



# Handbook for Honors Scholars

with additional information for Honors faculty

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## Welcome & introduction

Our alumni say they loved Honors, and we hope you will too! If you're thinking about applying to the program, this handbook will tell you all about it. If you're already an Honors Scholar, it will be your go-to reference for all things Honors.

Our Scholars are diverse! They come from all kinds of academic backgrounds (public school, private school, homeschool, GED). They come from a variety of racial, ethnic, cultural, and socioeconomic situations. Some are still in high school; some are older adults returning to college after all kinds of life experiences. Some have found academic success easily; others have struggled but persisted. But all have a high level of motivation and a burning desire to make the most of their college education. Because every applicant is unique, we give applicants a list of eligibility criteria and ask them to meet any two—not all— of them. We carefully consider the application essay and recommendation as well as transcripts and test scores. Sure, we like high numbers, but, equally important, we want highly motivated critical thinkers focused on success and ready to contribute something to the program, not just take from it.

Our community of Scholars promotes full-on engagement with academic life. Small Honors classes allow maximum interaction with classmates and professors. Honors Scholars—and, in fact, most students who choose to take Honors classes—are smart, curious, active students who want to succeed, and learning alongside them helps you learn and stay motivated. Plus, Honors professors are some of TCC's most capable and inspiring.

And, yes, there are potential financial benefits as well. Most Honors Scholars are eligible for Honors tuition waivers, TCC Foundation-sponsored Honors awards with monetary value, and big transfer scholarships if they complete the program successfully and become an Honors Scholar graduate. Honors at TCC has a strong academic reputation built on high standards and rigorous requirements, and local universities welcome graduates for transfer. And if you participate in conferences like the Great Plains Honors Council conference held every spring, the college usually pays for it.

As an Honors Scholar, you will also have obligations to the program. Here are the minimum expectations:

- attend Honors events, including the Honors ConBLUEcation (formerly called the Honors Roundup) each fall and the Blue-Carpet TCC Foundation Honors Awards each spring;
- keep up with program information in this handbook, on the Honors web page ([tulsc.edu/honors](http://tulsc.edu/honors)), the Honors Blackboard organization\*, and your email messages. *\*To join the Blackboard organization (easier on a computer than a phone), go to MyTCC and login to Blackboard. Choose Organizations and click "Organization Catalog." Search for "Honors." Hover over HonorsScholars on the results list, and a drop-down chevron will appear. Click on that. The password is MC510. The next time you visit Blackboard, a link to the Honors Scholars organization site will show up in your Organizations page. The search and password are just for the first time; you won't need them after that.*
- take Honors classes every semester (in special circumstances, you may skip one semester of Honors classes) and stay on track for completing the program.
- attend your classes and participate actively in them.
- keep the Honors office up to date on any changes to your academic plans or other circumstances affecting your progress toward completing the program.

But don't be satisfied with the minimum! Immerse yourself in the life of the college and take advantage of the many opportunities available to you as a TCC student and an Honors Scholar!

## Three ways to participate

You may participate in the TCC Honors Program in three different ways:

1. Enroll in individual Honors classes. Any current TCC student may take an Honors class. A 3.0 GPA is suggested but not required; some students find success as a result of taking Honors classes rather than as a prerequisite for it. You do not have to be an Honors Scholar to take an Honors class, but if you are an Honors Scholar, you must take Honors classes to complete the program.
2. Complete at least 15 credit hours of Honors courses with a minimum GPA of 3.5 in all your Honors coursework (and at least a 3.25 overall) to earn an Honors Certificate documenting your academic dedication. Just email [honors@tulsacc.edu](mailto:honors@tulsacc.edu) to register when you have completed the 15 hours.
3. Become an Honors Scholar. For this option, you must meet certain eligibility requirements and submit an online application form, verification of eligibility, educator recommendation, and essay. See the next section for details. Application is free. Full-time and part-time students are welcome to apply, as are concurrent students and high school students preparing to enter TCC. If you are admitted, then you will pursue an Honors curriculum to qualify for graduation as an Honors Scholar Graduate. The Honors curriculum requires 21 credit hours of Honors classes (or 18 hours plus another high- impact course outside of Honors). A cumulative GPA of 3.5 or higher and an exit essay are also required.

## Honors Scholar eligibility & application

*Eligibility:* Applicants to the Honors Scholar program should meet at least two criteria from Category 1 or at least one criterion from Category 1 and one criterion from Category 2.

### Category 1:

- Composite ACT score of 25 or higher;
- Combined SAT score of 1200 or higher;
- Unweighted 3.5 GPA from an accredited high school;
- Top 10% ranking in high school graduating class;
- 90+ percentile ranking on the GED;
- 3.5 or higher GPA on a minimum of 12 earned semester hours at TCC or another regionally accredited college or university;
- Completion of two TCC Honors credit courses with grades of A or B;
- Comparable academic results from an international secondary school.

If you are not a current TCC student, we will need a transcript sent from your school.

### Category 2:

- Membership in high school honor society (National Honor Society, Oklahoma Honor Society, or another state Honor Society);
- Documented demonstration of special abilities, awards, and/or academic or creative achievements or other significant accomplishments.

You will need to provide documentation of any Category 2 qualifications as part of your application. (For example, a copy of a certificate showing your Honor Society membership or significant accomplishment.)

*The application:* If you meet the eligibility requirements, the next step is to complete the application form available on our website at [www.tulsacc.edu/honors](http://www.tulsacc.edu/honors).

Enter your personal information (name, contact, information, residency, etc.).

- Attach documentation of any Category 2 qualifications (for example, a copy of a certificate showing your Honor Society membership or significant accomplishment.)
- Provide a recommendation from an educator (usually a professor or high school teacher) who can attest to your academic capability, motivation, creativity, and any other relevant qualifications. For current TCC students, the recommendation may be either a letter or an Honors referral submitted through Starfish. For high school students and other applicants who are not current TCC students, a letter is required. The letter should indicate how long and in what capacity the recommending educator has known you, and it should include the recommender's school/college-related contact information, including email address and telephone number. For homeschooled students, a letter from someone other than a family member who is familiar with your abilities and qualifications—such as a music teacher, coach, supervisor, etc.—may be appropriate. It can be attached to the application or requested separately using the instructions provided.
- Attach your application essay of approximately 500 words in response to one of these prompts:

1. Intellectual challenges: Analyze an intellectual disagreement that you have had with someone else or an experience that you found intellectually challenging. If you write about a disagreement, what caused it, were you able to reach a consensus, and if so, how? If you write about a challenging experience, what made it challenging, what did you do (or what could you have done) to meet or overcome it? With either the disagreement or the challenge, what did you learn from the experience that could be useful to you as an Honors Scholar?

2. Reading: What was the last book of challenging literary fiction, or of nonfiction related to an academic subject, you read on your own, not for a class, and what effect did it have on you? How did it expand your knowledge or understanding of its subject matter or of life? In what ways did it challenge your previously held beliefs or previous ways of thinking about something? How will your future thinking and/or intellectual maturity be different as a result of reading the book, and how might that change in yourself serve you as an Honors Scholar?

3. The Honors experience: Not every college or university offers its students the opportunity to participate in an Honors program. As a candidate for admission to Honors at TCC, what benefits do you believe such a program can offer students? How do you think that participation in the TCC Honors program will benefit you personally? What goals or intentions will it help you achieve? What do you think the Honors Program can do for you, and what do you think you can contribute to the program?

4. Response to intellectual commentary. Choose and respond to one of the following quotations about the life of the mind. What does it mean to you? How is it relevant to the life of a college student, particularly an Honors Scholar in today's world?

