

# ARIZONA WESTERN COLLEGE

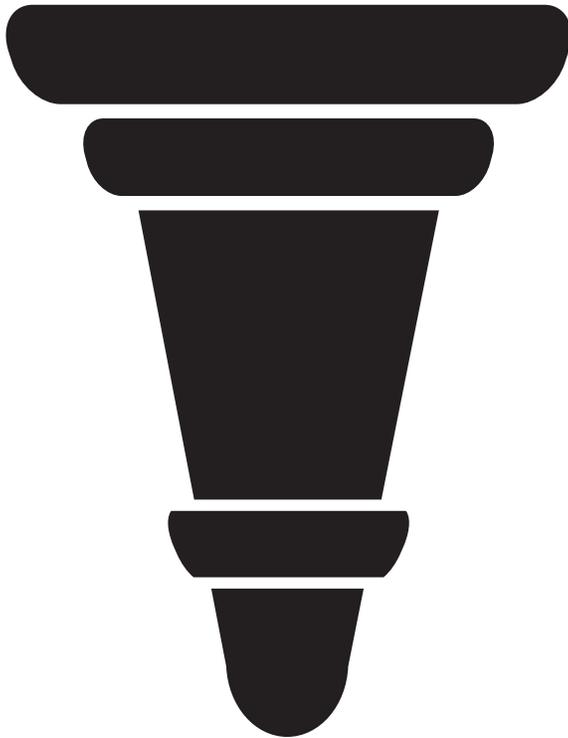


## Honors Program Student Handbook



ARIZONA WESTERN COLLEGE

**HONORS**





## About this Handbook

The Honors Program Handbook serves as both a charter and an operating manual for the Arizona Western College Honors Program. We ask that you become familiar with this Handbook, because it constitutes the guidelines for not only the Honors Program, but also for its membership. The Honors Council and Director are charged with implementing and following the policies described herein.

## Our Mission

The mission of the Arizona Western College Honors Program is to serve as a vehicle for students to explore and expand their intellectual, social, and emotional boundaries.

## Philosophy of the Honors Program

The Honors Program is dedicated to providing a variety of formal and informal learning opportunities designed to enrich each student's overall experience at Arizona Western College. Our goal is to encourage interaction between students and faculty that stimulates intellectual and emotional student growth. We – the Honors Council and Director – are dedicated to working with the rest of the AWC faculty to develop well-crafted curricula as the foundation for the Honors Program.

To achieve this, the Honors Program raises the level of discourse at AWC by encouraging and fostering in Honors students an attitude of intellectual risk-taking and an emboldened approach to the standard conditions of academia. The Honors Program joins the larger College community in promoting the value of life-long learning among its students, faculty, and administrative staff.



## Honors Council

The Honors Council is composed of Arizona Western College faculty and administrators and, as possible, faculty from NAU-Yuma, ASU@Yuma, and Univ. of Arizona-Yuma.

The Honors Council's primary purpose is to assist and guide the Honors Director in the operation of the Honors Program. Specifically, the Council reviews and recommends changes to the Honors Program Handbook; deliberates on scholarship distribution; confers with the Honors Director on issues pertaining to funding, student performance, and Program resources; assists the Director in scheduling Honors courses and in mentoring and directing Honors faculty.

## Honors Council Members

The Honors Council shall be made up of the following representatives:

- Honors Program Director (Chairperson)
- 1 Faculty - Business and Computer Information Systems Division
- 1 Faculty - Communications Division
- 1 Faculty - Fine Arts Division
- 1 Faculty - Math Division
- 1 Faculty - Modern Languages Division
- 1 Faculty - Science Division
- 1 Faculty - Social Sciences Division
- 1 Faculty - Career and Technical Education Division
- 2 Faculty-at-large Representatives
- 1 Advisement Services Representative
- Phi Theta Kappa President
- Representatives from the Yuma campuses of Northern Arizona University, University of Arizona, and Arizona State University

## Duties of the Honors Director

The Honors Director is charged with the daily operations of the Honors Program, assisted by a part-time employee and at least one Work Study student. The Honors Director acts as an advocate for the Honors Program, its student members, and its affiliated faculty.

