

# **Santiago Canyon College Honors Program Guidelines**

**Updated: Fall 2007**

## Introduction

The purpose of the Honors Program Handbook is three-fold: 1.) to provide a description and record of the SCC Honors Program as determined by the SCC Honors Program Advisory Committee and as presented to the RSCCD Curriculum Council, 2.) to provide a reference for students, faculty, and administrators at SCC and elsewhere, and 3.) to outline both short-term and long-term goals for maintaining and expanding the Honors Program at SCC.

With the support of the SCC Dean of Instruction, the SCC Honors Program Advisory Committee; consisting of the Honors Program Coordinator, the Honors Program Counselor, and six SCC faculty members; had the goal of researching existing community college honors programs and making recommendations for an SCC Honors Program that meets the needs of our student population and meets the minimum guidelines of the Honors Transfer Council of California, creating a program distinct from but coordinated with the SAC Honors Program. The committee convened once a month throughout the spring 1998 semester to review and discuss information from established and burgeoning honors programs at El Camino College, Fullerton College, Saddleback College, San Diego City College, and Santa Ana College. This information was gathered through interviews with some Honors Directors at other two-year colleges, research of their written descriptions of their honors programs, and a perusal of their web sites.

The *Handbook* was revised in fall 2007 to reflect changes and to clarify procedures and policies.

## **Goals of the Honors Program**

**The goals of the Honors Program need to be understood and embraced by all Honors students, faculty, and staff at Santiago Canyon College. The success of the Honors Program depends on a commitment from the institution to provide the support for an inter-disciplinary honors program so that students can complete the Program within two years. The specific goals of the SCC Honors Program are as follows:**

- **to help highly-motivated students and academic high-achievers transfer to four-year institutions**
- **to encourage the development of honors students**
- **to encourage those who may never have been recognized by others or themselves as honors students, but who now have a chance to fulfill previously underestimated abilities and potential**
- **to offer a core general education curriculum so that students may fulfill GE requirements and transfer in a timely manner**
- **to provide a few unique courses requiring faculty innovation and creativity**
- **to encourage students to think more independently and critically**
- **to inspire and develop faculty through creating and teaching new courses**
- **to promote our image as an institution of academic excellence to the academic and local community**

## **Characteristics of an Honors Course**

**Because honors classes are small and composed of highly-motivated students, they have more latitude in modes of instruction, assignments, and methods of assessment than non-honors courses. Honors courses share the following characteristics, which may distinguish them from non-honors courses:**

- **small size (10-20 students in arts, humanities, and social sciences classes; 10-24 in math and science classes)**
- **general education transferable courses (and occasional special interest classes), meeting at least one of the three general education patterns**
- **enriched curriculum and creative approaches**
- **a high degree of student participation and involvement**
- **independent study, including reading, library and field research, and thinking**
- **numerous opportunities for writing**
- **advanced analytical and critical thinking**
- **increased use of primary sources and research**
- **more depth and breadth of subject matter**
- **the opportunity to pursue topics and projects of individual interest**
- **flexibility in format and teaching methodologies, including team or group teaching and an interdisciplinary approach**
- **opportunities for students to participate in activities directly related to the course, such as field trips, guest speakers, related cultural and social events**

## Honors Program Requirements

Students should be aware of the requirements for acceptance into and continuation and completion of the Honors Program. All of the following requirements need to be met by Honors Program students:

### Acceptance

- completed application form
- two faculty references
- high school transcripts (entering freshmen) or college transcripts (continuing college students)
- no grade lower than C in any college-level honors course
- a cumulative high school GPA of 3.0 or above and graduation for entering freshmen or completion of a minimum of 6 college transferable units and a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0 for returning or continuing students and one of the following:
  1. ACT score of 15 or
  2. SAT score (combined) of 1000, with 450 minimum on either verbal or math or
  3. qualification for English 101, or completion of English 061 or ESL 112 with a C or higher
- may not be involved in or found at fault in any disciplinary action subject to violation of the Student Code of Conduct as outlined in the *RSCCD Catalogue* and the *Student Handbook* (No decision will be made until the outcome of any disciplinary action is final.)

