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General Education Reflection

One of the impactful general education courses was ME 220: Global Sustainability. In this course, we learned about the negative environmental issues happening in the world because of human actions, such as manufacturing, producing waste, deforestation, and others. The module that had the most impact on me was consumerism's negative effect on people and the environment. Companies do their absolute best to keep people buying their products; this includes producing new (often unnecessary) products constantly and as fast as possible. However, the materials and work hours that it takes to manufacture these products often come from poorer countries. Also, the waste produced while making these products may end up back in those countries. As an engineer, I may work on products that are mass-produced for consumers. It is important that I do my research and find out how the products I am designing are manufactured. I should only choose to work for companies that are ethical in their manufacturing processes. However, many companies have great software engineering jobs with a good work-life balance that, unfortunately, also promote this level of consumerism. There are also other global environmental issues discussed in this course, some of which can be solved with engineering. I've always wanted to use my engineering degree to help solve global issues, and this course has helped me learn about issues in our world today and what I can do to help.

Another course I found useful was MGMT 310: Entrepreneurship. In this class, I learned the basics of starting a business. It is important to identify a product or service that has a market, niche, or large. Then, identify competitors in that market and why people will buy your product instead. We split into teams during the class to create a mock business plan for a selected product. We identified the startup cost and the scalability of our business and even created a pitch that we presented at the end of

the year. This class taught me to look at things from a business perspective instead of just a technical one. The class also taught me that entrepreneurship doesn't just mean starting your own business; employees can use entrepreneurship in large companies to improve products or work operations. Lessons from this class will be useful for startups or large corporations.

In AP Psychology (PSYCH 101), I learned about the brain, nervous system, and different parts of the body. This class has taught me the negative impacts stress has on the body and brain and that it's important to stay healthy as an engineer since it will keep your mind in top condition for work. I also took ARCH 321, where I learned about the history of architecture in the U.S. It was interesting seeing the evolution of architecture and the reasons for different design concepts. For example, the evolution of the mall is interesting because now the mall is designed such that you must take the longest path to exits, stairs, bathrooms, etc. After all, the mall architects want you to spend time in front of as many stores as possible. It's always interesting figuring out why things are designed the way they are as an engineer, and for that reason, I enjoyed this class the most.

Overall, general education classes have shown me different perspectives I could use as an engineer rather than just looking at everything through a technical lens. Learning new perspectives to help guide you through the field is important. Thinking of an engineering problem through different perspectives will help bring up problems with a product or design that would otherwise go unnoticed. For example, someone may find a technical solution to a problem that may fix the problem but also bring another more social problem. For example, Chat GPT fixes people's issues with memorizing facts by relying on AI to remember them, but now it is much easier for students to cheat on assignments by using the service. Engineering is one of the pillars of our future, but it isn't the only pillar; ethics, political states, and environmental states are a few examples of what is also important for our future, and engineering is not above or below any of them.