As chairman of the Honors Council, the Director works closely with the Council members in the performance of operational duties and responsibilities. In addition to Council tasks, the Director is charged with:

- Welcoming new students into the program and helping them adjust to campus life.
- Working with AWC faculty and department chairs to develop, implement, and schedule Honors curriculum.
- Conducting individual course-program advisement sessions with each Honors student every semester.
- Teaching Honors Seminars and monitoring Honors Capstone projects every semester.
- Officiating and validating Honors in-course contracts.
- Hiring and supervising office staff.
- Arranging for student trips to Arizona universities.
- Overseeing and reconciling the Honors budget.
- Serving as faculty advisor to Sigma Beta, AWC's chapter of Phi Theta Kappa.
- Promoting the Honors Program at local high schools and at AWC.
- Networking with other academic institutions to discover scholarship opportunities for transferring students.
- Chairing monthly Honors Council meetings.
- Hosting an end-of-the-year Honors and PTK Convocation.
- Making academic and disciplinary recommendations to the Honors Council and to the Dean of Instruction.

## High School Applicants shall meet at least one of the following criteria:

- Ranked within the top ten percent (10%) of graduating class.
- American College Test (ACT) score of at least 24, or Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) score of at least 1575 (or 1050 without the written test).
- An appropriate qualifying score on the AWC Placement Exams: eligibility for **ENG 101** (or appropriate reading score) and **MAT 121**

## College Transfer or Current AWC Student Applicants shall:

Complete at least 12 college credit hours, in courses 100-level or above, with a cumulative GPA of at least 3.5.

## All applicants must submit the following application components:

- Online application, comprising personal data and two essays - a shorter one summarizing your background and what you bring to the Honors Program, and one longer one describing your academic and professional goals.
- Two academic references (online Excel spreadsheets).
- Scanned high school or college transcript AND
  - Qualifying ACT or SAT scores OR qualifying high school class rank clearly indicated on the transcript OR
  - Scanned ACT or SAT report OR
  - AWC Placement Test report

Exceptions to the application requirements may be allowed with the expressed permission of the Honors Director, subject to approval by the Honors Council. In rare circumstances, it is within the purview of the Honors Director to permit students showing extraordinary talent in a particular discipline or area of study to enter the program who otherwise would not meet the admission criteria above. Students who do not meet the published admission requirements, however, will enter the program on a provisional basis for a term of one semester. To remain in the Honors Program beyond that, the student must meet or exceed all Honors Program responsibilities detailed in this Handbook.

## The Application Process

High school student applications will be processed during the spring semester. Continuing AWC student applications will be processed throughout the academic year.

Students admitted to the Honors Program shall be invited to join via email and will have the opportunity to either accept or decline that invitation. New Program students will schedule an appointment with the Honors Director for academic advisement and to access program benefits.

## New Students - Enrolling in Honors Classes

Students who accept the invitation to Honors should make every attempt to enroll in courses for the following full semester (fall or spring) before the end of the previous semester. So, for example, a high school student who is admitted to the Honors Program in April should make an advising appointment with the Honors Director and enroll for Honors classes before the end of the week following AWC's final exams. Also, a continuing AWC student who is admitted to the Honors Program in November should make an advising appointment with the Honors Director and enroll for Honors classes before the end of the week following final exams. Enrollment during the winter and summer breaks is possible, but more difficult, since the Honors Center is officially closed during those periods.

## Honors Transfer Policy

The Honors Program will recognize up to seven credit hours in the event one of the classes is a four-credit General Education (GE) science class. GE Honors credit can be awarded if transferred from institutions affiliated with the National Collegiate Honors Council.

## Categories of Honors Memberships

There are three categories of student memberships in the Honors Program: Full (in good standing), Probational, and Provisional.

**Full (in good standing) members:** A student who meets all the criteria requirements and accepts the Honors Director's invitation to join shall be considered a full member in good standing. To maintain this status, a student must maintain standards of academic excellence within Honors Program advocacy and service learning. Only full members in good standing shall be eligible to receive Program scholarship opportunities. Only full members in good standing shall be eligible to receive an Honors degree from Arizona Western College.

**Probational members:** Full members in good standing who do not maintain standards of academic excellence within Honors Program advocacy and service learning during the semester marking period will be reduced in status to probational. Full membership can be restored by raising academic standards to acceptable levels.

**Provisional members:** A student not meeting the standards of academic excellence but who has been admitted into the program by recommendation of the Honors Director shall be considered provisional member. A provisional member may transition to full membership in good standing when academic standards of excellence are met and maintained. A provisional member must have a cumulative current GPA of at least 3.0 with the potential to graduate with a GPA of at least 3.5.

## Duration of Program Membership

Students may remain members of the Program as long as they continue to make progress toward earning their degree, while maintaining the standards of academic excellence, within Program advocacy and service learning.