### Continuation

- maintain a cumulative GPA of 3.0
- receive no grade lower than a C in any honors course (D grades may be repeated with Coordinator's prior approval.)
- before completing the program, enroll in at least two Honors courses a year for full-time students; one a year for part-time students
- complete English 101H during the first year in the Honors Program unless this requirement has already been met by a non-Honors English 101 class or Advanced Placement
- meet with the HP Coordinator or Counselor prior to the start of the semester following receiving a D or lower in an honors class or earning a GPA below 3.0
- may not be found at fault in any disciplinary action subject to violation of the Student Code of Conduct as outlined in the *RSCCD Catalogue* and the *Student Handbook*

## **Completion**

- **maintain a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0**
- **complete a minimum of six honors courses (or 18 units) with a minimum 3.0 GPA**
- **meet with the honors counselor and coordinator when accepted and then on an as-needed basis**
- **receive no grade lower than C in any college-level honors class (Academic Renewal is permitted—see page 9.)**
- **file an Intent to Complete the Honors program form by due date**
- **may not be found at fault in any disciplinary action subject to violation of the Student Code of Conduct as outlined in the *RSCCD Catalogue* and the *Student Handbook***

## Honors Program Administration

### Honors Program Coordinator

The Honors Program Coordinator is responsible for the daily operation of the Honors Program and is reassigned time to operate the program. The specific duties include the following:

- chairs the Honors Program Advisory Committee
- establishes and oversees the budget for Honors
- in coordination with the Honors counselor, meets with and advises Honors students about the program, the benefits and privileges of their target universities, and deadlines for applying for transfer, scholarships, and awards
- reviews applications to accept new students and sends letters of acceptance or rejection
- tracks progress and maintenance of eligibility of students in the program
- verifies successful completion of Program requirements and forwards the information for recording on transcripts
- writes letters of recommendation
- recruits students on campus through publicity and presentations; recruits students off campus at local high schools
- consults with faculty and department chairs in scheduling honors courses; coordinates with academic divisions and deans to schedule classes and faculty
- recruits new faculty and encourages the development of new honors courses
- arranges for speakers, lectures, and special events to coordinate with other groups/organizations on campus
- coordinates methods of publicity through a brochure, the college catalogue, the schedule of classes, and informing counselors and faculty
- attends Honors Transfer Council meetings and meets with university staff to maintain or to develop honors transfer agreements
- chairs the Honors Program Scholarship Committee
- coordinates Early Registration for honors classes
- coordinates the fall retreat and spring conference

### **Honors Program Advisory Committee**

The Honors Program Advisory Committee is a faculty-based committee that oversees the Honors Program and works with the Honors Program Coordinator to establish the standards, procedures, and policies of the Program. It is comprised of 11 members, including the HP Coordinator, the HP Counselor, the deans of divisions offering Honors classes, 1 student, and 6 faculty members across the Honors curriculum. Committee members are selected based on experience with and knowledge of the Honors Program and/or Honors classes. It meets once a month. The duties of the Committee include the following:

- assisting the Coordinator in recruiting new students and in promoting and publicizing the Honors Program
- review and approve proposed offerings as compiled by the Coordinator and Counselor
- reviewing and approving proposed honors courses before going to division curriculum committees and the Curriculum Council
- reviewing existing honors courses during their triennial review cycle in coordination with division curriculum committees
- soliciting course development from other disciplines
- approving or denying requests for exception to program rules and regulations

### **Honors Program Counselor**

The Honors Program Counselor is a member of the Honors Program Committee and works in conjunction with the Coordinator to communicate and meet with current Program members and potential new members. Duties of the Honors Program Counselor include the following:

