

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 red banner is at the top, and a gold banner is at the bottom. The text is in white and gold colors.

University Honors Program

2024

Report

A summary of activities and outcomes from the 2023-2024 academic year.

Katherine H. Tennis, Ph.D
Faculty Director

Kira A. Castle, M.A.
Assistant Director

Our Program

Mission Statement

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.

We accept 100 students each year into a vibrant community of learners.

Our program fosters a distinctive 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 2023-2024 Summary

The DU Honors Program continued to grow and to refine its programming and student support this year under the leadership of Honors Director Kate Tennis, Assistant Director Kira Castle, and Interim Honors Director Daniel McIntosh who covered Kate’s sabbatical leave during fall quarter.

This year, the Honors program graduated its largest class that we have record of! We are so proud of all of these students for completing the entire curriculum and earning distinction in their majors. We are hopeful that this trend will continue as we work to enhance the supports that we are providing in the areas of academic and distinction advising. We ended the academic year with a wonderful reception and cording ceremony for these 57 graduates and their families.

We also went through a comprehensive program review conducted by two NCHC certified reviewers in February. This was a fantastic opportunity for us to both reflect on our own areas of strength and opportunities for growth as well as to get some outside input on how our program compares with others across the country and constructive ideas for growth. We are very thankful to our partners across campus – faculty, students, and staff – who volunteered their time to meet with these reviewers and to provide feedback for the review.

We continued to grow our curriculum, bringing in new faculty and new courses from across campus for this academic year and into next. We ran second-round pilots of three courses that will be introduced as required courses next academic year, and conducted focus group conversations with participants to continue to improve them. HNRS 3000 was even given a 4D Infusion Grant to help scale the course. With the aid of the grant, we recruited two new faculty members for the course and had a series of conversations about how to expand this course to all Honors students in a consistent way, while still allowing for individual faculty to put their spin on the class.

Overview

continued

We also continued to expand our student leadership opportunities. This year our student programming board hosted 17 different events with over 300 participants and continued to build a robust Honors network.

We also brought on two new Student Recruitment Coordinators roles to help with recruitment events and admissions processes. These students provided an invaluable student perspective for prospective students as well as for Honors leadership during the admissions process. Their voice in the application review process provided a critical perspective that application review had heretofore been missing.

After a very successful recruitment cycle, we are excited to be welcoming an incoming cohort of 90 highly-motivated and diverse students, and will finish our recruitment of this cohort in fall quarter by reaching out to FSEM faculty for recommendations to the program. These students will be the first to come in to our new Honors curricular sequence, including a core Honors sequence and more flexibility in common curriculum requirements.

We also began to delve into alumni engagement efforts this year. We sent our first edition of *Illuminations*, our new alumni newsletter, to over 1,000 Honors Program graduates and received more than 80 responses to the included survey. This newsletter will go out at least twice per year moving forward and will feature student, alumni, and faculty stories from the Honors community. We also participated in 1Day4DU for the first time. While we did not have much success raising funds, we got some important infrastructure set up for future efforts. We hope to find success in this area as our alumni network and connections grow.

Overall, this was another building year for the Honors Program. We are now starting to repeat successful initiatives after multiple revisions and turn our focus to growing in areas like student leadership and alumni engagement.

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Community

Mission Statement:

Mission: 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.



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.

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

Student Events

Honors Student Association was in its second year and continued to lead the planning, organizing, and running a number of events under the mentorship of the Honors Assistant Director. They organized cultural, sporting, and other social events, which were all very well-attended and well-received. Some staple events, like musicals and Nuggets and Rockies games, remained in the lineup, joined by new events, such as a Colorado Avs game, painting night, and an event-of-year end co-sponsored with PLP. This year’s HSA leaders cemented the strong foundation established the year before.

**FALL
2023**

- Trivia Night (5)*
- Avs Game (19)
- Pumpkin Painting (20)
- Study Abroad Panel (4)**
- Mamma Mia!* (19)
- Ballad of Songbirds & Snakes* (12)

**WINTER
2024**

- Harry Potter at the Symphony (18)
- Research & Thesis Night (50)**
- Chicago* (20)
- Nuggets Game (17)
- Paint & Sip (15)
- Escape Room (10)
- Cookie Decorating (15)

**SPRING
2024**

- Meow Wolf (18)
- Emma* (8)
- Rockies Game (12)
- Sunset Fun Fest w/ PLP (125)***

*Attendance noted in parenthesis
 **Peer Mentoring event
 ***Disaggregated data unavailable



In an effort to better steward our funds, the HSA leadership team elected to eliminate the “dinner before the theatre” element of some events, as well as reduce the provided concessions funds at sporting events. This change allowed us to serve more students with our programming. We also reduced our spring offerings based on last year’s dip in attendance that quarter. We focused instead on larger and/or more popular events.

