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The mission of Curry College is to develop liberally educated persons who are able to gain and to apply knowledge humanely, intelligently, and effectively in a complex, changing world. Curry College promotes individual intellectual and social growth by engaging its students in seven spheres of activity. These are broadly defined as: thinking critically, communicating effectively, understanding context, appreciating aesthetic experience, defining a personal identity, examining value systems, and adapting and innovating. Accordingly, the College’s curricula focus on the two hallmarks of the Curry education: a high respect for the individuality of every student, and a developmental approach to learning that maximizes opportunities for achievement.

The Curry College First Year Honors Program and the Honors Scholar Program fully incorporate the College’s mission. Specifically, the Program’s faculty aim to enhance intellectual opportunities responsive to the educational needs of highly able and/or exceptionally motivated undergraduate students. We seek to promote an awareness of Honors learning within the College, to create enriched educational opportunities for Honors students, to contribute to the common good, and to foster high levels of intellectual discourse on the campus in ways advantageous to all students and faculty.

Honors programs in general are familiar features in colleges and universities nationwide, and Curry College is proud to be engaged in professional dialog with many of them through institutional membership in the National Collegiate Honors Council.

The Curry College Honors Programs stand out from the hundreds of NCHC programs in the nation for four reasons:

First, the Honors Programs are committed to a constructivist approach to learning and individualization. Curry College Honors students are neither encapsulated by generalizations nor forced into homogeneous groups. Instead, the educational challenges of each individual and the relation of the individual to the academy are central themes.
Second, the Programs’ goals are achieved not by segregating the Honors students into “Honors” sections of courses, nor by creating special “Honors” curricula within disciplines. Rather, the Honors Programs run parallel to normal academic majors, and often complement them by offering advanced work in an area closely related to the major.

Third, the Curry Honors Programs invite students to join with the faculty as true research partners. Within the Honors Scholar Program, each Honors student works with a thesis advisor, the library faculty, and Honors Scholar faculty, all of whom are partners in learning and research, and lend their expertise to the student’s production of an Honors thesis.

And fourth, the Curry College Honors Programs encourage each student to rely not simply on external definitions of excellence, but to develop personal answers to the meaning of intellectual achievement.

**Honors Program History**

In 1984 the faculty proposed to establish a program that would address the special learning potential of the College’s most able and/or most highly motivated students. A series of committees were established which, with rotating membership over the ensuing five years, considered a variety of program paradigms. The unique Honors Program that eventually evolved began in the spring of 1989, co-directed by Drs. Francis MacPherson and Linda Jarvis; Dr. Ronald Warners joined Dr. Jarvis as co-director in the fall of 1989, and was appointed director beginning fall 1991. Dr. Susan Pratt and Dr. Susan Pennini both taught in the Honors Program in the early 1990’s. Dr. Hunter joined the program in 1995, Professor Kean in 2004, Professor Michelle LeBlanc in 2005, and Professors Guerrero-Macia and ben Aicha in 2007, and Professors Andrew Horn and Susan Peterson on 2008. More than twenty Curry faculty have served as thesis advisors, and the entire library faculty have enriched Honors learning from the beginning.

Both the content and the structure of the Honors Program have changed significantly since its inception, and because educational responsiveness is key to the program’s success, small and large changes in the program’s syllabi and structure will continue to occur as student
characteristics change and as the Honors faculty continue to respond to programmatic needs. New editions of this Handbook will be published accordingly. The current version of the Handbook pertains to all students registered in the Scholar Program beginning Fall 2009.

Admission To the Program

An invitation to apply to the Honors Scholar Program is offered to students with an overall grade point average of 3.3 or above, and who will be a sophomore or a first semester junior when entering the program.

The admission process includes:

• submitting personal information as requested on the application form;
• submitting writing samples on topics specified on the application form;
• references from three faculty who know the applicant well; (faculty references are especially important) and
• a personal interview.

