

## Honors Committee Guidance to Students

The Honors Committee has approved nine categories of theses/senior projects, although of course students may combine genres.

1. Scholarly/analytical
2. Scientific
3. Creative
4. Pedagogical
5. Service Learning
6. Experiential Learning
7. Action Research
8. Leadership Portfolio
9. Wellness Project

The following definitions are provided to the students at the beginning of their fall term thesis prep class. They create the thesis/project proposal according to these guidelines.

### **What is a Thesis/Senior Project?**

The purpose of a thesis is to articulate and investigate a question that is both personally stimulating, useful to others, and presented in discipline-specific ways. It is a culmination of the student's unbiased research and balanced analysis, sensitive to the arguments on both sides of the rhetorical equation. Students should start not with a presumption but with an observation, then devise a way to seek explanations for that observation.

These are the components of a thesis proposal:

- **Abstract:** a thumbnail sketch of the proposal: What questions will you explore? A summary of the main point(s) of each major section of the proposal; not an introduction but rather a synopsis of the project.
- **Personal Interest:** discuss any relevant connections between your project and such things as courses taken, personal or work experiences, hobbies, volunteerism, study abroad, etc.
- **Larger Context:** the "so what" & "who cares" section. When completing this section, it will help to address some of the following questions: Who is the audience? Why is this work important to them? How could your results/project contribute to the discipline? References to two scholarly sources are required in this section.
- **Methods/Process:** What are you doing? How – specifically! – will you do it? Do you have sufficient resources? What will be the end-result? Make sure to define any discipline-specific terminology.
- **Working Bibliography with Select Annotations:** 8 sources required, 4 annotated.

## **Teacher Burnout: Central Causes and Preventive Measures (1)**

Advisor: Dr. Chloë Hughes, Division of Education and Leadership

Student Pronouns: She/Her

Thesis/Project Genre(s): Scholarly

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### **Abstract:**

Our education system is built around the people who dedicate their lives to educating future generations. Over the last few years we have seen mass amounts of teachers leaving behind their jobs because of teacher burnout. On many levels teachers are feeling left behind and ill prepared for their career and the challenges they face, as well as overwhelmed by the amount being asked of them. This thesis breaks down the issue of burnout by looking at potential causes, as well as possible solutions to implement in order to slow down this rapidly growing issue.

Using statistics my thesis explores how, on a base level, teacher burnout is affecting educators in the United States and how large the issue of burnout is becoming. Veteran teacher interviews are used in this thesis to discover real world explanations for why so many teachers are facing burnout. Those interviews will also be used to uncover ways that they personally have successfully avoided getting burnt out to the point of leaving their profession because these teachers have been able to do so for a long time.

After discussing causes of burnout, I plan to create a proactive and reactive plan to help teachers facing burnout and schools hoping to retain teachers for longer. This plan focuses both on changes administration should make as well as changes individual teachers can make in order to help themselves feel the effects of burnout less.

### **Personal Interest:**

I have always known I wanted to be a teacher. There was a project I did in preschool that asked us what we wanted to be in the future and instead of saying a princess or a pop star, I said a teacher. Growing up with two educators as parents I got to discover all of the fun parts of teaching. I knew that I would be able to help people learn and that I would have a classroom to decorate and I had the potential to be just like all the amazing teachers I had encountered. However, the older I got the more that naive excitement started to mix with worry because I got to see downsides of teaching that I had never discovered before. Their classrooms were too small and the class sizes were too big. They were expected to teach as well as nurture and discipline, and I was becoming increasingly aware that no matter the amount of passion somebody had for teaching, sometimes all of those responsibilities were too much.

The closer I get to my actual teaching career the more the issue of teacher burnout hits closer to home. In the education courses I've taken the idea of burnout is just a looming factor that is addressed as little as possible because most know it is bound to happen. While I am learning how to teach fractions four different ways, I haven't learned how to handle administrative pressure within a school or disciplinary action within a classroom. I can't help but feel like I will be walking in blind even though I will technically be qualified for a teaching job. It is a great fear that even though I want to teach I won't be able to overcome these struggles and I will just become one of the statistics of teacher burnout that is just getting greater and greater.

My hope is that through this thesis I can identify ways to prevent both myself from burning out as a future teacher as well as hopefully help other teachers going through these struggles. By focusing on the specific grade levels that I will be certified to teach, I am hoping my research will give more direct and specific preventive measures. Along with that by looking into some school districts within Oregon I may be able to see more clearly what myself and many other teachers will be facing in a few years time. This thesis is a look into my own future and a plan to help myself and others become more than just a number on a growing list of educators giving up on their passion.

### **Larger Context:**

Identifying the causes of burnout and developing possible solutions will only help with teacher retention and quality of k-12 education. Currently about 19 to 30 percent of new teachers are leaving within their first five years of teaching (American University, 2019). This is mostly due to teacher burnout, which is more likely to affect new teachers. Teacher burnout refers to "consequences of severe stress and high ideals in 'helping' professions," where people end up "exhausted, listless, and unable to cope," (American University, 2019). Entering teaching is overwhelming in itself because of the nature of the job. However, if you add in new requirements to teach social and emotional learning as well as pressures from administration levels to succeed, you get an extremely high pressure job. Öztürk explained that "Long-term occupational stress may lead to chronic exhaustion that closely correlates with burnout syndrome" (2021).

However stress alone is not the sole cause of burnout. Farber (1982) explains that burnout "can be regarded as the final step in a progression of unsuccessful attempts to cope with negative stress conditions". Burnout comes from failures in supporting teachers in their careers. We can see that through their underpayment, the amount they are overworked, and the lack of support systems put into place to encourage and help educators work through the stress of their profession. So this issue is coming from a long term lack of support, it is not a quick onset of emotions that causes teachers to feel burnt out to the point of leaving their profession. The overall system has not been built for educators to thrive and in most cases they are barely surviving.

Most researchers know at this point that “When a teacher chooses to leave his or her school, it is rarely for just one reason. Often, some, if not many, of the aforementioned reasons combine to burn out a teacher’s enthusiasm and motivation”(American University, 2019). This issue won’t go away with one small change, there are many large systemic changes that must be done to lessen teacher burnout and raise teacher retention. The goal of uping teacher retention within schools can in turn take more stress off of the educators still trying to make their situations work. Working to achieve a higher teacher retention goes hand in hand with trying to solve the teacher burnout crisis. If teacher burnout can be lessened not only will educators jobs be better long term but we can better insure a higher quality of education for students.

This issue affects every person that encounters the education system. Teachers take the brunt of it but it is a trickle down effect. If teachers aren't able to do their job that directly affects the students they see day to day. Working to solve teacher burnout can only help create a better environment for students to learn. Identifying the causes and working to find some solutions for teacher burnout can at least direct this dwindling system in the right direction towards a better future for educators.

### **Methods/Process:**

My thesis project will be based mostly on a critique of previous systems put into place for educators, such as administrative pressure and curriculum expectations. To start I will be looking at trends and statistics of teacher burnout throughout the country and using those to help find reasonings for the issue at hand. The statistics will also help to explain the gravity of the issue. I will also be using previous interview information that is available to the public to try and get a personal perspective from veteran teachers in America. My hope is that this will show the feelings of educators in America so that the explanation of this issue is not based solely on numbers. Some of that interview data from veteran teachers will also provide aid in explaining intrapersonal solutions to burnout. Intrapersonal solutions are things that an individual can do for themselves in order to take better care of themselves and in turn, last longer in this profession.

Additionally, my plan is to dissect three different contracts from school districts around Oregon to try and get a feel of what expectations for Oregon teachers look like. To determine what districts, I will use a website that lists all of the Oregon school districts and the amount of schools within that district. I will look at a small, medium, and large district in order to compare and contrast their expectations for educators and what protocols they have put into place in order to promote teacher retention in their school district. I will also be looking at the Oregon curriculum for 4th-8th grade, specifically the social-emotional aspect which has been a new addition in the last few years. The reason I am looking at this age group is, chiefly, because of personal interest,

seeing as this is my ideal future age group for teaching. I also am looking into this age group because this age is when a lot of social and emotional development may happen. If teachers are expected to help students navigate that as well as teach that may be a significant source of pressure or stress. Hopefully all of this will answer the question of whether or not, on a base level, too much is being asked of these teachers. Is asking them to teach their subject, social-emotional learning, and address behavioral issues too much?

Once I have determined what some of the biggest issues and causes of burnout are I will be looking at setting up resolutions to these issues on a few different levels. One of those levels is trying to find solutions for problems within school districts. How can expectations shift off of teachers and onto the administration that leads them? Also, I hope to find a better way to distribute the responsibilities that teachers are given so that they can just fill the role of a teacher and not be expected to do much more than be good at teaching their subject. I will also look to find wellness tips for teachers to exercise themselves. What practices will be most beneficial for educators to do in order to relieve some of the stress that comes with the job? With both of these, the goal is to give strategies to help resolve issues after teachers already feel burnt out as well as give tips for prevention of burnout.

### **Working Bibliography, with Select Annotations**

American University, 2019, March 10. "The current state of teacher Burnout in America." American University.  
<https://soeonline.american.edu/blog/the-current-state-of-teacher-burnout-in-america>.

This source goes over what teacher burnout is at a basic level as well as a small snapshot into how bad teacher burnout is right now. It shows a few statistics but in order to provide a small overview and introduction into the topic. This source works great for explaining the basics of my topic in order to build upon them later in my thesis. These statistics can help put into context how large the issue of teacher burnout is in America.

Beck, Jori S., et al. "We Need to Be in the Classroom More': Veteran Teachers' Views on Teacher Preparation and Retention." *Professional Educator*, vol. 43, no. 1, Jan. 2020, pp. 91–99

This source utilizes interviews from veteran teachers to explore what strategies helped with teacher retention. It provides insight into what connections exist between teacher preparation and teacher retention. Resiliency is one of the main topics of discussion. How to teach it and how to maintain it. This source focuses a lot on internal solutions for teachers to focus on instead of exploring external solutions because that part is coming from my own research. However, I don't

have an inside look for my own experiences with teacher burnout so this will help to provide a better look at strategies from teachers who have experienced and prevailed burnout related to the profession.

Farber, B. A., 1982. "Teacher burnout: Assumptions, myths, and issues."

Introduces the idea of teachers being worn out more than burnout. This source also goes in depth about how there is an extreme lack of administrative and parental support to help these teachers which is one of the main arguments in my thesis. This source will both help me to discover some main issues and potential solutions that come from a lack of administrative support because it also discusses the deep rooted change that needs to happen.

Niche, 2021. "2021 Largest School Districts in Oregon." Niche  
<https://www.niche.com/k12/search/largest-school-districts/s/oregon/>.

This website lists all of the school districts within Oregon. It gives the number of schools for each school district as well. This website will help me to determine which school districts I want to specifically dissect and focus on because that will be based on size. I will use a small, medium, and large district to compare and contrast the treatment/expectations for their teachers. This source all gives the exact number of students within the district which will help give context about how many people are affected by issues within that school district.

Oregon.gov. 2021. "Oregon Department of Education : Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) Resources : Student Assessment" : State of Oregon.  
 <<https://www.oregon.gov/ode/educator-resources/assessment/Pages/Social-and-Emotional-Learning-Resources.aspx>>

Öztürk, Meral, et al. "Predictors of Teacher Burnout in Middle Education: School Culture and Self-Efficacy." *Studia Psychologica*, vol. 63, no. 1, Jan. 2021, pp. 5–23.

Pyhältö, Kirsi, et al. "Teacher Burnout Profiles and Proactive Strategies." *European Journal of Psychology of Education - EJPE* (Springer Science & Business Media B.V.), vol. 36, no. 1, Mar. 2021, pp. 219–242

Westervelt, E., 2015. "NPR Cookie Consent and Choices." Npr.org.

<https://www.npr.org/sections/ed/2015/08/19/432724094/teacher-shortage-or-teacher-pipeline-problem>

(EB)

## **Self Portrait (2)**

Advisor: Dr. Gregory Poulin, Art Department

Student Pronouns: She/Her

Thesis/Project Genre(s): Creative

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### **Abstract:**

A self-portrait is an artwork depicting the creator of the work. Portraits are a key piece in any artist's portfolio as they can show the study of technique and individual style of the artist. As someone pursuing an artistic career, I have decided to create a personal portrait for my honors senior project. Although I will survey the history behind the artist and techniques, this creative thesis will be less of a study and more of an observation of what it takes to create a self-portrait and why an artist will choose to create one.

I became interested in art at a young age and throughout my education, I pursued art in a way that has helped my interest grow enough that it has influenced my decision to pursue art as a career. Because of my interest in making art my career, I was led to take a life drawing class that has led me to look more into self-portraits and why an artist will create one, or more, during their career or lifetime.

There are many reasons an artist will choose to create a self-portrait. These reasons include an exploration of their physical self and that of their mental self. It can even be used as a representation of what inspires them, what they view as important, or even strong beliefs. Artists like Erin Lee and Joan Semmel use their self-portraits to showcase their views on feminism. Artists like Picasso show how they step outside of themselves and use their self-portraits to see themselves as merely shapes and lines that allude to the person hidden within. I will explore the artist Jenny Saville and Pablo Picasso as I create my own self-portrait. My portrait will be a representation of me using inspiration from the methods and reasoning behind their works.

### **Personal Interest:**

My interest in art started at a young age. Multiple members of my family have backgrounds in art. I have also greatly enjoyed the idea of creating things that are unique to me. I took my first art class in middle school, and that was where I got a good idea of what it was that I liked besides saying that I liked the art in general. I enjoyed drawing, seeing lines and values come together on a page. From there I took more classes in high school that helped grow this interest in drawing and the different styles of creating pictures and images. During this time I was even able to enter a few competitions for my art and was able to receive medals and plaques in county and state

competitions. The competition that impacted me the most was the Peace Poster contest held by the lions club. This competition is held in schools and youth groups across the globe and encourages children to submit artwork that is a representation of what they believe peace across the globe is. I remember going to receive my award in a banquet for the winners and runner-ups in the state of Oregon and being amazed by all the amazing work submitted by other kids in Oregon. This experience made me realize all the different ways someone can interpret even the simplest of concepts.

My love of art continued to grow and encouraged me to pursue art later in life. To do this I started taking art classes in my first year of college. This is how I ended up making my first self-portrait. It was not something I was particularly proud of at the time, but it had been something that has driven this need to practice this ability and eventually create a piece I am proud of. Today I am currently an art major. To continue my practice of drawing and honing my artistic skill I have taken a beginning life drawing class. This class was my inspiration for following the idea of portraiture. I have found an interest in creating the human form as I see it before me and a readily available model is always one's self. I also feel that I am always going to be changing as I get older especially in my views of myself. By creating a self-portrait I will have a piece that not only depicts me as I am today but will hold a piece of today's self to look back on in the future that will most likely not be able to be recreated.

In the future, I plan to use this observation of self through self-portrait to help further my art practice, especially the artistic skill in the human form. The human form is a very organic form that has multiple planes and sections of tensions and fluidity. Being able to represent this form will greatly add to my skills as an artist no matter what field of career I choose. There are also many paths where it is beneficial to have this skill whether it is digital design, game design, or animation, especially with an increasingly more technological world.

### **Larger Context:**

Self-portraits can be a key piece of work for an artist. It can show skill and development because of how accessible the subject matter is. This is important for an artist who wishes to study that form; however, it is not very useful for an artist who enjoys studying landscapes as there are no human forms in a landscape-focused work. According to Mariana, an artist will make a self-portrait because “the artist is free to draw himself in any style, to represent his psychological/emotional features, in the piece.” There is no one telling an artist how they look or how they should look. It is an exploration of themselves both mentally and physically. Holly Duffurn states, “You can often pick out a self-portrait as they stand out from portraits of other people. They seem to reveal more, there seems to be less distance between the canvas and the person, and the honesty is louder than ever.” Where an artist is making a self-portrait for themselves

to use to learn or for the benefit of others it is a challenge of looking into the self and bearing what is seen to the world.

Many artists use this style of art because of its accessibility. In an interview with Mall galleries, artist David Copley states “I am always around, so if I am short of someone or something to paint I only have to look in the mirror. And for another, self-portraits give me a chance to try a new approach or spend time working something out...” Why not use something that is right in front of you or standing where you are. There are mirrors, cameras, and screens everywhere making it hard to not see yourself at least once a day. An artist must utilize what is on hand for them to use and what is better than something that is always with them? In this same interview artist Susan Lagarde states creating self-portraits is “an opportunity to get to know yourself better through this intense scrutiny – painting my hands has been particularly important. And of course, there's another aspect of painting which lies beyond the visual representation, which can become emotionally charged, often beyond what you expected.” A self-portrait pushes an artist to not just put on paper or canvas what they see in the mirror but to instead dive into who they are as a person. While putting down exactly what they see as an option there lacks an interest in doing this method. To dive in deeper and add a piece of themselves to the work, to add what hides under the surface of the artist, creates interest and emotion.

Artists use self-portraits as a study of the self in more ways than one. According to Hanying Jiang, Xianfei Liang, and Guoying Chen in, *Research on Self-portrait Artistic Creation*, “Realistic self-portraits represented by [Courbet] show a realistic picture of the ideal and realistic image of the world. Artists no longer add themselves to the story of religious paintings or historical themes, but to identify themselves as a person in a secular society, through the real picture depicting to reflect self-existence, to confirm the image and identity.” By choosing to depict themselves in the realism style, artists are admitting to their flaws and strengths in their person. Often in portrait painting, especially historically, the subject of the painting wishes to have all of their most attractive attributes on display while their flaws are masked or completely removed from the work. The self-portrait can be an admission to who they are and what they see in themselves. An artist may also use self-portraits as an expression of who they see themselves as or something that they are passionate about. Erin Lee tells Mall Galleries, “I am fascinated by gender and gendered representations in art... I became aware of the conventional dichotomy throughout Western art of the male artist and female muse and how representations of women were often geared towards the male gaze...” Lee uses her self portraits to break down her idea of a ‘woman’ and piece herself back together on the canvas as a person that is much more than the idea of gender. She is telling a story in every part of herself that she includes in the work. An artist is not only creating themselves for the world to look at, they are putting pieces of themselves into their work.

## **Methods/Process:**

I will be creating a self-portrait as the primary outcome of my creative project. This portrait will depict me, not only physically but also as a figurative representation of who I am beneath the surface. My goal is to dig into what it is that makes a self-portrait a self-portrait and how it will stand out against others. Self-portraits give insight into who the artist is. What they include in their work can have all different interpretations but at its base, it is a work created by the artist, of the artist, that uses the techniques that the artist favors. I plan to dig within myself and see not only the physical attributes but also display bits and pieces of my personality, likes and dislikes, and personal views that may not be easily seen by an outside viewer but to me and those who know me, it will be a visual sample of who I am.

To contextualize my original artwork, I will also use the required reflective section to examine select other artists who have used self-portraits as a method of displaying themselves. One artist that I will use as inspiration as I look into myself is Jenny Saville, a British contemporary artist. In an interview on one of her self-portraits, she talks about her painting process in an interview with Nicholas Cullinan, the director of the National Portrait Gallery, in London, stating “when you build form off that moment—like a nose, for example—it creates a visual shock. It’s a game of contradictions, of building and destroying, or of being conscious and letting go” She uses the form to explore the human body in a raw and almost disturbing way. She emphasizes the parts of the body that others are often ashamed of such as weight and the texture of the skin. I would like to further explore the different methods she employs as a creative process and take inspiration from how she displays the story behind her pieces to help with inspiration for my work.

I will also explore Picasso’s self-portraits in my exploration of the ways one can be represented. Picasso has an amazing array of portraits spanning his lifetime and style changes that showcase the different ways that he has evolved as a painter and a person. Jenny Saville states “The way [Picasso] plays with those contradictions automatically as he’s facing death. He’s terrified of death but at the same time he’s resisting it—the pure act of creation is a resistance to the end.” Picasso’s work has no written definition as to why he is creating it the way he is but through the composition and subject of the piece he has conveyed a story.

By looking into these artists, their methods, and reasoning, I will be able to create a work of my own that is a visual representation of how I see myself and how I wish to present myself to the world. I will take inspiration from Jenny Saville and how with each piece she is adding her commentary on the body and she wishes to break free from how society tells us how to see it. My work will include my personal views that represent me to show a piece of myself just as hers does. I will use Picasso’s method of setting outside

of myself and not just putting down what I see in the mirror on canvas but breaking myself down into pieces and shapes that are separate from me as a person. Picasso's work shows how he no longer sees a man staring back at him but a series of shapes colliding together. While my work will not be a mirror of his I will use his work to step outside of myself to see myself beyond just a human form.

### **Bibliography, with Select Annotations**

Brooke, Xanthe. National Museums Liverpool. September 2006. National Museums Liverpool. Transcript. 8 November 2021. <<https://www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/stories/self-portrait-young-man-rembrandt>>.

