

1. Provide a brief abstract or summary of your Honors in Action project including the following components: academic research and analysis, leadership roles, leadership development, action, collaboration, reflection and outcomes.

We began by asking "What frontiers of thought shape the world?" We believe Nobel Peace Prize winner Malala Yousafzai answered this question when she said, "One child, one teacher, one book and one pen can change the world." Our research revealed startling statistics regarding teacher turnover rates. High-poverty schools experience an attrition rate approximately twice as high as more affluent schools. We were determined to change this statistic, if only by one teacher. Further research confirmed a surprising lack of male and minority teachers. During our interview with a recruitment expert, she stated, "More kids are from broken families in a broken society; our students reflect that, but our teachers do not." In fact, South Carolina has one of the lowest percentages of male teachers in the United States at 18.8%. We collaborated with Horry Georgetown Technical College's (HGTC) Call Me MISTER (Mentors Instructing Students Towards Effective Role Models) program director and the Boys and Girls Club (B&G). This partnership will provide B&G Club members with positive role models and potentially recruit future teachers to the Call Me MISTER (MISTER) program. We created the Let's Inspire Great Hope in Teaching (LIGHT) event to inform and recruit new teachers. Additionally, we shared recruitment information with everyone at HGTC. Committee members developed technical, organizational, professional and social skills throughout the Honors in Action (HiA) process. An unexpected outcome was we improved our academic writing skills. We learned valuable lessons pertaining to our own personal development, such as flexibility, the importance of teamwork and the need to be assertive.

2. What theme in the current Honors Program Guide did your chapter focus on?

Theme 2 Ideas and Ideologies

3. Why and by what process did you choose this theme?

During officer training, we reviewed the Honors Program guide and debated the themes, narrowing them to Theme 3 (Human Expression) and Theme 4 (Natural Environment). Officers conducted preliminary research and presented their findings to the chapter for a vote. Chapter members decided to research renewable energy sources. However, committee members struggled to find a new frontier in our local area. While riding home from Honors Institute in Albuquerque, committee members debated, decided to change the topic and brainstormed new ideas. At the next HiA meeting, a member discussed an article about the poor performance of children with ADHD in public schools. This led to a discussion about deficiencies in our educational system and changed the direction of our project to Theme 2 (Ideas and Ideologies).

4. List the 8 academic/expert sources that were most enlightening regarding multiple perspectives of the Honors Study Topic Theme you selected. Briefly explain why these were the most important sources and what you learned from each of them as you researched your Theme.

1. Burden, Jean. November 2, 2015. Program Facilitator at Center for Educator Recruitment, Retention & Advancement (CERRA). jean@cerra.org. She identified issues in recruitment and retention and the challenges of teaching children from disadvantaged backgrounds. (C. Copeland, Interviewer)

2. Deruy, Emily. March 2013. American Association for Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE). "Student Diversity is up but Teachers are Mostly White." <https://aacte.org/news-room/aacte-in-the-news/347-student-diversity-is-up-but-teachers-are-mostly-white>. This report revealed teachers do not reflect our diverse student population.

3. Hansuek, Erik, et al. May 2014. Not Just the Problems of other People's Children: US student performance in global perspective. This summary of a study by The Program for International Student Assessment (PISA), Harvard's Program

on Education Policy and Governance, illustrates how America's educational deficiencies in one location affect the entire country's national ranking.

4. Hubbard, Rebecca. October 12, 2015. HGTC Assistant Chairperson, Education Professor. She emphasized the rate of teacher attrition within their first 5 years of entering the profession. She also referred us to Jean Burden of CERRA. (C. Copeland, Interviewer)
5. National Commission on Teaching and Americas Future (NCTAF). July 2014. "It's Time to Solve the Teacher Turnover Problem." <http://nctaf.org>. This report made us aware of the chronic problem of teacher turnover and its impact on the nation's ability to ensure all students have access to great teaching and directed our project to teacher retention.
6. New Teacher Center. (Web, 2015). This report indicated the national teacher retention rate is 56%. <http://newteachercenter.org/impact/retention>
7. South Carolina State Report Card, South Carolina Department of Education. 2015. This provided performance data on local schools which we analyzed to produce a comparative spreadsheet. <http://ed.sc.gov/data/report-cards>
8. "The State of Education in South Carolina." October 27, 2015. Forum sponsored by Coastal Carolina University's Spadoni College of Education's Consortium for Educational Research and Evaluation. Presenters included: SC State Superintendent of Education; Georgetown County schools superintendent; Horry County schools superintendent; and the 2015-16 Horry County Teacher of the Year. They addressed recruiting and retaining effective teachers and principals.

5. What conclusions did your chapter reach based on your research and how did these conclusions guide you to select the action part of your project?

