Ben Miller – Final Portfolio

Polished Assignments:

Assignment Drafts:

123 Street Ln
Bozeman, MT 59715

April 15, 2021

Brooke Carnwath
Montana State University
Bozeman, MT 59715

Reflection Letter

Dear Professor Carnwath,

I entered this class not very fond of writing, and I'm still not fond of it, but I am much more comfortable. Many eyes reading my writing and offering suggestions have helped me to see my writing through another's perspective, and I am much more aware of how my writing might be perceived by others. Writing in the voice of another entity has also been very helpful for seeing how differences in tone and writing style better lend themselves to different circumstances. Overall, I am much better at tailoring my writing voice than I was at the start of the class and have an easier time jumping into revisions or a new project.

I chose to order the documents chronologically to show how I progressed through the class, with the drafts placed after all the finished versions. I think my best work should be viewed first. Placing the drafts next to the final versions would encourage skimming, too, as it is harder to read the same thing twice in a row. This also counterbalances the ordering within the documents.

Complaint letter -- I had never written a letter of complaint before, so this was an interesting assignment. Usually when I have a complaint, I prefer to address the problem in person or in a vocal manner because it is much easier to address any misunderstanding than communicating over writing. The complaint letter forced me to try to address everything in such a manner that it wouldn't be misunderstood while keeping the letter concise and easily read. It was great to get feedback from my peers on this to see how they understood what I was trying to communicate and to do it better. Revising this, I rephrased my points to make the requests clearer while preserving the tone. I also directly asked for what I was requesting so the recipient could easily locate it rather than having to read the whole paragraph. Finally, I condensed the paragraphs and made each sentence logically flow to the next.

Discussion post -- I chose to revise the discussion post in response to the complaint letter and memo. This discussion post was earlier in the semester, so I had not had as much experience offering feedback and writing critique. At the start of the semester, I could recognize when there were problems with a piece, but I had a harder time pointing them out. In revising this, I removed unnecessary parts and gave more concrete feedback. I addressed aspects of the piece at multiple scopes and talked about specific parts that I thought needed improvement or that were great.

Resume -- I have been working on this resume a lot over the past year because I was trying to get an internship for the summer, so I already had this in a mostly finished form. Oddly enough, I

ended up getting full time work at MSU as a research assistant this summer, but it was from already working part time there and I didn't even need my resume. Following suggestions from *The Non-Designer's Design Book,* I reworked the format to be left aligned and used two columns. I also increased contrast to show a clear hierarchy of information and removed the section about high school. It was nice to get feedback from you on improvements and preferences for formatting. I preferred the version with the centered sections along with you, but it was good to try out the other format too. Now my resume is set up for many more years of experience and revisions.

Cover letter -- I have been putting off writing this cover letter for a while, and it was great to finally write it. Given that I am very new to the field of Computer Science and don't have a lot of experience to speak for me, I really should have written this cover letter several months ago. I never know what tone to use for a cover letter, so I chose to go with a more confident tone and focus on the work that I'm currently doing but that isn't established enough to include on my resume. It was helpful to receive feedback from you to balance it out and make it much more refined. I removed the parts where I repeated what was on my resume, and I expanded on the parts that highlight my skills and projects. Revising it with feedback helped me strike a balance between the experience I am getting and the experience I already have while highlighting skills that would be helpful to my employer.

Proposal -- This paper was an interesting challenge as my peers and I made contributions to each section separately, then I had to expand on them to fill in gaps in detail and unify the piece. I tried to preserve each of my peers' writing voices while also creating one unified voice; I reframed their arguments for the project to be centered around the members of FFA rather than just the state officers or the association itself and made sure citations were used uniformly and properly. Revising the document for the initial post was a lot of work, but feedback from my peers helped me realize that I should have been even more aggressive with my edits. The tone was still too uneven. My final revisions were centered around producing an even more cohesive and concise document rather than preserving individual voices and condensing sections for better flow. Looking back on it now, I realize that preserving individual voices within a single piece is jarring to the reader.

