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# Honors Program Handbook for Faculty 2021-2022



**University of Missouri – Kansas City**



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## Honors Program Faculty Handbook

### What is the UMKC Honors Program?

The UMKC Honors Program is an academic enrichment program for exceptionally talented students. It combines the curricular, cultural and research opportunities of an urban research university with the personalized advising, close-knit community and small classes of a liberal arts college. The Honors Program seeks highly motivated and academically talented undergraduates from all of UMKC’s schools and colleges to participate in an environment that challenges students to realize their greatest potential.

Honors students have opportunities to enroll in small, interactive honors seminars and attend special educational and social events. In addition, honors students are encouraged to participate in community service, study abroad and undergraduate research. We encourage all UMKC faculty members to collaborate with the Honors Program and thereby enable our students to make the most of their undergraduate experience at UMKC.

### About this Faculty Handbook

This handbook offers a general overview of Honors Program programs, activities and academic requirements. It will help UMKC faculty members understand the history and purpose of the Honors Program and learn more about the possibilities of engagement with the Honors Program.

This handbook is updated annually by Honors Program faculty and staff. We hope that you will find it informative, and that you will take full advantage of the many opportunities available to contribute to student success through collaboration with the Honors Program.

More general information for faculty may be found in the [UMKC Faculty Resource Guide](#), which provides links to UM System policies, UMKC policies, and to a variety of other resources to support your success in teaching, research and service.

**Revision date:** July 2020

**Cover Photo:** Cherry Hall, home of the Honors Program

## Section One – Introduction to the Honors Program

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Welcome from the Honors Program Director

Greetings to UMKC faculty members! We in the UMKC Honors Program are eager to work with you to explore possible ways that you can become involved in teaching, advising and mentoring our exceptionally talented honors students. I hope you will consider making the Honors Program and its community of learners part of your experience as a faculty member at UMKC. Becoming involved with the work of the Honors Program means that you will be surrounded by people who are excited to learn and grow together.

There are many ways that a faculty member can contribute to the work of the Honors Program. You might assist a student in developing an Honors Contract to do extra-credit work in your course and thereby earn honors credit. You might design and teach an honors course or an honors component in a course. Or you might serve as the supervisor of a Senior Honors Thesis. These are just a few of the many ways in which a UMKC faculty member from any college or school can work with the Honors Program to assure the success of our students.

Above all the Honors Program is a place for learning and innovation. UMKC faculty members play a big part in that! If you have ideas, questions, or thoughts on how to improve teaching and learning in the Honors Program, please bring those things to our attention. The faculty of the Honors Program believe a focus on the four following areas are a vital part of helping our students succeed: (1) Social Justice and Cultural Awareness, (2) Environmental Sustainability, (3) Leadership and Ethics, and (4) Kansas City History and Urban Engagement. You can learn more about these areas of focus and our plans for the future of the Honors Program starting on page 6 (below), “What to Expect in Honors Courses.”

I look forward to working with you to enhance the opportunities available to honors students. If you’d like to learn more about the Honors Program, please don’t hesitate to contact me with questions, or to schedule a meeting with me: [levyg@umkc.edu](mailto:levyg@umkc.edu)

With best regards,

*Gayle Levy*

Honors Program Director

Associate Professor of French



# Honors Program Mission and Vision

## **Mission Statement**

The UMKC Honors Program promotes the University's commitment to academic excellence.

The Honors Program:

- offers an enriched program of honors education for outstanding students of all majors;
- fosters intellectual and civic values: inquiry, discovery, knowledge and imagination, as well as community service, social justice, and ethical leadership;
- offers support for instructional innovation and provides the best possible teaching and learning environment for faculty and students.

## **Vision Statement**

The UMKC Honors Program aspires to become a program of national distinction, recognized as one of the most innovative, engaged, diverse, and inclusive honors programs in the United States.

# Honors Program Strategic Objectives

## **Honors Program Strategic Plan Pillars**

### **Pillar One – Student Success**

Provide exceptional student learning, success and leadership development.

### **Pillar Two – Discovery**

Promote student and faculty engagement in undergraduate research and creative scholarship.

### **Pillar Three – Community Engagement**

Transform our community and region with impactful engagement that promotes social justice.

### **Pillar Four – Diversity and Inclusion**

Foster an environment of invigorating multiculturalism, globalism, diversity and inclusion.

### **Pillar Five – Sustainability**

Develop a strong and resilient social and physical infrastructure that promotes the conservation of natural resources and environmental sustainability.

### **Foundational Commitment – People**

Provide an unwavering commitment to the development of our people.

## History of the Honors Program

The UMKC Honors Program was first established in 1979 as an academic program within the College of Arts and Sciences. Professor Bruce Bubacz served as the founding director from 1979 to 1985. Under his leadership, the Honors Program developed a sequence of courses that satisfied the general education requirement while nurturing a sense of identity for the honors students. He recruited students and faculty to participate in the program, created an oversight board and designed an introductory honors seminar. Professor Gayle Levy became director of the Honors Program in 2003 and continues to serve in that role today.

Beginning in October 2008, UMKC initiated a strategic planning process that resulted in UMKC's *Strategic Plan 2010-2020*, a design for the future of Kansas City's University. A key action item in this strategic plan was to expand the Honors Program into an Honors College. First convened in April 2011, the [Honors College Task Force](#) crafted a roadmap for the creation of an Honors College. In October 2013, its final report called for the establishment of an Honors College that will raise the undergraduate academic profile of UMKC and enhance the classroom and campus experience for all UMKC students.

On March 1, 2015, following a national search, James McKusick became the founding dean of the new Honors College, with an academic appointment as a professor in the English Department. Startup funding for the college was allocated by the University of Missouri System for high-impact learning experiences.

The UMKC Honors Program became the UMKC Honors College on July 1, 2015. Entering students in Fall 2015 became the inaugural class of Honors College students. Students who were then enrolled in the UMKC Honors Program automatically became part of the new Honors College. The faculty and administrative offices of the Honors College moved to the fourth floor of Cherry Hall in summer 2016. Over the next five years, enrollment grew substantially to 460 students enrolled in the Honors College.

In July 2021, the UMKC Honors College was reconfigured as an Honors Program. This transition was an outcome of the UMKC Forward initiative, which aimed “to reimagine our future in innovative and creative ways that would grow our excellence and financial stability.” The UMKC Honors Program is a university-wide academic program led by a director, Dr. Gayle Levy. The current goals for the Honors Program are to sustain enrollment while maintaining high academic standards and broadening our engagement with the campus community.

## Benefits of Membership in the Honors Program

The Honors Program offers special opportunities and benefits to its students, both within and beyond the classroom. These benefits include:

- Early registration before other students on campus
- Honors-only housing in the Oak Street Residence Hall, the Honors Living-Learning Community
- UMKC faculty who will individually guide students in their honors work
- Community service programs designed specifically for honors students, such as the Honors Program – Kauffman School Partnership
- Special courses for honors students
- Individual advising for national scholarships, including the Rhodes, Marshall, Truman, Goldwater and Udall Scholarships
- Honors-only summer study abroad programs

## What to Expect in Honors Courses

Students enrolling in honors courses often have questions about what is expected in our classes. Although each honors course is different, we offer the following guidelines for both students and faculty on what to expect.

### **Distinctive Features of Honors Courses at UMKC**

The following distinctive characteristics of honors courses were initially devised by the Honors Program faculty and formally established in 2019:

- **Honors courses should promote the development of skills that are transferable across a broad range of disciplines and professions**, using pedagogical approaches that advance student learning outcomes in critical thinking, logical analysis, problem solving, communication, teamwork, digital literacy and emotional intelligence.
- To the extent possible, honors courses should include at least one of the following **four focus areas** as an essential component. With evolving career opportunities and ever-changing cultural values, it is vital to imbue our students with skills, ethics and intercultural understanding beyond what is available in a traditional classroom experience.