Collection, Ruth Borchard. Artsy. 2 June 2021. Web page. 8 September 2021. <[https://www.artsy.net/show/ruth-borchard-collection-the-self-portrait-prize-2021-exhibition?sort=partner\\_show\\_position](https://www.artsy.net/show/ruth-borchard-collection-the-self-portrait-prize-2021-exhibition?sort=partner_show_position)>.

Cullinan, Nicholas, "Jenny Saville: Painting the Self: Interview." Gagosian Quarterly, 1 Dec. 2020, <https://gagosian.com/quarterly/2020/12/01/interview-jenny-saville-painting-self/>.

Custodio, Mariana. Mariana Custodio. 16 July 2020. Blog post. 8 November 2021. <<https://marianacustodio.com/why-do-artists-make-self-portraits-and-what-we-learn-from-them/>>.

Ebert, Grace. Colossal. 2 January 2020. Web Page. 8 November 2021. <<https://www.thisiscolossal.com/2020/01/self-portrait-me/>>.

In the article, 22 Artists Consider the Connection Between Self-Portraits and Identity in ME, Grace Ebert gives the transcript of a conversation between her and the Creator of the Art exhibition ME. This can be useful to me because it gives an artist interpretation of self-portraits and the different ways an artist can create a self-portrait.

Jiang, Hanying, Xianfei Liang, and Guoying Chen. "Research on self-portrait artistic creation." *Advances in Social*, 2017, January 29, 2022

McVeigh, Róisín. Mall Gallery. July 2019. Web Page. 8 November 2021. <<https://www.mallgalleries.org.uk/about-us/blog/art-self-portraiture>>

In the article, The Art of Self-Portraiture, Róisín McVeigh interviews five artists about their views on self-portraits and artists that they admire. I can use it for its brief history of the self-portrait and how it has evolved into what we see today. This article is also useful because it asks why three different artists have created self-portraits and why their interest lies in creating one.

Marder, Lisa. Thought Co. 24 February 2019. DotDash. Web Page. 8 November 2021. <<https://www.thoughtco.com/rembrandts-selfportraits-4153454>>.

In Rembrandt's Self-Portraits, Lisa Marder gives a brief history of Rembrandt's practice of self-portraits. This will be useful to me because this is one of the artists that has inspired me. I can use this background knowledge to not only fuel my writing but my work of art as well. I will be better able to explain the whys and hows as they apply to Rembrandt.

Richman\_Abdou, Kelly. My Modern Met. 7 April 2021. Web Page. 8 November 2021. <<https://mymodernmet.com/famous-self-portraits/>>.

Richman-Abdou, Kelly. My Modern MEt. 15 December 2016. My Modern Met. Web page. 8 November 2021. <<https://mymodernmet.com/pablo-picasso-self-portraits/>>.

In Evolution of Picasso's Iconic Self-Portraits From Age 15 to 90, Kelly Richman-Abdou shows the reader Pablo Picasso's most iconic works throughout his life and gives a brief overview of his history. This will be useful to me as I find Picasso's work to also be very inspiring. I will be able to use this background knowledge in my project to better explain the techniques used as well as a view of other artists' perspectives on art.

(AC)

## **The Effect Social Media has on the Self-Esteem of Youth (3)**

Advisor: Dr. Chehalis Strapp, Behavioral Sciences/Psychology

Student Pronouns: she/her/hers

Thesis/Project Genre(s): Scientific

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### **Abstract:**

The rise of social media has had many effects on our world today. One of the most prevalent, however, is the effect it has had on the self-esteem and mental health of youth. There have been studies surrounding this topic since the conception of sites like MySpace and Facebook, which were two of the earliest versions of social media. In the current study I will examine college-aged participants' self-esteem using the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, 1965. Participants will be separated randomly into control groups where one will be shown a pre-constructed feed that depicts a very average and "normal" life of a young adult. The other feed is constructed to be like that of an influencer, filled with travel content from beautiful places around the world, "body checks" that have essentially no flaws shown, and luxury items (i.e. cars, houses, clothes). Each participant will fill out the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale before and after scrolling through the "feeds", which will indicate the level of effect the pictures had on them. I hypothesize that there will be a greater effect on self-esteem for the group who was shown the influencer feed. Being able to analyze the data collected from this study will help further the knowledge of social media and how it plays such an influential role in the self-esteem of young people. The more information on the subject gathered, the more prepared we as a society are to begin fighting against the negative and self-deprecating effects of social media.

### **Personal Interest:**

I have had an interest in psychology since I had my first experience with therapy. I was 16, and my draw to the subject peaked and has yet to cease, even 4, almost 5, years later. I was helped so much and grew up during my experience with therapy. One of the things I struggled a lot with was comparison. Looking at and taking part in media, whether it be social media, seeing magazine covers in line at the supermarket, or watching tv, I would compare every little thing about me to those people. It was detrimental to my mental health and self-esteem, and I wanted to understand why and do what I could to overcome those feelings. I decided in the summer before my senior year of high school that I would major in psychology, get a graduate degree, and become a therapist. I want to be the person that changed people's lives and especially stop comparing themselves to others. I want to be able to empower people and help them in

their journey to knowing and loving themselves. Once I had realized my passion for therapy, I took the only psychology class that was offered at my tiny farm town high school, and my education in the subject began.

My first taste of helping another and playing a part of their journey was my junior year of high school. I was a part of a new local program set up by Community Counseling Solutions, where I was assigned to a kid in our elementary school to mentor. The kids chosen for this program had behavioral issues, bad home lives, or struggled in school. The girl I was paired with had anger management problems as well as occasional violence towards peers. I was with her for two years because we bonded so well, and the program proved itself to be very helpful for her. Both her teachers and her parents saw a positive change in her after starting to be mentored, and that is still one of the proudest things of my life, to this day. That experience only heightened my interest in therapy and psychology as a whole. I am so grateful I was able to be a part of it.

As a young adult who regularly takes part in social media, I personally know the effect it can have. I am also surrounded by people who spend a lot of time on the internet, and I see how it plays such a big role in their lives. However, I feel as though more times than not, we finish a period of time spent online feeling mentally drained. Whether it's keeping tabs on old friends from high school – “Are they happier than me?” More successful? Prettier? Smarter? – or looking at the grid of an influencer, who seems as though they are living the perfect life, we let these images dictate how we feel about ourselves and our self-esteem. Hopefully going forward in my career, with an expanded mind on the subject of social media and mental health, I can help the next generation of youth navigate their way through this time of their lives.

### **Larger Context:**

The use of social media in the United States has risen exponentially within the generation of youth today. In 2006, it was reported that 11% of the population used social media, while now in 2021, that number has risen to 72% of American adults (Pew Research Center, 2021). This rise of social media usage has had such a tremendous effect throughout its existence. It has helped businesses grow, allowed people from all over the world to meet and connect with each other, and changed the way we communicate. It has even gone as far as impacting big ticket items like the economy and politics. As a society we entered uncharted territory when we consider the generation that grew up knowing only a world where social media played a big role in their lives. There has been research in the past on the positive aspects of social media usage, such as offering new avenues for interpersonal connection and increased perception of social acceptance (Lie et. al., 2016). However, the research on the negative effects of social media is extensive as well. Negative effects such as undermining affective and overall well-being and increased feelings of depression (Verduyn et. al., 2015; Tandoc, E. et. al.,

2015). The most common and popular belief as to why social media plays a role in depression and a worsened well-being, is comparison. It has been found that if an individual dwells on their perceived inferiority through social media standards, they are more likely to show depressive symptoms and have lower overall self-esteem (Robinson et. al., 2019).

A study was done in 2020 which focused on social media and its effects on mental health and self-esteem. The researchers hypothesized that the participants who start off with lower self-esteem will be affected more by social comparison than those that come in with higher self-esteem. Not only that, they argued that those with low self-esteem to begin with will have the greatest reduction in their self-evaluations, mood, and life satisfaction overall (Midgley et. al., 2020). Once the data was collected and analyzed, the researchers found that compared to individuals with high self-esteem, those with low-self esteem made more extreme and upward comparisons (Midgley et. al., 2020). This proves that those with low self-esteem are more susceptible to making more frequent and extreme social comparisons while using social media.

Studies like this have been going on since social media has become so prevalent. We, as a generalized population, need to understand and grasp the severity of what we are participating in on a daily basis. There is a definite need for research in this area because the more we know, the better prepared we are to face the inevitable repercussions social media will have on this younger generation of social media users.

### **Methods/Process:**

For my Research project, participants will be recruited through SONA. This means the potential demographic consists of WOU psychology students, aged 18-22. My ideal sample size to collect data from is around 60 participants. Each student enrolled in a WOU psychology course will be given access to a SONA account which will allow them to participate in my study. I will reach out to peers who are enrolled in psychology courses, asking and encouraging them to take part in my study. In classes I am currently enrolled in, I will make announcements in class when my study is published and ready for data, as well as sending emails to those who are not in the same classes as me. Compensation offered for participation in this study is the opportunity for extra credit earned towards your psychology course. Participants will be presented with a consent form, and if they consent to be a part of the study they will be randomly assigned to a group. No matter the group, each participant will start out by rating their self-esteem using the Rosenberg Self-Esteem test. Both groups will then be shown a series of 10 photos. I have gone through public Instagram accounts to accumulate photos that showcase the same event or type of photo, but they are different in their socioeconomic status and position.

Group 1's photos will be taken from the public social media accounts of Instagram influencers, with 10,000 or more followers. After each photo is shown, the participant will answer two questions by rating their responses to the photo on a Likert Scale ("This photo depicts something I want but do not have" "I compared my own life to what is shown in this photo" , 1- strongly disagree, 2- disagree, 3- neutral, 4- agree, 5- strongly agree).

Group 2's photos will be taken from public Instagram accounts from users who live a more common lifestyle, and have a more grounded and realistic feed than those of the influencers. The photos for Group 2 will be taken from accounts that have 1,000 followers or fewer. For example, Group 1 will see photos from an extravagant and luxurious resort vacation around the world, while Group 2 sees a family photo from a vacation at Great Wolf Lodge. Group 1 will see a photo of people sitting courtside at an NBA game, while Group 2 will see a photo posted about being at the game up in the nosebleeds. The difference between the group's photos stem significantly through socioeconomic status. Social media has always been a place where people go to showcase the most expensive and luxurious aspects of their life. This can snowball into feelings of inadequacy and jealousy from the consumers of that content, most of whom cannot relate to the grandeur depicted on Instagram. The group 2 members will also rate their responses to the photos on a Likert Scale, the same one as previously mentioned. After each group has gone through their set of photos and rated their responses, the participants will fill out the Rosenberg Self-Esteem test again for a final time. Participants will be debriefed and thanked for their participation in the study, and awarded extra credit for their psychology course as compensation.

The data collected will be analyzed and the responses to each control group's photos will be compared to examine patterns of comparison while using social media. I hypothesize that group 1 will report lower scores on the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Test, as well as both groups reporting lower scores after interacting with the photos than before. The questions chosen for the participants to rate on the Likert Scale will ensure that the participant is actively engaging in the study, as well as provide data to analyze. Once I have gone over all of the analyzed data, I will present the results for my PSY 468 class at the end of winter term.

### **Working Bibliography, with Select Annotations**

Charoensukmongkol, Peerayuth, (2018). The impact of social comparison and envy in teenagers: The moderating role of the parent comparing children and in-group competition among friends. *Journal of Child & Family Studies*, 27, pp. 69-79. DOI 10.1007/s10826-017-0872-8

This article was a correlational study as well, and again, I got ideas for measures. This one focuses most on social comparison, which I appreciated since that is

what my project is kind of evolving to. Does comparing ourselves to others take the cake as the biggest reason social media destroys mental health?

Lockwood, P., Kovacheff, C., & Page-Gould, E. (2020). When every day is a high school reunion: Social media comparisons and self-esteem. *American Psychological Association*, 121(2), pp. 285-307. <https://dx.doi.org/10.1037/pspi0000336>

I really liked this one because it was more of an experimental design. One group was assigned to Facebook, and the other to Instagram. It focused the results on the comparisons that go on when we scroll through social media. There were a lot more participants in this study than there will be in mine, but the method section was still very helpful.

Mackson, S. B. & Brochu, P. M. (2019). Instagram: Friend or foe? The application's association with psychological well-being. *New Media & Society*, 21(10), pp. 2160-2182. <https://doi-org.ezproxy.wou.edu/10.1177/1461444819840021>

Ozimek, P. & Bierhoff, H. W. (2020). All my online friends are better than me- Three studies about ability-based comparative social media use, self-esteem, and depressive tendencies. *Behavior & Information Technology*, 39(10), pp. 1110-1123.

Sabik, N. J., Falat, J., & Magagnos, J. (2020). When self-worth depends on social media feedback: Associations with psychological well-being. *Sex Roles*, 82, pp. 411-421. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11199-019-01062-8>

This article did not present an experimental study with a control group, it was correlational research. The reason I liked it was because of the ideas it gave me for measures. For example, I may end up using the self-kindness subscale of the Self-Compassion Scale, developed by Kristin Neff, like they did in this study. I did not know that was a developed and research-supported scale until seeing it in this study, so that is why I saved and am including this link.

Vogel, E. A., Rose, J. P., Roberts, L. R., & Eckles, K. (2014). Social comparison, social media, and self-esteem. *Psychology of Popular Media Culture*, 3(4), pp. 206-222. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/ppm0000047>

Wright, R. R., Schaeffer, C., Mullins, R., & Evans, A. (2020). Comparison of student health and well-being profiles and social media use. *Psi Chi Journal of Psychological Research*, 25, 1, pp. 14-21. <https://doi.org/10.24839/2325-7342.JN25.1.14>

I got some good ideas from this method section, as well as the measures. This focuses mostly on mental health and the ways that social media effects it, finding results that link social media to mental health issues. This was also helpful because of the age group, as it is similar to mine (college aged).

Yang, C., Holden, S. M., & Carter, M. D. K. (2017). Social media social comparison of ability (but not opinion) predicts lower identity clarity: Identity processing style as a mediator. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 47, pp. 2114-2128.

<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10964-017-0801-6>

(CG)

## **To Honor Our Elders: Exploration of Elder Abuse In Nursing Homes (4)**

Advisor: Margaret Manoogian, Behavioral Sciences/Gerontology

Student Pronouns: she/her

Thesis/Project Genre(s): Scholarly/Action Research

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### **Abstract:**

My thesis project will explore the devastating topic of elder abuse in nursing homes. Although high numbers of elder abuse have been reported across the country, there is little research to pinpoint the exact causes of these high incident rates of abuse. My project will create an opportunity for more relevant conversations regarding elder abuse to take place and will hopefully be a call to action for retirement communities to implement better policies to combat occurrences of elder abuse in the facilities. My thesis will include close examinations of the most common types of abuse in nursing homes, followed by an analysis of why these abuses happen. To begin my project, I will contact professional informants from agencies such as Northwest Senior & Disability Services (NWSDS) and the Department of Human Services (DHS) and interview them in order to gain an agency perspective on abuse in long-term care communities. Meanwhile, I will be conducting my own research of existing literature to see what relevant information is already out there. After this foundational research, my plan is to visit a number of different retirement organizations and interview a representative in order to gain a better understanding of what types of policies already exist to combat abuse. I will visit retirement communities with different organizational bureaucracies in order to gauge how different types of organizations either condone or contribute to elder abuse. It is my aim to compile a list of best practices for those living and working in retirement settings in order to prevent abuse from occurring.

### **Personal Interest:**

At the age of 17, I got my first job working as a server in a local retirement home. From my very first day on the job, I fell in love with the atmosphere. Being around older adults put my mind at ease and made my job feel more like a hobby. I was more than willing to take on extra shifts just so that I would be able to keep making new connections with the residents. Pretty quickly, the residents became a second family to me. Before I knew it, I was getting promoted at work to a team leadership position, meaning that I could train to do different jobs around the community. By the age of 20, I had learned the jobs of a server, dishwasher, prep cook, housekeeper, receptionist, and even parts of the manager position. I dedicated so much of my time to my job at the retirement home and fell in love with the environment. When I began my education at

Western Oregon University, I knew that I wanted to enter the Gerontology program and hone the skills I had been learning at work.

As I near the end of my time at WOU, I find reassurance in the fact that I have learned a great deal about my passion, Gerontology. I am enjoying learning about all of the different avenues that my degree in Gerontology will take me down. Since first becoming a server in a retirement home, I have realized that my true passion lies with managing a retirement home. It seems surreal to me that I could spend the rest of my life doing something I am passionate about. I have also felt a strong desire to work with older adults and be an advocate for their underserved population. I am lucky to have found my calling at a young age and to have been given the opportunity to study a subject that I am passionate about.

In the future, I see myself recalling the important information that I have learned during my time here at WOU. If I am to manage a retirement home some day, it will be important to remember that numerous families are putting their trust in me to care for their loved ones. As my parents and grandparents continue to age, I worry about the potential abuse that they might encounter. I hope that my research will spark more conversations regarding elder abuse and potentially fundamentally change how nursing homes across the country think about and deal with abuse. It is my hope that I can make nursing homes a safer place for older adults to age gracefully. That is why it is of the utmost importance that I educate myself on serious topics, such as elder abuse, in order to help protect this vulnerable population.

### **Larger Context:**

Elder abuse is a predominant issue in America. The older population is expanding at an extremely fast rate and the demand for care and nursing homes is skyrocketing. It is projected that “not only will the proportion of older adults continue to increase to as much as 20 % of the total population, but also that there will be an even more dramatic growth in numbers of the “oldest old,” people over age 85” (Barboza et al., 2011). Because older adults are vulnerable and oftentimes are unable to stand up for themselves against any mistreatment, they are seen as easy targets. As our eldest populations continue to outnumber our younger populations, it creates unique issues for our ability to provide for these older adults. With a lack of support and resources, many nursing homes are experiencing growing rates of elder abuse. It is suggested “that as many as 10% of older people experience one or more forms of elder mistreatment” (Pillemer et al., 2021). As the population of older adults steadily grows, so does the need for care. The strain that many nursing homes face regarding the influx of older adults requiring care has contributed to this statistic.

Not only is this issue widespread, but also severely disregarded in society. An alarming number of abuses go unreported every year, making the need for awareness

and stricter policies essential. Many older adults lack the ability to advocate for themselves or are unaware that their rights are being violated in the first place. The Code of Federal Regulations states that those living in retirement facilities “have the right to be free from verbal, sexual, physical, and mental abuse, corporal punishment, and involuntary seclusion” (Bern-Klug & Sabri, 2012). Although these regulations are in place throughout the country, older adults and their family members are often not made aware of these rights when they move into a retirement facility. It is my hope that my findings will help to reduce the occurrences of elder abuse and increase the rates of reporting by opening the door for more conversations to be had about this topic.

### **Methods/Process:**

My thesis project will be based on the knowledge I have gained from my research as well as experiential learning at local retirement communities. I will gather relevant information on what types of abuse are common in nursing homes along with techniques that can be implemented to help be proactive in preventing these occurrences. I plan to meet with professionals and experts to get their opinions on the issue at hand. From them, I will be able to deduce how realistic the techniques found in my research will be in a practical application.

To begin my research, I will meet with different agencies such as DHS and NWSDS to gain an agency perspective on abuse in long-term care settings. The knowledge I gain from these informants will guide the rest of my research and will provide me with the most up-to-date information about what is being done to manage abuse in long-term-care settings at a policy level. My second step will be to examine the most common forms of abuse in retirement communities, including abuse from staff members to the residents as well as resident on resident abuse. I will also look into the rates of abuse found in for-profit versus not-for-profit communities. Once I have explored these considerations, I will shift my focus to identifying the potential root causes of these forms of abuse. Once these causes are determined, I can come up with multiple techniques to help solve these issues in order to prevent the abuse from happening in the first place. In order to test the practicality of these techniques, I will interview representatives from numerous local retirement communities.

During these informal consultations, I will seek to learn more about what policies are currently in place regarding abuse, resident’s rights, and their unique organizational bureaucracy. In order to test the effect organizational bureaucracy has on the rates of abuse in nursing homes, I will reach out to a wide variety of retirement communities to interview, including but not limited to: for-profit organizations, not-for-profit organizations, independent living facilities, assisted living facilities, and memory care facilities.

Once I have concluded these interviews and compiled a list of my particular findings, I will hopefully be able to conclude what the most common types of abuse in nursing homes are, why these abuses occur, and what we can do to prevent them. I will present my findings in the form of a “best practices” handbook. If time allows, I will present my findings to Panorama City, a continuing-care community in Lacey, Washington. I plan to complete a practicum at this site during the Summer of 2022 for my Gerontology major. This will be a great opportunity for me to share my findings with a community close to home.

Although I do not expect my thesis to fundamentally change the way retirement communities across the nation handle abuse, my hope is that I can at least change the practices of a few local retirement facilities, namely the ones I conducted my informal interviews at. No amount of change is too small, especially when dealing with an issue as imminent as elder abuse. If I can even prevent one case of elder abuse, I will consider my thesis successful. The overall end result is to spread awareness about abuse to those living and working in a retirement setting.