This class has been very educational. I am much more acquainted with the writing process and what I can do to feel comfortable with new projects and revising. While I'm still not a fan of writing, I have found ways to make it fun and feel much better about the final product. The best aspect of this class has been the interactive feedback, and while it makes the assignments harder, it has made my awareness of the reader's perception much clearer. It was also good to get experience in a group setting here before I have to write with a group outside of college or in a job. I am a much more versatile writer now than I was at the beginning of the semester.

Thank you

Ben Miller

January 30, 2021

Snow Removal Crew
MSU Family and Graduate Housing
1502 W Garfield St
Bozeman, MT 59715

Dear Snow Removal Crew,

Thank you for consistently and thoroughly plowing walkways around campus early each morning. This allows for easy and safe walking to classes, taking out trash, and checking mail. However, the ice patch near the mailboxes in Branegan Court is often large and too slick to walk across. Additionally, the walkway to my door is plowed in such a manner that the original path is inaccessible for a stretch.

Would you gravel the ice patch more frequently? It is constantly much more icy than other areas. I know that the patch cannot be permanently addressed during this season because it is caused by a low spot, but it would be nice if it were leveled in the summer. It usually takes several days after a snowstorm for the patch to be salted or graveled. The other Branegan tenants and I almost always take a wide berth around the patch until then. If this patch were salted or graveled more frequently, or a path was plowed around it, this spot would not be a problem.

My rental agreement states that walkways to doors are not part of the snow removal area, but this area has always been plowed while I've lived here. As it is now, there is a stretch on the walkway as large as the ice patch that is either muddy, or just as slick because it is not plowed over the asphalt. Would you plow a couple feet over the walkway, please?

The snow removal crew does an excellent job. With just these two modifications, I would say the snow removal crew does a perfect job. For further questions, I can be reached at ben.miller12@student.montana.edu or by cell at 406-800-8000.

Sincerely,

Ben Miller

Ben Miller

Hello Alyssa,

Your formatting is very good! A physical signature would have improved the letter, though I appreciate that you signed it with a scripty font. I like how you organized the information, going from the information to the story, then to the requests, and the conclusion. On my computer, the salutation runs onto a second page. If you could shorten it a little or make the font size 11.5, it would fit nicely.

On a non-writing note, though I understand your wish to remain cordial with the claim's manager, I think you could have taken a slightly more aggressive stance in your first and last paragraphs. However, given that you want to stay more cordial with the claim's manager, I think they have a good tone. Getting conjunctivitis in both eyes from an eyelash application almost seems like grounds for a lawsuit, especially with how much evidence you have!

You use the active voice throughout most of the letter except for the first paragraph and once in the third. I think that if you used the active voice in those spots as well, it would be a little more consistent and would better signal the severity of the situation.

There are some opportunities to boost concision here, too. You could remove "as a whole" from the second paragraph and "I have been informed" from the first, and there are some other spots that could be shortened as well. The comma in the second to last sentence of the second paragraph could also be removed.

Overall, I think it is a very well written letter. You make a clear case and deserve compensation. It is very easy to read and **the call to action is great**. If you could also include some of your evidence, like the photos, this letter would be impossible to ignore.

Ben Miller

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EDUCATION

Montana State University   Aug. 2019 – Expected May 2023
Bachelor of Science in Computer Science, Professional Option, Honors, GPA: 3.97   *Bozeman, MT*

Data Structures and Algorithms | Computer/Robot Vision | Data Mining | Web Design
Intermediate Statistics | Intro to Linear Algebra | Calc I and II | Discrete Structures

PROJECTS

Audalign | *Python, Git, GitHub Actions, NumPy, Scipy, Pydub*   Feb. 2020 – Present
- Python package for aligning a collection of recordings of the same event
- Published to PyPI and created a CI/CD workflow with GitHub Actions
- Uses noise removal and a variety of fingerprinting and visual alignment techniques

