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2021 Honors Portfolio

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Introduction

The thing that I love the most about Fontbonne is how our community is like a family. Coming to Fontbonne was the best decision I made during high school because it has become a place to grow and flourish. I am not sure what I was expecting of Fontbonne at that time, but it sure has exceeded all my expectations. My interest in Fontbonne stemmed from the personal connection I made while on a campus visit. That connection has continued with Fontbonne's faculty, staff, and students through participation in various courses, internships, work-study positions, and organizational involvement. A faculty member once told me that the more connections you make during college, the more options you will have to live the life you want once you graduate. As a first-generation college student, getting involved with Campus Ministry, GriffinTHON, and Omicron Delta Kappa enabled me to interact with peers and discover what drives and inspires me to achieve my goals including serving the dear neighbor. While I have grown from my own college experience, I want to make sure that other students have the same opportunities to excel at Fontbonne as it has afforded me.

The TELOS Portfolio offered me a powerful opportunity to reflect on what I have learned and how it can inform the future. During my self-reflection, one of the many themes that arose throughout my portfolio was "purpose." I was placed on this earth to connect and carry out a mission. A mission that I work out little by little; by taking the first steps in front of me and out of my comfort zone. I have been able to embrace what is both in front of and available to me, even if I have not completely understood it. This portfolio has allowed me to understand that my occupational and vocational callings can work in collaboration with each other. I have transformed my worldview by exploring unknown subject areas, leading various student groups, diving deeper into my occupational interest, and serving the dear neighbor without distinction. This portfolio only shows pieces of what I have been able to achieve while being at Fontbonne. Fontbonne has ignited a spark within me that will light the way on all my future endeavors.

Transformation

Campus Ministry

Tending to Faith

Sometimes, when things do not go according to plan, I tend to lose faith in myself and what I am doing. The foundation of faith in my opinion is the expectation of good things to come. While life can be hard, faith is the knowledge and understanding that things will get better. It is taking the next step when you cannot see the whole staircase. Faith is as important to me as the air that I breathe because while oxygen gives nourishment to my body, faith quenches the hunger and thirst of my heart and soul.

Through all the trials and tribulations that life throws at students during their time in college, it is faith that gives me a helping hand. In Scripture, Jeremiah 29:11 reminds me of this- "For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you, and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future". Everything in life is far easier to get through when there is faith involved. It is the guiding light that has pushed me closer to my purpose.

My faith has grown in ways I never imagined at Fontbonne. Although my faith is something that I hold near and dear to my heart, it was not something that I shared widely with others. Of course, God had a bit of a different plan which took shape more intensely during my time at Fontbonne. I became involved in Campus Ministry which has resulted in some wonderful relationships with other student leaders as well as staff, faculty, and administration. Masses, retreats, small group discussions, and community service opportunities have all helped shape me in a way that I never thought possible. They have allowed me to get involved in Fontbonne's mission by building relationships with others and creating supportive communities that provide experiences for the whole person.

Since my freshman year, I have served as a Campus Ministry Scholar who assists in planning activities and prayer services for students to participate in. As a freshman, I did not fully comprehend how I could help others through the campus ministry department. At that

time, I felt like sharing my faith meant that I was supposed to be able to answer people's questions by quoting Scripture or Theology. This was not something I felt like I was an expert in and felt like I was not prepared to set into that role. Although faith sharing sometimes looks like that, it usually looks quite different. In the four years since, I have noticed that it is people sharing their relationship that they have with God instead. In addition to being a scholar, I stepped into the position of Undergraduate Assistant for Campus Ministry my junior year. This role allows me to be a student voice on university committees as they make decisions that involve Campus Ministry or Mission & Heritage needs. This role has also been transformative for me because I get to help other students find answers to some of life's most important questions: "What are my core beliefs? What does the world need from me to make it better? What are my gifts and passions?" I know from my own college experiences that there are many things that can easily distract students from paying attention to their faith lives. The guidance that people look for is usually found more clearly in personal relationships with others. Who better to share your faith with than your friends and vice versa? Fontbonne has created a space for students to ask questions about their own faith lives, and I believe students feel more comfortable discussing those big questions with other students who are wrestling with the same questions.

I realized through the Campus Ministry Department, that I am called to help others understand how their own beliefs give them potential to help out the world that is in need. This has guided me to integrate my faith into my own lifestyle. I no longer shy away from keeping my faith to myself, rather I share it with others as they can benefit from knowing my struggles and successes and learn from them. I have had some wonderful spiritual directors and friends along the way who have helped me sort through the ups and downs of ministering to others. I have encountered Jesus through the people, classes, and experiences I have had while at Fontbonne.

FONTBONNE UNIVERSITY CAMPUS MINISTRY



Happy Monday

Monday's are hard-we all know it. We have a simple and motivating solution! Join the fun and get reenergized by entering to win a Gift card on the First Monday of the month. Be sure to check out the Campus Ministry social media accounts for more details!



Doerr Chapel Mass

Come join the Fontbonne community in the celebration of Mass. Held each Sunday at 7pm to accommodate student's schedules. If you belong to another faith tradition other than Catholicism, you are still invited to receive a blessing from the presider.