- "Americans are in serious intellectual trouble—in danger of losing our hard-won cultural capital to a virulent mixture of anti-intellectualism, anti-rationalism and low expectations."—Susan Jacoby
- "It is a sign of intellectual maturity to always crawl to conclusions."—Mokokoma Mokhonoana
- "Memorizing facts and then regurgitating them into carefully crafted words is not science[,] people. It's intellectual bulimia. Real science happens when we explore what we don't know. The first law of understanding the human brain[,] and the mind within, is to be an explorer." — Abhijit Naskar
- "They too, knew this beautiful and harrowing landscape; they'd had the same experience of looking up from their books . . . and finding the world disconcertingly sluggish and alien, as if it were not their home." — Donna Tartt
- "If you are not thinking universally and intellectually, you can only remain flawlessly stagnant." — Lionel Suggs

Before submitting your essay, please edit and proofread it carefully, not only for clarity and standard grammar/punctuation, but also for clear organization and adherence to the topic.

## Honors mission statement, vision, & learning outcomes

*Mission statement:* The TCC Honors Program provides qualified and highly motivated students with an enriched academic environment through high-impact educational practices and experiential learning in a community of scholarly minded peers. Participants in the program can expect lively interaction with peers and faculty members in small classes as well as faculty mentoring and opportunities to pursue independent research on topics of special interest.

*Vision statement:* Inspired faculty leading dedicated scholars on an engaging educational journey.

### *Learning outcomes:*

#### Communication skills

- Present ideas and research clearly and responsibly to an academic audience in both speech and writing at a level of proficiency appropriate for academic conferences as well as productive classroom discussion.

#### Critical thinking

- Analyze complex problems and significant research questions from diverse perspectives within and between multiple academic disciplines.
- Critique and synthesize sophisticated ideas and complex data from an array of sources.
- Construct a competent academic argument with a provocative thesis supported by logical reasoning and reliable and convincing evidence.
- Conduct independent research and/or significant creative projects.

#### Personal responsibility

- Independently navigate academic requirements and support to achieve personal goals.
- Demonstrate responsible and ethical scholarly behavior, including use and documentation of sources.
- Develop an independent scholarly/creative agenda.

#### Social responsibility

- Engage in dialogue with peers and mentors to achieve consensus.
- Support peers and help them stay motivated to achieve a high level of academic proficiency.
- Make connections outside the classroom through extracurricular activities, service-learning, global learning, community service, and/or pursuit of research opportunities.

## Honors ConBLUEcation

This is the Honors Program's annual meeting (formerly called the Honors Roundup), held each fall, usually in September. It is *mandatory for all Honors Scholars*, so plan accordingly! It is informative, but also inspirational, and social. The exact date, time, and location is announced each year in an email to all Scholars, so check your TCC-supplied email. Scholars who are scheduled to be in class during the time of the event will have an opportunity to attend a make-up session. If a face-to-face meeting is not possible, a virtual version will be substituted.

## Blue-Carpet TCC Foundation Awards Ceremony

The annual Honors awards ceremony sponsored by the TCC Foundation is held in the spring, usually in April. Your attendance is expected unless you have a class conflict. We present the Comby Prize for outstanding Honors graduate, the Kontogianes Award for outstanding Honors student of the current academic year, the O'Neal Award for service to the program, and a number of smaller Foundation Honors Awards. We also recognize our spring and summer Honors Scholar Graduates and present them with an Honors medallion.

## TCC Honors & NCHC

The TCC Honors Program is a member of the National Collegiate Honors Council and its regional affiliate the Great Plains Honors Council, and adheres to NCHC's values statement and definition of honors education.

*NCHC core values statement:* The National Collegiate Honors Council values an atmosphere that promotes academic opportunity and challenge for honors students and faculty. Within this intellectual environment, members of honors communities demonstrate integrity, respect, and excellence. Through the honors experience, participants realize enhanced personal, social, and intellectual development. The NCHC recognizes the importance of life-long learning and social responsibility in preparing individuals for an increasingly complex world. These beliefs and values are reinforced among member institutions through the collegiality and shared purpose of the NCHC.

NCHC definition of honors education: In summary, "honors education is characterized by in-class and extracurricular activities that are measurably broader, deeper, or more complex than comparable learning experiences typically found at institutions of higher education. Honors experiences include a distinctive learner-directed environment and philosophy, provide opportunities that are appropriately tailored to fit the institution's culture and mission, and frequently occur within a close community of students and faculty."

*TCC Honors Syllabus Statement:* As a reminder of its purpose, benefits, and expectations, the TCC Honors Program provides an Honors syllabus statement for its Honors classes:

Congratulations on choosing an Honors class! Honors sections at TCC are limited to 20 students, stress student-faculty and student-student interaction, emphasize communication skills, promote a high level of student engagement, and encourage creative and innovative approaches to learning. They do not require more work or employ harsher grading, but they do aim for deeper student engagement with the subject matter. In an Honors class, you will be expected to attend regularly, participate actively, work cooperatively with classmates, complete assignments to the best of your ability, and commit yourself fully to intellectual development. You do not have to be admitted to the Honors Program to take an Honors class, but successful completion of two Honors classes counts as

one of two eligibility requirements for admission to the program. A complete list of eligibility requirements and benefits, as well as an online application, can be found at [tulsacc.edu/honors](http://tulsacc.edu/honors).

## Honors FAQ

*What is the TCC Honors Program?* The TCC Honors Program offers small, highly interactive Honors courses to curious, highly motivated students who wish to grow personally and academically in a rigorous, engaging course of study.

*What's the difference between an Honors class and a "regular" class?* Honors classes aim to engage and inspire. An Honors class has a maximum of 20 students, allowing the professor to take innovative approaches to teaching the subject matter that might not be possible in larger classes. Lively class discussions, sometimes led by students; use of alternative texts, such as primary works or documents rather than textbooks; project-based or problem-based learning; and student participation in class design are some options that may be used. Honors classes typically emphasize critical thinking, writing, and reading, with independent study and research encouraged.

*Will I have to do more work in an Honors class than in a "regular" class?* Probably not. Usually, the amount of reading, writing, and testing required by an Honors course will roughly be the same as that required by an equivalent "regular" course. The difference is more qualitative than quantitative; you probably won't have to do more work, but you will be expected to participate actively and think for yourself.

*When should I enter the Honors Scholar program?* As early as possible! You can apply to the program as you are entering TCC from high school, while you are a concurrent student (but note that Honors courses are offered only on TCC campuses, and sometimes online, not at the high schools), or after starting your academic work at TCC. Any Honors course work you've done before admission program may be applied toward Honors Scholar requirements after you're admitted. But don't wait too long to apply, because all program requirements must be met before graduation, regardless of when you enter the program. Applying early will ensure a good selection of Honors classes and time to complete the required Honors hours, and early admission to the program will allow you to take full advantage of the program's benefits, including scholarships, consideration for the Foundation Honors Awards, guidance from the Honors office, and the opportunity to make the most of engagement with our scholarly community.

*Will taking Honors classes hurt my GPA?* Highly unlikely. As with any classes, you have to prepare and participate actively to achieve the best results, but research indicates that students taking in Honors classes earn the same grades they would get in equivalent "regular" classes. Some students feel they do even better in Honors classes because of their small, interactive nature. Honors classes follow the same grading system and standards as "regular" classes. Your Honors professors generally don't require more work or harder work, but they do expect you to do the work!

*Can concurrent students join the Honors Program?* Sure can! But you will need to take your Honors courses either on a college campus or online. We don't offer Honors courses on high school campuses because we want our Scholars to be active in our Honors community on campus at TCC.

