The Promethean Redesign

Makenzie Grube

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The Promethean Redesign

A Senior Honors Thesis

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for Graduation in the Honors College

By
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Art & Graphic Design Major

The College at Brockport
April 25th, 2018

Thesis Director: Mitchell Christensen, Assistant Professor, Art

Educational use of this paper is permitted for the purpose of providing future students a model example of an Honors senior thesis project.
Within Graphic Design, there are many different career paths that you can take, including branding, package design, advertising, and others. Throughout my coursework here at Brockport, I have found that I enjoy doing layout design the most. This includes designing the covers and spreads for magazines, books, newsletters, and other publications. Due to my interest in layout design, I decided that this would be the type of design I wanted to make for my thesis project. I also wanted to include the Honors College in my thesis because it has played a large role in my time at Brockport. Because of this, my first thought was to design a layout for a newsletter that the Honors College could continually use in the future for recruitment or outreach to alumni.

When I went to the director of the Honors College, Dr. Donna Kowal, to ask about my idea, she told me that we previously had a newsletter but it ceased publication in 2014. However, the Assistant Director of the Honors College, Dr. Austin Busch, was looking to restart the newsletter and was putting together a group of Honors College English students to work on writing content. However, they were not going to design it, they would just send the content to the College Communications office who would lay it out. Dr. Kowal and Dr. Busch spoke with this office to confirm that it would be acceptable for me to create the design. Once they did confirm this, I began to work with the English students and Dr. Busch to make the first issue of the new Promethean.

I received some examples of other newsletters from other departments at Brockport and also two older issues of The Promethean to examine and see what
could be used in my design. The newsletters from the other departments were not
great, but they gave me an idea of what is included in other Brockport publications.
The two issues of The Promethean that I received were from the Fall 2013 semester
and the Spring 2014 semester. It was beneficial for me to see what was done in the
past, but the design definitely needed an update. In the header on the front page,
there were boxes around some of the text, the headings for each article had a green
marble background with a yellow font that made it difficult to read the titles. The
body text had a one column structure that made it easy for the eye to get lost in the
text. From looking at all of these examples, I started to think about how the design
should be laid out and what needed to be included.

The first step in starting this project was having multiple meetings to go over
some basic information such as content, restrictions, and requirements that needed
to be met for the design to be accepted as a publication representing Brockport.
After it was first decided that this would be my thesis project, my first meeting was
in the Fall 2016 semester. This first meeting included two staff from the College
Communications office who would be overseeing the production of the newsletter,
Dr. Kowal and Dr. Busch, and my thesis advisor, Mitchell Christensen, an Assistant
Professor in the Art department. At this meeting, we discussed what I would need
to know before starting the design; such as the printing process, what size paper
would be used, how many colors and typefaces could be used in the design, what
size margins were needed and other technical things that were essential to know
before setting up my InDesign file.
Since I was completing the Disney College Program during the Spring 2017 semester, the next set of meetings did not happen until the Fall 2017 semester. The first was once again with the College Communications people, along with Dr. Busch and the English students that he chose to write the content. We talked once again about the restrictions and requirements we had so that the English students would be aware of them before deciding on content. At this meeting, the group of us decided that the newsletter would be an eight-page publication. After this meeting, I had multiple meetings with the English students to decide on content and what order the different articles would be in the design. We decided on having eight different articles: features of an alumni, a new student, a thesis, and a professor, an update on the Honors Club, updates on the Honors College, and thoughts about Honors from current students and a faculty member. Once we decided on these and an order, it was approved by Dr. Busch, and I began designing the spreads while the English students gathered the content.

While having these meetings with Dr. Busch and the English students, I was also working on mock-ups for the masthead and cover for the newsletter. During one of these meetings, I showed Dr. Busch and the students what I had come up with so we could discuss the different options and choose one. For the cover, I wanted to choose a picture that represents the Honors College, as well as Brockport. I thought of the Prometheus statue, the Special Olympics fountain, and the Prometheus medal that all Honors students receive upon graduating. I took multiple pictures of these three symbols and edited them in Lightroom to choose the
best one of each to show to Dr. Busch and the English students. For the masthead, the main choice I needed to make was what typeface to use. Personally, I prefer using sans serif fonts, but I thought a serif font would fit better with the subject matter and the tone of the newsletter. I made three different designs but had a sans serif and serif version of each design. Going into the meeting where we looked at my mock-ups, I had six mastheads and three covers for them to look over. We decided on a serif typeface for the masthead and the image of the Prometheus medal for the cover image. I continued working on the masthead to refine it for the final design by bringing the letters closer together and making it look like I didn’t just type out the title of the newsletter. After I finished the masthead, the cover was completed and I could begin really focusing on designing the interior spreads.