## Scholarships

Merit scholarships are awarded each semester at the discretion of the Honors Director and the Honors Council. Qualification for these awards is competitive and may be available for up to four semesters. The number and amount of awards varies depending on available resources and number of qualified candidates.

## Honors Degree Options

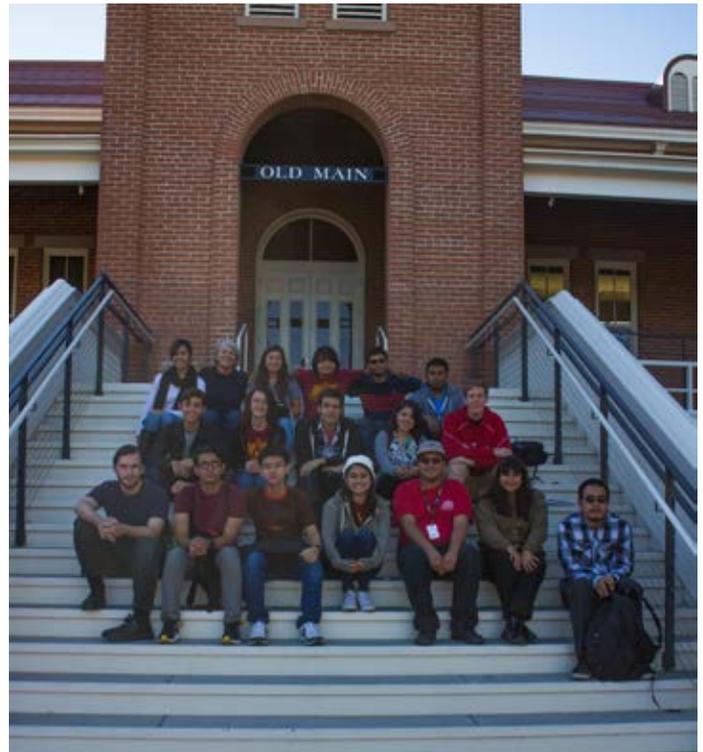
To accommodate the widest range of student interests and to facilitate the greatest involvement in the Honors Program, we offer the following degree choices to those students who have met the above eligibility criteria:

### Honors Liberal Arts

- Complete with a cumulative GPA of 3.5 or higher all coursework for a transfer degree (A.A., A.Bus., A.S.) in any major, or complete the AWC General Education Curriculum (AGEC-A, AGEC-B, or AGEC-S).
- Demonstrate competency in a second language, or complete two courses of foreign language study.
- Complete two Honors Seminars (HON 180 and HON 181) of 1 credit each.
- Complete either an Honors Colloquium (HON 280) OR an Honors Capstone Project (HON 285), 3 credits each.
- AGEC-A and AGEC-B student must complete at least nineteen (19) additional Honors credits, composed of Honors-designated General Education courses and courses with the HON designated prefix.
- AGEC-S students need only complete eighteen (18) additional Honors credits.
- HON 180, HON 181, and either HON 280 or HON 285 are required courses and are not considered additional Honors credits.
- If a student completes both HON 280 and HON 285, the second course will be considered as 3 additional Honors credits.

### Honors General Studies

- Complete with a cumulative GPA of 3.5 or higher all coursework for a transfer degree (A.A., A.Bus., A.S.) in any major, or complete the AWC General Education Curriculum (AGEC-A, AGEC-B, or AGEC-S).
- Complete two Honors Seminars (HON 180 and HON 181) of 1 credit each.
- Complete either an Honors Colloquium (HON 280) OR an Honors Capstone Project (HON 285), 3 credits each.
- AGEC-A and AGEC-B student must complete at least nineteen (19) additional Honors credits, composed of Honors-designated General Education courses and courses with the HON designated prefix.
- AGEC-S students need only complete eighteen (18) additional Honors credits.
- If a student completes both HON 280 and HON 285, the second course will be considered as 3 additional Honors credits.



### Discretionary Honors

- Complete with a cumulative GPA of 3.5 or higher all coursework for a transfer degree (A.A., A.Bus., A.S.) in any major, or complete the AWC General Education Curriculum (AGEC-A, AGEC-B, or AGEC-S), or complete a terminal, non-transfer degree (A.A.S.)
- Complete two Honors Seminars (HON 180 and HON 181) of 1 credit each.
- Complete either an Honors Colloquium (HON 280) OR an Honors Capstone Project (HON 285), 3 credits each.
- Complete at least twelve (12) additional Honors credits, composed of Honors-designated General Education courses and courses with the HON designated prefix.
- If a student completes both HON 280 and HON 285, the second course will be considered as 3 additional Honors credits.

