Throughout my undergraduate experience, general education courses have given me opportunities to grow in areas outside of engineering, providing both personal enrichment and professional skills that I can carry into my future career. Two courses that were especially impactful were Spanish and Human Sexuality. Each taught me lessons about communication, diversity, and cultural awareness, which not only shaped me personally but also influenced my decision to pursue a Spanish minor. More importantly, both courses helped me see how broad knowledge outside of engineering contributes to solving the complex problems engineers face in today's world.

In my Spanish courses, I developed more than vocabulary and grammar; I learned how language shapes thought and culture. Communicating in another language requires problem-solving, patience, and creativity. For example, when I struggled to recall a word or structure, I had to find alternate ways to express myself, much like how engineers must find alternate methods when a first design fails. These skills translate directly to engineering, where flexibility and persistence are essential. Spanish also connected me to cultural histories and global perspectives, teaching me that effective problem-solving in engineering requires understanding not just the technical side of a challenge, but also the cultural and human context. In a world where engineering projects are increasingly international, being able to collaborate with Spanish-speaking colleagues and communities is a clear advantage. This realization was one of the main reasons I decided to pursue a minor in Spanish to strengthen my ability to work across borders and cultures.

The Human Sexuality course may seem less connected to engineering at first, but it gave me valuable insights into diversity, inclusivity, and ethical awareness. We explored how biology, psychology, and culture intersect to shape human behavior and relationships. The biggest lesson I took from the class was the importance of empathy and respect when working with people whose experiences may be very different from my own. In engineering, this perspective is critical when designing technology for a wide range of users. For instance, medical devices, educational software, or even public infrastructure must be designed with inclusivity in mind so they are accessible and effective for diverse populations. Human Sexuality reminded me that engineers are ultimately designing for people, and that requires sensitivity to the varied needs and values of society.

Both courses also connected to contemporary issues that engineers must consider. Spanish highlighted the importance of global collaboration on urgent problems such as climate change and sustainable energy. These are challenges that cannot be solved by one nation alone and require communication across cultures and languages. Human Sexuality, on the other hand, drew attention to issues of health equity, privacy, and ethics, which overlap with technology development, data use, and biomedical engineering. Reflecting on these connections made me

realize that general education is not separate from engineering. Instead, it equips us with the tools to see problems holistically and approach solutions responsibly.

Ultimately, my general education courses have reinforced the idea that engineering is not just about technical problem-solving but about human-centered problem-solving. Spanish gave me the motivation to pursue a minor that will help me bridge cultural and linguistic divides, while Human Sexuality helped me appreciate the diversity of human experience and the importance of empathy in design. Together, these courses have broadened my perspective, making me a more adaptable and globally aware engineer. I now see that solving the problems of the future requires not only technical expertise but also cultural awareness, ethical reflection, and strong communication skills, all of which I began developing through my general education courses.