To prepare for designing a publication that will be representing the college, I did some research on publication design and important aspects of it that I would need to keep in mind. First, I looked into the history of design because it all started with editorial and publication design. In the 1400s, moveable type and the printing press were invented by Johannes Gutenberg in Germany. This invention made it much easier to print multiple copies of one document. Instead of having to write out each copy, one just had to arrange all of the type once on the printing press and then could easily make as many copies as needed. This resulted in the demand for printing to increase, so people put less thought into the design of documents, they just pushed them out as quickly as possible. However, after the invention of photography, there was a need for someone to organize the type around the images
in a document. This resulted in jobs such as art directors and publication art editors at magazines and other publications. Since then, graphic design has been influenced by and changed with the different art periods, with Bauhaus being the most influential. Its simple style is still very prominent today.

I also looked into the principles in publication design that should be considered, as they make or break a design. There are five principles: balance, proportions, sequence, unity, and contrast. All of these elements help create a hierarchy within the design. One way to include all of these principles in a good design is to use a grid system. I bought the book *Grid Systems* by Josef Muller-Brockmann so I could look more into the different grid systems and how to use them. Using a grid system makes it much easier to keep the design cohesive throughout the whole publication, even when there are different elements on each page. For the newsletter, I decided to use a 6x6 grid system, as I believed it would give me the most flexibility in my design for image placement and column size.

After doing the research, I began to really get into the design of the pages. It was a long process that started at the beginning of the Fall 2017 semester and was completed in April 2018. Throughout this time, I was meeting with my thesis advisor every other week to discuss the design and possible edits. I started with an initial mock-up of one page. I was unhappy with this design for a few reasons. In the header on each page, the rule was too close to the section title, so the descenders in the text were overlapping the rule. I also needed to think more about the hierarchy of the page. I had included a section title and a main title, and they were
being treated the same even though the main title is more important, so I needed to figure out a way to make that stand out more than the section title. I also thought this design was boring because I didn’t include any color. Even once images were added in, it was going to look very monochromatic. There was also nothing but the images and the text, there were no other visual elements to make it more interesting and fill the space.

After thinking about the changes that needed to be made to this initial mock-up, I began working on the first draft. This draft was definitely better than my first design, but there were still some things that I was unhappy with. On the cover, I had the table of contents in a transparent white box. It didn’t match the look of the masthead or the cover in general, so I needed to work on that for the next draft. I also needed to change the rules in the table of contents to match the rules that I used in the footer of the interior spreads.

In the first spread, the image used for the first article was poor quality so I needed to get a new one. I also still needed to solve the issue of the rule touching the section title, so it was suggested to make that title a smaller font size, which would also solve the hierarchy issue. I changed the color of the rules and titles to green to give the design more color, and I also added in pull-out quotes on each page to add another visual element. There was also a space between the beginning of the article in first column and the end of the article in the second column that needed to be fixed because it caused an issue with the flow of the page. I also wanted to change the headers so that they were all left-aligned to keep it consistent.
On the second spread, I was having a lot of issues. For this spread, we wanted to include some different content to break up all of the text of the longer articles. Because of this, there were some different elements that I was struggling to fit into my grid system. I knew that I needed to keep moving around the different elements until I figured out a way to make them fit. I also didn’t like how the quotes from the Honors students looked, as they were just put onto the page in a larger sized font. I wanted an element more interesting and visual to show the quotes, and I had a couple ideas. My first was giving that section a background color, but since we were unable to have a bleed in the design, my second idea was to make sticky note graphics to put the quotes on instead. I also needed to make the names of the students who gave the quotes smaller so they didn't overpower the actual quote.

The last spread didn’t have any issues except for the ones that I had on the first spread. I also didn’t have any issues on the back cover. Since it is going to be folded in half for mailing, the top half would be the first part that people would see, so I played with changing the orientation so it would be like a mini cover, but it didn’t work with the grid. I also needed to contact one of the College Communications people as to how to add in the right elements for a mailer on the bottom half.

After this draft, I met with Dr. Busch early in the Spring 2018 semester to receive his comments. He suggested getting more action shots for pictures so it wasn’t just headshots for every article. He also added that we needed to get a
picture of Dr. Soles, the professor featured in the second spread, as all the other people featured were women.

