



# Handbook for Honors Scholars

with additional information for Honors faculty

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## Welcome & introduction

Alumni say they loved Honors; we hope you will too! Whether you're applying to the program or already an Honors Scholar, this handbook tells you what you need to know.

Honors Scholars come from diverse academic backgrounds (public school, private school, homeschool, GED) and racial, ethnic, cultural, and socioeconomic situations. Some are still in high school; some are returning to college after much life experience. Some have found academic success easily; others have struggled but persisted. But all are highly motivated and want to make the most of their college education. We ask applicants to meet two eligibility criteria from a list of options. We consider the application essay and educator recommendation as well as transcripts and test scores. We're looking for highly motivated critical thinkers ready to contribute to the program, not just take from it.

Honors promotes full engagement with academic life. Small Honors classes allow maximum interaction with classmates and professors. Honors Scholars and other students taking Honors classes are smart, curious, and active; learning alongside them with TCC's most engaging professors helps you stay motivated. We have events/activities beyond the classroom too.

Most Honors Scholars are eligible for Honors tuition waivers (if they aren't getting other waivers), TCC Foundation-sponsored monetary awards, and significant transfer benefits (if they complete the program successfully and become Honors Scholar Graduates).

We expect Honors Scholars to

- attend Honors events, including the Honors ConBLUEcation each fall and the Blue-Carpet TCC Foundation Honors Awards each spring;
- keep up with program information in this handbook, on the Honors web page ([tulsc.edu/honors](http://tulsc.edu/honors)), on the Honors Scholars Blackboard page\*, and in email messages;
- take Honors classes every semester (in special circumstances, you may skip them one semester with the coordinator's permission) and maintain a GPA of 3.5 or higher;
- attend your classes and participate actively in them;
- keep the Honors Program updated on changes to your academic plans or other circumstances affecting your progress toward completing the program.

But don't be satisfied with this minimum! Immerse yourself in college life and take advantage of opportunities available to you as a TCC student and Honors Scholar!

*\*To join the Blackboard organization (easier on a computer than a phone), go to MyTCC and login to Blackboard. Choose Organizations and click "Organization Catalog." Search for "Honors." Hover over HonorsScholars on the results list, and a drop-down chevron will appear. Click on that. The password is MC510. The next time you visit Blackboard, a link to the Honors Scholars organization site will show up in your Organizations list.*

## Three participation levels

**Level 1:** Take Honors classes! Any TCC student may take an Honors class. (3.0 GPA suggested, but not required. You don't have to be an Honors Scholar to take an Honors class, but Honors Scholars have to take Honors classes to complete the program.

**Level 2:** Get the Honors Certificate! Complete at least 12 credit hours of Honors courses with a GPA of 3.5 or higher to earn an Honors Certificate documenting your academic dedication. Email [honors@tulsacc.edu](mailto:honors@tulsacc.edu) to register when you have completed the 12 hours. We will verify your hours and GPA and then issue the certificate.

**Level 3:** Become an Honors Scholar! Meet two eligibility requirements from a list of options and submit a free online application (including an essay) and educator recommendation. Full-time, part-time, and concurrent students may apply. (High school students not yet taking TCC classes also may apply, but we can't approve your application until TCC has admitted you and has your transcript). Once admitted to the program, Honors Scholars work toward the Honors Scholar Graduate designation, requiring 21 hours of Honors classes (or 18 hours plus one high-impact course substitution), with a cumulative TCC GPA of 3.5 or higher, plus an exit essay/portfolio. (*Note:* Start archiving materials for your essay/portfolio as soon as you enter the Honors Program/start taking Honors classes. Save syllabi, examples of papers and projects, notes on any Honors-related activities you participate in, etc.)

## Honors Scholar eligibility & application

*Eligibility:* Applicants to the Honors Scholar program should either meet at least two criteria from Category 1 or at least one criterion from Category 1 *plus* one criterion from Category 2.

### Category 1:

- Composite ACT score of 25 or higher;
- Combined SAT score of 1200 or higher;
- Unweighted 3.5 GPA from an accredited high school;
- Top 10% ranking in high school graduating class;
- 90+ percentile ranking on the GED;

- 3.5 or higher GPA on a minimum of 12 earned semester hours at TCC or another regionally accredited college or university;
- Completion of two TCC Honors credit courses with grades of A or B;
- Comparable academic results from an international secondary school.

Category 2:

- Membership in high school honor society (National Honor Society, Oklahoma Honor Society, or another state honor society);
- Documented demonstration of special abilities, awards, and/or academic or creative achievements or other significant accomplishments.

Attach documentation of any Category 2 qualifications to your application. (For example, a copy of a certificate showing your Honor Society membership or significant accomplishment.)

*The application:* If you meet two eligibility requirements, complete the online application form available at [www.tulsacc.edu/honors](http://www.tulsacc.edu/honors).

- Enter your personal information (name, contact, information, residency, etc.).
- Attach documentation of any Category 2 qualifications (for example, a copy of a certificate showing your Honor Society membership or significant accomplishment.)
- Provide a recommendation from an educator (usually a professor or high school teacher) who knows about your academic capability, motivation, creativity, and any other relevant qualifications. (For students currently enrolled in a TCC class, the recommendation may be either a letter or an Honors referral submitted through Starfish by a professor whose class you are taking. For applicants not currently enrolled in a TCC class (or being recommended by a professor they aren't in class with), a letter is required. The letter should indicate how long and in what capacity the recommending educator has known you, and it should include the recommender's school/college-related contact information, including email address. For homeschooled students, a letter from someone (not a family member) familiar with your abilities and qualifications—such as a music teacher, coach, supervisor, etc.—may be appropriate. It can be attached to the application or requested separately using the instructions provided.)
- Attach your application essay of about 500 words in response to one of these prompts:

1. Intellectual challenges: Analyze an intellectual disagreement that you have had with someone else or an experience that you found intellectually challenging. If you write about a disagreement, what caused it, were you able to reach a consensus, and if so, how? If you write about a challenging experience, what made it challenging, what did you do (or what could you have done) to meet or overcome it? With either the disagreement or the challenge, what did you learn from the experience that could be useful to you as an Honors Scholar?

2. Reading: What was the last book of challenging literary fiction, or of nonfiction related to an academic subject, you read on your own, not for a class, and what effect did it have on you? How did it expand your knowledge or understanding of its subject matter or of life? In what ways did it challenge your previously held beliefs or previous ways of thinking about something? How will your future thinking and/or intellectual maturity be different as a result of reading the book, and how might that change in yourself serve you as an Honors Scholar?

3. The Honors experience: Not every college or university offers its students the opportunity to participate in an Honors program. As a candidate for admission to Honors at TCC, what benefits do you believe such a program can offer students? How do you think that participation in the TCC Honors program will benefit you personally? What goals or intentions will it help you achieve? What do you think the Honors Program can do for you, and what do you think you can contribute to the program?

4. Response to intellectual commentary. Choose and respond to one of the following quotations about the life of the mind. What does it mean to you? How is it relevant to the life of a college student, particularly an Honors Scholar in today's world?

