



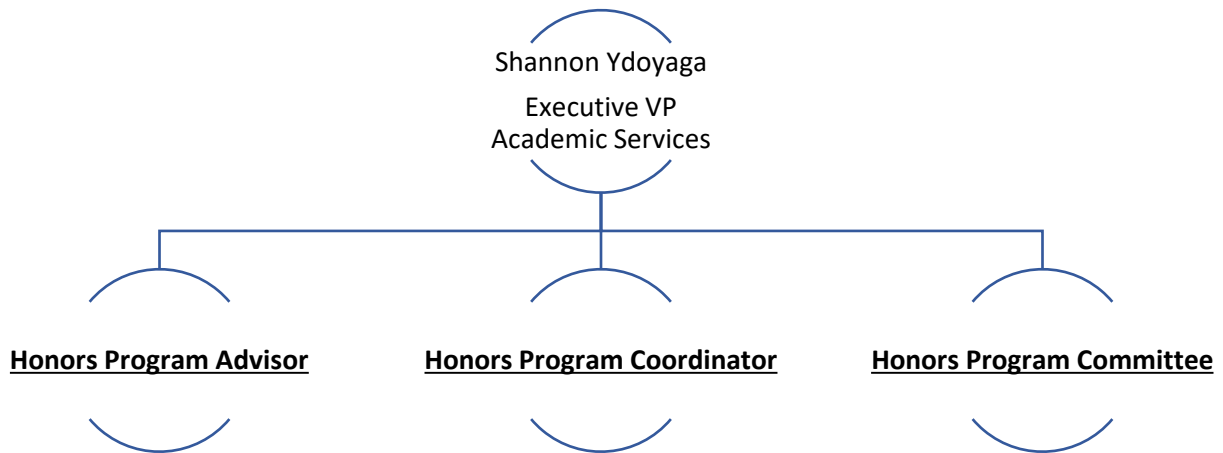
WEATHERFORD COLLEGE HONORS PROGRAM

Honors Faculty Handbook



The mission of the Weatherford College Honors Program is to foster the intellectual, creative, and personal growth of innovative and curious students by offering an advanced curriculum based on inquiry and research and dedicated to lifelong learning and leadership.

1. Organization



a. Honors Program Coordinator: Dr. Christi Cook

- Point of contact on/off campus for faculty, staff, and students
- Chair of honors program committee and all duties associated
- Works with HP advisor on creating and maintaining the budget
- Coordinator of HP student seminar
- 3 load unit reduction per semester
- Additional \$6000/year stipend
- Prepare and submit the annual program plan for the Honors Program
- Prepare reports as necessary in support of the Honors Program's strategic planning
- Conduct Honors Program orientations each semester for prospective honors students to learn about the purpose of the Honors Program, the benefits of participation, and steps to become involved
- Research emerging trends in honors educational programs
- Attend ongoing training on "best practices" for delivery of successful honors courses and programs
- Perform other duties and responsibilities as assigned

b. Honors Program Advisor: Anna Nichols

- Advises honors students
- Works with HP Coordinator on creating and maintaining budget
- Does preliminary HP admissions review
- Tracks honors students' progression within program
- Perform other duties and responsibilities as assigned

c. Honors Program Committee

Members from several disciplines represented in CORE classes

- Attend all Honors Program Committee meetings
- Reviews, interviews, and selects appropriate student applicants into program
- Reviews and selects appropriate honors courses each semester
- Assist with development and enforcement of operational policies and procedures for the Honors Program
- Contribute suggestions for improving and maintaining the Honors Program website
- Work with College staff to design and distribute promotional materials for the Honors Program
- Recruit students into honors program
- Participate in yearly new student orientations
- Routinely review the two-year cycle of honors cohorts and courses
- Aids in student seminar course design
- Perform other duties and responsibilities as assigned

d. Honors Faculty

- Aid the HP Coordinator by leading 1 session a semester for the honors seminar course
- May be called upon by HP lead to help with duties of the HP coordinator/committee as necessary
- Perform other duties and responsibilities as assigned

2. Procedures

a. Honors Courses

Faculty who teach honors-designated courses are encouraged to challenge themselves through their pedagogy by creating their own unique approaches to their course material and instruction.

According to the National Collegiate Honors Council (NCHC), most honors-designated courses will incorporate each of the following overarching objectives. In designing your course for the honors program, you should consider how your outcomes will not only align with the ACGM but also those suggested by the NCHC.

1. To help students develop effective written communication skills (including the ability to make effective use of the information and ideas they learn);
2. To help students develop effective oral communication skills (while recognizing that not all students are comfortable talking a lot in class);
3. To help students develop their ability to analyze and synthesize a broad range of material;
4. To help students understand how scholars think about problems, formulate hypotheses, research those problems, and draw conclusions about them; and to help students understand how creative artists approach the creative process and produce an original work;

5. To help students become more independent and critical thinkers, demonstrating the ability to use knowledge and logic when discussing an issue or an idea, while considering the consequences of their ideas, for themselves, for others, and for society.

Honors courses are offered in a variety of academic disciplines. They are smaller in size and designed so that students can interact closely with the professor and fellow classmates.

Honors courses must meet the requirements of the current ACGM. Honors courses also can include:

- Group project work
- Interdisciplinary linkage
- Writing component(s)
- Guest speakers and experts in the field
- Research and writing skills, resulting in a well-documented research project
- Primary and secondary sources as course material
- Activities, projects, assignments, and methods of evaluations that encourage critical thinking, applying, analyzing, evaluating, and creating
- Student presentations and oral examinations
- Interactive and creative media and technology use by the students and professor above and beyond basic course content delivery (i.e. podcasts, blogs, webpage development, etc.)
- Seminar style discussion or inquiry-based learning techniques

b. Honors Contracts

An Honors Contract is an agreement between an Honors student and a professor in a non-Honors course, outlining additional work or expectations that the student could complete in order to gain an Honors designation for the course. **Honors Contracts are only offered in CORE classes.** To establish an Honors Contract, the student should approach the instructor of the class **no later than the first week of the semester** (before the semester begins is even better). If the professor is willing to offer an Honors Contract, then the student and the professor in question will work together to understand the expectations and requirements for the contract. NOTE: professors are not required to offer Honors Contracts, and all requirements are at the discretion of the professor. The contract will need to be approved by the department chair and the Honors Committee. The department chair and committee can approve the contract, ask for changes or additional information, or deny it all together. Honors students are only allowed to attempt (1) Honors Contract each semester.

To get Honors credit, students need to successfully complete the terms of the Contract and get at least a B for the overall course grade.

Suggestions for discussing honors contracts with students:

- Projects should include significant work above and beyond the course requirements.
- Possible approaches include, but are not limited to:
 - Finding and researching interdisciplinary connections between different courses
 - In depth writing and critical thinking component including short essays, responses, reflections, and journal entries as well as a longer research paper
 - Creative content delivery in presentations including media and technology
 - Aiding an instructor in their own research