

## **Honors Student Handbook**

### **INTRODUCTION**

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

### **CONTACT INFORMATION**

The Director's office is located in A304 on the third floor of the Porter Henderson Library. The Honors Lounge is also located on the third floor of the Porter Henderson Library (A303); students access the Honors Lounge by an activated student ID card.

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

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

### **ORGANIZATION**

The Honors Program Director reports directly to the Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs. The Director administers the Honors Program and is responsible for assuring that the program maintains standards of excellence.

### **HONORS PHILOSOPHY**

The Honors experience revolves around a collection of courses and extracurricular opportunities that are designed to enrich the education of high quality students who want to make the most of their university experience. At the heart of the program is a unique learning community of capable and intellectually curious students who seek breadth and depth in their education and commit to becoming well educated and well rounded students and citizens. The program challenges students to delve deeply into their academic studies, to explore the world that surrounds them, to develop their critical thinking and analytical skills, and to actively engage in university and community life. Honors faculty commit to helping students maximize their intellectual and personal talents and to becoming true partners in the educational experience of Honors students.

### **MISSION STATEMENT AND GOALS**

The Honors Program at Angelo State University is committed to providing intellectually curious and capable students with an enriched learning experience. It seeks to challenge and enhance the intellectual and personal development of each individual student.

The Honors Program provides students with the opportunity to:

- Partner with other students and faculty in a unique learning community
- Achieve a deeper understanding of course material
- Participate in cultural and intellectual events that will broaden their appreciation of the world that surrounds them
- Develop leadership qualities that will help them throughout their careers and personal lives
- Participate in undergraduate research opportunities
- Nurture an understanding and appreciation of the diverse needs of society and the value of community service in personal and intellectual development

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

Membership in the Honors Program brings several benefits beyond the intrinsic value of an enhanced learning community and an opportunity to broaden one's horizons. Benefits provided to honors students include:

- Generally smaller class sizes and access to some of the best faculty members on campus
- Direct interaction with and peer support from some of the best students on campus
- Special access to distinguished speakers who participate in the various lectureships sponsored by ASU
- Access to the Honors Lounge and designated residence hall spaces
- Early registration privileges
- Access to travel funds to present research at honors convocations
- Guidance in applying for competitive national scholarship opportunities such as Goldwater or Truman Scholarships
- Participation in Honors Program sponsored course trips, activities, and events
- A Carry Forward Program for academic and career goal-setting as well as an opportunity to receive a composite letter of reference from a team of honors faculty and staff
- Opportunities for scholarships and financial support for special seminars and internships
- Opportunities to develop leadership skills through unique community service projects
- Access to special programs and/or admission criteria at the TTU Medical School and Law School and the ASU Physical Therapy program for eligible candidates

### **TRANSCRIPT AND DIPLOMA DESIGNATIONS**

In order to graduate with an Honors designation on their transcript, an Honors Program student must graduate with a cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 3.25 or higher, must fulfill all coursework prescribed on the student's approved Honors Degree Plan, and must satisfy program participation and service requirements.

Option One and Option Two curriculum tracks, detailed on the program website at <http://www.angelo.edu/dept/honors/curriculum-new.html>, receive different transcript and

diploma designations. On ASU transcripts, the Option One track is designated "Highest University Honors" and the Option Two track is designated "High University Honors." Similarly, Option One track diplomas include a Highest Honors emblem while Option Two track diplomas include a High Honors emblem. The thesis project title will be stated on the transcript of those students who choose the Thesis Option.

## **EXPECTATIONS OF HONORS STUDENTS**

The benefits associated with entry into the Program carry commensurate responsibilities. In keeping with the Honors philosophy stated above, Honors students are expected to be inquisitive in their academic pursuits and to exhibit a strong-willed pursuit of academic excellence and good character. Program requirements are intended to assist students to excel in the classroom and to broaden their personal horizons. General expectations are provided below:

### **a). University Policies**

Honors students are expected to adhere to all requirements of the ASU Student Handbook, the ASU Academic Honor Code, and the Honors Student Handbook. 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 <http://www.angelo.edu/cstudent>.

