

To: Katherine Schmidt, Faculty Senate President
From: Faculty Senate Honors Committee [Bob Hautala (HPE, Chair); Sharon Oberst (Creative Arts); David Murphy (Social Science); Jeff Myers (Natural Science and Math); Nick Backus (Humanities); Sue Dauer (DTE); Joel Alexander (Psychology); Gavin Keulks (Program Director); Kimber Saville, Rachel Hermanson, Diedra Cates (student representatives)]
Date: February 17, 2010
Re: Honors Program Recommendations/Proposals

The Faculty Senate Honors Committee proposes to redistribute six credits within the Honors Program. The full Honors Program currently requires 59-62 credits, and that number will remain unchanged.

The redistributed credits would come from the philosophy and general science requirements, which would each be reduced by 3 credits to form a new 6-credit Honors Elective category. This proposal thus affects courses from one academic department (philosophy) and one academic division (Natural Science and Math).

These changes have been discussed and under development since spring of 2008. A timeline of campus consultations is provided in our supplementary materials. Every change was voted on separately by the Honors Committee and approved unanimously, both before and after soliciting feedback from all faculty.

Rationales

The rationales for each specific change are described in our supplementary materials. More generally, the rationale for undertaking a program review and revision at this time is prompted by significant problems that, if not confronted, will continue to impact the Honors Program in negative ways.

Specifically, when compared with other in-state honors programs, WOU's Honors Program offers the least diverse and most inflexible curriculum. This rigidity has unquestionably contributed to the minimum 50-65% drop-out rate experienced by each incoming Honors cohort by their time of graduation.

Additionally, select faculty and departments have expressed interest in participating in the Honors Program; however, the current program offers only limited means to accommodate such interest on a regular or semi-regular basis—and no means to accommodate it at any level other than upper-division.

While representing only 10% of the total credits in the Honors Program, this six credit redistribution to elective credits will accommodate faculty and student demand for curricular diversity and flexibility. In all deliberations the Honors Committee aspired to seek a balance between the goals of the Honors Program and its students and the interests of faculty.

Comparison between Existing and Proposed Honors Program

Department or Division	Current Credits	Proposed Credits	Net Change
Creative Arts Sequence	9 (CA 101h, 102h, 103h)	9	No change
Social Science Sequence	8-9 (GEOG 106h, 107h)	8-9	No change
Social Science Elective	3-4 (from non-honors classes)	3-4	No change
English	8 (ENG 107h, 108h)	8	No change
Philosophy	9 (PHL 207h, 208h, 209h)	6	-3 (eliminate 209H)
General Science Sequence	15 (GS 201h, 202h, 203h)	12	-3 (change 5 cr. classes to 4 cr. classes)
Honors Electives	0	6	+6 (add new category, UD & LD both allowed)
Honors Seminar	3-4 (varies annually, UD credits)	3-4	No change
Thesis Prep. Class	1 (H303)	1	No change
Thesis Credit	3 (H403, Indep. Study)	3	No change
Total Credits	59-62 credits	59-62	No change

We will be happy to answer any questions and thank the Faculty Senate for considering our revisions.