

The background of the cover is a photograph of a modern university building with a courtyard. The building has multiple stories with many windows, some of which are lit up. In the foreground, there is a green lawn and a paved walkway. A person is visible walking on the path. The sky is a clear, light blue. A large, semi-transparent maroon rectangle is overlaid on the top half of the image, containing the title text. At the bottom, there are two overlapping rectangular boxes: a brown one on the left and a gold one on the right, both containing text.

University Honors Program

2022

Report

A summary of activities and outcomes from the 2021-2022 academic year.

Katherine H. Tennis, Ph.D
Faculty Director

Kira A. Castle, M.A.
Program Manager

Our Program

Mission Statement

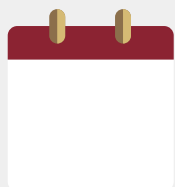
The University of Denver's Honors Program fosters an intellectually engaged and vibrant community of students, staff, and faculty. It promotes a distinctive broad and liberal arts education that challenges students to cultivate depth in critical and creative thought, and facilitates students' original contributions to intellectual life, their community, and their chosen field.

Three Pillars



Community
Curriculum
Distinction &
Research

Overview



AY 2021-2022 Summary

AY 21-22 has been both exciting and atypical in a couple ways. First, the leadership of the University Honors Program changed completely in AY 21-22. Faculty Director Kate Tennis joined the program in April of 2021. Former Associate Director Shawn Alfrey left the program at the end of July 2021. Kira Castle came in as our new Program Manager to replace her in November of 2021. Kira and Kate have thus spent much of the past year learning. We have consulted extensively with Honors Council and have also held student focus groups to get more input on the program. We are working on clarifying processes and procedures within the program. And we are excited about many new ideas for next year.

It was also both an exciting and atypical year in terms of COVID. On the bright side, most teaching returned to in-person this year, with mask mandates dropped by spring quarter. But COVID restrictions were also in flux all year, making event planning challenging, especially in winter quarter of 2022 with the Omicron surge and temporary shift to remote teaching. Our students have had very different experiences of campus and community-building depending on what year they entered DU, but there is a general feeling that more community building is in order after the past two years of COVID restrictions.

Contents

04 COMMUNITY

- Student Events
- Co-Sponsorships & Grants
- Student Leadership
- Online Presence
- New Students
- Faculty Engagement

12 CURRICULUM

- 2021-2022 Honors Courses
- Planned 2022-2023 Honors Courses
- Innovations

15 DISTINCTION & RESEARCH

- Distinction
- 2021-2022 Honors Graduates
- URC collaboration

18 PLANS FOR NEXT YEAR

- Four goals for 2022-2023

20 APPENDICES

- Revised Requirements Checklist
- Honors Council Membership and Mandate
- Honors Focus Group Narrative Notes
- Honors Graduation Program
- Sample Honors Compass Newsletter
- Admission & Retention Data

Community

Mission Statement:

The University of Denver's Honors Program fosters an intellectually engaged and vibrant community of students, staff, and faculty.



The community element of the Honors program is an essential piece of the Honors experience at DU, and the goal of the program is to foster a vibrant community of learners who engage with each other both within and outside of the classroom. This was a central theme in our 2022 focus groups (see Appendix C). Following these meetings, we would summarize the identity of our program as a community of students, faculty, and staff who are hungry for knowledge, passionate about a wide range of topics, and who want to learn in community with one another – both within the classroom and beyond.

The next page summarizes community-building activities as they related to current students, new students, faculty and staff, and our online presence.

Student Events

We worked on building opportunities for student community through a number of events this year, including cultural events (including the Denver Art Museum, a Denver Nuggets game, and the Hamilton musical) as well as socials (fall ice cream social and spring picnic). We hosted pizza and advising sessions every quarter. And we ended the year with a wonderful Honors graduation ceremony for students and their families in Mary Reed’s Renaissance Room.

**FALL
2021**

- Discoveries Week Orientation (80)*
- Ice Cream Social (60)
- El Pomar Info Session (2)
- Denver Art Museum (10)
- Pizza & Advising (25)

**WINTER
2022**

- Pizza & Advising (15)
- Trivia Night (10)
- Hamilton* (20)

**SPRING
2022**

- Denver Nuggets Game (30)
- Spring Kickoff Brunch (20)
- Mini Golf (2)
- Distinction Info Session (20)
- Focus Groups (35)
- Immersive Frida Kahlo (15)
- Honors Component of "Be Well to DU Well" Retreat at KMC (12)
- Pizza & Advising (5)
- Botanic Gardens (10)
- Trivia Night (5)
- Spring Picnic (35)
- Study & Cookies (5)
- Graduation (130**)



*Attendance noted in parenthesis
 **35 students plus families

Co-Sponsorships & Grants

Honors co-sponsored a spring speaker event with Phi Beta Kappa, bringing the speaker in for lunch with Honors students and providing some funding to support the cost of bringing him to campus.

Honors also co-sponsored DU's Model UN Club, enabling a number of students to attend two major MUN conferences.



Special Honors Funding Recipients

- ✓ Jackson Garske (\$99)
Coding software for thesis project
- ✓ Katherine Miromonti (\$587)
Books and materials for senior art conservation project
- ✓ Kassidy Patarino (\$568)
Attendance at the 2022 Society of Personality and Social Psychology Annual Convention
- ✓ Andres Pulido (\$575)
attendance at the 33rd National Association of Business Economics Annual Economic Policy Conference in D.C.

Future of Funding

We realized that most of our grants were redundant with URC grants, and thus will be moving away from a granting model next academic year, instead pointing people to the various grants offered by URC, including for conference presentations.

Student Leadership



We created a number of new student leadership positions within Honors. First, we returned to the tradition of including two student representatives on Honors Council – this year the Honors students elected:

- Emma Seel '24
- Luke Venezia '25

Their input in Faculty Council has been extremely valuable so far.

Next year we will also have a new Student Programming Board, Honors Student Association, that will include five students in leadership positions. We hired these students this year. They will be assisting with events planning through Voltaire, organizing and managing the Book Club, a new mentorship program, and with our social media engagement. We have met with this group once already and are excited by their enthusiasm and student-centered ideas.

Honors Student Association Leaders

2022-2023

- Alyssa Aragon '25
Communications & Voltaire
- Lindsay Baker '25
Book Club & Voltaire
- Audrey Mitchell '23
Peer Mentoring & Voltaire
- Sarah Olson '25
Voltaire
- Kenna Stephen '25
Communications & Voltaire

In an effort to increase accessibility of these roles, we will be providing all students on the Student Programming Board as well as our elected representatives to Honors Council with a small stipend.