Graduates of the College who have completed the Honors Scholar Program are graduated “With Distinction in the Honors Scholar Program,” which is announced at commencement and inscribed on the baccalaureate diploma.

Curriculum Structure

The Honors Program consists of four sequential courses; syllabi in each semester supersede these general descriptions:

**Honors Scholar Seminar** 3 credits

The purpose of the Seminar is to polish analytical, critical thinking, and writing skills, and to discover personal learning styles and to examine their relation to academic achievement. Students produce short research and perspective papers, and move towards the selection of an Honors thesis topic. Because every student agrees, by contract, to work at his or her personal level of excellence, customary letter grading is replaced by a Pass/Fail evaluation. Completion of the Scholar Seminar at a high standard and evidence of continuing excellence in general
coursework are required for preceding to Scholar Research I.

**Honors Scholar Research I**  
3 credits

The purpose of this course is to hone a thesis topic to a researchable focus, to develop a thesis introduction and review of literature, to develop comprehensive research skills, and to build a working relationship with the Honors faculty and the library faculty. Research I also includes a broad examination of perspectives on change and research, such as post-positivism, post-Colonialism, post-modernism, and critical theory. A variety of research perspectives and investigation techniques, both traditional and technology based, are investigated. While the content of a thesis may vary according to the nature of the topic under investigation, the submission and approval of a refined draft of a review of literature, a summary presentation, and a thorough bibliography are required of all. Evidence of continuing achievement at levels of excellence is required of each candidate in order to advance to Scholar Research II.

**Honors Scholar Research II**  
3 credits

Research II examines the principles and specific forms of empirical data-gathering, such as grounded theory, historical/literary approaches, case study, interview, portraiture methodologies and Likert scale questionnaires; guides students in constructing an instrument relative to their thesis topics with specific consideration of data organization, instrument construction, content analysis, data interpretation, and evaluating the results, which are reported in method, findings, and analysis sections of the developing thesis.

**Honors Scholar Thesis Seminar**  
3 credits

During the Thesis Seminar drafts of the thesis sections prepared in the previous semesters are comprehensively edited and the remaining components of a thesis are authored until a final draft is attained; a public presentation of the findings is prepared and delivered, and a personal reflective evaluation is submitted by the Honors student. The Director will certify a student’s completion of the Honors Program and submit a grade when each of the Thesis Seminar requirements, as
stated in the course syllabus, have been achieved.

**GradPath**

GradPath Honors Scholar students are sponsored by a faculty member in their major, and may substitute a research course within the major for Scholar Research II. In addition, the Honors Program will contribute to the expenses of the thesis advisor and student to present a paper at a convention or association meeting, and will provide assistance in submitting to a professional journal.

**The need for careful planning**

To design a conflict-free course schedule that includes requirements for both major and for the Honors Program requires careful planning. *Please construct a full two-year schedule of courses with your academic advisor at the time of joining the Honors Program in order to minimize unanticipated conflicts.*

**Transfer Students**

Sophomore or first semester junior transfer students who enter Curry College from a four-year liberal arts undergraduate institution or from a community college with which Curry College has articulation agreements, and who bring an overall grade point average of 3.3 or above from their previous institution may be eligible to be invited to apply.

**Choosing the Thesis Topic and Thesis Advisor**

Early in Research I, each student will have identified a thesis topic and will be guided by the course instructor to seek a thesis advisor. From the point of view of the Honors student, a thesis advisor should be someone who is willing to be engaged in the thesis project, who holds expertise in the thesis area, and who is likely to be a good working partner. A faculty advisor must normally be a member of the faculty of Curry College.

A publication describing the responsibilities of a thesis advisor is available. The Honors Scholar is responsible to initiate

1. agreement of the advisor,
2. to inform the Program Director of the agreement, and
3. to initiate a schedule of meetings.