3-D Community Events

Debrief, De-Stress, and Disseminate! Finding a community can be hard, but we have an easy way for you to get to know other people in a casual way. Each event has a theme from free popsicles to a paint night and so much more!



Community Convos

Do you want to hear how other feel or what they are going through? If you answered yes, this program is right for you! This 100% virtual experience allows you and other students to have a space to share ideas, opinions, and feel valued no matter what is said. It is a great way to meet others as well!



Ministry & Mingle (M&M)

A simple way to meet new people, engage in faith-based discussions, and enjoy snacks! This program fits everyone needs whether you have a desire to grow in your faith or learn about others. If you come once, you'll want to come again!



Eucharistic Adoration

Come and sit in the presence of the Eucharist. A devotional tradition that allows the faithful to come adore the Blessed Sacrament. Adoration is a sign of devotion to and Wordship of Christ under the appearance of the consecrated host.



De-Stress with Spirituality

As fellow students, we know how stressful college can be. We are here to help you with that! Journaling, listening to music, and reading inspirational scripture are just a few tips that we share during this event. Growing in your faith instead of fear is something we are all about!



Agape Latte

This is a monthly event that includes coffee and conversation. We like to call it a caffeinated conversation about one's faith and life. A faculty or staff member is invited to share their faith story and offers helpful tips and advice that students can use to have a stronger faith life.

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SCAN ME

Dialogue Across Difference Workshop

Branching into Unknown Dialogue

This might surprise some, but I am a person who can thrive with very minimal socialization with others. I am naturally quiet and tend to stick to the things that I am most comfortable with. I like to eat my favorite foods and talk to my core group of friends instead of branching out into the unknown. I feel more devoted to change now because it brings me a level of happiness. I have learned to navigate the unknown with compassion, deep self-awareness, and as much patience as my anxious self can handle.

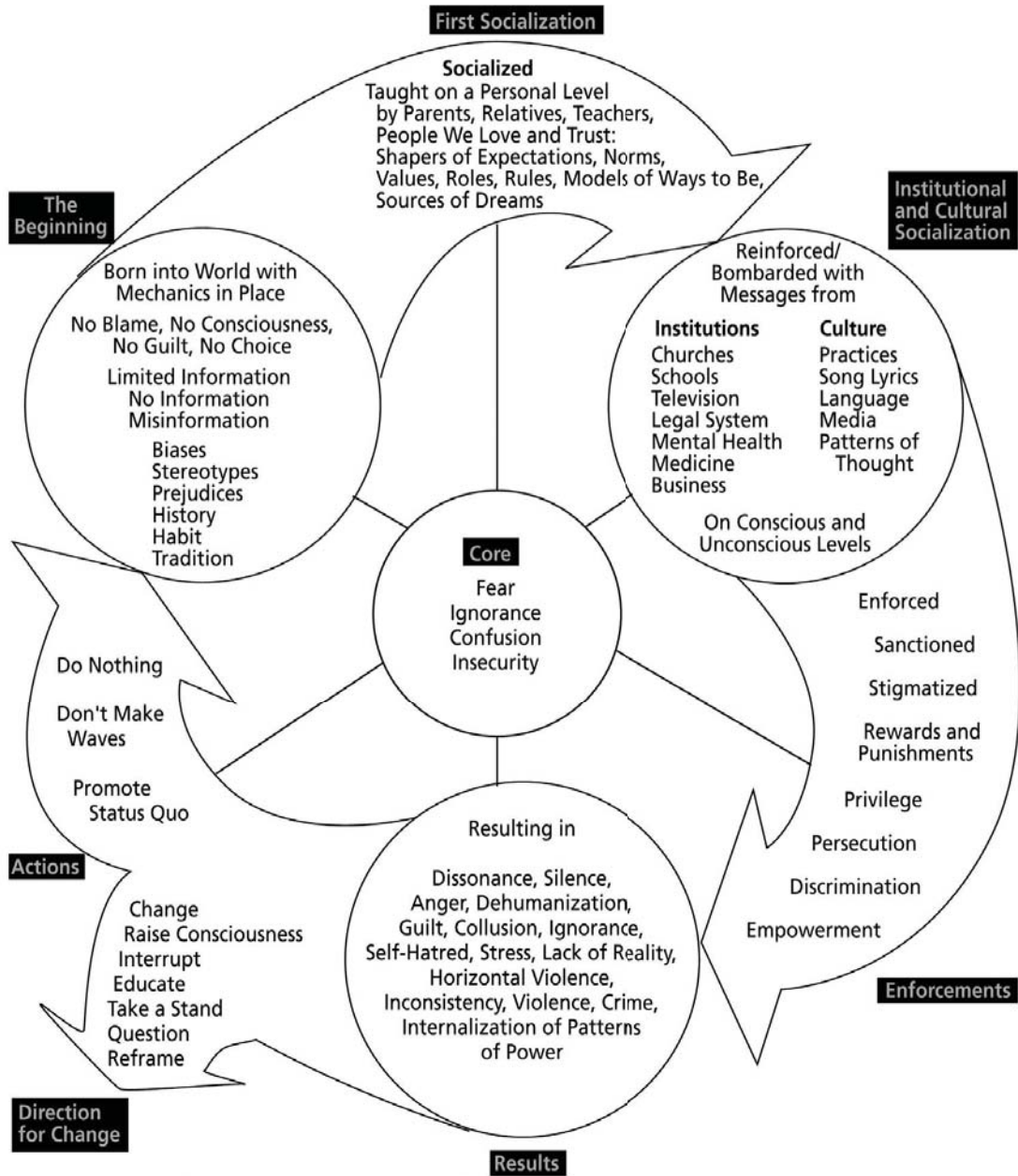
The Dialogue Across Difference Workshops that were offered at Fontbonne allowed me to engage in critical dialogue with others that helped me gain skills and knowledge that I use every day. The information ranged from how to build connection through communication, determining which social identities people identify with, and even went as far as how to foster strategic change. The lessons I learn through this program are concepts that I will wrestle with the rest of my life. This opportunity allowed me to be a part of a student group that included various people who were different than me. They differed from me in race, socioeconomic status, gender, and nationality, which created a space for everyone to share their own opinions and experiences. Even with all the participants' differences, we were still striving towards the same goal of learning how to care and be one with the dear neighbor without distinction. I was able to recognize through this experience who I really was, who others were and how I can use relationships to start dialogue, build supportive communities, and take measurable actions. The workshops made me believe that if someone wanted to pursue things that matter to them, they would run straight into fear to take care of themselves and others that are struggling.