- "Americans are in serious intellectual trouble—in danger of losing our hard-won cultural capital to a virulent mixture of anti-intellectualism, anti-rationalism and low expectations."—Susan Jacoby
- "It is a sign of intellectual maturity to always crawl to conclusions."—Mokokoma Mokhonoana
- "Memorizing facts and then regurgitating them into carefully crafted words is not science[,] people. It's intellectual bulimia. Real science happens when we explore what we don't know. The first law of understanding the human brain[,] and the mind within, is to be an explorer." — Abhijit Naskar
- "They too, knew this beautiful and harrowing landscape; they'd had the same experience of looking up from their books . . . and finding the world disconcertingly sluggish and alien, as if it were not their home." — Donna Tartt
- "If you are not thinking universally and intellectually, you can only remain flawlessly stagnant."  
— Lionel Suggs

Edit and proofread your essay carefully for clarity, standard grammar/punctuation, organization, and adherence to the topic.

## Honors mission statement, vision, & learning outcomes

*Mission:* The TCC Honors Program provides qualified and highly motivated students with an enriched academic environment through high-impact educational practices and experiential learning in a community of scholarly minded peers. Participants in the program can expect lively interaction with peers and faculty members in small classes as well as faculty mentoring and opportunities to pursue independent research on topics of special interest.

*Vision:* Inspired faculty leading dedicated scholars on an engaging educational journey.

*Learning outcomes:*

Communication skills

- Present ideas and research clearly and responsibly to an academic audience in both speech and writing at a level of proficiency appropriate for academic conferences as well as productive classroom discussion.

#### Critical thinking

- Analyze complex problems and significant research questions from diverse perspectives within and between multiple academic disciplines.
- Critique and synthesize sophisticated ideas and complex data from an array of sources.
- Construct a competent academic argument with a provocative thesis supported by logical reasoning and reliable and convincing evidence.
- Conduct independent research and/or significant creative projects.

#### Personal responsibility

- Independently navigate academic requirements and support to achieve personal goals.
- Demonstrate responsible and ethical scholarly behavior, including use and documentation of sources.
- Develop an independent scholarly/creative agenda.

#### Social responsibility

- Engage in dialogue with peers and mentors to achieve consensus.
- Support peers and help them stay motivated to achieve a high level of academic proficiency.
- Make connections outside the classroom through extracurricular activities, service-learning, global learning, community service, and/or pursuit of research opportunities.

## Honors ConBLUEcation

The Honors ConBLUEcation, the Honors Program's annual welcome/informational meeting held each fall (usually September), is *mandatory for all Honors Scholars*, so plan accordingly! If extreme circumstances force you to miss the event, you must complete a make-up assignment.

## Blue-Carpet TCC Foundation Awards Ceremony

Honors Scholars are expected at this ceremony, sponsored by the TCC Foundation, unless they have a class conflict. It takes place each spring (usually April). We present the Comby Prize for outstanding Honors graduate, the Kontogianes Award for outstanding Honors Scholar of the current academic year, the O'Neal Award for service to the program, and

smaller Foundation Honors Awards. We recognize our spring and summer Honors Scholar Graduates and present them with an Honors medallion. (When circumstances permit, we have a smaller medallion ceremony in late fall for December graduates.)

## TCC Honors & NCHC

The TCC Honors Program participates in the National Collegiate Honors Council and the Great Plains Honors Council, adhering to NCHC's values statement, definition of honors education, and "Shared Principles and Practices of Honors Education."

*Values:* "The National Collegiate Honors Council values an atmosphere that promotes academic opportunity and challenge for honors students and faculty. Within this intellectual environment, members of honors communities demonstrate integrity, respect, and excellence. Through the honors experience, participants realize enhanced personal, social, and intellectual development. The NCHC recognizes the importance of life-long learning and social responsibility in preparing individuals for an increasingly complex world."

*Definition:* "[H]onors education is characterized by in-class and extracurricular activities that are measurably broader, deeper, or more complex than comparable learning experiences typically found at institutions of higher education. Honors experiences include a distinctive learner-directed environment and philosophy, provide opportunities that are appropriately tailored to fit the institution's culture and mission, and frequently occur within a close community of students and faculty."

*Shared principles/practices:* Available at [www.nchhonors.org](http://www.nchhonors.org).

## Honors FAQs

*What is the TCC Honors Program?* A TCC academic program offering small, highly interactive Honors courses to curious, highly motivated students aiming to grow personally and academically through a rigorous, engaging course of study.

*What's the difference between an Honors class and a "regular" class?* An Honors class has a maximum of 20 students, facilitating more student-student and student-professor interaction and allowing innovative approaches to teaching. Frequent features include lively class discussions, alternative texts, and project- or problem-based learning. Honors classes emphasize critical thinking, reading, and writing, and encourage both independent and collaborative study and research.

*Will I have to do more work in an Honors class than in a "regular" class?* You probably won't have to do more work, but you will be expected to participate actively and think for yourself. Honors is about more meaningful education, not extra work.

*When should I enter the Honors Scholar program?* You can apply to the program at any point after admission to TCC. (High school students are welcome to apply, but we can't process your application until TCC has admitted you and received your high school transcript.) Any TCC Honors classes you take before admission to the program apply toward Honors Scholar requirements after you're admitted. You must meet all program requirements before graduation, regardless of when you enter the program. Joining the program early ensures a good selection of Honors classes, time to complete required Honors hours, the chance to take full advantage of benefits including scholarships, consideration for awards, guidance from Honors staff, and active membership in our scholarly community. We strongly encourage you to start taking Honors classes as early as possible.

*Will taking Honors classes hurt my GPA?* Highly unlikely. You have to prepare and participate to get the best results, but students typically get the same grades in Honors classes that they would get in non-Honors classes—some say they get better grades in Honors classes because they are small and more interactive. Honors classes follow the same grading system/standards as "regular" classes.

*Can concurrent students join the Honors Program?* Absolutely! But you will need to take your Honors courses at TCC. We don't currently offer Honors courses on high school campuses, because we want our Scholars to be active in our Honors community on campus at TCC and because limited resources necessitate a focus on TCC campuses. We offer some online Honors classes, but we encourage taking most Honors classes in person on a TCC campus.

*How many Honors courses should I take each semester?* As many as you can! Honors Scholars must take at least one Honors class each fall and spring semester (summer is optional) until they finish the program requirements, but you will need more than one Honors class in some semesters to complete the requirements in time for graduation. Most Honors classes are in general-education courses rather than major-specific ones, so it's important to get started with Honors classes early.

*How will my Honors work be recognized?* Honors classes are designated on your transcript (for example, HONORS American Federal Government). If you complete at least 12 credit

hours of Honors courses and meet the GPA requirements listed above, you are eligible to request an Honors Certificate. If you are an active Honors Scholar in good standing and have fulfilled all Honors Program requirements, the Honors Scholar Graduate designation will appear on your TCC transcript after graduation. You will also receive an Honors medallion to wear at commencement and be eligible for various transfer benefits.

*What kind of financial aid is available to Honors Scholars?* Most Honors Scholars in good standing are eligible for the TCC Honors Scholar State Regents Tuition Waiver, which covers tuition for up to 18 credit hours per fall or spring semester, if they are not getting another tuition waiver. High school seniors graduating in the spring and entering TCC in the fall may be eligible to apply for the Oklahoma State Regents' Academic Scholars Scholarship; the Academic Scholars Program is not part of the TCC Honors Program, but some Honors Scholars are also Academic Scholars. Additionally, the Honors Program presents monetary awards funded by the TCC Foundation each year to outstanding Honors Scholars. Most Honors Scholars qualify for transfer scholarships to four-year degree programs. For example, the University of Tulsa offers its largest transfer scholarship to TCC Honors Scholar Graduates.