Online Presence

Honors was asked to overhaul our website in 21-22. We first overhauled all of the outdated content on the existing Omni platform. We then worked with Drupal team to develop our current web page: <https://academicaffairs.du.edu/honors>.

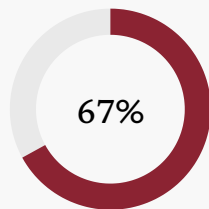
We are currently in the process of getting trained in Drupal so that we can make necessary changes and edits.

We developed a new student newsletter called *The Compass*, sent out every 2-3 weeks that includes events, important dates, and opportunities. A sample of this newsletter is included in Appendix D.



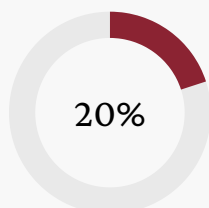
THE COMPASS

Your quarterly points of reference.



Open Rate

Average open rate of *The Compass* across the four Spring 2022 editions, compared to the national average of 29%*



Click Rate

Average click rate of *The Compass* across the four Spring 2022 editions, compared to the national average of 4%*

*Compared to average across the Education industry, per Campaign Monitor

New Students

We worked closely with the Office of Admission to recruit new students for the 2022-23 academic year. We also met with their DEI coordinators and their international admissions coordinators to begin planning for a more diverse recruitment strategy for next academic year. These new efforts may include high school outreach in the Denver Metro Area as well as leaving a few spaces open later in the application cycle for international students.

We attended numerous recruitment events, including those listed below, to present information and field questions:

- Boettcher open house
- Seven Friday@DU events
- Two in-person and two virtual Journey to DU events



INCOMING FRESHMEN

- 312 applications received (+18.6%)
- 178 applicants accepted (+1.1%)
- 108** deposited (+27.1%)
- 57% acceptance rate (-14.8%)
- 60% yield rate (+24.2%)

INTERNAL TRANSFERS

- 13 applications received (-23.5%)
- 11 applicants accepted (-26.7%)
- 85% acceptance rate (-3.6%)

**Percentage changes compared to previous year*

EXTERNAL TRANSFERS

- 1 application received (+50%)
- 1 applicant accepted (+100%)
- 1 deposited (+100%)
- 100% acceptance rate (+100%)
- 100% yield rate (n/a)

***We expect to actually retain a cohort of 100 students after first-year attrition due to students opting out of the program by not attending the required Honors Summit and/or not registering for Honors WRIT.*

Faculty Engagement

→ **Mentoring Lunches for New Honors Faculty**

We invited faculty who were new to the program to have lunch with existing Honors faculty. Two new faculty participated.

→ **Honors Faculty Lunch in May**

Catered lunch open to all Honors faculty from 2021-22, as well as our Honors Council

Honors Council

We organized five Honors Council meetings this year. Among other tasks, we worked with our faculty to revise Honors advising guidelines and checklist (see Appendix A), to approve an Honors Council Membership and Mandate document (see Appendix B), to approve new courses for next year (see Curriculum section), and to brainstorm improved faculty recruitment and engagement strategies.

Curriculum

Mission Statement:

[University Honors] promotes a distinctive broad and liberal arts education that challenges students to cultivate depth in critical and creative thought ...

2021-2022 HONORS COURSES

**FALL
2021**

Literary Inquiry: Contemporary Pastoral (Ramke) AISC
Music, Society, & Culture (Whitmore) AISC
Economics: A Critical Introduction (Urquhart) SISC
Global Environmental Change I (Trigoso) SINP
Living in the Microbial World I (Sasaki & Andrud) SINP
Spirituals & the Blues (Holland) ASEM
Cervantes & the Canon (Leahy) HSEM
Migration & Diaspora Narratives (Nwosu) HSEM
Reflection & Contemplation (Taczak) HSEM



**WINTER
2022**

Globalization & Cultural Texts (Gould) AISC
Images of Culture (Moor) AISC
Philosophical Perspectives on Perception & Reality (Reshotko) AISC
War & the Presidency (Schulten) AISC
Introduction to Media & Culture (Noveiri) SISC
Global Environmental Change II (Sullivan) SINP
Living in the Microbial World II (Sasaki & Andrud) SINP
Murder in America (Pasko) ASEM
Mind of a Leader (Loeb) HSEM
Reproductive Geographies (Hazen) HSEM
Advanced Rhetoric & Writing (multiple sections)



**SPRING
2022**

Making of the Modern World (Nail) AISC
Hard Choices in Public Policy (Salucci) SISC
Principles of Sustainability (Trigoso) SISC
Global Environmental Change III (Sullivan) SINP
Living in the Microbial World III (Sasaki & Andrud) SINP
Diseases in World History (Smith) ASEM
Myths of Medieval Encounter (Melleno) ASEM
Che Guevara (Taylor) HSEM
Denver Wilds (Del Rosso) HSEM
Ethical Dilemmas in Neuroscience (Linseman) HSEM
Honors Writing (multiple sections)



Curriculum

Along with Honors Council, we reviewed 12 new course proposals. We approved 10 of these courses outright or with revisions.

PLANNED 2022-2023 HONORS COURSES

**FALL
2021**

Music, Society, & Culture (Whitmore) AISC
Economics: A Critical Introduction (Urquhart) SISC
Introduction to International Politics (Tennis) SISC
Global Environmental Change I (Trigoso) SINP
Living in the Microbial World I (Sasaki) SINP
Mountains: Ecology & Imagination (Hesse) ASEM
Extreme Academics (Tennis) HSEM
Migration & Diaspora Narratives (Nwosu) HSEM
Native Plants in (Sub)urban Ecosystems (Sciarcon) HSEM



**WINTER
2022**

Making of the Modern World (Nail) AISC
War & the Presidency (Schulten) AISC
Introduction to Media & Culture (Lieberman) SISC
Hard Choices in Public Policy (Salucci) SISC
Contemporary Issues in the Global Economy (DiMartino) SISC
Global Environmental Change II (Sullivan) SINP
Living in the Microbial World II (Sasaki) SINP
Murder in America (Pasko) ASEM
Myths of Medieval Encounter (Melleno) ASEM
Cervantes & the Canon (Leahy) HSEM
Community Engaged Scholarship (DiEnno) HSEM
Reflection & Contemplation (Taczak) HSEM
Advanced Rhetoric & Writing (multiple sections)