The workshop helped me envision how to have better conversations about tough issues despite having differences of value, belief, opinion, or identity. Fontbonne is a place where students can encounter various global cultures and values, which gives students the chance to connect with others outside their "bubble" of friends. It is a place where truth and values matter. My truth and values matter but so does understanding that the way I see the world

might not be the truth that others hold. Dialogue Across Difference taught me about how to discuss various topics using compassionate, analytical, and nonjudgmental language. I was semi-comfortable before attending the workshops, however, they prepared me to handle conversations better. I feel more prepared to participate in difficult conversations while still being able to listen, empathize, and ask questions.

Some conversations feel challenging for me to participate in because they discuss ideas or scenarios that do not always fit with how I perceive the world. I am sure everyone can recall a time that they have had to admit that they do not know the answer- a statement that is so vulnerable to say, especially in group settings with familiar people or people who seem to have more knowledge on the subject than you. Challenging conversations however broaden perspectives, allowing people to move themselves from the unknown to more clarity.

Focusing on growth rather than feeling like I am going to say or do the wrong thing is empowering. It gives me a more positive outlook to focus on the present, as every new situation is a fresh opportunity to start taking responsibility for my own words and actions. Taking small steps to be better myself in this area of my life is how I plan to grow. This is not something I am planning to do overnight as too much risk, too soon, will have me feeling like a failure. With each step outside my comfort zone, I have realized that I am able to thrive out there as much as if I stayed within the constructs that I built for myself. After all, everything that I consider to be in my comfort zone was once an impossible dream or unknown knowledge.



Source: Cycle of Socialization developed by Bobbie Harro
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Exploration

Literature

Transferring Knowledge

Most math assignments have clear correct answers which results in me knowing whether I got a question right or wrong. Yes, some teachers base correct answers on the work that is shown, but in the end, there is likely only one correct response. English and literature on the other hand, can be open ended, and there is a lot of gray area between a stellar paper and a sub-par submission. Oftentimes during my literature class, I felt like I had the right idea in my head, but had a difficult time articulating them on paper. Although I enjoy analytical and mathematical information more, I found during my literature class that I can still gain skills from performing literature analyses.