Pi keyboard | *Python, ssh, Raspberry Pi, Cron, Git*   June 2020 – July 2020
- Set up a Raspberry Pi Zero W as a USB keyboard
- Can read text files or take user input and send as keyboard input to PC
- Used Crontab to turn on my PC daily

Command Line Money Tracker | *Python, Git, Pandas, Matplotlib*   Dec. 2019 – March 2020
- Command line app to keep track and manage income and purchases
- Uses graphs and a search interface to provide data on cash flow

WORK EXPERIENCE

Undergraduate Research Assistant   February 2020 – Present
Montana State University – Part-time   *Bozeman, MT*
- Design and create an audio fingerprinting system, Audalign, to align forensic audio
- Work with Dr Maher and other research assistants to solve creative problems
- Research and present my findings and methods to my team

Farm and Fencing Crew Foreman   May 2015 – Present
Miller Farms – Full-time Seasonal   *Glasgow, MT*
- Direct three to five employees and maintain safety standards and efficiency
- Manage design and procedures for projects and plan logistical maneuvers
- Build and maintain cattle fences, manage cows, fix and build corals, and perform various farm duties

Sound Designer   July 2018 – Aug. 2018
Fort Peck Summer Theater – Part-time   *Fort Peck, MT*
- Attended production meetings to plan and create engaging sound
- Winterized, stored, and inspected computers and sound production equipment
- Operated equipment and mixing board during show for cast of 25 people

ACHIEVEMENTS

MSU Presidential Scholarship | MUS Honors Scholarship | Local NHS Scholarship
MSU President's List Spring and Fall 2020 | MSU Dean's List Fall 2019

TECHNICAL SKILLS

Languages: Python, Java, C, C++, bash, HTML/CSS, R
Developer Tools: Git, GitHub, Pytest, Linux, AWS
General: Audio Systems, Welding (Arc, Wire), Soldering, Roofing

Ben Miller

September 27, 2021

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Dear Ms. Robinson,

I am excited to apply for the Computational Sciences Undergraduate Internship Program. I am specifically interested in the summer internship but am open to year-round as well. With a year and a half of research experience at MSU and a passion for working with servers, cloud technology, and raspberry pi's, I think I am a good fit for this position. I met with LANL representatives at the Montana State University Job Fair in the fall and am glad to follow up with this application.

As indicated in my resume, the most significant work I did in the Computer Science field is my work with Dr. Maher developing a python package to align forensic audio files. This project required various audio and image processing techniques as well as implementing existing technologies to get the most robust alignment possible. I worked with Dr. Maher and another undergraduate researcher to investigate enhancements, evaluate metadata to determine sources and possible tampering, and ultimately publish the package on PyPI. I also spent the last six years working on the family farm where I managed a team of three to five employees and directed operations. This taught me a lot about leading a team, dealing with interpersonal conflict, and the full process of designing and implementing projects. My current coursework, namely the computer/robot vision and data mining classes, are a good fit for LANL's big data and machine learning research areas.

Not indicated in my resume is my interest in developing computer vision and web apps to deploy on raspberry pi's. Most of my work outside of school and research for the past several months has been spent working on an automated trading and financial analysis program using mongo dB and flask. I have also added a pdf template and email service to send me interesting findings. Additionally, I am putting together various computer vision mini apps on a raspberry pi 4 and building a physical interface to switch between them. Learning and applying what I know to build useful projects and collaborate with others to build even more useful applications is what I like most about this field, and it is what I think most qualifies me for this position.

Thank you for your time; I would be happy to discuss the program and my application further and can be reached by phone at (XXX-XXX-XXXX) or email at (email@email.com).

