

# HONORS PROGRAM HANDBOOK



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## 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 3.6 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 3.6 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 3.6

*\*If a student’s cumulative grade point average falls below a 3.6, the student will be issued a warning that he/she may be endangering his/her prospects for completion of the Honors Program in good standing. A student receiving such a warning will be encouraged to assess the possibility of raising her/his GPA in time to graduate as an Honors Program Student. If this appears to be impossible, the student will be informed by the Director. A student who does not achieve a 3.6 cumulative GPA at the time of graduation will not graduate in the Honors Program. Appeals can be made to the Director 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 (in the student’s major)
- (c) Three additional Honors Program classes

**Honors Program classes can be chosen from the following options:**

Honors sections of the First Year Seminar as well as designated course offerings that vary from semester to semester are set aside and identified as Honors sections. Honors sections may satisfy Liberal Studies requirements or requirements for the student’s major or minor, in addition to meeting graduation requirements in the Honors Program. Students choose three Honors Program courses to complete this requirement. (*Visit the Honors Program page on the College’s website for further details*)

### Adapting a non-Honors Course to Honors Level

Specific requirements are bound to vary by department or program, but the following general guidelines should apply to any adaptation of a non-Honors course to Honors level. Rather than think of the Honors component simply as an add-on, the instructor and Honors student should address the following when planning a proposal for submission to the faculty Honors Committee.

By agreement between the student and the instructor, and with the approval of the faculty Honors Committee, a “regular” course may be taken as an Honors Course, with enhanced content.:

- (a) Include a true mentoring relationship between the instructor and student that involves regular discussions of student progress.
- (b) Go beyond the efficient consumption of knowledge and aspire toward the production of and creative application of knowledge.
- (c) 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.

The proposal form for adapting a non-Honors course to Honors level can be downloaded at the Required Courses tab on the Honors Program page of the College website.

### 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, as well as in weekly discussions of topics and readings. One unifying text is usually required reading. Students write response papers for attended events, lead class discussions and submit a final essay.

(*Visit the Honors Program page on the College’s website for further details*)

### **Senior Honors Capstone Project**

The capstone project is usually completed in the context of the senior seminar or capstone course in the student's major. 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.

Departments have formulated specific supplemental guidelines for their Senior Honors Program majors. These supplemental guidelines may be found at the Senior Project tab on the Honors Program page of the College website.

The proposal form for the Senior Honors Capstone Project can be downloaded at the Senior Project tab on the Honors Program page of the College website.

If the senior capstone project is done outside of the department's capstone course, students need to consult with their project advisor in consultation with the department chairperson to make an appropriate plan which will fulfill the capstone project requirement (*More info on website*). Any student completing the capstone project outside of the capstone course in the major must take an additional Honors Program course, for a total of five Honors Program courses.

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

The application form for Senior Capstone Project funding can be downloaded at the Senior Project tab on the Honors Program page of the College website.

## **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 Director**

- (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 implement 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.

#### **Secretary**

Takes notes at all Student Honors Committee meetings, distributes minutes to the committee, and arranges to have minutes published on the Honors Program Team Site at the SMC Portal.

#### **Treasurer**

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

### **Student Representative to the Faculty Honors Committee**

Normally attends all Faculty Honors Committee meetings as a non-voting member and acts as a liaison between the Faculty and Student Honors Committees and may voice concerns, offer suggestions, present Student Honors Committee proposals and program plans for consideration and approval 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.

### **Coordinator of the Mentoring Program**

Prepares upper-class members to mentor incoming Honors Program students and arranges events, both informational and social, for first-year members and their mentors.

### **Media Coordinator**

Designs and distributes posters for programs and events sponsored by the Honors Program, manages the Honors Program bulletin board in Alliot Hall, secures materials (i.e. pens, pamphlets, tri-folds) for tabling, and oversees media component on the Honors Program Team site at the SMC Portal.

It is recommended that voting **for all positions** be complete by the end of September, including the election of two Representatives for the incoming class.

*The term of elected office runs a full calendar year. For purposes of continuity, officers already serving are encouraged to continue in office or to seek a different position on the officers board. Any member of the Honors Program wishing to hold an office on 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 nomination must write a short paragraph explaining why they want to be on the committee to be read at an open forum that will occur the week of elections. Officers should be students who have already demonstrated a commitment to the activities of the Honors Program. The Honors Program Student Committee will announce the results.*

## **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 in concert with the mentoring coordinators 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.

### **Campus Wide Programs**

- (a) Designed to involve a larger population than the residential programs, often including the whole college community, and involving faculty as well as program students in presentations and panels
- (b) 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 Director of the Program distributes the money as he/she deems appropriate with the approval 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 funding the cost of sponsored events.
- (d) The Student Committee can apply to the Office of New Student Programs and Development for funding 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.

If you have any questions, comments, or concerns, please contact the Honors Program Director, Professor Joan Wry at [jwry@smcvt.edu](mailto:jwry@smcvt.edu) or **802.654.2891**. Office: St. Edmund's Hall 340.