Student Events

In addition to orientation, advising, and graduation-related events, Honors leadership also organized 1-2 on-campus activities each quarter, including food, board games or lawn games depending on the weather, and opportunities for informal socializing with peers and Honors leadership. All of these took place in the Dimond Family Residential Village 195 Events Space, or in the Honors/PLP/LLC suite. Most are held in a drop-in format in order to be accessible for those who may only have a few minutes to say hello and grab some food between classes.

<p>FALL 2023</p>	<p>Discoveries Week Orientation (88)* Ice Cream Social (70) Honors Summit (88) Pizza & Advising (10) Relax Night w/ PLP, LLCs (39-Honors)</p>	
<p>WINTER 2024</p>	<p>Hot Cocoa & Board Games (25) Honors Mini-Summit (18) Donuts & Advising (12) Relax Night w/ PLP, LLCs (43-Honors)</p>	
<p>SPRING 2024</p>	<p>Italian Soda & Advising (15) Spring Picnic (55) Relax Night w/ PLP, LLCs (59-Honors) Graduation (325**)</p>	

**Attendance noted in parenthesis
**52 students plus families*

Honors Summit, a required event for all incoming Honors students, ran for the second time, in a condensed 4-hour evening format. Based on feedback from the previous year, we kept the elements that resonated, like the peer mentor panel, and removed more of the “fun” pieces. We added more time for advising, with students spending time reviewing their major’s Distinction format and starting on their four-year plans. We also focused significantly on reflection and visioning, encouraging students to think about what they want out of their time at DU. We also held a mini version of this event in the winter for our newly-admitted students. Next year, we plan to increase the advising and peer mentoring elements even further based on feedback from students.

Co-Sponsorships, Scholarships, & Grants

Winter quarter, we co-sponsored Phi Beta Kappa's Visiting Scholar lecture by Professor Russell Muirhead (Dartmouth College) who spoke on "Conspiracy and Democracy" and did a lunch with Honors students the following day.



The DU Undergraduate Research Journal (DUURJ) has strong ties with Honors, with many of our students serving on the editorial board and submitting their work. This year, we were able to support DUURJ with a \$1,200 grant to print copies of their journal for distribution, which will hopefully serve to increase their visibility across campus.



Preisdanz-Schmid Endowed Scholarship Recipients

- ☑ Stacia Fritz '24
2023-2024 Recipient
- ☑ Jonathan Flores '25
2024-2025 Recipient
- ☑ Saul Flores '25
2024-2025 Recipient

Student Leadership



In addition to the faculty members on Honors Council, two elected student representatives serve overlapping two-year terms. These student representatives attend all Honors Council meetings and provide valuable student perspectives on program and curriculum discussion. Each spring, an election is held to replace the outgoing representative.

- Gavin Hood '25
- Emma Seel '24 (term ended June 2024)
- Tessa Appel '25 (term begins September 2024)

For the second year of the Honors Student Association, we decided to move from a 5-person to a 3-person board, moving the social media and marketing components to a work-study position. The HSA leaders met bi-weekly to plan, coordinate, publicize and execute events and programming for the Honors community, under the direction of the Honors Assistant Director. This year's HSA built upon the previous year's successes and has continued to offer events that have been successful in the past while trying new events to replace those that were not well attended. Overall, the HSA board model seems to serve the needs of our student population and program leadership.

Honors Student Association 2023-2024 Leadership

- Alyssa Aragon '24
Events Coordinator
- Elise Charette '24
Peer Mentor Coordinator
- Rhianna Lewis '26
Events Coordinator

To help make these roles accessible, Honors Student Association Leaders and Honors Council Representatives were paid a stipend for their work:

HSA Leaders:
\$500 per quarter

Honors Council Reps:
\$150 per quarter



Student Leadership



Honors Program Assistant Role

Amanda McKellips '27 and Deanna Angela Sameshima '27 served in the Honors Program Assistant role, handling administrative functions, including the Honors newsletter and Instagram. They also provided logistical support for Honors Summit and larger off-campus events. Moving forward, we elected to move some of these functions to HSA and have only one student filling this role in future.



