

Departmental Honors Program Council

Meeting: Wednesday, February 5, 2025

5:00 p.m., via Zoom

**** MINUTES ****

Honors directors present: Matt Estep (Biology), Nicholas Shaw (Chemistry), Cele Burt (Walker College of Business), Jennifer Gray (Communication), Stefan Frisch (Communication Sciences and Disorders), Mark Hills (Computer Science), Jennifer Kurtz (Exercise Science), Maggie Sugg (Geography and Planning), Cole Edwards (Geological and Environmental Sciences), Jessica Martell (GWSS/Global Studies/IDS), Michael Behrent (History), Eric Marland (Mathematical Sciences), Randall Reed (Philosophy and Religion), James Sherman (Physics and Astronomy), Emily Dakin (Social Work), Matthew Wright (Sociology), Rita Joyner (Sustainable Technology and the Built Environment), Paulette Marty (Theatre).

Honors College staff present: Vicky Klima, Heather Waldroup

- I. Welcome and Introductions
- II. Approval of minutes from November 13, 2024 (Eric, Matt E., 2nd)
- III. Upcoming reminders (Heather will send emails):
 - a. Let Heather and Vicky know about Fall honors course offerings in your department
 - b. Medals for departmental honors graduates – Heather will send out an email request next month
 - c. Be sure to inform the registrar of any graduates 5-6 weeks prior to graduation (this is so it will be printed on their name card)
- IV. Discussion:
 1. Students should only enroll in 3 credits **total** of thesis work. This can be spread over 2 semesters. Reasons:
 - a. 3 credits signals to the Registrar that the thesis is complete
 - b. A 6-credit thesis is a Master's thesis; we want to maintain equity in our expectations of undergraduates
 - c. If students wish to work over 2 semesters but enroll in all 3 thesis credits their final semester, they could enroll in 1-3 credits of an independent study, research assistantship, etc.
 - d. **Financial aid will not cover the additional 3 credits of thesis: this is significant for students on Federal aid**

2. The challenges of doing dual departmental honors:
 - a. Requirements vary widely across campus – ie, a Spanish thesis requires writing in Spanish.
 - b. Trickiness of developing a project that fully speaks to both disciplines (can be easier in some disciplines than others)
 - c. Requires a 6-credit thesis, which can be difficult for undergraduates to complete
 - d. Students also need to complete honors coursework in both disciplines (which mostly means 4 honors courses) = students may come to departmental honors later in their time at Appalachian
 - e. Where the thesis 'counts' (such as capstone, a major elective, etc.) varies widely across campus
 - f. If the student does wish to pursue, the co-directors should be in touch early and often to coordinate
 - g. Honors College staff are here to support faculty and answer questions.
- V. Adjournment: the meeting adjourned at 5:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted for review this 11 February, 2025, by Heather Waldroup.

NEXT MEETING: The next meeting will be 5 March, 2025, at 5:00 p.m. via Zoom.