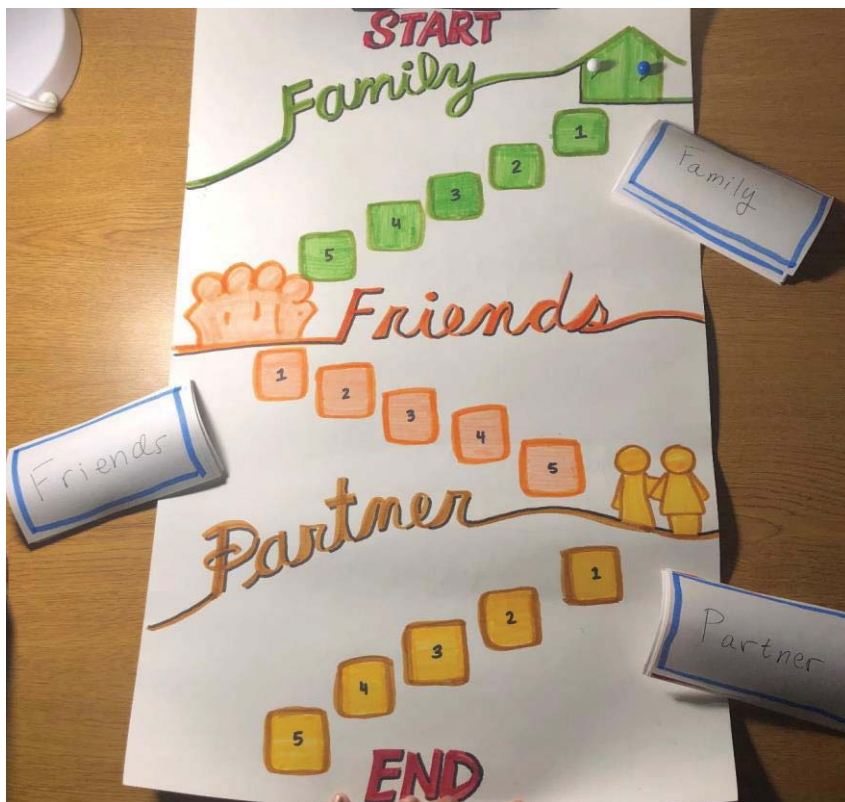
At its foundation, literary analysis encourages critical thinking. Reading and writing, the basic principles involved in the study of literature, serve as the gateway to a deeper level of thought. Studying literature and observing personal reactions to literature can make people more aware of their own values. Critical thinking is important because it encourages me to connect with ideas, examine for inconsistencies in reasonings, solve problems, and reflect on my own beliefs. English skills can be helpful in other areas of life as well. Comprehension, analysis, and interpretation increase efficiency no matter what someone is working on. Literary analysis asks students to form claims and offer relevant and rooted support in defense of a claim. While I know that I will not have to (nor want to) read a book and form a thesis about it in the real world, I will need to offer defense of my ideas and ways of performing tasks in my career. Literary analysis has established a framework for me to make claims and provide support, by engaging me to think critically.

I have the opportunity to explore information in the real world all the time whether it be a conversation I have with someone or something I read while scrolling through my phone. In a literature class, I traditionally think of a written piece of work as being the only way to gain

information. I do not consider myself passionate about literature and as a result do not bring deep content knowledge to the classroom. However, I do have content knowledge in other subject areas such as business, cooking, and religion. When the scope of what information can be considered in literature is broadened, I can bring my passion and expertise in other areas into the classroom. Critical thinking joined with a passion to understand took shape in my literature final.

For the assignment, the class was tasked to choose one of the texts from the semester to analyze and make a board game to show how the story progressed. I decided on Joyce Carol Oates's fictional narrative, "Where Are You Going, Where Have You Been?" because I felt that it discussed the realities of some young adults. To give context, Connie, the main character is a young girl that has been searching for attention and approval from anyone who might give it to her. She has high hopes and standards that are quickly lowered when she does not receive attention from her family, friends, or boys. By playing the board game, each player can travel down her various paths for attention to see how each one affects her and how she feels about herself after rejection. The board game made the literature text more realistic for me to explain how she felt as a character and how some people really feel living their lives.

Literature has led me to believe there is power in storytelling. Literature is both intensely personal as well as a communal experience. Literature taught me how to examine words, sentences, plotlines, and metaphors that reveal who we are as humans. Literature has opened my mind and enhanced the way I work with numbers in accounting. Instead of words on a page, I get to tell stories through numbers on a spreadsheet. In my job, I get to experience humanity by following transaction flows and see peoples' buying and spending habits. Literature has taught me that there is more to a story than what information is recorded in a text or in a general ledger. Understanding both what is written and how to interpret it is important to show the complete story.



Data Analytics

Data has Value

We are surrounded by stories. Storytelling is a medium as old as communication itself. My Data Analytics: Storytelling and Decision-Making course has taught me that stories have always been effective tools to express human experiences. Data is just another source of information. "Analytics" can sound very intimidating at first. Before this class, I understood Analytics as "crunching the numbers" and "processing data". I knew it dealt with terms like "regression" and "null hypothesis". Data holds tremendous amounts of potential value for an organization, but not one bit of value can be created unless insights are uncovered and translated into actions or business outcomes. Before taking this course, I struggled with communicating my insights to others effectively, but this course has taught me how to tell the story of numbers. Having this skill will allow me to move across business functions to access and explore data on my own.

Storytelling is also at the core of business, including financial statements. Yes, balance sheets and income statements among many other reports, are stories. For many organizations,

a trusted financial manager often translates the story for internal and external individuals. Most people do not understand the details of analytics, but they do want evidence provided through analysis and data. Stories that incorporate data analytics help business leaders make more informed decisions. The goal in accounting is not to deceive or withhold information, rather present financial stories in the most transparent and applicable way possible.

When stories have too many details, it causes the audience to lose track of the plot which in evaluation means that too much information obscures relevant findings. With any analysis or business evaluation, the creator decides what questions will be asked and, therefore, what story will be told with the data. It is important to make connections between analytics and decision-making. Data professionals are not fortune-tellers, and analytics tools are not crystal balls. Data-driven insights can inform important business decisions, such as when to launch a new product or how to improve the bottom line.

