

THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT ASHEVILLE  
FACULTY SENATE

Senate Document Number 0716F  
Date of Senate Approval 12/08/16

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Statement of Faculty Senate Action:

**APC Document 4 (HON): Elimination of the Honors LA 178 Requirement for Honors Students;  
Revise the Criteria to Remain in Good Standing in the Honors Program**

**Effective Date: Fall 2017**

1. **Delete:** On page 188, the entirety of Item I under the heading “Honors Program”:
  - I. As part of the 21 hours, first-year students entering the program are required to take an Honors section of the First-Year Colloquium, HON 178, during their first semester. Transfer students with more than 30 hours of credit are not required to complete HON 178, but must take an additional 3-hour Honors course in order to have 21 hours of Honors credits.

**Impact Statement:** The proposed change, to eliminate the requirement that first-year Honors students take an Honors-designated first-year colloquium (LA 178), is largely a formal one that brings the program into line with current practice, and therefore the change will have minimal impact on the Honors Program’s operations or offerings.

No academic units outside of Honors will be affected by this change. No substantial changes to staffing needs, student needs, or course offerings are expected, other than added flexibility for students and the possibility of a slightly lower demand for Honors-designated first-year colloquia.

**Rationale:** As indicated above, the proposed change is a formal one. For several years now, the Honors Program Director has completed a number of waivers of this requirement to accommodate the needs of talented students taking advantage of other academic opportunities (*e.g.*, the Chemistry Scholar Program) that also require enrollment in a specific section of LA 178. Several such opportunities exist, including scholarship programs, academic enrichment programs (*e.g.* AVID for Higher Education), and living/learning communities.

It should be noted that the primary purpose now served by the Honors first-year colloquia is the fostering of a sense of community and membership in the Honors Program. However, this sense of community is also fostered through a number of other means, including required co-curricular and extracurricular events (of both social and academic nature) for first-year Honors students, events planned by the newly formed Student Honors Advisory Committee, and the simple existence of a physical “home base” for the Honors Program in the Laurel Forum. Moreover, Honors students not taking advantage of such opportunities will still be strongly encouraged to enroll in Honors-designated first-year colloquia; these courses will continue to be offered and advertized, though not required.

2. **Delete:** On page 188, the entry to remain in “Good Standing” in the Honors Program:

### **Good Standing**

To remain in good standing with the Honors Program, students must meet the criteria listed below. Students not meeting these requirements will have one semester after falling below the standards to comply. If they do not, they will be suspended from the program and will have to reapply for admission through the Honors Program Office.

#### First-year Students

Students entering the program as first-year students must complete at least 6 hours of Honors credit as part of their first 60 hours at UNC Asheville and maintain an overall GPA of 3.25.

#### Transfer Students

Students transferring with 30 or more hours of credit must complete at least 3 hours of Honors credit as part of their first 30 hours at UNC Asheville and maintain an overall GPA of 3.25.

- Add:** On page 188, in place of the deleted entry:

### **Good Standing**

To remain in good standing with the Honors Program, students must meet the criteria listed below. Ordinarily, students not meeting these requirements will have one semester after falling below the standards to comply. In special cases, as indicated below, the Honors Program Director will regularly assess the standing of students who make significant progress toward compliance. Students who remain in noncompliance with no progress after one semester will be suspended from the program and will have to reapply for admission through the Honors Program office.

### **GPA**

Students must maintain an overall GPA of at least 3.25. A student whose overall GPA falls below 3.25 will have one semester in which to raise the GPA to the minimum level. If after one semester, the GPA remains below 3.25, the student may request a waiver from the Honors Program Director to remain in the program. The Director, after consultation with the student’s instructors for the term in question, may grant such a waiver in extenuating circumstances.

### **Regular enrollment in Honors courses**

Students must complete at least 3 hours of Honors credit every other semester. Students not meeting this criterion may request a waiver from the Honors Program Director to remain in the program. The Director may grant such a waiver in extenuating circumstances.

**Impact Statement:** Little impact on resource requirements is expected from the proposed changes, aside from a potential (and slight) long-term increase in the demand for Honors courses. As noted below, the new course enrollment requirement is very much in line with current enrollment levels, though the sustained commitment to the program the new requirement would encourage may result in slightly higher demand for Honors courses on the part of upper-level students.

Similarly, the proposed change in the GPA requirement would likely affect a very small number of students (if any) each term. Most students suspended from the Honors Program because they fail to meet the GPA requirement do not contest their suspension and are not typically among the most active members of the program.

No academic units outside of Honors will be affected by the proposed changes. No substantial changes to staffing needs or student needs are expected.

**Rationale:** Both of the proposed changes are designed to encourage talented students' sustained involvement in the Honors Program.

The proposed change in the GPA requirement is meant to mitigate the negative impact that a single course can have on an otherwise outstanding student's grade point average. For example, a student facing a difficult semester may opt to take an F in a challenging course rather than withdrawing from that course. Although the student may then continue to receive As in all other courses in subsequent semesters, the single F may bring the student's cumulative GPA below 3.25 until they have an opportunity to retake the course for a grade replacement. The new requirement would grant the Director the ability to assess such a student's progress toward compliance, allowing the student to continue in the Honors Program in the meantime.

Meanwhile, the other proposed change is meant to encourage more ongoing involvement with the Honors Program, not just at the outset of a student's program membership but throughout their career at UNC Asheville. Frequently, once students complete their first year of study their involvement in the Honors Program wanes as their attention shifts to major coursework. The new requirement would encourage students to take their "citizenship" in the Honors Program more seriously by requiring them to take Honors courses on a regular basis.

It should be noted that the expectation of 3-4 credit hours of Honors every other semester is in line with Honors students' current practice. Specifically, at present (October 2016) current Honors students have completed or enrolled in an average of 3.58 Honors hours per 30 credit hours overall. However, this mean decreases with every 30 credit-hours completed, as shown in the following table, which includes current enrollment.

<b>Total number of hours completed</b>	<b>Average number of Honors hours per 30 overall hours</b>
0-30	5.82
31-60	3.65
61-90	3.52
> 90	3.20

**Table 1.** Honors coursework taken by current Honors students

It should also be noted that the proposal to require 3 Honors credit hours every other semester, and not the more ambitious 4, acknowledges the fact that many of the most popular Honors courses (like most interdisciplinary special topics seminars) are 3-credit courses and that students should be able to comply with the new requirement by taking such a course once every other semester. Realistically, though, many students would meet the requirement by enrolling in 4-credit courses like Honors sections of courses in the Humanities and the rarer-but-not-uncommon 4-credit special topics seminars.