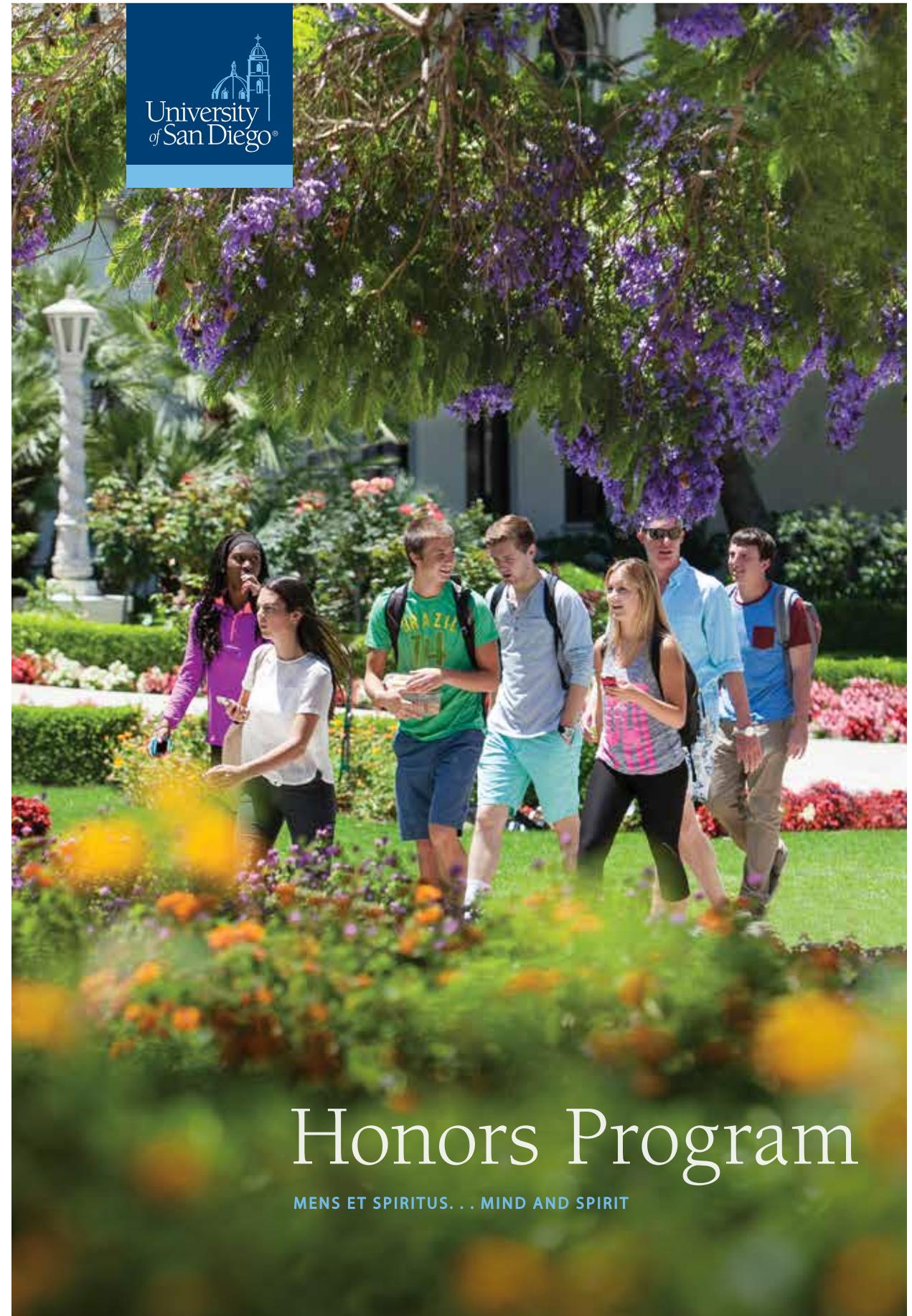
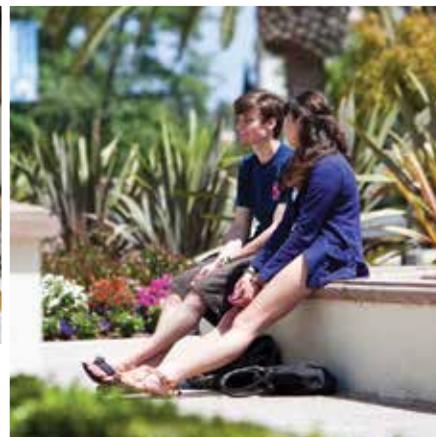




HONORS PROGRAM

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Honors Program

MENS ET SPIRITUS. . . MIND AND SPIRIT

Students in the Honors Program are looking for a challenging, enriching curriculum that will prepare them for excellent careers, graduate school and/or professional programs. Our program offers small, seminar-sized classes and team-taught courses, which encourage critical thinking and thoughtful discussion. The Honors faculty members are among the best on campus, and they are in a good position to write strong letters of recommendation for seniors.