For the second draft, I made a lot of changes that made me much happier with the design. Overall, this draft of the design is almost the same as the final, with only a few changes made for the final draft. On the cover, I removed the white box all together and reversed out the text in the table of contents. This change made all the difference; now the table of contents matched the look of the masthead a lot more than the first version that I had, and made the design look a lot cleaner.

On the interior spreads, I made the section title a smaller font size, which solved both the issue with the rule and the hierarchy. I also moved the titles so that they were all left-aligned and made the first paragraph of each article a larger type size and added a drop cap. This helps the reader get into the article, added another visual element, and filled in any empty spaces.

In the first spread, I was able to get a better-quality picture for the first article, which was helpful not just for the quality, but it also added in an action shot instead of a headshot. I moved the image to the right column because it was more balanced to have the image on one side and pull out quote on the other.

In the second spread, I made a lot of changes that made me much happier with the design. I created the sticky note graphics in Illustrator to add a visual element to the quotes and the spread in general. Adding in the picture of Dr. Soles made it a little difficult to fit the two different sections on each half of the page, but there is still a distinction due to the sticky notes.
On the last spread, I was able to get another action shot because the featured thesis was a dance student’s and we got a picture of a rehearsal. I still thought her headshot was important so that you can see who she is, so I still included it at the bottom of the page. On the back cover, I didn’t make any changes in this draft except for adding in the images required to make it a mailer.

After this draft, I met with Dr. Kowal to receive her comments. One suggestion from her was to add ‘The College at Brockport’ and ‘Honors College’ on the cover to make sure it is clear what the newsletter is for. I also realized that adding in the semester the issue was made would be a good idea as there will be multiple issues. Another suggestion Dr. Kowal made was to change some of the section titles, so a few of those were changed for the final draft. I also changed the author’s names to be italicized to distinguish them from the body text and removed the quotation marks from the pull-out quotes to make the design look cleaner.

On the interior spreads, the only changes that were made were the ones made to every spread, but one thing that Dr. Kowal wants me to prepare is a statement that they can add into all of the future issues saying that I am the one who redesigned the newsletter for my thesis project, as my picture won’t stay once I graduate.

Throughout my drafts, I was also making copy edits to the articles. I sent the design to Dr. Busch twice for copy editing, then I sent them to the College Communications people for edits, and finally I sent it to Dr. Kowal twice for her copy edits as well. Once all of the edits were completed, I sent the packaged design,
which included all of the images and fonts used, a PDF of the design, and the
InDesign file to Dr. Kowal so that she could submit the print order with the College
Communications office. This edition was printed for distribution around campus, to
be mailed out to alumni, and to be used as recruitment material at events like open
houses. It will also be digitized and archived in the Digital Commons. To finalize
the project, I met with Dr. Busch, the English students, and another graphic design
student who is in Honors to discuss how to continue using my design after I
graduate.

Overall, this experience has been extremely beneficial to me. I have learned
how to work with a client and other people in other departments to create a
cohesive publication. There can be a lot of issues with deadlines and
miscommunication that can come up when working with a group of people who all
have separate roles; having to deal with this first hand before going out into the
professional world was very beneficial to me. Even though this did not happen in
this project, this experience has also made me realize that there may be some times
in my career where my design decisions may differ from the client requirements and
I will have to balance the two. Now, I am able to go into my career knowing that
this will most likely happen and be prepared for that. This thesis has given me a lot
of very useful skills that I will use in the professional world, and I am very grateful
for the experience.
Bibliography


Inside

2 | Featured Alum
3 | Student Spotlight
4 | Honors Club Highlights
4 | What’s New?

5 | Faculty and New Student Thoughts
6 | Honors Thesis Spotlight
7 | Featured Honors Faculty
8 | About the Contributors
Dr. Amanda Schepis, DVM

Dr. Amanda Schepis graduated from The College at Brockport, where she was a member of the Honors College, in 2006 with a Bachelor’s in biological sciences. Dr. Schepis is now a veterinarian at the Sheridan Animal Hospital in Buffalo, NY, where she is also the Hospital and Medical Director.

Despite the heavy workload of her major course requirements at Brockport, Dr. Schepis still found time for extracurricular activities. She was a member of the pre-professional club, tennis team, and was a Resident Assistant. On top of all this, Dr. Schepis worked at the Brockport Small Animal Hospital! Taking on all of these roles was time consuming, but Dr. Schepis is glad that she got involved. “I definitely got busy,” she said, “but it really got me out there and involved on campus.”