*How many Honors courses should I take each semester?* As many as your schedule will allow! Many general education courses (i.e., core classes described in the TCC catalog as required for all degrees) are offered as Honors, while more specialized courses for specific majors are less likely to have Honors sections. (This is because all TCC students have to satisfy general-education classes, whereas a much smaller number have to satisfy the requirements for each specific major.) In fact, graduation with Honors Scholar standing requires

that at least 15 hours of your Honors classes be general education classes. Therefore, you need to take as many Honors classes as you can early on.

*How will my Honors work be recognized?* When you take Honors classes, those courses will show an Honors designation (for example, HONORS American Federal Government) on your transcript. If you complete at least 15 credit hours of Honors courses and meet the GPA requirements listed above, you may register with the Honors Office to receive an Honors Certificate. If you are in good standing as an active member of the Honors Scholar program, and if you have fulfilled the Honors Scholar requirements, the Honors Scholar designation will appear on your TCC transcript after graduation. You will also be recognized as an Honors Scholar at commencement and receive an engraved medallion to be worn with your regalia.

*How are the Honors Program and Phi Theta Kappa related?* The Honors Program is an academic unit of TCC, offering an Honors curriculum. Any eligible student can apply. There are no additional costs beyond those associated with being a TCC student. Phi Theta Kappa is an international honors society with chapters on community-college campuses. These chapters are student organizations (and thus extracurricular). Membership in Phi Theta Kappa is by invitation only (based on a GPA of 3.5 or higher) and requires payment of a membership fee. Phi Theta Kappa is not affiliated with the Honors Program, but most Honors Scholars are also qualified for Phi Beta Kappa, an excellent organization which provides leadership and scholarship opportunities, as well as recognition at graduation. Many students are both Honors Scholars and Phi Theta Kappa members.

*What kind of financial aid is available to Honors Scholars?* Most Honors Scholars in good standing are eligible to apply for the TCC Honors Scholar State Regents Tuition Waiver Scholarship, which waives tuition for up to 18 credit hours per fall or spring semester. (See details in a later section of this handbook.) High school seniors entering TCC immediately after graduation may be eligible to apply for the Oklahoma State Regents' Academic Scholars Scholarship. Additionally, the Honors Program presents Foundation Honors Awards, cash awards funded by the TCC Foundation, each year to outstanding Honors Scholars. Finally, because of their academic excellence, most Honors students become eligible for transfer scholarships when they move on to four-year degree programs. For example, the University of Tulsa offers its largest transfer scholarship to TCC Honors Scholar graduates.

*What is the difference between being an Honors Scholar, graduating as a Phi Theta Kappa member, and graduating "with honors"?* It's more complicated than a social-media relationship, but here's the gist: Graduating "with honors" just means you've earned a GPA of 3.5 or higher. You don't have to do anything else to get the designation, which is listed in the program at commencement. Phi Theta Kappa graduates have achieved a GPA of 3.5 or higher *and* joined that organization (by invitation, after paying a membership fee) and get to wear a special stole. Honors Scholars Graduates have achieved a GPA of 3.5 or higher *and* completed the Honors Scholar curriculum, which includes a required number of hours in Honors classes. They receive an engraved Honors Program medallion to be worn at graduation. Honors Scholar Graduates also qualify to graduate "with honors," but not all students graduating "with honors" have completed the special Honors curriculum. Phi Beta Kappa graduates also qualify to graduate "with honors" because of their high GPAs, but students graduating "with honors" are not Phi Theta Kappa graduates unless they have joined that organization. It is possible for a student to receive all three distinctions by achieving a GPA of 3.5 or higher, completing the Honors Scholar Program successfully, and joining Phi Theta Kappa.

## Communicating with Honors

The Honors Program maintains various tools and resources for communicating with its Scholars:

- Email is the best way to contact us directly. Our address is [honors@tulsacc.edu](mailto:honors@tulsacc.edu).
- The Honors website at [www.tulsacc.edu/honors](http://www.tulsacc.edu/honors) contains Honors course schedules and “blurbs” (course descriptions), Honors contact information, the Honors application, program news, and basic information about the program’s benefits and requirements.
- The Honors Scholars Blackboard site, open only to Honors Scholars and loaded with announcements of opportunities, links to resources, a blog of news and helpful advice written by the Honors coordinator, a form for requesting the tuition waiver, and much more).
- Meetings with the Honors coordinator can be scheduled. Ordinarily, we can meet face-to-face. When circumstances like the Covid-19 pandemic, prevent face-to-face meetings, we can arrange Zoom meetings if needed.
- The Honors Program office in Room 523C on the Metro Campus welcomes drop-in visits when the office is open. Hours have been limited during the pandemic, but we hope to be returning to regular hours afterward.
- Emailing [honors@tulsacc.edu](mailto:honors@tulsacc.edu) is the most efficient way to reach us, but you may also reach us during office hours by phone at (918) 595-7378.
- When campuses are fully open, the Honors Common Room, Room 523A, at Metro Campus, is available as a place for Honors Scholars to study, relax, or meet fellow Scholars. It contains a Scholars’ library, comfortable seating, a charging station for electronic devices; we currently have one desktop computer for Scholars to use and hope to have more soon. The room was recently freshened up with new paint and artwork.
- The Honors Program Coordinator, Dr. Allen Culpepper, is also an associate professor of English at TCC. He divides his office time between the Honors Program office at Metro Campus (Room 523C) and his faculty office at Southeast Campus (Room 1230). Contact info: [honors@tcc.edu](mailto:honors@tcc.edu), [allen.culpepper@tulsacc.edu](mailto:allen.culpepper@tulsacc.edu), (918) 595-7647, GoogleVoice (539) 664-6738. Email to [honors@tulsacc.edu](mailto:honors@tulsacc.edu) is the most efficient way to reach him.

## Requirements for Honors Certificate

Any student (whether an Honors Scholar or not) who completes 15 credit hours\* of Honors courses with a GPA of at least 3.5 in all Honors course work and an overall GPA of at least 3.25 may contact the Honors Program to receive an Honors Certificate. For more information, email [honors@tulsacc.edu](mailto:honors@tulsacc.edu). \*A maximum of nine Honors hours earned in distance-learning or self-paced classes may be counted toward minimum Honors requirements. (This requirement will be waived as needed during semesters affected by COVID-19 scheduling adaptations). Note that the Honors Certificate does *not* entitle the recipient to Honors Scholar transfer scholarships, transcript designation, or other Honors Scholar benefits. To receive those benefits, you will need to graduate as an Honors Scholar. (See details in next section.)

## Requirements to graduate as an Honors Scholar Graduate

- Be admitted into the TCC Honors Scholar program. (See eligibility and application information above.)
- Complete 21 credit hours of Honors courses. Select any classes from the Honors curriculum, but at least 15 credit hours must be earned in general-education Honors classes. For a list of general education classes at TCC, consult the current TCC Catalog. Other limitations on alternate-delivery classes also apply.\*

*Or:* Complete 18 credit hours\* of Honors courses *plus* one additional non-Honors course designated by TCC as using a high-impact instructional practice (see following section).

\*A maximum of nine Honors hours earned in distance-learning or self-paced classes may be counted toward minimum Honors requirements. (This requirement will be waived as needed during semesters affected by COVID-19 scheduling adaptations). \*A maximum of twelve transfer Honors hours may be counted toward TCC Honors requirements, subject to approval of the TCC Honors coordinator.

\*Students may apply for admission to the Honors Scholar program at any time. Honors course work undertaken by students prior to their acceptance into the program will be applied toward Honors Scholar requirements. All program requirements must be met prior to graduation, regardless of when the student enters the program.