Honors Recruitment Coordinator Role

Colton Arciniaga '24 and Sarah Olson '25 filled a new Honors Recruitment Coordinator role. They helped us with a variety of Honors recruitment events throughout the academic year, providing an invaluable student perspective to prospective Honors students. They also helped us read Honors applications, where their near-peer perspective on application quality was a welcome contribution to our admissions conversations.

Peer Mentoring

The Honors Program was fortunate to have 9 Honors Student Mentors this year. These students volunteered at Honors Summit in the Fall, and attended a series of events during the year based on their availability and interests. Elise Charette (an HSA leader) envisioned and coordinated these events.

Honors Peer Mentors 2023-2024

- Colton Arciniaga '24
- Elise Charette '24***
- Nicole Doris '25
- Clara Duong '25
- Annabelle Lingbeck '24
- Ryker Lott '25
- Angelina Scolio '24
- Emma Seel '24
- Jasmin Storer '25

**Peer Mentor Coordinator*

Peer Mentor Panel/Discussion Event Topics



Study Abroad



Distinction



Online Presence

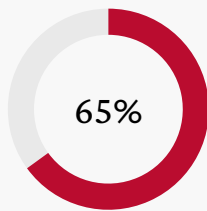
The Honors Instagram account continued to grow this year, increasing its followers to 623 (an increase of 24% since summer 2023). We continued to use this platform to market events and also began promoting Honors courses. For the coming year, we hope to expand our use of Instagram for informational purposes and also begin celebrating Honors students' accomplishments, including featuring our grads and their Distinction work.

We continued to send our newsletter, *The Compass*, weekly. New Honors Program Assistant, Amanda McKellips, was trained on the platform and took over primary management of this effort.



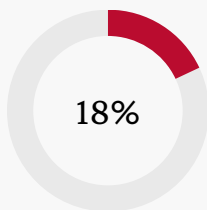
THE COMPASS

Your quarterly points of reference.



Open Rate

Average open rate of *The Compass* across the 25 editions sent in 2023-2024, compared to the national average of 29%*



Click Rate

Average click rate of *The Compass* across the 25 editions sent in 2023-2024, compared to the national average of 4%*

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

Admissions



Summary of 2023-2024 Recruitment Cycle

While overall applicant numbers were down from last year, the Honors Program still received a large number of highly qualified applications this year. Out of a total of almost 300 applications, we were able to accept 150 incoming students, resulting in an incoming cohort of 91 students for Fall 2024. We will continue to recruit through fall quarter to fill our remaining 10 spaces.

New efforts for this year included improved communication through the application process. Due to limitations on app communications via Workflow/Banner, we elected to manually manage our app communications through Anthology. This allowed us to brand our emails, update content through the admission cycle, and provide more tailored reminder emails to recommenders. While automated communication would be more convenient, we ultimately were happy with the new process and will plan to replicate it in Salesforce for the coming year.

We also began to refer students to PLP and the LLCs more systematically. As we were reviewing applications, we noted those whose focus aligned with these programs and provided a list to their Assistant Directors for follow-up. We intend to embed a field into our application review screen and report to better facilitate this referral process in the future. It is our hope that more students can find the best “home” for their first-year through these efforts.

Admissions

This year, we made tweaks to some of our application questions. The largest change, however, was to our review process. Previously, both the Honors Faculty Director and Honors Assistant Director read every application. This year, with the addition of the Honors Recruitment Coordinators, each application was reviewed by one program leader and one of the student coordinators. The other two reviewers only read applications if the first two readers' opinions differed significantly. This approach helped bring broader perspectives while making the reading load more manageable.

We worked closely with the Office of Admission to recruit new students for the 2024-25 academic year, participating in these events:

- Boettcher Open House (1)
- Friday@DU (7)
- Journey to DU (2)
- Virtual Journey to DU (2)
- Pathway to DU (1)

As shown by the Application Data on the following page, the demographic profile of our applicants and admitted students closely reflects the demographic profile of admitted DU students generally.



INCOMING FRESHMEN

- 297 applications received (-23%)*
- 161 applicants accepted (-9%)
- 89 deposited (-2.2%)
- 54% acceptance rate (+17.4%)
- 55% yield rate (+7.8%)

INTERNAL TRANSFERS

- 25 applications received (+25%)
- 17 applicants accepted (+70%)
- 68% acceptance rate (+36%)

**Percentage changes compared to previous year*

EXTERNAL TRANSFERS

- 2 application received (-66.7%)
- 2 applicant accepted (+0%)
- 2 deposited (+200%)
- 100% acceptance rate (+203%)
- 100% yield rate (+100%)