The most challenging element of this course is presenting statistics in a fun yet realistic way. Presenting from analytical perspective is not something that is easily researched and then learned by reading a quick article. It takes time to be able to construct presentations based on the concept of analytics. In the class, we are provided data on topics ranging from acceptance into college all the way to how to improve your golf score. After the data is analyzed, it is our job to tell the story that the given data provides. Learning how to approach problems from an analytical perspective is the foundation to solving problems. Business analytics gives meaning to data and helps me understand what changes need to be made to ensure long-term success for the client that I will work with. This class helped me expand my understand of statistics and analytics in a way that can be applied to both business and other subject areas.

Taking this data analytics course will elevate me in my future career because companies are looking to hire people who are comfortable analyzing data. In an increasingly data-driven world, CPAs need to be able to adapt to technological disruptions. I have observed this firsthand at my internship where the CPAs perform tasks that require data analytic skills. Accountants already use descriptive analytics in daily work as they compute sums, averages,

and percent changes. The analytical skills I will need as an accountant will be different depending on whether I am the one producing or consuming the information. Either way accountants use this information to help individuals and businesses uncover valuable insights within their financials.

The highest demand in the industry is for professionals who are great at mathematics, software development and communication. Successful data analysis requires attention to detail and critical thinking—two skills that are highly valued by employers. With my strong background in business and data analytics, I will be able to boil down large amounts of data to provide valuable insights to those that I serve. Data does not arrive as a clean Excel spreadsheet and this course has provided me the skillset to take a bunch of data, align it, and present it to others.

Leadership

GOLD Program

Impactful Leadership

College is a unique time between the known and unknown which can be challenging for many students, especially if they do not have someone to turn to for advice. Looking back to my freshman year, I was fortunate to have upperclassmen and staff members take me under their supervision. They were able to give directions on how to excel as a student, and how to make the most out of my college experience. Let's just say I took their advice and ran a marathon with it.

The GOLD (Griffin's Obtaining Leadership Development) Program allows students to find their place on campus while providing students with opportunities to enhance their leadership skills. Students can improve their leadership skills through learning about the practices of effective communication, exploration of personal values and identity, and the power of group dynamics. Student leadership is an important part of student success. Student leadership is the ability to influence decisions by listening and valuing the ideas that others have. While there are no cookie-cutter practices that ensure good leadership in all settings, there are some guiding principles. The GOLD Program has allowed me to measure my personal impact on Fontbonne since I was welcomed to campus at orientation.

When I was a freshman, I was not expecting to get involved in that many organizations, but I met so many great people here that I am now involved in organizations campus wide. Involvement has a broad definition, but it is about taking advantage of the opportunities that surround me so that I can continue to grow into the person I am hoping to be. For me, this included ENACTUS (the business group), Campus Ministry, Alpha Lambda Delta, and Omicron Delta Kappa, just to name a few. Getting involved with these groups early really helped me build connections across campus which has helped me gain two career-based internships, a student representative for committees as well as helping others to become their own heart led

leaders. At Fontbonne, we are extremely fortunate to have our faculty and staff support our student organizations, so making these connections has mattered a lot for me. I cannot imagine what Fontbonne would be like if I had not made these connections on campus.

Learning to build strong connections is one of the most worthwhile things that I have been able to accomplish my past four years of college. I was told by one of my instructors that the more connections you make during college, the more options you will have, and I would have to agree. Why? Because in my life, I want to be a guiding light and beacon of hope so that others can maximize their potential of serving as heart led leaders. This statement has become my reason, my "why" for serving others. I am on this earth to help people find their own potential even if they cannot see it themselves. This all started by taking the first step of interacting and connecting with those around me. Interacting with others is an important step to discovering what drives, inspires and fulfills me. Involvement in clubs and organizations has enabled me to understand that even as an introvert, I can take charge of situations, but also step back and allow others to do the same.

It struck me that taking a personal leadership journey, one of self-awareness and self-challenge adds a whole new dimension to the way in which I have seen and engaged with others in the world. When leaders deeply understand themselves, they remain grounded and constant, so that people know what to expect from them in certain situations. The GOLD Program has allowed me to reflect on experiences I have had as well as how I have impacted others through the giving of my time and leadership abilities. If I could give my freshman self some advice it would be "to embrace what is both in front of and available to me, even if I do not completely understand it at the time." In the end, it does not matter if a student gets involved in one organization, or a few. What really matters is that they are achieving their goals and positively impacting those around them.

WING Orientation Leader

Fontbonne Orientation

Being an accounting major, I did not know I would ever have a passion for serving other students. For the longest time, I just knew I wanted to work with numbers, and I never felt I had that passion or drive to deal with people. After seeing the impact that my former orientation leader had made on me and others, I was interested to see what I could do for other students as they became acquainted with Fontbonne.

I heard about the WING (Welcoming in New Griffins) orientation leader program through friends that would speak about how fun and exciting it was to work with incoming students and their families. I was hesitant when considering the position because I did not think they would want a quiet person being with new freshmen. I thought to myself, "how fun can this actually be?", but after careful consideration and some push from others, I decided to go for it. Little did I know that accepting this position would have such a profound impact on my experience at Fontbonne, my friendships, my view of others, my accounting career and myself.