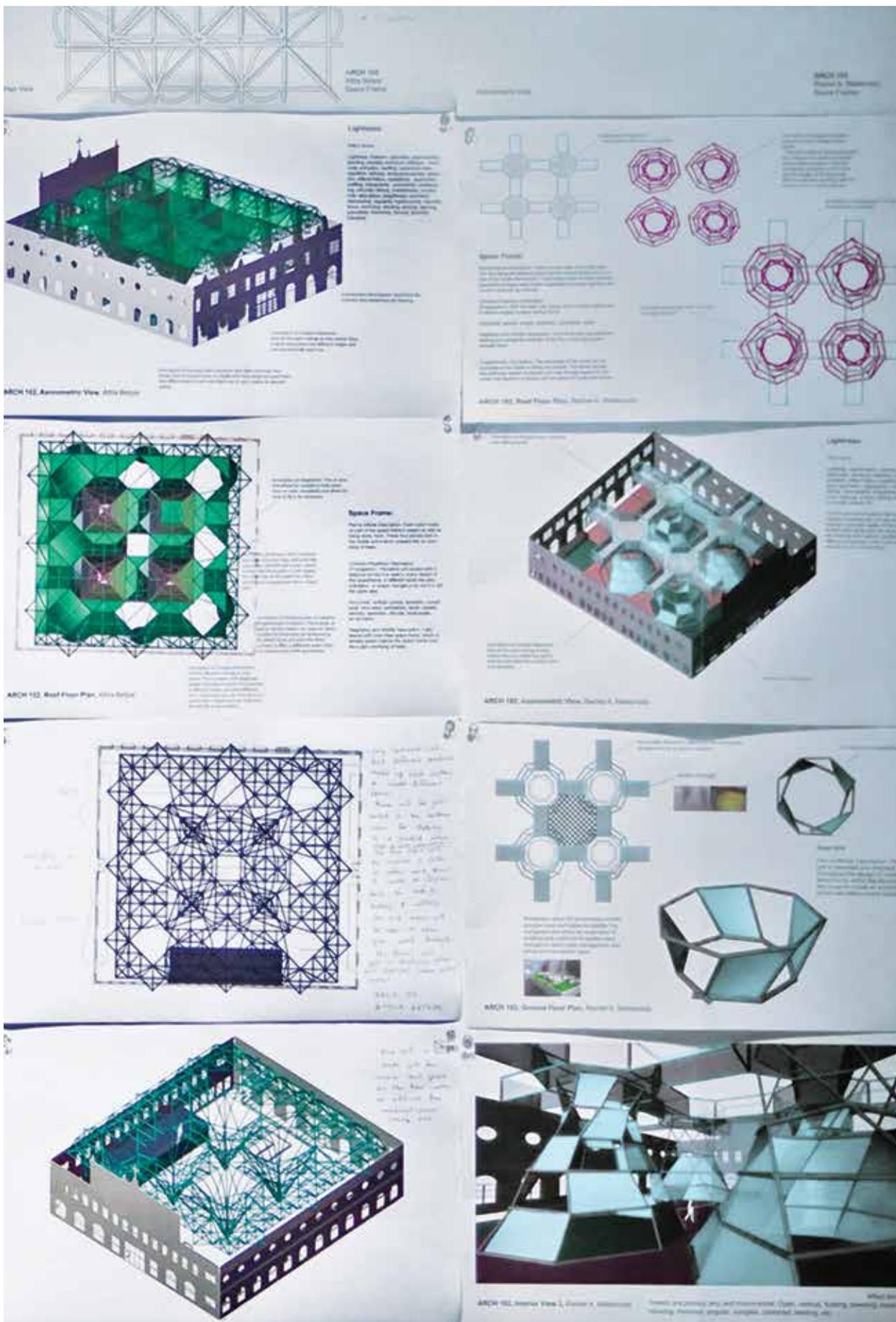
The Honors Program also publishes the best work of its seniors, a distinction that contributes tremendously to a solid résumé. Additionally, Honors students have early registration, which is based on the number of units students have completed. This provides flexibility in creating schedules. Honors students also receive special recognition at Commencement. They wear the Honors gold stole, sit in the front row and have their names read first at the ceremony.