App Data

Gender	All Applicants		Accepted Applicants		Deposited at DU	
F	215	71.9%	115	70.6%	66	71.0%
M	84	28.1%	48	29.4%	27	29.0%
Total	299		163		93	

Citizenship	All Applicants		Accepted Applicants		Deposited at DU	
US Citizen or Perm Resident	293	98.0%	158	96.9%	92	98.9%
Non-Resident	6	2.0%	5	3.1%	1	1.1%
Total	299		163		93	

Ethnicity	All Applicants		Accepted Applicants		Deposited at DU	
Hispanic or Latino	29	9.7%	19	11.7%	12	12.9%
Not Hispanic or Latino	258	86.3%	139	85.3%	79	85.0%
Total	299		163		93	

Race	All Applicants		Accepted Applicants		Deposited at DU	
Amer Indian or Alaskan Native	8	2.7%	4	2.5%	4	4.3%
Native Hawaiian or Pacif Islan	4	1.3%	2	1.2%	2	2.2%
Asian	30	10.0%	18	11.0%	9	9.7%
Black or African American	11	3.7%	6	3.7%	3	3.2%
Multiple (two or more races)	25	8.4%	14	8.6%	9	9.7%
Unknown	12	4.0%	5	3.1%	3	3.2%
White	268	89.6%	143	87.7%	82	88.2%
Total	299		163		93	

First Gen	All Applicants		Accepted Applicants		Deposited at DU	
Yes	27	9.0%	13	8.0%	8	8.6%
No	272	91.0%	150	92.0%	85	91.4%
Total	299		163		93	

In State	All Applicants		Accepted Applicants		Deposited at DU	
CO	91	30.4%	52	31.9%	32	34.4%
Total	299		163		93	

Note: Figures vary slightly from those on previous page due to late adds/drops from the program

Faculty Engagement

We continue to work to build connections and dialogue with exceptional faculty from across campus, both through our Honors Council as well as through events.

We continued to host quarterly faculty happy hours which have proven to be a valuable opportunity for Honors faculty to meet colleagues from across campus, discuss Honors pedagogy, and build community.

We also offered all new faculty teaching in the program the opportunity to have lunch with a current Honors faculty member to provide insight and advice on curriculum development and class design in the quarter before they taught the course. This year three new faculty members took this opportunity.

At our Honors graduation and cording ceremony, we recognized two faculty members this year. Faculty were selected based on student nominations in two categories. The first award went to a faculty member who demonstrated excellence in teaching in an Honors course. The second went to a faculty member who demonstrated excellence in mentorship of research, scholarship, or creative work, supporting students as they pursued their distinction projects.

Teaching:

Daniel McIntosh, Ph.D



Mentorship:

Daniel Linseman, Ph.D

2024 Recipients

Honors Faculty

2023-2024

Angelo Castagnino
Languages, Literatures, & Cultures

Kira Castle
University Honors Program

April Chapman-Ludwig
University Writing Program

Richard Colby
University Writing Program

David Coppini
Media, Film, & Journalism Studies

J. Michael Daniels
Geography & the Environment

George DiMartino
International Studies

Gustavo Fierros Torres
Spanish

Graham Foust
English & Literary Arts

Robert Gilmor
University Writing Program

Hava Gordon
Sociology & Criminology

Sarah Hart Micke
University Writing Program

Helen Hazen
Geography & the Environment

Doug Hesse
English & Literary Arts

W. Scott Howard
English & Literary Arts

Lindsay Lawton
Scholar Development & Fellowships Advising

Chad Leahy
Spanish

Leah McFail
Leadership Studies

Daniel McIntosh
Psychology

Daniel Melleno
History

Pamela Miller
Psychology

Bilha Moor
Art & Art History

Thomas Nail
Philosophy

Maik Nwosu
English & Literary Arts

Laura Perille
4D Experience

LP Picard
University Writing Program

Chiara Piovani
Economics

Bin Ramke
English & Literary Arts

David Riche
University Writing Program

Lapo Salucci
Public Policy

Susan Schulten
History

Geoffrey Stacks
University Writing Program

Don Sullivan
Geography & the Environment

Kate Tennis
International Studies

Erika Trigo
Geography & the Environment

Kate Willink
Communication Studies

Honors Council

Honors Council is the primary consultative body overseeing Honors consisting of 8 faculty from across campus as well as 2 student representatives. Their charge is to review and advise on major programmatic changes, to review and approve new Honors courses, and to act as a conduit to their respective departments. They also are sometimes asked to meet with new faculty in the program. This year Honors council met 3 times:


- In WI24, Week 3 to review new course proposals
- In WI24, Week 7 to meet with the NCHC review board and to review course proposals
- In SP24, Week 2 to consult on processes for Honors Seminar and Honors Contract applications

Honors Council Membership 2023-2024

Phil Chen (CAHSS)	Pamela Miller (CAHSS)
Richard Colby (Writing)	Lapo Salucci (Korbel)
J. Mike Daniels (NSM)	Susan Schulten (CAHSS)
Matt Gordon (Ritchie)	Emma Seel '24 (Student Rep)
Helen Hazen (NSM)	Benjamin Williams (Daniels)
Gavin Hood '25 (Student Rep)	

Alumni Engagement

CREATING AN ALUMNI COMMUNITY

- Compile list of alumni who earned University Honors
 - Establish regular newsletter with linked alumni engagement survey
 - Determine manageable ways to engage alumni using survey data
-  *Goal for 2024-2025*

Student, Alumna, & Course Featured in Alumni Newsletter

- Audrey Mitchell '23
Alumni Feature
- Colton Arciniaga '24
Student Feature
- Wildlife Conservation &
Culture in Kenya Interterm
Course Feature



FUTURE GOALS

Our hope is to establish solid ties with the Honors Alumni community and to connect that network with current DU Honors students. In 2024-2025, we also plan to establish ways for alumni who wish to provide financial support to sponsor initiatives to benefit our students. We are working with DU Advancement to achieve this goal.

Curriculum Overview

The DU Honors Program offered 4-credit courses in four common curriculum areas as well as a variety of 2-credit Honors Seminars. Unfortunately, our winter interterm field course in Kenya course did not fill this year. We brought a number of new faculty into the program across different lines and disciplines.

Next year we will continue to offer courses in all of our established common curriculum areas, though our natural sciences sequence will only be recommended instead of required for non-STEM majors. This will hopefully promote equity in Honors requirements between STEM and non-STEM majors.

We will also begin introducing our core sequence of HNRS 1000, HNRS 2000, and HNRS 3000 courses designed to be taken in students' first, second, and last years respectively. These classes will help prepare students for distinction, set them up to take advantage of opportunities across DU, and promote reflection across the class years and looking forward into the future. In anticipation of the curriculum revision starting for the incoming class of Fall 2024, we continued to workshop and improve what will soon be our core curriculum offerings:

HNRS 1000: *Honors Summit* was offered as a required 4-hour event for incoming students led by Kira Castle and Daniel McIntosh. In partnership with the Office of Academic Advising, the event covered topics designed to provide just-in-time advising opportunities for new Honors students. It also gave them opportunities to meet our peer mentors and provided time for reflection and goal-setting.

HNRS 2000 *Extreme Academics: Defining Success and Forging Your Path* was offered as a 1-credit Honors Seminar taught by Kate Tennis and Laura Perille (DU's 4D Executive Director). In partnership with Juli Parish from the writing center, the course taught skills for writing personal statements and provided students with opportunities to reflect on their goals and connect with opportunities across campus.

HNRS 3000: *Into the Unknown* was offered as a 1-credit Honors Seminar taught by Kira Castle and Leah McFail. The course provided space for students nearing graduation to reflect on their post-college plans and alongside peers who were also preparing to enter the unknown.

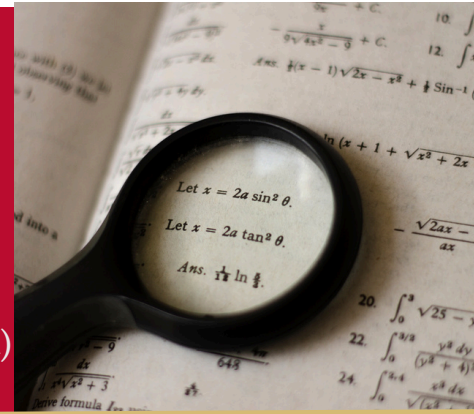
Curriculum

Mission: “Our program fosters a distinctive liberal arts education that challenges students to cultivate depth in critical and creative thought”

2023-2024 HONORS COURSES

**FALL
2023**

ARTH 1010: *Images of Culture* (Moor) AISC
 PHIL 2182: *Making of the Modern World* (Nail) AISC
 PPOL 1910: *Hard Choices in Public Policy* (Salucci) SISC
 INTS 1500: *Contemporary Issues in the Global Economy* (DeMartino) SISC
 GEOG 1264: *Global Environmental Change I* (Trigoso) SINP
 HNRS 2400: *Migration & Diaspora Narratives* (Nwosu)
 HNRS 2400: *Inventing Latin America* (Fierros)
 HNRS 2400: *Reproductive Geographies & the Politics of Population* (Hazen)
 ASEM 2499: *Mountains--Ecologies & Imaginations* (Hesse)



