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## SHP Final Write-Up

### The Process

In Honors 2000, we were challenged with a big task: identify a problem in the world and fix it. Although our professors did not mean this literally, the assignment was created to challenge our beliefs and allow everyone to express topics that interested them. Whether this was human rights and equality, environmental debates, health and wellness or educational reform, the topics identified were discussed thoroughly. The first few weeks of the semester were spent exploring topics and having group discussion among our honors college peers. We began to brainstorm, creating learning maps full of “problems” that we would be interested in tackling. This group discussion and collaboration was vital to the entire process and challenged each of us to think outside the box and listen to what others had to say. Over the weeks, research topics were narrowed down, and we could join groups based on shared interests.

Once groups and research topics were solidified, the actual work could begin. At this point in time, each of our current group members were involved in different research topics. As our honors classes progressed, the groups shifted, and members were added to the original team. From the beginning, drunk driving was an area that we identified as a problem here in Greenville and at East Carolina University. When comparing stories with each other, it was clear that we shared a common goal, help reduce the number of drunk driving accidents and educate ECU students on the dangers of getting in the car with someone under the influence. We spent several weeks researching the local statistics and bouncing off ideas with each other on how to address this overwhelming problem. At the culmination of Honors 2000, we created a presentation that was shared with our peers detailing our problem statement. We were able to educate our classmates on the statistics of drunk driving around Greenville and how each of our group members had been personally affected by this crisis. Transitioning into Honors 3000, we were able to begin a more extensive research journey, including interviewing ECU students, faculty, organizations, and ECU police as well as bringing some of our solutions to fruition.

In Honors 3000, our group gained multiple members as multiple classes were combined. This was beneficial in part because more members allowed us to work on many things all at once, but it was also detrimental because at times there seemed to be too many cooks in the kitchen. To best handle this situation, job titles were assigned to each person and small groups were created to focus on different aspects of our project. This was a great strategy because everyone was able to focus on their weekly goals and then as a group we could come together and share our progress. Among one of the small groups was the interviewers. To gain more insight and get ideas for our product, we set out to interview ECU students, professors as well as organizations in and around campus. ECU police was a great resource and interview for our team, and we were able to brainstorm even more ideas about how to tackle drunk driving in Greenville. As our interviews came to a close, a few common themes and ideas were discovered and used to further our research and product creation.

When it came time to create a “product” we had several avenues that we explored. We talked to many representatives at SAB, the student activities board at ECU and they encouraged us to create a club to spread awareness. We learned about SADD, Students Against Drunk Driving, a national organization represented at hundreds of universities across the country to

raise awareness about the dangers of drinking and driving. We considered opening a chapter here at ECU, however, this process typically takes months to years for approval and requires money to start up. We ultimately decided that we wanted to go a different route with the project. In order to address the issue head on, we discussed the idea of creating a driving service, ECU Beeper, that could be a resource for students on campus who need a ride home. Students at ECU could become drivers and receive reimbursement for their services. We considered partnering with ECU transportation so that students could use their own one-card to access the services. This idea was very exciting for us after reaching out to other universities in North Carolina who run similar services. Unfortunately, this service presented way too much liability and posed safety concerns for the drivers and students.

The classes format for honors 3000 changed to weekly presentations in front of the rest of the class and fielding questions from professors with a relentlessly direct approach. This was an effective form of making sure that progress was made each week because it was rather embarrassing to present in front of the large group and be told that what you were doing was not enough. Also, we were given the task of creating a video to present as our final for the class. This final video allowed us to detail our creative thought process and showcase the many trials and “pivots” we made throughout the semester. The video we created was used to inform and warn our fellow classmates about the dangers of drunk driving and what we can do to prevent drunk driving in the Greenville community.

In Honors 4500, our group lost many members as only a select few decided to continue the project on. At this point in the project, we ultimately decided that education was the most realistic option for our project. Although we had tried to create services and products, we simply didn't have the resources and legal means to continue. We came up with many educational ideas, which included partnering with TipWhip, a ride sharing service, making a video about drunk driving for orientation, and presenting an educational video to the Health 1000 classes. During this semester we also created a Twitter page, Ending Drunk Driving at ECU. In doing this, we created a platform where we could reach out to ECU students and people in the community to inform them about the dangers of drunk driving. Our Twitter account allowed us to easily share facts and statistics on drunk driving, and therefore educating fellow ECU students. Activity on this page included scary facts, funny slogans, and interactive questions to increase interest with the account. We were lucky enough to be recognized on the local Greenville news after a reporter discovered our twitter page and project mission. This was a great way for our group to continue sharing our mission statement and share statistics about drunk driving at ECU.

