Autumn quarter has been an interesting time. I’m still interested in working on a biochemistry major and in taking interesting interdisciplinary honors courses to supplement my biochemistry and pre-medical coursework. I dissect yeast cells for the replicative lifespan team in Kaeberlein Lab for nine hours a week and spend the majority of my other time on homework. Although I had initially planned to audition for Awaaz, an Indian fusion acapella group, I was unable to and have no extracurricular activities at UW other than my labwork. As a result, my social group consists mostly of people I study with for chemistry and math, along with a few people that I knew from high school.

In the future, I think I need to join a club or try to branch out in some manner. Although at the beginning of autumn quarter I didn’t place too much emphasis on clubs, I think it would be good to build a broader friend group and get to know more people. I might audition for Awaaz next year, or try to join a magazine like “Denatured”. Although the UW Taekwondo club is of a different style than my own Taekwondo experience, I think I might try to join it or to join some other type of martial arts club. Although I still want to find opportunities to shadow or volunteer at hospitals, it might be better to do so in the summer and to focus on schoolwork during the year. Although I don’t feel overwhelmed this quarter, adding more work would probably have tipped the balance for me, and I have two lab classes in winter quarter. This might nix my plan to take classes in the summer, so I will also have to either rearrange my four-year schedule or find a convenient location to live in the summer.

One of the most interesting people I met this quarter from Honors 100 is Dr. Kate Starbird. She was on the Civic Discord panel and is part of HCDE. Her work on disinformation in the media is extremely intriguing to me and I have already asked her for links to her papers. Once I have the time to read through them, I think I want to apply for some type of a position within her lab. Although the work has little relevance to a pre-medical pathway, I personally believe it to be extremely important. Beyond working with her, I think that I should somehow become more involved politically. Although journalism has never been my strength or interest, I find myself far too invested and emotional about current political decisions to stand apart from politics.

The honors study abroad opportunities also continue to interest me. Although I’m not sure if I’ll be able to pull together the appropriate funds for a study abroad experience, my goal is to rearrange my schedule so that I can do some type of study abroad or international engagement activity for experiential learning in the summer of junior year.

Beyond my own classwork and work at the Kaeberlein Lab, I’m finding myself surprised by the size and scope of UW. Although I knew about its size when I first matriculated, I didn’t keep it in mind in terms of making acquaintances. However, I really find myself enjoying exploring the campus itself. The buildings are beautiful and the designs are quite interesting. I find myself more interested in nature and the world around me simply because I am outside for a large part of my time in-between classes. It honestly makes me want to take more classes in order to be able to capture the magnificence of the campus and nature on paper.

At the end of my first year in Honors I hope to have taken honors classes that interest me throughout all three quarters. If nothing else, they will be a break from my more STEM-based courses. My GPA at the end of this year will likely also influence my decision to be a pre-medical student. If it dips below a 3.5 as in my freshman year, I will have to deliberate about whether I can raise it to an acceptable level in the next three years or whether I should focus more on biochemical research. At the end of my four years at UW I hope to have a B.S. in Biochemistry, and I am currently also deliberating either a B.S. or a minor in math. Math is a series of puzzles that I’ve always enjoyed doing, and I don’t particularly want to give it up. I also want to take a few 200 level art courses. Although I will likely be unable to complete a B.A. in art and a B.S. in Biochemistry in four years, I would like to improve my skills with tradition and digital art in a more structured setting.