Our exploration began with the question, "What makes an excellent school?" Preliminary research indicated the United States ranked 28th globally in educational performance and South Carolina ranked in the bottom 10% nationally. Utilizing the South Carolina State Report Card on school performance, our research team was surprised to discover two local high schools won silver awards. In order to determine whether a single variable indicated school excellence, we created a comparative spreadsheet of all Horry and Georgetown county high schools. We found no correlation between school performance and funding per student. We reviewed data on parent/teacher conference participation and found all schools received an excellent report in this area. What is the answer to creating a better school? The most obvious answer is teachers.

A committee member attended a forum on the State of Education in South Carolina, where Horry County Teacher of the Year Joey Trail stated, "Children come to school first to be loved, second to learn." In many cases, teachers find it difficult to relate to students because their backgrounds are so different. A startling statistic is that one in five teachers at low-income schools leaves every year, a rate 50 percent higher than at more affluent schools. Mrs. Burden from CERRA confirmed that lack of teacher diversity is also an issue. She explained the teaching profession is racially imbalanced and stated, "Elementary school boys need to see more men like them." This sentiment was verified by the AACTE report which emphasized there are not enough minorities and/or males in the profession, and many female teachers come from advantaged circumstances, making it difficult to relate to children born at a disadvantage. This report also revealed students of color made up more than 45% of the PK-12 population, whereas teachers of color made up only 17.5% of the educator workforce. The MISTER program at HGTC helps disadvantaged minority males enter the teaching profession. One of our committee members is in this program and invited Professor McCallum, the program director, to teach us about this organization. From our research and interviews, we concluded we need to promote diversity in our teaching population by recruiting males and minorities. We decided to collaborate with our local B&G. We felt our project would support its mission to enable young people to reach their full potential as productive, caring and responsible citizens. We wanted to shine light on the lack of male and minority teachers in the classroom and perhaps inspire at least one child to become a teacher.

6. Summarize your objectives for this Honors in Action project and the process by which the chapter set these objectives.

Our objectives changed three times as our research led us to explore new educational frontiers. We were concerned with the United States' poor performance relative to other countries, as well as South Carolina's dismal placement nationally. We were unable to identify a single variable that clearly indicated school excellence. Research revealed teacher retention is a national and local issue. Our new objectives were to interview education and recruitment experts and local high school principals to identify strategies to increase retention. We did not anticipate the lack of cooperation from principals, but the recruitment expert interviews and our research revealed a significant lack of diversity within the teaching profession. We decided to focus on recruiting males and minority teachers and set the following objectives: Create a PowerPoint presentation to promote the teaching profession; create a survey to confirm or refute research findings related to minority and male teacher populations; create an event to inspire and recruit new teachers; and establish a relationship between B&G and MISTER to promote diversity in teaching.

7. With whom did you collaborate for this Honors in Action project?

- HGTC departments: Education, Digital Arts, Career Resource Center (CRC), Library, Sociology, Information Technology (IT)
- Professor T'mars McCallum, HGTC Program Director for MISTER
- Jean Burden, Program Facilitator at CERRA
- Grady Crawford, Executive Director, B&G Club of Horry County
- Horry and Georgetown County High School Principals

8. Describe the leadership of chapter members that contributed to the planning, preparations, and implementation of this Honors in Action project. The exercise of leadership may come from groups/committees, officers, and non-officers. Leadership roles are not necessarily those that come with "titles."

Every committee member kept an HiA journal and recorded notes and reflections for later reference during the write-up process. Our committee utilized the online collaboration tool *Trello.com* to organize research and set deadlines. Two researchers analyzed data from the South Carolina State Report Card, producing a comparative spreadsheet. Committee members shared additional findings and information from our professional interview workshop at HGTCs Career Resource Center with chapter members. The committee chairperson created and managed events on Facebook to encourage chapter participation. The interview team developed questions for fourteen local high school principals. Our advertising manager and event coordinator designed the logo and poster for our LIGHT project and created a flyer for the B&G event. The event coordinator organized our LIGHT project and collaborated with B&G and MISTER directors through phone calls, emails and meetings. Our research dissemination team created a PowerPoint presentation to share findings with the college and community. A member generated a survey using Google Forms and we posted it on our personal, chapter and Carolinas Region Facebook pages.

9. Describe leadership education and training activities taken to specifically help chapter members be more effective leaders for this Honors in Action project.