*What is the difference between being an Honors Scholar, graduating as a Phi Theta Kappa member, and graduating "with honors"?* TCC gives the "with honors" designation to any student graduating with a GPA of 3.5-3.99 and the "with highest honors" designation to any student graduating with a 4.0. These designations are announced and included in the program at commencement, but not noted on the diploma or transcript; there is currently no regalia item associated with them. (TCC students can earn "honor roll" status for a particular semester, and this distinction is noted on the transcript, but the "with honors" and "with highest honors" designations are determined by the cumulative GPA and are not indicated on the transcript.) Phi Theta Kappa, an international honor society for two-year college students that offers leadership and scholarship opportunities, has a TCC chapter. Membership is by invitation (based on a GPA of 3.5 or higher for a certain number of hours) and requires a membership fee. PTK membership is announced and noted in the program at commencement, and members may wear a PTK stole.

Honors Scholars have applied and been admitted to the Honors Program on the basis of two eligibility criteria and an application including an essay and educator recommendation. Honors Scholars who complete the Honors Program requirements (21 hours of Honors classes with a GPA of 3.5 or higher and an exit essay) receive the Honors Scholar Graduate designation, which is noted on their transcript once their credentials have been verified. They may wear an Honors Medallion at commencement. Because they must have a cumulative GPA of 3.5 or higher, nearly all Honors Scholars Graduates also graduate "with honors" or "with highest honors" (but not all students graduating "with honors" or "with highest honors" are Honors Scholar Graduates). Some Honors Scholars are also PTK members.

## Communicating with Honors

- Email to [honors@tulsacc.edu](mailto:honors@tulsacc.edu) is the best way to reach us. The coordinator's email address is [allen.culpepper@tulsacc.edu](mailto:allen.culpepper@tulsacc.edu).
- The Honors website at [www.tulsacc.edu/honors](http://www.tulsacc.edu/honors) contains Honors course schedules and descriptions), contact information, the Honors application, program news, and information about benefits and requirements.
- The Honors Scholars organization page on Blackboard, open only to Honors Scholars, is loaded with opportunity announcements, resource links, the tuition waiver application, etc.
- Face-to-face or Zoom meetings with the Honors coordinator can be scheduled if needed. Email [honors@tulsacc.edu](mailto:honors@tulsacc.edu) to request a meeting.
- The Honors Program office is currently at Southeast Campus, Room 1230 (Bldg. 1, upper level). The best phone number for us right now is (918) 595.7647. Email to [honors@tulsacc.edu](mailto:honors@tulsacc.edu) is generally the better way to reach us, though.
- The former Honors Common Room (Metro Campus Room 523A) was not being used by students, so we are in the process of repurposing it as an Honors seminar room.

## The Honors Certificate

Students who complete 12 credit hours of Honors courses with a GPA of at least 3.5 are eligible for an Honors Certificate. To request a certificate, email [honors@tulsacc.edu](mailto:honors@tulsacc.edu) when you have completed the required hours. We will verify the hours and GPA and then issue the certificate. *Note:* The Honors Certificate shows educational accomplishment and makes a good resume/CV item, but it does *not* entitle you to Honors Scholar transfer scholarships, transcript designation, or other Honors Scholar benefits. To receive those, you must be admitted to the Honors Program, complete its requirements, and qualify as an Honors Scholar Graduate.

## Requirements for the Honors Scholar Graduate designation

- Be admitted to the TCC Honors Program as an Honors Scholar.
- Complete 21 credit hours of Honors courses (at least 15 should be in Honors sections of general-education classes listed in the TCC Catalog) *OR* Complete 18 credit hours of Honors courses *plus* one non-Honors course of at least 3 hours designated by TCC as "high-impact."

\*Previously, a maximum of 9 Honors hours could be earned online. That limit has been dropped, but Honors Scholars are encouraged to take as many of their Honors classes as possible face-to-face.

\*Students may apply for admission to the Honors Scholar program any time. TCC Honors classes completed before program admission will apply toward Honors

Scholar Graduate requirements. All program requirements must be met before graduation, regardless of when you enter the program.

\*A maximum of 12 Honors hours from another college or university can be transferred into the TCC Honors Program. The exact number of allowed hours may vary according to transfer institution; Honors hours transferred into the program are subject to approval by the TCC Honors coordinator.

- Submit an Honors exit essay/portfolio reflecting on/assessing the Honors experience at TCC. Criteria appear in a later section of this handbook. Submission deadlines: October 15 for fall graduates; March 1 for spring and summer graduates.
- Meet the requirements for the associate degree as stated in the TCC catalog.
- Achieve a cumulative grade-point average of at least 3.5 for all courses taken at TCC.

## High-impact course substitution option

*What is a high-impact course?* A high-impact course requires a high level of student engagement and often activity beyond the classroom. Any Honors class qualifies as high-impact. However, some non-Honors classes also qualify. At TCC, qualified classes may be designated as Service-Learning, Global Learning or Study Abroad, Undergraduate Research (Research-Intensive), or Common Book.

*Why have this option?* It is sometimes difficult to schedule 21 hours of Honors classes, and some other courses—even though they lack an Honors designation—provide a comparably intense experience, so this option lets you use one of them toward your Honors requirements. Also, most Honors courses are general-education courses, but some non-Honors high-impact courses are offered as major courses and/or at a higher level, so this option can sometimes allow you to count a major course without an Honors section.

*How will this affect my Honors hours?* A student completing this option will be able to graduate as an Honors Scholar with 18 Honors hours instead of the 21 Honors hours otherwise required. The substituted high-impact class must be worth at least 3 credit hours.

*Will I receive academic credit for this option?* Yes, you will receive the normal credit hours for taking the course. The only difference is that we will also include those hours in tracking your progress toward Honors graduation, even though the course does not have "HONORS" in the title.

*How do I find one of these classes?* In general, you can use the “Attribute” box and the pull-down menu to search for Service-Learning or Service-Learning Mastery Course, Study Abroad, Undergraduate Research (Research-Intensive), or Common Book when you browse for classes, but assistance from your advisor and Honors is recommended.

*How do I claim this option?* You must email [honors@tulsacc.edu](mailto:honors@tulsacc.edu) to notify us which course you wish to substitute so we can verify that it qualifies. You may be asked to submit a copy of the course syllabus for review, so save the syllabus when you receive it.

## Financial Aid

Check with the Financial Aid office about deadlines for specific scholarships. Always begin by completing the FAFSA, which can be done as early as Oct. 1 for the following academic year (fall/spring of the next year). Most TCC Foundation scholarships have March 1 application deadlines for scholarships awarded the following fall and spring. Graduating high school seniors seeking a TCC institutional nomination for the Academic Scholars Program (a program of the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education) also need to complete the general TCC scholarship application; the application deadline is currently in transition from summer to spring, so check the information about it carefully. The Honors Scholar Tuition Waiver works a little differently, as explained below.

## Honors Tuition Waiver

*Definition:* The TCC Honors Scholar State Regents Tuition Waiver Scholarship (“the Honors Waiver” for short) is available only to those who have been admitted to the TCC Honors Program as Honors Scholars. It waives tuition cost for up to 18 credit hours per fall and spring semester. Recipients must successfully complete at least three credit hours in fall and spring semesters and take at least one Honors course each fall and spring semester (summers are optional) until minimum Honors credit requirements have been satisfied. (Full-time students should take more than one in order to stay on track!) Honors Waiver recipients are required to attend the Honors ConBLUEcation each fall to remain eligible for the waiver.