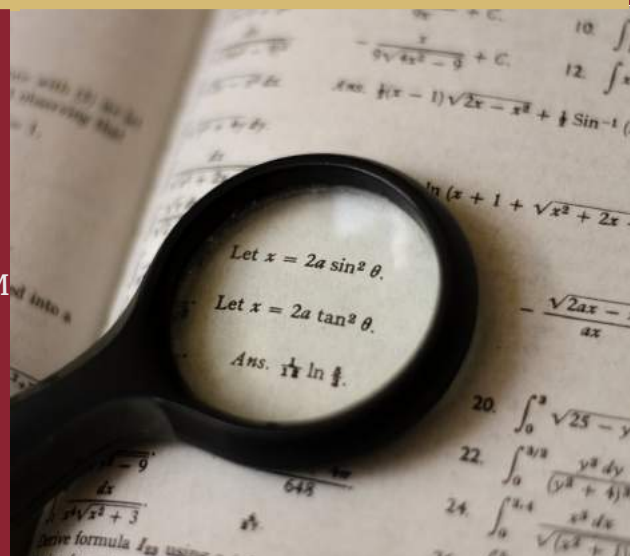
INTERTERMS

Winter Interterm
Conservation & Culture (in Kenya)
 (Uttaro & Vhyas) SISC

Spring Interterm
Denver Wilds (Del Rosso) HSEM

**SPRING
2022**

Literary Inquiry: Contemporary Pastoral (Ramke) AISC
World War I (Helstosky) AISC
20th Century Italian History & Culture (Castagnino) AISC
Principles of Sustainability (Trigoso) SISC
Global Environmental Change III (Sullivan) SINP
Living in the Microbial World III (Sasaki & Andrud) SINP
Psychology of Religious & Spiritual Practices (McIntosh) ASEM
Spirituals and the Blues (Holland) ASEM
Beautiful Investigations (Faust) HSEM
Che Guevara (Taylor) HSEM
The Human Population: Sustainability & Social Justice
 (Hazen) HSEM + SISC
Honors Writing (multiple sections)



Innovations

Next year's course list includes two major innovations in Honors curriculum:

Honors Interterms

- Winter interterm in Kenya taught by Robert Uttaro (INTS) and Dhaval Vhyas (BIOL) on Conservation and Culture.
- Spring interterm taught by Jared Del Rosso in Denver called *Denver Wilds* on local wildlife.

Honors SISC + HSEM

A six-credit SISC/HSEM joint offering taught by Helen Hazen in Spring quarter that will test a new way to offer an “Honors experience” in a larger general education course.



We hope to expand the reach of Honors next year in terms of faculty engagement by encouraging more faculty to apply through a fall faculty open house and greater faculty outreach prior to the new proposal deadline in January.



Distinction & Research

Mission Statement: [University honors] facilitates students' original contributions to intellectual life, their community, and their chosen field.

Graduating with University Honors requires students to gain distinction in at least one of their majors. Requirements for distinction vary dramatically between majors. We reached out to all major departments and got information on their distinction programs in order to better advise students.

We also organized a student information session in spring quarter on how to get started on the distinction process. Kate Tennis represented INTS and spoke to general expectations in many of the social sciences, Robert Dorres attended from Biology (and was able to speak to the processes in many NSM departments), McKenzie Mohler attended from Business, and Elizabeth Rouse also joined us - an Honors alumni who had graduated with distinction in Political Science.

Distinction in
25
different majors

2022 Honors
Graduates
45

Latin Honors
96%
earned

Graduation

2021-2022 University Honors Program Graduates

Arroway, Elena <i>Environmental Science</i>	Huzjak, Leah <i>Physics</i>	Pulido, Andres <i>Finance</i>
Bishop, Mckensey <i>Biological Sciences</i>	Jeng, Alyssa <i>Biological Sciences</i>	Reed, Bryanna <i>Political Science</i>
Brunton, Alessandra <i>German</i>	Krell, Sejal <i>Economics</i>	Rouse, Elizabeth <i>Political Science</i>
Christensen, Emma <i>Marketing</i>	Lee, Mikayla <i>Political Science</i>	Shadrina, Alexandra <i>Business Analytics</i>
Coniff, Caden <i>Computer Science</i>	Malers, Esther <i>Spanish</i>	Sheedy, Zoey <i>Political Science</i>
Curtin, Noah <i>International Studies</i>	MacAdam, Katie <i>Strategic Communications</i>	Smith, Alec <i>Biological Sciences</i>
Czebiniak, Nadia <i>International Business</i>	Marsan, Kiana <i>English</i>	Smith, Tessa <i>Biochemistry</i>
Dybvig, Evan <i>Computer Science</i>	Miromonti, Katherine <i>Pre-Art Conservation</i>	Soderstrom, Emma <i>Management</i>
Fawcett, Madi <i>Computer Science</i>	Morrell, Megan <i>Political Science</i>	Vieth, Charlotte <i>Marketing</i>
Frazier, Caleb <i>Mathematics</i>	Oltman, Meijia <i>Business Analytics</i>	Walker, Abby <i>Biological Sciences</i>
Garske, Jackson <i>International Studies</i>	O'Neill, Kiera <i>Film Studies & Production</i>	Walker, Emma <i>Finance</i>
Girardeau, Jill <i>Spanish</i>	Painter, David <i>Film Studies & Production</i>	Watson, Jordan <i>Philosophy</i>
Hempleman, Jack <i>Economics</i>	Panzer, Toni <i>Physics</i>	Wolfe, Grayden <i>Psychology</i>
Hidding, Paige <i>International Studies</i>	Paraschiv, Rachel <i>Business Analytics</i>	Woods, Zoe <i>Anthropology</i>
Horst, Lily <i>Theatre</i>	Patarino, Kassidy <i>Psychology</i>	York, Leah <i>Environmental Science</i>

URC Collaboration

Given the new organizational structure by which Kate Tennis is the director not only of Honors but of the Center for Undergraduate Scholarship and Honors which houses the University Research Center (URC), we also had closer collaboration with the URC this year. We communicated frequently about student funding applications and will move next year to a model where all research and conference travel funding requests are managed by URC.



—→ Showcase Event

The URC and Honors jointly planned and organized this year's Undergraduate Research Showcase (du.edu/research/showcase). This took place in the new Community Commons building. We had around 60 poster presentations and about 15 three-minute spoken presentations. Opening remarks were given by Provost Clark and attendance at the event was excellent, including faculty, staff, and students from across campus.

—→ DUURJ

Honors also worked closely with the DU Undergraduate Research Journal (duurjportal.com/index.php/duurj) which published research from across DU including by Honors students, as well as providing publishing leadership opportunities for numerous Honors students. They published two new issues this academic year and we are working closely with them as they transition to a new leadership team next year. DUURJ also published abstracts from the Showcase event in their spring issue.

Plans for Next Year

We are excited for the next year of the University Honors Program and have a number of priorities for our AY22-23 activities.



