

## FACULTY AGENDA ITEM

Date: *February 3, 2021*

Submitted by: *Kerry Wynn, x2062*

SUBJECT: *Honors Program changes to PSLO and Distinction Designation*

Description: *The proposed changes update the PSLOs and co-curricular aspects of the University Honors Program. Changes to PSLO are intended to more accurately reflect the mission of the Honors Program and improve ability to assess. Achieving Distinction and High Distinction used to be determined on the basis of number of hours of service to the Honors Program and community, but will now be determined by student participation in a wider range of intellectual activities and the submission of portfolios reflecting on that participation.*

Rationale: *Changes to PSLOs are intended to more accurately reflect the mission of the Honors Program and improve ability to assess. Changes to the requirements for distinction are intended to better align with the revised Honors Program PSLOs, provide a more holistic designation based on intellectual engagement, and encourage students to articulate the importance of their university experiences. Washburn University Honors Program students have the option to graduate from the program with "distinction" or "high distinction."*

Financial Implications: *Minimal. Small stipends to faculty who review student portfolios, using current funds.*

Proposed Effective Date: *July 1, 2021*

Request for Action: *Approval by Honors Advisory Board/ Interdisciplinary Studies Committee/ AAC /FS/ Gen Fac*

Approved by:

*Honors Advisory Board on February 2, 2021*

*Interdisciplinary Studies Committee on date*

*AAC on date*

*Faculty Senate on date*

*General Faculty on date*

Attachments Yes  No

#### PROPOSED CATALOG DESCRIPTION FOR UNIVERSITY HONORS PROGRAM:

The mission of the Honors Program at Washburn University is to provide highly motivated and academically talented students with enriched educational experiences in and out of the classroom, enabling and empowering them to realize their full potential as critical thinkers, informed global citizens, and agents of change. Toward this end, the program provides curricular and co-curricular experiences supporting, promoting, and rewarding excellence in academic rigor, research and scholarship, leadership, and service learning.

#### **Student Learning Outcomes**

Upon successful completion of the Washburn University Honors Program, students will be able to:

- Formulate a specific position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis) that accounts for the complexities of the issue and weighs the positions taken by others.
- Interpret intercultural experience from the perspectives of their own and more than one worldview and demonstrate the ability to act in a supportive manner that recognizes the beliefs of another cultural group.
- Connect academic experiences in the classroom to activities outside of the classroom. Experience and reflect upon cultural, artistic, and political events as intellectuals.
- Design, conduct, and actively pursue independent educational experiences.

In pursuit of its mission, the University Honors Program provides many benefits for students including the following:

- Special sections of existing courses.
- Unique and engaging Honors courses that also satisfy general education requirements.
- Independent research opportunities, and other creative scholarly projects.
- Closer working relationships with distinguished faculty.
- Individual and Honors specific advising.
- Unique ways to have a voice in, and change, Honors and the University as a whole.
- Trademark events that include guest speakers, community engagements, and more.

Honors fits well with Washburn's many four-year degree programs and the tiered system allows students to pursue honors with varying degrees of involvement and receive recognition. Students work directly with the Honors Program Director to identify opportunities to explore, relate, and assimilate many diverse learning experiences. As Linus Pauling said, "The best way to have a good idea is to have lots of ideas." The University Honors Program is committed to providing students, faculty, and staff with opportunities to develop and implement good ideas.

#### **University Honors Curricular Tiers**

**"Honors Associate"** – 12 Credit Hours of Honors Credit

**"Honors Scholar"** – 18 Credit Hours of Honors Credit

**"Honors Graduate"** – 24 Credit Hours of Honors Credit

Regardless of tier, students will be expected to complete an Honors Thesis Project (or similar scholarly/creative project, e.g., scholarly/creative WTE). In addition to curricular requirements, students may receive recognition for involvement in Honors and intellectual pursuits.

#### **University Honors Distinction**

Students may graduate “with Distinction” or “with High Distinction” by participating in and reflecting on activities in 5 areas pursued by intellectually engaged individuals: inspiration, collaboration, independence, curiosity, and service.

Students receive Distinction upon the completion of annual activities in each of the areas listed above and the submission of annual and comprehensive reflection portfolios. Students receive High Distinction based upon the evaluation of the quality of their portfolio by a faculty committee. Additional information regarding activities, reflection, and assessment is available from the Program Director.

Each curricular tier can be combined with any level of involvement (e.g., University Honors Graduate with High Distinction).

### **Admission Criteria**

Entering freshman students with an unweighted high school GPA of 3.5 or higher and/or an ACT of 28 or higher are especially encouraged to inquire about the University Honors Program by submitting a completed application (found on the University Honors website). Individuals may apply on their own initiative, be recommended to apply by their high school or college faculty, or be invited to apply by the Director of University Honors. Students who meet the minimum criteria and successfully complete the application process (application materials can be found online at [www.washburn.edu/honors](http://www.washburn.edu/honors)) will be invited to join the community of exceptional learners and thinkers.

Although proven scholastic performance is important, the Honors Dean will place substantial emphasis on students’ ability to benefit from and contribute to the program. Once admitted into the program, students who complete requirements associated with a given tier (listed above) will have their transcripts listing the completed tier and involvement if completed. Washburn is an institutional member of the National Collegiate Honors Council and an institutional member of the regional Great Plains Honors Council.

### CURRENT CATALOG LANGUAGE:

The mission of the Honors Program at Washburn University is to provide highly motivated and academically talented students with enriched educational experiences in and out of the classroom, enabling and empowering them to realize their full potential as critical thinkers, informed global citizens, and agents of change. Toward this end, the program provides curricular and co-curricular experiences supporting, promoting, and rewarding excellence in academic rigor, research and scholarship, leadership, and service learning.

#### **Student Learning Outcomes**

Upon successful completion of the Washburn University Honors Program, students will be able to:

- Analyze their own and others' assumptions and carefully evaluate the relevance of contexts when presenting a position.
- Interpret intercultural experience from the perspectives of their own and more than one worldview and demonstrate the ability to act in a supportive manner that recognizes the beliefs of another cultural group.
- Identify service opportunities in their community and make decisions and implement actions that address the needs of the community.
- Design, conduct, and actively pursue independent educational experiences.

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- Trademark events that include guest speakers, community engagements, and more.

Honors fits well with Washburn's many four-year degree programs and the tiered system allows students to pursue honors with varying degrees of involvement and receive recognition. Students work directly with the Honors Dean to identify opportunities to explore, relate, and assimilate many diverse learning experiences. As Linus Pauling said, "The best way to have a good idea is to have lots of ideas." The University Honors Program is committed to providing students, faculty, and staff with opportunities to develop and implement good ideas.

#### **University Honors Tiers and Involvement Requirements**

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Regardless of tier, students will be expected to complete an Honors Thesis Project (or similar scholarly/creative project, e.g., scholarly/creative WTE). In addition to curricular requirements, students may receive recognition for involvement (service) in honors and the community.

### **Involvement Requirements**

**“With Distinction in Service”** = 50 Hours of involvement with at least 35 hours in Honors-related events.

**“With High Distinction in Service”** = 100 Hours of involvement with at least 75 hours in Honors-related events.

Each curricular tier can be combined with any level of involvement (e.g., University Honors Graduate with High Distinction in Service).

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### MARKUP:

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### **Involvement Requirements University Honors Distinction**

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