Our leadership training began with our research librarian, who led an academic workshop on utilizing the electronic library guide he created for our project. Three committee members attended Honors Institute forums in Albuquerque, including Leadership Development and Reflective Writing, where we learned the process of planning a project. At the Carolinas Region Honors Institute, members attended a pre-conference workshop entitled "What is Academic Research" conducted by the Coordinator of Library Technical Services. We learned time-saving research techniques and how to navigate the electronic library guide created for the Carolinas Region. Members also participated in the Carolinas Region

Leadership Conference workshop entitled "Be an Honors in Action Judge." We examined completed projects and judged them utilizing the rubrics to understand the depth of the writing process. Additionally, interview team members brainstormed questions for high school principals and met with an education professional and a Sociology professor to ensure objectivity and sensitivity. We requested an interview skills workshop to aid members who had never conducted a professional interview. HGTC's Career Resource Center director presented the "3 P's of Interview Success," where we learned how to prepare, practice and perform professional interviews. We also received portfolios to organize our interview notes. We discovered the CRC's clothing closet and selected business outfits for our interviews. Our advertising manager and event coordinator consulted with HGTC's Digital Arts department chairperson to learn how to convert digital files for multimedia presentations.

10. Describe the service or "action" components of this Honors in Action project that were inspired by your Honors Study Topic research. (Action can also include advocacy.)

To further investigate the concern of retention, we conducted interviews with Horry and Georgetown county high school principals. Transforming the bureaucracy of local schools was beyond our ability, so we decided to focus on recruiting new teachers. Additional research indicated a lack of males and minorities in education. The goals of the MISTER program paralleled our objective to increase teacher diversity in and male recruitment to the profession. To supplement this research, we created a survey entitled "Reflections on Elementary Education," and sixty-eight people responded. The survey was posted on personal, chapter and regional Facebook pages and our data reinforced the lack of diversity among teachers. We decided to create LIGHT to promote the recruitment of teachers. Committee members created PowerPoint slides to share research findings and encourage individuals to become teachers. These slides were broadcast on campus closed-circuit televisions to HGTC's student body. To have a more meaningful impact and ignite the spark of becoming a teacher in young minds, our event coordinator approached the local Boys and Girls Club. We created the LIGHT event to coincide with the re-opening of the teen center and recruited members to host the event. This proved to be more difficult than expected due to mandatory background checks for volunteers at B&G. We planned to present our research to middle and high school aged students, invite Professor McCallum to discuss Call Me MISTER, provide snacks and play basketball. We arranged with Sonic Drive-In to donate hot dogs. This event was originally scheduled to take place in December; however, the B&G executive director changed the date three times. This forced us to recreate flyers twice and affected our volunteer numbers. We learned that outside agencies don't operate on our academic calendar and we need to be flexible when collaborating with others. Upon reflection, we could have reached out to other organizations earlier in the process to present our project.

11. What were the quantitative and qualitative outcomes of your project, including the lessons learned by your chapter members and others?

We analyzed the South Carolina State Report Card and learned we rank in the bottom 10% nationally, yet two local high schools received Palmetto Silver Awards. Utilizing data from the report card, members created a spreadsheet containing information such as parent/teacher conference involvement and monies per student from local high schools. The committee couldn't identify a single variable that created a highly ranked school. Further research led us to understand teacher retention is a national and local concern, so we decided to interview local high school principals. Only five of the fourteen we contacted granted interviews. Two refused to answer. One stated our questions had to be presented before an advisory board, and another said he would evaluate the questions to determine if they would reflect poorly on his school. We intended our project to be beneficial and were discouraged when they refused to review our questions. We learned the school bureaucracy was powerful and our ability to enact change was limited, so we decided to change our focus from retention to recruitment.

Research indicated many schools lack male and minority teachers. Our survey results revealed 96% of respondents had three or fewer minorities, and 88% had three or fewer male teachers throughout their elementary school experience.

Some members were surprised at this finding. Our remaining survey results were inconclusive, which taught us we should have collected demographic data to provide cross-references.

As of this writing, preparations for the January 29th event are complete. The directors of B&G and MISTER are collaborating for future events. B&G Director Crawford said, "I was unaware of the Call Me Mister program. What you are doing is great."

We faced a significant challenge when several committee members did not fulfill their responsibilities during the creation of the LIGHT PowerPoint presentation, so we recruited the College Project Advertising Coordinator to assist us. These recruitment slides were shown on multiple closed-circuit television screens at all three HGTC campuses, potentially reaching 7,000 students.

We grew as scholar-servant- leaders when facing the challenges of this project. The HiA process taught us the importance of teamwork during event planning and the need to be assertive in committee meetings. We learned that not speaking up when obstacles arise hinders progress. For example, communication between committee members was sometimes unclear, leading to deadlines not being met and slowing our progress. We experienced difficulty with technology. Two committee members didn't have Microsoft Word on their personal computers, which hampered writing and sharing as we prepared interview questions and hallmark awards packages. We overcame this by working with the HGTC IT department to install Microsoft Word.

12. What is left undone or what opportunities remain for the future?

We are excited to present our LIGHT project at B&G on January 29th. We anticipate 150 children will participate and hope to inspire at least one child to become a teacher. We will continue the LIGHT project with future events at other locations. Our chapter will also help the Boys and Girls Club by adding them to our future service projects.