- **Cohort Building**
Build a stronger first-year cohort experience by organizing an Honors Summit that will be required for all first year students and introduce them not only to Honors requirements but also to community building and mentorship opportunities
- **Student-Driven Programming**
Generate more events programming, and events programming that is student-driven. We have selected five students to be part of the programming board and are excited to work with them to develop more programming and student engagement.
- **Faculty Recruitment**
Develop our faculty and curriculum by recruiting more faculty to propose courses, including through a fall open house event where prospective faculty can discuss course ideas and discuss teaching in the Honors program with existing Honors faculty
- **Honors Retreat**
Organize a winter retreat in conjunction with PLP at the new Kennedy Mountain Campus to further expand our community-building opportunities

Thank You

It was a great year for the University Honors Program, and we look forward to continuing our work revitalizing the Honors community in the years to come. Thank you to our partner offices across the University of Denver campus, and congratulations to our 45 graduates and 108 incoming first-year students!



Address
2020 South High St, Denver, CO 80210



Email
honors@du.edu



Website
du.edu/honors

honors writing

- WRIT 1622:
Advanced Rhetoric & Writing^a
- WRIT 1733:
Honors Writing^a

honors analytical inquiry: society & culture

- Any one Analytical Inquiry:
Society & Culture course (AISC)
with Honors attribute^b

honors scientific inquiry: society & culture

- Any one Scientific Inquiry:
Society & Culture course (SISC)
with Honors attribute^b

honors seminars

Any two HNRS 2400 courses;
topics vary each quarter^c

- HNRS 2400
- HNRS 2400

honors scientific inquiry: natural & physical world

**Non-majors/minors in science,
choose one sequence^d:**

Honors Geography:
GEOG 1264, 1265, & 1266 or
Honors Biology:
BIOL 1270, 1271, 1272



**Majors/minors in science,
choose one sequence^d:**

or

BIOL 1010, 1011, & (2010/2120) or
CHEM 1010, 1020, & 2131 or
PHYS 1111, 1112, & 1113 or
PHYS 1211, 1212, & 1213/1214

honors advanced seminar

- Any one Advanced Seminar
(ASEM) course with Honors
attribute^b

distinction & GPA

- Earn distinction in one major,
per that department's standards
- 3.5+ cumulative GPA

notes & possible exceptions

a WRIT 1622/1733 may be waived if the student brings in transfer credit upon entering the program that the University determines will count for WRIT 1122/1133 respectively.

b If scheduling prevents meeting this requirement with an Honors course, student may propose an "H contract," designed in collaboration with the instructor of a "regular" section of AISC/SISC/ASEM. Requires approval from Program Director, Program Manager, and/or Honors Council.

c May substitute an extra Honors ASEM in place of two HNRS 2400

d If a student brings in transfer credit upon entering program and the University determines that those classes count towards SINP, they will apply towards the required 12 credits for Honors. Any remaining credits needed should be taken from one of the Honors-approved options listed here. If student's major exempts them from part of the SINP requirement, we will not require any additional SINP beyond what is required for the major.

Honors Council Membership and Mandate

Honors Council Membership

The Honors Council will include the following members

- Honors Faculty Director
- Honors Program Manager
- 2 Student Representatives
- 8 Faculty Representatives

The 2 Student Representatives will be self-nominated and elected by their peers in Spring quarter to start work in Fall. They will serve for 2-year overlapping terms, so that only one member comes up for election each year.

The 8 Faculty Representatives will serve 3-year overlapping terms and will be drawn from departments reflecting the composition of the student body.

- 2 NSM
- 3 CAHSS (2 from different departments in the social sciences, 1 from arts or humanities)
- 1 Business
- 1 Korbel (INTS/PPOL)
- 1 Engineering

They will serve overlapping terms so that at most 3 people are added each year.

Honors Council will meet monthly on Fridays from 12-2pm, or as needed. If an Honors Council member has a teaching schedule (or other obligation) that conflicts with this time, they will find a replacement for the quarter. These meetings will be scheduled on weeks that Faculty Senate does not meet.

Honors Council Mandate

Honors Council members will engage in the following activities in support of the DU Honors Program:

- Review and advise on major programmatic changes
- Review and approve Honors courses
- Act as a conduit to respective departments, including by
 - Promoting the Honors program and Honors teaching opportunities to their respective departments
 - Acting as points of contact for departmental information for students and Honors staff as needed
- Raise any concerns or ideas from their constituents
- Assist with onboarding new Honors faculty (for example by attending the Honors open house and lunches with new faculty)
- Other activities as needed

Honors Focus Group Narrative Notes

OVERVIEW

We organized 2 focus groups for Honors students in April 2022. One was in the evening and the other at lunch time. Both ran for an hour, and we provided students with a meal. We had between 15-20 participants for each. Many of the students who showed up were “familiar faces” who are active in the community and frequently attend events, advising, etc. But about 1/3 were students that I had not met before.

The overall objective of the focus groups was to help us understand the identity of the program and value added of Honors. Concrete outcomes from these meetings will include a revision of our application questions, and a reconsideration of our course selection processes.

We asked questions about the following subjects (outlined in greater detail below): overall experience, student community, curriculum, and events

Students clearly saw value in the program even beyond the transactional benefits of priority registration and smaller class sizes. They appreciated both the community and events of Honors as well as the classes. Though there was room to grow in both domains.

In terms of community, students appreciated opportunities for making friends and learning from their peers in Honors. They appreciated that their peers were smart, passionate, engaged in the classroom and beyond, and academically curious. But there is room for more community-building and engagement. This is especially true after the past years of COVID restrictions. People wanted to have a retreat again. They also talked about a desire for a mentorship program, alumni engagement, and distinction-related programming.

In terms of classes, students appreciated when classes were discussion based and focused on a professors’ niche area of expertise. There is room for growth by providing more science options, better advertising our courses, and looking for more creative, interdisciplinary, or otherwise innovative course offerings.

Coming out of this, I would summarize the identity of our program as follows: DU’s University Honors program is a community of students, faculty, and staff who are hungry for knowledge, passionate about a wide range of topics, and who want to learn in community with one another – both within the classroom and beyond.

As leaders of the Honors program, our priorities should be:

- 1. To bring together a cohort of students who thrive in this type of learning environment**
- 2. To bring together faculty who can help facilitate it**
- 3. To organize events that encourage critical thinking and learning beyond the classroom**

OVERALL EXPERIENCE

1. Why did they originally apply to join Honors?

People seemed a bit hazy on their original goals for joining Honors. There was a lot of talk about how this was just something that they thought that they “should do” – either because they’d always taken Honors program in high school, or as a way to set themselves apart when they were looking at graduate schools – to show that they were “smart enough.” Some also joined for strategic reasons either because of a “presumption of opportunity” or for the concrete goals of smaller class sizes or priority registration. Community was not generally a motivating goal for applying, though they did note that this was a reason that they stayed.