- assisting the Coordinator in recruiting new students and in promoting and publicizing the Honors Program
- helping to identify potential Honors students and individually counseling Honors Program students about their educational plan, Honors Transfer Agreements, Honors Program requirements, and issues related to transferring
- attending some Honors Transfer Council of California meetings with the HP Coordinator
- serving on the Honors Program Advisory Committee
- attending the HTCC meetings when needed
- attending special Honors events planned for SCC Honors students
- providing general support to the Honors Program Coordinator
- serving on Honors awards committees, including scholarship and valedictorian selection

## **Faculty Qualifications and Responsibilities**

**Ideally the Honors Program faculty should be a diverse and fluctuating group. In order to keep the Program vital, new instructors are encouraged to join the Program, and rotation of assignments is encouraged when more than one person from a department is interested in teaching an Honors course. This group may include full-time and adjunct faculty.**

### **Qualifications**

**Honors Program faculty should have the following qualifications:**

- **be respected by other faculty and the institution for professionalism and academic rigor**
- **have a teaching history reflecting their ability to challenge, excite, and fairly treat students**
- **be approachable, available, and supportive with faculty as well as students**

### **Responsibilities**

**Honors Program faculty should be prepared to do the following:**

- **express to the Honors Program Coordinator interest to teach an Honors class or to write new Honors curriculum**
- **work with the Coordinator to compose descriptions of honors classes for the honors brochure and flyers**
- **work with the Coordinator and department chairs to schedule sections at times that best meet the needs of the students and that fall within the scheduling demands of the Honors Program. Long-range offerings will be determined by the Honors Program Advisory Committee**
- **submit all new proposals for Honors courses to the Honors Committee for review before going to division curriculum committees three weeks prior to submission to division curriculum committee**
- **actively recruit and recommend students for the Honors courses and the Honors Program**
- **publicize their own classes and sections**
- **attend early registration for Honors classes**

## Student Responsibilities and Procedures

1. To maintain eligibility in the Honors Program, students must
  - maintain a minimum 3.0 cumulative GPA. Students who do not maintain a cumulative 3.0 GPA or do not receive a letter grade of C or better in all Honors courses will have one semester to raise the GPA to 3.0 or complete the class before being disqualified. A student receiving a D, F, or NC in an Honors class is excluded from enrolling in all other Honors classes until, with the approval of the Coordinator, the student retakes and passes the non-passing grade.
  - Before completing the Program, complete at least two Honors courses per year for full-time students; one Honors course per year for part-time students
  - apply to the Program before completing a third Honors class. Students completing more than two Honors classes prior to enrollment in the Program, whether at SCC or another college, may apply only two Honors classes toward completion of the Program.
  - Students not fulfilling all the Honors Program requirements, but who are still interested in the program, must be responsible for contacting the Honors Program Counselor and Coordinator to discuss their status.
  - check the on-campus Honors Program bulletin board and the web site ([www.sccollege.edu/honors](http://www.sccollege.edu/honors)) weekly to stay abreast of information and announcements. Students are responsible for observing all deadlines and information that apply to them.
  - seek academic counseling initially upon entry into the Program and thereafter as needed
  - adhere to the “Student Code of Conduct” as stipulated in *The RSCCD Catalog*, and the *SCC Student Handbook*. Any student involved in any disciplinary action subject to violation of the Student Code of Conduct will be placed on probation. Should the outcome of the disciplinary action reveal that the student is at fault, the student will be permanently dismissed from the program. Properly documented cases of plagiarism and/or cheating by any student will be grounds for dropping the student from the Honors Program.
  - submit in writing to the Honors Program Coordinator/Committee a request for reinstatement provided that they 1. have dropped out or have been dropped from the Program for reasons other than a low GPA or the Student Code of Conduct and 2. have not been previously reinstated

- **request reinstatement in writing to the Honors Program Coordinator/Committee when final grades are posted if they have been dropped because of a low GPA**