Sincerely,

Ben Miller

<center>**NON-PROFIT PROJECT PROPOSAL**</center>

To: Brooke Carnwath, WRIT 221 students
From: WRIT 221, Group 1; Ben, Anna, Jack, and Alyssa
Date: April 9, 2021
Subject: FFA Non-Profit Writing Proposal

Background

Once, FFA stood for Future Farmers of America. This was changed in 1988 to simply, "The National FFA Organization" to represent all fields of agriculture. FFA is a "dynamic youth organization that changes lives and prepares members for premier leadership, personal growth and career success through agricultural education." FFA was founded by a group of young farmers in 1928 and has grown significantly since then, totaling over 760,000 members ages 12-21 across all 50 states today. (About Us)

FFA's online presence is focused on recent events, member accomplishments, and materials to help members grow personally and professionally. Larger FFA programs, e.g. conferences, also contain a large element of networking, as members are encouraged to work with and find new friends in chapters around the state while state officers work with other officers across the nation. The communication skills, outreach, hard work, and perseverance needed for our agriculturalists are practiced in such events. Local events also encourage community engagement and various other skills.

The backbone of this program is the agricultural educators. According to the FFA, there are over 13,000 advisors and teachers that provide cutting-edge education to the youth and prepare them for exemplifying leadership and giving them the tools necessary to succeed in their endeavors. Not only do 92 percent of the program's teachers focus on teaching agriscience, "71 percent offer biotechnology, 59 percent offer agricultural mechanics; 49 percent offer horticulture; 43 percent offer animal science, and 24 percent offer environment-related" (About Us).

Within the Montana FFA Association, there are over 90 chapters in high schools across the state. Eight State Officers are elected at the annual State Convention. These eight leaders, between 18-20 years of age, put on workshops, lead meetings, and organize correspondence for all affairs of the organization. Funding for these trips and events comes from the Montana FFA Foundation or grants. However, there is still a need to support these leaders. (Montana FFA)

Communication Needs

After the COVID-19 pandemic hit in March 2020, many of the Montana FFA State Officers' trips were canceled, limiting the experiences of the membership. Students now miss opportunities to learn and network with others. In a normal year, the State Officers will go thousands of miles on commodity tours, presenting at conventions and schools. This year, the State Officers rarely traveled.

FFA is fundamentally about helping students develop skills to prepare them for their futures. The ability to hold events, organize community projects, and work with leaders in the community is key to getting these students the experience they need to develop as professionals and is central to the value of FFA. Especially this last year, it has been tough to raise funds and follow through with educational events.

Our proposal is to provide more leadership opportunities for members, specifically in Montana. This will be accomplished through funding for safe, distanced travel and virtual events. These opportunities will encourage students to seek more knowledge and capability in FFA competitions and events. Without such opportunities, students may feel as if there is nothing to do in an organization like FFA or that it is not helping them develop necessary skills for their future.

One of our group members, Anna, is an FFA Alumni member and past State Officer and has experience encouraging higher levels of participation. This plan correlates with past FFA outreach and will help counteract dropping participation from the COVID-19 pandemic. Increased activity within the organization will lead to increased engagement within chapters and draw more students to the organization. The opportunities planned will include webinars, competitions, and panels of career professionals.

Solution Documents

To assist FFA's mission, we will be creating a fundraising letter, a newsletter, and a social media ad. The fundraising letter will help raise necessary funds, and the newsletter and social media ad will both help secure funding and gather the community and members around specific events.

FFA's primary colors are National Blue and Corn Gold. The national FFA website has a more laid-back design, which emphasizes the content of the page, while the Montana website is much bolder and eye-catching with more images of students and events. The Montana website is more focused on the members and events and has a more community-oriented feel. As we are primarily writing for the Montana FFA section, our documents will also be centered on the community and feature a bolder design. (Media and Brand Center)

Further details on the FFA brand and design can be found here: https://www.ffa.org/media-center/.