From the beginning, I knew I was surrounded by an amazing community of students. Fellow Orientation Leaders truly opened my eyes to new beliefs, passions, and backgrounds. I formed lasting relationships with my partners, and my two groups of freshmen that I had the pleasure of meeting. This experience gave me confidence that I now carry through to my accounting career. During my two internships that I have had, I have found myself more confident to talk with clients and colleagues. I gained this new confidence from working alongside other student leaders and staff members from across campus. I have also learned how to respect everyone's opinion, take advice from others, as well as follow my instincts in making quick decisions. Being an orientation leader also taught me how to communicate with many different types of people, whether it is nervous freshmen, their parents, experienced faculty, or friends. New students and their families expect that orientation leaders know all

there is to know about campus and can answer any question or concern that may come up during the welcoming weekend. Because of this expectation, WING Leaders are often viewed as customer service agents and on the frontlines when students arrive on campus. Tuning into people's feelings and fears and respecting their vulnerability, as well as forming bonds were great lessons I took away from my experience as a WING leader. It is these lessons that I will continue to use throughout my career in business.

I along with two other student leaders participated in WING all three years we were eligible to serve on the team. I learned how to do things better each year I participated as a leader, which I was able to pass along to others as the Training and Leadership Development Coordinator my senior year. I was charged with developing an engaging curriculum for the WING Leaders that both prepared them for their active roles, but also challenged their thought process by using current events in society to reinforce lessons of allyship and customer service. I also outlined programming that allowed for the WING Leaders to see growth in areas such as self-confidence, knowledge of campus resources, and the ability to effectively communicate with one another and beyond. This role also allowed me to network with campus partners to build consistent, equitable training for all the WING Leaders that promoted campus pride, awareness, and engagement.

I am glad I decided to apply to become an orientation leader because I discovered things about myself that I did not realize before. I may not have thought that I was going to be a good orientation leader, but I found something that made me happy and helped me with self-growth, pushing my own limits, inspiring others, and being inspired myself. Being a WING leader really changed my life, and people will probably not believe me unless they knew how I was before becoming one. The rewarding feeling of helping other students transitioning to college, and the knowledge that my experiences will help future students too has left an imprint on my heart forever.



Marketing Your Skills as a WING Leader

As a member of the WING Team, you do so much more than lead a group and cheer! You gain valuable knowledge and skills that can be used in any area of your life. The following statements can be used on your resume as ways of defining the many different tasks you complete as a member of this team:

Serving as a WING Leader (both first year and returning members):

- Acted as a role model for new students
- Served as a liaison between the Department of Orientation & Student engagement and incoming families
- Communicated the positive aspects of Fontbonne University with incoming families
- Established pride and respect for Fontbonne University through active campus involvement
- Promoted the university's ideals and values
- Provided support and information to new students regarding campus life, academic regulations, and location of offices, people, and support services
- Created community among freshmen as that shift from Orientation groups, resident hall groups, and academic schools
- Utilized teamwork through planning sessions, group projects, social outings, meetings, and events
- Initiated spirit and group participation throughout Orientation Training Week and Weekend
- Engaged in planning and implementation of group meetings and team building activities
- Put into practice the case study scenarios on confidentiality, diversity, and ethics

Serving as a Returning WING Leader:

- Mentored new team members as they became acclimated to the group
- Maintained a strong relationship with the university throughout continued campus involvement
- Offered constructive criticism and suggestions for improvement regarding Orientation programs
- Trained new WING Leaders on the proper techniques and skills necessary to the group
- Learned to balance increasing levels of responsibility as a returning member

Occupation

HSB Advisors, LLC Internship

Culture is Key

HSB Advisors, LLC was founded on the foundation of providing quality, and personalized financial guidance to local individuals and businesses. I became familiar with this organization when I was looking for an accounting internship back in 2019. As an intern, I worked closely with all the employees on various tasks needed to be completed. Everyone at HSB Advisors has helped develop me as an employee, and as a person outside of work. HSB Advisors is more than a team-we are a family.

Workplace culture is not only a reflection of a business but reflects the leader and employees who work there. The culture of a workplace shows the way employees act with people in-and-outside the organization. Everyday leaders, like my supervisor, are tasked with managing and inspiring people who they are in contact with. It is difficult to be a successful leader and/or employee without having strengths that compliment your work ethic. Being a part of an organization is a choice, and being a heart led leader is one of the characteristics that I have found to be most valuable in my life already. Heart-led individuals in my opinion, try to draw on other's qualities of humility, vulnerability, transparency, and empathy. My colleagues at my internship live and lead from their heart because they value the abilities of others.

An organization's culture is hard to clearly define because there are so many aspects that make it inclusive or not. These aspects can be recognized though, by the interns who are the lowest level of employees all the way up to the Owner. Consequently, organizational culture permeates every aspect of an entity and is, therefore, significant to its operations. The culture of a workplace can affect employees' general behaviors, such as motivation and performance. I have noticed that being able to trust the people you work with usually brings the best work to the conference table. Trust exists when employees agree to keep open-minds

and minimize their expectations about how things are going to turn out. I believe creating a culture of accountability is a positive thing and means everyone can feel safe and happy at work.