Contents

- 3 About the Honors Program
- 4 Admission to the Honors Program
 - Fall Admission
 - Mid-Year Admission
 - Transfer Students
- 4 Planning an Honors Schedule
 - First Year
 - Second Year
 - Third Year
 - Fourth Year
- 5 Program Requirements
- 7 Research and Opportunities
 - Hinman Grants
 - Recent Topics of Honors Thesis Research
- 8 The Honors Team-Teaching Experience
 - Examples of Team-Taught Courses
- 10 Scholarships and Awards Received by USD Honors Students
- 11 Assistance in Applying for Scholarships and Awards
- 11 Honors Program Frequently Asked Questions

Honors Program

UNIVERSITY OF SAN DIEGO



About the Honors Program

Introduced in the College of Arts and Sciences in 1979, the Honors Program was established to promote interdisciplinary learning and undergraduate research, strengthen the intellectual climate of the campus and maintain the vision of the liberal arts as central to the college experience. USD faculty designed the program to fulfill the following specific objectives:

CHALLENGE students to develop their talents to their fullest potential.

APPROACH traditional topics from new perspectives that cut across standard disciplinary boundaries in team-taught, interdisciplinary seminars.



REALIZE that scholarly work is not restrained or limited by the boundaries of disciplines or areas of study.

WORK closely with faculty in small classes that promote engagement and original thought.

INTERACT with faculty informally through co-curricular activities that encourage camaraderie.

EXPAND students' scope of experience through excursions beyond the classroom.

ENGAGE in creative and sustained independent work in students' majors through original research projects that constitute the basis for the Honors thesis seminar.

PRESENT the results of student research to peers in the Honors thesis seminar and at Creative Collaborations, the undergraduate research conference.

EXERCISE the ability to change or modify the program through student representation on the Honors Program Committee and the Honors Student Board.

EXPLORE career opportunities with the assistance of the Honors Program Director and the Director of Career Services.

PREPARE to transition to graduate and professional educational programs with a skill set that includes superior written and oral expression, interdisciplinary understanding and original thought.



“It gave me a great outlet to get involved and to see my work in action. I felt respected and supported in the Honors community throughout my years at USD. I love the trust that Honors professors give you and their encouragement to explore your own intellectual curiosities.”

— Christine Horsman, Communication Studies major

Admission to the Honors Program

Fall Admission

We invite the top 10 percent of the incoming first-year class to apply to USD's Honors Program. These students achieve the highest high school grade point averages and scholastic aptitude test scores upon entering USD. Honors applicants are expected to have an active interest in their own education and an appreciation for academic challenges.

In evaluating the records of high school seniors, we seek to choose students who have the ability and motivation to excel in the Honors Program. Attention is paid to those who will most benefit from the Honors curriculum. Involvement in community, school and leadership activities, and evidence of a sustained desire to do excellent academic work are the most important indicators of a potential Honors student's ability to succeed in the program. The above are used as guidelines, not absolute criteria, in selection of Honors students. Each applicant is reviewed to recognize individual strengths.

Mid-Year Admission

Students who do not enter the program in the fall semester can apply for mid-year admission to the Honors Program. The most important criterion for admission is the student's academic record at USD. Students are generally not admitted to the program after their third semester unless satisfactory arrangements can be made to ensure that they will be able to complete the Honors curriculum by May of their fourth year.

Transfer Students

Transfer students follow the mid-year admission procedures. A maximum of 13 Honors units taken at another college or university may be counted toward the USD Honors diploma.

Planning an Honors Schedule

First Year

FALL SEMESTER
Honors Preceptorial (4 UNITS)

SPRING SEMESTER
Honors lower-division elective (3 UNITS)

Second Year

FALL SEMESTER
Team-taught, interdisciplinary course (4 UNITS)

OR
Single instructor, single-discipline course (3 UNITS)

SPRING SEMESTER
Same as fall semester. Students should take one team-taught course in the second year.



Third Year

FALL SEMESTER
Team-taught, interdisciplinary course (4 UNITS)

OR
Single instructor, single-discipline course (3 UNITS)

SPRING SEMESTER
Same as fall semester. Students should take one team-taught course in the third year.

