

**Dale Bumpers College of Agricultural, Food and Life Sciences**  
**UNDERGRADUATE HONORS PROGRAM**  
**Policies and Procedures**

**Mission Statement and Description of the Bumpers College Honors Program**

***Mission***

The mission of the Bumpers College Honors Program is to provide students with the opportunity to participate in academic, research and creative activities beyond the traditional undergraduate experience.

***Description***

The Honors Program in the Dale Bumpers College of Agricultural, Food and Life Sciences, hereafter referred to as the College, is a voluntary program of study accorded to eligible students by the Faculty and Dean of the College. The Assistant Dean or Honors Program Director and an Honors Faculty Committee administers the program. The Honors Faculty Committee consists of a faculty member from each academic department and three representatives from the School of Human Environmental Sciences (one from each academic area).

An Honors Faculty Mentor can be any University of Arkansas appointed personnel or external party with an expressed interest in mentoring exceptional undergraduate students, as described in further detail in the Honors Faculty Mentor section. Honors students are those who exhibit high levels of achievement in their chosen field and accept the commitment to the Honors Program as outlined by the Honors College.

The Honors Program requires coursework designed to encourage thinking and completion of an honors research thesis or honors creative project. This research or creative endeavor will be mentored by a member of the Honors Faculty and overseen by an Honors Committee. Students successfully completing the Honors Program will receive special recognition at graduation.

**Honors Director**

The Director of the Honors Program will be the Assistant Dean of International and Honors Programs or a faculty member in the College who will report to the Dean in the event there is no Assistant Dean. An Honors Program administrative assistant supports the program by maintaining the records and facilitating routine day-to-day activities of the program.

The duties of the Director include:

- Coordinating College and Departmental activities to target, recruit and retain qualified students.
- Acting as the program's spokesperson.
- Assisting in the development of honors projects with participating students and faculty.
- Providing a conduit for communication among students to provide a sense of community.
- Monitoring student progress in their academic program.
- Coordinating activities that recognize the achievements of honors students.
- Teaching the AFLS 1023H course required by the Honors Program.

- Serving as an ex officio member of the College Honors Faculty Committee.
- Serving as the representative to the Honors College Directors Committee.
- Preparing an annual report on the activities of the Honors Program.

### **Honors Faculty Committee**

The Honors Faculty Committee consists of one selected representative from each academic department and three from the School of Human and Environmental Sciences (one from each academic area). Committee representatives serve a staggered three-year term with approximately one-third of the members rotating off at the end of each academic year.

The Honors Faculty Committee will be responsible for the following activities and any other administrative activities needed to support the Honors Program:

- Establishing and maintaining Honors Program policies and procedures.
- Educating and inspiring faculty, staff, and students regarding the mission and methods of the Honors Program.
- Building student and faculty support by developing and administering faculty and student incentives for the Honors Program.
- Promoting and attending the Honors and Awards Reception and Commencement Ceremony.
- Serving on Research or Creative Project committees.
- Reviewing and approving the completed honors theses in their respective department or area.
- Serving as reviewers for the semesterly Bumpers College Undergraduate Research and Creative Grant award.

### **Honors Faculty**

All University of Arkansas faculty (as defined in the Bumpers College Bylaws Article III) of the College are invited to participate in the Honors Program as Honors Faculty Mentors or committee members. University of Arkansas instructors or staff members who hold at minimum, a M. S. degree and have the capability to conduct research may also serve as an Honors Faculty Mentor. External parties who are not affiliated with the University of Arkansas but hold expertise in the student's area of interest may serve as a co-mentor in collaboration with a current Bumpers College faculty member for the purpose of ensuring adequate student progress, assigning grades for thesis hours, etc. First time Honors Faculty Mentors are encouraged to meet with the Assistant Dean or Honors Program Director to discuss expectations and commitments of an honors mentor.

