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# Honors Program Handbook for Students 2021-2022



**University of Missouri – Kansas City**



# Table of Contents

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<b>Section One – Introduction to the Honors Program</b> .....	3
Welcome from the Director.....	3
Welcome from the Director of Student Services.....	4
Honors Program Mission and Vision.....	5
Honors Program Strategic Objectives.....	5
History of the Honors Program.....	6
Benefits of Membership in the Honors Program.....	7
What to Expect in Honors Courses .....	7
<b>Section Two – Academic Requirements</b> .....	12
Honors Program Academic Requirements .....	12
Graduation Requirements for Transfer or Continuing Students .....	13
How to Earn Honors Credits .....	13
Honors-Only Courses .....	14
Honors Discussion Groups .....	14
Honors Contracts .....	14
Study Abroad .....	15
Beyond the Classroom Experiences.....	16
Internships .....	17
Graduate Courses .....	18
Senior Honors Thesis .....	19
<b>Section Three – Academic Advising</b> .....	22
Advising Expectations .....	22
Honors Ambassadors.....	24
Additional Campus Resources .....	25
Frequently Asked Questions .....	25
<b>Section Four – The Honors Program Experience</b> .....	29
Honors Program Living-Learning Community.....	29
Honors Program Student Association (HPSA).....	29
<i>Lucerna</i> , UMKC’s Undergraduate Research Journal .....	30
Alpha Lambda Delta.....	30
Honor Societies at UMKC.....	31
<b>Section Five – Honors Program Faculty and Staff</b> .....	33

# Honors Program Student 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.

If you are driven to go the extra mile academically, the Honors Program is for you! 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. Join the Honors Program to make the most of your undergraduate experience at UMKC.

## About this Handbook

This handbook offers a general overview of Honors Program programs, activities and academic requirements. It will help students understand the history and purpose of the Honors Program and find answers to questions they may have about their privileges and responsibilities as members of 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 students in the Honors Program.

**Revision date:** June 2021

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

## Section One – Introduction to the Honors Program

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### Welcome from the Director

Welcome to students in the Honors Program! We in the Honors Program are proud and delighted that you have elected to spend your college years with us, and we shall do our best to make them stimulating and profitable ones.

As a member of the Honors Program, you will pursue an intensive honors curriculum within the stimulating intellectual environment of an urban research university. While you will be part of a small cohort of talented and highly motivated students, all of whom excel in academics, you will also be part of the UMKC student body of more than 16,000 from diverse geographic and cultural backgrounds.

I look forward to working with you to help you discover new opportunities for educational and personal development. 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



## Welcome from the Director of Student Services

Welcome to the UMKC Honors Program. I'm thrilled that you have decided to make the Honors Program and its community of learners part of your college experience. Being part of the Honors Program means you are surrounded by people who are excited to learn and grow together.

There are a lot of perks to being a member. Honors Program students have the opportunity to register for classes before the rest of campus. You are welcome to hang out in the Honors Lounge, where there is space to study, have group meetings and unwind. Coffee, tea, and cocoa are always available. We offer events every month for our community, including lunch on Reading Day (the day before finals starts), Friendsgiving in November, and Graduation Reception in December and May. As an Honors Program student, you have access to exclusive mentoring. Every Honors student is assigned a Faculty Preceptor, a student OWL (Older, Wiser Learner), and meets regularly with me for advising. Once you enter your graduating year you will be assigned a Graduation Guide, who will provide moral support throughout the sometimes-stressful job search or graduate school application process.



Above all the Honors Program is a place for learning and innovation. You play a big part in that! If you have ideas, questions, or thoughts on how to improve the Honors Program, please bring those things to our attention! The faculty and staff 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 starting on page 7 (below), "What to Expect in Honors Courses."

I look forward to working with you throughout your Honors Program career! Please don't hesitate to reach out to me with questions or comments: [gamachem@umkc.edu](mailto:gamachem@umkc.edu)

Sincerely yours,

*Margo Gamache*

Director of Student Services

UMKC Honors Program

# 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 you in your 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

#### 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 you must earn a B or higher in the course.

- Enroll in [honors courses](#). Many of your 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 Ireland, Scotland, or Sweden. 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 various academic departments. Honors courses typically enroll a smaller number of students and provide rigorous and engaging coursework. Every semester, the Honors Course Schedule is published on the Honors Program website, along with a description of each course: [honors.umkc.edu/academics/course-descriptions](https://honors.umkc.edu/academics/course-descriptions)

## Honors Discussion Groups

Honors discussion groups are weekly discussion sessions offered in connection with certain courses at UMKC. In recent semesters, 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).