- In the final fall or spring semester, submit a three- to four-page written assessment of the Honors experience at TCC. (Criteria for this essay are found in a following section.)
- Meet the requirements for the associate degree as stated in the TCC catalog.
- Achieve a cumulative grade-point average of at least 3.5 for all courses taken at TCC.

## High-impact course substitution option

*What is a high-impact course?* A high-impact course requires a high level of student engagement, and often activity beyond the classroom. A class designated as Service-Learning, Global Learning, Research-Intensive, or Common Book will qualify. One non-Honors course bearing a high-impact designation (must be at least 3 credit hours) may be used toward your Honors graduation requirements.

*What is the purpose of this option?* When students take an Honors course at TCC, they can assume that it will be a high-impact course. However, it is sometimes difficult to schedule 21 hours of Honors classes, and some other courses—even though they lack an Honors designation—provide a comparably intense experience. Most Honors courses are general-education courses, but some non-Honors high-impact courses are offered as major courses and/or at a higher level, and this option encourages Honors Scholars to take high-impact sections of courses that might not have an Honors section.

*How will this affect my Honors course load?* A student completing this option will be able to graduate as an Honors Scholar with a minimum of 18 Honors hours instead of the minimum of 21 Honors hours otherwise required.

*Will I receive academic credit for this option?* Yes, you will receive the normal credit hours for taking the course. The only difference is that we will also include those hours in tracking your progress toward Honors graduation.

*How do I claim this option?* When you are enrolling, use the advanced search feature to look for the attributes Service Learning, Travel, or Common Book Used, or search this document: ([https://www.tulsacc.edu/sites/default/files/file\\_attachments/research\\_foundation\\_and\\_research\\_intensive\\_course\\_listing\\_3.pdf](https://www.tulsacc.edu/sites/default/files/file_attachments/research_foundation_and_research_intensive_course_listing_3.pdf)) to find “research-intensive” classes. Enroll in one of these high-impact classes and notify the Honors Program office for confirmation that your selected course will meet our requirement. When you have completed the course, submit a copy of the syllabus to the Honors Office ([honors@tulsacc.edu](mailto:honors@tulsacc.edu)), and we will check your transcript once grades have been submitted. If you have passed the course, we will consider you to have an eligible high-impact class on your record when we are checking your Honors graduation requirements. Be sure to contact us on the schedule outlined above, first to confirm the course is on the high-impact list and then to submit the syllabus; don’t wait you are about to graduate.

## Scholarships

Check with the Financial Aid office about deadlines for specific scholarships. Always begin by completing the FAFSA, which can be done as early as Oct. 1 for the following academic year (fall/spring of the next year). Most TCC Foundation scholarships have March 1 application deadlines for scholarships awarded the following fall and spring. The Honors Scholar Tuition Waiver is a little different. (See details in the following section.)

### TCC Honors Scholar State Regents Tuition Waiver

The TCC Honors Scholar State Regents Tuition Waiver Scholarship is available only to those who have been accepted into the TCC Honors Scholar program. The scholarship is a waiver of tuition, up to eighteen (18) credit hours per semester, for fall and spring. Honors Scholar Tuition Waiver recipients must successfully complete at least three credit hours in the fall and spring semesters and must take at least one Honors course each semester until minimum Honors credit requirements for the Honors Scholar program have been satisfied. (Full-time students should take more than one in order to stay on track!) All recipients of the Honors Scholar Tuition Waiver are required to attend the Honors ConBLUEcation each fall semester to remain eligible for the scholarship.

Honors Scholar Tuition Waiver recipients must be legal residents of Oklahoma (as defined by the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education) and must maintain a cumulative TCC grade-point average of 3.5 or higher. Should the GPA fall below 3.5 but remain above 3.0, the student will no longer be an Honors Scholar in good standing, and the tuition waiver will be reduced to twelve (12) credit hours per semester. The Honors Scholar Tuition Waiver will be revoked if the GPA falls below 3.0. (The waiver may also be revoked if the student withdraws from his or her Honors classes. Check with the Honors Office if you are unsure how your academic decisions may affect your tuition waiver.) The Honors Scholar Tuition Waiver is *not* available to concurrent high school students or to students who have attempted more than 95 college credit hours. A recipient of another tuition waiver is not eligible for both awards and will receive only the larger waiver.

Honors Scholars should complete the Honors Scholar Tuition Waiver request form on the Honors Scholars Blackboard site each spring in order to receive the waiver the following academic year. Waivers will be awarded to eligible Honors Scholars on a first-to-reply, first-served basis as long as funds remain available. Priority will be given to those who have not yet earned a degree and are making good progress toward completing Honors requirements.

*Important note:* The tuition waiver does *not* include student fees, such as assessment, technology, laboratory, student center, activity fees, or parking fees. Students receiving tuition waivers will not be automatically de-enrolled for nonpayment. Should you decide not to attend TCC, you must take the action of dropping your classes before the drop/add deadline. If you do not do this, you will remain financially responsible for your student fees, even if you have never attended class.

Each March, the Honors Office will send an email to all Scholars when the Tuition Waiver Request is available in the Honors Scholars Blackboard site. Honors Tuition Waivers are awarded to eligible students in the order requests are received as long as funds remain available. In addition, each semester there are deadlines by which a tuition waiver recipient must be enrolled. Those enrollment deadlines are detailed on the Honors Tuition Waiver request form each year.

## Enrollment

The college's on-time enrollment policy means that students *must* enroll before classes meet for the first time, but to make sure they get the classes they need, Honors Scholars *should* enroll as soon as possible after enrollment opens, usually in late October preceding a spring semester or in late March preceding a fall or summer semester. Also, recipients of the Honors Tuition Waiver have enrollment deadlines each semester. Honors Scholars are entitled to priority enrollment, meaning that they may enroll for classes as soon as enrollment opens, along with students who have completed 48 or more credit hours. Honors Scholars who are enrolling in the first group but have not yet earned 48 credit hours need to enroll in person, by going to Enrollment Services on any campus. If campuses are closed because of the pandemic, the process will happen online. Email [enrollment@tulsacc.edu](mailto:enrollment@tulsacc.edu) and identify yourself as an Honors Scholar.

## Advisement

The Honors Program coordinator is always happy to provide information about the Honors Program, but is not an academic advisor, so, when you are planning your class schedule, verifying that you are on track for graduation, etc., it is important to visit Academic Advising and tell your advisors that you are an Honors Scholar so that the advisor will know that you need to meet the Honors Program requirements in addition to your degree requirements.

If you have already identified your intended transfer institution, also check with advisors there each semester as you plan your schedule. They are eager to help prospective students—especially Honors Scholars--make sure that every class you take at TCC will count toward your bachelor's degree as well as your TCC degree.

## Honors conferences

The TCC Honors Program usually has grant funds for a limited number of Honors Scholars to attend the Great Plains Honors Council's annual conference, held in March or April. Occasionally, funding is available for the National Collegiate Honors Council conference as well. During the pandemic these have been virtual, but under normal circumstances, we travel to the GPHC conference, and the grant money covers registration, travel, and lodging expenses as well as the registration costs. We encourage each of you to apply to present a paper, research, musical performance or analysis, or other product of your study. Presenting at a conference looks great on a résumé. Students selected to represent the TCC Honors Program at conferences will be briefed on expectations prior to travel. TCC travel policies are provided in an appendix to this handbook.

## Honors Advisory Panel

The TCC Honors Advisory Panel includes faculty, staff, administrators, and a student representative who help shape Honors Program policies and practices. All Honors students should feel free to give suggestions and relevant feedback to the Honors coordinator or the student rep, who will be happy to relay the information to the group. If you are interested in serving as a student representative, let the coordinator know!