**WINTER
2024**

ITAL 2201: *20th Century Italian History & Culture* (Castagnino) AISC
 HIST 1510: *War & the Presidency* (Schulten) AISC
 ECON 1020: *Economics: A Critical Introduction* (Piovani) SISC
 MFJS 2280: *Politics & Media* (Coppini) SISC
 GEOG 1265: *Global Environmental Change II* (Sullivan) SINP
 HNRS 2400: *Cervantes & the Canon* (Leahy)
 HNRS 2400: *Into the Unknown* (Castle & McFail)
 HNRS 2400: *Shakespeare's Americas* (Howard)
 ASEM 2406: *Myths of Medieval Encounter* (Melleno)
 WRIT 1622: *Advanced Rhetoric & Writing* (multiple sections)

**WINTER INTERTERM
2023**

**HNRS 2701: Wildlife Conservation & Culture (Uttaro) SISC (in Kenya)*

**Unfortunately, this course was cancelled due to low enrollment. We feel that Honors may only be able to sustain an interterm travel course every two years, instead of annually.*

**SPRING
2024**

ENGL 1110: *Literary Inquiry: Contemporary Pastoral* (Ramke) AISC
 COMN 2459: *Between Memory & Imagination* (Willard) AISC
 PSYC 1001: *Foundations of Psychological Science* (Miller) SISC
 HNRS 2400: *Beautiful Investigations* (Foust)
 HNRS 2400: *Extreme Academics* (Tennis)
 GEOG 1266: *Global Environmental Change III* (Daniels) SINP
 ASEM 2454: *Psychology of Religious & Spiritual Practices* (McIntosh)
 ASEM 2641: *Globalization--Above & Below* (Gordon)
 WRIT 1733: *Honors Writing* (multiple sections)
 HNRS 3991: *Evaluating Into the Unknown* (Castle) independent study



Curriculum

Along with Honors Council, we reviewed 8 new course proposals. We approved 6 of these courses outright or with revisions.

PLANNED 2024-2025 HONORS COURSES

**FALL
2024**

WRIT 2650: *Digital Rhetorics* (Colby) AISC
 ECON 1020: *Economics: A Critical Introduction* (Cole) SISC
 INTS 1500: *Contemporary Issues in the Global Economy* (DeMartino) SISC
 GEOG 1264: *Global Environmental Change I* (Trigoso) SINP
 HNRS 2400: *Poetry as Social Activism* (Brakefield) HSEM
 HNRS 2400: *The Why of Work* (Middleton) HSEM
 HNRS 1000: *Honors Summit* (Castle, Tennis) CORE1
 HNRS 2000: *Extreme Academics* (Tennis) CORE2
 HNRS 3000: *Into the Unknown* (Picard) CORE3
 ASEM 2736: *Spirituals and the Blues* (Holland) ASEM



**WINTER
2025**

HIST 1320: *European Culture in the World Wars* (Campbell) AISC
 PPOL 1910: *Hard Choices in Public Policy* (Salucci) SISC
 GEOG 1265: *Global Environmental Change II* (Sullivan) SINP
 HNRS 1000: *Honors Summit* (Castle, Tennis) CORE1
 HNRS 2400: *Cervantes & the Canon* (Leahy)
 HNRS 2400: *Native Plants in Urban Ecosystems* (Sciarcon) HSEM
 HNRS 2401: *Adventures in Fellowships* (Pine) HSEM
 HNRS 3000: *Into the Unknown* (McFail, Baldassari) CORE3
 ASEM 2861: *Taboo Tales* (Chapman-Ludwig) ASEM
 ASEM 2748: *What We Eat Matters* (Piovani)
 WRIT 1622: *Advanced Rhetoric & Writing* (multiple sections) WRIT



**SPRING
2025**

ITAL 2201: *20th Century Italian History & Culture* (Castagnino) AISC
 PHIL 2260: *Philosoph Approaches to Perception & Reality* (Reshotko) AISC
 INTS 1700: *Intro to International Politics* (Tennis) SISC
 GEOG 2511: *Principles of Sustainability* (Trigoso) SISC
 GEOG 1266: *Global Environmental Change III* (Daniels) SINP
 HNRS 2400: *The Human Population* (Hazen) HSEM
 HNRS 2400: *Chance Encounters* (Williams) HSEM
 HNRS 2401: *Adventures in Fellowships* (Lawton)
 HNRS 2000: *Extreme Academics* (Perille, Pine) CORE2
 ASEM 2460: *Psychedelia in the Age of AI* (Reddell) ASEM
 ASEM 2666: *Murder in America* (Pasko) ASEM
 WRIT 1733: *Honors Writing* (multiple sections) WRIT



Course Grants

This year we distributed six course grants, designed to help faculty add an Honors component to their courses that might require some outside resources.

