Capstone Part 5: Making a Proposal

Don’t worry CHC, I didn’t die or forget about you, in case that was what you were thinking about my long absence from writing my Capstone series. No, forgetfulness and death would only be minor obstacles to keep me from my task of documenting the process of successfully completing a Capstone Experience at Commonwealth Honors College. What’s really been holding me up is the actual Capstone Experience.

Surprise, surprise, this project is a lot of work! You might have known that already, but it’s a true fact.

I’ve only made it worse for myself, of course, by tackling not one but two of these Everest-sized commitments. Not wanting to short-change any of my interests, I am attempting to complete a Capstone for both of my majors, English and Spanish. Needless to say, this dual endeavor is occupying my every waking hour, and I am gradually becoming more and more scatterbrained. It’s okay. I’ll make it out alive. Maybe. Any help you have to offer in the form of coffee and hugs is greatly appreciated.

But let’s not get ahead of ourselves. If the first step was panicking and the second step was investigating, the third step was asking for help and the fourth step was crossing all of your limbs in hope, the fifth step is probably just as good as any to actually do some work on the project.

The first real thing you have to do is create a project proposal. This doesn’t have to be an outline of exactly what you are going to do - it is expected that your ideas will grow and change a little as you do research, so don’t worry if you’re not sure what direction you will end up going. Instead it should be an outline of your ideas and intentions as you understand them at that moment. Check out this page, the one stop resource for all your proposal questions - there are guidelines and sample proposals (at the bottom of the page) from past Capstones. If there isn’t one from your major, think about getting in touch with your Honors Program Director and asking to see one - that’s what
I did and it definitely helped, because let’s face it, proposals for microbiology and polymer science research just aren’t helpful for English majors.

Once you’ve written the proposal, send it along to both of your committee members as well as the Honors Program Director - you will need signatures from all three of them on the contract you submit to the Honors College (it can be found here). Make sure you give yourself plenty of time for everyone to read your proposal and give you suggestions, as well as coordinating schedules to get everyone’s signature - I know from personal experience rushing to get this all in before add/drop ends is no fun for anyone (well, it wasn’t fun for me).

Once your proposal has been edited, approved, and signed, pass it on in to the Honors College. Breathe a sigh of relief. Then get researching - no rest for the wicked (read: seniors completing Capstones) here at CHC.

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