*Eligibility:* Honors Waiver recipients must be legal residents of Oklahoma (as defined by the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education) and must maintain a cumulative TCC grade-point average of 3.5 or higher. Should the GPA fall below 3.5 but remain above 3.0, the student will no longer be an Honors Scholar in good standing, and the tuition waiver will be reduced to 12 credit hours per semester. The Honors Waiver will be revoked if the GPA falls below 3.0. (The waiver may also be revoked if the student withdraws from Honors classes. Check with Honors if you are unsure how your academic decisions may affect your Honors Waiver.) The Honors Waiver is *not* available to concurrent high school students or students

who have attempted more than 95 college credit hours. A recipient of another tuition waiver is not eligible for both awards and will receive only the larger waiver.

*Application:* Honors Scholars should complete the Honors Waiver application form on the Honors Scholars Blackboard site each spring to request a waiver for the following academic year (fall/spring). Honors emails a reminder to Scholars when the application is available (usually March). Waivers will be awarded to eligible Honors Scholars on a first-to-reply, first-served basis while funds remain available. Priority goes to those who have not yet earned a degree and are making progress toward completing Honors requirements. *The priority deadline for application is June 1.* There is also a deadline by which Honors Waiver recipients must be enrolled each semester. Those deadlines are detailed on the Honors Waiver request form each year.

*Note:* The tuition waiver does *not* include student fees, such as assessment, technology, laboratory, student center, activity fees, or parking fees. Students receiving tuition waivers will not be automatically de-enrolled for nonpayment. Should you decide not to attend TCC, you must drop your classes before the drop/add deadline. If you don't, you will remain financially responsible for your student fees, even if you have never attended class.

## Enrollment and Advising

TCC's on-time enrollment policy means students *must* enroll before classes meet for the first time, but to make sure they get the classes they need, Honors Scholars *should* enroll as soon as possible after enrollment opens, usually in October preceding a spring semester or March preceding a fall or summer semester. Also, Honors Waiver recipients have enrollment deadlines each semester. Honors Scholars are entitled to priority enrollment, meaning they may enroll for classes as soon as enrollment opens (not before), along with students who have completed 30 or more credit hours. When enrollment begins, Honors Scholars with less than 30 hours should contact their advisor, who can verify eligibility. (*Note to advisors:* Eligibility is indicated by the HONSHC code on SGASADD screen in Banner.)

The Honors Program coordinator can provide information and advice about the Honors Program, but is not an academic advisor, so, when planning your class schedule, verifying you are on track for graduation, etc., it is important to visit Academic Advising and tell your advisor you are an Honors Scholar so they can help you meet Honors Program requirements as well as degree requirements.

If you know where you will transfer, also check with advisors there each semester as you plan your schedule. They can help you make sure every class you take for your TCC degree will also count toward your bachelor's degree.

## Honors conferences

The Honors Program usually has funds for a small number of Honors Scholars and Honors faculty to attend the Great Plains Honors Council's annual conference, held in March or April in one of the eight states served by GPHC. Student funding comes from TCC Foundation grant funds, whereas faculty travel is funded by the Division of Engaged Learning. The grant funds for students typically cover registration, transportation, and lodging expenses. Priority goes to Scholars presenting a paper or poster, but others may attend if funding permits. We strongly encourage Honors Scholars to submit a paper or poster abstract for consideration. The call for submissions comes early in the spring semester, so submissions usually reflect research that Scholars have done during preceding fall semester. Presenting at a conference is a rewarding experience and looks great on a resumé. If approved to attend a conference, you will be briefed on expectations before the trip.

## Honors Advisory Panel

The Honors Advisory Panel includes faculty, staff, administrators, and one or more Honors Scholars who advise the Honors coordinator on policies and practices. All Honors students should feel free to give suggestions and relevant feedback to the Honors coordinator or the student reps. If you are interested in serving as a student representative, let us know!

## Exit Essay/Portfolio for Honors Scholar Graduates

To qualify as an Honors Scholar Graduate, you must submit an exit essay/portfolio reflecting on and assessing your Honors experience. You will not earn the Honors Scholar Graduate designation if you do not meet this requirement.

*Deadlines:* October 15 for fall graduates; March 1 for spring *and summer* graduates.

*Advice:* Don't wait until the last minute! You will need time to revise, edit, and polish your work before submitting it. We strongly suggest consultation with a Writing Center staff member before submission.

*Submission:* When your essay or portfolio is complete, submit it by email to [honors@tulsacc.edu](mailto:honors@tulsacc.edu). If you have chosen the essay option, attach your essay to the message as a MS Word document (preferred) or PDF; if you have chosen the portfolio option, include a link to your portfolio in the text of the message.

**Essay option:** Write an essay of 4-5 double-spaced pages in which you reflect on and assess your experience as an Honors Scholar at TCC. Your essay should be a careful, thoughtful reflection on your Honors experience. Include specific details and examples; edit and proofread your essay carefully to eliminate errors before submission.

The essay option might be better for you if you prefer to present the information in the form of a single continuous essay that shows your ability to construct an extended argument, and if your intended audience is the Honors staff only.

We recommend that you carefully review the Honors Program mission statement, vision statement, and learning objectives in this handbook before beginning your essay. Keeping the program's stated goal, mission, vision, and objectives in mind, you should discuss, analyze, and evaluate the following topics:

- Personal growth and development resulting from the Honors Program;
- Specific Honors classes and interaction with Honors faculty and other students;
- The Honors Program's impact on your college experience;
- Program strengths, weaknesses, and suggested improvements;
- Your contributions to the program, and its contributions to your education/growth.

Also follow these guidelines:

- Make sure your essay has a clear focus and purpose;
- Develop topics using specific supporting details;
- Show competent analysis and evaluation skills;
- Write well-developed, coherent, unified paragraphs;
- Write for an academic audience;
- Compose sentences that are effective, concise, and varied in structure;
- Choose appropriate and precise words;
- Follow the grammar, usage, punctuation, spelling, and mechanics of Standard Written English.

The essay should show proficiency in writing skills and critical thinking, original and perceptive thinking, and specific evidence to support its claims. An essay that uses the Honors Program's own claims without critical analysis, makes general claims without specific supporting details, or is just poorly written will not be accepted.

**Portfolio option:** Effective fall 2022, Honors Scholars Graduates will have the option to prepare an exit portfolio instead of the traditional essay. If you choose the portfolio option, you must still cover the topics listed for the essay option and present carefully edited work with evidence to support its claims, but you will present your work in the form of a digital portfolio. The portfolio might be the better option for you if you prefer to present the information in small, more visually appealing chunks rather than one continuous piece of writing and you want to a more portable collection of your work that's easy to share with people outside Honors and TCC, as well as with the Honors staff.

The exact format is largely up to you, but the portfolio should be a well-organized presentation that includes

- artifacts (examples of your academic work and other activities),
- annotations and reflections (commentary on your artifacts and what you gained from your experiences),
- an evaluation of the program and your participation in it,
- a narrative statement that ties all the portfolio components together.

Photographs and other items may be included in addition to the required elements listed above. Note that carefully edited writing is expected in portfolios as well as essays!

You may choose your own platform for the portfolio. (Some popular ones include WordPress, GitHub, Wix, Weebly, but there are many others.) Choose a platform that lets you upload materials easily and create an appealing design. You must be able to provide a link to the portfolio that makes it easily accessible to anyone who has the link.