2. To what extent has Honors met or not met their original goals?

On the positive side, they noted the classes, the community, and the benefits of priority registration and extra-curricular opportunities. In terms of classes, benefits included small class sizes, discussion-oriented learning, and different types of class content. In terms of community, they mentioned that they met friends through the program, enjoyed the familiar faces around campus, developed a support system, and enjoyed learning from peers. However, it should be noted that even among these small self-selected groups, people were concerned that they didn’t really know who was even in the Honors program and felt that the sense of community could be much stronger.

On the negative side, of course, was COVID which completely upended their expectations of college in general, including of Honors. The other major frustration was situations where they learned that they had to re-take a class to get Honors credit. (These concerns should already be at least partially addressed since we overhauled the program requirements last fall to try to avoid as much of this as possible and we are also doing much more active advising.)

STUDENT COMMUNITY

1. How would they describe an ideal Honors colleague?

They like when their colleagues are *engaged*. This might mean that they are involved in events, activities, and community – though they note that the ideal Honors colleague joins “for the right reasons,” not just to be able to list it on their resumes. They also note that a lot of their colleagues are very engaged with politics both domestically and internationally, and that they learn about the world through conversations with their Honors colleagues.

Passion was another theme that came up repeatedly. They noted that many of their colleagues had weird and quirky passions beyond the classroom, and that they were passionate about subjects beyond their major. This made classroom discussion and peer-to-peer learning more valuable.

The ability to engage in *classroom discussion* and think critically was closely related to this idea of passion. They wanted to see people in the program who truly enjoyed academics – one student described this as people who continue talking about class even after they leave the classroom. They wanted to see people contributing who had different opinions and backgrounds, and who had strong communication skills. They said that a key difference between and Honors class and a

“regular” class was that there were never any awkward pauses or hesitations about joining discussion.

Finally, they discussed the idea that Honors means being ready for a *challenge*. This is necessary in the classroom but even more so in the context of distinction, where people struggle to persist if they don't see a clear purpose and opportunity in writing their thesis.

2. If they were writing admissions questions to select for this type of student, what would they include?

- Condense MLK's "I have a dream" down to a tweet
- Watch a video and respond
- Oddball question to show creativity and passion – “if you could be any animal, what would you be”
- A book you read recently
- Creative question → “If you could design your own course, what would it be and what would be on the syllabus?”
- Tell us about something weird that you're interested in.
- Here is our mission statement [...] What is yours?
- How will you bring your passion to college?
- What student organization do you most want to be a part of and why?
- Describe yourself from someone else's point of view
- Tell us about a failure / something you overcame

CURRICULUM

1. What makes an Honors course strong?

Learning from discussion was a central theme. Students generally agreed that they liked classes where the faculty stepped back and allowed for peer-to-peer learning.

They also really liked classes taught by faculty who were teaching in their areas of specialty. Regardless of the exact content, they seemed to thrive when faculty were teaching in weird niche areas. They wanted more novelty – out of the box subjects (mythology!) and interdisciplinary courses.

Specific things to look for when vetting Honors courses included

- Not more work – more passion
- “Honors for a reason”: there should be a clear reason why this makes sense for Honors
- Engagement with theory
- Critical thinking and reflection skills
- Opportunities for faculty feedback
- Learning beyond the subject content: writing, presentation skills, communication, or engagement with primary texts

Students brought up the need to make sure that course descriptions are both concrete and accurate. Examples of cases where they felt this was not the case included *Diseases in World History*, *Images of Culture*, and *The Making of the Modern World*.

They also wanted more science options.

2. What would an ideal Honors Seminar look like?

Students brought up a few ideas for innovative ways of thinking about Honors Seminars:

- Independent studies
- Experiential learning
- Service-based learning
- Skills development

They felt that if it were a traditional course structure, it should be something that could only be taught by that professor – something very niche to their interests. And they highlighted that faculty need to remember that it is only 2 credits: work volume should be appropriate and not include busy work.

Positive examples of excellent Honors Seminars included Helen Hazen's *Reproductive Geographies*. Students appreciated the volume of work: One response each week and a student presentation done in pairs once in the quarter (and "no busy work!"). They also liked the structure of class with a mini-lecture and ample opportunities for discussion.

3. Random good idea: Honors textbook library

EVENTS

1. What types of events would help them in their academic journeys?

A *mentorship program* is something that came up a lot. Some argued that this should be organized within the major – or that there should be at least some type of within-major communication between the years. Others noted that having some type of matching device ensures shared interests and having "something to talk about."

Another idea was to form "families" with one student from each year and maybe including a faculty mentor. Quarterly coffee check-ins might be enough. And having some type of social networking around events so that they know that someone who they recognize will be there.

Students also mentioned that more *alumni engagement* would be appreciated.

A few people wanted to think about a *thesis-sharing event*. Showcase seemed to be intimidating to some people. They wanted something fun and low stakes that wasn't centered around posters which I think felt alienating for some folks from the humanities especially. It should be fun and should both be a celebration for those completing work and an opportunity to demystify the experience for freshmen and sophomores. Might include a panel of seniors to give advice to future gens.

They also mentioned the need to learn more about distinction earlier on.

2. What types of things would draw you to fun events?

- Free food!
- A retreat!
- Opportunities to leave campus
- Specific ideas included art museums, trivia nights, and a “sip and paint” event

CLOSING

How would they describe the overall value of the program (imagine you are pitching the program to a potential donor)?

People felt that they came out of Honors “more well-rounded”, feeling like “life-long learners.” They did independent research and were also part of a community that provided support and a peer network. Finally, it provided the opportunities of small classes, distinction, early registration, and events.



UNIVERSITY *of*
DENVER

UNIVERSITY HONORS PROGRAM

Graduation

FRIDAY, JUNE 10, 2022

Honors Graduation

FRIDAY, JUNE 10, 2022
4:00-6:00 P.M.

MARY REED HALL
RENAISSANCE ROOM



Note of Congratulations

When you all began college three or four years ago, surely you didn't envision your college experience being what it was. While the past two years have been filled with loss and fear and disappointment, and the world as we know it is irrevocably changed, you are here now: college graduates.

In our bubble we sometimes forget how special that is. Less than 40% of Americans age 25 or older hold a bachelor's degree. It is a huge accomplishment in a normal year. It displays remarkable resiliency in times like these.

