

In time to come when our ideals shall become reality...

## **Honors Program Student Handbook**

### **INTRODUCTION**

This handbook is intended to serve as an introduction to the Honors Program at Angelo State University. The primary purpose of the handbook is to help indoctrinate new Honors Program students concerning policies and procedures within the Honors Program. All honors students must abide by the current Honors Student Handbook regardless of date of entry into the program.

### **CONTACT INFORMATION**

Dr. Nick Flynn is the Honors Program Director. He is your first point of contact for the Honors Program. Dr. Flynn's Honors Program office may be found in A304 of the third floor of the Porter Henderson Library. The Honors Lounge is located on the third floor of the Porter Henderson Library as well (A303); you will need to use an activated student ID card to access the Honors Lounge. Below are the Honors Program contact numbers.

#### **Honors Program contact information**

325-942-2722 (Phone)

325-942-2716 (Fax)

<http://www.angelo.edu/dept/honors/contacts.html>

#### **Honors Council**

We also have an Honors Council composed of Angelo State University faculty and/or staff members. The membership of the Honors Council will be updated each year on our webpage. The purpose of the Honors Council is to assist the director in the overall development of the Honors Program and to provide program oversight. The Honors Council is expected to help formulate and review the policies, programs and procedures of the Honors Program. Areas where the Honors Council will help the director shall include curriculum decisions, evaluating Honors Program student applications and involvement in Honors Program activities. Essentially, the Honors Council serves as a board of directors for the Honors Program. Members also act as sounding board and source of guidance for the director. For a listing of Honors Council members and their email addresses please visit <http://www.angelo.edu/dept/honors/honorscouncil.html>.

### **OUR PHILOSOPHY**

There are several models of Honors Programs that exist. This should not be surprising since there are many different types of universities in America. Each program is designed to meet the individual needs of the students and the resources that are available. Our goal at Angelo State University is to produce a program that attracts high-quality students with an interest in becoming well-educated and well-rounded people willing to make their respective communities and nation a better place to live, work and learn. To achieve this goal, we have compiled a collection of courses and experiences that are designed to enrich the education of our students.

It is our hope that Honors Program students will embrace the opportunities that we provide them with vigor, curiosity and courage. Honors students should be willing to take a look at the world that surrounds them and challenge themselves to learn more about that world. Honors students should also be willing to develop their analytical and critical thinking skills; these are the skills that will carry them far in life.

## **MISSION STATEMENT AND GOALS**

The Honors Program at Angelo State University will provide students with the opportunity to:

- Participate in undergraduate research opportunities
- Achieve a deeper understanding of course material
- Have access to cultural and intellectual events that will broaden their appreciation of the world that surrounds them
- Develop leadership qualities that will help them through their careers and personal lives
- Nurture an understanding and appreciation of the diverse needs of society and how their personal service can enhance the quality of life for their family and others

The Honors Program will achieve these goals through course offerings and extracurricular activities designed to challenge and enhance the intellectual and personal abilities of Honors Program students.

## **BENEFITS OF BEING AN HONORS STUDENT**

There are several benefits associated with being an Honors Program student. It does need to be stressed that we want our students to enter, and remain, in the Honors Program due to their interest in broadening their horizons. Below are some of the benefits provided to honors students:

- Small class sizes and access to some of the best faculty members on campus
- Access to travel funds to present research
- Special access to distinguished speakers who participate in the various lectureships that ASU sponsors
- Designated residence space in the residence halls
- Guidance in applying for national scholarship opportunities such as Goldwater, Truman or Jack Kent Cooke scholarships
- Participation in Honors Program sponsored activities and events
- Early registration privileges
- Direct interaction with some of the best students on campus
- A Carry Forward Program for academic and career goal-setting as well as an opportunity to receive a composite letter of reference

## **BEING AN HONORS STUDENT**

### **A). Honor Code**

Angelo State University expects its students to maintain complete honesty and integrity in their academic pursuits. Students are responsible for understanding the Academic Honor Code which may be found online at the ASU website at <http://www.angelo.edu/forms/pdf/honorcode5.pdf>.