By the end of the semester, we decided to reach out to the Health 1000 department and ask about partnering with the professors to include a video lesson about drunk driving at ECU. After connecting with the department head, Brian Cavanaugh, we decided to move forward with the idea to make an educational video to be played during the Health 1000 classes. After showing our video we made during Honors 3000 to the new Honors 2000 class, we found that they were very engaged and entertained. Seeing that kind of response motivated us to create an entertaining yet informational video to show to freshmen for years to come.

During our final required semester for our Signature Honors Project, we made a detailed plan for the Health 1000 video. We brought our plan to our mentor in the Health Education Department, Brian Cavanaugh, to share our ideas and excitement towards this project. Unfortunately, he did not express the same enthusiasm for the concept of our video. Even though he thought it was great, he expressed that he wanted the video to go in a completely different direction altogether. He suggested that we put a unique twist on drunk driving education and

look into making the video about the victims of drunk driving instead of solely focusing on the drunk driver themselves. By the end of this meeting, we created the “It’s Not About You” campaign. The main purpose of this campaign is to put the emphasis on the people that are affected by drunk driving, not just the driver. At this point in time, the health 1000 curriculum was about to undergo major changes to restructure the topics and format of the classes, so this was perfect timing to add in a short lesson about the dangers of drunk driving and the statistics around ECU.

Aside from our work with the Health department, we have also enjoyed presenting our project to a variety of judges at the research and innovation fairs hosted by ECU. Ending Drunk Driving at ECU participated in both the RCAW presentation and the innovation fair later that week. We had a wide array of judges and community members that supported our project and believed our mission is very important in Greenville. The feedback we received from these presentations was very positive and encouraging. We were thankful for the opportunity to share what we are passionate about with others. Over the course of our entire signature honors project, our group communication increased, and we all learned valuable lessons on working together as a group and respecting others' opinions. Although the primary focus of this course is to see our projects through, we have learned many valuable lessons aside from our project. Along with group collaboration, each one of us has grown as a leader and stepped outside of our box. We have learned how to professionally interact with faculty members at ECU and community members of Greenville. We are extremely proud of the many things we have accomplished over the course of our college careers and hope that we were able to make an impact.

### Personal Reflection

My work with Ending Drunk Driving at ECU was a huge learning experience for me. As I look back on the work I did for this project, I have realized just how much I grew professionally during that time. I began working with Ending Drunk Driving at ECU as a freshman, then completed my time with it at the end of my sophomore year. During that time, I learned the importance of working effectively in a team, how to respect other team members, how to pitch an idea to a room full of critical professors, how to interview people, and how to apply research I’ve collected to a real-life problem.

Working with my Signature Honors Project group during Honors 2000 and 3000 was my first experience in working with groups in college. The diversity of our group was something that I did not have much experience with prior to college, and it was a huge learning experience. With such a diverse group of people from different backgrounds, you must learn how to respect others and their boundaries and opinions. While I personally never had any conflict with anyone in my group, I saw conflict between many group members, and it hindered our progress. Since we had projects due every week, I also learned about how to delegate tasks so that our group is working efficiently as possible.

Along with how to successfully work in teams, I learned how to receive criticism and use it to better our project. During Honors 3000, we had to present projects every week to our whole class and professors, then the professors would criticize our projects. At the time, it was stressful and extremely scary, but in hindsight I am very thankful for that experience. Through being criticized in front of our peers for our project, I learned how to have thick skin and use the

criticism for good. While some weeks were worse than others, I felt like I was always able to leave class with a better idea of the direction our group should be taking.

The last takeaway that I gained from this project was how to talk to and interview strangers. I am not outgoing and tend to be very shy around people I do not know. With that being said, one can imagine how anxious I became when I realized we had to regularly interview students, professors, and others. In conducting these interviews, I slowly found myself getting more comfortable to approach random strangers and talk to them about the matters I was curious to know more about. Once I gained the information I received from the interviews, I learned how to take that information and apply it towards our project. For example, one of our interviews was with Mr. Cavanaugh in the Department of Health Education and Promotion. We entered that interview with an idea that we believed was great and ended up leaving with a completely transformed idea that was much more sustainable. Even though that interview was a little disappointing for myself and my group members, I realized how instrumental the interview process is due to the feedback you receive.

While our project unfortunately did not carry on after Honors 4550, I am content with what we achieved during the two years of Ending Drunk Driving at ECU. We made a successful and entertaining video for our peers, started a Twitter account for Ending Drunk Driving at ECU, and presented at Research and Creative Achievement Week 2019. Among these achievements, I learned so much about working with others in a professional setting and believe that I grew so much in the professional aspect of my college career.