

Beatrice A Becerra Portfolio

Fall 2016- Spring2018



Honors Courses Taken

- English Composition I
- English Composition II
- Principles of Biology I
- History of American People to 1877
- General Sociology
- World Religions

Section 1: In what ways did the Program help you “demonstrate engagement,” “cultivate curiosity,” and “explore perspectives” (community, curiosity, and diversity)?

The Honors Program gave me access to a variety of academic and professional opportunities that would not have been available to me otherwise. I joined the program my first semester at NWACC and was immediately invited into a community of diverse students. In my English Composition I class, I met two lifelong friends who motivated me and understood the importance of education and finding opportunities.

Some of the ways the Program helped me demonstrate engagement was helping me get more involved with the campus. My third semester at NWWACC, I joined the Student Government and Ambassador Association (SAGA). I was also briefly involved in the Student Newspaper and Art Club. Because the student population on campus is small, I found that many of my peers involved in these organizations were also involved in the Honors Program. This allowed me to create a community of peers; many of which were from various parts of the world and different ages.

Most of my honors classes were discussion based which created a small safe environment for being with differing opinions to voice their perspective on world issues. Being in these classes helped me further open my mind to these perspectives and understand the actions of different people.

Section 2: How did this program prepare you for a university (or for a workplace, if you aren't transferring at this point)? What hard or soft skills will you take with you?

The Honors courses are tailored in a way that is a unique educational experience. I had been in college courses where lectures were two hours long and the class size was too large for any special attention to be given to an individual student. In my experience in the Honors courses at NWACC, I felt more connected and engaged in the course material. The professors were passionate about their students learning and thinking critically rather than just passing the class. Some of the soft skills I think I can take with me are:

- Nonverbal/verbal communication
- Interpersonal and Teamwork
- Listening
- Persuasion
- Presentation/Public speaking
- Writing skills
- Flexibility/ Tolerant of change and uncertainty
- Leadership
- Motivation
- Problem Solving Abilities
- Work Ethic
- Critical observer
- Critical thinking
- Design sense
- Innovator
- Logical thinking
- Problem solving/Troubleshooting
- Research
- Resourceful
- Think outside the box
- Value education
- Willing to learn/Desire to learn

Some of the hard skills I think I can take with me are:

- Proficient math and science knowledge
- Associates Degree in Liberal Arts and Sciences

Although many of the Honors courses I took were not science or math courses, I enjoyed the courses I took and think they helped me further develop my soft skills. The most important skill I think I will take away from all my classes is the value of education and passion for learning. My professors always had opportunities to use our knowledge in the real world and I think it really motivated me to want to explore more.

Section 3: What is one experience you had while a member that you'd like to share?

I started school at Northwest Arkansas Community College in the summer of 2016 after transferring from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, a private technical university, where I was studying aeronautical engineering. At first, I did not think much about my experience at NWACC and was focused on taking all the courses I needed in order to transfer back to a 4-year college. Yet, in my second semester here, I realized that in order to make my learning experience effective, I would need to become involved in the institution as well. I joined a few school

organizations and became more involved in the Honors program. Being part of the latter has been especially beneficial to me because it has created a close knit environment of educators and ambitious students that support my own aspirations. Because many of the courses I am taking are pre-engineering, I look forward to my honors courses because they are smaller, discussion based, and enticing.

The most meaningful educational experience I have had while attending NWACC was judging junior high students' websites at National History Day hosted by the college. As an assignment for English Composition II, my fellow students and I were allotted the task of preparing constructive comments and criticisms about the contestants' work before we interviewed them on National History Day. When the assignment was first presented, I felt skeptical on how to approach the task. It seemed increasingly overwhelming, especially after I learned we would each be judging eight individual websites. Yet, as I began browsing through the websites I had been assigned, I become more interested and invested in the students' work and my feedback. To make the experience a little easier, I first imagined a junior high version of myself. Taking that mindset really helped me understand what sort of feedback the students would appreciate on their writing and design skills. Overall, I put a lot of time, effort and interest into my comments on the students' work because I felt that those students deserved the knowledge to advance their own education. Often times, it can be difficult for individual students to get personalized feedback on their progress. As a tutor, I have found that many students lack interest in their education because they are deprived of critical positive and constructive feedback needed to advance. Many of the students I have worked with benefited from constant encouragement and small criticisms; eventually, they gained the confidence needed to self-teach and progress.

Education is a very important aspect of my life; I am constantly in an environment of curiosity, invention, and discovery. As a Tinkering Lead at the Amazeum, I encourage guests of all ages to discover or develop new skills in circuitry, aerodynamics, electricity and other simple science phenomena. When I tutor, I work with students to overcome their personal obstacles and insecurities. Being a judge for National History Day reinforced the idea of how important education is and inspired me to continue making it a priority for myself and others.

Section 4: Considering all you have written for the above, what advice do you have for new members? This answer should be "short and sweet."

I have met a lot of students at NWACC who are in Honors courses but not the program. Some of them don't feel they are qualified or can handle the "stress" of being in the program. Yet, in my experience, being surrounded by a community of like-minded students is one of the most rewarding experiences you can have. Even if you're a student passing by, it's always nice to have on your academic and work resume because it shows your ambition. My advice is to be involved on campus and in the program.

P.S. Pay for your drinks in the lounge too...