Having a comfortable work environment makes employees more productive. I have learned that making the workplace better allows employees to collaborate with each other to make the entire organization more efficient. I have learned how important the role of communication is in developing and/or supporting relationships. Communication is vital in an organization whether the purpose is to update employees on new policies or to listen to the concerns of employees. For example, I was invited to participate in HSB Advisor's yearly party where their two locations come together. During this party, my manager updated my co-workers and I on the challenges that the company has been facing and the good work that everyone had completed. Motivation plays a key role in keeping the best employees focused on the positive. It was a small act to bring the two locations together, but as my supervisor has taught me, small acts can make the biggest differences and transform people's lives. Being at this internship has shown me that transformational leaders make a huge impact on individuals lives and futures.

In future organizations, I plan to promote communication by establishing connections with my co-workers. By providing tools and resources, I will allow my co-workers to grow and gain confidence and help them to fit better into the organization's culture. Building connections between people can encourage collaboration and sharing. Having a culture of collaboration helps organizations maximize employee knowledge and capabilities. To achieve this as a leader, I can do something as simple as asking employees for their opinions or rearrange the office to be more open and inclusive. Engaging with others does not always have to happen under elaborate or formal circumstances, but it is important to make time to connect with others. I hope to have a great impact on the culture of the organization where I work. I want to do this for others as my supervisors have done for me during my time as an intern.



Melman, Alton, & Co Internship

A Look into my Future

Melman, Alton, & Company is a Certified Public Accounting Firm that was located in Clayton, Missouri, but has since moved to Creve Coeur, Missouri. In terms of employment, Melman, Alton, & Company had two full-time accountants, one part-time accountant, and two independent contractors that helped with the tax season workload. With the given staff, Melman, Alton, & Company was able to provide the following services: bookkeeping, payroll, tax return preparation, cash flow analysis, financial forecasting, and business valuation.

I acquired this position from the previous intern there who is also connected to Fontbonne as an alum. She had worked there until she found a full-time position elsewhere after graduation. She reached out to see if I were interested because she thought I would be a good replacement and thought I could use the internship as a learning experience. I interned with the firm the spring term of my sophomore year. My duties included administrative work, payroll of firm employees, and tax return assemblies. The administrative piece might seem like a typical task for an intern to do, but I really enjoyed that part of my job. It included answering phones, creating invoices, and taking bank deposits to the bank. This internship taught me many great lessons that have helped me in other positions as well as in my coursework. I was able to work independently with little guidance which was for me because it helped build my confidence. This internship also showed me that it is important to have a working relationship with every client, but each relationship needs to work like a partnership. "Our Success is your Success." was a motto that was very evident in the way that this firm worked. Without a client's satisfaction a company is not living out its responsibilities or mission. The experiences that I had are not stagnant as they have inspired me to set future goals for myself. This internship provided me a better understanding of what CPAs do and energized me to sit for the CPA exam upon completion of my degree.

Even though the firm was small, I was still able to network with people both in and outside the organization. Networking allowed me to obtain the student membership with the Missouri Society of Certified Public Accountants. This society promotes continuous learning both in and outside the organization. I had the opportunity to work on projects with my colleagues which taught me that collaboration is key in any workplace. I built an outstanding reputation with my colleagues because I efficiently and effectively completed tasks. I also found that having high standards for client services is an important lesson to learn early in an accountant's career. Exposure to experiences like tax preparation and audits have been valuable lessons for me and have paired nicely with my Fontbonne courses. This internship allowed my in-class material to come to life in a practical manner. My goal for this experience was simple-to learn. More specifically I wanted to get a more general view about my chosen

profession. I wanted to be exposed to the standard practices that an accountant would be subjected to. The aspect of the internship that I liked most was having the opportunity to work on client projects in a collaborative environment. It allowed me to connect with professionals beyond my office which I recommend that everyone take advantage of.

Internships are crucial to having a successful career because practice makes you push yourself to be more prepared. This internship has taught me that doing someone's tax returns directly affects people. Although accounting is more analytical, it still satisfies my passion of helping others with their needs. The knowledge that I gained has helped me better understand what my career goals should look like. I learned that fears present in the beginning become strengths in the end.

Service and Social Justice

World Food Day

Feeding the Hungry

While I am no expert, I do know that people who struggle with hunger are far from having the same opportunities equal to someone with stability. In theory, people facing hunger in America have the same chance to go to college, get a great job and build a better future just like I do, but in reality, the obstacles they face in doing so are far greater. Unfortunately, the starting point is not the same for everyone. When someone faces poverty and hunger, it impacts their physical and emotional development and thus their ability to achieve academically. It is unjust that the opportunities for people who begin with a solid foundation and those who begin without are so immensely unequal.