### **Working Bibliography, with Select Annotations**

Barboza, G., Griffore, R., Heydrich, L., Oehmke, J., Post, L., Schiamberg, L., Weatherill, R., Zhang, Z. (2011) Elder Abuse in Nursing Homes: An Ecological Perspective, *Journal of Elder Abuse & Neglect*, 23:2, 190-211, DOI: 10.1080/08946566.2011.558798

This article dives into the role stress plays as a risk factor for elder abuse in nursing homes. In the context of caregiving relationships, stress can lead to an increased prevalence of abuse within a long-term care facility. The authors propose an ecological model to provide a framework for informing the future development of effective interventions and policies. An ecological perspective takes into account the way living organisms interact with their environment. I will use this source in the sections where I discuss the root causes of abuse in retirement facilities as well as in the section where I brainstorm potential remedies to this issue.

Mercedes Bern-Klug & Bushra Sabri (2012) Nursing Home Social Services Directors and Elder Abuse Staff Training, *Journal of Gerontological Social Work.*, 55:1, 5-20, DOI: 10.1080/01634372.2011.626016

This study looks into the percentage of nursing homes within the country that provide resident’s rights training. The authors suggest that the most prevalent causes of elder abuse in nursing homes are low staffing levels as well as inadequate training programs. They define a resident's rights as what a resident can expect to receive in regards to respect, services and fees, money, privacy, and medical care. The article also surveys the extent to which nursing home social

services departments are involved in training staff members about the important issues regarding elder abuse. I will use this source in the section where I discuss the root causes of elder abuse and will also use it as a framework for my suggestions about what the best practices for nursing home caregivers should be.

Shinan-Altman, S., & Cohen, M. (2009, July 02). Nursing Aides' Attitudes to Elder Abuse in Nursing Homes: The Effect of Work Stressors and Burnout. Retrieved from <https://academic.oup.com/gerontologist/article/49/5/674/643216>

This article assessed the attitudes of nursing aides' towards the existence of abuse in nursing homes as well as the possible causes of such instances. The causes that are explored within the study examined in this article as demographic variables, work stressors such as role conflict, role ambiguity, and work overload, burnout, and perceived control. The article makes the claim that these issues are caused by the theory of planned behavior, meaning that an individual will behave in accordance with their personal beliefs. The authors conclude that training should be created to address these specific issues and attitudes. I will integrate this source in my section that explores the root causes of elder abuse. I will also take the authors' suggestions into consideration when suggesting best practices for nursing homes.

Mbabazi, S., & Conway, F. (2012). Elder care catastrophe: Rituals of abuse in nursing homes & what you can do about it, by Jason S. Ulsperger & J. David Knottnerus. *Journal of Women & Aging*, 24(2), 169–171.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/08952841.2012.665787>

This article discusses the topic of organizational bureaucracy and the effects of organizational bureaucracy on elder care and elder abuse. They compare and contrast the rituals that are present in profit and non-profit organizations. The authors speak on a number of different types of abuse including emotional abuse in the form of objectification, inadequate compassion, spiritual neglect, and ridicule as well as medical, personal, and verbal abuse. I will likely use this article in my section that discusses the types of abuse found in nursing homes as well as my section regarding the potential causes of these abuses.

Castle, N. G. (2012). Resident-to-resident abuse in nursing homes as reported by nurse aides. *Journal of Elder Abuse & Neglect*, 24(4), 340–356.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/08946566.2012.661685>

Pickering, C. E., Nurenberg, K., & Schiamberg, L. (2017). Recognizing and responding to the “toxic” work environment: Worker Safety, Patient Safety, and abuse/neglect in

nursing homes. *Qualitative Health Research*, 27(12), 1870–1881.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1049732317723889>

Vanderburg, S., Wright, L., Boston, S., & Zimmerman, G. (2010). Maternal child home visiting program improves nursing practice for screening of woman abuse. *Public Health Nursing*, 27(4), 347–352. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1525-1446.2010.00865.x>

Pillemer, K., Burnes, D., & MacNeil, A. (2021, February 11). *Investigating the connection between ageism and elder mistreatment*. Nature News. Retrieved November 27, 2021, from <https://www.nature.com/articles/s43587-021-00032-8?proof=t%2Btarget%3D>.

Eitzen, D. S., Zinn, M. B., & Smith, K. E. (2018). *Social problems*. Boston: Pearson.

(NH)

## **Prison Privatization: Profit Over Rehabilitation (5)**

Advisor: Dr. Evan Shenkin, Sociology Department (pending confirmation)

Student Pronouns: She/Her/Hers

Thesis/Project Genre(s): Scholarly

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### **Abstract:**

The United States only makes up 4.2% of the world population and yet incarcerates 20% of the world's prisoners at a rate higher than any other country in the world. Incarcerating U.S. citizens on a mass scale has shown diminishing returns in regards to crime reduction; This begs the question: Who is mass imprisonment benefiting if not our communities?

Prisons in the U.S. represent a multi-billion dollar industry in which many corporate and government agents have large financial stakes. There is a fundamental conflict of interest between the rehabilitative aims of the justice system and the profit interests of the prison industry. Since their emergence in the 1980's, private prison companies have successfully influenced national prison policy and worked to shape the prison system as a whole to work in their favor. While privately-run prisons only represent about eight percent of the U.S. incarcerated population, the reach of corporate influence in the prison system extends far beyond these institutions because most state and federal prisons still contract with private firms. Because higher incarceration rates produce larger profits, private corrections companies are inherently incentivized to advocate for increased convictions and longer prison sentences which is a major cause of mass incarceration. They succeed in influencing national policy through lobbying and campaign contributions.

The U.S. has a long history of neglecting prisoners' basic needs and failing to create environments that are conducive to rehabilitation and societal reentry. Profit incentives in the prison industry seem to exacerbate these problems as operation costs are cut wherever possible and prisoner well-being is seen as irrelevant to monetary goals. Research has shown that rehabilitative justice models grounded in providing resources and support to individuals convicted of crimes are far more effective at reducing crime and promoting a safer society. The private prison industry imposes major barriers to effective crime prevention.

### **Personal Interest:**

When you grow up in the U.S., the concept of imprisonment is normalized. We are taught that you should follow the law, and if you fail to do so, being locked in a cage for a period of time is the established punishment. I cannot remember a particular

moment in which I began to question this course of logic, but as I have become more educated over the years I have doubted our justice system more and more; I have found that people are far more complex than we make them out to be, yet as a society we maintain a simple approach with how we view crime and punishment. Through my sociology courses especially, I have come to understand the complexities of social deviance and how the root causes of crime often lead back to inequalities of race, class, and gender. These inequalities cause discrepancies in the resources and opportunities granted or denied to certain groups, which in turn leaves large portions of our population vulnerable to the social conditions that tend to generate crime. Viewing crime through this lens made me consider the problematic nature of a black and white justice system that mandates the imprisonment of human beings for widely varying different crimes.

In addition to experiences had in my sociology courses, I encountered moral dilemmas when researching the psychological trauma that prison inmates experience as part of a research project for my Psychology of Trauma class. I discovered how severely trauma can alter someone's brain chemistry— to the point that their judgment and decision making are completely compromised. Prison is a concept we are socialized to accept before we have any information on what we as a society are actually subjecting people to. I would never knowingly approve of the systemic traumatization of prison inmates, but I was made to believe that prison was an inevitable necessity. However, even on a societal level, we have been facing large social movements to reform our criminal justice system and dismantle the systems of racial and class oppression in this country.

Despite not having any personal connections with anyone who has been incarcerated, I feel deeply connected to the issue of incarceration because I want to be a voice for the people society has cast out. With so many things in the world to focus on, it's easy to not care about the suffering of prisoners facing trauma and abuse because they are alienated from mainstream society. However, by doing this we are essentially dooming anyone who enters the justice system to a life of marginalization and inequality. Mass incarceration and the high recidivism rates in the U.S. empirically show that our system is not effective in helping people be rehabilitated or reintegrated into society. I believe the main barriers to truly helping people who have committed crimes lie within the practices of private prison companies whose business models rely on high incarceration rates. Since their emergence, they have shaped the prison system around the maximization of profit which has consequently resulted in an ineffective and harmful carceral state that generates more social problems than it fixes.

### **Larger Context:**

In the 1970's, crime became an issue of great national concern, spurring a crackdown on crime that would lead to unprecedented levels of incarceration. The War on Drugs and new "Tough on Crime" laws resulted in overcrowded prisons, prompting governments to turn to the private sector for solutions. The first private prison company, the Corrections Corporation of America, was established in 1983 claiming that a private firm could "operate more efficiently and thus reduce the costs of holding prisoners" (Mamun et al., 2020, p. 4499). The next several decades would see an exponential rise in prison sentences with the number of inmates in the U.S. going from around 196,000 in 1970, to more than 1.5 million in 2007 (Mulch, 2009). As prisons emerged as one of the fastest-growing industries in the United States, national prison policy increasingly catered to the interests of private corrections corporations largely due to their model legislation and lobbying efforts (Cooper et al., 2016). The overlapping interests of governments and private companies merging to expand the prison industry has come to be widely known as the Prison Industrial Complex (PIC).

Mass incarceration and the state's power to imprison its citizens is justified and maintained by theories of crime prevention that legitimize incarceration as the dominant and most effective strategy. However, studies looking at recidivism rates estimate that roughly 68% of released prisoners are rearrested within three years, 79% within six years, and 83% within nine years (COPP, 2020, p. 781). Research has shown that the crime reduction impact of mass incarceration is minimal, with each additional increase in the incarceration rate being associated with a smaller reduction in crime rates (Stemen, 2017). Many studies actually show prisons having a criminogenic effect due to harsh prison environments generating the social conditions that tend to cause crime in the first place (COPP, 2020). Evidence that incarceration does not consistently reduce crime supports the notion that the justice system is not effectively serving the interests of communities and thus calls into question who stands to benefit from maintaining our exorbitant incarceration levels.

There is a fundamental conflict of interest between the rehabilitative ideals of the justice system and the profit interests of the prison industry. Private prison companies earn profits based on how many prisoners they house and are therefore incentivized to hinder prisoner rehabilitation. If private prisons were truly effective in transforming incarcerated individuals into law abiding citizens they would be running themselves out of business (Bryant, 2021). Private prisons have long histories of understaffing overcrowded prisons and neglecting the basic needs of prisoners while subjecting them to deplorable living conditions (Friedmann, 2016). Private corrections firms over the years have worked to increase their revenues by lobbying for stricter enforcement of laws, longer prison sentences, increased use of private goods and services in all prisons, and an increased use of prison labor (Cooper et al., 2016). The core principle of the PIC

– corporations maximizing profits – is antithetical to the interests of the general public, as mass incarceration benefits the prison industry at the expense of communities.

Research has shown time and again that rehabilitative and/or restorative models of justice are far more effective at reducing crime and maximizing societal benefit (Mulch, 2009; Silva & Samimi, 2018). Imprisonment in the U.S. incarceration system is linked to high rates of PTSD, highlighting the need for trauma-informed corrections, which seeks to aid in the rehabilitation process by fostering a culture of support that recognizes the emotional and behavioral impacts of psychological trauma (Kubiak et al., 2017). Incarcerated individuals have the opportunity to grow psychologically following the trauma of being sentenced to prison but a safe environment along with personal and professional support is crucial if such growth is to take place (Hearn et al., 2020). Setting inmates up for success upon their release from prison is the most effective method of directly reducing crime because it greatly lowers the risk of recidivism. It is crucial we begin to consider alternative models of justice that would stop the perpetuation of crime and incarceration in the U.S. in order to truly create a safer society.

### **Methods/Process:**

In this scholarly project I will explore the impact of private corrections companies and analyze the ways in which the prison industry may impose barriers to prisoner rehabilitation and crime reduction. My goal in writing my thesis is to further understand complexities of mass incarceration and educate my audience on some of the ways corporate entities often undermine the health and safety of communities in order to boost profits. Once I illustrate the failure of the U.S. incarceration system to effectively control crime, I want to provide my audience with alternative ways of thinking about crime that are logically conducive to the reduction of criminal offenders and the well-being of society.

First I will establish that the assumed goals of the U.S. criminal punishment system are to encourage public safety and reduce crime in communities. I will briefly discuss the theoretical approaches that are used to substantiate the current carceral system, including theories of deterrence, incapacitation, and punishment. I want to provide a framework for how imprisonment has been viewed historically in our society as the only system able to control crime. I will then discuss the emergence of private prison companies in the 1980's and the correlation between prison industry growth and the unprecedented levels of mass incarceration that followed.

Once I establish a timeline for when private prisons began to impact the prison system, I will begin my preliminary discussion on the fundamental conflict of interest that exists between private corrections and crime reduction goals. I will support the assertion that excessive levels of imprisonment in the U.S. have not resulted in an

exceptionally safe society, but instead have more often perpetuated crime and recidivism. I will discuss the long history of prisoner neglect and abuse within U.S. prisons, particularly privately owned institutions, and emphasize the failure of U.S. corrections to carry out their intended purpose of reducing crime and making communities safer. Establishing a clear account of the empirical realities of U.S. incarceration will provide a baseline of knowledge for analyzing the ways in which corporate corrections have shaped prison policy and culture over the last several decades.

I will dive deeper into the inherent conflict between profit and punishment by examining how profit incentives for private corrections companies fundamentally encourage the enlargement of the prison population while discouraging prisoner rehabilitation. I will begin my examination of the specific ways in which corporations have influenced national prison policy and legislation over the years while analyzing the damaging impacts their influence has had on communities. I want to establish that whether it be an unintentional outcome of profit-interest, or a calculated move on prison company's parts, the structure of our carceral system works to keep people entrenched in a cycle of trauma, poverty, and crime that is not conducive to the well-being of society. Throughout my discussion I will also address the counter arguments in support of private corrections and provide evidence that the proclaimed benefits of privatization do not outweigh the severe consequences.

After establishing the adverse effects of privatized corrections and retributive justice, I will emphasize the need to reintroduce rehabilitative goals into U.S. prisons and demonstrate why restorative models of justice are both socially and fiscally more beneficial to society. I will rely on sociological research on the use of trauma-informed corrections as well as many studies from prisons in other countries that have integrated restorative justice into their prison models such as the U.K. and Norway. Subtopics I will cover include the importance of staff-prisoner relationships, access to specialized mental health professionals, education and work opportunities, and the best ways to support people upon their release from prison. I will address that, while we are a long way from instituting any major changes to our criminal punishment system, recognizing the inefficiencies of our current carceral state is a crucial first step toward adopting better alternative models. My underlying goal of this research will be to highlight the effectiveness of restorative justice models by juxtaposing the benefits of prisoner rehabilitation with the failures of the prison industry.

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This will be a major resource for me when I dive into the specifics of private firms lobbying the government and drafting model legislation to present to legislatures that directly benefit shareholders of the prison industry. Talks about the specific tactics they use to increase the incarcerated population and maximize revenues.

COPP, J. E. (2020). The Impact of Incarceration on the Risk of Violent Recidivism. *Marquette Law Review*, 103(3), 775–791

This article delves into the different theories of deterrence, which is the envisioned outcome of our current sentencing policies. I will utilize this source in my discussion of how well our systems of deterrence actually work compared to how we expect them to work. Solid evidence for the incarceration experience increases someone's risk for violent recidivism.

DeVeaux, M. (2013). The Trauma of the Incarceration Experience. *Harvard Civil Rights-Civil Liberties Law Review*, 48(2), 257–277

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- A systematic review of six research studies analyzing PTSD outcomes for U.S. prisoners while in prison and post-release. I will utilize this source to show the poor outcomes associated with incarceration and how it can be debilitating once people are released. I will tie this research back into my discussion on how incarceration often only perpetuates crime in individuals.
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(MH)

## **Exploring the Relationship Between Strength and Cardiovascular Capacity (6)**

Advisor: Anna Mahony, Division of Business/Accounting

Student Pronouns: He/Him/His

Thesis/Project Genre(s): Wellness Project

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### **Abstract:**

The relationship between strength and cardiovascular capacity is often counterintuitive. A focus on one will generally lead to a decrease in the other. Crossfit, however, is a sport that requires a balance between strength and cardiovascular endurance. To explore the relationship between these two aspects of fitness, I will undertake a wellness project training plan to explore how best to maximize strength and cardio in training. Because strength and cardio can counteract each other, there has to be a knowledgeable plan in place to increase both at the same time. This project will require outside research that will inform the best practices of my training plan. To implement a research-based training plan I will need to discover the movements and time domains that will produce the most out of my cardiovascular and strength potential before my competition. Will implementing the information of the research into my training benefit the results of my competition? If not, what are the reasons that things didn't go as well as I had hoped? The goal is for this wellness project to give me insight into the relationship between strength and cardiovascular capacity and, subsequently, apply that insight to my training and help me to improve at both aspects. Lastly, my results of the competition should allow me to make some final conclusions about this tricky relationship. This project should be able to shed some light on the relationship between strength and cardiovascular capacity so that they are no longer seen as counterintuitive, but as counterparts instead.

### **Personal Interest:**

Starting at age four I played on my first soccer team. Since then, I have progressed in the sport, playing for many high level teams and eventually in college. The sport of soccer requires an intense amount of cardio exercise, and there is not much strength that is required. Due to this, I would attempt to gain some strength on any break that I could. Over the years, this system proved to be faulty and I discovered that my body was just progressively breaking down and feeling bad. At the end of the soccer season I could barely run at half speed due to the effects of all of the cardio on my body. The strength training I was able to fit in made me feel better but was not enough to rejuvenate my body. Then, after the end of my sophomore year at college, I had had

enough and I stepped away from soccer completely and put all my energy into this thing called CrossFit.

Crossfit is a training style that involves constantly varied movements with constantly varied time domains. This requires that a person, involved in this sport, be decent at both strength and cardio related modalities. I was well aware of CrossFit and had been involved with it for a while at this point, but I wanted to see if I could find a better way to increase my cardio and my strength simultaneously. With all my eggs in the CrossFit basket, I was extremely satisfied with the results after a year. I was still fit cardiovascularly, but my strength numbers seemed to be increasing weekly as well. This led me to think about the possibility of my progress if I continued with this trajectory. To continue my progress, and get the most out of my time, it is vital that I better understand the relationship between strength and cardiovascular endurance.

I have currently been participating in CrossFit, as my main sport, for three years now. The first one and a half years of this time I experienced massive growth in my strength numbers while my cardiovascular capacity stayed consistent. After this time period, though, my strength numbers began to plateau while my cardiovascular capacity began to increase. This is a phenomenon that is common in the sport, and the trick to being competitive is being able to find a way to continue to break through this strength plateau. Now that I am beginning to compete in this sport I need to be able to do this. This makes it vital to understand the relationship between strength and cardio. So, with this project I will research and discover the keys to unlocking the potential of both of these modalities. I then will be able to show off the things that I learned by putting my body to the test in a real CrossFit competition.

With the information that I extract from my research and the data that comes from the results of my training and competition, I should be able to continue to progress in this sport. This new knowledge will give me a competitive advantage because I will not only know the important exercises involved, but I will also understand the science behind them. I am also hoping that this project can be used as a tool for others looking to progress in this sport, or in any other form of physical activity. What will make my project useful is that it will contain scientific research and then a real life test of this information. This will add some life to the data being presented and allow for myself and others to learn from my successes and failures.

### **Larger Context:**

CrossFit is a sport that pairs varied, functional movements with the constraints of varied time domains. The result of this pairing is a sport that requires proficiency in both strength and cardiovascular endurance. Cardiovascular capacity is the measure of how well your body copes with high intensity exercise. For your body to function properly under the stress of high intensity exercise the heart, lungs and muscles are all

stimulated and stressed (Biostrap.com). The key to improving this aspect of fitness is to train these parts of the body so that an increase in intensity doesn't cause them to react in a foreign way. This can be accomplished by tracking your progress through different performance trackers. These include tracking METs and Vo2 max. METs stands for the metabolic equivalents ratio. This ratio compares the volume of oxygen that is used while you are resting with the volume while you are performing a cardiovascular exercise (Biostrap.com). The Vo2 max test measures an individual's maximum oxygen intake capabilities. (Biostrap.com). A decrease in heart rate during either of these tests can be a measure of an increase in cardiovascular capacity.

[\(https://biostrap.com/blog/cardiovascular-endurance/\)](https://biostrap.com/blog/cardiovascular-endurance/)

The two components of strength are total strength output and muscular endurance. These two components are trained in different ways. Muscular endurance is trained by higher repetition schemes which range from 12 and beyond. Total strength output is trained by repetition schemes of 12 and lower, and heavier weight. Both of these training techniques can build muscle, but training with heavier weight better prepares your nervous system to send signals to your muscles and brain (Science Daily). In order to give your muscles both capabilities, strength training should include a mixture of both repetition ranges.

