**Aidan Sharpe GOLD Scholarship Essays**

**How has your Honors experience expanded your thinking and ignited your curiosity? (500 word max)**  
  
Please provide 1-2 specific examples. The awards committee will be looking for evidence of the GOLD Award aims (experiencing growth, overcoming challenges, commitment to learning, and embracing a spirit of discovery)

I have never been afraid to change my mind. While I am not an indecisive person, I find that the best solution to a problem is often not the first one that comes to mind. In many cases people want to be “right” and desire a victory in an argument over being factually correct. While there is a science to winning debates, it often caters to witty comebacks and quips rather than structured, evidence-based claims. However, as Nobel Prize winning physicist, Richard Feynman, once said, “It doesn’t make any difference how beautiful your guess is, it doesn’t matter how smart you are… If it disagrees with experiment, it’s wrong. That’s all there is to it.” Beyond our axiomatic presuppositions, it is important to look for the truth, for patterns of nature rather than the simple joy of winning arguments based on unsupported emotional attachment to a belief. My Honors experience has solidified this scientific philosophy by giving me opportunities to address complex issues from several angles. I have been granted the freedom to do research on my own and discover the underlying truths of the world. Between my engineering curriculum and my experience with college composition, I have learned to develop sound arguments based on reliable evidence.

I grew most in my ability to address these issues in Honors College Composition I. This course focused primarily on strengthening our writing abilities in the context of the topic of climate change – one of the most complex issues of our time. Challenges as comprehensive as climate change may be daunting, yet the thrill of adventure lurks. By reading a wide set of facts and opinions on the matter I was able to step up to the task. While many of my proposals offered through my writing were mitigations to climate change rather than full blown solutions, my skills improved greatly.

My outlook on the world has changed through the honors curriculum. As the analogy goes, some will say that a glass is half empty and others will say that a glass is half full. For most of my time in high school, I would have said that the glass is half full and left it at that. However, through the various courses I have taken at Rowan, I have had a slight change in perspective. While I may still have optimistic tendencies, I usually respond to problems with a solution. Rather than leaving the glass half empty or half full, why not take advantage of the situation, restore order, and refill the glass?

**How will the Honors GOLD award help you achieve your goals?  (500 word max)**  
  
*Are you facing any financial challenges that prevent you from committing energetically to Honors? Do you have an idea for an exciting project, initiative, or opportunity you could take on with additional financial support? Applicants with a range of specific circumstances and situations are encouraged to apply.*

Beyond helping to cover school costs, additional funding would be very beneficial towards exciting and innovative projects. From doing extensive research to taking a more project-oriented approach, being in the honors program has taught be to be more proactive about my thoughts and ideas.

For example, my first semester at Rowan helped me build upon my technical skill set. Through engineering clinic projects and my computer science and programming course, I became much more accustomed to doing larger scale projects as opposed to completing a larger quantity of smaller assignments. Having practice with larger projects inspired me to become take a more applied approach and utilize more creative thinking. In doing so, I was able to build several iterations of an Android app over winter break. If you are interested, you can find the code at: <https://github.com/Adog64/Lotus-Mobile>.

My urge to implement creative solutions continued into my second semester. The primary context of my college composition course was climate change, therefore leading to the idea being on my mind for a significant portion of the semester. Around the third week of the semester, I received an email from my major department head, Dr. Polikar, who explained that the business school was hosting a new venture competition. I was proactive about the situation and began the application process. The idea was quite simple: create a mechanism to collect carbon dioxide in such a way that it would be profitable for whoever owned the machine.

Overall, the receiving this scholarship would allow me to go above and beyond expectations. In addition to helping fund my studies, I would be given more financial freedom to explore new opportunities and expand my horizons and creative abilities.