Fontbonne introduced me to food justice and its efforts to address socio-economic issues that affect much more than food. There is no way for the St. Louis community to reach equal access to healthy food without equal access to jobs, education, well-being, and opportunity. Food insecurity is a real issue that has real consequences that I did not consider before being a student. Today, more than ever, I am continually exposed and aware of hunger in the world, whether it is halfway across the world in Uganda, or right here in Missouri. Hunger is not abstract; it has a human factor to it. It is overwhelming to think about the work that still needs to be done to combat this issue in society. There is no one single way to tackle hunger in the world. In our community, I have a higher chance to encounter someone who is experiencing human suffering than someone who is not. My faith guides me to do corporal works of mercy which are charitable actions to help neighbors in their needs. The first Corporal Work of Mercy is to feed the hungry. Feeding the hungry is a basic principle of Christianity, and the best way I can feed the hungry is to be active in the community.

Responding to hunger can take on many forms. Responses can vary from just learning about its severity to getting involved in the development of aid/relief. One of the most notable

activities that I have worked with to combat food insecurity is participating in World Food Day. It has become one of my favorite days to help individuals in the community receive the food that they most desperately need. St. Louis's World Food Day is an annual food-packaging event to help feed hungry people living both locally and abroad. St. Louis World Food Day was originally established to raise awareness and increase understanding about hunger while empowering people to take action to alleviate it. I was surprised to find out how many people in our community are food insecure. The World Food Day event in St. Louis runs a full day in October and invites "teams" from local schools, companies, and nonprofits to package as many meals for those in need in a friendly competition. By working together with individuals who all desire to help their community as much as possible, I have become a more open-minded individual who looks for ways to help others in whatever way possible. It is inspiring to see everyone from middle school students to CEOs of companies finding ways to give back to the community when they do not necessarily have to in this specific way.

Participating in this service event every year brings so much joy to my life because it shows that the community responds in large volumes when their neighbors are in need. I was already aware of some of the challenges that come with food insecurity, but it is so much more meaningful to work in the community I live in and be able to physically see the impact I have when doing service like this. This experience will continue to impact me in the future as it reminds me how much I must be thankful for each time I eat something. Every year, I feel a rejuvenated sense of purpose because I know that my actions are vital to connecting individuals to food that they desperately need. It also confirms a growing passion of mine to find ways to improve the community I live in so that others find it easier to satisfy their basic human needs. In the end, feeding the hungry is an important work of mercy that everyone should actively engage in. In a very real sense, it is not a choice to feed the hungry, but a mandate laid upon us as global citizens. Volunteering is one of the most life changing and rewarding experiences someone can take on.



ODK National Day of Service

Service Leadership

Over the past three years, Omicron Delta Kappa (a National Leadership Honor Society) students and alumni have partnered with "House of Living Stone" Community Garden. Omicron Delta Kappa hosts a national day of service each year as they want to foster servant-leadership within their circle members. To me, servant leadership is the most effective form of leadership, because it is completely focused on others and building them up to reach their potential. The beauty of servant leadership is the ability for a leader to build community in a place through service. What I love about servant leadership is that it has the power to impact a

person, a group, a community, or society. Participating in ODK's national day of service specifically at the community garden has taught me a lot about leadership and what it means to truly serve the dear neighbor without distinction.

Community gardens are effective tools for enhancing food security in low-income communities. Volunteering for this garden has allowed me to be an advocate on how to build and strengthen local communities so they can flourish. Community gardens are only one method that communities can use to create access to clean and healthy food. It has been an eye-opening experience to work in a community garden each year because it is in an area where people come together across various levels of income and ethnicity to enjoy the outdoors, grow healthy food, and socialize with others. The idea of the community garden is that anyone in the community can sign up to garden for a small fee per season and grow their own food. The "House of the Living Stone" Community Garden is located on the grounds of the First Baptist Church of Webster Groves and is organized by Gateway Greening. I got involved in the community garden service day not only because some of my friends were doing it, but because I think it is crucial for city neighborhoods to have access to green spaces to grow what they need.

Volunteering fosters interpersonal trust, empathy for others, and respect for the common good. It is fun to be with other servant leaders as service draws different kinds of people together who might not have the same opportunities. It unifies people who want to act and get their hands dirty. I have met people over the years that if it were not for volunteer opportunities, I would have never met them, and each year leads me back to help prepare the garden for the growing season. The garden has been a good and well-received addition to the community, and it has had ripple effects on other community partners to clean up the community and beautify it.

At the end of the service days, I have found that there is a unanimous sense of community pride because of the beautification efforts that have taken place especially in a

community where there is economic hardship. I like to work with others on this project because it renews my understanding that I am capable of doing things. It has taught me that what I do no matter how small is important and can add to the beauty of St. Louis. It also gives me a chance to feel like I can make a positive difference in the community that is so appreciative of any support they can get. The joy and excitement of serving the dear neighbor is shown on each volunteer's face after the day at the garden is over. Servant Leadership is about forming clear goals, and then doing whatever it takes to help to achieve them. Overall, the service leadership aspect of this volunteering opportunity is something that has contributed to my own professional development. I have learned that I must get down in the dirt to experience what others are doing before I become a leader that others are willing to serve with. Service leadership has exceeded my expectations and has allowed me to further understand the reason to do service and the best ways to serve others in our growing community.

