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General Education Reflection

Before I entered college, I wanted to be a music producer. I wanted to pour myself into a piece of work that would allow me to impact people's lives by making them feel something. In my head, I would be able to share part of my soul and my artistry and hopefully find an audience that would find happiness, an escape, peace, or whatever feeling they gave themselves into by listening to this work. As I approached my college years, I realized that this may have been an unrealistic career for me, so I had to think how else I could accomplish this. I thought about my interests, and realized that I could still reach people's lives and be a voice and a mind that impacts them, but it would be through technology. What I've found is that there is a fluidity to the art of music, but as I've progressed throughout my college experience, I've noted that this same concept of fluidity is found in the technical knowledge that I've been building. There is chaos, but as you observe it all from a higher perspective, there is a pattern, a rhythm, and motion in this field.

As I continue to grow, I think my ideal work would be a middle ground of working with embedded systems design, and also interface with industrial design for consumer technology. I would hope that through this, I can still be a user focused problem solver through the power of thoughtful design, as well as efficient engineering using my technical skill set I have built up through my time at Iowa State. This is where I believe that I can achieve a sense of fluidity in technology today, and make this a life-long goal.

As an engineer, it's often that I find myself stuck when I'm too far deep into the technical realm, and lose perspective of anything else. This is where I'm happy that I did an independent study with industrial design, as well as take several general electives. These classes allow me to expand my perspective and knowledge on areas that I otherwise would not have been as

comfortable with. We make decisions and think through things based off of our experiences, observations, and reflections. This much is not news to anyone, but it is an important wake up call for many to remember. Technical knowledge is undoubtedly valuable, but in my sociology class freshman year, I grew in a different area of knowledge than I would have been exposed to, and I think that I was able to understand why groups of people acted the ways they were, and was able to put meaning to observations that I otherwise would have swept under the rug. Sociology 134, Introduction to to Sociology, was a class that allowed me to remember that society itself is both chaotic, and fluid. This was achieved through topical focuses of analyzing the various relationships among fields of life, including family, work and your independent free time. There is a definition and order to which societies tend to behave, but there is also outbursts of outliers, and trends that appear in an individual's day to day, as well as a society's long-term behavior.

Over the summer, I took Human Sexuality, HD FS 276, as well as Greek and Roman Mythology, CL ST 273. Both of these classes required me to post my thoughts on a discussion board, as well as read and respond to my peers. The material itself was not what I found to be applicable, but rather the exercises that are required in these classes. It reminded me that when we were all reading the same exact material, there were so many different responses, points of view, and major takeaways that varied from it, and being able to see this with others reminded me that my point of view is not the same as another. I went to work every day with this idea constantly being fresh in my mind, because after work I would work on these classes and remember the value of varying perspectives. This inspired and challenged me to continually see challenges from others' perspective, to get a more wholistic rounded view of a topic or issue. Because of this, I came up with the idea to request meetings with multiple people in my department to ask them questions on their thoughts on how things worked, and even career

questions of how to approach certain forks in the road. This was definitely not something that I thought to do my first internship, and through the realization that thinking of other fields and knowing that there are stark differences between subjects like human sexuality, and semiconductors, I understood that there is room for translation. There is room to constantly question your perspective, and I remind myself that the best way for me to learn is to share my thoughts, but also listen to others' when I'm struggling or curious. It's not about changing your perspective, it's about connecting your story with others.

Taking general education classes allowed me to connect my story with others. It allowed me to remember that fluidity can be observed in places other than music, and technology. It is by this realization that came to me while taking some of these classes that I now can understand and apply connecting everything together. I can, in a professional way, connect the perspectives of others with my own story. I can listen to my peers, superiors, coworkers, and understand how their stories have different characteristics of fluidity. While this may seem obvious to some, its meaning carries more weight with me than many of my peers seem to understand. As an engineer, I enjoy finding solutions, but what I'm understanding now, is that not everything will have systematic solutions, and sometimes the nature of a problem will create a unique solution that may prove to have convoluted routes to its flow, but it is through multiple narrators, adding their numerous perspectives that we will be able to achieve a harmony in technical solutions.