- Gustavo Fierros (\$200) for HNRS 2400: *Inventing Latin America*
Class trip to the Denver Art Museum
- Maik Nwosu (\$400) for HNRS 2400: *Migration & Diaspora Narratives*
New course materials
- Don Sullivan (\$1400) for GEOG 1265: *Global Environmental Change II*
Class trip to Denver Botanic Gardens & Denver Museum of Science and Nature
- Scott Howard (\$900) for HNRS 2400: *Shakespeare's Americas*
Class trip to Improvised Shakespeare Company with cast meeting after the show
- Graham Foust (\$500) for HNRS 2400: *Beautiful Investigations*
Series of guest speakers via video conferencing
- Chiara Piovani (\$250) for ECON 1020: *Economics-A Critical Intro*
Guest speaker from the Colorado Fiscal Institute





Distinction & Research

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

This year, we graduated 57 students, all of whom achieved distinction in their majors, which is a significant accomplishment. We requested that everyone participate in the Undergraduate Research Showcase and submit their work to the DU Digital Commons, as applicable to their projects.

At Showcase, 35 Honors students presented their research. This represents a significantly higher percentage of our students who participated. In 2023, 23% of our graduates participated in the Showcase; this year, it was 61%. We plan to have greater enforcement of this requirement next year. We also continue to promote submission to the digital archives, including having a representative from the Digital Commons table at Showcase.

Distinction in
25
different majors

2024 Honors
Graduates
57

Latin Honors
86%
earned

Graduation

2023-2024 University Honors Program Graduates

Aragon, Alyssa <i>Biological Sciences</i>	Hinds, Haven <i>Emergent Digital Practices</i>	Reinwald, Sabrina <i>Communication Studies</i>
Arciniaga, Colton <i>International Studies</i>	Hogan, Zachary <i>Political Science</i>	Riddell, Kenzie <i>History</i>
Bell, Ryan <i>History</i>	Holman, Rhys <i>Philosophy</i>	Robson, Emma <i>Biological Sciences</i>
Casteel, Payton <i>International Studies</i>	Ivesdal, Greta <i>Biological Sciences</i>	Rockwell, Vanessa <i>Ecology & Biodiversity</i>
Chapell, Lauren <i>English & Literary Arts</i>	Iveslatt, Ella <i>International Studies</i>	Romero, Abi <i>Anthropology</i>
Charette, Elise <i>Psychology</i>	Kappes, Kevin <i>Economics</i>	Scolio, Angelina <i>History</i>
Cieraszynski, Daniel <i>Business Analytics</i>	Kleckner, Colin <i>History</i>	Seel, Emma <i>Political Science</i>
Cox, Aubrey <i>Journalism</i>	Knaus, Alyssa <i>Environmental Science</i>	Senti, Marcella <i>English & Literary Arts</i>
Crimaldi, Olivia <i>Public Policy</i>	LeMoine, Amanda <i>English & Literary Arts</i>	Sharafeldean, Shujan <i>Molecular Biology</i>
Crowley, Parker <i>Biological Sciences</i>	Leon-Gamez, Vanessa <i>Biological Sciences</i>	Sinar, Madison <i>Molecular Biology</i>
Cyprien, Kae <i>Sociology</i>	Lewis, Rachel <i>Molecular Biology</i>	Spurbeck, Chase <i>Psychology</i>
DesLauriers, Derek <i>Accounting</i>	Lingbeck, Annabelle <i>Environmental Science</i>	Stadnik-Ptobera, Christine <i>Geography</i>
Doherty, Liam <i>Biological Sciences</i>	Mason, Ansley <i>Psychology</i>	Starkey, Lily <i>Spanish</i>
Eklund, Juliet <i>Sociology</i>	Naegelen, Grace <i>International Studies</i>	Stephenson, Jacqueline <i>History</i>
Fritz, Stacia <i>Chemistry</i>	Nghe, Vy <i>Emergent Digital Practices</i>	Tisher, Magdalena <i>Biochemistry</i>
Gielczynski, Julia <i>Biological Sciences</i>	Paabo, Kenra <i>Music</i>	Tolkacz, Brianna <i>Art</i>
Hamilton, Mary <i>Art</i>	Pandey, Vincent <i>International Studies</i>	Vilela, Isabela <i>Political Science</i>
Hansen, Theodore <i>Art</i>	Parish, Regan <i>Biological Sciences</i>	Wuttke, Olivia <i>Chemistry</i>
Hays, Joslyn <i>Environmental Science</i>	Pratt, Ren <i>Criminology</i>	