- **Fundraising Letter:** Our fundraising letter will bring in money for FFA on a state and local level. With the money raised via the fundraising letter, members of FFA will be able to attend state-wide conferences and reconnect with a vast network of fellow members. Necessary funds will help advance teaching plans for advisors as well as increase the capacity of material learned. We will be sending this letter to all previous members of FFA and families of current members. The tone of this letter will be persuasive in hopes to bring in as much donations as possible.
- **Flyer:** The flyer will increase awareness and planning for activities. We're planning on posting flyers in high schools across Montana to inform current members of events as

well as public areas like parks and grocery stores. The flyers will give information about FFA current events and information about upcoming meetings. Our flyer will be simplistic and catch the attention of the reader.

- **Facebook Ad:** Our Facebook ad will raise community awareness of activities and FFA needs. The ad will inform current and potential new members of upcoming events hoping to bring a higher member count to activities. Facebook is one of the more used social media platforms by a wider range of age groups therefore, we believe we could cover the most ground this way. The Facebook ad will be informative while concise and straightforward. While we will reach members this way, we are hoping lots of parents will see these Facebook ads so they can keep track of what members are participating in and how FFA is advancing.

Works Cited

"About Us." National FFA Organization, 18 Nov. 2020, www.ffa.org/about/.

"Media & Brand Center." National FFA Organization, 16 Feb. 2021, www.ffa.org/media-center/.

Montana FFA, montanaffa.org/.

Montana FFA. montanaffa.org/who-we-are/.

123 Street Ln
Bozeman, MT 59715

April 10, 2021

Brooke Carnwath
Montana State University
Bozeman, MT 59715

<div align="center">Reflection Letter</div>

Dear Prof. Carnwath,

I entered this class not very fond of writing, and I'm still not fond of it, but I am much more comfortable. Many eyes reading my writing and offering suggestions have helped me to see my writing through another's perspective, and I am much more aware of how my writing might be perceived by others. Writing in the voice of another entity has also been very helpful for seeing how differences in tone and writing style better lend themselves to different circumstances. Overall, I am much better at tailoring my writing voice than I was at the start of the class and have an easier time jumping into revisions or a project.

I chose to order the documents chronologically to show how I progressed through the class better. They go in this order: reflection letter, complaint letter, discussion post, resume, cover letter, non-profit proposal, then receipt. The receipt caps the project, in a way showing my growth in the areas of revision and cooperative writing. The reflection letter is first as required. I chose to place the drafts after all the finished versions because I think my best work should be viewed first. Placing the drafts next to the final versions would encourage skimming, too, as it is harder to read the same thing twice in a row. Ordering them this way also counterbalances the chronological order of the documents with them leading up to my best work while ending with the worst.

Complaint letter -- I had never written a letter of complaint before, so this was an interesting assignment. Usually when I have a complaint, I prefer to address the problem in person or in a vocal manner. It is much easier to address any misunderstanding when you are talking to someone because you can handle it in the moment. The conversation never has to move on before both parties are completely understood. Writing the complaint letter forced me to try to address everything in such a manner that it wouldn't be misunderstood; I also had to keep the letter concise and easily read. It was great to get feedback from my peers on this to see how they understood what I was trying to communicate and to do it better. Revising this, I rephrased my points to make the requests clearer while preserving the tone.

Discussion post -- I chose to revise the discussion post in response to the complaint letter and memo. This discussion post was earlier in the semester, so I had not had as much experience offering feedback and writing critique. I also felt this was an important assignment to give feedback on for the reasons I stated in the complaint letter section and because it has the largest ability to ruin someone's day. It is important for feedback to be balanced, pointing out the good

aspects along with the bad. I have become blunter in my feedback throughout the semester because I think it is nicer to just say what I have to say rather than draw it out. In revising this, I shortened it a bit and had more concrete feedback to give than when I initially wrote it.