### **b). Academic Requirements and Procedures**

Honors students are expected to meet (or exceed) the graduation and course requirements of the Honors Program and to fully comply with academic policies and procedures in their particular discipline.

- **Honors Program Tracks**

The Honors Program curriculum tracks were developed with careful attention to degree requirements across campus, making the Honors Program a viable option for most majors at ASU. Currently three possible tracks exist: the Option One track, the Option Two track and the Great Plains Honors Council (GPHC)/National Collegiate Honors Council (NCHC) Community College Member track. Students are assigned to the various tracks based on the Honors Program Director's review of the scholastic credits earned prior to their entry into ASU. Also available is an Honors Thesis Option whereby students conduct a yearlong research or scholarly project.

All Honors students are encouraged to take additional Honors courses beyond those required for their degree plan. Students admitted into the program are required to take at least one honors course during their entry semester, and those admitted under the Option One curriculum track are generally expected to take at least one Honors Program course each long semester (Fall and Spring).

- **Degree Planning and Advising**

Students will be required to complete an *Honors Program Degree Planning Form* during the semester that they are admitted into the program. Students are strongly encouraged to complete 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 *Honors Program Degree Planning*

*Form* unless they receive written permission from the Honors Program Director. Any deviations from the degree plan must be reported immediately to the Honors Program Director, who will approve or deny the proposed change. Failure to follow degree planning forms may result in a student not receiving honors credit for a course or removal from the program.

It is the responsibility of Honors Program students to make sure that they do not enroll in regular sections of courses they agree to take as Honors sections. 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 on the program website at <http://www.angelo.edu/dept/honors/advising.html>.

- **Academic Performance**

Students must maintain a cumulative GPA of 3.25 to retain full privileges in the program. If the cumulative GPA of an Honors Program student falls below 3.25, the student, if allowed to remain in the program, will be required to participate in the Honors Probation Program.

- Students on probation will still receive most of the rights and privileges provided to an Honors Program student, but will not be eligible for Honors Scholarships during the probationary period.
- First semester non-provisional freshman Honors Program students are generally given two long semesters to bring their cumulative GPA above 3.25, provided they fulfill all terms of the probation contract and make substantive academic progress during the first semester of probation.
- Continuing students are allowed one semester to bring their cumulative GPA above 3.25.
- If, after completion of the probationary period, the student's cumulative GPA remains below a 3.25, the student will be removed from the program. In rare cases, the Honors Program Director may extend the probationary period if substantive progress is demonstrated.

Provisional students who do not achieve a 3.25 GPA in their first semester in the program are generally not offered probation and are removed from the program.

Students who fail to meet the GPA or Probation Program requirements stated above have the right to petition the Honors Program Director to remain in the program. At the Director's discretion, the student will either be informed of additional conditions for remaining in the program or be removed from the program.

- **Honors Course Attendance**

Excessive absences in any course taken for honors credit are unacceptable. Honors faculty are expected to report to the Director when an Honors student misses more than one equivalent week of lecture (3 days for MWF classes or 2 for TR classes) due to unexcused absences. The student will be required to meet with the Honors Program

Director to discuss attendance issues. An additional unexcused absence following this meeting will result in removal from the program.

- **Courses by 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 needs to take a course for Honors credit must initially contact the faculty member for permission to take the course by Honors contract. Students should not enroll in the course until they have contacted the professor, submitted an *Honors Course by Contract Proposal Form*, and received the Honors Program Director's approval. **This must be done by the end of the semester preceding anticipated enrollment in the course.** The student should provide the professor with a copy of *Taking a Course by Honors Contract*, found in the policies and forms section of the webpage at <http://www.angelo.edu/dept/honors/documents.html>. The student is responsible for ensuring that the faculty member submits the *Honors Program Course by Contract Agreement Form* **by the end of the second week of the semester.** For the student to receive Honors credit, the *Contract Completion Form* must be submitted at the conclusion of the contract.