As we gather today to celebrate your accomplishments, we want to acknowledge your commitment to the Honors Program. We are thrilled to be graduating 45 dedicated students this year: the first graduates of our tenure as program directors! Seeing you all here, in person, having completed your Honors requirements and earned distinction in your major, is what drives our passion for this program. Our sincerest congratulations on your graduation. We can't wait to see where your paths lead you in the future. We hope that you never forget your passion for learning.

Best wishes for the journey ahead, and congratulations!!!



Order of Events

WELCOME & OPENING REMARKS

HONORS HONOREE
TEACHING & STUDENT IMPACT
AWARD PRESENTATION

CORDING CEREMONY

CLOSING REMARKS

GROUP PHOTO

*Assemble on the South side
of the Renaissance Room*



2022 GRADUATES

Elena Arroway
McKensey Bishop
Sasha Brunton
Emma Christensen
Caden Coniff
Noah Q. Curtin
Nadia Czebiniak
Evan Dybvig
Madilyn Fawcett
Caleb Frazier
Jackson Garske
Jill Margaret Girardeau
Jack Hempleman
Paige Hidding
Lily Horst
Leah Marie Huzjak
Aly Jeng
Sejal Desai Krell
Mikayla Lee
Katie MacAdam
Esther Malers
Kiana Marsan



2022 GRADUATES

Katherine Miromonti
Megan Morrell
Meijia Oltman
Kiera O'Neill
David B. Painter
Toni V. Panzera
Rachel Alyne Paraschiv
Kassidy Patarino
Andres Pulido
Bryanna Reed
Elizabeth Hope Rouse
Sasha Shadrina
Zoey Sheedy
Alec C. Smith
Tessa Smith
Emma Soderstrom
Charlotte Vieth
Abigail Walker
Emma Walker
Jordan Watson
Grayden Wolfe
Zoe Woods
Leah C. York



Honors Honoree



TEACHING & STUDENT IMPACT AWARD



Kara Taczak, Ph.D
2022 Awardee

Dr. Kara Taczak, Teaching Professor with the University Writing Program, has been working with Honors students since she started at DU in 2011. Her Honors Seminar course, *Reflection & Contemplation*, is often described as an influential honors experience. Students have commented that, "Her nontraditional approach to teaching was a breath of fresh air" and that "she knows how to teach thought-provoking material." One student stated that, "She was a professor who drastically changed the way I reflected and contemplated life in a way that I had never imagined."

We are honored to present Dr. Kara Taczak with the inaugural Honors Honoree Teaching & Student Impact Award. Thank you for your continued dedication to teaching Honors students. We are lucky to have you on the Honors faculty. Congratulations, Kara!



Elena Arroway

Major: Environmental Science

Minors: Geographic Information Science, Mathematics

Distinction in Environmental Science: *"Point of Use Technologies to Increase Access to Clean Water in Rural Communities"*

McKensey Bishop

Major: Biological Sciences

Minors: Chemistry, Human Health Science & Systems, Leadership Studies

Distinction in Biological Sciences: *"Significant Decreases in Biomarkers Indicating Endogenous Antioxidant Depletion After Traumatic Brain Injury in a Clinical Patient Population"*

Sasha Brunton

Majors: International Studies, German

Minor: Leadership Studies

Distinction in German: *"Die Frau als Werkzeug für den deutschen Wiederaufbau in drei Nachkriegsfilmen"* ("The Woman as a Tool for German Reconstruction in Three Post-War Films")

Emma Christensen

Major: Marketing

Minor: Business Information & Analytics

Distinction in Marketing



Caden Coniff

Majors: Computer Science, Mathematics
Minor: Leadership Studies

Distinction in Computer Science: *"Understanding Structural Properties of Multi-Agent Graphs and the Ease of Disruption"*

Noah Q. Curtin

Majors: Economics, International Studies

Distinction in International Studies: *"Decision Making in International Supply Chain Investment"*

Nadia Czebiniak

Majors: Environmental Science, International Business

Distinction in International Business

Evan Dybvig

Major: Computer Science
Minors: Leadership Studies, Mathematics

Distinction in Computer Science: *"4D Visualization in a 3D Environment"*

Madilyn Fawcett

Major: Computer Science
Minors: Leadership Studies, Mathematics

Distinction in Computer Science : *"DiscoverU: Designing the Interface for a Mental Health Application"*



Caleb Frazier

Major: Mathematics

Minors: Computer Science, Leadership Studies

Distinction in Mathematics: *"The Redfeild-Polya Theorem"*

Jackson Garske

Major: International Studies

Minors: Biological Sciences, Intercultural Global Studies, Leadership Studies

Distinction in International Studies: *"State-Sponsored Cultural Production's Influence On Nationalist Politics: A French Case Study"*

Jill Margaret Girardeau

Majors: International Studies, Spanish

Minors: Art, Leadership Studies

Distinction in Spanish: *"The Child Protagonist and Escapism in Hispanic Film"*

Jack Hempleman

Major: Economics

Minors: Business Administration, Leadership Studies, Sustainability

Distinction in Economics: *"Sustainable Rural Development: Is it Possible to Boost Rural Economies while Protecting the Environment?"*



Paige Hidding

Major: International Studies

Minors: Leadership Studies, Political Science, Spanish

Distinction in International Studies: *"The Reality is not as it seems: The Formal process of identification for Victims of Human Trafficking in Spain and the United States"*

Lily Horst

Majors: Music, Theatre

Distinction in Theatre: *"Birdbaths, Twilight, and Other Sundry Items"* (Directing Capstone)

Leah Marie Huzjak

Majors: Mathematics, Physics

Minors: Astrophysics, Computer Science, Latin

Distinction in Physics: *"Optical Vortex Nucleation Behind a Circular Obstruction"*

Aly Jeng

Majors: Biological Sciences, Psychology

Minors: Chemistry, Mathematics

Distinction in Biological Sciences: *"Mutations in the human VPS41 protein and their effect on insulin secretion"*

Sejal Desai Krell

Majors: Economics, Psychology

Minor: Spanish

Distinction in Economics: *"Takes Two to Tango: The Fusion of Slow Fashion and Agroecology to Combat the Fast Fashion Industry"*



Mikayla Lee

Major: Political Science
Minor: Leadership Studies

Distinction in Political Science: *"Can Varied Descriptive Representation Among Judges Affect Institutional Legitimacy?"*

Katie MacAdam

Major: Strategic Communication
Minors: Business Administration, Business Analytics, Marketing

Distinction in Strategic Communication

Esther Malers

Majors: English & Literary Arts, Spanish
Minor: Geography

Distinction in Spanish: *"La censura y el franquismo: critica escondida"* (*"Censorship during Francoist Spain: Hidden Criticism"*)