Fourth Year

FALL SEMESTER
Independent Study (496/499H) in major field (1, 2 OR 3 UNITS) or Capstone Project in major field (3 UNITS)

SPRING SEMESTER
Honors Thesis Seminar (OPTION OF TAKING FOR 1 UNIT OR 3 UNITS)

Program Requirements

The Honors Program offers a four-year, interdisciplinary curriculum that is integrated with a student's major area of study and the university's core curriculum requirements. Students must complete a minimum of 25 Honors units and maintain a 3.4 cumulative GPA for graduation with the Honors diploma. This is an average of one Honors course each semester. The 25-unit curriculum includes two upper-division, interdisciplinary courses and Honors thesis research.





Research and Opportunities

Honors Thesis Research

All students in the Honors Program are required to conduct independent, scholarly research in their major field of study. During the Honors Thesis Seminar, fourth-year students in the program present their work in the form of an oral presentation to colleagues and faculty mentors, and as a written thesis that demonstrates mastery of the material. Additionally, students present their scholarship at Creative Collaborations: Undergraduate Research Conference.

The scholarly activity that constitutes an Honors thesis is conducted in conjunction with a faculty member in the student's major field of study, and the presentation of this work generally occurs in the last semester of the student's career at USD. However, the basis for this capstone generally occurs in the semesters prior to the thesis seminar. Students are encouraged to enroll in either an independent study/research course or the capstone project course associated with their field of study. This ensures that students make significant progress on their thesis research before enrolling in the seminar.

Often, the full extent of the thesis project is not known until the student and mentor are actively involved in the project development. Getting approvals and/or funding can be time consuming and can potentially derail a thesis project. Students should make contact with their thesis mentors no later than the spring semester of their third year. Starting projects earlier is strongly encouraged and generally yields higher-quality work.

Hinman Grants

Research may be funded through several grants, including the Hinman grant that is offered exclusively to students in the Honors Program. In their third or fourth year, Honors students can apply for the Lawrence Hinman Honors Research Grant, which supports the growth and development of Honors research. These grants can be spent on research to develop the Honors thesis, to develop a presentation for a conference or to travel to present at a conference. Not only do these research grants improve the quality of student research, but they also look great on applications to graduate schools, professional programs or jobs.

Recent Topics of Honors Thesis Research

- “Boundaries, Binaries, and Language: An Experiment in Bilingual Fiction Writing” (English/Languages and Literatures)
- “The Success of Nipah Virus Across Species” (Biology)
- “The Predictive Factors of an NFL Wide Receiver’s Salary” (Economics)
- “Activists and Partisan Change: Is the Tea Party Driving Polarization in the Republican Party?” (Political Science/International Relations)
- “Responding to Jealousy: Partner and Relational Uncertainty in Sibling Relationships” (Communication Studies)
- “Interaction of Petroleum-Based Organosulfur Compounds with a Titanium Dioxide Surface” (Chemistry/Biochemistry)
- “Das E-Bike: Electric Friction Bicycle Assist Device” (Mechanical Engineering)



“As a senior, it has been so much fun and inspiring to watch all my friends in the Honors Program present their theses on topics they have worked so hard on and are so passionate about. It is such a surreal and wonderful feeling to look back from this culminating point in my college experience on just how far each of us has come since starting the Honors Program in our freshman year.”

— Katherine Kupfer, Psychology major

The Honors Team-Teaching Experience

Team-taught courses are a unique feature of USD's Honors Program. Team-taught courses bring together two faculty members from different disciplines to create innovative, interdisciplinary courses. Three to four team-taught courses are offered each semester, giving students a great selection of subjects. These classes provide a more balanced perspective on life, as problems in the real world are seldom answered by a single subject.

Honors students are required to take two team-taught courses. Due to the creative and experiential nature of these courses, many students list team-taught courses as one of the best features of the program.



“The aspect I most enjoyed also happens to be what makes our program at USD so unique — the opportunity to participate in team-taught classes. Interdisciplinary studies are becoming an extremely integral part of learning and career paths today, because they form the foundations for more useful and holistic education.”

— Molly Gentile, English major

Examples of Team-Taught Courses

- The History and Politics of South Africa (Political Science and History)
- Sacred Things: The Material Culture of American Religion (Theology and Religious Studies and Art History)
- The Facebook Phenomenon: The (Social) Capital of Social Media (Marketing and Communication Studies)
- The Psychology and Ecology of Environmental Challenges (Psychology and Environmental Science)
- International Social and Human Rights (Sociology and Political Science/International Relations)
- Women in Islam and Confucianism (History and Theology and Religious Studies)



- Conflict Diagnosis and Dispute Resolution in a Global Environment (Business Management and Ethics and the Law)
- Pollution in the Sand (Biology, Marine Science, and Chemistry)
- Prison: Communication and Culture (Communication Studies and Sociology: Crime, Justice, Law and Society)
- Cultural Construction of Motherhood: Ideologies, Practices, and Contradictions (Psychology, Communication Studies, and Sociology)