1. **Social Justice and Cultural Awareness**: As an urban institution, UMKC aims to be at the forefront of social justice reform. Today's leaders must be citizens of the world. The Honors Program believes the experience of study abroad to be of utmost importance for all students. Students also have opportunities to learn more about diverse cultures in our own community through pre-professional internships and community service. Working with the Office of Diversity and Inclusion, Honors Program students will learn how to challenge their own preconceptions and become better and more inclusive citizens of the world.
2. **Environmental Sustainability**: Climate change is an issue that will have an enduring impact on current and future students. Honors students must have a strong background in basic science and technology in order to fully understand the difficult environmental challenges we face and be prepared to make decisions, both in their daily lives and on a broader scale, that will have positive environmental impacts and help start healing the earth.
3. **Leadership and Ethics**: Leadership is a necessary skill, and one that continues to change as our culture and society evolves. It is imperative to give honors students the tools to become effective leaders who know how to challenge authority and engage in ethical reflection in order to make the changes necessary to help their organizations thrive. The Honors Program seeks to build future leaders who are capable of making informed ethical decisions. Honors students will learn how to assess the needs of a team, adapt to diverse community and cultural standards, and how to contribute when not in the lead.
4. **Kansas City History and Urban Engagement**: Almost half of UMKC alumni stay in the metro area after graduation. The Honors Program will prepare its students to become the backbone of the area by building their local knowledge and getting them engaged early. Honors students work with local charter schools, engage with UMKC alumni, and work closely with local nonprofits and elected officials to build a better Kansas City.

The **four focus areas** stated above are **distinctive features** of many honors courses at UMKC. In addition, the following **general characteristics** of honors courses are evident throughout the honors curriculum at UMKC.

## Pedagogy and Curriculum

- **Honors courses are generally taught in a seminar format.** Students are expected to be active learners, engage in extensive writing, discussion, and hands-on scientific laboratory or creative work, read original texts or documents, and work at a more advanced or intellectually sophisticated level than would be expected of students in a non-honors course at a similar level and with a similar topic.
- **Honors courses are more challenging,** with greater intensity, depth, and student engagement than one might find in a similar non-honors course. Honors courses don't necessarily entail a greater quantity of reading and writing assignments, but they do have higher expectations of student performance, particularly in the quality and degree of student participation in class discussion, group projects, and independent research.
- **Honors courses incorporate primary source readings with textbooks.** Rather than read only derivative sources of information in the field, students should have the opportunity to engage the most important thinkers in the field in their own words.
- **Honors courses integrate active learning with other approaches.** Honors instructors provide students with plenty of opportunities to engage actively with the course material through lively, well-planned discussions, debates, simulations, small-group work, hands-on experiments, and case studies.
- **Honors instructors set clear learning expectations.** Each honors instructor clearly articulates the course objectives and the expectations for individual assignments.
- **Honors courses incorporate opportunities for independent research and co-curricular activity.** When relevant, honors courses provide the chance for students to gain the essential library research skills of the discipline addressed in the course (introduction to key reference materials, sources and methods, documentation system, and discussion of ways to find and evaluate appropriate sources). Additionally, honors courses should include, where appropriate, co-curricular activities such as field trips, speakers, film showings, visits to exhibits, social-academic gatherings, and service learning.
- **Honors courses sequence assignments** so that on each assignment, students apply previous knowledge to new ideas and thus become increasingly sophisticated learners and knowers.
- **Honors courses focus on enduring and emerging issues and problems in each field.** Rather than emphasize only the acquisition of knowledge outside the context in which it will be used, students in honors courses are often asked to complete assignments

designed around real-world issues and problems. In this way, they experience the compelling challenges typically faced by professionals in their disciplines.

- **Honors courses enable students to understand the characteristics of excellent work in the academic discipline.** Honors instructors help students to understand the assumptions, methods, types of evidence, means of organizing information, appropriate language, purposes, and ethical implications of the work done in their fields. They invite students to consider how these conventions differ from those in other fields.

### **The Students and the Professor**

- **Students are actively involved in the course.** Honors students are constantly encouraged to seek new information, integrate it with what they already know, organize it in meaningful ways, and have the chance to explain it to others. They explore, research, make choices and explain, and these activities help them develop an expert understanding of the discipline.
- **Students take responsibility for their own and others' learning.** Honors faculty help to ensure this outcome by setting aside some time in class to discuss the roles and responsibilities that both students and the professor should assume in the course. They encourage students to engage one another in discussions and to hold each other accountable for participating actively and constructively in class activities and discussions.
- **Honors courses are taught by highly qualified faculty members** who provide the students with the opportunity, tools, intellectual foundation, and encouragement to become motivated, self-disciplined, and independent learners.
- **The professor serves as coach or facilitator, rather than the sole authority or expert.** Honors instructors guide students so they can come up with their own questions and answers and provide feedback to other students.
- **Professors provide regular opportunities for feedback and assessment.** They offer continuous feedback to students so that students make steady improvements in performance. Feedback to students is often provided through discussion with peers and the professor, through the use of rubrics describing excellent work, or through summaries of student responses to in-class surveys. Honors instructors also incorporate into the course opportunities for students to offer them feedback on the course through questionnaires, emails, discussion, mid-term evaluations, and course evaluation forms.

- **Grading for honors courses should be rigorous but fair**, based on clearly articulated expectations. Students should not be given any grade advantage simply because they are enrolled in an honors course, but neither should they be penalized. Many honors students are rightly concerned about grades because their educational goals include professional and graduate programs that look carefully at applicants' grades. These are legitimate concerns, and it is the instructor's responsibility to communicate the expectations required for success. Especially in first-year honors courses, a graded assignment should be returned to students by the fourth week of classes. In all honors courses, students should be held to high and clearly articulated standards.
- **The professor and students respect and value one another.** Honors faculty members enhance mutual respect between themselves and students by treating them like adults, allowing them to take risks, meeting with them individually, and involving them in making certain decisions regarding class direction.

**Note:** The general characteristics of honors courses stated above were adapted from the Honors College at the University of New Mexico and subsequently revised by UMKC Honors Program faculty.

## Section Two – Academic Requirements

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### Honors Program Academic Requirements

We encourage all faculty members to become familiar with the following requirements, since students often seek guidance from those faculty members with whom they work most closely.

#### Honors Program Graduation Requirements

- Graduate with **University Honors**: 27 total credit hours required.
- Graduate as an **Honors Scholar**: 33 total credit hours required.
- Students must maintain a **3.2 GPA** to remain in good standing in the Honors Program.
- Students must earn a **B or better** in a course to receive honors credit.

#### University Honors Requirements

First-year students must complete 27 hours of honors coursework to earn the **University Honors** distinction. A minimum cumulative grade point average of 3.2 is required to graduate with **University Honors**. Students can earn honors credits through:

- Honors-Only Courses
- Honors Discussion Groups
- Study Abroad
- Individual Honors Contracts
- Beyond the Classroom Experiences
- Graduate Courses

#### Honors Scholar Requirements

To graduate as an **Honors Scholar**, students must complete a six-credit [Senior Honors Thesis or Project](#) in addition to the requirements noted above.

Students who complete the Honors Program Requirements and the Senior Honors Thesis will graduate not only with **University Honors** but also as an **Honors Scholar**. Both notations will appear on the student's transcript and on the diploma.

## Graduation Requirements for Transfer or Continuing Students

- **Transfer students** who enter the Honors Program with more than 50 hours of transfer credit will need **21 hours** of honors credit to earn the **University Honors** distinction.
- **Transfer students** may count up to 9 transfer honors credit hours toward the total hours required for graduation with **University Honors**.
- **Currently enrolled UMKC students** who enter the Honors Program with less than 50 credits will need 27 hours of honors credit to earn the University Honors distinction. A total of 21 hours of honors credit is required if the student enters the Honors Program with 50 or more credits.