[\(https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2017/07/170710091652.htm\)](https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2017/07/170710091652.htm)

Because both strength and cardiovascular capacity are required for maximal physical preparedness, can they be increased at the same time? A study was done in 1980 by an exercise scientist named RC Hickson that put this question to the test (Issaonline.com). Three groups were tested, where one group performed only strength exercises, another performed a mix of cardio and strength exercises, and the last group only performed cardio exercises. After 6 months the muscle mass and cardiovascular capacity of these three test groups was measured. After the data was collected, the results showed that the group that performed only strength exercises portrayed a clear advantage in muscle mass at the end of the 6 months. The group that performed only cardiovascular exercises experienced a clear cardiovascular advantage over the group that only trained with strength exercises. The interesting part of this study came from the group that performed a mixture of both types of exercises. Their cardiovascular capacity was measured to be just as good as the group that only performed cardiovascular exercises. Along with this, even though their muscle mass was not as significant as the group that only trained their strength, each of the members of this group still experienced muscle growth (Issaonline.com). These results demonstrate that it is indeed possible to train strength and cardiovascular endurance simultaneously. It is much easier to train these physical modalities separately, but a finely tuned training plan can create a more well rounded athlete.

<https://www.issaonline.com/blog/index.cfm/2016/do-cardio-and-strength-training-actually-work-against-each-other>

Undergoing a training plan that trains strength and cardiovascular endurance simultaneously is extremely difficult, but there are athletes that have done it and competed at the highest level. These athletes include Jason Khalipa, Hunter McIntire, and Mat Frasure. Jason Khalipa and Mat Frasure both started out as predominantly strength athletes. To fix their cardio weaknesses, they both colluded with a cardio coach named Chris Hinshaw who has a background in marathon running (Morning Chalkup). Fraser and Khalipa eventually accumulated six CrossFit Games gold medals. Hunter McIntyre, on the other hand, started off as an obstacle course racer which is predominately a cardiovascular sport. As he began to transition to CrossFit and Hyrox, he changed his training so that he would train cardio and strength in cycles. He managed to become successful in CrossFit and Hyrox, while continuing to set records in running.

### **Methods/Process:**

My project will be an incorporation of both exercise science research and a personal test of this research. The combination of these two aspects will create a wellness project that will provide me, and readers, with data on the relationship between strength and cardiovascular capacity. I will be gathering research on the science behind both cardiovascular capacity and strength and how the processes of the body affect these two modalities. This information will be incorporated into my training plan where I will attempt to increase both strength and cardiovascular capacity. I will be able to test the results of my training in a real CrossFit competition where I will be able to extract comparative data from my results.

To create this project I will need to begin with providing a base of knowledge about the relationship between strength and cardiovascular capacity. This will allow me, and readers, to better understand the internal processes that are involved in my experiment. This research will involve facts and data, but also examples of individuals who have been successful in implementing both strength and cardio competitively. At the moment, I plan on including Mat Fraser, Jason Khalipa, and Hunter Macintyre as these examples. Each of these individuals have proven mastery in the fields of both strength and cardiovascular capacity. The journeys of these individuals will provide good information for me to incorporate in my test, but their stories will not be the focus of this project. The data from my research will be used to help shape my personal experiment.

Once I have a base of information on this relationship, I will begin to create and undergo my training plan. This training plan will include daily workouts, whose exercises will be focused on increasing my strength and cardiovascular capacity

simultaneously. Beginning on December 1, 2021, these workouts will be put into a table with dates and observations that I find throughout. The data in the table will be a summary of my work from December all the way to the competition on February 24, 2022. I won't add in every exercise and workout because that would be an extensive amount of information over 3 months. The information in the table will be the workouts and exercises that are directly related to my research. To create my training plan I will use the information that I acquire from my research, and I will also be working with a coach who will have some say in the workouts that I do.

My training will lead me into my competition which will be the true test of my strength and cardiovascular capacity. This competition is called the CrossFit Open and is worldwide in scope. The top ten percent will move on to the quarterfinals, the top ten percent of this group will move to the semifinals and the top five from the semifinals will move on to the CrossFit Games. This competition will take place on February 24, 2022 and will last five days. Last year I made it to the quarterfinals and so that will be the baseline of success that I will base my results off of this year. To track the data and my observations, I will create another table that presents the statistics and my observations that come from the different workouts of this competition. The statistics will include things like times and weight, and my observations will shed some light on the reasons for these times and weights and how I personally feel about them.

Once my research, training and the competition have all come to an end, there will be enough information and data gathered so that conclusions can be made. This is a personal experiment, so there isn't any certainty on what my results will be. There is a chance that my personal data will perfectly align with my research, but there is also a very real chance that my results will contradict my research in some areas. No matter what happens, I will be given the opportunity to reflect on every aspect of my project. This will involve critiques to my execution of my training as well as highlighting areas which were executed well. Along with this, there will have to be critiques to my research and highlights of areas that proved to be valuable.

### **Bibliography with Select Annotations**

1. "Why Strength Depends on More than Muscle." *ScienceDaily*, ScienceDaily, 10 July 2017, <https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2017/07/170710091652.htm>.

This source, from the news site Science Daily, explains the science behind the increase of muscle mass and strength. From an outside perspective, it seems apparent that an increase in strength would be the direct result from training a muscle group to lift heavier loads. This article agrees with this but then explains why training your nervous system is just as important. When you lift weights motor neurons send electrical signals to the brain, and training this system to be more efficient can increase strength. This article will give me a better grasp of the

internal functions that are involved in building strength. This will hopefully give me some insight on if I have been overlooking the training of my nervous system. The more aspects involved in building strength, the more likely I will be able to incorporate a successful strength program.

2. Marty, Erika. "Cardiovascular Endurance: What It Is and How You Can Improve It." *Biostrap*, 20 Aug. 2020, <https://biostrap.com/blog/cardiovascular-endurance/>.

This source, from the fitness company Biostrap, first defines cardiovascular capacity, and then goes on to explain how to measure it and improve it scientifically. The definition goes into explaining the different parts of the body that are active, such as the heart, lungs, and different muscle groups. Less obviously, this article also explains the importance of oxygenated blood in your body's ability to endure cardiovascular activities. I can use the part of this article that explains how to track your cardiovascular output to find ways to track results of my training. Some of the ways that are listed in this article are MET's and Vo2 max. Lastly, the most important part of this article will be the section where it explains how to increase cardiovascular capacity. This part of the article explains how cardiovascular capacity can be increased through weight training and other purely cardiovascular activities. This will hopefully give me a better understanding of some ways that I can effectively train my cardiovascular capacity.

3. "Do Cardio and Strength Training Work against Each Other?" *ISSA*, <https://www.issaonline.com/blog/index.cfm/2016/do-cardio-and-strength-training-actually-work-against-each-other>.

In this article, by the personal training company ISSA, it starts off by asking the question, "Do strength and cardio work against each other?". To demonstrate this dilemma a test was done where one group performed only strength exercises, another a mix of both strength and cardio, and lastly a group that just performed cardio. The results of this demonstrated that the group performing only strength had a major advantage in strength by the end. The surprising part of the study was that the group performing concurrent exercises performed just as well cardiovascularly as the group who only performed cardio exercises. This is great news for my project because it means that I should be able to increase both cardiovascular capacity and strength simultaneously. The article then goes on to give scientific data from 21 studies on concurrent training. The next section provides advice on how to apply the results of the data from the 21 studies. This information will be vital for me to incorporate into my training plan.

If I can learn from the successes and failures of other, similar, studies, then I can be already ahead of schedule before I even start my test.

4. “Exclusive: Chris Hinshaw Pulls Back the Curtain on Fraser's Aerobic Development.” *Morning Chalk Up*, 12 Jan. 2021, <https://morningchalkup.com/2020/12/30/exclusive-chris-hinshaw-pulls-back-t-he-curtain-on-frasers-aerobic-development/>.

This article, by the CrossFit news site Morning Chalkup, gives some insight into the process of Chris Hinshaw. Chris Hinshaw is the most famous aerobic coach in the CrossFit world and has successfully increased the aerobic capacity of a list of the best Crossfit athletes. Since he coaches CrossFit athletes, he is aware that he has to think about strength as well as cardio when he is working with someone. This makes his methods very applicable to my project. In this article it summarizes his time working with Mat Fraser, who is the best, male Crossfit competitor of all time. During his time with Fraser, he taught him how to strengthen his breathing muscles, which are muscles that are often underdeveloped in stronger athletes. Learning how to train these muscles, such as the intercostal and diaphragm muscles, will be important in my cardio training. It will also be valuable to see the type of cardio training that the best, male CrossFitter in the world utilized. This article also gives the reasons why the training was so successful which will be important for me to understand.

5. “Former Crossfit Champion Jason Khalipa Shares Secrets of His Success.” *Stack*, 16 June 2021, <https://www.stack.com/a/former-crossfit-champion-jason-khalipa-shares-secrets-of-his-success/>.
6.  Why YOU SHOULD do CrossFit to Build Muscle - Science Explained (Jeff N... YouTube video of the science behind building muscle using CrossFit.
7. “OCR Champion Hunter McIntyre Shares His Training and Diet.” *BarBend*, 12 May 2020, <https://barbend.com/hunter-mcintyre-interview/>.
8. *CrossFit*. [https://www.crossfit.com/cf-seminars/CertRefs/CF\\_Manual\\_v4.pdf](https://www.crossfit.com/cf-seminars/CertRefs/CF_Manual_v4.pdf).

(DK)

## **The Controversies within the LGBT Community Towards Recently Popularized Sexual Identities (7)**

Advisor: Prof. CM Hall, Co-Project Director for DeafBlind Interpreting

Student Pronouns: She/Her/Hers

Thesis/Project Genre(s): Scholarly

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### **Abstract:**

Since the legalization of same-sex marriage within the United States in 2015 there has been a paradigm shift in views from the LGBT community towards the new wave of popularized sexualities. The generational gap between older members of the community and the newer members has in turn caused a divide within the overall views and beliefs of the community as a whole. This divide has caused debate over many topics within the LGBT community, ranging from the identifying acronym to issues over non-family-friendly content being normalized within the community. One of the biggest controversies currently is the acceptance of hyper-specific sexual identities that are new concepts to majority of people and are beginning to become more common place with the newer LGBT members.

This paper will examine the controversies within the LGBT community towards the controversies about the spectrum of sexualities that have recently emerged. I will evaluate the extent of the discourse taking place with the community, seeking to determine whether it is due to factors such as the generational gap, internalized homophobia, or something else. Then I will use the evidence I have found from my sources to attempt to explain the main factors behind the emergence of these sexual identities and these differing opinions within the LGBT community. At the end of my paper I hope to better understand and explain why these sexual identities emerged at the time in which they have, why the communities or the general public view them in a specific way, and how to proceed from that point on.

### **Personal Interest:**

Middle school for me was a key point in my life because it is when I first started to discover who I really was as a person, including my sexual identity. By the time I was in seventh grade I had begun to build a connection with the LGBT community, mostly online due to living in a small town with a very little queer presence. The discoveries I made and the people I met within the community changed my life and my perceptions of my own identity greatly in a beautiful and beneficial way. As I got older, though, I truly began to notice how divided the community was, which surprised me. Some people held heavily contrasting opinions of how the community should look or function,

and that divide left me with multiple questions. I also began to notice the emergence of new identities during my teenage years that were once barely mentioned and unknown to become keystone sexual identities. This emergence resulted in more questions and more disagreements within the community and as a result left me wondering what the future of the LGBT community would look like.

During my time at college I had started to unconsciously separate myself from the LGBT community, I felt as if the community I once loved had changed so dramatically that I no longer felt as if I had a place to belong within it. The present discourse seemed to take over every favorable quality of being a part of the community, with constant arguing and fighting over how the community should look and its place within society as a whole. At first I felt as if something was wrong with me, that I did not deserve to belong among the community unless I prioritize my sexual identity above all else, which is something that is personally very uncomfortable for me to do. I still long for the acceptance and connections that I know is the main purpose of the LGBT community, but I feel that no matter where I look there is always some kind of discourse within these queer groups that I dislike.

I am unsure of any future connection between me and the LGBT community at this time, I want to find my place back within it, but only this time getting to be a valid part of it as I am, not having to change my beliefs or the way I choose to live my life as a closeted bisexual woman. It took me a long time to come to terms with who I really was and I don't want to be told by others that it is wrong, whether that be straight society or the gay community. I plan to attend law school and become a lawyer in the future with the goal of helping promote social justice within the legal system and our society, I believe that this thesis is a good connection to the field of work that I want to do in the future through its examination of reactions within communities and being able to adequately explain the issues and controversies that these groups are facing.

### **Larger Context:**

Throughout recent decades, our societal views towards the understanding of the fluidity of human sexuality has changed drastically. In the United States, within the last 20 years alone, we have witnessed a completely altered perception and public acknowledgment towards the LGBT community. Policies such as Don't Ask Don't Tell, which barred any openly queer individuals from discrimination in the military, helped spur societal shifts in attitude. Eventually, the Supreme Court struck down *United States v. Windsor*, ruling that same-sex marriage was legal in all fifty states. Glenda M. Russell states that, "Only 30 years ago the American medical and psychological establishments decided that homosexuality was not a mental illness, and less than 35 years ago the modern "gay rights" movement was inaugurated at Stonewall." The time

frame in which the shift in public acceptance of gay rights progressed was relatively quick and happened alongside the emergence of the twenty-first century.

The recent progress made toward the equality of gay individuals has been momentous to members of the LGBT community, guaranteeing them the same rights as straight individuals. But along with the changes happening within the public's perception toward homosexuals there were also changes happening within the gay community itself. As Carla Moniero states, "although these categories [lesbian, gay, and bisexual] continue to be widely used, sexual orientation does not always appear in such definable categories and, instead, occurs on a continuum." Changes in identification and labels have always been important to the LGBT community, and recently there has been an influx in new identities popularized by mostly younger queer individuals. Another byproduct of changes within sexual identity labels has been a new wave of redefinition of previously held criteria for sexualities, such as bisexuality. There has been some discourse within the LGBT community of whether the definition of bisexuality should be the attraction for two or more genders or attraction to only two genders.

Many members of the LGBT community have vocalized their support and gratitude towards this shift in previously held notions of how the gay community should look and function, but there are still a number of members who take issue with these changes. Hopefully, this thesis will be able to evaluate the views and controversies towards these new shifts within the LGBT community and help expand the reasons why these new sexualities have emerged. The LGBT community will always have members who disagree with the way in which the community should be led, but by having a better understanding of how we got to where we currently are, we could possibly reach a mutually beneficial relationship between differing opinions.

### **Methods/Process:**

In this thesis I plan on exploring differing views expressed by members of the LGBT community towards the recent shifts in structure and beliefs within the community – specifically targeting the discourse surrounding recently emergent sexual identities. I plan to establish these beliefs by using articles which survey collections of community members' opinions. I will not be conducting my own original surveys or interviews; instead, I will be undertaking qualitative historical research to trace these shifting attitudes. From there, I will explore the historical reasons for why this shift in understanding of sexual identities has taken place.

After focusing on this aspect of the thesis, I will then move on to exploring the reasons why some gay community members take issue with this shift. I plan to explore topics such as the generational gap within members of the LGBT community and the presence of internalized homophobia to see if one of these reasons, or possibly some form of mixture or other factors, could be the cause of these differing values. I plan on

using two articles I have found, “The Gay Generation Gap: Communicating Across the LGBT Generational Divide” and “The Evolution of Aging With Pride—National Health, Aging, and Sexuality/Gender Study: Illuminating the Iridescent Life Course of LGBTQ Adults Aged 80 Years and Older in the United States” as information on the generational gap within the community in order to have a better understanding and proper amount of information to come to a conclusion on whether the generational gap is the leading aspect to the current division of attitude towards the use of hyper specific sexuality labels.

Then, I will evaluate the data I have collected in order to explain the most influential/main factors behind the emergence of the new multiple hyperspecific sexual identities. I will then apply that information and make an hypothesis on what I believe the future of the community and our understanding of sexuality might look like in the next few decades if the current mindset of community members is still similar. I will also be able to come to an evidence-based conclusion on how the overall views of the LGBT community and the views of the overall public might also look in the next decade as a result of a better understanding of the influence of labeling and grouping specific sexual identities.

### **Working Bibliography, with Select Annotations**

1. Russell, Glenda M. and Bohan, Janis S. December 2005 “The Gay Generation Gap: Communicating Across the LGBT Generational Divide” Vol 8. Issue 1.  
[http://library.gayrepublic.org/0005/EN/Gay\\_generation\\_gap.pdf](http://library.gayrepublic.org/0005/EN/Gay_generation_gap.pdf)

This article discusses the social change and cross generational communication taking place within the gay community within the last two decades and the effect that has happened as a result of it. I plan to use this article to quote statistical data that collected information about the beliefs and traditions shared between specific age groups within the LGBT community towards topics such as, “exhaustive categories of sexual orientation identity” and the boundaries that titles play within labeling one’s sexual identity.

2. Levin, Dan. June 2019 “The Human Experience is Infinite” The New York Times.  
<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2019/06/28/us/pride-identity.html?action=click&contentCollection=New%20York&region=Footer&module=WhatsNext&version=WhatsNext&contentID=WhatsNext&moduleDetail=undefined&pgtype=Multimedia>

3. Ruberg, Bonnie and Ruelos, Spencer. June 2020 “Data for queer lives: How LGBTQ gender and sexuality identities challenge norms of demographics” Vol 7. Issue 1.

<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/2053951720933286>

This text discusses the issues that reside in demographic studies towards the LGBT community and queer individuals due to the shift in these demographic’s understandings of their sexual identities over time. I plan to use certain aspects and findings in this article to help me find information and data collections of the changes of views centered around gender fluidity and the spectrum of sexualities within the demographics of the gay community.

4. Hatchel, Tyler, Subrahmanyam, Kaveri, and Birkett, Michelle. 2017 “The Digital Development of LGBTQ Youth: Identity, Sexuality, and Intimacy”  
<https://www.igi-global.com/chapter/the-digital-development-of-lgbtq-youth/173154>
5. Goldsen, Karen Fredriksen. April 2019 “The Evolution of Aging With Pride—National Health, Aging, and Sexuality/Gender Study: Illuminating the Iridescent Life Course of LGBTQ Adults Aged 80 Years and Older in the United States” <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0091415019837591>
6. Schmitz, Rachel M, Tyler, Kimberly A. 2018 “Life has actually become more clear: An examination of resilience among LGBTQ young adults” Vol 22. Issue 4.  
[https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/1363460718770451?casa\\_token=FKWHsbadTIAAAAAA%3A8aygs-5-XKuWl7IZ32ZwEGJbIA2\\_x4MGoY65q5eo8gglPnTCA-cXcrmZJ86fw8LgeLUdltMn3RlMCw](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/1363460718770451?casa_token=FKWHsbadTIAAAAAA%3A8aygs-5-XKuWl7IZ32ZwEGJbIA2_x4MGoY65q5eo8gglPnTCA-cXcrmZJ86fw8LgeLUdltMn3RlMCw)
7. Green, Adam Isaiah. 2002 “Gay but Not Queer: Toward a Post-Queer Study of Sexuality.” *Theory and Society*, Vol. 31, Issue 4. pp. 521–45  
[https://www.jstor.org/stable/3108514?casa\\_token=-HG\\_SF2oRRcAAAAA%3A7eHH8UBz\\_a9tn48IXaLIMJ2Vjx5YON-vfO7HO9ViBmZLyGEmfdoXONlh\\_oR6m\\_AKdNcXXopg5zka9dz-cjkcJS2bXv3PopbEuPTKgMJbJzfYlmgWug8J&seq=1#metadata info tab contents](https://www.jstor.org/stable/3108514?casa_token=-HG_SF2oRRcAAAAA%3A7eHH8UBz_a9tn48IXaLIMJ2Vjx5YON-vfO7HO9ViBmZLyGEmfdoXONlh_oR6m_AKdNcXXopg5zka9dz-cjkcJS2bXv3PopbEuPTKgMJbJzfYlmgWug8J&seq=1#metadata%20info%20tab%20contents)
8. Herek, Gregory M. 2004 “Beyond “Homophobia”: Thinking about sexual prejudice and stigma in the twenty-first century” *Sex Res Soc Policy* 1, 6–24  
<https://link.springer.com/article/10.1525/srsp.2004.1.2.6>

This text discusses the issue of homophobia and the problem of antigay prejudice and stigma, as well as touching on the topic of internalized homophobia within the LGBT community. For my paper, I plan to use this article while comparing the views of the general population and also of the LGBT community towards the

changes made in ideals toward sexual identities and how homophobia might be a reason behind those views.

9. Formby, Eleanor. 2012 “Solidarity but not similarity? LGBT communities in the twenty-first century”

[http://shura.shu.ac.uk/6528/1/LGBT\\_communities\\_final\\_report\\_Nov2012.pdf](http://shura.shu.ac.uk/6528/1/LGBT_communities_final_report_Nov2012.pdf)

This article is the product of a study which was conducted to examine understandings and experiences of LGBT communities, and assess implications for LGBT health and wellbeing. The study had two elements: first to bring together existing literature from a range of subject disciplines and second to consult with a range of LGBT people via an interactive website, short online survey, and a series of in-depth interviews and discussion groups. I plan to use this study as statistical evidence when evaluating views on, and experiences of the LGBT community and also information towards the terminology I use in my paper.