Dr. Schepis advised students to know what their purpose is, but also to live in the moment and “see where life takes you.”

For Umaima, the opportunity to have her own research is one of the biggest appeals of the Honors College.

Umaima Jamal moved to New York from Pakistan over the summer of 2017 in preparation for her first year of college. She is an accounting major and is excited to become immersed in all that Brockport’s Honors College has to offer.

The Honors College attracted Umaima in a few major ways. The first would be the small classes with no more than 20 students. The fact that Brockport is relatively small was also important to Umaima, and she found that dedicated attention would be given to her from the very beginning of her experience with the Honors College.

Professor Austin Busch, Associate Professor of English and Associate Director of the Honors College, reached out to Umaima and helped her adjust to the Honors College.

The Promethean
Over the past two years, the Honors Club has been making strides in connecting with the campus community. In 2017, under the leadership of President Tambria Shroeder, the club put on an enjoyable Scholar’s Day Soirée. The annual event held in April is a celebration of all of the students and faculty that conduct research on campus, and it features hors d’oeuvres catered by Garnishes. It was a great time and a very social event!

For the Fall 2017 semester, the club elected co-presidents Amber Schwartz and Caitlyn Koch, both juniors in the Honors College. In addition, Sophie Nash was elected as Vice President, Sean Regan was elected to be Treasurer, and Katelynn Demskie was elected as Secretary.

The Honors College is on the move! Both the Honors offices and the student lounge will be moving from their current place on the second floor of Holmes Hall to the ground floor of the Albert W. Brown Building. The new Honors College location will be open beginning in the Fall 2018 semester. The program’s new location will be different in setup from its location in Holmes. The Honors College will be spread between rooms 131 and 139 in the Brown Building. The student lounge and computer lab will be in room 135. There will be a copier and supply room, a conference room, and a student employee office as well. Most importantly, while this setup is more spread out, there is also more space for students and faculty to gather and collaborate. The new space is brighter, more inviting, and located adjacent to the new Academic Success Center, where many Honors students work as tutors and receive tutoring.

On Friday, April 27th at 3:30pm to 5:30pm, the Honors College will host a celebratory event to recognize this milestone in the program’s history. The entire campus community is invited!

The executive team worked together in the beginning of the year to recruit new Honors students to join the club. With the help of the new recruits, the Honors Club created a successful Homecoming Parade float. The theme of the Homecoming Parade was “Game on!” and the Honors Club chose to put together a Mario Kart themed float. This took form as the club members painted and designed boxes to use as cars, which they wore as they marched in the parade in this past October.

--Caitlyn Koch

The Promethean

What’s New?

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--Caitlyn Koch

Faculty Thoughts

Carter Soles

Dr. Carter Soles is a professor in the English Department at Brockport, who specializes in Film Studies, and has taught Honors 112, Introduction to Honors, for two years. Dr. Soles is also a member of the Honors Advisory Council, which meets with the Honors College directors to develop initiatives for Honors programming.

“I would say it is different [to teach an Honors class]. One thing that I have noticed … is that the students lean into the material more so. For me, that’s especially lovely when I’m teaching argumentative writing and basic rhetoric. I think Honors students … have a sense that the value you get out of a thing is based on what you put into it.

“My favorite part of teaching Honors classes] is the class discussions. With Honors students, I can bring in a reading that is a little more heavy duty and expect them to get it.

“My class structure] pushes students to think on their feet and really exercise good judgment. That’s why I like it... We walk through the various steps of how to analyze arguments, how to assess who your audience might be, and how to address their concerns and not alienate them, and then we eventually get into writing essays that are analyzing texts or analyzing issues that we care about.

“By and large, the Honors students I have worked with so far are really super organized.”

--Caitlyn Koch

NEW STUDENT THOUGHTS

"The Honors College was the reason I chose to come to Brockport.
It was very creative.
" - Morgan Palmowski

"The Honors College is a great community to be a part of.
" - Ethan Bulmahn

"I loved being a part of the Honors Club Homecoming Float!
It was very creative.
" - Tegan Stoddart

"I found it was much easier to meet people with similar interests and goals [through the Honors College].
" - Ethan Bulmahn

"It is very beneficial to be able to register for classes early because it makes scheduling less stressful.
" - Jess Ketzak

"I love the atmosphere and the people.
" - Ethan Bulmahn

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Mia Martelli

Mia Martelli is a senior undergraduate Honors student at The College at Brockport, and is a Dance BFA candidate. For her Honors Thesis, being presented in Spring of 2018, Mia is researching dance curation. She identifies a curator as “someone who adjudicates, shows, and commissions ...” art and, more specifically, dance. Instead of choosing dances that one has seen before, Mia wonders how curators can continue to push the art field forward by choosing different and unique works and voices.