The director will contact the thesis mentor to make arrangements for compensation according to the stipulations of the *Agreement* between Curry College and the Curry College Chapter of the American Association of University Professors.
The Role of the Thesis Advisor

Among the special characteristics of the Curry College Honors Program is the opportunity for each student to engage a faculty member as a partner in research. In general, the thesis advisor is a resource for the Honors student in structuring and evaluating the research, in evaluating principle drafts of the thesis, and in guiding the research progress, especially during the Research semesters.

Early in HON 4911, Scholar Research I, students are asked to invite a member of the Curry faculty or under special circumstances a person who is not on the faculty but is specially connected to the thesis topic, to join their Honors investigation as a thesis advisor. The expectations for the thesis advisor during HON 4911, 4912, and 4920 include:

1. Offering advice on primary and secondary research sources, and thereby representing the discipline pertaining to the thesis;
2. Meeting periodically with a student to hear about and comment on progress, and offering guidance where appropriate. The frequency of these meetings is agree upon by the advisor and student (often every other week for up to 60 minutes depending on the circumstances that are unique to each researcher); these meetings usually do not exceed 12 hours per semester;
3. Providing written editorial critique of sections of the thesis that are deemed to be ready for review, and sending an e-mail copy of the critique to the Director of Honors Programs;
4. Serving as the second reader on the final thesis draft, including commentary e-mailed to the Director of Honors Programs;
5. Introducing the student when the thesis presentation is made.

The Library Faculty

The faculty of the Levin Library is a valuable resource in research, especially in developing the introduction and literature review of the thesis. Members of the library faculty are guest speakers in Research I to advise researchers concerning the latest search techniques, and are available for individual advising through the Research Assistance Program (RAP). The library faculty is cordial, generous, and expert at providing suggestions that will make the literature review a happy adventure.
**Registration Exceeding 18 Credits**

If the sum of the credit requirements of a program (such as an IIM or dual major) or the credit requirements of a major (such as nursing) *as explicitly described in the Catalog*, in addition to the required credits of an Honors Program course, exceed 18 semester credits, the students may be a candidate for an Honors scholarship that may waive tuition fees up to 6 credits. A petition for such a scholarship must demonstrate that the credit overload is unavoidable and not the result of a student’s individual choice, and is jointly authored by the student, his or her academic advisor, and the Program Director. The dean has the final decision.

**Eligibility for Dean’s List**

Honors Program students are eligible for the Dean’s List in all normal ways as described in the Catalog. Note that 12 graded credits are required, and that the Scholar Seminar is an ungraded course. Thus, registration for a minimum of 15 credits during when the seminar is taken is required for Dean’s List eligibility.

**Honors Program and CLAC II**

The 12 credits required in the Honors Scholar Program are applicable to the requirements of 12 credits outside of your major in CLAC II. See the Catalog for details.
Curry College
Honors Scholar Program

COURSE CONTRACT

By my signature I hereby agree

- to participate in the Honors Program according to my own highest standards of performance in accord with program requirements;

- to participate *actively* in campus issues in a manner that is clearly reasoned, articulate, and appropriate to an Honors Program member;

- to support in every appropriate and honorable way the intellectual advancement of my Honors Scholar colleagues, in this course primarily and in others we share;

- to support Honors Program colleagues by attending thesis presentations as I am able;

- to submit each assignment on time.

_________________________________________________  ______________________
Signed                                      Date
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• to submit each assignment on time.

_________________________________________________ ______________________
Signed                                                                 Date
Curry College
Honors Scholar Program

Faculty Contract

The faculty of the Honors Scholar Program pledge

• to respect the individual brilliance and to support the intellectual development of each student;

• to foster a positive atmosphere of academic partnership with Honors Scholars;

• to be open to diversity and change, and to alter the course syllabus whenever appropriate;

• to be available for academic and personal counsel;

• to provide timely evaluations of written assignments;

• to participate actively in campus issues in a manner that is clearly reasoned, articulate, and appropriate to an Honors Scholar;

• to represent members of the Honors Scholars Program in all interactions with faculty and administration in a manner that enhances their view of the potential and promise of the academically talented students at the College.