## How to Earn Honors Credits

The Honors Program offers many opportunities for students to earn honors course credits. To earn honors credit, students must earn a B or higher in the course.

- Enroll in [honors courses](#). Many of the General Education core requirements can be fulfilled by taking honors courses.
- Complete an [individual honors contract](#) in any course to receive honors credit for that course.
- Participate in an [honors discussion group](#) – a weekly student-led discussion session offered in connection with certain specific courses at UMKC.
- Complete a [Study Abroad Program](#). Every summer, the Honors Program offers a one-month study abroad program. In addition, many academic departments at UMKC offer excellent study abroad programs. Up to 15 credits earned in any UMKC-approved study abroad program may be counted as regular honors credits toward the coursework needed to earn the University Honors distinction.
- Enroll in a [Beyond the Classroom Experience](#), which could be an internship, a clinical experience, practice teaching, undergraduate research or a community engagement project. Up to six credits earned in Beyond the Classroom Experiences may be counted toward the University Honors distinction.
- Enroll in [Graduate Courses](#). Up to six credits of graduate-level coursework may be counted toward the University Honors distinction. An undergraduate student within 30 credits of graduation can enroll in a graduate-level course by submitting a [special permission form](#).
- Complete a [Senior Honors Thesis or Project](#).

More complete information about each of these honors credit options is provided below.

## Honors-Only Courses

Honors-only courses are open only to honors students. They are taught by Honors Program faculty and by faculty members in a broad spectrum of academic disciplines. Honors courses typically enroll a smaller number of students and provide rigorous and engaging coursework. Every semester, the [Honors Course Descriptions](#) are published on the Honors Program website.

The Honors Program encourages all UMKC faculty members to consider engaging in the development of new honors courses. Designing and teaching honors courses is intrinsically rewarding, due to the advantages of working with highly motivated and academically talented students in small, interactive honors seminars. Moreover, engagement in honors teaching and mentoring is often regarded as highly meritorious in the context of unit standards for promotion and tenure. Accordingly, the Honors Program welcomes the participation of faculty members from all disciplines in the development and implementation of new Honors courses.

For further information on how faculty members can become involved in designing and teaching honors courses, see “How to Develop a New Honors Course” (on page 27 below).

## Honors Discussion Groups

Honors discussion groups are weekly discussion sessions offered in connection with certain courses at UMKC. In recent semesters, student-led honors discussion groups have been offered in conjunction with courses in Accounting, Biology, Calculus, Chemistry, English, French, German, Spanish, Management, Physics, Psychology, and Conservatory (Music, Dance, Theatre).

- Students may sign up for a discussion group during the first two weeks of each semester.
- Honors credit may be assigned retroactively in a course for which a student has successfully participated in a related discussion group. The letter “H” (for Honors) will be added to the course number on a student’s transcript.
- A course grade of B or higher is required for a student to receive honors credit, and students may receive honors credit only for courses taken at UMKC.
- Leaders of the discussion groups are upperclassmen in the Honors Program who have good knowledge of the subject and are often majoring in the discipline.
- The discussion group meeting times are arranged by the leader in conjunction with the group. Attendance will be taken at all group meetings, normally once per week.

- Regular attendance and participation in the discussion group is required in order for a student to qualify for honors credit in the related course.
- Every semester, the [Honors Discussion Group Schedule](#) is published on the Honors Program website.

## Honors Contracts

Many students in the Honors Program choose to do an individual Honors Contract. An Honors Contract is an agreement to carry out an independent study project designed in consultation with the instructor, in any course they choose. Students enjoy this option because it allows them to individualize virtually any course and become better acquainted with UMKC faculty members.

### **Advice to UMKC faculty members regarding Honors Contracts**

If a student asks you to approve an Honors Contract in a course that you are teaching, please consider their request carefully, bearing in mind the following considerations:

Only a few courses are taught each semester exclusively as honors seminars. Honors students need to supplement these courses with regular courses of their choice in which they do alternative and/or supplemental work for honors credit. Professors participate in advising Honors Contracts on a voluntary basis, and faculty members may decline such a request if they feel unable to take on the responsibility of supervising and evaluating the supplemental work. If you are willing to allow your course to be taken for honors credit, then please discuss the supplemental work that is to be done with the student, and work with them to fill out the [Honors Contract Form](#). The student is responsible for returning an electronic copy of the completed and signed Honors Contract to the Honors Program by the end of the fourth week of the semester.

The proposed project should extend and supplement the learning objectives of the course. For example, the student may wish to write a paper, carry out research, conduct an experiment, make an oral presentation, engage in a community service project, or organize a tutorial group. The completed Honors Contract should specify the type and amount of supplemental work expected. For example, if a paper is assigned, the Honors Contract should specify its minimum word count.

Any undergraduate course at UMKC in which the student is currently enrolled for a letter grade may serve as the basis of an Honors Contract, subject to the approval of the faculty member teaching the course. However, Physical Education courses are ineligible for Honors Contracts.



At the end of the semester, it is up to you to decide whether the supplemental work completed by the student merits the honors credit. We suggest that you meet with the student a few weeks before the end of the semester to discuss the student's progress on the honors project and to assess what still needs to be done so that you feel comfortable awarding the honors credit to the student. If, after having made clear your expectations, the student still does not meet them, you have every right to withhold the honors credit.

If the student receives a grade of B or better in the course and submits an [Honors Contract Completion Form](#) signed by you, the student will receive honors credit.

If you wish to set up a special honors discussion section, lab, tutorial, etc. that would include students who are not a part of the Honors Program but who could profit from an honors experience and whom you think should get honors credit, please contact Honors Program Director Gayle Levy, and she will handle the paperwork. (Students who are not a part of the Honors Program can receive honors credit in specific courses without planning to graduate with honors).

Please feel free to contact Honors Program Director Gayle Levy at 816-235-2820 or [levyg@umkc.edu](mailto:levyg@umkc.edu) if you have any questions about Honors Contracts.

### **Guidance to Students regarding Honors Contracts**

We encourage faculty members to provide the following guidance to students who are seeking your approval for an Honors Contract.

- The student should obtain an [honors contract form](#).
- The student should devise a project they would like to do for a course in which they are currently enrolled. This project should extend and supplement the learning objectives of the course. For example, the student may wish to write a paper, carry out research, conduct an experiment, make an oral presentation, engage in a community service project, or organize a tutorial group.
- Any undergraduate course at UMKC in which a student is currently enrolled for a letter grade may serve as the basis of an honors contract, subject to the approval of the faculty member teaching the course. However, Physical Education courses are ineligible for honors contracts.
- The student should approach the professor with their idea and discuss the additional work to be completed under the honors contract.
- The student should fill out the [honors contract form](#) and sign it; then ask their instructor to complete and sign the form.

- Contracts are due within the first four weeks of the semester. The student should scan and submit the completed contract to the Honors Program e-mail: [honors@umkc.edu](mailto:honors@umkc.edu)
- When the student has completed the work required to fulfill the honors contract, they should fill out the [completion form](#), and have their instructor complete and sign the instructor's section of the form.
- Completion forms are due no later than the Tuesday following finals week. The student should submit a scanned copy of the [completion form](#) to [honors@umkc.edu](mailto:honors@umkc.edu).
- A course grade of B or higher is required for honors credit to be awarded.
- If the student requests an extension of the completion deadline, they must email the [Honors Director](#) with the said request before the end of the semester, and the instructor must agree to the extension.
- Honors Contract forms can be found at: [honors.umkc.edu/academics/honors-contract](https://honors.umkc.edu/academics/honors-contract)

## Study Abroad

Study abroad fits perfectly into the honors experience. The Honors Program seeks to break down the traditional divide between classroom and life. Study abroad opportunities sustain this kind of learning through international travel and study.