Faculty agreeing to serve as an Honors Faculty Mentor will be asked to pledge their support for their student in several ways. First, if the faculty member agrees to mentor, they must work with their honors student on a one-on-one professional basis. Honors students are to be guided by the mentor for the duration of the honors project. The second commitment is one of fiscal support of the honors project. Mentors are expected to assist the student to develop project proposals that can be submitted for funding. If specific funding for the project is not obtained, then the mentor agrees to help support the project out of existing funds.

### **Student Eligibility Requirements for the College Honors Program**

There are several avenues by which qualified candidates can become eligible to participate in the Honors Program of the College. Students will receive an invitation to participate in the Honors Program if they are incoming freshmen with an ACT of at least 28 and/or a high school GPA of at least 3.50. Transfer students will be invited if they transfer no more than 62 hours with a college GPA of at least 3.50. Currently enrolled freshman and sophomore students who have completed less than 62 hours with a college GPA of 3.50 or greater may apply for admission to the Honors Program. Students wishing to join the Honors Program after completing 62 hours of college credit may petition for admission by submitting a plan of study documenting how they propose to incorporate the Honors Program requirements into their remaining degree requirements.

To be eligible for continued participation in the Honors Program, students must maintain a cumulative 3.5 GPA and actively work toward earning an Honors degree designation. Students who have a cumulative GPA between 3.0 and 3.5 for one semester will have their Honors Program status placed on probationary status for one term. Students will be considered academically ineligible when:

- a student's cumulative GPA is below 3.5 for two consecutive terms or
- a student's cumulative GPA is below 3.0 for one term.

Students who fall below these minimal levels of participation will receive written notice of the removal of their Honors status.

Students must have prepared a proposal for study and identified an honors mentor who mutually agrees to the topic proposed by the end of 90 hours of course credit completion. Students must complete all requirements of the Honors Program to graduate with the honors distinction as described below.

### **Honors Orientation**

All incoming freshman honors students are required to complete the AFLS 1023H Honors Perspectives course. However, current U of A students who are admitted into the program after the fall semester of their freshman year and incoming transfer students are considered exempt and may select from other honors course offerings to fulfill the required amount of honors course hours. AFLS 1023H will cover the requirements of UNIV1001 and provides an overview of the Bumpers College Honors program, program requirements, research and creative project requirements, and to introduce all honors students to their undergraduate honors student mentor.

### **Honors Proposal Development and Research Methods**

All honors students are required to complete AFLS 3413H Honors Proposal Development and Research Methods course. Students may petition the Assistant Dean for Honors and International Programs (or Honors Program Director if there is not an Assistant Dean) for exemption from the course by submitting a justification for the request using the AFLS 3413H Opt-Out Form. In addition to final approval from the Assistant Dean or Honors Program Director, the form will require signed acknowledgement from the student's honors faculty mentor, academic advisor, and the honors faculty representative for the student's academic unit. AFLS 3413H will cover the creative process, ethics, proposal writing, literature review, qualitative and quantitative/experimental design, scientific theory and methods, data collection,

and analysis. At the end of this course, students will have developed a proposal for their Honors thesis. The course also offers an opportunity for students to present their proposals orally as preparation for their proposal meeting.

### **Honors Curriculum**

Graduation with Honors Distinction from the College requires that each student must complete 15 credit hours in the Honors Program. Each student must complete at least 9 credit hours of honors courses and at least 3 credit hours of thesis hours with a faculty mentor on the student's honors committee and thesis culminating their program. Students are encouraged to take honors courses in other colleges.

Students are encouraged to complete 6 credit hours of Honors courses during the fall semester of their freshman year. This will qualify students for research and international program funding from the Honors College.

Students may enroll in 5000 level courses using the Out-of-Career form and count the credit hours toward the required amount of honors courses. However, if any 5000 level courses are counted toward undergraduate honors program completion, they may not be counted toward graduate degree completion.

See Addendum A for a list of current Honors courses offered in the College.