**Review:** The Honors coordinator will review the essay or portfolio and accept/reject it on the basis of the guidelines above. The nature of your assessment, whether positive or negative, will *not* affect approval/rejection, so don't be afraid to provide an honest assessment. If the essay/portfolio does not meet the criteria listed, you will be asked to revise it.

## Graduation checklist for Honors Scholar Graduates

During the semester in which you plan to graduate as an Honors Scholar Graduate, you need to do several things:

\_\_\_\_\_ Complete a final graduation check and file for graduation with your advisor. Be sure to remind your advisor that you are an Honors Scholar. The deadline to file for graduation each semester is noted on the college's academic calendar.

\_\_\_\_\_ Contact the Honors Program at [honors@tulsacc.edu](mailto:honors@tulsacc.edu) near the beginning of the semester and request an Honors graduation check. If you will graduate in the summer, contact the office at the beginning of the preceding spring semester.

\_\_\_\_\_ Let the Honors Program coordinator know how you want your name to appear on your medallion and Honors Scholar certificate.

\_\_\_\_\_ Be sure your contact information in MyTCC is current so we can contact you if questions arise, keep you posted on graduation-related information, and email your certificate to you once your Honors Scholar Graduate designation has been confirmed (typically a few weeks after graduation).

\_\_\_\_\_If you are using the high-impact course substitution option (to graduate with 18 hours of Honors classes plus one approved non-Honors but high-impact course substitution), be sure the Honors Office has approved and made a record of the substitute course and that you have submitted a syllabus for verification.

\_\_\_\_\_By March 1 for spring or summer semester graduates, October 15 for fall graduates, submit your exit essay/portfolio to [honors@tulsacc.edu](mailto:honors@tulsacc.edu) for review by the Honors coordinator. *This is a firm deadline* to allow time for us to review your essay and you to make any revisions required for approval.

\_\_\_\_\_Check your transcript to be sure you have completed at least 21 Honors hours (18 hours if you have completed the high-impact option) and have a TCC GPA of 3.5 or higher.

## Transfer

TCC Honors Scholars transfer into honors programs/colleges at many four-year colleges and universities, including Oklahoma State University, the University of Tulsa, Northeastern State University, the University of Oklahoma, and Oral Roberts University. The University of Tulsa offers an Honors transfer scholarship to TCC's Honors Scholar Graduates (and may accept transfer students into the TU honors program *if seats are available*; there is an application process). The TCC Honors Program and the OSU (Stillwater) Honors College signed an updated transfer agreement in April 2022 that allows TCC Honors Scholar Graduates to transfer up to 15 Honors hours to OSU (Stillwater). OSU-Tulsa recently launched its own honors program, with a proposed agreement to allow transfer of 9 Honors hours. We have a longstanding transfer agreement with ORU. Southeastern Oklahoma State University offers TCC Honors Scholar Graduates admission and scholarships to the SOSU Honors Program. OU welcomes our Honors graduates and we have initiated contact with them about a possible transfer agreement.

A pending transfer agreement with Missouri Southern State University would allow TCC Honors Scholars to count certain specific TCC courses toward the MSSU Honors requirements. NSU welcomes our graduates, but you should consult their honors program director about specific options available to you. We have also had preliminary discussions with Missouri Southern State University about a possible transfer agreement. To learn more about transferring into any of these honors programs, check the transfer institution's website for links to its honors program or honors college. Also, see the appendices of this handbook for our agreements with OSU and ORU.) Many other universities, both in Oklahoma and out of state, report that they are more likely to offer admission to transfer students who have achieved the Honors Scholar Graduate designation. Transfer admission and scholarship deadlines vary, so be sure to check with all the transfer institutions you are considering; some may have deadlines as early as January or February for the following fall semester.

*What you should know about the transfer process:*

- If you already know where you will transfer, check with the transfer university regularly to make sure you are taking courses that will count toward your bachelor's degree. Keep syllabi from all your classes in case the transfer school needs them to evaluate transfer credits.
- If you earn an associate degree at TCC and then transfer to a public university in Oklahoma, the associate degree will be accepted as fulfillment of your general-education requirements. (If you do not earn a TCC degree, the transfer institution may require you to retake some credits.) If you choose a private and/or out-of-state university, their policies may be different, so be sure to ask them!
- Consider applying to multiple universities, even if you think you know for sure where you want to go. Explore all your options, and consider applying to at least one university that seems like a stretch! Visit the universities you're considering if you can. The Jack Kent Cooke Foundation website offers excellent advice on applying to selective schools. (<http://www.jkcf.org/scholarship-programs/undergraduate-transfer/the-transfer-process/>)
- Some universities have separate applications for transfer (as opposed to freshman) admission and scholarships, so be sure to complete the correct forms.
- If you are transferring to TU, make sure your transfer admissions representative and the TU financial aid office know you are a TCC Honors Scholar. This is essential for receiving TU's Honors Scholar Transfer Scholarship. Details are given in an appendix to this handbook.
- Whichever transfer institution you choose, be sure to mention that you are an Honors Scholar in your earliest dealings with them. And be sure to contact the university's Honors College or honors program directly at the same time you are applying for admission and scholarships, especially if you are transferring to OSU or NSU.
- Get started on the transfer process early—and register for classes as early as you can so that you don't miss out on a class you need! Some transfer institutions have application deadlines in February, for example, and close fall enrollment in May.
- Applications for some transfer scholarships are part of TCC's online general scholarship application, so be sure to check that application to see whether one of the scholarships might be a good fit for you. The Bovaird Foundation scholarship (for TCC students transferring to TU) is one example.
- Some scholarships and other opportunities may be available only at certain times of year (fall semester only, for example), so December graduation might or might not be advantageous. Be sure to ask your transfer institution if it matters when you enter. If are applying for the Jack Kent Cooke Undergraduate Transfer Scholarship (you should if you have high GPA, documentable financial need, and a record of service to the college, community, etc.), note that recipients must participate in a summer orientation and begin university studies in the fall.
- Don't assume that all schools operate the same way as TCC; in fact, assume that they don't! Be sure to read your next institution's catalog so that you understand procedures, requirements, and deadlines, and don't be afraid to ask lots of questions!

## Appendix 1: TCC Travel Policies

When members of the Honors Program (students and/or faculty) travel to meetings or activities, the following TCC and State of Oklahoma policies must be followed.

1. The Dean of Engaged Learning must approve any travel plans. The Honors coordinator decides if the Honors Program will be represented at a meeting or conference and who should act as representatives on these occasions. The Honors coordinator requests permission from the Dean of Engaged Learning for travel expenditures from the Engaged Learning account.
  1. Before the coordinator can endorse the requested travel, the Honors student or faculty member must submit the appropriate application materials. Instructions will be provided when the materials are needed.
  2. Once travel has been approved, the Honors Program will follow college and state financial procedures. It should be emphasized that until the application materials have been approved, authority to travel has been granted by the dean and provost, *and* signed waivers have been turned in to the Honors Office, no travel has been approved.
2. Students are acting as representatives of the Honors Program, and college and state policies must be observed. Representatives should remember that they are acting in an official capacity and not independently.

Students are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that will reflect favorably on the Honors Program and the college. Statements, positions, or agreements made in meetings should not be presented as reflecting the position of the whole Honors Program in the form of a formal vote of endorsement. While away from campus on Honors Program business, students must follow the regulations outlined in TCC's Student Handbook:

<https://www.tulsacc.edu/student-resources/student-handbook>.

