

UNIVERSITY AND DEPARTMENTAL HONORS PROGRAM

The mission of the Niagara University Honors Program is to create and support a scholarly community of students who, in addition to earning high grades, possess the following unique characteristics:

- Have a passion for learning across a breadth of disciplines.
- Enjoy the interchange of ideas and thoughts.
- Are willing to take intellectual risks to satisfy their intellectual curiosity.
- In addition to their broad interests, are motivated to undertake significant original research at their own initiative in their chosen major field of study.

The Honors Program provides curricular support to these students by offering smaller, "honors student only" sections of general education classes in which alternative pedagogies and close interaction between professors and students are encouraged. An honors-enhanced course in one's major provides extra knowledge and experience helpful for preparing the student to carry out an ambitious research program. Finally, by means of a year-long honors thesis, the NU Honors Program participant conducts original research at his or her own initiative while working one-on-one with a member of NU's faculty. At the end of this process, NU Honors Program participants will have not only added to the sum total of humanity's knowledge, but will have distinguished themselves from their peers across the nation by having produced significant, original research projects that are similar to those done in graduate school.

In addition to the honors curriculum, a robust extra-curricular calendar of events enables NU Honors Program participants not only to enjoy intellectually stimulating company but also to satisfy their thirst for knowledge about topics they might otherwise not encounter in the classroom. In the end, NU Honors Program participants graduate with the desire and tools to be lifelong learners with many interests while being fully equipped to excel in their own particular specialties.

The provost and university honors director invite students who have been awarded the Trustees' or President's Scholarship to apply to the university honors program.

Those transferring into NU as sophomores and rising NU sophomores with fewer than 48 credit hours and a 3.5 grade point average (on a 4.0 scale) will be invited to apply. (The invitations to apply are typically mailed out in the summer months.)

Please note that an invitation to apply is not a guarantee of acceptance into the program. Acceptance is restricted to those applicants who demonstrate the qualities consistent with the above-stated mission of the honors program. Students accepted into the university honors program receive special recognition for their academic achievements, including an honors certificate at graduation from the university president, honors notation on the student's transcript, and commencement recognition.

The honors program also sponsors several extra-curricular activities aimed at satisfying the intellectual thirst of honors students (e.g. lectures, book club, mixers, etc.). *Members of the university honors*

program will be expected to participate in at least some of these extra-curricular activities! Please refer to the website for current activities and participation requirements.

University honors students entering as first-year students are required to take an honors section of either REL 101 The Search for God or REL 103 Introduction to Christianity. They must take the honors section of PHI 105 Reason & Responsibility

In addition they must also take two more general education courses (for a total of four general education honors courses) and an honors-enhanced course in one's major. Those admitted to the program as sophomores must take at least two honors sections of general education courses and an honors enhanced course in one's major. The presentation, delivery and scope of content of these honors sections are tailored to the specific needs and talents of honors students. (More information can be found on our website.)

In addition, all university honors students take a six-credit, two-semester honors thesis course in their fourth year. Under the direction of a professor in their major department, students engage in substantive research of an approved topic of interest to the student and the professor. The honors thesis provides a unique experience to students in the honors program since it allows them to work one-on-one with a professor for an entire year. At the end of this thesis course, the NU honors student will have written a thesis that, in many cases, resembles those done at the graduate level. This unique experience is not generally available to many college undergraduates and may help the honors student distinguish himself or herself when applying to jobs or graduate school.

Students who have not participated in the university honors program and who qualify (3.5 GPA in one's major) may be invited to participate in the departmental honors program at the close of their third year of studies. The invitation to participate will be sent from the student's departmental chair. The departmental honors program requires the six-credit, two-semester thesis course in the fourth year. Students who successfully complete this program will receive with their diploma a departmental honors certificate and commencement recognition.

Both university and departmental honors students embody the dedication to academic excellence and service that reflects well on their future graduate and professional studies. For more complete and further information, please consult the website or contact the program at 716.286.8202.