Most summers, the Honors Program offers an exciting one-month study abroad program designed exclusively for honors students. In addition, UMKC offers many other study-abroad programs suitable for honors students. We encourage our students to study abroad with any program they choose. Visit [Study Abroad and Global Engagement](#) for complete information on all study abroad opportunities at UMKC.

- For information about **Honors Program Study Abroad Programs**, please visit our website: [honors.umkc.edu/beyond-the-classroom/study-abroad](https://honors.umkc.edu/beyond-the-classroom/study-abroad)
- To get honors credit for their study abroad experience, students should complete [the Honors Program Study Abroad form](#) at least two weeks before departure.

Up to 15 credits earned in any UMKC-approved study abroad program may be counted as regular honors credits toward the coursework needed to earn the University Honors distinction.

## Beyond the Classroom Experiences

The Honors Program provides many opportunities for students to engage in **Beyond the Classroom (BTC) Experiences**. These experiences are recommended, but not required for honors students. A student's BTC Experience could be an internship, a clinical experience, practice teaching, undergraduate research or a community engagement project. A maximum of six academic credits earned in BTC Experiences may be counted toward the coursework needed to earn the University Honors distinction.

Students must register in advance to receive honors credit for their BTC Experience. Students should complete the [Beyond the Classroom Form](#) and specify the course and experience they are completing. This form is due within the first four weeks of the semester. For further information: [honors.umkc.edu/beyond-the-classroom](https://honors.umkc.edu/beyond-the-classroom)

The following volunteer opportunities may be suitable for BTC Experience credit if students enroll for academic credit in the *Honors Internship* course (Honors 496 or 496A) or a suitable internship course in their academic major program.

### **Kauffman School**

Since 2004, the Honors Program has proudly sponsored a partnership with the Ewing Marion Kauffman School. The Kauffman School is a free public charter school for students in fifth through twelfth grades, and its mission is to support and empower students to become eventual college graduates. Each year, the Honors Program allocates several Work-Study positions for eligible students to work at the Kauffman School in administrative and classroom roles. In addition, honors students are proud to claim a strong track record of volunteerism at the Kauffman School.



### **Academy for Integrated Arts (AFIA)**

The Academy for Integrated Arts (or AFIA) is a free Kansas City charter school dedicated to using the arts to prepare students for a college preparatory high school. AFIA serves students from pre-K to sixth grade. The Honors Program sponsors several Work-Study positions at AFIA each year, and also supports volunteer opportunities within the school.

## Internships

The Honors Program encourages all of its students to seek out internship opportunities that are appropriate to their interests and future career goals. Internships enable students to apply their learning to real-world situations, network with professionals in their chosen discipline, and gain job experience in their intended career field. Many academic departments at UMKC provide access to internship opportunities, and some offer academic credit for internships, so students should visit their home department's website and consult with their major advisor to learn more about the internship opportunities specific to their major.

[UMKC Career Services](#) offers a broad range of tools to assist students in all stages of their career development. Utilize Career Services' [Handshake](#) to begin searching for jobs and internships. There is no fee for UMKC students and alumni.

### **Honors Program Internship Course**

***Honors Internship*** (Honors 496 and 496A) is an academic internship course available to members of the Honors Program. This course requires written assignments in addition to the work performed in a professional workplace. Internships are individually arranged with the sponsoring organization. A Learning Agreement will be established in the first week of the semester that states the contractual responsibilities of the student, the workplace supervisor and the faculty internship coordinator. Variable credit, 0-6 credits. For further information, visit [honors.umkc.edu/beyond-the-classroom/internships](https://honors.umkc.edu/beyond-the-classroom/internships)

## Graduate Courses

Honors Program students may count up to six credits of graduate-level coursework in fulfillment of their University Honors requirements. Some students in combined undergraduate-graduate degree programs, such as the Pharm.D. or BSN/MSN program, will enroll in graduate courses as a required part of their academic program. Other undergraduate students may request permission to enroll in a graduate-level course by submitting a completed [Request Form](#) to the School of Graduate Studies.

Students must earn a B or better in a graduate course to receive honors credit. Undergraduate students pay standard undergraduate tuition for graduate courses.

## Eligibility Requirements

For an undergraduate student to enroll in a graduate course, they must be a degree-seeking senior who meets one of the following conditions:

- Be within 12 hours of graduation and have at least a 3.0 grade point average in their undergraduate work;
- Be within 30 hours of graduation and have at least a 3.5 grade point average in their undergraduate work; or
- They must be enrolled in the Pharm.D. program, the six-year M.D. program, or the BSN/MSN program and have the permission of their program coordinator to take the specified 5000-level courses as a required part of their degree program.

In exceptional cases, undergraduate students who do not meet one of the above conditions may petition the School of Graduate Studies for an exception.

## Approval Process

To request permission to enroll in a graduate course, a student should submit a completed [Request Form](#) to the School of Graduate Studies. Before submitting the form, the student should consult with the academic advisor in their major degree program for advice and approval to enroll in graduate courses. For further information:

[honors.umkc.edu/academics/graduate-courses](https://honors.umkc.edu/academics/graduate-courses)

## Senior Honors Thesis

All honors students are encouraged to undertake a six-credit **Senior Honors Thesis** in their senior year. If a student completes the requirements for the Honors Program and for the Senior Honors Thesis, they will graduate not only with **University Honors** but also as an **Honors Scholar**. Both notations will appear on their transcript.

In all cases, the **Honors Scholar** distinction will require an additional six credits of Honors Thesis or Project coursework beyond the **University Honors** requirements.

The Senior Honors Thesis should be a research paper or project in the student's major discipline that they are working on for a specific course or professor.

The Senior Honors Thesis is normally completed over three semesters, starting with a preparatory seminar in the spring semester of the junior year. Students are invited to select

their own thesis topic, which will involve in-depth research with a faculty advisor. The Senior Honors Thesis or Project provides six honors credits (with a course grade of B or higher) toward the requirements for graduation as an **Honors Scholar**. See the [Senior Honors Thesis Student Guidelines](#) for additional information.

Honors students who are thinking about producing a Senior Honors Thesis or Project can see some of the great work of Honors Program graduates online at [Miller Nichols Library](#).

## Senior Honors Thesis Guidelines for Faculty

All UMKC Honors Program students are encouraged to undertake a 6-credit Senior Honors Thesis in their senior year. This thesis or project is designed to be the culminating product of the student's undergraduate career. Oftentimes this work can be used as the writing or project sample in the student's application to graduate school or in an employment portfolio. The faculty advisor for this project plays an essential role in guiding the student in this high-impact learning experience.

If the student completes the requirements for the Honors Program and for the Senior Honors Thesis, they will graduate not only with University Honors but also as an Honors Scholar. Both notations will appear on the transcript. In all cases, the Honors Scholar distinction will require an additional 6 credits of Honors Thesis coursework in addition to the 27 credits which make up the basic University Honors requirements. These additional 6 credits can be piggybacked onto a major requirement (Senior Capstone or Seminar) if possible or taken as Directed or Independent Studies (and applied to the major in addition to the honors requirements). Alternatively, the student may instead choose to enroll in Honors 495 (Senior Honors Thesis).

Every Senior Honors Thesis requires thoughtful and sustained collaboration between the student researcher and a faculty mentor. It is the responsibility of the student to seek out and cultivate a relationship with an appropriately qualified faculty mentor to serve in that role. The essential responsibilities of the faculty mentor and student researcher are outlined below. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the Honors Program Director, Gayle Levy: [levyg@umkc.edu](mailto:levyg@umkc.edu).

### **Faculty Eligibility**

All full-time faculty members at UMKC (both regular and non-tenure-track) are eligible to serve as faculty mentors for the Senior Honors Thesis.