3. Appropriate procedures must be followed:

1. Registration forms and answers to questions about registration preferences must be submitted in a timely fashion. The Honors Office will have further instructions regarding conference expenses and receipts.
2. All students who are participating must sign an Honors Travel Waiver and return it to the Honors Office promptly.
3. If college funds are used to finance the trip, a completed Request for Authority to Travel on TCC Business form must be signed by the student when the Honors Office requests it. The Honors Office will submit the form to the proper college officials for approval. Permission to travel is not granted until all approvals have been obtained.

Airline tickets may be purchased by the student if the student is paying for them. If the Honors Program is paying for airline tickets, the tickets must be obtained by the College.

4. Representatives will want to report to other Honors students on ideas and issues that were presented in the meeting or conference that they attended.

*Required reflection:* Each conference participant whose travel was funded by the Honors Program should be expected to provide a brief written reflection on the experience to the Honors Program as soon as practical after the event. The reflection should also include a statement of gratitude for the funding.

#### HONORS TRAVEL WAIVER

(This is just an example; the actual form may include revisions appropriate to current circumstances)

Name \_\_\_\_\_ .

I, the undersigned, a student of Tulsa Community College (or a faculty/staff member or guest) being over eighteen (18) years of age, acknowledge that I have signed up for travel to \_\_\_\_\_.

I recognize that this activity is voluntary on my part and for it I will receive no compensation either directly or indirectly from Tulsa Community College. I therefore assume all risk incident to the above activity, including travel to or from such place of activity, and acknowledge that Tulsa Community College, its Board of Regents, its employees, and the State of Oklahoma assume no liability, including financial responsibility for injuries or other loss resulting from or occurring during the activity or from such activity.

The undersigned further indemnifies, releases, and holds harmless Tulsa Community College, its Board of Regents, its employees, and the State of Oklahoma against any losses or injuries resulting or claimed to result from the undersigned student/faculty/staff member's training, participation, attendance, travel, or other involvement in any and all phases of such activity.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, student travelers must follow CDC recommendations for social-distancing, screening to include temperature checks, and approved facial coverings for all participants.

The undersigned further acknowledges that his/her signature hereto evidences that he/she has read, fully understands, agrees with and consents to the contents thereof.

## Appendix 2: Honors transfer and articulation agreement between OSU (Stillwater) & TCC, updated April 2022

### Honors Transfer and Articulation Agreement Oklahoma State University (Stillwater) and Tulsa Community College

**Purpose:** This agreement is to facilitate the transfer of students between the Tulsa Community College (TCC) Honors Program and the Oklahoma State University (OSU) Honors College.

#### **Agreement:**

- TCC Honors students whose grade point averages qualify them for the OSU Honors College may use up to 15 transfer honors credit hours toward the 18 honors hours required for the OSU "General Honors Award," but they still must meet the breadth and honors seminar/interdisciplinary course requirements for that award. [OSU Honors College Policies and Procedures, Sections 3-2-1, 3-3-1, 3-3-6.]
- TCC Honors students whose grade point averages qualify them for the OSU Honors College may use up to three additional transfer honors credit hours toward the total of 36 hours required for the "Honors College Degree," but they still must meet all remaining requirements for the degree. [OSU Honors College Policies and Procedures, Sections 3-2-1, 3-3-6.]
- TCC Honors students must earn an A or B in any TCC honors class for it to be used to meet OSU Honors College requirements. [OSU Honors College Policies and Procedures, Section 3-3-1.]
- OSU Honors College students whose grade point averages qualify them for the TCC Honors Program may use 12 transfer honors hours from OSU toward TCC Honors Scholar graduation requirements (21 honors credit hours OR 18 honors credit hours plus a designated high-impact class (service-learning, global learning, undergraduate research, common book) of 3 or more credit hours.
- OSU Honors College students must earn an A or B in any OSU honors class for it to be used to meet TCC Honors Program requirements.
- Both institutions intend to remain active members of the Great Plains Honors Council and the National Collegiate Honors Council.

**Notice of Change or Cancellation:** Either institution may change or cancel this agreement by notifying the other no less than one academic year before the intended date of change or cancellation.

## Appendix 3: Honors transfer and articulation agreement between ORU & TCC

### Honors Transfer and Articulation Agreement Oral Roberts University and Tulsa Community College

**Purpose:** This agreement is to facilitate the transfer of students between the Tulsa Community College (TCC) Honors Program and Oral Roberts University (ORU) Honors Program. Transfer students may be given full credit for their Honors hours earned when the credit is appropriate to the student's degree program and the receiving institution has validated the courses, with the following additional provisions:

#### **Agreement:**

- TCC Honors Scholars with a cumulative grade point average of 3.5 or higher qualify for the ORU Honors Program and may use up to 12 transfer Honors credit hours toward the 21 Honors hours required for graduating as a transfer Scholar.
- TCC Honors Scholars must earn an A or B in any TCC Honors class for it to be used to meet ORU Honors Program requirements.
- TCC students who meet the ORU Honors Program requirements (minimum 29 ACT or 1280 SAT and minimum overall GPA of 3.5 from TCC) may apply for the Honors Program Scholar's Scholarship. The deadline is March 1.
- ORU Honors Program students transferring to TCC's Honors Program may use 12 transfer Honors hours from ORU toward TCC Honors Scholar graduation requirements.
- Both institutions intend to remain active members of the Great Plains Honors Council and the National Collegiate Honors Council.

**Notice of change or cancellation:** Either institution may change or cancel this agreement by notifying the other no less than one academic year before the intended date of change or cancellation.

## Appendix 4: University of Tulsa transfer scholarships for TCC Honors Scholar graduates

*Who is eligible?* TCC Honors Scholars transferring to the University of Tulsa as full-time students. (Students who already hold bachelor's degrees, international students, and former TU students are *ineligible*.)

### *How much are the scholarships worth?*

- Transfer Honors Scholarship: \$24,000. Awarded to new transfer students who were members of Phi Theta Kappa at two-year schools. Must have a cumulative 3.5 GPA and at least 48 hours of transferable credit or participate in the Tulsa Community College Honors Program. Students receiving this award are not eligible for the Transfer Hurricane Scholarship.
- Transfer Hurricane Scholarship: variable amounts. Awarded to new transfer students, based on exceptional performance in previous college coursework. Students receiving this award are not eligible for the Transfer Honors Scholarship.
- TCC Honors Award: \$2,000. Awarded to new transfer students who earn an associate degree from Tulsa Community College as an Honors Scholar with a cumulative 3.5 GPA. Students receiving this award may also receive the Transfer Hurricane Scholarship or the Transfer Honors Scholarship.

### *How do I apply?*

- Apply for admission and gain acceptance to The University of Tulsa for the term following your TCC graduation.
- Notify TU's Office of Admission that you are a TCC Honors Scholar.  
How can I renew the scholarship?
- Continue full-time enrollment at TU. (The scholarship is forfeited upon withdrawal or dismissal.)
- Maintain a cumulative 3.0 grade point average at TU.

### *Can I receive other scholarships?*

Need-based grants, loans, and work-study may supplement the scholarship if sufficient financial need is demonstrated on the FAFSA.

**Note:** Scholarships to TCC Honors Scholar Graduates may be awarded provisionally by The University of Tulsa, pending receipt of the final verification and degree transcript from Tulsa Community College.

