Mahesh Gowda

2021-22 Year in Review – Honors

 Another year in the 2020s, another plethora of historical events that come swinging in like a pile of bricks on top of the ongoing ones, and another set of students who will incorporate them into their learning material, writings and mindsets. But let’s retreat a little to the actual topic of this essay. This yead, I was able to participate in experiences that further developed my path in life, allowed me to grow as a person, and even expanded my definition of what a global citizen scholar is.

 Let’s look at my honors experiences first: I think that my English 2089 Intermediate Composition Honors course with professor has shifted my way of thinking about language, its usage, and communication within and between communities. To be honest, I feel like it is the first English course that has actually focused on topics relevant to my life personally as well as incorporating modern discussions from a variety of sources, including ones considered less “mainstream” and “traditional” but still prevalent (e.g. podcasts and fandom). With this course, I was given opportunities to see the relationships between super- and subcultures as well as explore unique characteristics of their interactions and communication. Admittedly, I was not always able to maximize my potential in the class, but even these setbacks allowed me to become a better researcher and observer. With the new mindsets and knowledge that I have gained, I hope to better understand intra- and cross-cultural communication, learn more about the diversity of language, and make my work more accessible by accounting for such differences. In fact, I would say that is another hallmark of a global citizen scholar: one who understands how differing cultures and ideas of communication shape our collective identities and has the ability to bridge such gaps.

 Another experience that impacted me this year was taking on a leadership position in a student organization for the first time with my inauguration to and term as the treasurer of the Association of Computing Machinery (ACM) university chapter. Though I had been heavily involved in the organization previously, this represented a major step-up from my previous activity. Now I didn’t just have responsibilities to fulfill for RevolutionUC; I would have to do it all school year and present leadership skills as well. Although I made some beginning stumbles, I ultimately was able to show my chops and make some real changes. Through my time at ACM, I was able to help stimulate the organization by offering more experiences, increasing student participation and making administration more efficient. Proof of the splash I made came when I was voted treasurer again in an adjacent organization, IT Students Association (I couldn’t return to ACM due to schedule conflicts).

Last but not least, my entry and first steps into the Foreign Affairs Information Technology (FAIT) Fellowship program has already been quite impactful on my future career and general journey in life. Most obvious is how this provides an entry into the Foreign Service, where I can work in locales throughout the world with different needs, priorities, and environments. However, the fellowship also allows me to gather with a group of my peers with a variety of backgrounds from all over the country that have also qualified to become fellows, which will allow us to discuss, refine and better understand each other and the world around us. From the conversation that I have had with them, I sense that we will really gel well with each other, In addition, I think it is an ideal way to use my skills as a global citizen scholar to make an impact on a large scale and, as my first time living outside Cincinnati, present a new setting to explore and further broaden my horizons.

With all these unique experiences, I feel like my mojo is coming back after the effect of the past two years. Now, not only have I returned to form, but I will also be able to use the experiences of this year and the past to uplift my future self and unlock all my potential.