

FIVE TOWNS COLLEGE

HONORS PROGRAM

The Honors Program at Five Towns College is designed to provide enhanced challenges to students with the intellectual curiosity and ability to engage in more rigorous academic work. Students who complete the academic challenges receive the designation “With Honors” on their diploma and final transcript. They also receive an Honor’s Cord to adorn their academic garb at the annual commencement ceremony.

Membership in the Honor’s Program is by application only. New freshman and transfer students are notified of their eligibility to apply for membership by the Admission’s Office following a review of high school and college transcripts. Decisions are made by the College Provost. Continuing students who are not already in the Honor’s Program, may apply for membership prior to their fifth semester of full-time study when they have achieved a cumulative GPA of 3.5 or higher. Challenge requirements for transfer and continuing students may be modified so as to align with their remaining degree program.

Honors program students are required to complete the following three criteria:

- **Cumulative Grade Point Average**

Honors Program students are required to maintain a cumulative grade point average of 3.5 or higher. Program students who fall below the 3.5 threshold will receive an academic warning after their first semester below the threshold. If the GPA remains below 3.5 for two consecutive semesters they will be released from the Honors Program. Unless a waiver is granted by the College Provost, honors students must fulfill the College’s Finish-in-Four requirements by graduating on-time. In rare cases, the cumulative Grade Point Average may be waived or altered when exceptional talent, skill, and/or commitment is documented and demonstrated.

- **Challenge Requirements**

Honors Program students are required to complete at least one challenge requirement each academic year, although more than one challenge in any year is permitted. Challenge requirements vary from semester to semester, but include those listed below. Certain challenges may only be applied towards the Honor’s Program once. These are designated “1”.

Honors First-Year Seminar (1) – during the first year of matriculation, students are invited to register for specific courses open only to honor’s program students. These courses vary from year-to-year. First-Year Seminar courses emphasize critical thinking within the context of exploration of diverse perspectives around a common subject, theme, or issue within a discipline. Seminar classes incorporate significant experiential learning opportunities as well. Class size is capped at 12 students, to ensure that students have the opportunity to work closely with faculty mentors, peers, and other students. Students must earn a course grade of B or higher for this attempt to qualify as a successful challenge.

Special Academic Achievement – current students with an exemplary academic accomplishment may request that the achievement be approved as an Honors Challenge. The accomplishment must involve external review by a recognized organization. Examples include publishing a paper, article, or creative work; presenting at a national or regional conference; a featured performance at a legitimate venue; winning an academic or performance based award, and others.

Traditional Challenge – Pursued within the context of a regular course offering, honor’s program students may enter into a traditional challenge agreement with the assigned faculty member to engage in additional work above and beyond the requirements listed in the course syllabus. Examples include an extra research papers of approximately 10 pages in length, an additional special project, focused research, class presentation, or other student-centered work. Traditional challenges generally do not count towards the regular class requirements, but must be completed before the end of the term in which is it begun. Students must earn a course grade of B or higher for a Traditional Challenge to qualify.

Research Challenge – Pursued independently with a faculty member from any division. Research Challenges are not connected to any particular course and so are not time sensitives like Traditional Challenges. Challenges of this nature must include a research paper, but may center on specific research, a special project, community service, internship or other learning experience that does not earn college credit. Submitted materials represent the equivalent of a B or higher in terms of the overall assessment of student learning and competency.

Creative Challenge – Similar to a Research Challenge, Creative Challenges are pursued independently with a faculty member from any division. Creative Challenges are not connected to any particular course and so are not time sensitive like Traditional Challenges. Creative Challenges typically center on a specific production, performance or other creative endeavor. Examples include a short story, musical composition, musical performance, one-person play, portfolio review, short film, and audio production. The Creative Challenge may not be credit bearing and so is not connected with any particular course, but the submitted work must represent the equivalent of B or higher in terms of the overall assessment of student learning and competency.

Second Major – A student may elect to complete a second major area of concentration as a challenge. Students completing a second major may receive an extension of the finish-in-four requirement. Grade point average requirements, as set forth above apply. Students receiving financial assistance should consult with the Financial Aid Director before applying for admission to the second major area.

Semester Abroad – Students who complete a semester abroad in coordination with the Career Services/Experiential Learning Office receive this challenge, provided they complete a minimum of 12 credits and achieve a grade equivalent of B for this effort.

Themed Residence Hall (1) – Students who reside in Melody House actively participate in at least one community service project each semester as a community. Melody House residents who seek to utilize one of these activities as a challenge must obtain the approval of the College Provost, and typically will be required to take a leadership role in the community service project and to complete a paper or other presentation to the College community related to the project. The effort and work submitted for review must represent the equivalent of B or higher in terms of overall assessment of student learning and competency.

- **Phi Sigma Eta Membership**

Honors Program and other students who have earned a cumulative GPA of 3.5 after earning a minimum of 59 credits towards a baccalaureate degree will be considered for membership in the Five Towns College Phi Sigma Eta Society. Membership invitations are made by a faculty committee chaired by the Provost, who serves as advisor to Phi Sigma and to the Honors Program. Candidates for membership are required to participate in an induction ceremony and to then fulfill the requirements of membership in the Phi Sigma Eta Society. This typically includes at least one community service project per year. Students who complete the requirements for membership receive a Phi Sigma Eta Honor Society medallion to be worn at commencement and have their membership in the Phi Sigma Eta Society noted on their official transcripts. While Phi Sigma Eta membership is a requirement for Honors Program students and to receive the graduation “with Honors” designation, Honors Program participation is not mandatory for Phi Sigma Eta Society membership.

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