# Information for Honors Faculty

An addendum to the TCC Honors Program's *Handbook for Honors Scholars*  
Last updated summer 2022

## Message from the Honors Coordinator

Whether you are a veteran Honors professor or new to the program, thanks for being part of Honors at TCC! The *Handbook for Honors Scholars* covers much of what you need to know, but this addendum deals with a few other items useful for faculty.

## Honors Program background

Our program started in 1985. Honors programs at two-year colleges, common now, were rare then. Some people stereotype honors programs as elitist and honors students as privileged prep-school grads, but TCC Honors Scholars—and other students taking Honors classes—are quite diverse in educational background, socioeconomic status, age, ethnicity, etc. Pre-pandemic, we typically had 85-100 Honors Scholars and around 450 students enrolled in Honors classes. Post-pandemic, we were down a bit (65-70 Scholars, around 325 students in Honors classes), but we set a goal of 100 Scholars and 500 students enrolled in Honors classes for AY 2022-23. We are back to approximately 500 students enrolled in Honors classes, but with approximately 50 active Honors Scholars. We typically offer 30-35 Honors sections in fall and spring and 2-3 in the summer; most are in general-education courses. Honors Scholars must meet eligibility requirements for admission, but we have a flexible criteria list, and we consider the application essay and educator recommendation as we evaluate each application and aim to admit students who are not just smart, but also highly motivated, and genuinely interested in being active participants in a community of scholars.

## Characteristics of the program

As an active member of the National Collegiate Honors Council (NCHC) and its regional affiliate the Great Plains Honors Council (GPHC), we do our best to comply with the NCHC definition of honors education and its newly published document on “Shared Principles and Practices” (which replaces an earlier best-practices document that had become dated).

The tenets of our program are straightforward:

- We offer designated Honors sections of TCC courses, not contracts or add-ons to “regular” classes (although we are considering some limited contract options).
- We keep classes small, with a 20-student cap, to facilitate professor-student and student-student interaction.
- We encourage hands-on learning and high-impact practices (which were Honors practices long before the “high-impact” term was coined) because we believe our Honors Scholars benefit most from their classes when they interact with fellow Scholars and outstanding faculty. Undergraduate research, field trips, interactive lectures, collaborative learning, service-learning, etc., are good examples.
- We don't give Honors students extra work. The focus is on quality, not quantity.

- We don't apply more rigorous grading standards to Honors students. The choice to take Honors sections should not result in lower grades than the student would receive in non-Honors sections. (This does *not* mean you shouldn't maintain high standards, only that you shouldn't grade Honors students more harshly—TCC doesn't use a weighted grading system, so an Honors section doesn't have more GPA value than a non-Honors section.)
- We emphasize—even more than the college as a whole does—critical thinking and communication skills.

## Learning outcomes and syllabus statement

The program's mission statement, vision statement, and learning outcomes are in the *Handbook for Honors Scholars*.

We ask Honors faculty to include the following statement on the syllabus for their Honors sections:

Congratulations on choosing an Honors class! Honors sections at TCC are limited to 20 students, stress student-faculty and student-student interaction, emphasize communication skills, promote a high level of student engagement, and encourage creative and innovative approaches to learning. They do not require more work or employ harsher grading, but they do aim for deeper student engagement with the subject matter. In an Honors class, you will be expected to attend regularly, participate actively, work cooperatively with classmates, complete assignments to the best of your ability, and commit yourself fully to intellectual development. You do not have to be admitted to the Honors Program to take an Honors class, but successful completion of two Honors classes counts as one of two eligibility requirements for admission to the program. A complete list of eligibility requirements and benefits, as well as an online application, can be found here ([www.tulsacc.edu/honors](http://www.tulsacc.edu/honors)).

## Honors students and Honors Scholars

Within the Honors Program, "Honors student" is the general term for any student taking an Honors class; "Honors Scholar" is the more specific term for students who have been admitted to the Honors Program and are working to complete the program requirements and become Honors Scholar Graduates. Confusingly at TCC, "honors student" may also refer to a student listed on one of the college's honors rolls for a particular semester, a student graduating "with honors" (cumulative GPA of 3.5-3.99) or "with highest honors" (cumulative GPA of 4.0), or a member of the Phi Theta Kappa honor society. In addition, the invitations sent out by the National Society of Leadership and Success (which is really a leadership organization and not strictly speaking an honor society) say "honor society invitation" on the envelope, so students receiving those sometimes mistakenly think they are "honors students." At commencement, Honors Scholar Graduates are entitled to wear a pewter Honors medallion provided by the Honors Program; PTK members are entitled to wear a PTK stole (which they purchase through the organization); Student Government Association members are entitled to wear SGA cords. Other groups may have their own regalia items, but Honors medallions, PTK stoles, and SGA cords are the items officially recognized by the

college. Students graduating “with honors” and “with highest honors” are announced at commencement and noted in the program, but there is currently no associated regalia item.

Honors Scholars have met the admission criteria explained in the *Handbook for Honors Scholars*, have written application essays, and have been recommended by an educator. They are aiming to complete 21 hours of Honors classes (or 18 hours of Honors classes plus one designated high-impact class of at least 3 hours). Students interested in becoming Honors Scholars can find the online application at [www.tulsacc.edu/honors](http://www.tulsacc.edu/honors).

But *any* TCC student may enroll in Honors sections (a GPA of 3.0 is suggested, but not required), so you will also have students in your classes who are not Honors Scholars. While some students excel academically before they enroll in Honors classes, some excel because they take Honors classes. Students with spotty academic records often perform very well in Honors classes, get hooked on Honors, and eventually become Honors Scholars. (Earning A’s or B’s in two Honors classes can be used as one of the two criteria needed to apply; this allows students who are capable but lacking confidence to sample Honors classes before committing to the program.)

Students who complete 12 hours of Honors classes with a 3.5 GPA—whether admitted to the Honors Program or not—are eligible for an Honors certificate documenting their achievement. All they have to do is email [honors@tulsacc.edu](mailto:honors@tulsacc.edu) to indicate they have completed the requirements and would like to request a certificate. The certificate documents academic accomplishment and makes a nice CV or resume item, but it does not entitle the recipient to specific financial or transfer benefits; those are reserved for Honors Scholar Graduates.

Please remember that the students in your class, though Honors students and often Honors Scholars, are still first-year and second-year students and not necessarily majors in your discipline. You will have some brilliant students; you will have some students who are diligent and engaged but less brilliant; you will have some who are just ordinary students but like Honors classes because they are smaller and more interactive. We love getting really smart, super-prepared students, but we have found high motivation is an even bigger determinant of success in Honors.

## Referring/recommending students

If you have students in your class you think would be strong candidates for the Honors Program, you can easily refer them to us using the Starfish app. Here’s how:

- Log into MyTCC and open Starfish.
- From the list of your students, choose “select student”, check the box by the student’s name (you will see the text of the message going to students; you can personalize it if you wish, but you don’t have to) and then click save. (You can select multiple students at once if needed.)

We will receive a copy of the referral and follow-up with our own email to the student. If the student decides to apply to the program, your Starfish referral will serve as the required recommendation for the student; there’s no need to write a separate recommendation letter.

If, however, you are asked for a recommendation by a student not currently enrolled in one of your classes, you will not be able to access the referral system for that student and will need

to write a recommendation, which you can email to [honors@tulsacc.edu](mailto:honors@tulsacc.edu), with the subject line "Recommendation for [student's name]."