## Exit essay for Honors Scholars

Before your graduation from Tulsa Community College, you must submit an exit essay evaluating your Honors Scholar experience at TCC.

*Deadlines:* March 1 for spring *or summer* graduation; October 15 for fall graduation. Essays will not be accepted after these deadlines. A student cannot graduate as an Honors Scholar if this requirement is not met. Don't wait until the last minute! We strongly suggest, drafting the essay, scheduling a consultation with a Writing Center staff member at any TCC campus, and then revise carefully, incorporating feedback from the writing consultant. When your essay has been thoroughly revised, edited, and proofread, submit it by email to [honors@tulsacc.edu](mailto:honors@tulsacc.edu)

*Criteria:* The exit essay, which is the student's written assessment of the Honors experience at TCC, should be approximately 3 to 4 pages typed (double-spaced) and should be a careful, thoughtful reflection on the student's Honors experience. Be sure to include specific details and examples, and to edit and proofread your essay carefully to make sure that it does not contain grammatical errors or other mistakes!

We recommend that you carefully review the Honors Program mission statement, vision statement, and learning objectives provided near the beginning of this handbook. Keeping the program's stated goal, mission, vision, objectives in mind, Honors Scholars should discuss, analyze, and evaluate the following topics:

- Personal growth and development as a result of the Honors Program;
- Individual Honors classes and interaction with Honors faculty and students;
- The effect of the Honors Scholar program on the student's college experience;
- Program strengths, weakness, and suggested improvements. In addition, you should follow these guidelines:
  - Restrict a subject and define a clear purpose for the essay;
  - Develop topics using specific details for support;
  - Illustrate competency in analysis and evaluation skills.
  - Write well-developed, coherent, and unified paragraphs;
  - Adopt a style appropriate to the reading audience;
  - Compose sentences that are effective, concise, and varied in structure;
  - Choose words that are appropriate and precise;
  - Follow the grammar, usage, punctuation, spelling, and mechanics associated with Standard Written English.

The essay must demonstrate a high level of proficiency not only in the mechanics of writing, but also in analytical thought. Therefore, an essay that quotes (or paraphrases) the Honors Program's own claims without analyzing whether, in the student's experience, the program is meeting its goals, is not an acceptable essay.

*Review:* The essay will be reviewed by the Honors coordinator and accepted or rejected on the basis of compliance with the guidelines above. Note that the nature of your assessment, whether positive or negative, will *not* affect approval or rejection of the essay, so don't be afraid to provide an honest assessment. If the essay does not meet the criteria listed, you will be asked to revise the work. Essays are rejected on the grounds of superficiality and poor organization as often as they are rejected for careless writing. Rejection is not uncommon, but it can be avoided by means of careful preparation before submitting your essay.

## Graduation checklist for Honors Scholar graduates

During the semester in which an Honors Scholar plans to graduate, the following tasks are the Scholar's responsibility:

\_\_\_\_\_ When you enroll, complete a final graduation check and file for graduation in the Advisement Office. In your graduation check, be sure to indicate that you are an Honors Scholar candidate.

\_\_\_\_\_ At the beginning of your last fall or spring semester, contact the Honors Program at [honors@tulsacc.edu](mailto:honors@tulsacc.edu) to begin an Honors Scholar graduation check and to be sure your current address and phone number are on file. If you will be a summer graduate, contact the office at the beginning of the preceding spring semester.

\_\_\_\_\_ Let the Honors Program coordinator know how you want your name to appear on your medallion and Honors Scholar certificate. Again, be sure your contact information in MyTCC is current so that your certificate will reach you when it is mailed (or in case of circumstances such as the pandemic, emailed) about a month after graduation.

\_\_\_\_\_ At the beginning of your final semester, if you are using the **18-hour-plus option [proposed revision]**, be sure that the Honors Office has recorded which non-Honors high-impact course will be substituted for an Honors class and that you have submitted your syllabus for verification.

\_\_\_\_\_ By March 1 for spring or summer semester graduates, October 15 for fall graduates, submit your exit essay to [honors@tulsacc.edu](mailto:honors@tulsacc.edu) for review by the Honors coordinator.

\_\_\_\_\_ Check your transcript to be sure you have completed at least 21 Honors hours (18 hours if you have completed the high-impact option) and have a TCC GPA of 3.5 or higher.

## Transfer

TCC Honors Scholars may transfer into honors programs at many four-year colleges and universities, including the University of Oklahoma, Oklahoma State University, Northeastern State University, Southeastern Oklahoma State University, and Oral Roberts University. The University of Tulsa accepts transfer students into the TU honors program *if seats are available*; there is an application process. To learn more about transferring into any of these honors programs, check the transfer institution's website. Look for links to that institution's Honors Program or Honors College. Also, see the appendices of this handbook for our agreements with OSU and ORU.) Many other universities, both in Oklahoma and out of state, report that they are more likely to offer admission to those who have achieved the Honors Scholar designation. Transfer admission and scholarship deadlines vary, so be sure to check with all of the transfer institutions you are considering about their deadlines. Some may have deadlines as early as January or February for the following fall semester.

*What you should know about the transfer process:*

- If you already know where you'll be transferring, it's a good idea to check with your future school each semester as you enroll in classes, to be sure you are taking courses that will count toward your bachelor's degree. Save syllabi from all your classes in case your next school needs them to evaluate transfer credits.

- If you will attend a public university in Oklahoma, your associate degree will be accepted as fulfillment of your general education requirements. (If you do not earn a TCC degree, the transfer institution has the option of requiring you to retake some credits.)
- There's no harm in applying to multiple universities, even if you think you know for sure where you want to go. Explore all your options! Visit the universities you're considering if you can. The Jack Kent Cooke Foundation website offers excellent advice on applying to selective schools. (<http://www.jkcf.org/scholarship-programs/undergraduate-transfer/the-transfer-process/>)
- Some universities have separate applications for transfer admission and scholarships (as opposed to freshman admission and scholarships), so be sure you complete the correct application forms.
- If you are transferring to the University of Tulsa, make sure your transfer admissions representative and the TU financial aid office know you are a TCC Honors Scholar. This is essential for receiving TU's Honors Scholar Transfer Scholarship. Details are given in an appendix to this handbook.
- Whichever transfer institution you choose, be sure to mention that you are an Honors Scholar in your earliest dealings with them. And be sure to contact the university's Honors College or honors program directly at the same time you are applying for admission and scholarships, especially if you are transferring to OSU or NSU.
- Get started on the transfer process early—and register for classes early! Some transfer institutions have application deadlines in February, for example, and close fall enrollment in May.
- Applications for some transfer scholarships are part of TCC's online general scholarship application, so be sure to check that application to see whether one of the scholarships might be a good fit for you. The Bovaird Foundation scholarship (for TCC students transferring to TU) is one example.
- Be aware that some scholarships and other opportunities may only be available to graduate in December may or may not be in your best interests, depending on your circumstances, so be sure to ask your transfer institution whether entering in the spring will be to your advantage or disadvantage. And if you are applying for the Jack Kent Cooke Undergraduate Transfer Scholarship, not that it requires you to participate in a summer orientation and begin your universities studies in the fall.
- Don't assume that all schools operate the same way as TCC; in fact, assume that they don't! Be sure to read your next institution's catalog so that you understand procedures, requirements, and deadlines.

## Appendix 1: TCC Travel Policies

There will be occasions when members of the Honors Program (students and/or faculty) will be traveling to meetings or activities. The following College and State of Oklahoma policies must be followed.