Distinction Challenges *Update*

In last year's report, we discussed the challenges that Honors students face when trying to complete Distinction in their major. We referenced survey data from our biennial student survey, which included students' suggested remedies to the issue. This information is summarized below, followed by an update on our efforts to reduce barriers to Distinction completion.

Issue Summary

Many students drop the Honors Program as they near graduation because they are unprepared or cannot meet their major's Distinction requirements. The main challenge students noted when talking about distinction was the lack of clarity about requirements, followed by challenges identifying a project.

Specific requests for how the Honors Program could better support students were mostly focused on the need to communicate more and earlier about expectations, timelines, and requirements. Some asked for information in freshman and sophomore years, others for a ping in the year before they need to start.

Previous Efforts

As this issue is neither surprising nor uncommon for honors programs in general, there had been efforts related to improving Distinction outcomes for students prior to the student survey results. Outreach to departments requesting additional Distinction details resulted in several departments improving their bulletin listings. We had also hosted a Distinction information session in both 2022 and 2023. The 2022 session had modest attendance (20-30 students), but the 2023 event had less than 10 participants. We had also begun talking about the Distinction requirement more in-depth at advising and admissions events to help students understand its fundamental place in Honors requirements.

Distinction Challenges Update, cont.

Earning departmental distinction continues to be a central part of our students' Honors experiences at DU, and we have continued to work to scaffold this process and better prepare students for this huge undertaking. This year, we encouraged our students to start thinking about distinction early using Honors courses, email communications, and events.

COURSES

Honors Summit *(Year 1, required)*

All incoming first-year students looked up Distinction requirements in the bulletin for their intended majors and completed a related worksheet

Extreme Academics *(Year 2 or 3, optional)*

Students who chose to take this course looked up Distinction requirements, explored any additional info from departments about the distinction process, and met with a departmental advisor to ensure they were on track to pursue distinction

EMAILS

Confirm Requirements *(Year 2)*

All second-year students received an email in spring quarter encouraging them to solidify their understanding of Distinction requirements by looking up the bulletin listing and bringing any major-specific questions to their major advisor

Make a Plan *(Year 3)*

All third-year students got an email advising them to have a solid plan for Distinction by the end of the year, including selecting an advisor and topic

EVENTS

Distinction Info Session *(All Years)*

All Honors students were invited to a peer-led event where seniors shared their experiences with Distinction. The two-hour event was split in half: one hour on thesis-based Distinction and the other on STEM/lab-based Distinction. Second- and third-year students were specifically encouraged to participate. Over 50 students attended this event. Our Peer Mentor Coordinator, who organized the event, also took detailed notes to turn into a print resource in future. We plan to repeat this event annually or biennially, depending on attendance in year two.

Plans for Next Year

We are enthusiastic about the direction the University Honors Program is headed and have a number of priorities for our AY24-25 activities:



- **New Curriculum Model Debut**
The entering class of Fall 2024 will have revised Honors requirements, featuring increased flexibility for completing Honors Common Curriculum courses and an Honors Core Sequence (HNRS 1000, 2000, & 3000) to provide structure to the Honors experience and help students to maximize their time at DU.
- **Showcase & Digital Archives Compliance**
Building on previous year's efforts, we will have greater enforcement of the requirement for students to present at Showcase and share Distinction work through the Digital Commons @ DU. This will include options specifically tailored to non-traditional Showcase projects, like portfolios, creative works, etc. We hope to celebrate less-represented fields, while also making the requirement more equitably enforced.
- **Revise Mission, Vision, & Values**
Based on feedback from the NCHC program review, we intend to revise our mission, vision, and values statements to increase specificity and clarity.
- **Cultivating Self-Directed Learners**
In line with revisions to our mission statement, we will host workshops for faculty on cultivating self-directed learners in partnership with the Office of Teaching & Learning.

Thank You

It was a great year for the University Honors Program, and we look forward to continuing our work strengthening the Honors community in the years to come. Thank you to our partner offices across the University of Denver campus, and congratulations to our 57 graduates and 91 incoming first-year students!



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