Resume -- I have been working on this resume a lot over the past year because I was trying to get an internship for the summer, so I already had this in a mostly finished form. Oddly enough, I ended up getting full time work at MSU as a research assistant this summer, but it was from already working part time there and I didn't even need my resume. Following suggestions from *The Non-Designer's Design Book*, I reworked the format to be left aligned and used two columns. I also increased contrast to show a clear hierarchy of information and removed the section about high school. It was nice to get feedback from Professor Carnwath on improvements and preferences for formatting. I preferred the version with the centered sections and Professor Carnwath did as well, but it was good to try out the other format too. Now my resume is set up for many more years of experience and revisions.

Cover letter -- I have been putting off writing this cover letter for a while, and it was great to have finally written it. Most jobs in the Computer Science field don't ask for cover letters because a portfolio of their work or their GitHub page can be a lot more informative of their experience or abilities. Most organizations in this field that want cover letters are involved in research, so they probably want a better idea of a candidate's technical writing skills. I am new to the field and don't have a lot of experience to speak for me, so I really should have written this cover letter a few months ago. I never know what tone to use for a cover letter because it all depends on what that reviewer is looking for. I chose to go with a more confident tone and focus on the work that I'm currently doing but that isn't established enough to include on my resume. It was helpful to receive feedback from Professor Carnwath to balance it out and make it much more refined. Revising it with feedback really helped me strike a balance between the experience I am getting and the experience I already have while highlighting skills that would be helpful to my employer.

Proposal -- This paper was an interesting challenge. My peers and I made contributions to each section separately, then I had to expand on them to fill in gaps in detail and unify the piece. I tried to preserve each of my peers' writing voices while also creating one unified voice; I reframed their arguments for the project to be centered around the members of FFA rather than just the state officers or the association itself. After all, FFA is for educating and connecting its members. I also had to make sure citations were using uniformly and everything was properly cited. Revising the document for initial feedback was a lot of work, but feedback from my peers helped me realize that I should have been even more aggressive with my edits and that the tone was still a little to uneven throughout the piece. My final revisions were centered around producing an even more cohesive and concise document rather than preserving individual voices. Looking back on it now, I realize that preserving individual voices within a single piece is jarring to the reader.

This class has been very educational. I am much more acquainted with the writing process and what I can do to feel comfortable with new projects and revising. While I'm still not a fan of writing, I have found ways to make it fun and feel much better about the final product. The best

aspect of this class has been the interactive feedback, and while it makes the assignments harder, it has made my awareness of the reader's perception much clearer. It was also good to get experience in a group setting here before I have to write with a group outside of college or in a job. I am a much more versatile writer now than I was at the beginning of the semester.

Thank you

Ben Miller

January 30, 2021

Snow Removal Crew
MSU Family and Graduate Housing
1502 W Garfield St
Bozeman, MT 59715

Dear Snow Removal Crew,

First, I would like to thank you for always plowing the walkways early every morning without fail. It makes walking to classes, taking out trash, and checking the mail much simpler tasks. It is very nice to not trod through snow. However, the ice patch near the mailboxes in Branegan court is often large and too slick to walk across. Additionally, the walkway to my door is plowed in such a manner that the original path is inaccessible for a short stretch.

As you know, the ice patch is caused by a very low spot in the path and leveling the ground there is a task better suited to summertime. It usually takes several days after a snowstorm for the patch to be salted or graveled; I, and most tenants I see, usually take a wide berth around the patch until then. If this patch were salted or graveled more frequently, or a path was plowed around it, this spot would not be a problem.

I know that my rental agreement states that walkways to doors are not part of the snow removal area, but because this area has always been plowed while I've stayed here, I would appreciate it if the stayed over the path more. As it is now, there is a stretch on the walkway as large as the ice patch that is either muddy, or just as slick. Because this area is higher than the ice patch, plowing a couple feet over the walkway would solve this problem.

The snow removal crew does an excellent job. With just these two modifications, I would say the snow removal crew does a perfect job. For further questions, I can be reached at ben.miller12@student.montana.edu or by cell at 406-800-8000.