Working on the Guest Artist Committee under the Student Dance Organization (SDO) is what sparked Mia’s interest in curation. The Guest Artist Committee works to bring in relevant dancers and choreographers to work with the Brockport Dance Department. Mia believes that it has been important for her to choose the right artist to move Brockport’s dance program forward.

Because Mia has decided to research a more academic aspect of dance, she chose Tamara Carrasco, an Assistant Professor in the Dance Department as her Faculty Adviser. According to Mia, Professor Carrasco has taught many academic dance classes and has a good sense of dance theory, which is important to her thesis. Mia is also interested in Carrasco’s outside research, which most recently works with multi-media.

Mia’s research process has been difficult so far because there is not a wide berth of literature on dance curation. Out to curators who run their own festivals. She has even spoken with a curator at the Whitney Museum of American Art, expanding her research to include other forms of art.

Mia began her thesis project in November of 2017 by pairing choreographers with other visual artists to create site-specific art. With this thesis, she hopes to create a change in the dance world by forcing curators to question their own biases when choosing work. Mia wishes to push boundaries while still staying connected to traditional dance.

She has a unique ability to make a very specialized area, such as theatre, interesting to all of her students.

This course acknowledges the differences in student experience and learning style, and offers a unique variety of exercises that can reach all students. One of the most positive aspects of this course is the fact that, no matter their major or lack of experience with theatre, students are able to have a valuable experience and gain expertise that they can apply in their education. While it may be concentrated on theatre, this course enables students to learn performance skills that can be applied to various aspects of life, such as techniques that can be applied in oral presentations.

A major factor that makes this class a success is the professor, Susan Hopkins. Professor Hopkins teaches Improv Theatre at The College at Brockport not only for Honors students, but also for the general student population. She has been teaching this course for more than ten years, and has received positive reviews from many students. In a course that can stretch and challenge students’ comfort zones, she is still regarded as being “hilarious,” “amazing,” and “a lot of fun” by those who have taken her class.

Professor Hopkins is a major factor that makes this class a success. She has a unique ability to make a very specialized area, such as theatre, interesting to all of her students, and this ability is one of the many ways that Professor Hopkins heightens the experience for her students.

Susan Hopkins

For students at Brockport, there are a number of specialized requirements and courses that must be fulfilled. One is the Fine Arts with Performance. One Honors course that fulfills this requirement is Improvational Theatre. According to the course catalog, “Honors Improv” is a class that “covers principles and techniques of improvisation as an art form.” This class teaches students the interactive nature of improvisational theatre, and allows them to have a creative experience in a form with which they may not be familiar.

While this class does require active student participation, it also offers a lecture component in which students learn about theatre and the skills of improvisation.

Improv theatre is most commonly taken by Honors students in their first year. While there are many excellent courses that can fulfill the Fine Arts with Performance requirement, Improv Theatre offers a unique approach that successfully reaches students with diverse areas of interest and levels of comfort in theatre.

A rehearsal of Mia’s thesis performance.

Honors Improv Theatre

Professor Susan Hopkins, instructor of Honors Improv Theatre.
April Quattlebaum
April Quattlebaum is a second year student at The College at Brockport. She has been in the Honors College since her first year. April is an English major with a dual concentration in Literature and Adolescent Education and a minor in Music.

Catherine Esposito
Catherine Esposito is an English and Dance double major, and is a sophomore in the Honors College. She is excited to be writing for The Promethean, and enjoys sharing all the Honors College has to offer.

Caitlyn Koch
Caitlyn Koch is a junior in the Honors College. She is a dual major in English Literature and Finance with a minor in Political Science. She is Co-President of Honors Club, President of Circle K Club, and Vice President of the Swing Dance Society. She intends to pursue a law degree after graduating.

Makenzie Grube
Makenzie Grube is an Art major with a concentration in Graphic Design. She is very happy that Dr. Kowal and Dr. Busch gave her the opportunity to redesign The Promethean and is excited that her design will be a part of the Honors College even after graduating in May 2018.