### **B). Expectations of an Honors Program student**

If you carefully read our philosophy statement above, you will see that we basically want our students to be well-rounded academic and personal explorers. Our expectations are not excessive, but they are intended to provide you with the opportunity to excel at Angelo State University. Our basic expectations are provided below:

- Adhere to the requirements of every ASU student, which are outlined in the Student Handbook
- Meet the graduation and course requirements of the Honors Program
- Maintain proper conduct and behavior that is expected of an Honors Program student
- Become an integral part of the program and not a member “in name only”
- Take responsibility for your actions as well as your individual success inside and outside of the classroom
- Address personal problems immediately to avoid them having a larger impact on your life

### **C). Personal conduct**

Angelo State University is making a very important investment in you as a student. This investment includes special privileges and opportunities that are sometimes only available to students in the Honors Program. These perks come with some additional responsibility. We obviously want you to be inquisitive in your academic pursuits, but we also want you to exhibit a strong-willed pursuit of academic excellence and good behavior. Honors students should bring to this program a sense of personal responsibility and good judgment. Behavior that brings you or the Honors Program into a bad light may require us to remove you as a member of the program.

If we receive notification that an honors student has violated any university or program policies, they will be required to meet with Dr. Flynn to discuss the matter. Any behavior that negatively impacts Angelo State University or the Honors Program could lead to a restriction of Honors Program privileges or removal from the Honors Program. After this meeting, a decision will be made as to the status of the Honors Program student. A student will have the opportunity to discuss this with Dr. Flynn before the decision is finalized. Students that are restricted or removed from the Honors Program will receive notification in writing by letter and email. A further discussion of student disciplinary removal procedures may be found in a separate section of this handbook.

Our expectations regarding personal conduct are important to your success and that of the program as a whole. Most honors students become successful, productive members of society. Their success is in large part due to their derived ability to think independently and arrive at their own conclusions and decisions. Honors students should also be cognizant of the personal consequences of their actions.

**D). Academic requirements**

In order to remain in the Honors Program, students that are on the Option One curriculum track must take at least one Honors Program course each long-term semester (Fall and Spring). Students that are on the Option Two curriculum track are not required to take an Honors Program course each semester.

Students must also maintain a cumulative GPA (GPA) of 3.25. If the cumulative GPA of an Honors Program student falls below 3.25, the student will be required to participate in the Honors Probation Program. Students on probation will still receive all of the rights and privileges provided to an Honors Program student. First semester non-provisional freshman Honors Program students have two long semesters to bring their cumulative GPA above 3.25. All other non-provisional students are provided with one semester to bring their cumulative GPA above 3.25. If, after the aforementioned period, the cumulative GPA of a student remains below a 3.25, then they are removed from the program. Provisional students who do not achieve a 3.25 GPA in their first semester in the program are not offered probation and are removed from the program.

Students who fail to meet the course, GPA or Honors Probation Program requirements stated above have the right to petition Dr. Flynn to remain in the program. One of two things will happen at this time. Additional conditions for remaining in the program will be placed on the honors student, or the student will be removed from the program.

**E). Contract of understanding**

Before Honors Program students can be cleared to use the Honors Lounge and receive other benefits associated with the program, they must sign a contract stating that they have read the Honors Student Handbook and they agree to abide by the requirements stated in the Handbook.

**F). Honors course attendance**

An excessive amount of absences in an Honors Program course is unacceptable behavior for an honors student; honors students are expected to attend their honors courses on a consistent basis. If an honors student misses more than one equivalent week of lecture due to unexcused absences (3 days for MWF or 2 for TR courses), the student will first be required to meet with Dr. Flynn to discuss their attendance. The second unexcused absence following this meeting will result in removal from the program.

**G). Degree planning**

Honors students will be required to fill out a degree planning form during their first full semester in the Honors Program. Spring entry students are required to complete a degree planning form during the semester that they are admitted into the program. Students are required to finish their freshman and sophomore courses in the Honors Program by the end of their third year at Angelo State University. Additionally, students must take Honors Program courses in the semester indicated on the degree planning form unless they have received written permission from Dr. Flynn.

