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The new CSB/SJU Honors Program

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CSB/SJU
New Honors Program

Overview

1. What's Behind the Overhaul?
2. The New Program: Foundations
3. The New Program: Coursework
4. Student Applications
5. Invitation for Faculty

Old Honors Program

Why redesign Honors now?

- Integrations Curriculum is replacing the Common Curriculum and Honors at CSB/SJU is based on the general education curriculum.

2016 Honors Program Review

Problems identified:

1. lack of academic integration and cohesion
2. no clear mission or subset of students being served
3. overwhelmingly white, high SES, continuing generation
4. high attrition rate
5. lack of rapport among students
6. no dedicated faculty

2019 Summer Work

- Funded by NEH Humanities Connections Grant, May 2019-2020
- Principle Investigators: Emily Esch (Philosophy) and Beth Wengler (History)

Bret Benesh (Mathematics), Pam Bacon (Psychology), Whitney Court (Political Science), Bill Lamberts (Biology), Matt Lindstrom (Director of the McCarthy Center), Margrette Newhouse (Director of the McNeeley Center), Erica Stonestreet (Philosophy), and Adia Zeman Theis (Assistant Director of Experience and Professional Development, Bonner Leaders Program and Service Learning).

New Honors Program

Mission: The CSB/SJU Honors Program provides an intellectual community for a self-motivated and diverse group of students to take intellectual risks, participate in a challenging, integrative, and interdisciplinary liberal arts curriculum, develop their collaborative leadership skills, and apply their learning to projects that contribute to the common good.

Three pillars of the new Honors Program:

- Integrative Learning
- Collaborative Leadership
- Liberal Arts in Action

First Pillar: Integrative Learning

Integrative, focused, rigorous curriculum

- Five seminars that all Honors students will take over 4 years with their year's cohort
- Learning outcomes from Integrations as well as outcomes specific to Honors
- Tied together with a focus on Community and the Social Change Model of Leadership Development

Second Pillar: Collaborative Leadership

Collaborative Leadership

- Social Change Model: leadership is understood as a process, emphasizing intellectual collaboration and commitment to the common good
- Integrated in each Honors seminar
- CSB/SJU values: Benedictine responsibility to community and transformative inclusion

Third Pillar: Liberal Arts in Action

Liberal Arts in Action

- Students take classes from a diverse cross section of faculty, including a team-taught course from two Ways of Thinking
- Integrate academic learning and leadership skills
- The final two courses center on experiential learning projects that support the common good of their communities

CSB/SJU Honors Program

FIRST YEAR

Honors 1:
Community
and Identity

Cultural and
Social Difference:
Identity
equivalent

SOPHOMORE

Honors 2:
Interdisciplinary
Approaches to
Communities of
Scholarship

Thematic Exploration
equivalent

Honors 3:
Communities and
Systems

Cultural and Social
Difference: Systems
equivalent

JUNIOR

Honors 4:
Community,
Research,
And
Social Change

Thematic Focus
equivalent

Experiential
engagement

SENIOR

Honors 5:
(Capstone)
Liberal Arts
in Action

Writing Integration
equivalent

Honors 1 (Spring First Year)

Honors 1: Community and Identity

- This course is the introduction to the Honors Program. Students will learn to think critically about their own gendered, racial, and ethnic identities and the ways in which these features relate with issues of power and justice in the contemporary United States. These issues are explored through the Honors theme of “community.” Students also will be introduced to the value-based, collaborative theory of leadership that is central to each of the five Honors seminars.

Honors 2 and 3 (Sophomore Year)

Honors 2: Interdisciplinary Approaches to Communities of Scholarship

- This Honors seminar is team-taught by instructors from two different Ways of Thinking and will introduce students to the complementary roles that different disciplines bring to the study of common issues. Topics vary according to instructors.

Honors 3: Communities and Systems

- In this course, students will demonstrate an understanding of how constructions of race, gender, and ethnicity shape cultural rules and biases and how these constructions vary across time, cultures, and societies. In addition, students will critically analyze the ways in which these forms of identity raise questions of justice with regard to access and participation in communal life. Specific topics, national and cultural contexts, and time periods will vary by instructor.

Honors 4 (Junior Year)

Honors 4: Community, Research and Social Change

- In this junior seminar, students will explore the privileges and responsibilities that come with community membership. Common to all sections is project-based learning in which students identify an authentic opportunity or challenge that would enhance the common good, thoroughly research it from all angles, and produce research papers and make oral presentations to community stakeholders.

Honors 5 (Senior Year)

Honors 5: Liberal Arts in Action

- Students will integrate their previous course work and leadership development through project-based learning and their integrative essay. Based on their research in Honors 4, students will design, execute, and evaluate a project that enhances the common good of the community.

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Expected outcomes

- An integrated and rigorous program of courses designed around a clear mission
- Opportunities for students to apply their learning in an authentic way through experiential learning and development of collaborative leadership skills
- Better representation of our student body
- The cohort model and project-based focus will increase social rapport among students and create a true learning community
- A means of recruiting prospective students

Student Application

We have six characteristics for identifying prospective Honors students. We are looking for 60 students who:

- have a 3.85 GPA
- have demonstrated academic excellence
- are intellectually curious about many fields
- desire personal growth through meaningful reflection
- value community and working together toward a shared purpose
- are willing to step outside their comfort zone, challenge assumptions, and take collaborative action for the common good.

Invitation to Faculty

We will post an invitation to apply to teach in the Honors Program by the end of the semester.

Applications for Honors 3 in 2021-2022 will be due by March 18, 2020.
Course Proposals are due to GECC in September 2020.

Faculty teaching Honors 1, 2, and 3 will be expected to attend a professional development workshop in May 2020.

Honors Faculty Fellows

- We are working on a proposal to create a stable pool of faculty to teach in the Honors Program
- We want faculty who develop Honors courses a chance to teach these courses repeatedly
- We want to recognize their service to Honors in a way that helps with promotion and tenure
- We plan to include Honors-specific professional development opportunities

Questions?