Lee Honors College Student Handbook

Everything you need to know to succeed in the honors college!

Preface

This handbook is intended to provide students with important information about the Lee Honors College. All honors college students are students of the University, and as such, the Lee Honors College operates within the policies, practices and guidelines established for all undergraduate students at Western Michigan University as described in the WMU Catalog. Students are strongly advised to regularly consult with a Lee Honors College advisor. The honors college website, Facebook and Twitter pages should be used to remain informed of important information and updated policies regarding the honors college and WMU. Honors students are held to the policies in the Lee Honors College Student Handbook in effect at the time of their admission to the honors college. While the handbook is intended to facilitate smooth and orderly progress toward completion of honors requirements, the information presented is subject to periodic revision and shall not be construed as a contractual or otherwise binding obligation of the college or university.

Lee Honors College Mission

The mission of the Carl and Winifred Lee Honors College is to provide an exceptional undergraduate experience for high achieving students, to inspire in our graduates a thirst for the lifelong pursuit of creative inquiry and discovery, to provide our students with the skill and passion to address critical challenges, and to foster personal responsibility informed by a global perspective.
Definitions

A Lee Honors College student is any student who has been formally admitted to the Lee Honors College and who has received a letter so indicating their membership in the honors college. The Lee Honors College recognizes these categories of students and alumni:

First Year Students: Students who enter directly from high school into WMU and the honors college.

Internal transfers: WMU students who did not enter the honors college directly from high school but join by invitation or application after enrolling at WMU for one or more semesters.

External Transfer students: Those who enter the honors college as a part of their transfer to WMU from a community college or other four-year college or university.

Lee Honors College Graduates: Individuals who have completed all graduation requirements as stated in the handbook at the time of their entry into the Lee Honors College.

Requirements

All students receive a letter of admission outlining their specific requirements for graduation from the honors college. Following completion of all requirements, as detailed in this document, students become Lee Honors College graduates. This achievement will be acknowledged in the University commencement program along with a special notation on the diploma and academic transcript.

Summary of Admission Criteria

- Automatic invitations are issued for first year students with an ACT composite score of at least 26 and high school GPA of at least 3.6.
- Automatic invitations are issued for external transfer students with transfer GPA of at least 3.5.
- Automatic invitations are issued for current WMU students with two semesters cumulative GPA of at least 3.5 and at least 3 semesters left prior to graduation.
- Automatic invitations are issued for WMU first year students who achieve a 4.0 in their first semester.
- Approved application process for students who do not meet automatic admission criteria. Students must submit the application with a statement of interest and a supporting letter from a teacher or counselor.
First year students must complete a minimum of 18 hours of honors credits. Transfer students (internal and external) must complete the number of honors credits stated in their letter of admission to the honors college. Honors courses must be taken for a letter grade—they may not be taken for credit/no credit. To qualify for honors credit, a course must be listed in the honors college course catalog or be approved by an honors college academic advisor, the associate dean or dean. Individual professors, a department or program may not grant honors credit for a course without explicit permission from the honors college. Students may receive honors credit for a variety of experiential learning options, subject to honors college approval (see right). Students must complete at least half of all honors credits by taking Lee Honors College catalog courses. Up to half of honors credits may be completed via other opportunities for honors credit (see right). A grade of “C” or better is required in any course used to satisfy the Lee Honors College credit hour requirement.

Lee Honors College students have the opportunity to meet international scholars and other prominent figures such as Dr. Anita Hill, shown here with honors students and Dean Carla Koretsky.

**Courses Available for Honors College (HC) Credit**

*Lee Honors College Catalog Courses.* Any section of a course with a CRN listed in the honors college catalog. Please note: sections with CRNs not listed in the honors college catalog do NOT qualify for HC credit. Additionally, courses taken prior to enrolling in the honors college or at other institutions do not qualify for HC credit. Students receive honors credit equal to the actual credits offered for an honors lecture and separate honors credit for a lab. In the case of a 0-credit honors lab associate with a non-honors lecture, students will receive one honors credit. Questions should be directed to an honors college academic advisor.

*Study in the States.* These Lee Honors College courses offer educational opportunities that take place outside of southwest Michigan. Except for the cost of tuition, the honors college pays all expenses, including travel and lodging, that are associated with the course. Most courses also count for general education credit.

**Other opportunities for HC Credit**

*Foreign Language.* Three honors credits will be given for two semesters on non-honors student of the same foreign language. May be repeated for additional honors credit for additional foreign language(s). However, no additional honors credit will be given if a student takes more than two semesters of the same language.
Other Opportunities for HC Credit:

Experiential Credit.
Honors credit may be awarded for approved non-honors experiential courses in dance, music or theater as well as for participation in a varsity sports course. Up to three credits may be counted toward honors credit hour requirements and these may be accrued by repeating a course, or by taking multiple approved courses. The department under which the course is offered specifies the number of times each course may be repeated.

