

THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA ASHEVILLE
FACULTY SENATE

Senate Document Number SD3423S
Date of Senate Approval 03/30/2023

Statement of Faculty Senate Action:

APC Document APC 24 (HONORS): **Revise the requirements for the Honors Program;
Remove the cap on the number of courses students can
take via Honors Contracts;
Change the name of the Distinction from University
Scholar to
University Honors Scholar**

Effective Date: Fall 2023

1. Delete: On page 178, the entry under **Honors Program:**

Students who successfully complete the University Honors Program, detailed below, will graduate with Distinction as a University Scholar. Students must complete at least 21 hours of Honors credit with a minimum overall GPA of 3.25, and a 3.50 GPA in Honors courses.

- I. Students must complete at least two, 3- or 4-credit-hour Special Topics Honors courses at the 300-level or higher. Such courses may be designated by an Honors (HON) prefix or by a departmental prefix with Honors designation indicated in the section number.
- II. No more than 9 combined credit hours in Readings for Honors courses and HON 499 may count toward the 21 hours.
- III. As the capstone course for both LAC and the Honors Program, students must complete an Honors section of LA 478. Centered on civic engagement and culminating in a service-learning experience, LA 478 will bring together students from several disciplines for research, discussion and a group project.

Note: Students planning to enroll in an Honors section of LA 478 must meet with the Honors Program director no later than the end of preregistration of the semester prior to the one in which the student plans to enroll in the course.

Add: On page 178, in place of deleted entry:

Students who successfully complete the University Honors Program will graduate with Distinction as a University **Honors** Scholar. Students must complete at least 21 hours of Honors credit with a minimum overall GPA of 3.25, and a 3.50 GPA in Honors courses.

As part of the 21 hours, students must complete an Honors section of LA 478. Centered on civic engagement and culminating in a service-learning experience, LA 478 will bring together students from several disciplines for research, discussion and a group project. Students planning to enroll in an Honors section of LA 478 must meet with the Honors Program director no later than the end of preregistration of the semester prior to the one in which the student plans to enroll in the course.

2. **Delete:** On page 179, the last paragraph under **Obtaining Honors Credit via Honors Contracts:**

Students can receive Honors credit via contract for no more than two courses during their studies at the university. No more than 8 hours of Honors credit earned via contracts can be applied toward the 21 hours required to graduate with Distinction as a University Scholar. Honors students cannot earn credit for Honors Special Topics courses via contracts.

3. **Delete:** On page 179, first and second paragraphs under **Honors Credit for Courses Taken at Schools Other than UNC Asheville:**

Students may receive Honors credit for courses taken at other institutions, either through transfer or through Study Abroad. ~~Credit for at most one Honors Special Topics course may be granted for courses taken at other institutions.~~

Transfer students who were in Honors programs at other institutions may petition the Honors Program director for up to 9 credit hours for Honors-designated classes taken at previous institutions.

Add: On page 179, in place of deleted entry:

Students may receive Honors credit for courses taken at other institutions, either through transfer or through Study Abroad. Transfer students who were in Honors programs at other institutions may petition the Honors Program director for up to 9 credit hours for Honors-designated classes taken at previous institutions.

4. **Add:** On page 53, in the first and seventh paragraphs, add the word “Honors” to the name of the

Distinction:

Academic Honors for Graduates

The university awards five kinds of academic honors to its eligible graduating students: universitywide Latin honors of cum laude (with honors), magna cum laude (with high honors) and summa cum laude (with highest honors); Departmental Distinction; University Research Scholar; University **Honors** Scholar; and Community Engaged Scholar. The Honors Committee must approve all recommendations and report them to the faculty, which has sole authority to award honors.

Students enrolled in the University Honors Program who have successfully completed the program, maintained an overall grade-point average of at least 3.25 and a 3.50 grade-point average for Honors courses may graduate with **Distinction as a University **Honors** Scholar.**

Impact: The name of the Distinction will be changed from University Scholar to University Honors Scholar. There are other distinctions with similar name lengths (e.g., “Distinction as a University Research Scholar”) so there should not be an impact on printed resources such as commencement programs.

There is no anticipated impact from eliminating the restriction regarding Honors contract courses and eliminating the requirement for Honors special topics courses. Faculty will need to cooperate with the student and Honors program director to complete contracts, but this should not involve extra work on the part of the faculty member. There will be less pressure on departments, faculty, and the honors program to offer many ST options each semester.

Rationale: The reason to change the name of the distinction is simply to differentiate it from other University distinctions. When the Honors program was established in 1985, there were no other distinctions titled “Distinction as a University [blank] Scholar.” Now there are several, such as “Distinction as a University Research Scholar” and “Distinction as a Community Engaged Scholar,” as well as “Distinction” designations for each department and program. It is perfectly logical to give Honors students the designation “Distinction as a University Honors Scholar.” The founder of the Honors Program, Phyllis Betts, concurs with this rationale (pers. comm. to Graham Reynolds 11/7/22).

The reason to remove the restriction on the maximum number of contract courses is because Honors students have long argued that graduating with Honors, especially in the Natural Sciences, is extremely difficult. They are correct about this. There are very few Natural Sciences HON courses offered in any given year. The Honors Program needs to become slightly more flexible and adaptive. It is the prerogative of the Director to ensure that the program is ready for the next 40 years. The intention is to make it easier for all majors to participate in the Honors program. Course contracts are a valuable way to make the program more flexible. They are widely used in other honors colleges; for example, the Lloyd Honors College at UNCG uses contracts within disciplines to allow students to participate in honors without taking additional courses. In reality, Honors students will infrequently count more than 11 hours of contract courses towards the Honors Distinction, as they must take LA478 and are going to be strongly encouraged to take HON designated HUM courses.

The reason to remove the mandate for two ST courses is to remove barriers that students have faced to graduating from the Honors program. Because few NS courses are offered as ST HON, NS majors have had a very difficult time completing this requirement in addition to their other coursework. ST courses will still be offered, and HON students will still be strongly encouraged to take them, but this will add flexibility to the Honors program that is needed and that has been a source of dissatisfaction.