Sincerely,

Ben Miller

Hello Alyssa,

Your memo and letter are formatted very nicely! Your second through fourth paragraphs are very detailed and clearly lay out the situation. I like the organization of the information. It makes a compelling case.

While I understand your wish to remain cordial with the claim's manager, I think you could have taken a slightly more aggressive stance in your first and last paragraphs. Getting conjunctivitis in both eyes from an eyelash application almost seems like grounds for a lawsuit, especially with how much evidence you have.

I think that if you used the active voice in the first paragraph, it would portray the significance of the situation better without offending the claim manager. The last paragraph has a good tone to end the letter, but I might try to sound a little more upset.

Overall, I think it is a very well written letter.

Ben Miller

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EDUCATION

Montana State University   Aug. 2019 – Expected May 2023
Bachelor of Science in Computer Science, Professional Option, Honors, GPA: 3.97   *Bozeman, MT*

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Intermediate Statistics | Intro to Linear Algebra | Calc I and II | Discrete Structures

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Languages: Python, Java, C, bash, HTML/CSS, R, MATLAB
Developer Tools: Git, GitHub, Pytest, Linux, AWS
General: Audo Systems, Welding (Arc, Wire), Soldering, Roofing

My Address
Bozeman MT, 59715

September 27, 2021

Dear Ms. Robinson,

I am excited to apply for the Computational Sciences Undergraduate Internship Program and am specifically interested in the summer internship, but I am open to year-round as well. With a year and a half of research experience here at MSU and a passion for working with servers, cloud technology, and raspberry pi's, I think I am a good fit for this position. I met with LANL representatives at the Montana State University Job Fair in the fall and am glad to follow up with this application.

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Thank you for your time; I would be happy to discuss the Computational Sciences Undergraduate Internship Program and my application further and can be reached by phone at (XXX-XXX-XXXX) or email at (email@email.com).

Sincerely,

Ben Miller

NON-PROFIT PROJECT PROPOSAL

To: Brooke Carnwath, WRIT 221 students
From: WRIT 221, Group 1
Date: March 14, 2021
Subject: FFA Non-Profit Writing Proposal

Background

Once, FFA stood for Future Farmers of America. This was changed in 1988 to simply, "The National FFA Organization" in order to represent *all* fields of agriculture. FFA is a "dynamic youth organization that changes lives and prepares members for premier leadership, personal growth and career success through agricultural education" (FFA 2020). Founded by a group of young farmers in 1928, over 760,000 members ages 12-21 across all 50 states participate in this program according to the FFA.

FFA's online presence is focused on recent events, member accomplishments, and materials to help members grow personally and professionally. Larger FFA programs, e.g. conferences, also contain a large element of networking, as members are encouraged to work with and find new friends in chapters around the state, or even the nation. Communication skills and outreach as well as the hard work and perseverance needed for our agriculturalists are practiced in such events. Local events also encourage community engagement and various other skills.

The backbone of this program is the agricultural educators. According to the FFA, there are over 13,000 advisors and teachers that provide cutting-edge education to the youth and prepare them for exemplifying leadership and giving them the tools necessary to succeed in their endeavors. Not only do 92 percent of the program's teachers focus on teaching agriscience, "71 percent offer biotechnology, 59 percent offer agricultural mechanics; 49 percent offer horticulture; 43 percent offer animal science, and 24 percent offer environment-related" (FFA 2020).

Within the Montana FFA Association, there are over 90 chapters in high schools across the state. Eight State Officers are elected at the annual State Convention. These eight leaders, between 18-20 years of age, put on workshops, lead meetings, and organize correspondence for all affairs of the organization. Funding for these trips and events comes from the Montana FFA Foundation or grants. However, there is still a need to support these leaders.

Communication Needs

After the COVID-19 pandemic hit in March 2020, much of the Montana FFA State Officers' travels were canceled, therefore limiting the experiences of the membership greatly. Students now miss opportunities to learn and network with others. In a normal year, the State Officers will travel thousands of miles, on commodity tours, to conventions, and to visit schools. This year, the State Officers rarely traveled.