Internship, Field Experience or Independent Study.
The honors college encourages students to explore opportunities to conduct independent academic inquiry under the guidance of a faculty mentor. Students may substitute an approved internship/field experience or independent study for an honors course. Please note that to receive credit for internship/field experience or independent study the appropriate approval form (available on the honors college website) must be submitted prior to initiation of the experience. It is possible to receive honors credit for more than one field experience or independent study with prior approval by the honors college dean or associate dean. Approval will only be granted if the experiences are substantially different.

HNRS 3990 Field Experience.
Three hours of credit for an organized experience with a person or agency involving work and learning activities.

HNRS 4950 Independent Study.
Three hours of credit for an independent study of at least one semester that explores subjects outside the usual course structure and is supervised by a WMU faculty member. A student taking a departmental internship, field experience or independent study course may receive honors credit if the appropriate pre-approval form has been submitted to an honors college academic advisor and is approved by the honors college dean or associate dean.

Study Abroad.
We strongly encourage participation in a study abroad program. Study abroad credits appearing on a student's WMU transcript, whether for a WMU course or a course run through another institution, will be counted as honors credit, up to a limit of 3 credits per semester. Multiple study abroad experiences may count for additional honors credit with honors college advisor, associate dean or dean approval.

The Honors Thesis
To graduate from the Lee Honors College, all students must complete and successfully defend an honors thesis. The thesis topic will vary depending on the field of study. For example, a traditional research paper, a public performance, a work of art, a design project, a business plan or educational curriculum may be completed for the honors thesis. While it is typical for a student to choose a thesis topic in their major field, this is not required. The thesis committee chair and the dean or the associate dean of the Lee Honors College must approve the thesis topic. For more information, please see the honors college website (wmich.edu/honors/advising/thesis).

A full-time WMU faculty member must chair the honors thesis with at least one additional committee member. Committee members may include faculty, staff, graduate students (except graduate students who work for the thesis chair) or members of the broader community with expertise relevant to the thesis. The chair and at least one committee member must attend and approve both the thesis defense and the written thesis.

All honors students must complete one credit of HNRS 4980 How and Why to Write an Honors Thesis and two credits of HNRS 4990 Honors Thesis. HNRS 4980 is an online course and must be taken not later than the junior year. Two additional credits of HNRS 4990 must be taken subsequently with the thesis mentor as the instructor of record OR by substitution with an honors college-approved departmental course (e.g. senior design project for engineering students). HNRS 4980 and 4990 credits are NOT counted toward the required honors credit hours.

The thesis declaration form should be submitted at least three semesters prior to the intended semester of graduation. The thesis defense certificate request form should be completed and submitted at least one month before the planned date of the thesis defense. The chair and at least one committee member must attend and approve both the thesis defense and the written thesis. Honors theses must be defended no later than the date of graduation from WMU. We strongly encourage, but do not require, that the thesis defense be completed in the Lee Honors College during the designated Thesis Celebration days. A digital copy of the final, approved thesis must be submitted to the honors college within 30 days of the student's graduation date. All thesis-related forms and instructions are available on the honors college website (wmich.edu/honors/advising/thesis).
Community Service Requirement
All students must complete 20 hours of community service each academic year. The last day to submit community service logs for 2015-16 is June 24, 2016. Community service hours are reduced to 10 hours per year for a year in which a student joins the college in the spring semester or graduates in the fall semester. Additional hours completed within an academic year will not be carried over to the following year.

Service activities must be documented by turning in a signed volunteer time log to an honors college advisor. Failure to report community service by the end of the first year will result in a student not being in good standing in the honors college. Failure to report community service by the end of the second year will result in dismissal from the honors college. Possible service activities may include:

- Community service activities included in weekly honors college announcements and emails.
- Service activities through Volunteer Kalamazoo.
- Service activities with non-profit organizations.
- Service activities with registered student organizations (RSOs), except fund-raising activities to benefit the RSO.
- Service activities completed through a service-learning course.
- Other activities, as approved via submission of Volunteer Activity Authorization forms to the honors college.

Sponsored Events Requirement
This requirement is intended to encourage students to explore the rich array of cultural events available through the Lee Honors College. All incoming first year students must attend at least four honors college sponsored events during their first year and two in their second year. Transfer students are required to attend two honors college sponsored events during their first year as an honors student. Failure to attend and present a Bronco ID at the required number of events by the end of the academic year will result in dismissal from the honors college.

ADVISING
Specialized academic advising is an important benefit available to all honors students. First year students are required to attend a Mandatory First Year Advising session during their first semester at WMU. Times for these group advising sessions that are typically held in October will be announced on the honors college website, Facebook page and via email. Following their first year, students are strongly encouraged to visit an academic advisor in the honors college at least once per year.