- **Withdrawal from Honors Courses**

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. In order to withdraw from an Honors Course, the student must complete and submit an *Honors Course Drop Form*, meet with the Honors Program Director to fully explain any extenuating circumstances, and demonstrate that the student has made a good faith effort to fulfill the course requirements. If the withdrawal is allowed, the student must immediately file an updated *Honors Program Degree Planning Form* addressing how the student will replace the dropped class. Withdrawing from an Honors course without approval may result in removal from the program.

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 to replace the dropped course. A student may, for example, be allowed to drop honors CHEM 1411 and take honors BIO 1480 or GEO 1402 in a subsequent semester. In the case of single honors offerings for a given requirement (e.g. HIST 1301, POLS 2301), however, students will be required to take the same course in a subsequent semester.

### **c.) Program Participation**

In addition to the grade point requirements, students in the Honors Program commit to full engagement in program activities. To earn and retain eligibility for Honors Program scholarships, students must satisfy participation and service requirements to be certified "in good standing." As the number and type of activities available vary from year to year, students will be provided with specific requirements by the end of the second week of the semester. In addition, first-year students are required to participate in additional mentoring activities to ease the transition into Honors education. The requirements for both entering students and continuing program will be provided by the end of the second week of classes.

#### **d). Personal conduct**

Angelo State University is making a very important investment in each Honors student. This investment includes special privileges and opportunities that are generally only available to students in the Honors Program. Students are expected to take responsibility for their personal actions as well as individual successes or failures inside and outside of the classroom. Honors students are expected to demonstrate proper conduct and behavior appropriate to an Honors Program. They should bring to their daily pursuits a sense of personal responsibility and good judgment and seriously consider and accept responsibility for the consequences of their actions. They are expected to address personal and academic problems immediately to ensure that they do not become overwhelming and negatively impact academic and personal development.

Students need to remain mindful that their actions reflect not only on themselves but on the Honors Program and the university as well. Any legal violation or any behavior that brings an Honors student or the Honors Program into a negative light may lead to restriction of Honors Program privileges or removal from the program.

#### **e.) Student Contact Information**

The ASU email address assigned to the student serves as the university's official means of communication; therefore, Honors Program students are expected to check their ASU email on a regular basis and will be held responsible for any messages or program information missed as a result of failing to regularly check their university email.

Honors students must also maintain their current contact information both with the Honors Program and in the current student records system. 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 sent using their existing contact information.

### **LOUNGE POLICIES AND CONTRACT OF UNDERSTANDING**

The Honors Lounge is not only a communal space for Honors students but also a workplace for Honors Program staff and a public showcase for visitors and prospective students. Before Honors 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 its requirements.

The current lounge policies are posted in the Honors Lounge and under the policies and forms section of the webpage at <http://www.angelo.edu/dept/honors/documents.html>. Any Honors student failing to meet posted lounge policies may have their lounge privileges restricted.

### **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. Students reported for legal violations or violations of any university or program policy will be required to meet with the Honors Program Director to discuss the matter. After this meeting, a decision will be made as to the student's status in the Honors Program. A student will have the opportunity to discuss any

restrictions or removal recommendations with the Honors Program Director before the decision is finalized.

At the discretion of the Honors Program Director, 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 the Director. Any student facing removal from the Honors Program will be allowed to discuss this with the Honors Program Director, who will make a decision following the meeting.

Students who are restricted or removed from the Honors Program will receive notification in writing. Students wishing to appeal the decision must request reconsideration by the date specified in the notification communication. The appeal process will involve a meeting between the student, the Honors Program Director, and a review committee appointed by the Program Director. The Honors Program Director will make any tie-breaking decisions.