## **Earning Credit for the Senior Honors Thesis**

Students have three basic options for earning the 6 credits needed to complete the Senior Honors Thesis:

1. Roll the credits into a class that lends itself to a thesis. Some departments offer open-ended Senior Seminars or Capstones in which students could begin to work on their theses. The Senior Honors Thesis is a two-semester undertaking so the student will continue their work through the next semester.
2. Take Honors 495 (Senior Honors Thesis) for one or both of their thesis semesters. This course is offered for variable credit so the student can enroll in however many credits they need.
3. Enroll in a Directed or Independent Studies in their major. Many of these courses are also variable credit.

The Senior Honors Thesis is normally completed over two or three semesters, ideally starting with an optional preparatory seminar in the spring semester of the junior year (Honors 330: Honors Thesis/Project Practicum, 1 credit). Although students can choose to devote all 6 credits entirely to the research and production of the thesis or project over semesters, we suggest breaking down the 6 credits as follows:

### **Spring semester junior year**

- Honors 330: Honors Thesis/Project Practicum (1 credit; optional)

### **Summer or Fall semester senior year**

- Honors 495 or Directed Studies/Independent Study or Senior Seminar/Capstone in the major (2–3 credits)

### **Fall or Spring semester senior year**

- Honors 350: Honors Thesis/Project Writing Group (1 credit; optional)
- Honors 495 or Directed Studies/Independent Study (2–3 credits)

## **Responsibilities of the Faculty Mentor**

- Explore possible research topics that reflect the student's interests and preparation.
- Identify the knowledge, experience, and skills the student needs to complete the project. The faculty mentor may advise the student to enroll in an appropriate research methods course before embarking upon the project.
- Help the student define and focus the project, including the development of a timetable to assure that the project can be managed within the time frame allotted.

- Discuss with the student the details of how the proposed research, scholarly, or creative project will be carried out and the features of a good project proposal.
- Help the student determine if their project will require approval from UMKC's Institutional Review Board if the student is involved in Human Subjects Research, from the Institutional Biosafety Committee if biohazardous materials will be involved or from the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee in the case of vertebrate animals.
- If the student is conducting research outside of UMKC, discuss and identify the resources that will be available at the location of the research, including specific individuals to whom the student can turn for guidance.
- Develop a system of communication with the student during the project period that will allow for an appropriate balance of mentor guidance and student independence.
- Sign all the necessary contract and completion forms. If the Honors student has enrolled in Honors 495 (Senior Honors Thesis), then the senior honors thesis advisor will need to include the grade on the completion form so that the Honors Program Director can submit the grade.
- Assist the student in identifying appropriate forums in which to present their research or creative endeavor. All students completing a Senior Honors Thesis are required to present their research at the Honors Program Research Colloquium (April or May), the UMKC Undergraduate Research Symposium (April), or the Great Plains Honors Council (April). Other research conferences or departmental forums may also be appropriate.
- Assist the student in editing and preparing the final version of their Senior Honors Thesis for electronic publication. All students who complete the thesis or project are asked to give permission for the thesis to be stored in an online archive, [MOspace](#), through Miller Nichols Library, which can be accessed by any member of the UMKC community. If the final paper contains any proprietary material that is not suitable for publication, access can be restricted or embargoed. The student researcher should consult with their faculty mentor to determine whether any such restriction is necessary.

If you would like to see examples of honors theses, visit [MOspace](#) here (log-in required).

### **Frequently Asked Questions by Faculty Mentors**

Q: Why am I being asked to direct a Senior Honors Thesis or Project?

A: A student identified you as a faculty member they would like to work with and who does research of interest to them in the major.



Q: How much time will this take?

A: We suggest that you meet with the student weekly or biweekly simply to make sure they are on track and to hold them accountable for their project. These meetings can be quick or a bit longer, depending on the needs of the student, but relatively frequent meetings will help to keep the student on track. Certainly early on the student will need some thoughtful guidance in the exploratory stages of the project; towards the end the student will greatly benefit from suggestions and edits when writing the thesis. Students do their best work and get the most out of the experience with regular contact with their faculty mentor throughout the thesis or project year.

Q: How long should the thesis or project be?

A: This depends on the field and project. Humanities theses are often 30–40 pages in length. A biology thesis can be 10–15 pages. An artist statement that accompanies a public performance or art exhibit may only be 5 pages long. As a general rule the thesis should be the length of a substantial journal article in the field.

Q: What will I get out of directing an honors thesis or project?

A: Faculty members often say that working so closely with a motivated student is one of the most meaningful pedagogical experiences they have. Some students choose to work on a faculty member's research project and co-author a publishable paper together. If this is the case, the thesis portion of the project still needs to be written entirely by the student.

Q: How many Honors Program students choose to write a thesis?

A: Over the last few years 8–12 students per year have written a thesis. We hope that over the next five years 40–50 students will choose to do a Senior Honors Thesis. This is about one-fifth to one-quarter of students graduating from the Honors Program each year.

Q: What if I don't know the student very well or am not sure if I want to be a thesis or project mentor?

A: Ideally the student who asks you to mentor them will have taken at least one class with you. If this is not the case, then you will have to decide whether the student's project interests you and whether you have the time to take this on. If not, please consider giving the student suggestions on which of your colleagues might be willing to mentor someone.

Q: Who should I contact if I have questions?

A: Please contact Dr. Gayle Levy, Honors Program Director ([levyg@umkc.edu](mailto:levyg@umkc.edu)) or 816-235-2820.

## Resources for Faculty Mentors

[UMKC's Office of Undergraduate Research](#) administers several programs to support students and their faculty mentors who engage in undergraduate research and creative scholarship. We encourage all faculty mentors to share information about these opportunities with their students and encourage them to apply for undergraduate research support through the following programs:

- **[SUROP—Summer Undergraduate Research Opportunity](#)**. Provides students with tuition grants (\$2,000) and project expenses (up to \$1,250) to undertake projects during the summer under the supervision of a faculty mentor, who receives a \$1,000 stipend. All SUROP students present their work at the SUROP poster symposium in late August.
- **[SEARCH—Students Engaged in the Arts and Research](#)**. Provides students with project expenses (up to \$1,250) to undertake projects during the academic year under the supervision of a faculty mentor.
- **[EUREKA Course Development Initiative—\(Experiences in Undergraduate Research\)](#)**. Provides faculty with a \$2,500 stipend for developing 100- and 200-level courses that embody key characteristics of undergraduate research & creative scholarship.
- **[URD@C--Undergraduate Research Day@ the Capitol](#)**. Provides undergraduate researchers and artists with the opportunity to share their work with state legislators and other stakeholders in Jefferson City, Missouri, in partnership with other UM-system campuses.
- **[Annual Symposium of Undergraduate Research and Creative Scholarship](#)**. Provides students from across the university with the opportunity to present posters, read papers, make oral presentations, and undertake performances.
- **[Award for Excellence in Mentoring Undergraduate Researchers, Scholars, and Artists](#)**. This award honors a UMKC faculty member whose student has presented his or her research at a forum on or off campus. Up to three \$1,000 stipends are awarded annually.

### Key Traits for Mentoring

UMKC's Office of Undergraduate Research offers the following guidance for faculty mentors:

- **Forwardness.** Our students may well be hesitant about approaching us if they are interested in doing scholarship. They know that they don't know much yet and may feel

inadequate or in danger of being dismissed. And they certainly know that they don't yet know enough to take on fully professional work. But with undergraduate research projects, we as faculty are in charge. We can recruit students in whose eyes we see the glint of pleasure in the ideas of the classroom; we can reach out to students who may not yet feel capable of reaching out to us.