- You 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 you 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.umkc.edu/academics/honors-discussion-groups](https://honors.umkc.edu/academics/honors-discussion-groups)

## 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.



## How to Contract for Honors Credit

- Obtain an [honors contract form](#).
- Think of a project you would like to do for a course in which you are currently enrolled. This project should extend and supplement the learning objectives of the course. For example, you 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 you are 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.
- Approach the professor with your idea and discuss the additional work to be completed under the honors contract. [See letter to faculty](#).
- Fill out the [honors contract form](#) and sign it; then ask your instructor to complete and sign the form.
- Contracts are due within the first four weeks of the semester. Scan and submit your completed contract to the Honors Program e-mail: [honors@umkc.edu](mailto:honors@umkc.edu)
- When you have completed the work required to fulfill the honors contract, fill out the [completion form](#), and have your 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, he or she 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 your study abroad experience, please 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. For further information: [honors.umkc.edu/beyond-the-classroom/study-abroad](https://honors.umkc.edu/beyond-the-classroom/study-abroad)

## 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. Your 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.

You must register in advance to receive honors credit for your BTC Experience. Complete the [Beyond the Classroom Form](#) and specify the course and experience you 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.



Interested in learning about other opportunities to work and volunteer at the Kauffman School? Contact the [Honors Program](#) and we'll put you in touch with the right people!

## **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.

Interested in learning more about AFIA and ways to get involved? Contact the [Honors Program](#) and we'll send you more info.

## **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 visit your home department's website and consult with your major advisor to learn more about the internship opportunities specific to your major.

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

A maximum of six academic credits earned in Beyond the Classroom Experiences (including internship credits) may be counted toward the coursework needed to earn the University Honors distinction.

### **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, you 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 your undergraduate work;
- Be within 30 hours of graduation and have at least a 3.5 grade point average in your undergraduate work; or

- You must be enrolled in the Pharm.D. program, the six-year M.D. program, or the BSN/MSN program and have the permission of your program coordinator to take the specified 5000-level courses as a required part of your 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, you should submit a completed [Request Form](#) to the School of Graduate Studies. Before submitting the form, please consult with the academic advisor in your 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 you complete the requirements for the Honors Program and for the Senior Honors Thesis, you will graduate not only with **University Honors** but also as an **Honors Scholar**. Both notations will appear on your 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 your major discipline that you 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 your junior year. You are invited to select your 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](#) and [Senior Honors Thesis Faculty 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](#).

### **Preparatory Semester (normally the spring semester of your junior year):**

Enroll in **Honors 330: Honors Thesis/Project Practicum**. This one-credit course will prepare honors students to undertake a Senior Honors Thesis or Project. In this course, students will explore different options for theses or projects; identify a topic and faculty advisor; plan the production of the thesis or project; produce a component of the thesis or project and collaborate effectively with other honors students to develop their plans. This course is appropriate for juniors who can then devote their senior year to producing an honors thesis or project.

### **First Semester of Senior Year:**

Complete the [Senior Honors Thesis Contract Form \(First Semester\)](#) with the supervising professor. This person will oversee the six-hour project. The first-semester work is normally research, planning and outlining. The honors contract must be associated with a specific course in which you are enrolled, either a course in your major (such as the Senior Seminar or Senior Capstone) or the Honors Senior Thesis course (Honors 495).

Complete a **detailed prospectus** outlining the scope of the senior thesis and attach this to the contract. Both are due to the Honors Program director during the first month of the first semester of work.

Upon completion of the first-semester work, submit the [Senior Honors Thesis Completion Form \(First Semester\)](#) to the director (424 Cherry Hall). **Completion forms are due no later than the Tuesday following finals week.** If additional time is required, email the Honors Program Director with said request before the close of the semester.

### **Second Semester of Senior Year:**

Complete the [Senior Honors Thesis Contract Form \(Second Semester\)](#) with the supervising professor and submit to the Honors Program director (424 Cherry Hall) during the first month of the second semester of work. The second semester is normally reserved for writing and any additional research. Like the first semester, the honors contract must be associated with a specific course in which you are enrolled. A course grade of B or higher is required.

Many students will benefit from enrolling in **Honors 499: Senior Thesis/Project Writing Group** during the semester in which they plan to complete their Senior Honors Thesis. This one-credit course is a collaborative research writing workshop for students of all majors. No matter what

your thesis topic may be, you will benefit from the friendly critique and peer review offered by fellow honors students and the professional writing advice and support provided by the course instructor.

You will make a public presentation of your work at either the [SEARCH Symposium](#) or another conference or symposium of your choice during the second semester. Please inform the Honors Program director where you will present your work.

Provide the director with the second-semester [Senior Honors Thesis Completion Form \(Second Semester\)](#) signed by the supervising professor. **Completion forms are due no later than the Tuesday following finals week.** If additional time is required, contact the Honors Program director before the close of the semester.

At the end of the second semester, provide the Honors Program with an electronic copy of your completed work. With the student's [permission](#), the thesis will be stored in an online archive, [MOspace](#), through Miller Nichols Library and can be accessed by any member of the UMKC community.

## Section Three – 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

You are responsible for ensuring that your Honors credit has posted correctly. Students are notified when Honors credit has officially posted. You have two weeks after grades post to run a degree audit and notify the Honors Program of any issues you may find.

