

HONORS PROGRAM HANDBOOK



I. MISSION STATEMENT

The Honors Program, as a community of student-scholars, is guided by the mission of the College: “to contribute through higher education to the enhancement of the human person and to the advancement of human culture in the light of the Catholic faith.” It is the mission of the Honors Program to enrich the college experience of each Honors Program student; to promote the intellectual growth of every student at Saint Michael’s College by contributing to the overall academic culture of the College; and to encourage active involvement in service to the community.

II. MEMBERSHIP

Students are invited to join the Honors Program:

- (a) at the beginning of their first year on the basis of a promising high school record.
or
- (b) at the beginning of the second semester of their first year if they earned a grade point average of 3.5 or above in their first semester at Saint Michael’s.
or
- (c) at the beginning of their sophomore year if they earned a grade point average of 3.5 or above in their first year at Saint Michael’s.

To remain in the Honors Program, students must do the following:

- (a) complete the course requirements as explained in section III below
and
- (b) maintain a cumulative grade point average of 3.5
**If a student’s cumulative grade point average falls below a 3.5, he/she will be issued a warning and have one semester to obtain a 3.5 cumulative grade point average. If the student does not raise his or her cumulative GPA to a 3.5 in the subsequent semester, he/she will be dismissed from the program. Appeals can be made to the Honors Program Coordinator in writing in the case of extenuating circumstances.*

All Honors Program students are welcomed to participate in the Honors Program Student Committee (*see section IV*).

III. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

To graduate from Saint Michael’s College Honors Program, a student must complete at least five honors courses:

- (a) Honors Colloquium (2 credits)
- (b) Senior Capstone Project (typically in the student’s major for a minimum of three credits)
- (c) Three additional Honors classes, for a minimum of three credits each

The Honors Colloquium

The Honors Colloquium offers opportunities to explore a wide variety of cultural and intellectual topics through attendance at public lectures, artistic performances and other events on and off-campus. One unifying text is usually required reading. Students write response papers for attended events, lead class discussions and submit a final essay.

(*See the College website for further details:*
<http://www.smcvt.edu/academics/honors/colloquium.asp>)

Senior Capstone Project

The capstone project component is completed in the major and usually in the context of a senior seminar.

If the departmental capstone project is done outside of course work or in a course earning fewer than three credits, students need to consult with their thesis advisor and the Coordinator of the Honors Program to make an appropriate plan which will fulfill the capstone component requirement (*see section VIII*).

Double Majors are required to complete only one capstone project for Honors credit.

Senior Honors Program members may apply for research funds to help with expenses incurred in the pursuit of these projects. Awards subject to review of applications made to the Coordinator of the Honors Program.

Additional Honors classes can be chosen from the following options:

Regularly offered courses designated as the “Honors Core” which consist of an Honors section of a First Year Seminar, Ancient and Medieval Civilization (HU 101), Modern Civilization (HU 102), Introduction to Philosophical Problems (PH 103), and Philosophy of Human Being (PH 201).

Designated course offerings, which vary from semester to semester by arrangement between the Honors Program Committee and the academic department

By agreement of the student, the instructor, and the Honors Program Coordinator, a single “regular” course in the student’s major may be taken as an Honors Course, with enhanced content (*see section VIII*).

IV. LEADERSHIP

Faculty Honors Committee

- (a) Consists of full-time, tenure-track faculty members appointed by the Vice President for Academic Affairs with the advice of the Faculty Council.

- (b) Reports to the Faculty Assembly, the Dean of the College, or the Vice President for Academic Affairs, as may be required.
- (c) Is responsible for governance and policy making for the Honors Program in consultation with the Student Honors Committee.

Honors Program Coordinator

- (a) Is a faculty member appointed by the Dean of the College.
- (b) Chairs the Faculty Honors Committee as a non-voting member.
- (c) Is the primary contact person for the concerns of the Honors Program Student Committee.
- (d) Oversees all day-to-day operations of the Honors Program – he/she keeps membership records, answers inquiries from students and faculty, shapes each semester’s course offerings, manages the Program’s budget, organizes the agenda of the Faculty Honors Committee, assists the Office of Admissions in its recruitment activities, implements additional policies as approved by the Faculty Honors Committee, and encourages the strengthening of the Program in all available ways.

Honors Program Student Committee

- (a) Welcomes the participation of all Honors Program student members.
- (b) Consists of Honors Program students who volunteer to represent the Honors Program by taking an active interest in the needs of its members.
- (c) Facilitates interaction between the Honors Program students and the Faculty Honors Committee.
- (d) Acts as a forum for the concerns of Honors Program students.
- (e) Helps organize, publicize, and execute Honors Program–sponsored events with funds available from the Honors Program budget (see sections V & VI).

The Officers of the Honors Program Student Committee

Are nominated and elected by the volunteer Honors Program Student Committee for the following organizational positions:

President

Sets the agenda for and presides over Honors Program Student Committee meetings and leads Honors Program-wide meetings.