## **REMOVAL FROM THE HONORS PROGRAM**

Students may be removed from the Honors Program if they fail to meet the personal or academic obligations of Honors Program students stated in this handbook. Examples of reasons for removal are provided below:

- Performing any illegal act that results in legal punishment
- Dropping an honors course without going through the drop procedure
- Excessive absences
- Any action deemed harmful to the reputation of the Honors Program or Angelo State University
- Failing any condition of the Honors Probation Program

At the discretion of Dr. Flynn, a peer review board may be appointed to review the circumstances surrounding a student's particular actions. The peer review board will review the matter and make a preliminary recommendation to Dr. Flynn. Dr. Flynn will notify students that face removal from the Honors Program. Any student facing removal from the Honors Program will be allowed to discuss this with Dr. Flynn and a decision will be made following that meeting. Following notification of removal, the student has two weeks to request an appeal from the Honors Council. The appeal process will involve a meeting between the student and the Honors Council. Dr. Flynn will be present at the meeting, but, as stated below, will not be involved in the appeal decision regarding removal.

## **HONORS CURRICULUM**

### **A). Honors Program Tracks**

The Honors Program is proud to present three possible tracks for potential students: the Option One, Option Two track and Great Plains Honors Council (GPHC)/National Collegiate Honors Council (NCHC) Community College Member track. We also offer an Honors Thesis Option whereby students conduct a year long research or scholarly project; all honors students may participate in this. Our curriculum tracks as well as our Thesis Option were developed by an interdisciplinary committee with careful attention being given to degree requirements for every major on campus. Because of this, the Honors Program is a viable option for all majors at ASU.

It does need to be stated that students do not have to be a member of the Honors Program in order to take an honors course. Students interested in just taking an honors course must contact Dr. Flynn for permission to do this.

### **B). Transcript and Diploma Designations**

There is a difference in transcript and diploma designation between the Option One and Option Two curriculum track. On the transcript, the Option One track is designated "Highest University Honors" and the Option Two track is designated "High University Honors." Similarly, Option One track diplomas contain a Highest Honors emblem while Option Two track diplomas contain a High Honors emblem. If a student participates in the Thesis Option, the title of their thesis project will be stated on their transcript.

**C). Eligibility**

Fall 2008 entering students or students who are majoring under a 120 credit hour degree plan. The Option Two track is provided as an option to transfer students, spring entry students and incoming freshman who have a significant amount of incoming credit. We are generally defining a significant amount of incoming credit to be 18 or more credit hours in courses or course areas (e.g. GOVT, Lab Science, etc.) that we offer as honors core curriculum courses.

**D). Option One Track requirements (27 honors credit hours)**

1. At least 15 honors hours in honors core curriculum courses. Please see our Core Curriculum Requirement Comments below.
2. Only 6 honors hours may be obtained by taking honors contract courses. Please see our Contract Comments below.
3. Six honors hours must be within the student's academic department. Three departmental hours can be substituted by participating in a study abroad program.
4. HONR 3281- Introduction to Honors Research. This course is offered every fall and should be taken during the student's junior year.
5. HONR 4181- Honors Seminar. This course is offered every spring and should be taken during the student's senior year.

**E). Option Two Track requirements (18 honors credit hours)**

1. At least 9 honors hours in honors core curriculum courses. Please see our Core Curriculum Requirement Comments below.
2. Only 3 honors hours may be obtained by taking honors contract courses. Please see our Contract Comments below.
3. Three honors hours must be within the student's academic department.
4. HONR 3281 (see description above)
5. HONR 4181 (see description above)

**F). GPHC/NCHC Community College Member track (27 honors credit hours; at least 12 hours obtained from ASU)**

1. Eligibility: Those students who graduate from a community college Honors Program that is an institutional member of GPHC and NCHC. For scholarship and transcript purposes only, students in this track are considered to be Option One students and will receive a scholarship their first semester in the program provided that they have a 3.25 transfer GPA.
2. Honors credit obtained from a community college Honors Program that is a member of GPHC and NCHC may be applied toward satisfying requirements in this track. Please see our Core Curriculum Requirement Comments below.
3. At least 12 of the honors credits required to graduate as an Option One student must be obtained at Angelo State University.
4. HONR 3281 (see description above)
5. HONR 4181 (see description above)

**G). Core Curriculum Requirement Comments**

1. Honors core curriculum hours should be from different disciplines whenever pre-existing credit allows.
2. Exceptions to Option Two core curriculum requirements may be made for students who have already satisfied their core curriculum requirements prior to entering the program.
3. Standing contract courses may be used to satisfy honors core curriculum requirements.
4. GPHC/NCHC Community College Member track students are exempt from honors core curriculum requirements.
5. Honors core curriculum courses are listed below.