#### How do I run a degree audit?

1. Log into [planmydegree.umkc.edu](http://planmydegree.umkc.edu)
2. Click “Run Audit”



3. Choose "Select a Different Program"
4. Choose "Honors Program" and the semester you started with the Honors Program
5. Click "Run Different Program"
6. Your degree audit will appear.

Please remember that honors credit for Discussion Groups is tied to the semester you took the related course, **not** the semester you took the Discussion Group. If you find errors or missing honors credit, please email Margo Gamache, Director of Student Services: [gamachem@umkc.edu](mailto:gamachem@umkc.edu). She will work with the Registrar to get the credit corrected.

### **Communication**

Honors Program students are expected to read the weekly e-newsletter and stay abreast of events, opportunities, and announcements. Please ask questions when you have them and to inform us of any changes in your enrollment status.

Students are expected to respond within 48 hours to any email, written, or phone communication from any Honors Program faculty or staff (including Honors Ambassadors and Student Workers).

### **Advising**

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

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

## **How do I make an appointment with the Director of Student Services?**

Follow these steps to make an appointment:

1. Login to [UMKC Handshake](#). Use your UMKC SSO and password to login.
2. Navigate to the Honors Program Advisor, Margo Gamache, and schedule an appointment with her.
3. Mark your calendar and keep your appointment! Margo's office is located in Cherry Hall room 420.

When you make your advising appointment, please be sure to specify what you want to discuss. Margo is available to discuss honors requirements, majors and careers, graduate school readiness, involvement and leadership opportunities, academic and personal success and much more! If you wish to discuss your schedule of classes for next semester, please make sure you have met with your departmental advisor before your meeting with the Honors Program Advisor.

## **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 Program students who work closely with our faculty and staff to promote the Honors Program 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). Please feel free to reach out to them in person or via email with any questions you may have about being a student at UMKC, the Honors Program, extracurricular involvement, and more.

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)

## **How do I make an appointment with an Honors Ambassador?**

Individual appointments are not required. You are welcome to walk into the Honors Ambassadors' office anytime during their office hours. However, it is often useful to make an appointment, especially during busy times of semester. In particular, please schedule an

appointment if you are meeting with an Ambassador for academic advising. This gives them time to properly prepare. To make an appointment with an Honors Ambassador, follow these steps:

1. Login to [UMKC Handshake](#). Use your UMKC SSO and password to login.
2. Navigate to the Honors Ambassadors and schedule an appointment with them.
3. Mark your calendar and keep your appointment! The Honors Ambassadors' office is located in Cherry Hall room 455.

When you make your appointment with an Honors Ambassador, please be sure to specify what you want to discuss with them. If you wish to discuss your schedule of classes for next semester, please make sure you have met with your departmental advisor before your meeting with an Ambassador.

## Additional Campus Resources

Additional campus resources and services are available for UMKC students:

- [Counseling Services](#) offers individual counseling, group programs, and more. You can check symptoms and get the help you need.
- [Career Services](#) is available to help you find internships and post-college employment. Be sure to attend the upcoming career fairs. They can also help you get your résumé in order, practice interviews and more. There are always events going on to help you find a promising position.
- [Academic Support and Mentoring](#) offers tutoring and instruction in a wide variety of subjects.

## Frequently Asked 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 Program 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 earn a valuable research credential, 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 success in your 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. Get started early! Your junior year is an ideal time to start planning your Senior Honors Thesis or Project. Please meet with Honors Program director as soon as you begin thinking about your Senior Honors Thesis or Project.

### **Getting Involved**

Q: How do I get involved with the Honors Program student organizations?

A: Please 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 you don't see an organization and would like to start one, please reach out to the Director of Student Services or an Honors Ambassador.

Q: How do I list the Honors Program and my achievements on my résumé?

A: The Honors Program suggests you list the Honors Program on your 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 Four – 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 Program. We love sharing ideas, so come to voice yours at our weekly meeting in room 415 or 428 Cherry Hall. All honors students are welcome to attend.

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 Program 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 Program as well as faculty and staff from the Honors Program. Papers are judged on the basis of their clarity, originality, organization and argumentative qualities. Having your 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 Program 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 you are invited, we encourage you 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 Program, 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 would strongly encourage you to join if you are invited:

- [Alpha Lambda Delta](#) recognizes outstanding academic achievement by students in their first and second year of study in higher education. See on page 30 above for further information.
- [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 you to consider joining such an Honor Society if you are invited.

If you are invited to join an Honor Society that is not listed above, we advise you 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, you should only consider joining an Honor Society if you receive the invitation from a reputable source whose identity you can verify, such as a local UMKC chapter officer. If you are still uncertain, please consult with the [Honors Program Academic Advisor](#) or with your major advisor.

We strongly encourage you to consider joining a reputable Honor Society if you are 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 Five – Honors Program 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. When she is not teaching or writing, she cooks, walks her wacky Australian shepherd, watches sports with her husband, and visits her two adult daughters.

**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. In her spare time Margo likes to bake, hike with her husband and two sons, and watch movies.