- **Persistence and repetition.** Nothing is easy the first time . . . or, perhaps, even the fourth. The ongoing contacts with undergraduates during research projects allow us to give students the opportunity to struggle and eventually to emerge from those struggles with hard-won success. And inviting students into our intellectual world allows them to see us struggling with the framing of a new problem, with the management of inevitable setbacks. It takes scholars off pedestals and allows undergraduates to see us as workers and thinkers not unlike themselves.
- **Emotional honesty.** We all entered our career paths because of some particular motive, often hard to state rationally but still at the core of why do the work we've chosen. There are parts of our work that enliven us and other parts we find frustrating or tedious. Our being open about the joys and challenges we find in our work will help our students see how they might partake of the particular pleasures of our discipline.
- **Recognizing and locating alternative mentors.** As students grow and become more focused in their work, they may well want to take their scholarship into an area with which we're less familiar or less capable of strong guidance. If students have been working and presenting along with us, they are becoming part of our professional network, and we can work with them to find an intellectual guide more closely fitted to their specific interests.<sup>1</sup>

### **Mentoring Tips for Faculty**

- Remember that your goal is enhancing the educational and personal growth of the student.
- Be patient. Do not take students' abilities for granted.
- Tailor explanations of concepts to the student's level. Students often remark that mentors forget that "I am just a student."

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<sup>1</sup> Source: Louise Temple, Thomas Q. Sibley, and Amy J. Orr. *How to Mentor Undergraduate Researchers*. Washington, DC: Council on Undergraduate Research, 2010.

- Encourage questions. Create an environment in which all questions are legitimate and answered.
- Show enthusiasm and interest in the student and the project.
- Be available and accessible. Make time for students. Everyone is busy. If you agree to be a mentor, you need to take the time required to be supportive. Avoid distractions, such as phone calls and colleague visits during scheduled student meetings.
- Be ready. If you are not prepared when the student arrives, it does more than cause him or her to do “busy work” to kill time; it sends a message about how much you value the student and his or her contribution and worth.
- Set aside a regular time for mentor-student meetings. The frequency of such meetings will vary by discipline and by level of student.
- Talk about career plans with your students, and if appropriate, encourage students to consider graduate school. Many students, even very bright and capable students, do not feel able or worthy; sometimes they only have to be asked if they are considering graduate school to be encouraged to apply.
- Occasionally choose a different venue for meetings, such as a campus coffee shop. Students typically enjoy seeing the “human” side of their mentors. Remember that you are always a role model.
- Trust is more easily lost than gained.
- Think about what you say to students. Be consistent; students do repeat to each other the things you say. Never rebuke a student in front of others.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Source: Louise Temple, Thomas Q. Sibley, and Amy J. Orr. *How to Mentor Undergraduate Researchers*. Washington, DC: Council on Undergraduate Research, 2010.

## Section Three – Honors Course Development

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### Invitation to Faculty

The Honors Program encourages all UMKC faculty members to consider engaging in the development of new honors courses. Designing and teaching honors courses is intrinsically rewarding, due to the advantages of working with highly motivated and academically talented students in small, interactive honors seminars. Moreover, engagement in honors teaching and mentoring is often considered to be highly meritorious in the context of unit standards for promotion and tenure. Accordingly, the Honors Program welcomes the participation of faculty members from all disciplines in the development and implementation of new honors courses.

New honors courses are particularly welcome in disciplines that currently lack honors curriculum, or in subject areas where there is high student demand for additional honors courses. Student demand can often be discerned in existing (regular) courses in which students frequently approach the instructor to request an Honors Contract, and in some cases students have expressed their desire to faculty members for new honors courses on specific topics. We especially encourage the development of honors courses that fulfill a General Education requirement, since such courses typically enroll students of all majors and engage them in essential, foundational learning. Honors courses that satisfy major or minor requirements are also generally encouraged. However, special-topics courses and free electives are generally not good candidates for new honors courses unless it can be demonstrated that there is strong student demand in a specific subject area.

### How to Develop a New Honors Course

Any faculty member at UMKC may initiate a proposal for a new honors course or an honors version of an existing course. Once approved by the faculty member's department chair and the dean of the faculty member's college or school, the proposal must then go to the Honors Program Director and (in the case of a new course designation) the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee for review and approval. It would be prudent for a faculty member considering the development of a new honors course to consult informally with the Honors Program Director about the potential feasibility of the course before moving forward with a formal course proposal.

The Honors Program does not have any dedicated funds available to support the instruction of new honors courses, and for this reason, any new honors courses will generally be offered as

regular departmental courses that are part of a faculty member's normal teaching load. Any tuition revenue that results from honors course instruction will accrue through normal budget procedures to the faculty member's home academic unit.

## Honors Course Criteria

The Honors Program has established the following criteria for the development of new honors courses. Each of the following criteria should be addressed in an honors course proposal:

1. Limited enrollment to ensure the opportunity for student participation and for faculty-student interchange. The recommended maximum class size for an honors course is 25 students. (If an exception to this guideline is requested, please provide rationale.)
2. Structure and instruction that is supplemental to or independent of lecture, laboratory, and discussion meetings and materials for a non-honors course covering the same or similar subject matter. An honors section of a large lecture course can be created by adding an honors subsection, or an honors laboratory section, to the regular course.
3. Instruction by regular faculty members to ensure expertise with subject matter, experience with teaching and research, a role model of the professional in the discipline, and personal consultation. (In some exceptional cases, an adjunct faculty member may possess unique expertise in the course subject area; in such cases, please provide rationale and attach a faculty CV.)
4. Honors courses should promote the development of skills that are transferable across a broad range of disciplines and professions, using pedagogical approaches that advance student learning outcomes in critical thinking, logical analysis, problem solving, communication, teamwork, digital literacy and emotional intelligence.
5. To the extent possible, honors courses should include at least one of the following four focus areas as an essential component: (a) Social Justice and Cultural Awareness, (b) Environmental Sustainability, (c) Leadership and Ethics, and (d) Kansas City History and Urban Engagement. These are recommended but not required course components.
6. Content that transcends the textbook and introduces advanced concepts, uses appropriate sources for intensive study of the topic, relates the discipline to other disciplines, and engages students in ethical reflection.
7. Methodology that fosters the growth of intellectual attitudes and skills through individual exploration of the topic, introduction to research methods, and appropriate fieldwork or service learning.

8. Syllabus that clearly presents student learning objectives, assignments, expectations of performance, timetables and deadlines, and basis for grading.
9. Grading that neither penalizes nor rewards the student because of his or her honors status. The grades in an honors course are not distributed on a curve, because the class is not a typical student population.
10. Workload and pace that both maintain the interest and challenge the ability of honors students.
11. Communication of the enthusiasm, dedication, and intellectual curiosity that a scholar brings to his or her discipline.

For further information on the characteristics of honors courses, please consult “What to Expect in Honors Courses” (on page 6 above).

The Honors Program Director is always glad to meet with faculty members who wish to discuss the possibility of developing a new honors course. Please contact Gayle Levy at 816-235-2820 or [levyg@umkc.edu](mailto:levyg@umkc.edu).

## Section Four – Academic Advising

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The Honors Program provides academic advising to all honors students. Students should also consult regularly with the academic advisor in their intended major. All honors students are encouraged to meet regularly with the Honors Program Advisor in order to discuss their progress toward completion of their academic requirements.

The main purpose of academic advising in the Honors Program is to assist students in the development of meaningful educational plans compatible with their goals, focusing on the following activities:

- assisting students in developing an educational plan and evaluating their progress toward life goals and objectives;
- assisting students in gaining
  - decision-making skills that are relevant to their educational, career and personal goals;
  - access to campus and community resources to enhance educational success;
  - enhanced understanding of their abilities, interests, aptitudes, and limitations;
- providing accurate and timely information about institutional policies, procedures, resources, and programs.

**Margo Gamache**, Director of Student Services, serves as the primary Honors Program Advisor. She works closely with many academic departments to coordinate and enhance our advising activities. In addition, the Honors Program administrators have specialized advising responsibilities. Honors Program director **Gayle Levy** offers advising to students who are planning to write a Senior Honors Thesis.