**H). Contract Comments**

1. The limit on the number of contract hours does not include standing contract courses (e.g. GEO 1402, ECO 2301, MATH 1332 and PHIL 2301).
2. Contract courses may not be used in place of a course that is already offered as an honors course. For example, we offer an honors section of COMM 2301 so a contract for COMM 2301 could not be used in lieu of taking the honors section of COMM 2301.
3. Students may petition the Honors Program to make an exception to the limit on the number of contract hours based upon their individual or pre-existing course credit situation.

For a full listing of the courses that we offer in the Honors Program please visit our curriculum webpage at <http://www.angelo.edu/dept/honors/curriculum.html>.

**DROP POLICY**

Honors students will only be able to drop an honors course under the most extraordinary or extenuating circumstances and only when the drop is approved by the Honors Program Director or Honors Council. Honors students are free to drop non-honors courses as regular students are. Below is the outline of the drop procedure for honors courses:

1. Fill out the Honors Course Drop form that includes a maximum 250-word word essay stating why the student needs to drop the course
2. Students wishing to drop an honors course must meet with an Honors Program staff member to fully explain why they wish to drop the course. An updated degree planning form must also be filled out in consultation with the Honors Program staff member. The updated degree planning form must provide details as to how the student will address the dropped course and still be able to finish the Honors Program
3. In the case of a student requesting a drop for the first time or a drop of an “elective” honors course, the Honors Program Director will review the drop form, degree plan and any other relevant information and render a decision. In the case of a denial, students will have the right to request a review by the Honors Council. This appeal must be submitted to the Director within one week of receipt of the decision. Appeals made after this time will be automatically denied.
4. In the case of a student requesting a drop for extraordinary or extenuating circumstances, the Honors Council will review the drop form, degree plan and any other relevant information and render a decision.

### **Important Notes**

1. Honors Program students are encouraged to take additional honors courses that are not on their current Honors Program degree planning form. Students will be allowed to drop these “elective” honors courses without penalty provided that it is clear that they are not repetitively enrolling and subsequently dropping these courses. Students must, however, still go through the formal honors course drop procedure.
2. Honors Program students may be allowed to drop one Honors Program course provided that they can document the fact that they have made an effort to succeed in the class. Evidence such as a current passing grade in the class, regular attendance in class and turning in all required assignments to date are examples. In order to exercise this option, the student must have met with their instructor to discuss their desire to drop the course and document these items (current grade, attendance record and turned in assignments). The instructor will have the ability to recommend a drop approval in this case.
3. In the case of multiple honors offerings for a given requirement (e.g. lab science), students are allowed to take a course from a different area. A student may, for example, be allowed to drop honors CHEM 1411 and take honors BIO 1480 or GEO 1402 in a subsequent semester. The intention here is to allow students the opportunity to explore other academic areas. In the case of single honors offerings for a given requirement (e.g. HIST 1301, GOVT 2301), however, students will be required to take the same course.

A copy of the honors course drop form may be found in the documents section of the Honors Program webpage: <http://www.angelo.edu/dept/honors/documents.html>.

### **RETAKE HONORS PROGRAM COURSES**

An honors course may be retaken but it may not be replaced with a regular section of the course if the student intends to use the original honors course to fulfill honors requirements. This requires a change to the degree planning form, which must be approved by Dr. Flynn.

### **COURSES BY HONORS CONTRACT**

It is likely that a student in the Honors Program will have to take a course by honors contract to satisfy one or more of the curriculum requirements in the Honors Program. A student who wishes to take a course for Honors Program credit must initially contact the faculty member for permission to take their course contract. Students should not enroll in the course until they have contacted the professor and received approval to do the course by contract. This must be done by the end of the preceding semester. Faculty are not expected to honor last minute requests or requests made at the beginning of the semester in which the course is being offered; this places an unfair burden on the faculty member. The student should provide a copy of the *Taking a Course by Honors Contract* document to the faculty member or direct them to the Honors website to retrieve a copy of this document. This document may be found in the document section of our webpage at <http://www.angelo.edu/dept/honors/documents.html>.