1. The Dean of Engaged Learning must approve any travel plans. It is the responsibility of the Honors coordinator to decide if the Honors Program is to be represented at a meeting or conference and who should act as representatives on these occasions. The Honors coordinator requests permission from the Dean of Engaged Learning for travel expenditures from the Engaged Learning account.
  1. Before the coordinator can endorse the requested travel, the Honors student or faculty member must submit the appropriate application materials. Format of the application materials and criteria for approval will be announced at a later date.
  2. Once approval has been obtained, the Honors Program will follow college and state financial procedures. It should be emphasized that until the application materials have been approved, authority to travel has been granted by the dean and provost, and signed waivers have been turned in to the Honors Office, no travel has been approved.

2. Students are acting as representatives of the Honors Program, and college and state policies must be observed. Representatives should remember that they are acting in an official capacity and not independently.

Students will want to conduct themselves in a manner that will reflect favorably on the Honors Program and the college. Statements, positions, or agreements made in meetings should not be presented as reflecting the position of the whole Honors Program in the form of a formal vote of endorsement. While away from campus on Honors Program business, students must follow the regulations outlined in TCC's [Student Handbook](https://www.tulsacc.edu/student-resources/student-handbook) (<https://www.tulsacc.edu/student-resources/student-handbook>).

3. Appropriate procedures must be followed:

1. Registration forms and answers to questions about registration preferences must be submitted in a timely fashion. The Honors Office will have further instructions regarding conference expenses and receipts.
2. All students who are participating must sign an Honors Travel Waiver and return it to the Honors Office promptly.
3. If college funds are used to finance the trip, a completed Request for Authority to Travel on TCC Business form must be signed by the student when the Honors Office requests it. The Honors Office will submit the form to the proper college officials for approval. Permission to travel is not granted until all approvals have been obtained.

d. Airline tickets may be purchased by the student if the student is paying for them. If the Honors Program is paying for airline tickets, the tickets must be obtained by the College.

4. Representatives will want to report to other Honors students on ideas and issues that were presented in the meeting or conference that they attended. Each conference participant whose travel was paid by the Honors Program should report by posting a description of the experience on the Honors Scholars organization site on Blackboard. Additionally, each conference participant whose travel was paid by the Honors Program must complete a written evaluation of the conference (evaluation form to be supplied by the Honors Office) and must write a letter of thanks to the grantors of the funding. This letter should be delivered to the Honors Office within two weeks of the conclusion of the conference.

#### HONORS TRAVEL WAIVER (SAMPLE)

Name \_\_\_\_\_ . I, the undersigned, a student of Tulsa Community College (or a faculty/staff member or guest) being over eighteen (18) years of age, acknowledge that I have signed up for travel to \_\_\_\_\_.

I recognize that this activity is voluntary on my part and for it I will receive no compensation either directly or indirectly from Tulsa Community College. I therefore assume all risk incident to the above activity, including travel to or from such place of activity, and acknowledge that Tulsa Community College, its Board of Regents, its employees, and the State of Oklahoma assume no liability, including financial responsibility for injuries or other loss resulting from or occurring during the activity or from such activity.

The undersigned further indemnifies, releases, and holds harmless Tulsa Community College, its Board of Regents, its employees, and the State of Oklahoma against any losses or injuries resulting or claimed to result from the undersigned student's (faculty/staff member's or guest's) training, participation, attendance, travel, or other involvement in any and all phases of such activity.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, student travelers must follow CDC recommendations for social-distancing, screening to include temperature checks, and approved facial coverings for all participants.

The undersigned further acknowledges that his/her signature hereto evidences that he/she has read, fully understands, agrees with and consents to the contents thereof.

## Appendix 2: Honors transfer and articulation agreement between OSU & TCC

*Purpose:* This agreement is to facilitate the transfer of students between the Tulsa Community College (TCC) Honors Program and the Oklahoma State University (OSU) Honors College.

*Agreement:*

- TCC Honors students whose grade point averages qualify them for the OSU Honors College may use up to 15 transfer Honors credit hours toward the 21 Honors hours required for the OSU “General Honors Award,” but they still must meet the breadth and Honors seminar/interdisciplinary course requirements for that award. [OSU Honors College Policies and Procedures, Sections 3-2-1, 3-3-1, 3-3-6.]
- TCC Honors students whose grade point averages qualify them for the OSU Honors College may use up to six additional transfer Honors credit hours toward the total of 39 required for the “Honors College Degree,” but they still must meet all remaining requirements for the degree. [OSU Honors College Policies and Procedures, Sections 3-2-1, 3-3-6.]
- TCC Honors students must earn an A or B in any TCC Honors class for it to be used to meet OSU Honors College requirements. [OSU Honors College Policies and Procedures, Section 3-3-1.]
- OSU Honors College students transferring to TCC’s Honors Program may use 12 transfer Honors hours from OSU toward TCC Honors Scholar graduation requirements (24 Honors credit hours OR 21 Honors credit hours plus an approved Honors service learning project). The service-learning option may be completed at either institution.
- Both institutions intend to remain active members of the Great Plains Honors Council and the National Collegiate Honors Council.

*Notice of change or cancellation:* Either institution may change or cancel this agreement by notifying the other no less than one academic year before the intended date of change or cancellation.

## Appendix 3: Honors transfer and articulation agreement between ORU & TCC

*Purpose:* This agreement is to facilitate the transfer of students between the Tulsa Community College (TCC) Honors Program and Oral Roberts University (ORU) Honors Program. Transfer students may be given full credit for their Honors hours earned when the credit is appropriate to the student’s degree program and the receiving institution has validated the courses, with the following additional provisions:

*Agreement:*

- TCC Honors Scholars with a cumulative grade point average of 3.5 or higher qualify for the ORU Honors Program and may use up to 12 transfer Honors credit hours toward the 21 Honors hours required for graduating as a transfer Scholar.
- TCC Honors Scholars must earn an A or B in any TCC Honors class for it to be used to meet ORU Honors Program requirements.
- TCC students who meet the ORU Honors Program requirements (minimum 29 ACT or 1280 SAT and minimum overall GPA of 3.5 from TCC) may apply for the Honors Program Scholar's Scholarship. The deadline is March 1.
- ORU Honors Program students transferring to TCC's Honors Program may use 12 transfer Honors hours from ORU toward TCC Honors Scholar graduation requirements.
- Both institutions intend to remain active members of the Great Plains Honors Council and the National Collegiate Honors Council.

*Notice of change or cancellation:* Either institution may change or cancel this agreement by notifying the other no less than one academic year before the intended date of change or cancellation.

## Appendix 4: University of Tulsa transfer scholarships for TCC Honors Scholar graduates

*Who is eligible?* TCC Honors Scholars who plan to attend the University of Tulsa as full-time students. (Students who already hold bachelor's degrees, international students, and former TU students are ineligible.)

*How much are the scholarships worth?*

- Transfer Honors Scholarship: \$24,000. Awarded to new transfer students who were members of Phi Theta Kappa at two-year schools. Must have a cumulative 3.5 GPA and at least 48 hours of transferrable credit or participate in the Tulsa Community College Honors Program. Students receiving this award are not eligible for the Transfer Hurricane Scholarship.
- Transfer Hurricane Scholarship: variable amounts. Awarded to new transfer students, based on exceptional performance in previous college coursework. Students receiving this award are not eligible for the Transfer Honors Scholarship.
- TCC Honors Award: \$2,000. Awarded to new transfer students who earn an associate degree from Tulsa Community College as an Honors Scholar with a cumulative 3.5 GPA. Students receiving this award may also receive the Transfer Hurricane Scholarship or the Transfer Honors Scholarship.