Ashleigh Watson, Anthony Helms, and honors college graduate assistants are the academic advisors for all course-related advising. Dean Carla Koretsky and Associate Dean Jane Baas are the primary advisors for thesis projects, scholarships, and graduate or professional school applications.

Please call for an appointment (269-387-3230) to be assured that an advisor will be available for you and that we can serve our honors students most efficiently. Drop-in advising is also available most days, Monday through Friday, 9 a.m.-noon and 1-4 p.m., but may require longer wait times.

Priority Registration
All members in good standing of the Lee Honors College are eligible for special priority registration privileges. Honors college students may register at the announced priority time or anytime thereafter by going to the GoWMU portal. The computer system will identify you as a member of the honors college. If you experience problems registering, call the honors college office at (269) 387-3230. Please note that honors courses are restricted to honors students. For courses with multiple sections, be sure to register for the specific CRN provided in the course catalog.

Audits
Honors college audits include the semester Academic Standing Audit, the annual Lee Honors College Requirements Audit, and the Lee Honors College Graduation Audit. All honors students must also complete the University graduation audit.

Academic Standing Audit—Fall and Spring Semesters
Following each fall and spring semester, the honors college advising staff conducts an audit of every student’s transcript to assess the cumulative GPA and determine honors college academic status. Students with a cumulative GPA below 3.5 will receive an email from the dean informing them that they are no longer in good academic standing with the honors college and recommending (warning status) or requiring (probation status) honors academic advising. Three or more semesters of cumulative GPA lower than 3.5 will result in dismissal from the Lee Honors College unless a strong upward trend is present.
Keeping Informed
While we make every effort to inform you of events and necessary information regarding the Lee Honors College, it is also your responsibility to stay in touch with us. Information is published weekly in the honors college newsletter which is available online via a link on the honors college home page. We encourage you to visit the website and Facebook page frequently and follow us on Twitter @leehonorscol. Additionally, we post information on various bulletin boards in the honors college building as well as on a video display in the lobby. We are responsible for notifying you of pertinent information, but you must be responsible for receiving and responding to it. Please check our messages regularly and contact us with any questions.

Honors College Graduation Audit
All honors college students are required to complete the online graduation audit survey at least one semester prior to the anticipated graduation date. A link to the survey is emailed to all seniors at least twice per semester.

University Graduation Audit
A university audit is initiated prior to or at the beginning of the senior year. This audit determines whether or not all university, general education, major and minor requirements have been fulfilled. Students should apply for a university graduation audit at the major advising office of their academic college. For additional information, please see the Graduation Procedures section in the university undergraduate catalog under Academic Policies.

Honors College Requirements Audit—Annual
Lee Honors College audits are conducted on an annual basis during the summer and address progress with respect to all honors requirements (honors college sponsored events attendance, community service, course work, GPA). Once audits are completed, students will receive an e-mail with their current status in the honors college. The audit will be conducted based on the information present in transcripts, the number of honors college sponsored events at which a Bronco ID has been presented, and volunteer service logs. Please contact the Lee Honors College academic advisors for questions regarding the audit.

HONORS COLLEGE ACADEMIC POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Academic Standing
Good Standing
A student with a cumulative grade point average of at least 3.5 who has completed all honors college sponsored events attendance and community service requirements, is in good standing with the Lee Honors College.

Warning
A student with a grade point average that drops below 3.5 will be placed on academic warning status with the honors college and is strongly encouraged to meet with a Lee Honors College academic advisor.

Academic Probation
A student with a grade point average that remains below 3.5 following one semester on academic warning status will be placed on academic probation with the honors college and is required to meet with a Lee Honors College academic advisor.

Dismissal
After one semester on academic probation, a student who fails to achieve a 3.5 overall grade point average will be dismissed from the Lee Honors College. If extenuating circumstances exist, a student may schedule an appointment with the Lee Honors College associate dean to request a one-semester extension of academic probation status.

Honors Student Organizations
Three honors organizations are housed within the Lee Honors College: the first year student honor society, Alpha Lambda Delta; Tau Sigma honor society for transfer students; and Phi Kappa Phi honor society for upperclassmen.

First year students in good standing with the Lee Honors College may choose to join Alpha Lambda Delta. Membership in ALD is by invitation only at the end of a student’s first or second semester at WMU. Transfer students who join the honors college are invited to join Tau Sigma. Anthony Helms, director of academic advising, serves as the administrative advisor for both ALD and Tau Sigma. Jane Baas, associate dean, serves as faculty advisor for Tau Sigma. Dean Koretsky serves as the faculty advisor for ALD. Juniors in the top 7.5 percent and seniors in the top ten percent of their class are invited to join the Phi Kappa Phi honor society.

Electronic Communication
All official Lee Honors College electronic communication will be sent to your official WMU email address; please check it regularly. According to University policy, the honors college is allowed to respond to your messages only if they come from your WMU email account.
“Be the change that you wish to see in the world.” ~ Mahatma Gandhi

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