After the student has gained permission to take a course by Honors contract, the faculty member and student will discuss the requirements that need to be met in order for the student to receive Honors credit. The Honors Program Director may be involved in this discussion at the request of either the student or the faculty member. While the deadline for these projects is up to the discretion of the faculty member, it is strongly suggested that the deadline be set during or prior to the last full week of the semester.

Once an agreement has been reached, the faculty member will provide the student and Honors Program Director with an Honors Program Course by Contract Agreement Form. The form will outline the requirements for the honors contract as well as what bearing those requirements will have on the student's final grade. This form should be submitted to the Honors Program by the end of the second week of the semester that the course is being taken by honors contract. At the end of the course, the Contract Completion Form must be completed in order to confer honors credit for the course. Both the Honors Program Course by Contract Agreement and Contract Completion Form may be found within the *Taking a Course by Honors Contract* document.

## **HONORS ADVISING**

It is the responsibility of Honors Program students to make sure that they do not take regular sections of courses they agree to take in the Honors Program. No exceptions will be provided for students who took a regular section of an honors course designated on their Honors Program degree planning form while they were in the Honors Program. An updated version of honors advising procedures may be found at <http://www.angelo.edu/dept/honors/advising.html>, but a brief description is provided below.

Each honors student must first make an appointment with their academic department advisor. Students must have a copy of their Honors Program degree planning form with them when they see their academic advisor. Students are still required to contact their designated departmental advisor in order to determine what courses they must take to satisfy their major and/or minor requirements. The student must then visit with the honors advisor who will verify that the courses the student plans to take match with the Honors Program degree planning form.

## **GRADUATING WITH HONORS**

In order to graduate with an honors designation on their transcript, Honors Program students must graduate with a cumulative GPA of 3.25 and they must satisfy the Honors Program curriculum that was in place the first semester that they entered ASU as an undergraduate student. Exceptions to that curriculum are very rare, but may be approved by Dr. Flynn at his discretion.

## **HONORS LOUNGE POLICIES**

The current lounge policy may be found in the honors documents section of the Honors Program website. Each student may bring one non-honors guest into the lounge. The honors student will sign in the guest and must remain with the guest; the honors student will be responsible for the actions of that guest. Food and drinks may only be consumed in designated areas within the Honors Program lounge. Any honors student failing to meet posted lounge policies may have their lounge privileges restricted.

## **HONORS STUDENT CONTACT INFORMATION/EMAIL POLICY**

Honors students must maintain their current contact information both with the Honors Program and with the current student records system at Angelo State University. This information should include **local address, local phone number, cell phone number, emergency phone number, permanent address, permanent phone number and email address**. Students who fail to maintain current contact information will be responsible for any notification or program information that was sent to them using their existing contact information. Finally, Honors Program students must check their ASU email on a regular basis and will be held responsible for any email messages that they miss as a result of failing to regularly check their email.

## **ORGANIZATION**

Dr. Flynn, Honors Program Director, reports directly to the Provost/Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs. The Honors Program Director administers the Honors Program and is responsible for assuring that the program maintains its standard of excellence. The Honors Council, comprised of ASU faculty and/or staff, advises the Honors Program Director on current and future policies concerning the Honors Program.

Any decision involving a member of the Honors Council and a student that they are teaching will not include the Honors Council member in the decision making process. The Honors Director will make any tie-breaking decisions. In the event that the Director is the Council member in question, a temporary chair will convene the meeting and make any tiebreaker decisions.

## **FINAL COMMENTS**

This Handbook is intended to provide honors students, faculty and ASU administrators with a clear direction regarding the Honors Program. Honors students are strongly encouraged to contact Dr. Flynn if they have any questions about the program, or if they have any ideas about how to make the Honors Program better. The usefulness of any organization is only as good as the dedication and support of its existing members.

## Contract of Understanding

### Contract of understanding

Before an honors student can be cleared to use the Honors Program lounge and receive other benefits associated with the program, they must sign a contract stating that they have read the Honors Student Handbook and they agree to abide by the requirements stated in the Handbook.

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By signing this contract, I am stating that I have read the most current Honors Student Handbook, and I agree to abide by the requirements stated in that Handbook. I also understand that all honors students must abide by the current Honors Student Handbook regardless of date of entry into the program.

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**Name, Printed**

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**Name, Signed**

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**Date**