*How do I apply?*

- Apply for admission and gain acceptance to The University of Tulsa for the term following your TCC graduation.
- Notify TU's Office of Admission that you are a TCC Honors Scholar.  
How can I renew the scholarship?
- Continue full-time enrollment at TU. (The scholarship is forfeited upon withdrawal or dismissal.)

- Maintain a cumulative 3.0 grade point average at TU.

*Can I receive other scholarships?*

Need-based grants, loans, and work-study may supplement the scholarship if sufficient financial need is demonstrated on the FAFSA.

*Note:* Scholarships to TCC Honors Scholar Graduates may be awarded provisionally by The University of Tulsa, pending receipt of the final verification and degree transcript from Tulsa Community College.

## Information for Honors Faculty

An addendum to the TCC Honors Program's *Handbook for Honors Scholars*  
Last updated summer 2021

### Message from the Honors Coordinator

Thanks so much, esteemed colleagues, for being part of the TCC Honors Program! I and our Honors students appreciate your enthusiastic participation. This faculty guide is an addendum to our *Handbook for Honors Scholars*. Before, we have had a separate handbook for faculty; now we are presenting the faculty-specific material as a supplement to the Scholars' handbook, which already contains much of what you need to know. If you are a veteran member of the Honors faculty, we're glad to have you as a regular. If you are relatively new, we hope you are finding it rewarding and will keep it up. We hope the information provided here and in the *Handbook for Honors Scholars* that it accompanies will be helpful for reference and an occasional refresher. If you haven't taught an Honors class before and would like to, you will find information below about how to request, propose, and prepare for an Honors section.

### Honors Program background

Our program started in 1985 when honors programs were rare at two-year colleges. Today, many community colleges have such programs for helping ambitious students succeed. Some people stereotype honors programs as elitist and honors students as heavily resourced prep-school grads, but TCC Honors Scholars at TCC are quite diverse in educational background, socioeconomic status, age, ethnicity, etc. And many other students besides Honors Scholars choose our Honors classes too. In typical recent semesters, we have around 100 Honors Scholars and around 450 students enrolled in Honors sections. Students must meet eligibility requirements to be Scholars, but we have a flexible criteria list, and we look too at the application essay and educator recommendation as we evaluate each application holistically and admit those students who are not just smart, but also highly motivated, and genuinely interested in being active participants in a community of scholars. We typically offer 30-35 Honors sections in fall and spring and around 5 in the summer.

### Characteristics of the program

As an active member of the National Collegiate Honors Council (NCHC) and its regional affiliate the Great Plains Honors Council (GPHC), we comply with the NCHC definition of honors education and NCHC best practices of fully developed programs (both in the *Handbook for Honors Scholars*). Of course, every college is unique, so our program also reflects TCC's institutional culture.

The tenets of our program are straightforward:

- We offer designated Honors sections of TCC courses, not contracts or add-ons to "regular" classes.
- We keep classes small, with a 20-student cap, to facilitate professor-student and student-student interaction.
- We encourage hands-on learning and so-called high-impact practices because we believe our Honors Scholars benefit most from their classes when they interact with fellow Scholars and outstanding faculty. Undergraduate research, field trips, interactive lectures, collaborative learning, service-learning, etc., are good examples.
- We don't give Honors students extra work. The focus is on quality, not quantity.
- We don't grade Honors students more harshly than other students. The choice to take Honors sections should not result in lower grades than the student would receive in non-Honors sections.
- We emphasize—even more than the college itself does—critical thinking and communication skills.

### Learning outcomes and syllabus statement

The program's mission statement, vision statement, and learning outcomes are in the *Handbook for Honors Scholars*.

We ask Honors faculty to include the following statement on the syllabus for their Honors sections:

Congratulations on choosing an Honors class! Honors sections at TCC are limited to 20 students, stress student-faculty and student-student interaction, emphasize communication skills, promote a high level of student engagement, and encourage creative and innovative approaches to learning. They do not require more work or employ harsher grading, but they do aim for deeper student engagement with the subject matter. In an Honors class, you will be expected to attend regularly, participate actively, work cooperatively with classmates, complete assignments to the best of your ability, and commit yourself fully to intellectual development. You do not have to be admitted to the Honors Program to take an Honors class, but successful completion of two Honors classes counts as one of two eligibility requirements for admission to the program. A complete list of eligibility requirements and benefits, as well as an online application, can be found here ([www.tulsacc.edu/honors](http://www.tulsacc.edu/honors)).

### Honors students and Honors Scholars

At TCC, "Honors student" is the umbrella term for any student taking an Honors class; "Honors Scholar" is the more specific term for students who have been admitted to the Honors Program and are working to complete the program requirements and become Honors Scholar Graduates.

Honors Scholars have met the admission criteria explained in the *Handbook for Honors Scholars*, have written application essays, and have been recommended by an educator. They are aiming to complete 21 hours of Honors classes (or 18 hours of Honors classes plus one designated high-impact class of at least 3 hours). *Note this is a change for 2021-2022; the previous requirement was 24 hours.* You will almost certainly have some Honors Scholars in your Honors sections. Interested students can find the online application at [www.tulsacc.edu/honors](http://www.tulsacc.edu/honors).

But *any* TCC student may enroll in Honors sections (a GPA of 3.0 is suggested, but not required.) While some students excel academically before they enroll in Honors classes, some excel because they take Honors classes. Students with spotty academic records often perform very well in Honors classes, get hooked on Honors, and eventually become Honors Scholars. (Earning A's or B's in two Honors classes can be used as one of the two criteria needed to apply; this allows students who are capable but lacking confidence to sample Honors classes before committing to the program.)

Students who complete 15 hours of Honors classes with a 3.5 GPA—whether admitted to the Honors Program or not—are eligible for an Honors certificate documenting their achievement. All they have to do is email [honors@tulsacc.edu](mailto:honors@tulsacc.edu) to indicate they have completed the requirements and would like a certification. The certificate, makes a nice CV or resume item but does not currently come with any financial or specific transfer benefits. (We are investigation possibilities for enhancing this part of the program.)

Please remember that the students in your class, though Honors students and often Honors Scholars, are still first-year and second-year students and not necessarily majors in your discipline. You will have some brilliant students; you will have some students who are diligent and engaged but less brilliant; you will have some who are just ordinary students but like Honors classes because they are smaller and more interactive. We love getting really smart, super-prepared students, but we have found high motivation is an even bigger determinant of success in Honors.

## Referring/recommending students

If you have current students you think would be strong candidates for the Honors Program, you can easily refer them to us using the Starfish app. Here's how:

- Log into MyTCC and open Starfish.
- From the list of your students, choose "select student", check the box by the student's name (you will see the text of the message going to students; you can personalize it if you wish, but you don't have to) and then click save. (You can select multiple students at once if needed.)

We will receive a copy of the referral and follow-up with our own email to the student. If the student decides to apply to program, your Starfish referral will also serve as the required recommendation for the student; there's no need to write a separate recommendation letter.

If, however, you are asked for a recommendation by a student not currently enrolled in one of your classes, you will not be able to access the referral system for that student and will need to write a recommendation, which you can email to [honors@tulsacc.edu](mailto:honors@tulsacc.edu), with the subject line "Recommendation for [student's name]."

## Qualifications for teaching Honors

Honors classes are taught by enthusiastic and engaged faculty members committed to the concept of honors education advocated by the National Collegiate Honors Council Definition of Honors Education, available at <https://www.nchchonors.org/directors-faculty/definition-of-honors-education>, and to the NCHC's principles of course design, available at <https://nchc.site-ym.com/page/coursedesign>.