(SM)

## **Less Managers, More Leaders (8)**

Advisor: Prof. William Armstrong, Health & Exercise Science (pending confirmation)

Student Pronouns: He/ Him

Thesis/Project Genre(s): Leadership Portfolio

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### **Abstract:**

There are thousands of books and articles claiming to have the answers to the correct paths of leadership. My goal is to create a leadership portfolio that models what I have experienced, and have learned from others, to be the best leadership qualities for business. I will compile and read five books, some of which are described below. I will focus on the factors of leadership I have learned to be most important, including decisiveness, resilience, model leadership, and connection with others. Besides these core texts, I have gained insight from experience and also from discussing leadership values with people at my jobs.

The end result will be a leadership portfolio project that touches upon each of these four main qualities of leadership. I picked these four qualities not because they make the most profit, but because they produce the best quality of operation. Whether the quality pertains to the employees, the atmosphere, the clients, or myself as one of the physical therapists, I plan to produce a leadership track that will facilitate, ideally, the blossoming of a genuinely healthy business model. The scope of profit has become a main influencer on business and leadership development, but with the scope shifted to create a quality work and physical therapy environment, I plan on improving the patients' and workers' experience.

### **Personal Interest:**

My interest in leadership started during my first restaurant job when I turned 16 years old. I was hired on as a line cook at Dory Cove and worked there for a span of three years. The leaders of that establishment were crafting me into someone who would have the capability to manage the entire restaurant. This restaurant was the first time I was given responsibility and power in a way that allowed me to confidently execute orders and take control of a team of people assigned to me.

I currently work at a Momiji sushi restaurant and at a physical therapy clinic that is owned by one person, both of which contain model leadership in the top positions of the company. The second in command of the Momiji chain has shown me key characteristics involving resilience, becoming a model worker in the eyes of his employees, along with the importance of decisiveness. In terms of the physical therapy clinic, it is run by a 56-year-old woman who opened her clinic at the age of 53. This is

admirable in itself, because of the fact that she was nearing retirement age and decided to keep pushing herself to open a clinic that aligns with how she thinks healthcare should be provided. In the world of physical therapy, I have noticed that people are often emotionally fragile. After watching how Hele'n, the physical therapist, works, I realized that patients require a compassionate, yet decisive, physical therapist as their role model. Patients ask a variety of questions throughout their visit in our clinic. In order to properly lead patients down the correct path of healing, a wide and solidified foundational knowledge is necessary in order to retain their trust.

My personal experience with implementing my learned methods for leading an individual was displayed when I physically trained my co-worker, Derek. Derek explained to me that he was showing signs of someone who is developing type two diabetes and asked if I could, "Help him lose weight". During this time I had to keep him motivated and teach him everything he knew about weight lifting. This scenario was the first time that I was required to use my leadership skills without any sort of supervision, and I was able to implement everything I had learned in order to reach a set goal. But of course, there are always aspects to improve upon.

By using my pre-clinical, exercise science bachelor of science degree, I plan on continuing my education to a school with a doctor of physical therapy program after my undergraduate. Since physical therapy is my main career path, I would like to continue to challenge myself once I reach my goal and open up a practice of my own. This project will help provide an explanation for leadership qualities that I have experienced or some that I have never considered. I plan to discover a few overlooked leadership qualities by reading the books I have chosen in order to tie this new knowledge in with self reflection of my previous experiences as a leader. By doing this I hope to create a sustainable leadership model that will give others and myself a helpful tool as well as provide guidance on how to treat employees and clients as people and not as a profit.

### **Larger Context:**

While some companies focus solely on profits, it has been shown that profits increase more in the long-term when there is a satisfied workforce. A satisfied workforce will come from a satisfying leader. This synopsis is made in the book *Good to Great: Why Some Companies Make the Leap... and Others Don't*. This book goes in-depth and analyzes what the leaders of 11 elite companies (over the course of 15 years) were focused on and compares them to leaders and plans of less successful, mirror companies during that same 15 year period. A notable finding included hiring the right, hardworking employees and treating them as such, with much deserved compensation. One executive of a steel mill practicing this method said, "We hire five, work them like 10, and pay them like eight." (51) This is a unique way to provide a beneficial relationship between the leader and the employees. There is a mutual respect that the

workers are being recognized for their hard work, which also rewards the company and makes the employees want to strive for bigger checks at the end of each payday. Through the analysis of even the most profitable and financially elite companies, hopefully readers will realize that the focus on profits is not what got the elite to this level of success.

There are many business people looking to make a name for themselves, but as seen in the video *The Rarest Commodity Is Leadership without Ego*, there are other ways to get your name out in the open than being the most profitable person on the block. This is seen being rewarded in the video where Bob Davids, a leader of 6 different companies, described that his most effective strategy as a leader was being willing and capable of doing even the lowest paid employee's job. He wasn't repulsed by the idea of getting into the muddy environments of construction sites where he was able to help people build the foundation for a new building. This intervening allowed for Davids to build a personal connection with his team; eventually he showed the entire company that he is willing to lead by example and also that he understands what it is like to work from the ground up.

A lot of great points for a leader building connections with their followers can be seen in *How to Make Friends and Influence People*. Dale Carnegie shares an understanding of how people mentally operate in order for others to use this information to soothe areas of confrontation, misunderstanding, or many social possibilities that could be detrimental to relationships. Carnegie has unique takes on influencing people such as, "The only way to influence people is to talk in terms of what the other person wants." He provides unique stories behind each of these ideas followed by convincing evidence to support each theory. Carnegie gives the power for understanding how people will feel when they are talked to in certain ways. An effective leader could use these theories to successfully bond with their staff and clients alike.

The audience for my project will primarily consist of people who want to be considerate leaders themselves. Additionally, it will interest those who want to open their own business and be able to effectively lead a group of individuals while creating a meaningful connection focused on making both their employees and their own lives better. By guiding individuals to better understand and practice just four important traits of leading, I hope that they will be able to guide their own people to a more enjoyable work and customer experience.

### **Methods/Process:**

As outlined by the Honors Committee, Leadership Portfolio projects must consist of a literature review (min. 5 key sources); a discussion of personal leadership experiences during the student's time at WOU; and a reflection section that forecasts

towards the future, drawing connections between the literature review and the experiential section.

To begin this leadership portfolio, I will first read the five books I have hand-picked, seeking to define best practices in my four chosen main ideas of leadership. My first section will involve a literary review, where I will survey the key contributions of my core texts. I plan to discuss each book in regards to decisiveness, resilience, model leadership, and connection. I will also be providing a rationale for why each book was chosen. For the video, I will include any relevant information and explain how it coincided with some of the information from the literature.

Next, I will discuss and apply these four leadership qualities to my own experiences. I will include my experiences in becoming a sous chef at a seafood restaurant; my training experience in becoming a head server at a sushi restaurant; my self-taught experience with physically training someone to the loss of 40 lbs in order to prevent the development of type II diabetes; and my current training of becoming a physical therapist in my job as a PT aide. Additionally, I will be including traits that I've been told of, or noticed, by my mentors along the way. These mentors include Ruben Fernandez and Jesus Alvarado-Juarez who taught me that the initiation of leadership should not be limited by my age; Rafael Rivera who taught me the importance of being able to lead with an iron fist as well as a forgiving heart; Hele'n Akerberg-Evans who taught me how to lead with kindness and exemplary influence; and Derek Villalobos who taught me from the perspective of a client how to truly understand what my patients are going through.

By tying in what I have learned from these mentors as well as what I've read from the books and seen in the video, I will then finish the project with a reflective section about my professional future. I want to implement the four leadership qualities into my career as a physical therapist and for my future clients. At a physical therapy clinic, there is a lot of emotional recovery that comes along with healing from physical damage. It is important that as a physical therapist I will be able to handle the emotional burden that comes along with the operation and instruction of such an institution. This project is correlated heavily with my future career, but even on a non-professional level, I plan on being a leader for my entire life.

### **Working Bibliography, with Select Annotations**

Carnegie, Dale. *How to Win Friends and Influence People*. The World's Work, 1913.

This book is great for understanding, not only how other's minds work, but how your mind works when communicating with others. There are multiple great points in this book that I have experienced before, but had never been able to identify and label these experiences in a definitive sense. This book builds off of

the simplest tasks such as effective study habits, gives life tips, and teaches you how to be engaging when talking with a group of people or a person, no matter the situation. It not only gives real life accounts and examples of these strategies working, but also explains how to use these skills in specific future situations. Additionally, it will give you what to look for in order to properly execute these strategies in common or uncommon scenarios. This book will help develop my connection to the clients and workers point and give great feedback as well as deeper knowledge on this segment.

Chouinard, Yvon. *Let My People Go Surfing*. PENGUIN PAPERBACKS, 2006.

Collins, James C. *Good to Great: Why Some Companies Make the Leap ... and Others Don't*, 2009.

This book contains at least one important point that I really want to expand on. The exact term is “level 5 leadership”. This is in regards to leaders who display characteristics that make them elite in their position. Characteristics such as how to handle personal humility, organization, and the insatiable desire to be at the top are all touched upon and broken down. These are just a couple of the points broken down under the level 5 leadership category, but I am interested to see what else can be analyzed from this. Collins and his team analyzed 11 elite companies that were able to exceed the industry’s average business return by threefold in a 15- year span. They then breakdown how other companies in similar situations at the time of development didn’t succeed as well. This is a unique comparison between companies, and being able to see the side-by-side distinctions surely gave Collins insight on what produces great leaders.

Goggins, David. *Can't Hurt Me: Master Your Mind and Defy the Odds*. Lioncrest Publishing, 2020.

This book is the epitomized version of my point, be a model leader. David Goggins being named “the toughest man on Earth” was not an accident, he has lived through many abnormally tough life events and has come out on top in every scenario. He is the man who has broken the most number of pull-ups in 24 hours, ran over 60 ultra-marathon races, setting course records on multiple occasions, and is the only person to have gone through Navy SEAL hell week three times as well as complete Army Ranger School. David Goggins is the leader who sets himself as an example. This is one of the most important factors to leading and he gives tips as well as extra information on what that looks like in real life scenarios of hardship.

Goleman, Daniel, et al. *Primal Leadership*. Harvard Business Review Press, 2013.

Greene, Robert. *The 48 Laws of Power*. Penguin Books, 1998.

Sinek, Simon. *Leaders Eat Last: Why Some Teams Pull Together and Others Don't*. Penguin Business, 2019.

Trinidad, Adrian Pablo, director. *The Rarest Commodity Is Leadership without Ego: Bob Davids at TEDxESCP*. YouTube, 10 Apr. 2012, <https://youtu.be/UQrPVMcgJJk>. Accessed 9 Nov. 2021.

With one of the opening lines being, “There’s too many managers already, the world is short of leaders, we don’t need more managers”. This video provides good examples of what separates leaders from people in power. Davids elaborates on many scenarios of exemplary leadership situations where the leader is not afraid to connect with the common employee as well as lead by example. He created a small company that started with just one and expanded to over 8,000 people. For my leadership portfolio, it is good to include some sources that pertain directly to business and scenarios that involve what leadership looks like in a business environment. I plan on opening my own business in regards to my future career, so having this insight will help me apply these exact traits to the environment I will be using them in.

(MM)

## **Gender Equality and Inclusivity in the Computer Science Field (9)**

Advisor: Dr. Breeann Flesch, Division of Computer Science

Student Pronouns: She/Her/Hers

Thesis/Project Genre(s): Scholarly

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### **Abstract:**

Statistics show there are fewer women in computer science careers. Is there a stigma around women in computer science and, if so, why is that? I plan to investigate the obstacles that are presented in higher education and the career field that lead to this possible stigma. I will also look into potential ideas that might improve equality in this field. I will focus on three main sections. These sections involve analyzing current and past statistics regarding women in computer science to determine potential stigmas; researching further into the obstacles that could be presented towards a woman in computer science; and finding ways that these obstacles could be overcome or diminished. Each component will allow me to address the way that our actions can lead to the increase or decrease in the stigma as well as the amount of women in this field. The main outcome I am hoping for is a scholarly thesis that brings attention to this topic. I also hope that by examining the past and present, we might be able to affect the future in hopes of making computer science equal for all.

### **Personal Interest:**

Although I do believe that I had always wondered about the divide in certain careers, the origin of my interest in this project began when I started here at Western. This was because I was working on picking my major and what I would like to pursue as a career. While I had many ideas on what this final decision would be, I eventually decided on computer science. However, I was somewhat reluctant to pursue this as I knew that there was a lack of women in this field and that it definitely was not an “easy” major to pursue. This was because I had no real prior experience with computer hardware, programming, or anything in between. So, these two pieces combined made me reluctant to follow through with my decision. Yet, the origin of what led to my thesis project idea came from this experience because I knew this information, but wanted to be one more woman to change this stigma around women in STEM, specifically computer science in this case. The interest for my project came from the fact that I knew that there was likely a divide in gender of those pursuing computer science degrees in the United States when comparing men to other minorities, specifically women in this case.

Currently, I still have a strong connection with my project topic and am very interested in it. This is because I am continuing to pursue an undergraduate degree in computer science, meaning the majority of my classes each term are computer science related. I have been involved in FEM in STEM events with Western as well which has led to my interest in my project topic continuing and my understanding of the subject to remain strong. I also work with the computer science department here at Western and this has provided me with a better understanding of the department and major and has given me an opportunity to help change the stigma and decline in women with jobs related to computer science, even if it is just an on-campus job and not one in the career field.

Lastly, this project has a significant connection to my future self and my future career as, after obtaining my undergraduate degree in computer science, I will either pursue a career in the field or continue towards achieving my master's degree. Thus, this topic has interested me for a while and will continue to for most of my life. The idea behind this topic can and will likely impact my future self as the stigma around women in computer science tends to continue from school to careers and there is still a strong difference between the amount of men and women in this field. So, I believe that this thesis idea takes my future into consideration as what I am addressing within it will correlate to what I may or may not experience in my career as well as may provide me with information on how to address this issue and make the field more inclusive for all future computer scientists after myself.

### **Larger Context:**

Computer science is one of the STEM-related fields that features the largest divide between the number of men and women. According to the Daily Emerald, the divide in recent years at University of Oregon is actually more than 80 percent men opposed to less than 20 percent women obtaining degrees from CS or IS departments (Carey 2019). This knowledge, combined with the obstacles that women encounter, could be precisely the reason why the number of women in the field is not increasing. Based on recent information in the United States, the total of bachelor's degrees in computer science earned by women is only approximately 18 percent (computerscience.org). This fact shows how, in society even in recent years, women interested in this STEM field have likely not been encouraged or invited to pursue computer science based on such low fulfillment rates regarding degrees.

This statistic matters because the numerous obstacles that present themselves lead to the idea that women are not as welcomed in this field because they face gender-related obstacles more often than do men (Sanders 2021). Congruity theory may also play a role, as it contends "people choose career paths based on attributes they were socialized to value" (Sanders 2021). The stereotypes surrounding CS have poor,

negative effects on the women pursuing this field. These stereotypes can lead to women feeling like they do not belong, even when they are as, or more, capable than their male peers (Beyer 2014). Using the idea that there are obstacles preventing growth shows the importance of increasing this number because, especially in today's society, equality is essential and opportunities should not be limited regardless of the gender of the person pursuing computer science as a career.

For years, women in STEM have been working towards equality and addressing stigmas and divides in this career. Even though girls often graduate with the same skills and knowledge as their male peers in high school regarding the sciences and math, it is shown that they are less likely to continue pursuing these fields in college compared to the boys that they graduated with (Guynn 2016). Based on this fact, one can see the way that the stigma and current state of the field is today, will most likely have some type of impact on the number of girls graduating from high school continuing their STEM-related passions in careers or higher education. Using the information about how previous and current obstacles not only affect current women in the field, but also future women interested in computer science, is what leads to why I would like to analyze this topic in my thesis and look into how to improve this for all women in computer science.

### **Methods/Process:**

My thesis project will consist of analyzing scholarship regarding women in computer science in the United States and investigating how this research can elaborate on the stigmas surrounding women in the field. If so, I will look into why this may be as well as what can be done to promote equality.

I plan to begin by looking into statistics relating to this gender divide. I will also compare the current percentage of women obtaining computer science degrees today with those who received degrees over a decade ago. This information will allow me to include data from the recent past to strengthen my point of how the number of women in the field is still far from being equal. According to Code.org, for instance, despite recent growth over the last 15 years, "women still only represent 1 in 5 CS graduates.". Similar trends appear prior to college also, as young girls demonstrate interests in tech that later do not continue into higher education (Guynn 2016). Analyzing the numbers and information from my sources, like the ones mentioned above in my larger context section, will provide me with a better understanding of the current situation and allow me to infer whether there exists a stigma around women in this field underlying the employment divide.

After diving further into the statistical research, I will take this information and look deeper into what obstacles may be causing the result. This investigation includes analyzing multiple theories that might explain why women tend to shy away from computer science such as the role of congruity theory or expectancy-value theory

(Sanders 2021). Congruity theory is the idea that “people choose career paths based on attributes they were socialized to value, which tend to be stereotypically gendered” (Sanders 2021). However, expectancy-value theory relates to how “people choose career paths commensurate with the degree of self-efficacy they possess” (Sanders 2021). I will look at these obstacles individually and attempt to determine why they might be in place. Specific questions to explore include: Are these obstacles directed towards women in computer science or are these obstacles gender-neutral? Do these theories stem from an internal sense of self or an image created from society’s view of women in STEM? How have these obstacles impacted gender inequality in this career field? Whereas the first section of my thesis will be statistically-based, this second section will be more qualitative. This examination will allow me to gain a better understanding about the existing theories for the divide that prevents the inclusivity and equality that women in the field have been striving for.

Next, my goal will be to research how these obstacles can potentially be resolved, or at least improved upon. For example, I will look into the way that the number of girls interested in computer science before college decreases, often fairly significantly, when it comes to picking a major in college or a career. I plan to use this information that I find to present a couple ways that equality can be demonstrated, taught, and presented to society such as holding conferences or events for women in STEM, using encouraging words and advice, or by just creating an inclusive, welcoming environment (Tucker 2011). The goal with this section – this “overcoming obstacles” section – is not to make others feel excluded, but rather to find a way to promote equality and inclusivity to all people who have a passion for computer science regardless of gender. During this explanation, if time allows, I may look into my own experiences as a woman in computer science to provide a personal perspective to my thesis project. I might also look into the way that campuses can promote inclusion by examining the way that Western does with the Fem in Stem program.

Lastly, I will summarize the ideas within this section and attempt to demonstrate how information about the field over the last 20 years, combined with the ideas for overcoming obstacles, can help to close this gap and make the tech world welcoming to all who wish to begin this journey pursuing a degree or beginning in the field.

By looking into these ideas and dissecting these sections of research, I can create a stronger thesis as this idea stems from personal experience and information. This thesis could also be a way to use this information to hopefully inspire other people in the field or schools to work towards recognizing discrimination and stigma, identifying common obstacles, and overcoming them together as a community of those with a passion for computer science rather than add to the divide. The end result for this thesis project will be a paper that can open the eyes of those within computer science regardless of gender, show everyone the potential lack of equality, and help make a step

in a positive direction by informing the reader about the statistics and reasons for the divide.

### **Working Bibliography, with Select Annotations**

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<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/08993408.2014.963363?scroll=top&needAccess=true>.

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[https://www.dailyemerald.com/news/uo-s-ongoing-struggle-for-women-earning-degrees-in-computer-science-and-mathematics/article\\_7ce5f4b0-4c16-11e9-891d-7790ba0a1288.html](https://www.dailyemerald.com/news/uo-s-ongoing-struggle-for-women-earning-degrees-in-computer-science-and-mathematics/article_7ce5f4b0-4c16-11e9-891d-7790ba0a1288.html).

Code.org. "Women Computer Science Graduates Finally Surpass Record Set 17 Years Ago, but Percentages Lag Behind" *Medium*, Medium, 11 May 2020,  
<https://codeorg.medium.com/women-computer-science-graduates-finally-surpass-record-set-17-years-ago-20a79a76275>.

This source provides a look into the positive ways that the number of female graduates in computer science have been increasing, overcoming a previous record almost two decades later, in fact. Looking at the way that computer science and the amount of women in the field has changed over almost 20 years provides a fresh outlook at the way that positive change is happening, but this source also addresses the way that the world of computer science and the number of graduates in the programs have a long way to go to reach actual equality. This article compares the way that the number of bachelor's degrees has changed over the years while also comparing the number of men and women that make up these amounts to show that there may be an increase in the number of women in the field, but it also shows exactly how large the divide still is. Lastly, this source provides statistics and an outlook into the way that the pre-college education system has been changing regarding computer science and the way that this may or may not have an impact on the previous statistics for bachelor's degrees results.