For all of the above degree programs, no grade of less than "C" may be used in the overall program, and no grade of less than "B" will count toward Honors Degree requirements. In the event a student does not complete an Honors Degree program, all courses completed for Honors credit will carry an Honors (HON) prefix, or be designated with an "H" on a student's transcript. All Honors Program students earning one of the above degrees will be recognized at the AWC Honors Convocation held at the completion of the spring semester.

# Curriculum

## Honors Core Courses

Honors core courses include the following:

- **HON 180:** Honors Seminar 1, 1 credit (required). Fall only. HON 180 focuses on creating a student portfolio in anticipation of university transfer after earning a degree with Arizona Western College.
- **HON 181:** Honors Seminar 2, 1 credit (required). Spring only. HON 181 focuses on higher-level research skills required for success at the junior- and senior level and provides insight and inspiration for students who are considering graduate school.
- **HON 197:** Honors Special Topics, 1 credit. Under the guidance of discipline-specific experts, students will have the opportunity to apply critical thinking skills through classroom instruction.
- **HON 199:** Honors Field Trip, 1 credit. Under the guidance of discipline-specific experts, students will have the opportunity to apply critical thinking skills through experiential engagement. Previous Honors Field Trips have included City as Text, State University Honors Programs, Yuma County hikes, and metropolitan museums.
- **HON 280:** Honors Colloquium, 3 credits (required option). Honors Colloquium consists of special academic programs of an interdisciplinary or creative nature, presented by AWC faculty. Topics for Honors Colloquium reflect universal topics, or current, relevant social issues. Previous Honors Colloquia have included the fate of the Colorado River, effective parenting, campus recycling, students in free enterprise, film in culture, poetry and art, transformative leadership, and the separation of church and state.
- **HON 285:** Honors Capstone Project, 3 credits (required option). The purpose of the Capstone Project is to challenge students intellectually, while providing an outlet for individual creativity and interest. Project subjects are unique to each student, but all projects include the following components:
  - Creation of a Capstone team consisting of a minimum of the student, the Honors Director, and two discipline-specific advisors/mentors
  - Regular team meetings to set goals, establish timelines, and evaluate progress
  - Documented research on the Project topic
  - Formal presentation of research to a specific entity or group

## Honors General Education Courses

Each semester, the Honors Program is committed to offer Honors sections in all of the GE content areas. It is the responsibility of the student to enroll in Honors GE courses that are congruent with their degree program. In the

unusual event a scheduling conflict cannot be resolved, at the discretion of the Honors Director, a student may contract for a compatible course.

## Responsibilities of Honors Program Students

Honors students shall maintain the following standards of academic excellence:

- **Minimum GPA:** Students shall maintain a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.5. Students failing to meet this requirement will be placed on probational status as defined previously in this Handbook.
- **Full Course Load:** Students shall be enrolled in at least twelve (12) credit hours during fall and spring semesters, regardless of financial aid requirements. Students failing to meet this requirement will be placed on probational status as defined previously in this Handbook.
- **Participation in Honors Program Curriculum:** Students shall enroll in and complete all required courses within the Honors Program Curriculum as specified herein: HON 180; HON 181; HON 280 or HON 285; and 12, 18, or 19 additional Honors credits (depending on the Honors degree and the student's AGEC). Students failing to meet this requirement will be placed on probational status as defined previously in this Handbook.
- **Advisement:** Students shall meet with the Honors Director each fall and spring semester for academic advisement. The student shall, under the direction of the Advisor, determine the student's discipline of study, explore available degree options, and develop an academic/degree plan.

Program students are also expected to participate actively in service-learning, a standard of excellence that is central to Honors education at Arizona Western College. Service-learning involves students in dynamic, challenging, creative, and relevant educational opportunities both in and out of the classroom. The key to service learning is engagement: Honors education rejects the notion of passive, lecture-based learning in favor of inquiry-based educational opportunities. This method of instruction seeks to draw on students' innate curiosity and love of learning in order to learn about the world around them by experiencing it.

## Acknowledgments

We extend our sincere gratitude to the faculty and staff of Arizona Western College for their dedicated service on the Honors Council and as Honors faculty.

Special thanks go to the Arizona Western College administrators for their continued support of and commitment to our Program and our students.

The AWC Honors Program recognizes Dr. Doug Brown (Professor of Political Science, Retired) as the founder and original Director of this Program.