### Advising Expectations

#### Transcript Hygiene

Every student is responsible for ensuring that their Honors credit has posted correctly. Students are notified when Honors credit has officially posted. Students have two weeks after grades post to run a degree audit and notify the Honors College of any issues they may find.



## Communication

Honors College students are expected to read the weekly e-newsletter and stay abreast of events, opportunities, and announcements. Students are encouraged to ask questions and to inform the Honors College of any changes in their enrollment status.

## Advising

Honors College students are required to adhere to the following advising schedule:

- **Freshman:** students must meet with the Director of Student Services once each fall and spring semester.
- **Sophomore:** students must meet with the Director of Student Services during the fall semester and an Honors Ambassador during the spring semester.
- **Junior:** students must meet with an Honors Ambassador during fall semester and the Director of Student Services during their spring semester.
- **Senior:** students must show proof of having met with one of the following:
  - Career Services;
  - A faculty mentor in their major academic program;
  - An Honors College mentor; or
  - A professional mentor in their intended career path.

Students should meet with their major advisor before making their Honors Advising appointment. Students who schedule their Honors Advising before having met with their major advisor will be required to reschedule.

## Honors Ambassadors

Honors Ambassadors serve as peer advisors and mentors to current honors students by holding regularly scheduled office hours in various locations on campus to answer questions and support their peers academically, professionally, personally, and socially. Ambassadors are actively involved and committed Honors College students who work closely with our faculty and staff to promote the Honors College to prospective and current students as well as to the university community. The Honors Ambassador program provides these students with opportunities to develop leadership skills through the recruiting, advising and mentoring of honors students.

You can contact the Honors Ambassadors through email at [hcambassadors@umkc.edu](mailto:hcambassadors@umkc.edu). To get acquainted with the individual Honors Ambassadors and to find out their office hours, please visit: [honors.umkc.edu/get-involved/honors-ambassadors](https://honors.umkc.edu/get-involved/honors-ambassadors)

## Additional Campus Resources

Additional campus resources and services are available for UMKC students:

- [Counseling Services](#) offers individual counseling, group programs, and more. Students can check symptoms and get the help they need.
- [Career Services](#) is available to help students find internships and post-college employment. They can also help students improve their résumés, practice interviews and more.
- [Academic Support and Mentoring](#) offers tutoring and instruction in a wide variety of subjects.

## Frequently Asked Questions

Faculty members who teach and advise honors students may find it helpful to know how to respond to the following questions.

### **Fulfilling the University Honors Requirements**

Q: Am I required to enroll in certain specific honors courses in order to earn the University Honors distinction?

A: No. The University Honors requirements are entirely elective, meaning that any 27 honors credits will satisfy the requirements. No specific courses are required. Many honors students find that they are able to fulfill the University Honors requirements while also counting many of the same credits toward UMKC's General Education requirements. Many different pathways are possible. It is always a good idea to meet with the Honors College Advisor to map out your own individual plan to fulfill the University Honors requirements.

Q: Can service activities (such as serving as an officer for HPSA, working as an editor for *Lucerna*, or volunteering at the Kauffman School) be counted toward the University Honors requirements?

A: Honors students are strongly encouraged to serve as an officer for HPSA, work as an editor for *Lucerna*, volunteer at the Kauffman School, and many other service activities. Students can earn academic credit for these community engagement activities through the Honors

Internship course (Honors 496 or 496A), or through a suitable internship course in their academic major, provided that they meet the internship course requirements. Visit the Honors Internship web page for further information about the Honors Internship course requirements: [honors.umkc.edu/beyond-the-classroom/internships](https://honors.umkc.edu/beyond-the-classroom/internships)

Q: How can I earn honors course credits for Beyond the Classroom experiences?

A: A student may count up to six credits earned in Beyond the Classroom experiences toward the University Honors distinction. Your BTC Experience could be an internship, a clinical experience, practice teaching, undergraduate research, or a community engagement project. The basic eligibility rule is that the student must earn academic credit for the experience in order for it to count toward the University Honors distinction. Non-credit experiences cannot be counted. A student may count the credits earned in different kinds of Beyond the Classroom experiences for a maximum of six credits toward their University Honors requirements. To claim these credits, complete the [Beyond the Classroom Form](#) and specify the course and experience you are completing. The form is due within the first four weeks of the semester.

### **Earning the Honors Scholar Distinction**

Q: Am I required to write a Senior Honors Thesis in order to graduate with University Honors?

A: No. A student may graduate with University Honors without having completed a Senior Honors Thesis. For honors students who want to go the extra mile and gain valuable research experience, the Honors Scholar distinction is available through the completion of a Senior Honors Thesis. This additional distinction is strongly encouraged, but entirely optional for members of the Honors Program.

Q: How can I earn the Honors Scholar distinction?

A: The Honors Scholar distinction requires an additional six credits of Honors thesis or project coursework beyond the credits required for the University Honors distinction. The Honors Scholar distinction is the highest recognition that any undergraduate can earn at UMKC. It is well worth the additional effort.

Q: Am I required to enroll in certain specific honors courses in order to earn the Honors Scholar distinction?

A: No, although the project-related coursework must add up to six credits. The six credits of recommended honors coursework (as listed above) provide one suggested pathway toward fulfilling the Honors Scholar requirements. However, students are not required to enroll in

these particular courses, provided that they enroll in at least six credits of Honors Thesis or Project coursework. Many academic majors offer their students the option of enrolling in a senior capstone seminar that leads to the completion of a substantial written capstone research or creative project, and the related coursework may also be counted toward the Honors Scholar distinction, provided that the capstone-related coursework totals at least six credits, and the student has submitted a formal proposal to the Honors Program for their capstone project to be approved as an Honors Thesis or Project.

Q: What is the best time to start planning my Senior Honors Thesis or Project?

A: Careful advance planning is the key to student success in the Senior Honors Thesis or Project. Visit the [Senior Honors Thesis page](#) on the Honors Program website for further information about the project expectations and requirements. The junior year is an ideal time for students to start planning their Senior Honors Thesis or Project. A student should meet with the Honors Program director as soon as they start thinking about their Senior Honors Thesis or Project.

### Getting Involved

Q: How can a student get involved with the Honors Program student organizations?

A: Students should visit our [website](#) to learn about how to get involved in the Honors Program Student Association (HPSA), *Lucerna*, the undergraduate research journal, and Alpha Lambda Delta, the freshman honor society. If students don't see an organization and would like to start one, they should contact the Director of Student Services or an Honors Ambassador.

Q: How should a student list the Honors Program and their achievements on their résumé?

A: The Honors Program suggests that students list the Honors Program on their résumé as follows:

- **University Honors:** 27 credit hours of Honors Program coursework. Honors courses completed include: Anchor H2xx, Biology H3xx, etc. [whatever you choose to highlight]
- **Honors Scholar:** 27 credit hours of Honors Program coursework and a Senior Honors Thesis entitled "The Title of Your Thesis Here"

## Section Five – The Honors Program Experience

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### Honors Program Living-Learning Community



The Honors Program, in collaboration with Residential Life, hosts a Living-Learning Community located in UMKC's [Oak Street Residence Hall](#). In this community, honors students live and learn together through honors courses, special programs and events, informal interaction with Honors Program faculty, social activities and community service.

The program builds a cohesive community among the honors students, promotes student and faculty engagement and provides continuity of the intellectual learning experience outside of the classroom.

### Honors Program Student Association (HPSA)

HPSA's goal is to help honors students engage in the creation and implementation of student activities within the Honors College. All honors students are welcome to attend these events.

For further information about HPSA, contact [the HPSA team](#) or visit [our RooGroups page](#).