Guynn, Jessica. "Women in Computing to Decline to 22% by 2025, Study Warns." *USA Today*, Gannett Satellite Information Network, 20 Oct. 2016,  
<https://www.usatoday.com/story/tech/news/2016/10/20/women-in-computing-t-o-decline-22-percent-by-2025-study-warns/92438566/>.

This article addresses the decline in women pursuing STEM careers--specifically computer science--over recent years. It touches on the way that computer science went from a more significant number of women involved in the programs, majors, and careers to the current situation and how this number will continue to decline unless something is done about it. The statistics alluded to are taken from the research that Accenture and Girls Who Code completed in order to back their claims regarding whether or not there is a decrease in females that are currently a part of, or interested in, the computer science field. The article refers to reasons that this decline might have, and still could be, occurring as well as ways that this number can potentially positively increase both in elementary or middle-high education and college or the career field.

Sanders, Elyssa. "Why is Computer Science Unpopular Among Women" *Texas Tech Today*. *TTU*, 24 Sept. 2021,  
<https://today.ttu.edu/posts/2021/09/Stories/why-is-computer-science-unpopular-among-women>.

This particular source goes in depth on the reasons that women may not naturally or eagerly gravitate towards pursuing a degree in computer science. The author of this article looks into the study and the two men behind it. The men feel the need to look further into this "problem" and address why this is a problem in the first place. The source dissects the way that the number of women who graduated with a computer science degree has rapidly decreased compared to less than 50 years ago. They investigate reasons that this might be the case. For example, whether it be from stock market crashes, the expectancy-value theory, role congruity theory, or the field-specific ability beliefs theory. This source looks into the possibility of why and how this "why" might affect the future of women in this career field. Overall, this article has a main question that they want to answer (Why is computer science unpopular among women?) and they research into what the answer to this question is, why this is, and how people can go forward to change the answer.

Singh, Ishani. *By the Numbers: Women in STEM: What Do the Statistics Reveal about Ongoing Gender Disparities?* 27 Nov. 2020,  
<https://www.yalescientific.org/2020/11/by-the-numbers-women-in-stem-what-do-the-statistics-reveal-about-ongoing-gender-disparities/>.

Staff Writers. "Women in Computer Science." *Get an Education the World Needs | ComputerScience.org*, 29 Sept. 2021,  
<https://www.computerscience.org/resources/women-in-computer-science/>.

This website article presents the reader with common questions regarding women in computer science and answers these questions to address the way that women

are or are not involved and encouraged in computer science. This article uses many different types of statistics to back up their claims and gives numbers to help truly show if there is a division and reduction of women in computer science and why this may be. It addresses the past as well as the present in this article in regards to the way computer science is today and how that connects to the amount of women in the field. This source also looks into the future and how it depends on society's action on whether that future leads to more or less women in computer science. Finally, in order to back the claims provided and answer the questions, the amount of research as well as comparisons relating to the real world allows for readers to gain a bigger picture on the way computer science tends to be regarding gender inclusivity in the US and what may or may not be leading to this.

Tucker, Eric. "Lack of Women Does Not Compute." *CAScade*, 2011, <https://cascade.uoregon.edu/spring2011/natural-sciences/lack-of-women-does-not-compute/index.html>.

(AM)

**Finding a School-Wide Approach for Trauma in Education (10)**

Advisor: Dr. Cindy Ryan, Division of Education and Leadership

Student Pronouns: She/Her/Hers

Thesis/Project Genre(s): Scholarly

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**Abstract:**

For my thesis, I chose to dive into an important and heavily emphasized topic in my major – trauma-informed learning. Most people have experienced trauma at one point in their lifetime. However, what most people fail to recognize is that it is a universal human experience and a pervasive problem if left untreated. Research can point to the long-term issues of trauma on one's health. While there are various levels of trauma that one can experience, this project will be looking more specifically at the research behind childhood trauma and connecting it back to a developmental level.

With my project, I choose to link trauma with education with the goal of finding a school-wide approach to helping children navigate trauma within the school system. More specifically, I will be looking at how schools can implement an overall trauma-informed environment and what that could possibly look like. Because education is a big part of our society, it would make sense to tackle childhood trauma where it is most convenient: in our schools. By prioritizing the mental health of our students now, it will make a difference in order for our future generation to thrive. The end result will be a paper that puts into perspective the significance of trauma in development and the urgency towards finding implementation for a school-wide approach to trauma.

**Personal Interest:**

Past things that sparked my interest for this project go back to elementary school and connect my own life experiences with what I have learned about trauma now. Everyone has gone through some form of trauma and it impacts people differently. When I first really got to dive into learning about trauma and how it will connect to my future profession, I can't help but connect it back to my own experiences. I can see how my past has shaped who I have become today. I can also look back and reflect on how my school, teachers, and administration have handled my situation. I questioned if things could have been different or if they did the best that they could with the resources there were at the time. This makes me motivated to dive into this research on trauma-informed learning because it would make an overall difference throughout the lives of many students if there is a bigger focus and push on mental health. We don't get

to decide on our own life journey but with resilience and people to support us, it will make a greater impact in the future.

Being that I am in college to major in Early Childhood and Elementary Education, I had to take several undergraduate classes that had mentioned trauma-informed learning at one point or another. This has stuck with me because it forced me to look at teaching through a whole different lens. Trauma experiences are more common than people truly imagine. Learning this has changed my perspective on teaching and life in general. When looking at teaching, it really can not be done without the student being fully present. However, when children go through trauma in their lives, it can leave an impact on their brain development. It sticks with a person and what can help to combat this is a supportive and safe space with a caring adult. Teachers can not expect students to thrive in school when they are suffering silently. Trauma impacts learning and learning about this was an eye-opening moment in my education journey. It made me consider what has been or is currently being done in schools to navigate the urgency of trauma.

The connection between my project and my future career is directly intertwined. I am pursuing to be an elementary school teacher and knowing this information as a backbone to my knowledge in my profession will be greatly beneficial. I will be working with children and understanding the consequences of trauma at a young age is crucial. It will be beneficial to look into practices that I can use in my future classroom and help me be prepared. Writing the thesis can also inform other teachers and future educators on the importance of understanding trauma and how it intertwines with development. It is unclear if during my time as a teacher there will be any big changes done nationally to implement trauma-informed care school-wide but doing this project will give me more in-depth knowledge on the topic of trauma and development as well as see the options that there are for schools currently.

### **Larger Context:**

Trauma is a universal human experience but is unfortunately not perceived that way in our society. It is estimated that one half to two-thirds of children experience trauma.<sup>1</sup> Mental health should be put at the forefront of education and this could be done through trauma-informed approaches. Researchers and practitioners in the field agree that trauma-informed approaches at the system level make intuitive sense, and a growing body of research supports their implementations as evidence-supported approaches.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> McLnerney, Maura, and Amy McKlindon. "Unlocking the door to learning: Trauma-informed classrooms & transformational schools." Education law center (2014): 1-24.

<sup>2</sup> McLnerney, Maura, and Amy McKlindon. "Unlocking the door to learning: Trauma-informed classrooms & transformational schools." Education law center (2014): 1-24.

With trauma in our youth being such a prevalent issue, finding a school-wide approach is more consequential than ever. Being aware of the trauma students have experienced and putting in place trauma-sensitive routines for students will allow students more opportunities for success and the ability to grow not only academically but also socially and emotionally.<sup>3</sup> The impact of childhood trauma on biological, psychological, and social disorders have devastating outcomes on a young person's ability to learn in educational settings.<sup>4</sup> Educators cannot expect students to thrive when under a fragile state.

Schools' implementation of trauma-informed care and multilayered systems of support has been necessary, especially considering the current and ongoing COVID-19 pandemic crisis. COVID-19 has impacted students and teachers' lives drastically in many ways. Generally, students who have been exposed to trauma or an extended exposure to stressful situations that can translate to trauma can demonstrate negative impacts on their school functioning.<sup>5</sup> We are aware of the trauma that the pandemic brought to people – economic loss, illness or potential loss of a family member, social isolation, significant and widespread disruption in our everyday lives. Absolutely nobody could have predicted and prepared for something like this. The pandemic has demonstrated that having strong support, being more trauma-sensitive, and implementing trauma-informed care in schools was needed more than ever. Preparedness is key to implementing and ensuring a support system for both students and teachers alike.

Thus, the promotion of trauma-informed approaches should be implemented systemically in schools to empower resilience and also prevent retraumatization among students. In areas of the world where there is conflict, emergency, and crisis, both children and adults see schools as places of refuge, learning, and paths to better futures.<sup>6</sup> The trauma-informed approach is an approach that all child-serving systems can implement. However, by specifically focusing on the education system, it helps target a large demographic of students where support is needed. By transforming the educational environment to better respond to trauma-exposed youth, it will make for an advantage in the long run of our society.

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<sup>3</sup> Taylor, Shanon S. "Trauma-Informed Care in Schools: A Necessity in the Time of COVID-19." *Beyond Behavior*, June 2021, pp. 1-8. EBSCOhost, doi:10.1177/10742956211020841.

<sup>4</sup> Brunzell, Tom, Helen Stokes, and Lea Waters. "Trauma-informed flexible learning: Classrooms that strengthen regulatory abilities." *International journal of child, youth and family studies* 7.2 (2016): 218-239.

<sup>5</sup> Taylor, Shanon S. "Trauma-Informed Care in Schools: A Necessity in the Time of COVID-19." *Beyond Behavior*, June 2021, pp. 1-8. EBSCOhost, doi:10.1177/10742956211020841.

<sup>6</sup> Maynard, Brandy R., et al. "Effects of trauma-informed approaches in schools: A systematic review." *Campbell Systematic Reviews* 15.1-2 (2019): e1018.

### **Methods/Process:**

For my thesis project, I will examine trauma from an educational lens and look at the various ways schools can approach trauma. By gathering evidence and data on trauma from childhood, I will seek to demonstrate why a trauma-informed approach to education is necessary. This will involve discussing various approaches and the ways schools can incorporate trauma-informed learning.

First, I will thoroughly examine the Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE) study, looking for significant findings about the urgency of childhood trauma as well as any insufficiencies in the study. I choose this study because it is the largest investigation on the impact of childhood trauma, and it closely examines the adverse effects it can have on one's health. This study categorizes ACE into three categories: abuse, neglect, and prior loss all before the age of 18 years old. This lays the foundation as to why understanding childhood trauma specifically is crucial as it is a time-sensitive topic.

Next, I will compile multiple key sources and studies of empirical research that lay the background towards trauma-informed schools. I have gathered sources and studies to look at the various approaches to integrating a trauma-informed learning environment systematically. I plan on using mainly scholarly journal articles as my sources. I will be focusing on connecting the key shreds of evidence that support trauma-informed learning from a school-wide perspective. The source "Unlocking the door to learning: Trauma-informed classrooms & transformational schools" condenses and summarizes the impact of childhood trauma and what can and has already been done in the education system at an organizational level. The source discusses various states that have already taken steps at a state level. I will be looking at the specific aspects that have to be implemented and transformed in order to see an actual shift in school culture.

After giving a bit of relevant information on the background and understanding the movement of trauma-informed approaches at an organizational level, I plan on moving to focus on the Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) movement. In 1994, a multidisciplinary collaboration created both the Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL) and the term SEL to address a missing component in education — children's social and emotional needs. The advocacy for evidence-based SEL primarily focuses on the goal for children and adults to build a relationship from preschool through high school. For the longest time schools have been pushing out the importance of educational achievement, but in reality that can not be feasible without the consideration of their social and emotional well-being. There is a direct connection with the success of students' future outcomes in schools and their social-emotional competence. I plan on looking through various studies that have incorporated SEL and analyzing the outcomes.

The end result will be a scholarly paper that will enlighten readers about the importance of trauma in an educational setting. The key impact that I want my work to show is how the effort to find a school-wide approach for trauma in education is a time-sensitive, urgent call to action. My audience, primarily anyone with a connection to education, will be able to realize the significance as well as the drawbacks of incorporating it into education systematically. Overall, I want this to be an informative work that lays out the importance of mental health and the goal of normalizing a society where we put mental health at the forefront.

### **Working Bibliography, with Select Annotations**

Ashdown, Daniela, and Michael Bernard. "Can Explicit Instruction in Social and Emotional Learning Skills Benefit the Social-Emotional Development, Well-Being, and Academic Achievement of Young Children?" *Early Childhood Education Journal*, vol. 39, no. 6, Jan. 2012, pp. 397–405. EBSCOhost, doi:10.1007/s10643-011-0481-x.

This article investigates the effect of adapting social and emotional learning skills curriculum through explicit instruction lessons. The findings of explicit instruction in social and emotional learning for the early years show that it built a foundation for the overall well-being of the child. The combination of cognitive and social-emotional competence is important considering the prediction of the child's academic success in the long term. Considering from teacher reports that students had improved in their social skills through the study, it provides insight to the value of explicit instruction in social and emotional learning.

Brunzell, Tom, Helen Stokes, and Lea Waters. "Trauma-informed flexible learning: Classrooms that strengthen regulatory abilities." *International journal of child, youth and family studies* 7.2 (2016): 218-239.

Maynard, Brandy R., et al. "Effects of trauma-informed approaches in schools: A systematic review." *Campbell Systematic Reviews* 15.1-2 (2019): e1018.

McInerney, Maura, and Amy McKlindon. "Unlocking the door to learning: Trauma-informed classrooms & transformational schools." *Education law center* (2014): 1-24.

The facts and statistics involving childhood trauma unlock the importance of the approaches that can be done at an organizational level for schools and educators. Adopting a trauma-informed approach requires a commitment from the schools to put in the dedication towards meeting the needs of students who have experienced trauma. Some states such as Massachusetts and Washington have taken a systematic approach to promote trauma-informed school environments. While these are case-by-case examples of schools they still show the potential of

what could be an intervention that all schools across the nation can follow one day. Schools are the one spot a student can rely on feeling safe and with what we already know about trauma and development it is crucial that schools are being shaped to meet the needs of all students.

Overstreet, Stacy, and Sandra M. Chafouleas. "Trauma-informed schools: Introduction to the special issue." (2016): 1-6.

Palacios, Alfredo F., and Truelove, Matthew E. Lemberger. "A Counselor-Delivered Mindfulness and Social-Emotional Learning Intervention for Early Childhood Educators." *Journal of Humanistic Counseling*, vol. 58, no. 3, Oct. 2019, pp. 184-203. EBSCOhost, doi:10.1002/johc.12119.

Schultz, Betsy, et al. "A Preschool Pilot Study of Connecting with Others: Lessons for Teaching Social and Emotional Competence." *Early Childhood Education Journal*, vol. 39, no. 2, June 2011, pp. 143-148. EBSCOhost, doi:10.1007/s10643-011-0450-4.

Early childhood is developmentally the target age when developing social skills is essential considering the timeline. Social-emotional learning can be built from a strong foundation in early childhood which can positively impact the child in the future. It is significant to target social-emotional learning at a young age and this can be done by integrating it into the school curriculum through direct intervention.

Taylor, Shanon S. "Trauma-Informed Care in Schools: A Necessity in the Time of COVID-19." *Beyond Behavior*, June 2021, pp. 1-8. EBSCOhost, doi:10.1177/10742956211020841.

In light of current events, the COVID-19 pandemic has drastically changed the lives of everyone's routine and way of living. This unpredictability and sudden drastic change in lifestyle due to the pandemic classifies this period as a disaster. The COVID-19 pandemic qualifies as a traumatic event and students across the nation have been impacted in one way or another.

What that entails for students in schools moving forward is to see what schools can do to implement various programs or practices. Trauma-Informed Care (TIC) is an approach that has a number of programs and practices that can be used. This leaves a roadblock for educators because they are left to navigate these implementations alone. However, TIC is a schoolwide and collaborative effort and when done successfully it can help educators better support students, families, and themselves.

(SN)

## **The Ethical Implications of CRISPR/Cas Technology (11)**

Advisor: Dr. Patricia Flatt, Chemistry Department

Student Pronouns: She/Her/Hers

Thesis/Project Genre(s): Scholarly/Scientific

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### **Abstract:**

A fairly new and prevalent medical treatment is known as CRISPR/Cas, which utilizes enzymes to edit genes within a patient to help alleviate symptoms of a disease, or even cure it. These new ways of treatment are viewed as less harmful in the long run because there are fewer risks compared to traditional treatments of larger diseases. However, the ethics behind this treatment are divided. Many believe there should be no gene-editing human intervention when it comes to treating diseases; others think it is a viable option for those who truly need it. Furthermore, there are other unethical uses of this technology such as for personal enhancement or for the creation of designer babies (i.e. picking and choosing which features will appear in offspring). This project aims to show that when used appropriately, CRISPR/Cas can have a great impact on an individual's quality of life if they suffer from a disease. CRISPR/Cas is medically valuable as it can provide another viable option for patients who have a disease with no known cure, or one that has a low success rate. By giving a better prognosis, this technology can help to lower recovery time and benefit the individual in the long run if there are less complications that can arise.

### **Personal Interest:**

The origin of interest for my thesis stems from my love of science and the human body. Ever since I was young, I have always been fascinated with the interconnectedness of the systems within the body and how it works in such perfect harmony to keep us alive and well. The science aspect comes from my elementary and middle school days where I attended an advanced math and science school, in which we did weekly experiments, practice problems, and collaborative assignments. While there, we also did yearly science fair projects that would be displayed in the school over the course of a week, sharing our own individual interests, explorations, and passions with one another in fun, yet controlled, ways. From there, I took many science and medically focused courses in high school – such as anatomy and physiology, and sports medicine – that further nourished my love of science and the body.

At WOU, I am currently a chemistry major with a concentration in medicinal chemistry and pharmacology. It is here that I have found a focus for my thesis while talking to my major advisor and current professor, Dr. Patricia Flatt. She had told me

about a very prevalent thing known as CRISPR/Cas technology that is used for editing genes to help cure or alleviate symptoms of many diseases. I was thoroughly intrigued and started to do some surface research and instantly fell in love with its implications and inner workings. This was solidified when we then started a group paper about the ethics behind CRISPR/Cas technology in humans and how it can be beneficial to thousands, but also harmful if used in inappropriate ways.

Through this thesis proposal, I hope to attend medical school in order to fulfill my lifelong dream of becoming a pediatrician. As stated before, I have always had a fascination with the human body, but I also thoroughly enjoy working with children as well. This will help me in the future because it can be used in a professional medical setting where I have a better understanding of other viable treatment options that may be better suited for a patient I am working with.

### **Larger Context:**

My project will revolve around discussing the ethics behind CRISPR/Cas technology and its use on humans. I plan to highlight multiple diseases which will contribute to the positive side of ethics regarding CRISPR/Cas' ability to properly treat and/or help alleviate symptoms of certain diseases.

Sickle cell disease is one which affects thousands and it takes a toll on their daily lives as many must move with pain shooting throughout their body (Sanders, 2021). It is an even bigger deal to those who are Black or of African descent as 1 in 13 will have sickle cell disease (Sanders, 2021). Sickle cell disease is also very limited in how treatment is administered, often with blood transfusions as the only option. With this technology, CRISPR/Cas will allow patients to heal themselves from within without having to rely on others who may or may not match their blood type exactly (Sanders, 2021). Sickle cell disease also affects many young children who also have very limited treatment options, the main one being strictly stem cell transplants (Sanders, 2021). However, in some cases, a patients' genes are edited to allow them to use their own stem cells for treatment (Sanders, 2021). Not only does it utilize their body's own resources, it eliminates the risk of finding a match that may work, and there are less complications that may follow.

Additionally, Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy often affects individuals and causes them to have limited mobility. It is shown that in eight percent of boys, nearly half of them are missing dystrophin protein due to a mutation that causes a vital gene that promotes protein production to essentially stop it (UT Southwestern Medical Center, 2021). Another case is in the treatment of Duchenne's muscular dystrophy where CRISPR/Cas has been shown in mice models to help regenerate a large percentage of protein in leg muscles and allow for a larger range of movement (Perry, 2020).

Ethics in the medical field are always a slippery slope and many practices walk a fine line between morally acceptable and unethical. CRISPR/Cas is no exception, and it can be argued that it is one of the most talked about revolving around ethics. There are many reasons to be concerned about using CRISPR/Cas on humans, one of which is how far CRISPR/Cas should be permitted in clinical medicine. Additionally, the clinical research involving humans should also accommodate all possible types of human genome editing, which includes the germline. Heritable genome-editing research is one that should be permitted in order to learn more about CRISPR/Cas' effects on humans, but only if it follows research about the risks and benefits to be authorized for clinical trials and with strict guidelines set in place (Brokowski, 89). Although it has been beneficial for improving the health of those with well-known diseases, and even some that are novel, there is also the risk of subjecting participants to significant harm when testing is done such as irreversible side effects or even death (Brokowski, 92). There is also the ethics about access to CRISPR/Cas applications and whether it will be made equitably accessible for all or just for a small portion of the population. The technology itself is inexpensive, but with price-gouging it can lead to patients choosing between a better quality of life or economic hardship in the long-run (Brokowski, 94).