**2. To complete the Honors Program, students must**

- **submit an “Intent to Complete the Honors Program” (See Appendix A) form within the first month of their final semester in the program**
- **must complete the Program in good standing to participate in the Honors Program Transfer Agreements. This includes maintaining a minimum 3.0 cumulative GPA in all transferable courses, completing with a C or higher a minimum of 18 units of Honors courses (Up to two honors courses may be accepted from another college if requested and verified.), and submitting on time any transfer agreement forms required by the transfer university.**
- **Must apply for and be granted an Associate degree**

## Benefits of the Honors Program

### For Students:

- participation in smaller classes (10-20/24 students) that allow more one-on-one interaction with peers and professors
- an enriched environment that allows for student-directed activities and discussions, seminars, guest speakers, and other activities
- an enhanced and more in-depth study of the subject matter, fostering advanced critical thinking, analysis, discussion, and writing skills
- professors who are committed to innovative teaching styles and strategies
- a learning community of students who share a curiosity and an analytical approach to education
- designation on the students' transcripts of honors courses and completion of the program if they petition and are eligible to receive an associate degree
- designation of "President's Scholar" on transcripts of students completing the Program, maintaining an overall GPA of 3.5 or above, receiving no grade lower than a C, and petitioning to graduate
- participation in Honors functions, including Honors colloquia, Fall Retreat, Student Conference, to enrich the Program and the students' educational experience
- the assistance and academic advisement of the Honors Program Coordinator and Counselor
- through the HTCC, pre-transfer benefits at universities in TAP, Transfer Agreement Program. Pre-transfer benefits may include library card privileges, opportunities to attend academic, cultural, and athletic events
- guaranteed or priority admission consideration at universities with whom we have transfer agreements. Also possible are priority consideration for scholarships and housing and admission to honors programs at the four-year institutions
- eligibility for awards and scholarships from Santiago Canyon College and from some four-year institutions. The Honors Transfer Council of California offers awards, scholarships, and special summer/semester Honors programs every spring.
- eligibility to apply for NCHC semester-long programs at major colleges and universities in the U.S., which focus on special topics and provide transferable credits

**For Faculty:**

- reduced class size (10-20/24 students) to enable seminar-type discussions
- the opportunity to teach highly motivated students and to expect a higher quality of work from these students
- increased opportunity to perfect and develop alternative teaching styles and strategies, including seminars, guest speakers, field research, team teaching, and interdisciplinary courses
- projects to stimulate new liaisons with off-campus academic or vocational collaborators

**For Santiago Canyon College and the Surrounding Community:**

- a program for students with the goal of earning a four-year degree. With University of California and other four-year institutions reducing the number of entering freshmen and with increasing costs of higher education, we need to target high school students, continuing students, and re-entry students
- higher student retention and successful transfer rates.
- increased contact and exchange with four-year institutions
- increased student achievement not only in Honors courses but in other courses as well through the presence of highly-motivated students
- enhancement of Santiago Canyon College's reputation for academic success and excellence

## **Publicity and Student Recruitment**

**In order for the SCC Honors Program to be successful, it must be visible, active, and credible: it must be seen; it must act; it must act well. The following elements are now in place:**

