**Intro**

* What is husky 100? Who qualifies/meets the criteria?
* How to navigate the site, explore the stories
* Explain “web-like” structure of the stories and experiences

**Story 1**

* Zoom first year

**Story 2**

* Jazz Directory and Music for Charity

**Story 3**

* School, Project Sidewalk, and BCME Lab

**Story 4**

* Engineering Ambassadors

**Finale**

* Main goal: wanting to educate and spread awareness for stem education and community!
* Key words: **meaningful, meaning, community**

**Intro**

*Everyone* is a culmination of their interconnected stories. My name is David Phan, I’m an Electrical and Computer Engineering major who does research for the BCME lab, leads in the Music for Charity RSO, and does outreach for the Engineering Ambassadors. But how did it all come to be? And why do these things I do even matter? All of these, my “now,” are woven from my stories and experiences in (and out) of UW.

**Story 1**

My first year at UW was an experience shared by many: Zoom classes. The feeling of isolation, the sense of loneliness trekking through schoolwork at home, and the disconnect of trying to find a sense of belonging in a school that was miles away from me brought fresh questions into my head. How can I make the most of my time at UW with the disconnect of post-pandemic life? How can I feel a sense of community when everyone is so separated? How do I find *meaning* in what I do, even when I’m holed up in my room?

**Story 2**

My love for music and jazz led me to reach out to the Jazz Directory RSO, and my experience at UW changed for the better. Jazz directory was a tiny RSO with the dream of being an accessible way to connect all different kinds of people around campus to play music together. It was like a dream come true: I made friends, organized events, and worked with other organizations to make opportunities for people of different skills, backgrounds, and interests to play music together. Eventually, I ended up joining Music for Charity as well, a non-profit that holds the same spirit of accessible musicianship but with the purpose of donating their proceeds to various charities. It was here that I had found my sense of community, where I learned that I could put my passions to help the communities I was a part of, and where I learned that the adversities that had blocked my college life could be challenged.

**Story 3**

My signal processing class was inspiring. Really, a simple filter and a little bit of math magic is all it takes to talk to someone on the other side of the world? To stream music and videos to entertain millions around the world? To take an image and magically make it hundreds of times more compact, but look almost exactly the same? Now, THIS was something I could do to take my passions, the culmination of my work throughout school, and make a difference in the lives of the people and communities around me! That is, until I asked a professor who told me that the knowledge was outdated, niche, and only useful in an oversaturated sector. I was crushed. It had felt like nothing up until then mattered; the hundreds of assignments, the late night studying to prepare for headache-inducing exams, the frustration of grueling group projects. But soon after, a classmate told me something that stuck with me.

Everything you do matters. Every class you’ve taken, every experience you’ve had, every failure you undertook. It all comes around at some point to become useful.

“There is no such thing as wasted knowledge.”

And just like that, a breath of life was added to my UW experience. Now, my journey through UW was about tackling new experiences and finding out more about myself and the world around me. I worked with Project Sidewalk to help develop software to identify accessibility issues in cities for those with disabilities. I joined the BCME lab, where I help design air sampling filters to catch and identify particulates in medical spaces and beyond. Diving into subjects both inside and out of my comfort zone, I still struggle with figuring out whether what I do is what has the most meaning behind it, or if I feel the most passionate about it. But one thing that I’m absolutely sure of, is that “There is no such thing as wasted knowledge.”

**Story 4**

An opening for a program called Engineering Ambassadors appeared before me. I had done outreach before: going back to my high school to jump-start their music program, playing music for elementary schools to convince them to pick up band or orchestra. But this was my first opportunity at STEM education. …

**Finale**

My experiences growing through UW have made me into the person I am today. The isolation of the pandemic pushed me to see the value in community and the need for meaning behind what I do in school. My time in Jazz Directory and Music for Charity showed me how to take my passions to achieve those ends, building and leading community within my peers and using those passions to meaningful ends. My struggles through coursework and my connection to my peers led me to understand the value of knowledge, no matter the subject. And my work as an Engineering Ambassador showed me the love of spreading that knowledge to those who have yet to see it. I’m continuing to work with the BCME lab to research biomedical devices; I’ll be hosting a jazz concert with Music for Charity to celebrate Black History Month; and I’m continuing to do outreach with Engineering Ambassadors to spread awareness of engineering and STEM to local youth. I’ve taken steps to continue a path towards STEM education and community building by taking education classes and planning more outreach events beyond Engineering Ambassadors. I’m still growing, still learning, and still searching for the limits of what makes meaning in what I do. But my goal is to make sure that my future self takes what I’ve learned, what I’ve experienced, to make meaning through building up the communities around me, whether it be advancing technology though my research, STEM education, or spreading the love of music.