

## Honors Program

Director: Michael Thunberg.

The mission of the Honors Program is to support an enriched university experience for highly motivated students with demonstrated academic abilities and strong interests in research, service, and leadership.

The University Honors Program is a merit-based, highly selective academic track for outstanding undergraduates, comprising less than 5% of the graduating class. It provides a framework for an advanced education experience encompassing the following core elements:

- One-on-one faculty mentorship over the participant's tenure in the Honors Program
- Customized opportunities for enhanced academic growth
- Individualized hands-on research experience
- Learning community of like-minded motivated peers
- Prestigious Honors designation on the diploma and transcript upon graduation

The University Honors Program is designed with the understanding that most of our students have very tight curriculum maps and do not have many free electives. Students complete the following requirements in fulfillment of the University Honors Program:

- **First-year Honors Seminar.** Faculty across the university engage in a competitive application process to teach this course. Topics rotate based on faculty expertise but all sections are interdisciplinary, academically challenging, and thought provoking. Honors students collaborate with colleagues across the university to critically tackle difficult topics and expand their perspectives.
- **Contract Course.** Honors students start to take control of their research interests by collaborating with one of their course faculty. Together, Honors students and faculty develop an enrichment project for the course based on the student's interests.
- **Honors Thesis Preparation Course.** The Honors thesis is the most substantial and rigorous academic requirement for an undergraduate. The Director of the Honors Program dedicates a course to preparing students to successfully complete the thesis. Students develop their research question in consultation with the Director and faculty mentor, read scholarly literature on the topic, and develop a method of study.
- **Honors Thesis.** The Honors Thesis is the culmination of student research. Students work closely with their thesis committee to engage in a rigorous, original research project. Successful completion requires a public, oral defense and acceptance of the final thesis by the student's committee.
- **Honors Portfolio.** Under the supervision of the Honors Director, students will compile a portfolio chronicling and reflecting on their work in the Honors Program. This includes material developed for the first-year seminar, contract course, research projects, and University lecture series.

The Honors Program has a two-wave admission model.

- **First wave.** The top 15% of first-year applicants are invited to apply to the program. If they choose to pursue this opportunity, then the student must submit an Honors Program application that consists of two letters of recommendation from an educator familiar with the student's academic profile; a resume outlining the student's academic achievements, work experience, and service credentials; and, a response essay to a writing prompt. The Norwich University Honors Council considers the credentials of each applicant and makes acceptance decisions on a case-by-case basis.

- **Second wave.** Students completing their first semester at Norwich with a 3.2 GPA or higher and showing outstanding academic aptitude are invited to apply to the program. Nominations are also solicited from faculty teaching freshmen courses. Second wave students follow an application process that is similar to that of first wave applicants.