### **Honors Project**

All honors students are required to develop and complete an honors research or creative project appropriate for their degree and interests to graduate from the Honors Program. Traditional research projects, such as laboratory and field studies and surveys are welcomed in addition to novel methods of research that may be accomplished at sites other than on campus or on research stations. Research projects must follow the research project guidelines developed by the Honors Faculty Committee. Creative projects are also allowed and are expected to follow the creative project guidelines developed by the Honors Faculty Committee. Group or team projects are allowable and are expected to follow the group project guidelines developed by the Honors Faculty Committee. Each student taking part in a group project must be responsible for a unique project objective and complete an individual research or creative thesis document. Honors students are encouraged to develop proposals for funding of their projects, as well as to conduct and present their results.

The student's Honors Mentor and Honors Committee will approve the honors research or creative project prior to graduation from the Honors Program. Upon approval and graduation, an original copy of the honors document will be submitted to the University Library. Publication of the thesis in an appropriate venue is encouraged.

See Addendum B for creative and research thesis project guidelines.

### **Honors Graduation**

Honors students enrolled in the Honors Program will be expected to perform at very high levels of achievement, earning credentials beyond the classroom experiences. Therefore, they will be eligible for several privileges during commencement not accorded to other students in the College.

Honors students within the College will graduate as a body and as members of the Honors Program at the College Commencement. Separate regalia consisting of appropriate honors hood, stole, braid, tassel, and/or mortarboard will distinguish all students in the Honors Program. Students graduating from the Honors Program will be further distinguished from students receiving traditional College and University recognition of scholastic achievement (distinction, high distinction, or highest distinction) by graduating cum Laude with Honors Distinction, Magna cum Laude with Honors Distinction, or Summa cum Laude with Honors Distinction if cumulative grade point averages of 3.5 to 3.74, 3.75 to 3.89, or above 3.9 are maintained, respectively.

Incentives for student participation in the Honors Program include:

- Transcripts of honors students will specify that they are graduates of the College Honors Programs.
- Honors students may request project support by applying for a grant from Bumpers College Undergraduate Research and Creative Project Grant Program.
- Honors students have the benefit of working one-on-one with faculty members on research or creative projects.
- Honors students will be eligible to apply for competitive scholarships supporting undergraduate honors studies or research (i.e., SURF grants).
- Honors students will receive all other rights and privileges as outlined in the Honors College benefits.

### **Evaluation and Support of the DBCAFLS Honors Program**

*Evaluation Time Lines.* It is recommended that an evaluation of the program be conducted to determine the effectiveness of its intentions in meeting student and administrative needs and goals. Evaluations should be held every 5 to 10 years. The evaluation should include: the number of students in the program, quality of the research projects being conducted and reported, the number of projects being reported in statewide and national forums, the number and funding rate of proposals being submitted to agencies to support the research projects, the number of endowments being sought and obtained to support the program, and quality of the presentations made by Honors students.

The Honors Program shall be terminated if it should fail to perform as expected.

*Enrollment Goals.* The goal of the Honors Program is to enroll and graduate as many of the qualified students as possible. It is considered that an average enrollment of 5 to 10% of the College undergraduate student body will be an acceptable base to justify the expenditures and course offerings.

Revised: May 5, 2000

The AFLS Honors Faculty Committee approved the option to allow any AFLS Honors Student the opportunity to petition the AFLS Honors Faculty Committee requesting substitutions of honors courses from outside of AFLS on a case-by-case basis.

Approved: 14 August 2006

The AFLS College Faculty approved the motion to increase the university grade point requirement to participate in the AFLS Honors Program from the current 3.25 to 3.50. The change will apply to admission requests received after the start of the Fall 2010 semester.

Approved: 9 December 2009

The AFLS Faculty Council approved the motion to require students admitted to the AFLS Honors Program after the start of the Fall 2011 semester to complete 9 hours of honors courses from any college across the university plus 6 hours of thesis credit. This change nullifies the requiring substitution approval of honors courses outside of Bumpers College.

Approved: 19 March 2010

Revised: 23 February 2016

Revised bylaws to remove items no longer in place and added critical information regarding the current program.

Approved: 2 March 2016

Revised: 25 January 2021

Revised bylaws to clarify Bumpers College Honors Program administration and requirements.

Approved: 11 February 2021