FFA is fundamentally about helping students develop skills to prepare them for their futures. The ability to hold events, organize community projects, and work with leaders in the community is

key to getting these students the experience they need to develop as professionals and is central to the value of FFA. Especially this last year, it has been tough to raise funds and follow through with educational events.

Our proposal is to provide more leadership opportunities for members, specifically in Montana. This will be accomplished through funding for safe, distanced travel and virtual events. Opportunities as such will encourage students to seek more knowledge and capability in FFA competitions and events. Without such opportunity, students may feel as if there is nothing to do in an organization like FFA or that it is not helping them develop necessary skills for their future.

As an FFA Alumni member and past State Officer, one of our teammates assures that this plan will encourage higher levels of participation that have dropped since the COVID-19 pandemic. Increased activity within the organization will lead to increased engagement within chapters and draw more students to the organization. The opportunities planned will include webinars, competitions, and panels of career professionals.

Solution Documents
To assist FFA's mission, we will be creating a fundraising letter, a newsletter, and a social media ad. The fundraising letter will help raise necessary funds, and the newsletter and social media ad will both help secure funding and gather the community and members around specific events.

FFA's primary colors are National Blue and Corn Gold. The national FFA website has a more laid-back design, which emphasizes the contents of the page themselves, while the Montana website is much bolder and eye-catching with many more graphics. The Montana website is more focused on the members and events, and has a more community oriented feel. As we are primarily writing for the Montana FFA section, our documents will also be centered on the community and feature a bolder design.

Further details on the FFA brand and design can be found here:
https://www.ffa.org/media-center/.

- **Fundraising Letter:** Our fundraising letter will bring in money for FFA on a state and local level. With the money raised via the fundraising letter, members of FFA will be able to attend state-wide conferences and reconnect with a vast network of fellow members. Necessary funds will help advance teaching plans for advisors as well as increase the capacity of material learned. We will be sending this letter to all previous members of FFA and families of current members. The tone of this letter will be persuasive in hopes to bring in as much donations as possible.
- **Flyer:** The flyer will increase awareness and planning for activities. We're planning on posting flyers in highschools across Montana to inform current members of events as well as public areas like parks and grocery stores. The flyers will give information about FFA current events and information about upcoming meetings. Our flyer will be eye popping and catch the attention of the reader.

- **Facebook Ad:** Our facebook ad will raise community awareness of activities and FFA needs. The ad will inform current and potential new members of upcoming events hoping to bring a higher member count to activities. Facebook is one of the more used social media platforms by a wider range of age groups therefore, we believe we could cover the most grounded this way. The facebook ad will be informative while concise and straightforward. While we will reach members this way, we are hoping lots of parents will see these Facebook ads so they can keep track of what members are participating in and how FFA is advancing.

Works Cited

"About Us." National FFA Organization, 18 Nov. 2020, www.ffa.org/about/.

"Media & Brand Center." National FFA Organization, 16 Feb. 2021, www.ffa.org/media-center/.

Montana FFA, montanaffa.org/.

Montana FFA. montanaffa.org/who-we-are/.

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📌 to me ▾

Session Notes

Writer: Ben Miller

Date: April 8, 2021, 1:00pm - 2:00pm

Tutor: J.J.S.

Session Notes:

Hi Ben!

Thanks for using the MSU Writing Center!

Today we looked at some of your WRIT papers, talking mainly about concision for both of them, both to meet a page limit as well as concision to bring clarity to your writing. We also talked about general grammar and flow, as well as proofreading a paper to catch those small things.

Feel free to look back on the online consultation if you have any lingering questions.

Thanks again!

Jon (JJS)

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If you have questions or comments, you are welcome to reply to this email. Replies will go to our central Writing Center email account and be forwarded to the relevant tutors/staff.

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