The overall ethics revolving around CRISPR/Cas technology is very split as many believe that it is beneficial to patients, but at what cost to them financially. There is also the matter of how effective it is for a patient as each individual is unique, and there is no set standard baseline of these effects when using CRISPR/Cas technology. Additionally, when used in inappropriate ways, this technology can be made available to those who are not qualified to utilize it and it may result in designer babies or even unnecessary enhancements to a person.

### **Methods/Process:**

My thesis project will be based on both scholarly and scientific research. I will mainly be focused on using sources found online to back up claims of whether CRISPR/Cas technology is ethically okay to use in humans to treat disease or if it should be used strictly for research purposes. It will utilize both expert opinion and my own input on where the line should be drawn when implementing CRISPR/Cas as a treatment option. I will also touch base on the restrictions and regulations that will need to be put in place so as to limit the uses of it as well as help to make it more accessible to others.

My plan is to first focus on the ethics behind CRISPR/Cas in general and why it should and should not be used. More specifically, it will focus on inappropriate uses such as designer babies, unnecessary enhancements, and the overall cost to an individual and the general public. I will then counter these points with the benefits such as providing an additional treatment option that is less invasive and risky as well as

more effective than the traditional treatment options. CRISPR/Cas technology can also result in less down-time for recovery as there is sometimes no follow-up treatment that needs to be administered or monitoring for any complications.

Following the ethics portion of using CRISPR/Cas technology, I will then shift the focus onto diseases that could be cured, or at the very least provide relief from the symptoms associated with the disease, with the use of CRISPR/Cas technology. The diseases I will focus on are ones that are less talked about: blood disorders and muscular diseases/ diseases that affect muscle/motor movement. More specifically, this section of my thesis will talk about sickle cell disease with a sub-point about beta thalassemia for the blood disorders and Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy with a sub-point of Huntington's and Lou Gehric's disease, also known as amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), for the muscular disorders. The main reason to focus on these diseases specifically is because they are lesser known and are ones that allow for less freedom and poorer quality of life. They are also more focused on one aspect unlike in something such as cancer where there are multiple factors that play a role in how it is treated.

By the end of this project, I will have produced a scholarly project about the functional uses of CRISPR/Cas technology and its overall potential in the world of science and healthcare. Although these points are more focused on two specific diseases, the applications of CRISPR/Cas are still universal to other diseases that it can be used on and it will still have the same risks and rewards. It will also inform those of this breakthrough in genetics that can hopefully be used in the future (for good) to help treat and possibly cure incurable diseases while telling people about the regulations and restrictions behind it.

I want to be able to inform my audience about these new developments in CRISPR/Cas technology and why it is important to us as a whole. This technology can also be universally used, further bridging the gap between us as humans in differing societies. By having this option available not only provides a longer life for those individuals, it creates a ripple effect on those around them and their community.

### **Working Bibliography, with Select Annotations**

Sanders, Robert. "FDA Approves First Test of CRISPR to Correct Genetic Defect Causing Sickle Cell Disease." *Berkeley News*, 30 Mar. 2021, <https://news.berkeley.edu/2021/03/30/fda-approves-first-test-of-crispr-to-correct-genetic-defect-causing-sickle-cell-disease/>.

This article talks about the use of CRISPR/Cas technology in treating sickle cell disease. More specifically, it touches on its symptom alleviating properties, the use for patients to become their own stem cell donors, and how it can provide a safer, more effective way of treating, and may be even of curing,

sickle cell disease. It is rooted in trying to help people understand the positive benefits of CRISPR/Cas technology and how it can shape our perception of gene editing in the future as it has the potential to help the greatest number of people possible.

This article will help me to focus on the ethics of CRISPR/Cas through the lens of welfare revolving around the thousands of people who suffer from sickle cell disease by allowing me to see its overall effectiveness against the traditional forms of treatment. Although this is a fairly new way of treatment, it is one that has limited risks compared to the many other forms of treatment for sickle cell disease, which come with greater risks.

Frangoul, Haydar, et al. "CRISPR-Cas9 Gene Editing for Sickle Cell Disease and  $\beta$  Thalassemia." *The New England Journal of Medicine*, 12 Dec. 2020, [http://genetics.wustl.edu/bio5491/files/2021/02/nejm\\_CRISPR\\_BC11A\\_Therapy.pdf](http://genetics.wustl.edu/bio5491/files/2021/02/nejm_CRISPR_BC11A_Therapy.pdf).

This article talks about the uses of CRISPR/Cas technology specifically for sickle cell disease and beta thalassemia, both of which are blood disorders. Both had the same alleles edited and it was found that after the editing took place, there were no off-target effects of surrounding cells or genes. Furthermore, it compares two patients' response to this treatment as both diseases affect the hemoglobin beta subunit gene. By using this comparison, it will allow for a greater focus on specifically which genes should be altered and where exactly on it, which can help narrow down the target area to reduce the risk of off-target effects and mutations.

This article will be helpful as it will allow me to see the differing effects of CRISPR/Cas technology on two separate individuals who have different, yet similar, diseases. By seeing the wide range of CRISPR/Cas technology will allow me to show the positive aspects of this technology, and its use for a wide variety of diseases.

"Beta Thalassemia (Cooley's Anemia)." *Children's Hospital of Philadelphia*, The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, 2021, <https://www.chop.edu/conditions-diseases/beta-thalassemia-cooleys-anemia>.

This article talks about beta thalassemia, also known as Cooley's anemia, specifically. It also talks about the various traditional treatment methods used which can then further be compared to CRISPR/Cas technology, focusing on each of their positive and negative attributes.

Ekman, Freja K, et al. “CRISPR-Cas9-Mediated Genome Editing Increases Lifespan and Improves Motor Deficits in a Huntington’s Disease Mouse Model.” *American Society of Gene and Cell Therapy*, Sept. 2019, [https://gaj-lab.bioengineering.illinois.edu/files/2020/04/Publication\\_39.pdf](https://gaj-lab.bioengineering.illinois.edu/files/2020/04/Publication_39.pdf).

This article talks about Huntington’s disease within a mice model that focuses on the effects of CRISPR/Cas technology on their muscular movements after the treatment. The researchers found that it had helped some mice with motor functions and even extended their life spans. Although not directly linked to humans, as it is difficult to “scale-up” from a small mice model to human beings, using the tests can allow researchers to create a study that can use human subjects and evaluate its efficacy within them.

This article can help me with understanding how CRISPR/Cas technology is used within organisms, specifically with Huntington’s, and its overall effect on them. By utilizing this mice model, it can help to show the efficacy of this new technology and may help find a way to promote a better quality of life within humans because as of now, there is no cure for Huntington’s.

“New Gene Editing Strategies Developed for Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy.” *UT Southwestern Medical Center*, 30 Apr. 2021, <https://utsouthwestern.edu/newsroom/articles/year-2021/duchenne-muscular-dystrophy.html>.

This article talks about Duchenne muscular dystrophy and how CRISPR/Cas has been able to edit a section of the gene responsible for this disease, but it was in a mice model. The researchers had found that with the use of CRISPR/Cas technology, they were able to have the dystrophin gene skip the STOP codon and continue to create more copies of the missing gene dystrophin, and exon 51. This ended up restoring approximately 97 percent of the lost protein and enabled the mice to have more movement and function in their leg muscles.

This article will be helpful because it shows how effective CRISPR/Cas technology can be in helping to essentially reverse the symptoms of Duchenne’s muscular dystrophy. Although there are only animal tests so far, it is still helpful in showing the positives of using this technology because it can help them live longer lives and have a better quality of life as well.

“Stem Cell Transplant for Sickle Cell Disease.” *Stem Cell Transplant for Sickle Cell Disease | Michigan Medicine*, 23 Sept. 2020, <https://www.uofmhealth.org/health-library/hw254074>.

This article talks about the use of a patient's stem cells for treating sickle cell disease which can then be used to compare across CRISPR/Cas technology and its effectiveness.

Perry, Caroline. "Major Study on Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy Gains Support." *Harvard Gazette*, Harvard Gazette, 9 Jan. 2020, <https://news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/2020/01/major-study-on-duchenne-muscular-dystrophy-gains-support/>.

This article talks about the breakthrough in finding a cure for Duchenne muscular dystrophy through the use of stem cells modified through CRISPR/Cas technology.

Mollanoori, Hasan, et al. "Promising Therapeutic Approaches Using CRISPR/cas9 Genome Editing Technology in the Treatment of Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy." *Genes & Diseases*, Chongqing Medical University, 8 Jan. 2020, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC8099695/>.

This article talks about the use of CRISPR/Cas technology to help treat Duchenne muscular dystrophy by removing duplicated exons, correcting the mutation by HDR-based pathways, and inducing the expression of compensatory proteins such as utrophin.

Brokowski, C., & Adli, M. (2018). CRISPR ethics: Moral considerations for applications of a powerful tool. *Journal of Molecular Biology*, 431(1), 88–101. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jmb.2018.05.044>

This journal article talks about the ethical considerations of using CRISPR/Cas technology and the regulations that should be put in place to regulate its uses for not only clinical research but also for general use by the public. It goes more in depth about four main topics: 1) what should be permitted with CRISPR/Cas; 2) who should have access to CRISPR/Cas applications; 3) regulations that should be implemented for research involving humans and the human genome, germline included; 4) whether international regulations governing inappropriate use of CRISPR/Cas should be publicized.

(SS)

## **A Deeper Look at a First-Generation Student's Struggle Through a Lens of STEM (12)**

Advisor: Dr. Kathy Espino Perez, Behavioral Sciences/Psychological Sciences

Student Pronouns: He/Him/His

Thesis/Project Genre(s): Action Research

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### **Abstract:**

My aim with this project is to target and find solutions to issues that first-generation college students (FGCSs) face in STEM related degree paths and why this impacts retention in STEM fields. Using newly conducted research, past surveys, relevant data from Western Oregon University (WOU), and research about first generation college student retention, I will create a resources handout containing my findings and also resources that I found useful during my first year and onward. In addition, STEM fields often benefit from having preparatory privilege (Carver, 21). This project will help me evaluate what we lack and how we can better support students. My greater understanding of the needs for FGCSs will contribute to making my field more diverse and help me shape my career path to assist first-gen students further. Apart from that, it will continue to help the community that I belonged to during my time at WOU. The culmination of this project will be to create founding documents and resources that can be used as a foundation for a club that focuses on providing opportunities and resources for FGCSs on campus, specifically dedicated to retention in STEM degree paths. This will range from events tailored to teach students about interviews, as well as panels with current professors in STEM fields. In the end, the documentation will be used to create an environment where students can receive support for their college education and future careers. Overall, this project will be developed with the idea in mind that there is a need for more support and useful information for FGCSs in STEM.

### **Personal Interest:**

As a FGCS myself, I encountered obstacles I didn't even think about during my first year of college. Before high school ended, I found it cumbersome applying to college and getting resources that applied to me specifically. I didn't have a single clue how and where to start. From financial aid to my parents being unsure if college was the right fit for us, I struggled navigating this new and unopened world. I *am* a DACA recipient and to say the least, it complicates things. I had no idea if I was even allowed to go to college, or how much I would have to pay, where I would go, so many questions and so few answers. My goal, because of my struggle, is to make sure that no one has to fight this

much just for something we are expected to do and should be just as accessible to anyone.

Having now experienced more than half of my college career I am certain that there is so much I wish I had known before. How much I would struggle financially, how much dedication this takes, how tiring it can all be. I became incredibly involved and a lot of my worries were solved, but the things that still pertained to me persisted. My family, my legal status, and other outside factors make it incredibly difficult to focus on my classes and my leadership positions. For anyone who knows, STEM fields require patience, dedication, and motivation to focus and learn. Not to mention, all the outside factors, how does one focus on just their education? And yet the same things happen, who do you turn to when all this stuff is happening to you?

I care about this subject a lot because I have seen how being a first-gen student can impact your life. I want my field to be as diverse as possible so that everyone can be equally represented and by building opportunities for students from all backgrounds we can create an environment that works for all people regardless of where they're coming from. This project heavily works with how I want my career to shape in the future. Working to create diverse and equitable environments for people that had similar experiences opens the door for many others to also create the same environments that are needed today. Furthermore, I have always been interested in being an advocate for diversity and inclusion and it would be great to have this as something that I can talk about during interviews and potential job offers.

### **Larger Context:**

Many FGCS go to college in order to seek new and important opportunities that may have been previously unavailable to their families and themselves. Emily Cataldi, in collaboration with the U.S. Department of Education, mentions that “When they do enroll, first-generation students cannot benefit from their parents’ college going experience—a valuable source of cultural capital that helps students navigate college.” This details the difficult life as a FGCS, it’s immediately more difficult because of this lack of understanding that parents have about college. This affects students when signing up for classes, where to get help on campus, what resources are available to them, and how to essentially navigate through college. It all becomes increasingly difficult to navigate if you don’t have any basis to start from. Because of the missing college capital it’s important to get to students from the start, especially here at WOU. Whether it be preparatory privilege, lack of resources in high school, or just the cost of attending college in any aspect, these all contribute to the difficulty of entry for STEM degree paths.

Recently, it has come to my attention that many FGCS come to smaller schools for the personalized attention and close bonds. According to Katherine Mangan of *The Chronicle*:

The Council of Independent Colleges concluded in a report released earlier this year (2015) that small and midsize colleges, with their small classes, involved faculty members, and extracurricular activities, do the best job retaining low-income and FGCSs.

If we really wanted to continue to improve our community it would be in our best interest to keep finding ways to assist FGCSs. Moreover, WOU is dedicated to serving its close-knit community and finding ways to reach out and increase retention in possibly one of the largest groups of marginalized students on campus would benefit not only the students but WOU as well.

Currently, WOU offers two resources that I could find using the website. A web page that states basic information about attending a university with the title First Generation. Not exactly helpful since the information lacks focus and is too general. The second resource is SEP, which can be an excellent program for FGCSs but does not specifically work extra for students in a given career path, including STEM. I believe that the current information that is provided at WOU is simply too general and does not adequately prepare STEM FGCSs for the future. Not only are the resources not enough, but whatever resources that are available one has to go out of their way to discover for themselves. This is an even greater issue when students are looking for those resources when they come to college only to find that they are wholly missing or difficult to find altogether. Students who are still looking for a major may not even consider STEM because the specific information is lacking entirely.

### **Methods/Process:**

To start, spreading more information about offered STEM paths can help students get their feet wet. Designing a program at the beginning of the year that takes the best parts of STEM and showcases them is a great way to demonstrate what WOU has to offer in terms of STEM. Creating the necessary information for an event such as this would take ample time and open the door for future students to get interested in STEM.

Next, we can use the gathered information from our first (proposed) event to see where students would like more help or gather resources to provide other opportunities to learn more. Doing some more research on similar sized universities and possible successes they might have with advocating for STEM could provide some great information for programs/events. Using better events and building on what we already have can facilitate joint events with other organizations on campus to create more

informational, potential jobs fairs, or simply answer STEM related questions for students. I think creating this interest can help the potential club to flourish and have plenty of prospective members see the usefulness in creating a program for FGCSs in STEM.

Being a part of the computer science department helps me look to my advisors and professors about the different ways that they are helping students and their impact and retention in programs. Outreach remains key when looking towards retention and forming networks especially when the department is looking into attracting prospective students. Having already talked to some, they have given me a brief description about their involvement in inclusion and diversity. Starting with the head of the department. Breeann Flesch is a strong advocate for Fem-in-STEM which is an approach to making STEM more accessible for women and minorities alike. Showcasing a bit of the research I did, I found a compelling study that elaborates on resources (eg. peer mentors, supplemental courses, check-ins, etc.) that all contributed positively to STEM FGCSs. This is a start for ways to create a more welcoming environment, but by continuing my research I can tailor my findings to specifically help WOU. To add, establishing the basis for a club is the most important aspect of my thesis because it brings all this information together in a concise and tangible resource for up and coming students wanting to study STEM related fields. Creating this club in the future could be something that brings students closer together and further enriches a major field on campus. Overall, this project ties well with the computer science department's motto, "Change the world, no experience required." stating that anyone can and has the ability to bring about change regardless of background which in the end is the reason for the thesis, to make an environment that is welcoming and accessible to anyone.

### **Working Bibliography, with Select Annotations:**

Azmitia, Margarita, et al. "Dropping Out Is Not an Option': How Educationally Resilient First-Generation Students See the Future." *Navigating Pathways in Multicultural Nations: Identities, Future Orientation, Schooling, and Careers. New Directions for Child and Adolescent Development*, John Wiley & Sons, Ltd, 6 Apr. 2018, [onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1002/cad.20240](https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1002/cad.20240).

Blanca E. Rincon & Casey E. George-Jackson (2016) STEM intervention programs: funding practices and challenges, *Studies in Higher Education*, 41:3, 429-444, DOI: 10.1080/03075079.2014.927845

A STEM education program, as defined by the United States Government Accountability Office (GAO), may include one or more of the following objectives: (1) attract or prepare students to pursue classes or coursework; (2) attract students to pursue STEM degrees; (3) provide undergraduate or graduate training in STEM; (4) attract graduates to pursue STEM careers; and (5) increase

the ability of K-12 or postsecondary institutions to promote education in STEM fields (Scott 2013).

- Carver, Susan, et al. "Operation STEM: Increasing Success and Improving Retention among First-Generation and Underrepresented Minority Students in STEM." *Journal of STEM Education: Innovations and Research*, Institute for STEM Education and Research, 3 Oct. 2017, <https://www.jstem.org/jstem/index.php/JSTEM/article/view/2182>.
- Cataldi, Emily Forrest, et al. "First-Generation Students: College Access, Persistence, and Postbachelor's Outcomes." *Stats in Brief*, U.S. Department of Education, Feb. 2018, [nces.ed.gov/pubs2018/2018421.pdf](https://nces.ed.gov/pubs2018/2018421.pdf).
- Dewsbury, Bryan M., et al. "Career Choice among First-Generation, Minority Stem College Students." *Journal of Microbiology & Biology Education*, ASM Journals, 1 Jan. 1970, <https://journals.asm.org/doi/full/10.1128/jmbe.v20i3.1775>.
- Dika, Sandra L. D'Amico, Mark M. *Early Experiences and Integration in the Persistence of First-Generation College Students in STEM and Non-STEM Majors*, Department of Educational Leadership, University of North Carolina at Charlotte, 2015, DOI: 10.1002/tea.21301
- Engle, Jennifer & Vincent Tinto. *Moving Beyond Access*, The Pell Institute, 2008, [files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED504448.pdf](https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED504448.pdf).
- As the United States continues to realize the importance of increasing the educational attainment of its citizens as the key to its future economic stability in the global marketplace, improving postsecondary access and success among underrepresented populations, such as low-income, first-generation students, is paramount. As the analysis in this report has shown, there is much work to be done if this growing population is to participate and achieve within higher education similar to their more advantaged peers. Without action by policymakers and practitioners at all levels, it appears that not only will these students be left behind, but so too will the United States.
- Jason Jones, Aaron Williams, Shanta Whitaker, Stephanie Yingling, Karen Inkelas & John Gates (2018) Call to Action: Data, Diversity, and STEM Education, Change: The Magazine of Higher Learning, 50:2, 40-47, DOI: 10.1080/00091383.2018.1483176
- Mangan, Katherine. *The Challenge of the First-Generation Student*, The Chronicle, 23 July 2020, [www.chronicle.com/article/the-challenge-of-the-first-generation-student/](http://www.chronicle.com/article/the-challenge-of-the-first-generation-student/).

The Council of Independent Colleges concluded in a report released earlier this year that small and midsize colleges, with their small classes, involved faculty members, and extracurricular activities, do the best job retaining low-income and first-generation students.

Soria, Krista M & Michael J. Stebleton. *First-generation students' academic engagement and retention*, *Teaching in Higher Education*, 2012, 17:6, 673-685, DOI: 10.1080/13562517.2012.666735

(ESS)

**ReNew Clothing:****The Creation and Branding of a Sustainable Brand (13)**

Advisor: Dr. Tiara Good, Communication Studies Department

Student Pronouns: she/her/hers

Thesis/Project Genre(s): Creative

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**Abstract:**

This thesis will explore how to effectively create a branding plan for a sustainable fashion company. Brand identity is a key aspect of success and a large portion of a brand's overall value. There is limited understanding around the importance of design and the effectiveness of strong visual communication. I will emphasize the value of art and design, along with the value of sustainable and ethical clothing production. The project will begin with research about design and branding practices that are most effective. This will include looking at the techniques and tendencies of existing brands. Next, the project will feature development of the brand including name and concept. The creation of the branding plan will include making the logo, color scheme, package design, and a poster. I will conclude with a presentation of the branding plan, a discussion of the design process, and a summary. The outcome of this thesis is the creation of and branding plan for a sustainable fashion company.