Scholarships and Awards Received by USD Honors Students SINCE 2000

Fulbright Scholar (5)

Goldwater Scholar (4)

Truman Scholar (1)

Oxford University Blackfriars Scholar (22)

Oxford University St. Benet's Scholar (2)

Donald Strauss Scholar (5)

USD Valedictorian (6)

USD Alcalá Award (11)

Anne Catherine Swanke Award:
Exceptional Honors Program Senior (18)

Assistance in Applying for Scholarships and Awards

One of the advantages of being an Honors student at USD is that assistance and advising are provided in applying for nationally-competitive scholarships. The program director is the primary faculty contact for Fulbright scholarships, the largest U.S. international exchange program sponsored by the Department of State, and also serves as a liaison for other scholarship opportunities, including Rhodes, Marshall, Truman, Goldwater, Udall and Strauss scholarships. For more information about the range of available scholarships and their principal advisors visit the website at www.sandiego.edu/cas/academics/scholarships/.



“I’ve most enjoyed the program’s commitment to lead a consistent group of classmates and peers throughout a student’s four years of school. I’m honored to watch these presentations from other seniors, some of whom I met in my very first class as a freshman at USD. Combined with the school’s already-small class sizes, this intimacy makes for a special experience, especially now that I have the privilege to watch the culmination of months of hard work from my friends.”

— Davis Jones, English major

Honors Program Frequently Asked Questions

Does the Honors Program require extra classes?

The 25 units taken in the Honors curriculum generally fit into a student’s core curriculum, and in some instances, one’s major or minor. Therefore, Honors classes are not considered extra classes.

How are Honors courses different from regular courses?

Honors courses are special because they are smaller, allowing professors to give more time to individual students. All Honors courses are capped at 20 students. Lower-division courses focus on one discipline and are



taught by a single instructor. Upper-division courses may be single-discipline courses led by one instructor, or they may be team-taught courses led by two instructors from different disciplines. The team-taught, interdisciplinary classes count for 4 Honors units and are offered only to Honors students. In general, Honors classes involve thoughtful, sophisticated classroom discussion. Honors professors expect excellence from their students, both in class and in their written assignments.

Will being in the Honors Program hurt my grade point average?

Most students do at least as well in their Honors courses as in their regular classes, and they find many of the Honors courses among the best they have taken at USD.

Continued on next page

What is the Honors LLC?

First-year students in the Honors Program are required to live in the Honors Living Learning Community (LLC). The Honors LLC allows incoming Honors students to connect with each other and build a sense of community early. The idea is for students to live and learn together. They participate in various LLC activities (both on and off campus), coordinate study groups in their dorms, attend classes together and develop close friendships that last throughout their college career. To learn more about the Honors LLC, please visit the website at www.sandiego.edu/cas/llc_honors/.

Does the Honors Program offer special financial aid?

At this time, we are unable to offer special financial assistance for Honors students, but we do find that most Honors students qualify for academic scholarships. Additionally, students can apply for a Hinman Grant to fund Honors thesis research.

Can Honors students study abroad?

Yes, the majority of Honors students study abroad. Honors students who study abroad for one full semester have 4 Honors credits waived and only need to complete 21 Honors units. These study abroad units do not count towards the 124 units required to graduate from USD. We simply deduct 4 units from the 25 required to graduate from the Honors Program.

“I have enjoyed the discussion-based classes. Professors show respect toward Honors students and give us the opportunity to deeply explore various topics, rather than limit students to a surface-level, lecture-only approach.”

— Alyssa Knauer, Accounting major

What kinds of leadership opportunities are available within the program?

Honors students have the opportunity to serve on the Honors Student Board (HSB). HSB was established with the purpose of enhancing student participation in the Honors Program and promoting student interaction with the Honors Director and Honors Faculty Committee. HSB advises the director on the Honors curriculum, voices student views about the structure of the program, suggests Honors social and philanthropic activities, and works to draw prospective students. The board consists of four representatives from each academic year.



During the fall semester, a select group of HSB members attends the National Collegiate Honors Council (NCHC) Conference. This annual conference invites Honors Program faculty, students and staff from colleges and universities across the country to participate in various workshops and interactive presentations. Students are encouraged to share ideas and network with other honors professionals. Members of our student board deliver a presentation about USD's Honors Program, and they learn about different ways to improve our honors teaching, learning and administration.