Kiana Marsan

Major: English & Literary Arts
Minor: Critical Race & Ethnic Studies

Distinction in English & Literary Arts: *"Nella Larsen's Quicksand and Passing: Reimagining the Tragic Mulatta Trope as a Means of Identifying Structural Patterns of Racial Homelessness and Hyper(in)visibility"*



Katherine Miromonti

Major: Pre-Art Conservation

Minors: Chemistry, Italian

Distinction in Art: *Senior Conservation Project: "Collection from Three Chiefs Cultural Center in St. Ignatius, Montana"*

Megan Morrell

Major: Political Science

Minors: Philosophy, Sustainability

Distinction in Political Science: *"Between Populism and Settler Colonialism: A US Case Study"*

Meijia Oltman

Major: Business Analytics

Minors: Accounting, Spanish

Distinction in Business Analytics

Kiera O'Neill

Majors: Film Studies & Production, Mathematics

Minor: Media, Film, & Journalism Studies

Distinction in Film Studies & Production

David B. Painter

Majors: English & Literary Arts, Film Studies & Production

Distinction in Film Studies & Production



Toni V. Panzera

Majors: Mathematics, Physics

Minor: Astrophysics

Distinction in Physics: *"One Star, Two Star, Red Star, Blue Star: Probing the Binary Status of the Wolf-Rayet Stars WR 12 and WR 71 with Spectropolarimetry"*

Rachel Alyne Paraschiv

Major: Business Analytics

Minors: Entrepreneurship, Leadership Studies

Distinction in Business Analytics: *"My Data Brain"*

Kassidy Patarino

Major: Psychology

Minors: Biological Sciences, Leadership Studies, Sociology

Distinction in Psychology: *"Contextual Influences on Trust: Automatic Deception Detection"*

Andres Pulido

Majors: Finance, International Studies

Minors: Leadership Studies, Mathematics

Distinction in Finance

Bryanna Reed

Majors: Political Science, Psychology

Minors: International Studies, Leadership Studies

Distinction in Political Science: *"Effectiveness of Human Trafficking Legislation in Ecuador"*



Elizabeth Hope Rouse

Majors: Political Science, Public Policy, Spanish

Distinction in Political Science: *"Framing the Democratic Socialist Movement: A Discourse Analysis of Pro-Movement Literature"*

Sasha Shadrina

Major: Business Analytics

Minor: Leadership Studies

Distinction in Business Analytics

Zoey Sheedy

Majors: Political Science, Spanish

Minor: Leadership Studies

Distinction in Political Science: *"Cuban Migration to the United States: An Analysis of the Relationship Between Migration Policies and Migrant Demography"*

Alec C. Smith

Majors: Biochemistry, Molecular Biology

Minor: Mathematics

Distinction in Biological Sciences: *"Therapeutic potential of a red dragon fruit, Hylocereus polyrhizus, ethanol extract in an hSOD1G93A mouse model of amyotrophic lateral sclerosis: isolation and characterization of other novel red dragon fruit extracts enriched in betacyanin compounds"*



Tessa Smith

Major: Biochemistry

Minors: Biological Sciences, Music

Distinction in Biochemistry: *"Analysis on the Toxicity and Binding of TDP-43"*

Charlotte Vieth

Major: Marketing

Distinction in Marketing: *"Minimizing the Risk of Burnout by Increasing Vacation Time"*

Emma Soderstrom

Major: Management

Minor: Sustainability

Distinction in Management: *"Corporate Climate Action: A Multidimensional Approach"*

Abigail Walker

Majors: Biological Sciences, Psychology

Minor: Chemistry

Distinction in Biological Sciences: *"Interconnectedness with Nature and Human Emotional Response to Biodiversity"*

Emma Walker

Majors: Finance, Theatre

Minor: Business Ethics & Legal Studies

Distinction in Finance



Jordan Watson

Major: Philosophy

Minor: Emergent Digital Practices

Distinction in Philosophy: *"The World Between A and B: How the Bicycle Can Reclaim the Modern Commute"*

Grayden Wolfe

Majors: Psychology, Spanish

Minors: Biological Sciences, Real Estate

Distinction in Psychology: *"Childhood Experiences and Future Expectations During the COVID-19 Pandemic"*

Zoe Woods

Majors: Anthropology, International Studies

Minors: Leadership Studies, Spanish, Sustainability

Distinction in Anthropology: *"ColoRADO: Exploring the Rocky Mountains"*

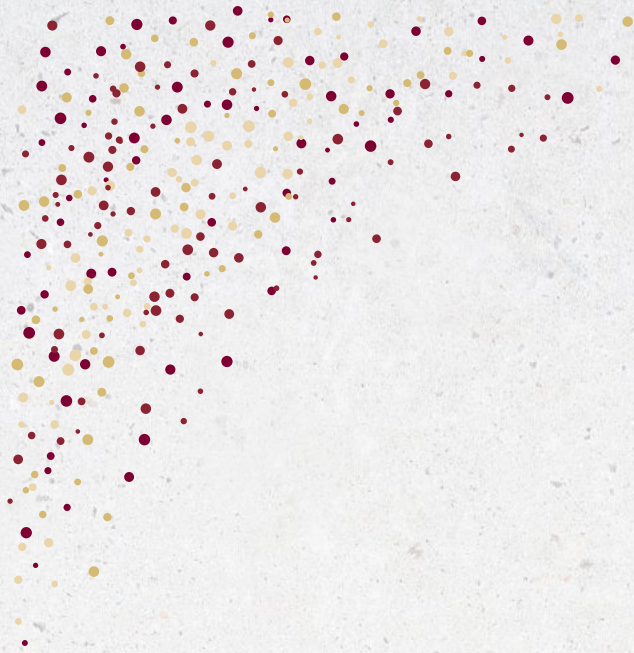
Leah C. York

Majors: Environmental Science, Psychology

Minor: Intercultural Global Studies

Distinction in Environmental Science: *"Environment, Endocrine Function and Embryos: How Exposure to Environmentally Compromised Regions Influence Critical Steps of Human Development and the Disproportionate Impacts of these Effects on the Global South, A Nigerian Case Study"*





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Honors Events & Announcements



Spring 2022, Week 4



4/30-Honors @ "Be Well to DU Well" Retreat

Last chance to sign up!
RSVP Deadline Friday, April 22.

Join Honors @ the "Be Well to DU Well" Retreat. As this retreat is open to all DU students, Honors students can participate in all the regular activities available but will also have an Honors-only during the day.