**Personal Interest:**

I love creating and art has always been a part of my life. I have danced since I was three, I have loved music for as long as I can remember, and I've been playing dress up since my mom let me start picking out my own outfits. Art has influenced my personal and educational decisions. I began to have an interest in digital art and graphic design in high school. I have a love for fashion and particularly, the need I see for more sustainable and ethical fashion options. I gave a speech about this in a communications class my sophomore year. I really enjoyed learning more about sustainability and the effects of fashion on the environment and society. As I have gotten older, I have started to pay more attention to brands: specifically, what they value and how they communicate that.

I am majoring in Art & Design and minoring in Communications. I want my thesis to be representative of the work I have put into my Creative Arts degree. In my classes, I am learning how to design creatively and communicate effectively. With this project, I want to build a bridge between the creative art and communication processes. I am intrigued by the branding and marketing industry and want to learn how to be successful in it. I want this project to help myself and others navigate through the highly

visual and digital age we are in. There is a lack of emphasis on the importance of visual communication and design. I want to highlight how crucial these elements are to both a company's monetary success and success growing a meaningful client base. I want to demonstrate that messages can be conveyed powerfully and effectively through visual mediums. I want to display my creativity, along with everything I have been learning in school.

My goal for the future is to work as some form of a designer. I am open to working for a singular company, doing freelance projects, or maybe one day having my own business. I would love to work in the fashion industry. I feel that the fashion industry needs to change and needs more voices that care about sustainability and consumer experiences. I want sustainability to be a mindset. When we are living a more sustainable life in general, our shopping and purchasing habits will naturally change. I think this project will be a great opportunity to learn more about visual communication and branding. The marketing world is constantly evolving due to changes in products, technology, and trends, and this project would be a great starting point for understanding it. I think a project like this would be amazing to show future employers what I am capable of producing as a designer and communicator.

### **Larger Context:**

Developing and implementing an effective brand image can greatly affect success in a saturated market (Kohli, 2002). Image, strategy, and identity act as the personality of a brand. Brand identity motivates consumers to purchase from, recognize, and be loyal to a brand (Ianeko, 2020). On average, the intangible identity of a brand, accounts for one-third of the brand's total value, meaning that brand identity is not something to ignore (Kirk, 2013). The way a brand communicates their identity, or personality, is through design. While most designs are aesthetically pleasing; the real purpose of a design is to accurately communicate an intended message. In markets with thousands of options, having a strong brand identity and effectively communicating it are priorities. More and more consumers are seeking out brands that produce sustainably and ethically. Understanding how to communicate these brand values through designs is crucial to gaining valuable customers. This thesis is important because strong image and visual communication are paramount to a brand's success and growth.

Visual elements have taken over brand advertising (Phillips, 2014). Verbal components, like slogans, used to be a driving force, but visuals are now the main source of communication in the marketing industry. A defining visual element of brand identity is the logo. In the same way that brand identity acts as the personality, the logo acts as the face of the brand. A strong logo design must clearly communicate the message of the brand, be versatile, and distinctive (Fogarty, 2019). The visual elements like logo and color scheme, combined with the strategies, values, and products become the brand

identity. Some visual elements may seem small, but when they are crafted with intention they contribute to a strong brand identity. This thesis will demonstrate communication through visual elements, and in the process, reinforce the value of design.

A brand that has successfully created a strong brand identity is MATE the Label. MATE the Label shows that sustainability is a personality trait of their brand. Consumers are drawn to companies with similar traits and values as themselves. MATE the Label attracts customers that either already do or want to care about sustainability. Not only are their clothes produced sustainably, they contribute to nonprofit organizations advocating for environmental issues, and they provide education to customers about sustainability. These characteristics help the brand to stand out and draw in loyal, returning customers. MATE the Label's visual elements and products are rooted in simplicity. The logo of the brand is economic and clearly communicates the focus on simplicity. They have a neutral color scheme that stays true to the clean and organic nature of the brand. All the elements work together and create a cohesive brand identity. MATE the Label will serve as a model of strong brand image and visual communication for this thesis. This project will use real world examples and my own unique creation to show the importance of image, communication, and brand identity.

### **Methods/Process:**

For my thesis, I will be exploring the creative process of developing and branding a sustainable and ethical fashion company. There are thousands of clothing companies, but I want to build a brand that focuses on mindset and community, as I feel these are things missing in the fashion industry.

I will start by developing the brand concept. This will include naming the brand and beginning to develop its identity. A potential name for the brand is ReNew Clothing. I like that this leans toward the sustainability side and I think this name would be perfect for the brand to expand into consignment. I also like the monogram RC and think that would work well for other design elements. I will specify what the brand is intended to sell as I think this will help give context to the designs. Brand identity development will include the core values and goals of the brand - some core values I know will be included are sustainability and inclusion. I will also identify my hypothetical customers in this section. This will be important because I need to know who I am marketing towards and who I want to be attracted to this brand. I will identify key characteristics of the brand and our customer. Some ideas for this include "timeless and clean."

Once I have identified the brand and its identity, I will make mood boards to gain inspiration and get myself thinking visually. A mood board is a collage of images, whether they be textures, colors, quotes, fonts, etc., that evoke a certain style or concept. These mood boards will contain images of my own and from others and will serve as a

starting point for visualizing the brand's image and vibe. These images will be intentionally selected with the key characteristics of the brand in mind.

I will then start working on the logo for the brand. I will start by making the logo in black and white. This will ensure that the design is strong and does not rely too heavily on color. There will be a primary and secondary logo, and potentially, a badge and/or monogram element. I will then start working on the color scheme for the brand. I believe I want to use organic colors, but I am open to adding a pop or two of more vibrant colors. Something important to me is that the brand does not seem too trendy or too high end. I think a good way to avoid this is to use unique colors. With the use of color theory, I will not limit myself to existing color schemes. My goal is that the logo would mostly be used in color, but that it would still be effective and interesting without it.

While the name and logo are the core of branding, there is much more that builds on top to establish the full identity and image of the brand. To show this, I am going to create a poster and packaging design. The poster design will be formatted for multiple mediums. I will think more about trends than I did with the logo, because it needs to draw in consumers that are not already familiar with the brand. Ideally, I will incorporate some of my own photography into this poster. Photography is a huge part of branding and marketing, and I think using my own photography would be a nice way to incorporate myself into the brand. My goal for package design is to include price tags and wrapping paper. This design will be rooted in sustainability, so if the plan was implemented the packaging would be made from recycled materials.

My thesis will serve as a branding plan that showcases my brand as a whole. I will present my brand (logo, color scheme, other elements) through brand boards. This will display the designs in a way that is more engaging than just on a blank white background. I would ideally include some mockups of ways the logo specifically could be incorporated into more than just a digital image. Throughout the project I will include images of my process. This will include designs that did not make the final product and show different iterations. I think this will be a nice insight into my working process and show the creative process of trial and error well.

In my actual thesis, I will not only detail my creative process and provide examples of my branding and logo creation. I will also write a reflective section that details best practices I learned from existing brands, both good and bad, and the ways that my own creative process was influenced by professional work in the field.

### **Working Bibliography with Select Annotations**

Fogarty, M. (2019). The Process of Creating a Successful Brand. Liberty University  
<https://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1963&context=honors>

Ianenکو, M., Stepanov, M., & Mironova, L. (2020). Brand identity development. E3S Web of Conferences, 164, 9015. <https://doi.org/10.1051/e3sconf/202016409015>

This paper defines brand identity as the specific facets of the brand. This includes the character of the brand, as well as its goals and values. Brand identity can be seen as a strategic concept and plays a major role in the process of brand recognition. The brand identity is also the element that forms the brand image. This paper has an algorithm for developing brand identity that has things to consider and questions to ask when doing so.

Jansone, I. (2012). Branding and Visual Identity. Case: Kikerigu. [https://www.theseus.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/43823/Jansone\\_Ivanda.pdf?sequence=1](https://www.theseus.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/43823/Jansone_Ivanda.pdf?sequence=1)

This thesis provides a guide for creating a consistent brand image and visual identity. The thesis defines a brand as an idea. A brand is the experience and represents the “personality” of the company. Brands account for 75% of the value of the company and a well designed brand builds respect and loyalty from customers. Brand values and key words are the core of any brand and create unity. A successful brand begins with passion to see the future in a new creative way.

Kenny, Brian. (2020, August 4). Cold Call: Glossier Built a Cult Brand and a Digital Community, but What’s Next?. Apple Podcasts. *Harvard Business Review*. <https://podcasts.apple.com/bw/podcast/glossier-built-a-cult-brand-and-a-digital/id1156646189?i=1000487073621>

Kim, M. J., & Lim, J. H. (2019). A comprehensive review on logo literature: research topics, findings, and future directions. *Journal of Marketing Management*, 35(13-14), 1291-1365. <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/0267257X.2019.1604563?needAccess=true>

Kirk, Leslie E., (2013). "Visual Branding In Graphic Design". Honors Theses. 127. [https://aquila.usm.edu/honors\\_theses/127](https://aquila.usm.edu/honors_theses/127)

Kohli, C., & Suri, R. (2002). Creating effective logos: Insights from theory and practice. *Business Horizons*, 45(3), 58-64. [https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Chiranjeev-Kohli/publication/4884944\\_Creating\\_effective\\_logos\\_Insights\\_from\\_theory\\_and\\_practice/links/5bc7c1b0299bf17a1c57c4aa/Creating-effective-logos-Insights-from-theory-and-practice.pdf](https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Chiranjeev-Kohli/publication/4884944_Creating_effective_logos_Insights_from_theory_and_practice/links/5bc7c1b0299bf17a1c57c4aa/Creating-effective-logos-Insights-from-theory-and-practice.pdf)

Machado, J. C., de Carvalho, L. V., Torres, A., & Costa, P. (2015). Brand logo design: examining consumer response to naturalness. *The Journal of Product & Brand Management*, 24(1), 78–87. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JPBM-05-2014-0609>

This paper explores how logo design characteristics influence consumer response and emotions. The study compares three logo styles - abstract, cultural, and organic. Researchers hypothesized that organic logos would be the best received based on the suggestion that humans have an innate preference for natural and organic forms. The findings show that organic logo design, which refers to logos that depict “biological objects”, i.e. flowers, fruits, objects from the natural world, produce the highest percentage of positive affect toward the logo.

MATE the Label <https://matethelabel.com/>

MATE the Label is an ethical and sustainable fashion brand. Their mission is “To provide people everywhere with essentials that are clean from seed to skin”. The company is rooted in simplicity that extends from their products and into their branding. MATE the Label adheres to a strict style and color palette that unifies the brand across multiple platforms. They have a defined image and values that translate through visual design elements.

Phillips, B. J., McQuarrie, E. F., & Griffin, W. G. (2014). The Face of the Brand: How art directors understand visual brand identity. *Journal of advertising*, 43(4), 318-332. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00913367.2013.867824>

(JT)

## **Keeping Teens Involved (14)**

Advisor: Dr. Kenneth Carano, Education and Leadership Division

Student Pronouns: He/Him/His

Thesis/Project Genre(s): Scholarly

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### **Abstract:**

High school athletics and extracurricular activities are staples of the school community and play a vital role in keeping students focused on school, as confirmed by increased GPA and better attendance records. However, students often drop out of school activities even though many have been involved for years even with all the benefits that are associated for reasons that are not their fault. Poor instruction from the adults in charge has directly led to almost every avoidable negative situation students cite as their reasons for quitting. Schools should provide a wide array of activities, ranging from the arts to athletics, and those activities should also be well-supervised by school staff. Some schools are better than others at running afterschool programs; however, restructuring the afterschool activity system to benefit students is not the goal of this project. Instead I will be focusing my attention on what every school, administrator, or instructor should do to, within the current system, help their students succeed in their various activities. To do this I will need to compile strategies that schools, coaches, and parents can use to help either increase participation or retain the students they currently have.

### **Personal Interest:**

I have always been involved in extracurricular activities in some form or another. I have played instruments like handbells and the violin; competed in soccer and basketball; and been part of clubs and organizations like the National Honors Society. There are some lessons that are not taught in the classroom that I learned from participating in a wide variety of activities. Learning how to be patient with myself and trusting my instructors came as a part of playing the violin and handbell. My leadership and teamwork skills have been honed in over my 15 years of playing soccer and being captain of the team for the four years in high school. The importance of community service and making goals in the classroom were byproducts of my involvement in the National Honors Society. While some kids are even more involved than I was there are many more that did not take advantage of those opportunities especially as they got older.

Today high school is far behind me but I still find ways to get involved, but that always was not so. My freshman year at WOU I did not participate in any clubs or

activities that the university offered and would occasionally make an appearance at some events. That all changed during my sophomore year when I joined the men's club soccer team, started participating in intramural sports, and got a job at the university working in the Health and Wellness Center. During such a difficult year like 2020, those activities kept me working hard on my studies even when motivation was hard to come by. Now as a junior I am the vice president of the club soccer team and one of the club sports and intramural supervisors for the Health and Wellness Center.

As an education major aiming to teach high school, it is important to me that students are not only able to participate in after-school activities but also that those students keep participating in those activities. I also want to continue to give students the opportunities and experiences I had with after-school activities which means implementing good practices. This project will help me learn valuable skills I can use every day with my students to help support them and I will be able to more effectively teach and coach students. To be the best educator I can be, I need as many strategies as I can get to lift my students up to their full potential, and with this project, I plan to add on some of those new skills.

### **Larger Context:**

High school students who participate in after-school programs are going to be benefits to their performance in school. Numerous studies have shown that such participation improves GPA and attendance records. The National Federation of State High School Associations, NFHS, organizes many aspects of high school athletics, and they cite independent studies that document improvement in GPA and attendance due to activity participation. One such study involved 300 Minnesota high schools, concluding that the student-athlete GPA was at 2.84 compared to the 2.68 GPA of non-student athletes. The same goes for attendance and that same study showed that student-athletes missed 7.4 days and non-student athletes missed 8.8 days (NFHS). Because the advantages of participating in afterschool programs are so great, we need to ensure that there are as many students involved as possible.

Every school district is going to be different, but there are things we can do to help our young people in such a vulnerable time in their lives. There are little changes we can make as adults and administrators in the structure of clubs and sports that will dramatically reduce dropout rates and improve retention. Tactics like reducing time commitments, positive enforcement coaching styles, offering increased responsibilities, waiting to specialize, and prioritizing enjoyment rather than results will all help kids stay involved. Diana Simeon, an editorial consultant for Your Teen magazine, echoes some of the same ideas by saying "A good coach can change lives. A bad coach will make your teenager miserable and, worse, miss out on all the valuable life lessons sports can offer." When we boil down the reasons kids quit it ultimately comes down to decisions

made by the instructors and the parents putting too much pressure on their children. This is a commonly held belief and one that is also held by registered psychologist Richard Fryer who writes, "A recent study of youth soccer participants found more than half reported performance pressure with the main sources being teammates, parents, coaches and even themselves." We have to make sure that parents and coaches are doing their jobs and not pushing their kids too hard.

What I want to accomplish with this project is to establish the importance of afterschool programs and then show how we can help students with little changes made at home, classroom, or in practice. All the changes mentioned are relatively easy to accomplish because they do not require restructuring of entire school districts but just need smaller changes from those closest to our future generation to help them grow and succeed. These tactics are intended for teachers, coaches, and parents to consider and implement into their best practices.

### **Methods/Process:**

In my thesis project I want to take a scholarly approach to examine why kids drop out of afterschool programs like sports and clubs even though they are beneficial to their performance in school. Since most kids leave their sports or activities right before or during high school I want to focus on what can be done for the kids in grades 9-12. During this time kids are leaving the activities they have been participating in for years while there are even more opportunities to get involved in afterschool activities.

The first concept I want to make clear are the benefits of afterschool and extracurricular activities by showing that they reduce dropout rates and increase student GPAs and improve attendance records. Much research has already been done on this subject and there is already a clear link between being involved and improved school performance. There are also intangible benefits to these activities like leadership and time management. My goal of writing about the benefits is to establish the importance of those activities whether they are sports or not.

After I establish the importance of student involvement, I want to look into why students drop their activities. There are a number of reasons why kids quit their extracurricular activities but I want to focus on a few key details. One of the, if not the most, important reasons why kids quit those activities is because they are no longer having fun, so I want to look into the factors that play into the kids losing their joy in participation. The whole point of participating in after-school activities is to learn something new, and if the people teaching the new skill are inadequate, that heavily influences the kids and their decision to keep participating. I am not going to write a manual on how to be a good coach or instructor, but I will talk about what bad coaching or instructing does to the student and why it makes them want to quit. While these

activities can help students learn time management skills there is a difference between having time to manage and no time at all which is what students are facing now.

The goal for my project is not to lay out a framework for a school district to restructure how they do their extracurricular activities but instead to compose some of the best strategies schools and parents can implement to help retain student involvement. Showing up to a school with a layout of budget changes to funding activities and a plan to execute that plan would be too much. I still want my ideas to be heard by teachers, coaches, and parents, so my work will provide a foundation for improvement that highlights all the important information. Best practices that should be included in the final project will be concepts like positive coaching, waiting to specialize, and time management along with ideas for how those practices will also be included.

My project will probably never lead to systemic changes throughout the public school system, but if I can reach out to even a handful of educators and show them new ways of teaching then it will be a success. I can start with reaching out to former teachers and coaches and letting them see my work and then coordinating with them on how to get the information out to more parents and instructors. My work will also be digitally published on the Honors Digital Commons website, so it will outlast, and be available beyond, my time at WOU.

### **Working Bibliography, with Select Annotations**

Burke, Christine. "High School Activities Have Become 'All or Nothing' and It's Unacceptable." *Grown and Flown*, 2 Sept. 2021, <https://grownandflown.com/too-many-high-school-activities/>.

Burke writes about her own personal experience with extracurricular activities and the experiences her son is going through as a 15-year-old. She stresses that high schoolers have too much on their plate for just one activity saying her son would have to not participate in track and scouts because he got the lead in the school play. Additionally, it is emphasized that there are only 168 hours in a week so there is not enough time to dedicate all our time and energy into and activities have become too time demanding.

Collins, Micheal G. *Coaching Like Your Daughters Are on the Team: A Father's Guide to Team Development, Winning and Having an Impact*. Amazon KDP Publishing, 2020.

"The Case for High School Activities." *NFHS*, <https://www.nfhs.org/articles/the-case-for-high-school-activities/>.

Fryer, Richard. "Why Kids Quit Sport." *BelievePerform*, 12 Sept. 2019, <https://believeperform.com/kids-quit-sport/>.

As a registered psychologist and father Fryer has a unique vantage point that he can evaluate youth activities from. He spends most of the article laying out reasons why kids quit sports. Whether the sport is not fun anymore or setbacks by injury there are many reasons why participation drops. Time demands and the confidence of the children were also addressed along with some tips for addressing these issues like prioritizing enjoyment.

Long, Kimberly. "4 Ways to Get Students Interested in Extracurricular Clubs (Opinion)." *Education Week*, Education Week, 20 Feb. 2019, <https://www.edweek.org/teaching-learning/opinion-4-ways-to-get-students-interested-in-extracurricular-clubs/2015/02>.

Some kids participate in the same activities their whole lives but it is necessary to recruit new members into the fold to keep the club healthy. Long recommends to pitch the club like a salesperson, adapt the club to the individuals in it, let the students take on leadership roles within the club, and to build traditions that they will remember. The purpose of these strategies is to help make the club memorable for the students which will also help recruit new ones into the club.

Loveless, Becton. "Guide on Extracurricular Activities for High School Students." *Extracurricular Activities (The Complete Guide)*, 2021, <https://www.educationcorner.com/k12-extracurricular-activities.html>.

Benefits to doing extracurricular activities are numerous and Loveless hits most of those advantages on the head. He claims with supporting evidence that students that participate have high GPAs, lowers chances of getting involved in risky situations, and helps with college admission. However, he also addresses the drawbacks of doing activities outside of the classroom. Burnout and potential grade slipping are cited as two drawbacks of extracurricular activities but with effective time management, those can be dealt with.

Miner, Julianna W. "Why 70 Percent of Kids Quit Sports by Age 13." *The Washington Post*, WP Company, 24 Oct. 2021, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/parenting/wp/2016/06/01/why-70-percent-of-kids-quit-sports-by-age-13/>.

O'Brien, Eileen, and Mary Rollefson. "Extracurricular Participation and Student Engagement." *Extracurricular Participation And Student Engagement*, National Center for Education Statistics, June 1995, <https://nces.ed.gov/pubs95/web/95741.asp>.

O'Donnell, Alexander William, and Gerry Redmond. "The Kids Who'd Get the Most out of Extracurricular Activities Are Missing out – Here's How to Improve Access." *The Conversation*, 19 Oct. 2021, <https://theconversation.com/the-kids-whod-get-the-most-out-of-extracurricular-activities-are-missing-out-heres-how-to-improve-access-169447>.

Simeon, Diana. "When Sports Go Wrong for Teenagers (and Parents)." *Your Teen Magazine*, 10 Aug. 2021, <https://yourteenmag.com/sports/teenagers-and-team-sports>.

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