Vice President

Disseminates timely information, including keeping the bulletin board up-to-date, emailing announcements for events and agendas for meetings, and arranging the official written correspondence of the student committee. He/She shall preside over Honors Program Student Committee meetings in the absence of the President. It is recommended that this officer not be a member of the Senior class.

Secretary

Takes notes at all Student Honors Committee meetings; distributes meeting minutes to the committee; and acts as a contact for committee member schedule conflicts.

Treasurer

Works in conjunction with the Honors Program Coordinator to fund student-run Honors Program events, proposes a program budget, and manages the distribution of funds.

Student Representative to the Faculty Honors Committee

Attends all Faculty Honors Committee meetings as a non-voting member; acts as a liaison between the Faculty and Student Honors Committees, may voice concerns, offer suggestions, present Student Honors Committee proposals; must be approved by the Faculty committee.

Class Representatives (2 per class)

Serve as the contact persons for their class year in answering questions of the program members in the respective class and bringing the interests and concerns of the class to the Student Committee, as well as publicizing events and changes among members of their respective class.

- It is recommended that voting be completed by mid-October.

The term of elected office runs a full calendar year. Elections will take place on the following schedule: Any member of the Honors Program wishing to be an officer of the student committee must be nominated (self-nomination is permitted) for a specific position via email to the serving secretary. Notifications of nominations are sent to the nominees and may be accepted or rejected. Those accepting their nominations must write a short paragraph explaining why they want to be on the committee, etc. An open forum will occur the week before elections. Votes are emailed to the Program Coordinator.

V. PROGRAMMING

Residential programs

- (a) Provided for First-Year Honors Program students, as coordinated in conjunction with the Office of New Student Programs and Development.
- (b) Designed to encourage Honors Program students to build a closer social community.

- (c) Run by the Honors Program Student Committee in honors housing areas but open to all Honors Program students, regardless of where they live.

Social Programs

- (a) Involve a larger population than the residential programs, often including the whole college community.
- (b) Are designed to contribute to the cultural enrichment of the campus, to stimulate social awareness, and/or to promote service projects.

VI. FINANCIAL MATTERS

- (a) The budget for the Honors Program is determined by the College's Board of Trustees at their annual budget meeting.
- (b) The Coordinator of the Program distributes the money as he/she deems necessary with the advice of the Faculty Honors Committee members. Funding is issued for specific initiatives including, but not limited to: senior capstone projects, lectures, social programming, etc.
- (c) The Student Committee can apply to the Faculty Committee for funds to cover the cost of events being sponsored.
- (d) The Student Committee can apply to the Office of New Student Programs and Development for funds for programs directed towards first-year Honors Program students.

VII. HONORS HOUSING

- (a) Incoming students can request to be placed in Honors Housing, but such placement is not automatic.
- (b) During room selection for upper classes, rooms are set aside for Honors Housing.

(See publications from Residence Life for more information)

VIII. GUIDELINES

Senior Honors Capstone Projects

Capstone projects are opportunities for students to display their mastery of a particular set of standards established for their majors. An honors capstone project should aim, in addition, for the creation of original work of graduate-level quality in the particular discipline. Evidence that such aims have been achieved includes:

- (a) An intellectual/creative problem of some significance,
- (b) A relatively sophisticated understanding of the materials involved and the relevant research and artistic methodologies, and
- (c) A high level of clarity and organization, as well as felicity of presentation, in the finished work.

Completed projects should be subject to (1) a final mentoring session before one or more faculty members where the student will have an opportunity to discuss his/her work and (2) a source of presentations (talks/demonstrations/exhibits) before a public audience, not only as part of the capstone course requirements, but in academic publications and such forums as those sponsored by the Committee on Undergraduate Research, the Social Science Research Council, the Lake Champlain Research Consortium, the Vermont Genetics Network, and disciplinary conferences.

Honors Components to Regular Courses

Specific requirements are bound to vary by department, but the following general guidelines should apply to all. The instructor and honors student should address the following when planning:

- (a) Be consistent with course objectives and department standards.
- (b) Help elevate the intellectual level of the class.
- (c) Include a true mentoring relationship between the instructor and student that involves regular discussions of student progress.
- (d) Go beyond the efficient consumption of knowledge and aspire toward the production of and creative application of knowledge.
- (e) Foster the skills necessary for systematic intellectual investigation and creativity. These can include the ability to critically evaluate pertinent scholarly literature, an understanding of and ability to apply relevant research methods, and/or an ability to produce artistic work of some originality.
- (f) Include an end-of-semester summation of what has been learned. This summation should take a form consistent with each department's disciplinary standards for excellence: an oral exam, talk, demonstration, exhibition, or other accounting of the student's work that goes beyond the standard course requirements.

If you have any questions, comments, or concerns, please contact the Honors Coordinator, Professor Nick Clary at nclary@smcvt.edu or **802.654.2390**.



SAINT MICHAEL'S COLLEGE

One Winooski Park
Colchester, Vermont 05439
www.smcvt.edu