- **a description of the Honors Program in the RSCCD Catalog and a separate page listing Honors course offerings in the class schedule every semester**
- **publication and distribution of a brochure describing the Program in detail, including entrance and exit requirements, benefits, transfer agreements, student comments about the Program, current course offerings, a request for an application form, the Honors Program Coordinator's and Honors Program Counselor's names, extensions, office numbers, and email addresses. This brochure should be available to campus recruiters and counselors as well as the Coordinator and other faculty.**
- **a web site that discusses all of the above in addition to affiliations, such as Phi Theta Kappa, Honors Transfer Council of California, National Collegiate Honors Council, updates on the program and important timelines, and the ability to apply to the Program online**
- **spring visits to feeder high schools and groups of college-bound students as well as visits to SCC clubs and student services groups such as re-entry women's groups**
- **annual letters to new and returning students qualifying for the Honors Program**
- **active involvement in enrollment by college counselors**
- **end-of-the-semester recommendation forms distributed to all faculty soliciting names of students interested in or possessing the qualification for the Honors Program and follow-up by personal letters of invitation**
- **Honors Program tables during registration, orientations, club rush, and student events staffed by Honors students as well as faculty**
- **periodic announcements and articles in the college newspaper and other publications**
- **an Honors Program bulletin board (north side of B Building) with Program announcements, Honors course offerings/schedules, lecture seminar schedules, Transfer Agreements updates, and Phi Theta Kappa events**
- **strong connections with campus honors societies (Phi Theta Kappa and Alpha Gamma Sigma)**
- **fliers posted in classrooms and on bulletin boards at both colleges**
- **personal faculty visits to other classes in their discipline the semester immediately preceding the one when their class will be offered**

- **encouragement of classroom visits by prospective honors students to current honors classes and dialogues with current honors students and faculty**
- **student referrals and recruitment by current honors students, perhaps testimonials to high schools groups**
- **a centrally located Honors Program office with a support staff, telephone, fax, and computer**

## **Student Evaluations of the Honors Program**

**The “Student Evaluation of the Honors Program” (see Appendix E) should be given to Honors Program students once a year to determine if the Program is meeting their needs and if changes need to be made. This survey could be administered in Honors classes or by mail. It is important to get continuous feedback from students about such matters as courses offered, the schedule of Honors classes, the assistance from the HP Coordinator and Counselor.**

## **Transfer Agreements**

**Through membership in the Honors Transfer Council of California, SCC currently has transfer agreements with 14 four-year institutions. These institutions include the following:**

- **California State University, Fullerton**
- **California State University, Stanislaus**
- **Chapman University**
- **La Sierra University**
- **Occidental College**
- **Pacific College**
- **Pitzer College**
- **Pomona College**
- **San Diego State University**
- **UC Irvine**
- **UC Los Angeles**
- **UC Riverside**
- **UC Santa Cruz**
- **Whitman College**

**(This list is subject to change.)**

**The Honors Program is expanding its relationships with transfer institutions, and students who successfully complete the Honors Program are eligible for the Transfer Agreements. The agreements vary from institution to institution, but all include some or all of the following benefits:**

- **guaranteed or preferential admission consideration at four-year colleges and universities**
- **financial aid incentives**
- **scholarships to transferring graduates**
- **early registration**
- **library card privileges**
- **access to university honors programs**
- **admission to cultural activities and special events on the campuses**

## **Course Approval Process**

**Though new course proposals come from individual departments, Honors Program Advisory Committee members and faculty should encourage departments to create Honors courses to supplement the current list of 50 approved courses. Once the department member(s) design the new course, the overview should then be sent to the Honors Program Advisory Committee to be evaluated as fulfilling the requirements of an Honors course. Next, the division Curriculum Committee would review the new course. Finally, the proposal goes to the Curriculum Council for approval and then through the CSU and ICETC certification approval process.**

## **SCC Honors Program Annual Budget**

**In order to ensure continuity of Program offerings, efficiency of accessing funds and running the program, and short- and long-range planning of Program offerings and activities, it is important for the Honors Program to control and monitor its own budget. Aside from the current release time for the Coordinator and Counselor, the program needs funds for the following:**

**PT Other Certificated (faculty)**

**Administrative Supplies**

**Printing Supplies**

**Other Non-Instructional Supplies**

**Special Lectures**

**Conference Expenses Reported (i.e. Fall Retreat and Spring Student Conference)**

**District Business-Travel (i.e. NCHC and HTCC Conferences)**

**Institutional Memberships**

**(See Appendix G for the last two yearly budgets.)**

**As the state and, therefore, RSCCD budgets improve, funds that have been reduced for the Program should be restored, at a minimum, to the original amounts.**