Saturday, April 30 (day trip only)
Kennedy Mountain Campus
Transportation & meals included

RSVP

Fall 2022 Honors Courses

Advising for Fall 2022 begins next week. Reference the full list of Honors courses when you're making your schedule.

Note: Most HNRS 2400 options will now be open to all class years!

See Course List



Pizza & Advising

Drop-in for pizza and answers to your Honors advising questions!

Tuesday, May 10
3:00-5:00 p.m.
Honors Lounge, DFRV P-163

Friday, May 13
11:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.

Undergrad Showcase

Have you been working on a Distinction project this year? Remember to register for the Undergraduate Showcase. All Honors students doing a thesis or capstone project are expected to participate in the event.

Undergraduate Showcase
Thursday, May 12 @ 3:00-6:00 p.m.

Register by 4/22



Voltaire Botanic Gardens Trip

Join Voltaire Society for a trip to the Denver Botanic Gardens.

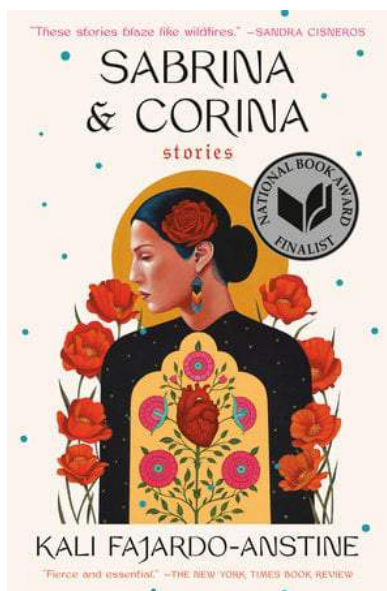
Friday, May 13
2:00-5:00 p.m.
Concessions & entry ticket included

Sign up to Attend

Honors End-of-Year Picnic

Save the date for the annual Honors End-of-Year Picnic! We'll have a taco bar, desserts, and lawn games. RSVP available closer to the event.

Thursday, May 26
5:00-7:00 p.m.
Village Green (lawn adjacent Dimond)



Honors Book Club

Honors Book Club is reading *Sabrina & Corina* by Kali Fajardo-Anstine. Books are available in the Honors Lounge (DFRV P-163).

Book Club Meetings
Mondays @ 7:30 p.m.
Honors Lounge (DFRV P-163)

Contact esther.malers@du.edu or katherine.miromonti@du.edu for more info.

Other Campus Events



These aren't Honors opportunities, but you should check them out!

- [Discoveries Orientation Leaders application](#)
- [Fulbright Workshops](#): Learn more about fully-funded, post-grad grants for study, research, or English Teaching Assistantships in 140+ countries. Thursday, April 28 and Tuesday, May 3 @ 12:30-1:30 p.m.
- [Rome: One and Many, Literary and Cinematic Representations of the Eternal City, a lecture by Dr. Raffaello Palumbo Mosca.](#) Wednesday, May 4 @ 5:00 p.m., Sturm 451

Stay Informed

Follow us on Instagram to stay up to date on Honors happenings!



Upcoming Honors Events

- Apr. 23.....[Voltaire Lunch + Frida Kahlo Exhibit](#)
- Apr. 30.....[Honors @ "Be Well to DU Well" Retreat](#)
- May 10.....[Pizza & Advising](#)
- May 13.....[Pizza & Advising](#)
- May 12.....[Undergraduate Showcase](#)
- May 13.....[Voltaire Botanic Gardens Trip](#)
- May 26.....[Honors End-of-Year Picnic](#)

[View in browser](#)



University Honors Program
 2020 S High Street
 P-168
 Denver, CO 80210

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Alignment with DU goals

The Honors program helps DU to attain programmatic goals such as student recruitment and retention.

Student recruitment

Many students make the final decision to come to DU in part because they were accepted into the Honors program. Focusing on our most competitive students with admit ratings of 1 or 2, we compared the number of students who are accepted to the number that deposited both for DU as a whole and for Honors specifically. The percentages of deposited students in these admit ratings are more than 5 times higher for Honors.

These data probably overstate the value of Honors as a deciding factor in College decisions as the decision to apply to Honors is itself already an indication of commitment. Nevertheless, this trend is supported by our qualitative experience fielding questions from prospective students who eagerly await their decision about acceptance into Honors and tell us it will influence their overall university choice.

DU				
Admit rating	Accepted (DU)	Deposited	% Admitted students who deposited	
1	3,383	319	9%	
2	2087	220	11%	
DU Total	15,020	1,727	11%	
Honors				
Admit rating	Accepted (Honors)	Deposited	% Admitted Honors students who deposited	
1	114	64	56%	
2	27	17	63%	
Honors Total	175	109	62%	

Student retention

DU sets high goals for student retention, and Honors students are consistently more likely to stay at DU after their first year as compared to the DU student body as a whole.

Incoming class of ...	1 yr persistence rate (All DU Students)	1 yr persistence rate (Honors students)
Fall 2017	87	
Fall 2018	85	97
Fall 2019	84	97
Fall 2020	84	94
Fall 2021		98*

* based on fall enrollments

Current Student Retention

It is important to us that our students are happy with the program. To gauge student satisfaction with the Honors program, we hosted two focus groups in spring 2022 to evaluate strengths and areas for improvement. These narrative responses are included in the Appendix.

We also pulled data on student retention rates as one of the clearest indicators we have of current student satisfaction is that our students stay in the program. As we would expect, student retention dropped off the longer that students continued their educational journeys. Students mostly stayed in the program in their first two years, beginning to drop off in year 3. We see our largest losses in the last year of the program when students have to complete their distinction research and so we are working to try to increase our support for students in doing distinction research.

Incoming class	Retained in Honors	Retained at DU	Incoming Class Size	Percent still in Honors
Fall 2018	30	81	89	37%
Fall 2019	67	84	92	80%
Fall 2020	113	119	127	95%
Fall 2021	82	87	88	94%

New Student Cohort Demographics

We want to build a program that is diverse and inclusive of students from all backgrounds. We have been working with various partners in recruitment to move towards these goals. The demographics of our incoming cohort are shown below, compared to the demographics of the DU incoming class as a whole. Compared to the broader DU student body, our students have higher average GPAs, skew strongly female, and are whiter. Demographics on in-state versus out-of-state and percent Hispanic or Latino are roughly comparable.

	DU (incoming 2022)	Honors (incoming 2022)
Average HS GPA	3.72	3.98
% Female	43.50%	68.57%
% Out of state or international	71.40%	69.52%
% POC	27.90%	21.78%
% Hispanic or Latino	14.10%	13.33%