Preference is given to full-time faculty, but part-time faculty will be considered in the absence of full-time faculty interest in teaching a course that Honors Scholars need.

## Proposing an Honors course or section

Faculty wishing to teach an Honors course not currently offered should discuss their idea with the Honors coordinator and then complete a course proposal form and submit it to the Honors Program by email. The form asks for a description of the course, a brief rationale for offering it, and an indication that the department chair and dean have been consulted. Faculty members who have not taught Honors before will also need to do our online training course.

Faculty who wish to teach a section of a currently offered Honors course and have not taught that Honors class before should also complete and submit the proposal form. (They will need to complete the training course only if they have not taught Honors at all before, not if they have taught in the Honors Program before, just not this specific class.)

The form can be obtained from [honors@tulsacc.edu](mailto:honors@tulsacc.edu) and looks like this:

### **Proposal to Teach an Honors Class**

Faculty member making request: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of request: \_\_\_\_\_

Desired location (which campus): \_\_\_\_\_ Semester course would be taught: \_\_\_\_\_

*The proposal should be made one year in advance of the semester the class will be taught. Fall proposals are due by Nov. 1 (with decisions by January); spring and summer proposals are due by April 1 (with decisions by June). Exceptions may be made for urgently needed classes.*

Course number and title:

Briefly explain why you want to teach an Honors section and which students are likely to benefit from it:

Briefly describe your vision for the course (content, methods, etc.):

The TCC Honors Program adheres to the National Collegiate Honors Council statement that honors education “provides opportunities for measurably broader, deeper, and more complex learning-centered and learner-directed experiences for its students than are available elsewhere in the institution.” A high level of faculty-student and student-student interaction and a high degree of student engagement are expected. Means of achieving such engagement might include research and creative scholarship, interdisciplinary learning, service learning and leadership, and participation in learning communities. What methods and strategies appropriate to your discipline would you employ in your class to facilitate this high level of student engagement?

Have you taught an Honors class before? \_\_\_Yes \_\_\_No

Are you familiar with the TCC Honors Program’s policies regarding class size, quality rather than quantity of work, fair grading, and emphasis on communication skills?  
\_\_\_Yes \_\_\_No

Have you consulted your department chair about the appropriateness of offering an honors section of this course and about the likelihood that there will be student demand for it? \_\_\_Yes \_\_\_No

*Evaluation criteria for proposals:*

- Probable demand for the course and section
- Adherence to the National Collegiate Honors Council statement that honors education “provides opportunities for measurably broader, deeper, and more complex learning-centered and learner-directed experiences for its students than are available elsewhere in the institution”
- A clear vision of how the course will achieve a high level of student engagement and student interaction with the professor and fellow students
- Compatibility of the proposed course or section with the Honors schedule as a whole

*Deadlines and timeline for proposals:*

The proposal should be made one year in advance of the semester the class will be taught. Fall proposals are due by Nov. 1 (with decisions by January); spring and summer proposals are due by April 1 (with decisions by June). Example: Proposals are due by Nov. 1 of the current year for classes to be taught in the fall semester of the following year. Exceptions to the timeline may be made in the case of a class that is urgently needed. The Honors Program will notify faculty members and their chairs when decisions have been made.

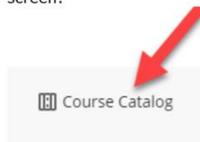
Faculty members who have taught an Honors course and wish to teach a future section of the same course do not need to submit a proposal, nor do they need to take the training course.

Even “veteran” Honors faculty, though, might want to enroll in the course on Blackboard just to get access to the resources section.

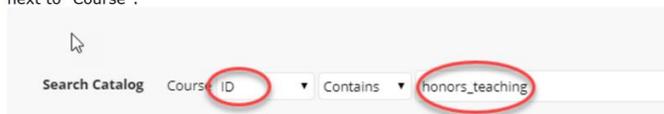
### Instructions for enrolling in the training course for Honors teaching (Knights of the Seminar Table)

Instructors will be able to enroll by searching the course catalog found in the upper right-hand corner of the courses page in Blackboard:

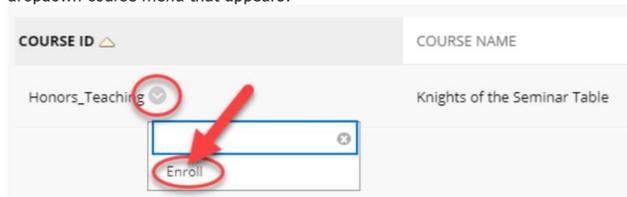
1. Click on the "Courses" tab once logged into Blackboard.
2. Click the "Course Catalog" button located in the upper right-hand corner of the screen:



3. Type "honors\_teaching" into the text field and select "ID" from the dropdown menu next to "Course":



4. Click "Go" to run the search.
5. Hover next to the "Course ID" and click the Chevron. Then, click "Enroll" on the dropdown course menu that appears:



6. On the next screen, click the "Submit" button.

### Scheduling an Honors section

Faculty wishing to teach an Honors section in a specific semester work within the scheduling processes used by their respective schools after signaling their request to both the Honors coordinator and the faculty chair.

A member of the Honors faculty may continue to teach an approved course regularly for as long as it is needed, provided that other faculty members are not requesting the same course. If, however, multiple faculty members are requesting the same course, the Honors Program staff will work with the faculty members to craft an equitable rotation.

### Policies governing Honors sections

- **No mixed Honors/non-Honors classes.** Some students enrolled in Honors sections will be Honors Scholars; others will not. But the class experience should be the same for all enrolled students. It is *not acceptable* to have different assignments, practices, or standards for the two groups.
- **No contracts.** Honors-by-contract, a practice used by some programs, places students earning Honors credit and students not earning Honors credit in the same classroom, and the students seeking Honors credit contract with the professor to do extra work. The TCC Honors Program *prohibits* this practice, as decided by a vote of the entire Honors faculty
- **Maximum of 20 students.** The 20-student cap is an essential characteristic of an Honors class at TCC. Small classes that facilitate a high level of student-student and student-professor interaction are probably our program's biggest selling point, and we guard it vigilantly.
- **Modality conducive to a high level of engagement.** Program policy currently limits Honors Scholars to nine hours of Honors credit in online classes. Enforcement of this policy has been suspended during the pandemic. The Honors coordinator and Honors Advisory panel are currently considering

post-pandemic options: retain the current policy and resume enforcement, modify the policy to make it more flexible, or abandon the policy altogether, but we have not yet made the decision.

### Some scheduling concerns

We love offering Honors classes, but we hate having to cancel classes because doing so creates difficulties for our Honors Scholars, many of whom already face challenges in scheduling the 21 hours of required Honors classes. Therefore, the Honors Program runs a relatively lean schedule, focused on general-education courses. We do offer some more specialized Honors courses, but only if we are reasonably sure that there is adequate student demand for them. Honors sections may be offered on any TCC campus, and the Honors Program seeks to serve the whole college. However, there is a much larger concentration of Honors Scholars on the Metro and Southeast campuses, so Honors sections on those two campuses are generally more likely to make. Offering Honors sections on multiple campuses makes Honors classes more accessible for some students, but distributing courses too widely frustrates some Honors Scholars who then must take classes on multiple campuses during the same semester to earn sufficient Honors hours. There is no perfect solution to this problem, but the Honors Program staff attempts to balance the competing desires to serve students collegewide and to ensure reasonable scheduling options for Honors Scholars.

In cases where more than one section of the same Honors course will be offered during the same academic year, it is sometimes preferable to have a fall section on one campus and a spring section on another so that more students have convenient access to the course.