## Lucerna, UMKC's Undergraduate Research Journal

*Lucerna* is a peer-reviewed interdisciplinary journal and UMKC's only journal of undergraduate research. *Lucerna* publishes articles by students in all fields of scholarship, including the humanities, social sciences, sciences, mathematics, music, fine arts, and professional disciplines. Published annually since 2005, *Lucerna's* purpose is to cultivate and showcase original research and scholarship from the entire UMKC undergraduate community. All current UMKC undergraduates may submit research papers written anytime during their academic careers at UMKC. If you would like a copy of *Lucerna*, stop by the Honors College in 424 Cherry Hall. For further information about *Lucerna*, contact [umkclucerna@umkc.edu](mailto:umkclucerna@umkc.edu) or visit the [Lucerna web page](#).



Each submission is peer-reviewed by a volunteer staff of student readers from the Honors College as well as faculty and staff from the Honors College. Papers are judged on the basis of their clarity, originality, organization and argumentative qualities. Having their work published in *Lucerna* is a great achievement for any undergraduate looking to further her or his education or to begin a professional career.

The Faculty Advisor for *Lucerna* is Dr. Henrietta Rix Wood, Honors College Teaching Professor.

Every year *Lucerna* celebrates its annual publication with the *Lucerna* Symposium. The *Lucerna* Symposium allows authors of the newest volume to present their research to the UMKC and Kansas City community.

## Alpha Lambda Delta

Alpha Lambda Delta (ALD) is the National Honor Society for first-year students. Founded in 1924 at the University of Illinois, the mission of Alpha Lambda Delta is to encourage superior academic achievement among students in their first year in institutions of higher education, to promote intelligent living and a continued high standard of learning, and to assist students in recognizing and developing meaningful goals for their roles in society.



Students with a 3.5 GPA and are in the top 20% of their class following their first semester will be invited to join ALD. If a student is invited, we encourage them to join! Invited members must pay their one-time membership dues of \$50.00 prior to attending the spring induction ceremony.

Hosted by the UMKC Honors College, and open to all qualified students, the Alpha Lambda Delta chapter at UMKC provides great opportunities for students to develop their leadership skills through executive board positions.

For more information about the ALD national organization, please visit [www.nationalald.org](http://www.nationalald.org).

Contact the UMKC Alpha Lambda Delta advisor, Margo Gamache: [gamachem@umkc.edu](mailto:gamachem@umkc.edu)

## Honor Societies at UMKC

The following Honor Societies for students of all majors are hosted and endorsed by the University of Missouri-Kansas City. We strongly encourage students to join if they are invited:

- [Alpha Lambda Delta](#) recognizes outstanding academic achievement by students in their first and second year of study in higher education. See page 36 above for further details.
- [Phi Kappa Phi](#), founded in 1897, was the first national honor society to recognize superior scholarship in all fields of study and to take into membership the highest-ranking student from all branches of learning. UMKC's chapter was founded in 1969. Each year, the highest-ranking students in the University are elected into membership.
- [Mortar Board](#) is a national honor society that provides opportunities for leadership development and encourages lifelong contributions to the global community. Juniors are annually selected for membership on the basis of scholarship, leadership and service. UMKC's chapter was founded in 1973.
- [Golden Key](#) is an international academic honors organization dedicated to excellence. The society is interdisciplinary and unites the talents of the most promising undergraduate students. Juniors and seniors in the top 15% of their class may be selected for membership. Members are actively involved with community service projects.



- [Omicron Delta Kappa](#) is a national leadership honor society with circles on more than 200 college and university campuses. The society recognizes and encourages the achievement of superior scholarship and leadership. All members are expected to engage cooperatively in effective leadership and services for the good of the institution and the community.

In addition, [several academic disciplines at UMKC offer honor societies](#) that select members on the basis of their grades and class standing. We would certainly encourage students to consider joining such an Honor Society if they are invited.

If a student is invited to join an Honor Society that is not listed above, we advise them to consult the website of the [Association of College Honor Societies](#) (ACHS). ACHS publishes a set of guidelines, "[How to Judge the Credibility of an Honor Society.](#)" In general, students should only consider joining an Honor Society if they receive the invitation from a reputable source whose identity they can verify, such as a local UMKC chapter officer. If they are still uncertain, students should consult with the [Honors College Academic Advisor](#) or with their major advisor.

We strongly encourage students to consider joining a reputable Honor Society if invited to do so. There are many distinctive [benefits of Honor Society membership](#), as described by ACHS:

*"Honor Society members are people – like you – with similar interests and high achievements. They are eager to advance scholarship, ethics, and professionalism in their academic disciplines. Though achievement is its own reward, earning your Honor Society key or pin demonstrates that you have accomplished something that makes you special and puts you at the top of your chosen field. Having an Honor Society listed on your résumé provides a tangible sign of your academic success."*



## Section Six – Honors College Faculty and Staff

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### Gayle A. Levy, Ph.D. Associate Professor of French and Honors Program Director



Gayle Levy began her life-long love of French at the age of five when she learned how to say "*jus d'orange*" in kindergarten. She honed her francophilia as an undergraduate at U.C. Berkeley and during her graduate studies at The Johns Hopkins University, Duke University and the École Normale Supérieure-Ulm in Paris. Currently, her research centers on French resistance fighters during World War II. In 2012, she was selected to receive the prestigious Palmes Académiques award for her contributions to the study of French literature and history.

Levy has served continuously since 2003 as the director of the Honors Program. She loves meeting and working with these exceptional students. She is particularly proud of the way the students have taken leadership roles in and helped shape the Honors Program initiatives.

### Henrietta Rix Wood, Ph.D. Teaching Professor, Honors Program

Henrietta Rix Wood is a teaching professor for the Honors Program and teaches writing, research, and general education courses. Wood earned her interdisciplinary doctorate in English and History at UMKC; she has a master's degree in English from UMKC and a bachelor's degree in journalism from Southern Methodist University in Dallas. Her research focuses on the rhetoric and history of women in the United States.



Her book, *Praising Girls: The Rhetoric of Young Women, 1895-1930*, was published by Southern Illinois University Press in 2016. She co-edited *In the Archives of Composition: Writing and Rhetoric in High Schools and Normal Schools*, published by the University of Pittsburgh Press in 2015. Her work also has appeared in *American Periodicals*, *Rhetoric Review*, and *Feminist Challenges or Feminist Rhetoric? Locations, Scholarship, Discourse* (Cambridge Scholars, 2014). Wood won the 2012 Rhetoric Society of America Dissertation Award.

In her previous career, Wood was a reporter for *The Kansas City Star*, and for a newspaper and city magazine in Dallas.

**Stephen R. Christ, Ph.D. Assistant Teaching Professor, Honors Program**



Stephen R. Christ is an assistant teaching professor of social/behavioral science in the UMKC Honors Program. In his research, Dr. Christ examines the everyday experiences of Mexican immigrants in the United States that contribute to Mexican-American identity formation. More specifically, how Mexican Americans experience daily life at home, at work, in public life and in how these experiences impact their sense of personal identity, their relationships with natives, their interactions with their families and community and the identity work that goes into producing such categories and social worlds.

Dr. Christ's current book project, *Authentic Imitations: Culture and Society in a Globalized World*, examines the negotiated construction of authenticity among Latino/a immigrants employed in the Mexican restaurant industry, a site in which authenticity is a major theme. Dr. Christ has presented his original research at regional, national, and international conferences and has been awarded several research awards, including the Hispanic Scholarship Fund Dissertation Scholarship, the John D. Bies International Travel Research Award and the Robert W. Habenstein Dissertation Fellowship. His work has appeared in peer reviewed journals such as *Organizational Cultures: An International Journal*, *Rural Sociology* and *Qualitative Sociological Review* and has been featured in over 60 national and international news sources including the *Los Angeles Times*, *The Atlantic* and *NPR*.

**Margo Gamache, Director of Student Services, Honors Program**

Margo Gamache is the Director of Student Services. She earned her M.A. in Leadership in Human Service Administration from Bradley University. Margo loves helping students find a career path that excites and interests them.