## Qualifications and training for teaching in Honors

Honors classes are taught by enthusiastic and engaged faculty members committed to the concept of honors education advocated by the National Collegiate Honors Council Definition of Honors Education, available at <https://www.nchchonors.org/directors-faculty/definition-of-honors-education>, and to the NCHC's principles of course design, available at <https://nchc.site-ym.com/page/coursedesign>.

You don't need any special qualifications beyond those required for teaching in your discipline, but if you are teaching in Honors for the first time, you will need to complete the Honors Program Faculty Training, which will be available in Percipio starting fall 2022. The training takes about 1.5-2 hours to complete. Preference is given to full-time faculty, but part-time faculty may teach an Honors course if a full-time faculty member is not requesting it

## Proposing an Honors course or section

Faculty wishing to teach an Honors course not currently offered should discuss their idea with the Honors coordinator and then complete a course proposal form and submit it to the Honors coordinator at [honors@tulsacc.edu](mailto:honors@tulsacc.edu), with a copy to your department chair/program director. The form asks for a description of the course, a brief rationale for offering it, and an indication that the department chair/program director has been consulted. Faculty members who have not taught Honors before will also need to complete the training for Honors faculty on Percipio.

Faculty who wish to teach a section of a currently offered Honors course and have not taught that Honors class before should also complete and submit the proposal form. (They will need to complete the training course only if they have not taught Honors at all before, not if they have taught in the Honors Program before, just not this specific class.)

The form can be obtained from [honors@tulsacc.edu](mailto:honors@tulsacc.edu) and looks like this:

### Proposal to Teach an Honors Class

Faculty member making request:

Desired location (which campus):

\*Date of request:

\*Semester course would be taught:

(\*Deadlines: Proposals to teach a spring course are due by the Friday after Labor Day in September. Proposals to teach a fall course are due by the Friday after Groundhog Day in February. Changes in the TCC schedule process are likely to result in earlier deadlines in the future.)

Course number and title:

Briefly explain why you want to teach an Honors section and which students are likely to benefit from it:

Briefly describe your vision for the course (content, methods, etc.):

The TCC Honors Program adheres to the National Collegiate Honors Council statement that honors education “provides opportunities for measurably broader, deeper, and more complex learning-centered and learner-directed experiences for its students than are available elsewhere in the institution.” High levels of faculty-student and student-student interaction and a high degree of student engagement are expected. Means of achieving such engagement might include research and creative scholarship, interdisciplinary learning, service learning and leadership, and participation in learning communities. What methods and strategies appropriate to your discipline would you employ in your class to facilitate this high level of student engagement?

Have you taught an Honors class before? Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_

Are you familiar with the TCC Honors Program’s policies regarding class size, quality rather than quantity of work, fair grading, and emphasis on communication skills?  
Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_

Have you consulted your department chair or program director about the appropriateness of offering an Honors section of this course and about the likelihood that there will be student demand for it?  
Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_

*Deadlines:* Proposals to teach a spring course are due by the Friday after Labor Day. Proposals to teach a fall course are due by the Friday after Groundhog Day. (We can be somewhat flexible about these deadlines when circumstances within a department change on short notice and adjustments are needed, but the deadlines are designed to allow plenty of time for faculty to complete the paperwork, complete the training if needed, request the course, and prepare for it in advance so that our students get the best honors experience.)

*Evaluation criteria for proposals:*

- Probable demand for the course and section
- Adherence to the National Collegiate Honors Council statement that honors education “provides opportunities for measurably broader, deeper, and more complex learning-centered and learner-directed experiences for its students than are available elsewhere in the institution”
- A clear vision of how the course will achieve a high level of student engagement and student interaction with the professor and fellow students
- Compatibility of the proposed course or section with the Honors schedule as a whole

## Scheduling an Honors section

Faculty wishing to teach an Honors section in a specific semester work within the scheduling processes used by their respective schools after signaling their request to both the Honors coordinator and the faculty chair. (Note that the scheduling process takes place in the semester prior to the one in which the course will be taught.)

A member of the Honors faculty may continue to teach an approved course regularly for as long as it is needed, provided that other faculty members are not requesting the same course. If multiple faculty members are requesting the same course, the Honors coordinator will work with the faculty department chair/program director to craft an equitable rotation.

## Policies governing Honors sections

- *No mixed Honors/non-Honors classes.* Some students enrolled in Honors sections will be Honors Scholars; others will not. But the class experience should be the same for all enrolled students. All the students are in an Honors section. It is *not acceptable* to have different assignments, practices, or standards for the two groups.
- *Designated Honors sections, not Honors contracts.* Honors-by-contract, a practice used by some programs, places students earning Honors credit and students not earning Honors credit in the same classroom, and the students seeking Honors credit *contract with the professor to do extra work.* For many years, the TCC Honors Program has *prohibited* this practice, as decided by a vote of the entire Honors faculty. The thinking on the issue has changed somewhat in recent times, however, and the Honors Advisory Panel has given its consent for the Honors coordinator to explore limited use of contracts in specific situations (for example, an Honors Scholar in their final semester taking a class in the major for which there is no Honors section).

Even if limited use of contracts is allowed, designated Honors sections remain the primary means of earning Honors credit at TCC.

- *Maximum of 20 students.* The 20-student cap is an essential characteristic of an Honors class at TCC. Small classes that facilitate a high level of student-student and student-professor interaction are probably our program's biggest selling point, and we guard it vigilantly.
- *Modality conducive to a high level of engagement.* Many believe that face-to-face interaction is essential, or nearly essential, to the Honors experience, with fully face-to-face classes or blended classes including a significant face-to-face component as the preferred mode. Others feel that the quality of the Honors experience depends on factors other than modality, and that fully online classes can work equally well for Honors if well designed and well taught. Previously, the Honors Program limited Honors Scholars to 9 Honors hours earned online. Enforcement was suspended during the height of the Covid-19 pandemic for obvious reasons, and the policy has now been eliminated, effective fall 2022. Honors Scholars are still encouraged, however, to take fully or partly face-to-face Honors classes when possible, and the faculty preference for those types of classes makes it unlikely that Scholars would be able to take all their Honors classes online. Because we are unable to offer a full slate of Honors classes on all four TCC campuses (not to mention all the remote locations where TCC classes are taught), and because students are sometimes unable to take face-to-face classes for other reasons, concerns about equity and accessibility necessitate offering some online options. The current Honors Program position is that any modality can be used for Honors classes, provided that the class is conducive to the high level of student engagement expected in Honors education.

## Some scheduling concerns

Most Honors sections are at Southeast and Metro campus, because that's where we have the most students, but Honors classes can be taught on any campus, and we are eager to offer Honors sections anywhere we can fill them. But we have to be careful not to schedule sections we can't fill, because cancellations inconvenience both students and faculty.

Scheduling the required 21 Honors hours can be difficult for some Honors Scholars, particularly if they don't start taking Honors classes early on. The tightly structured program maps that came with guided pathways, more restrictive federal financial aid rules, and the fact that many students take several general-education courses in high school before arriving at TCC have all made it harder for Scholars to meet their Honors requirements in time for graduation. (That's why we added the high-impact substitution option, lowered the required number of Honors hours from 24 to 21 and lowered the requirement for the Honors Certificate from 15 hours to 12.)

In the past, Honors Scholars could—and wanted to—take Honors classes that allowed for exploration beyond their major and general-education requirements, but Scholars these days are more cautious and have more restricted options, so it has become much harder to fill sections of courses that aren't specifically mentioned on degree maps.