



## UNIVERSITY HONORS PROGRAM HANDBOOK

### **University Honors Program Directors**

Dr. Monica VanDieren, Mathematics

Dr. Philip Harold, Social Sciences

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## University Honors Program Admission Policy

**Patriot Scholar Admission Process.** Patriot Scholar candidates are highly motivated individuals who wish to foster their love of learning in challenging environments where they are surrounded by students who share their drive and determination.

Individuals may apply to be Patriot Scholars during the following times:

- Upon entering the university as a first year student (Incoming Patriot Scholar)
- After successfully completing 30 credits at RMU with a QPA of 3.5 (Continuing Patriot Scholar)
- Upon transferring to the university (Transferring Patriot Scholar)

While each Patriot Scholar is unique, they are recognized for their:

- Advanced critical thinking and written communication skills
- Superior academic performance in a challenging curriculum
- Excellent standardized test results on one of the following: SAT or ACT\*
- Commitment to community service
- Demonstrated leadership skills

\*An impressive academic record, Honors essay, and résumé of accomplishments and interests *may* compensate for standardized test scores slightly below the published guidelines.

## **Application Procedures**

**Incoming Patriot Scholars.** Incoming Patriot Scholars will be recruited from the class of incoming first-year students. The UHP and Enrollment Services will work together to identify future Patriot Scholars from the academically qualified applicants who have been accepted to RMU. Once candidates have been identified, the UHP Director will send letters to prospective Patriot Scholars inviting them to apply. Interested candidates will be invited to return a completed application form.

### **Incoming Patriot Scholar Selection Criteria:**

- A score of 1200 on the SAT or 26 on the ACT
- A 3.5 high school GPA
- School and community activities, honors, and awards
- At least one letter of recommendation from a teacher, additional recommendation letters from teachers or other sources are optional
- Essay (response to a prompt selected by the UHP Director)

All Patriot Scholar candidates will be notified of the University Honors Program's decisions separately from their admission decision.

**Continuing Patriot Scholars.** Continuing Patriot Scholars are full-time students enrolled at RMU and will be recruited at the end of their freshman year. The UHP and the Registrar's Office will work together to identify potential candidates. The UHP Director will send letters to the candidates inviting them to apply for admission to the UHP.

### **Continuing Patriot Scholar Selection Criteria:**

- Completion of at least 30 credits, but not more than 60 credits
- 3.5 RMU GPA
- Personal Statement indicating the student's goals and expectations
- Goals Statement (in which students discuss their educational and career goals and how being in the UHP would assist them in accomplishing those goals).
- Letter of Recommendation submitted by an RMU faculty member
- Review of applications will begin on July 1. Applications will continue to be accepted until all positions are filled.

**Transfer students.** Transfer students may also apply to be Patriot Scholars.

### **Transfer Patriot Scholar Selection Criteria:**

- Completion of at least 30 applied credits
- 3.5 GPA
- Consideration of the type of transfer institution (e.g., two-year, four-year, technical)
- Consideration of previous participation in an Honors Program
- Amount and type of honors work completed
- Feasibility of completing the program
- Quality of application
- At least one letter of recommendation from a professor, additional recommendation letters from teachers or other sources are optional
- Review of applications will begin on July 1. Applications will continue to be accepted until all positions are filled

## **Remaining in Good Standing**

To maintain their status as Patriot Scholars, **all** students must maintain the following QPAs:

First year:	3.3
Sophomore year:	3.4
Junior year:	3.5
Senior year:	3.5

If students fall below the required QPA, they will be placed on UHP probation for one academic semester. If, at the end of the probationary semester, a student has not raised his or her QPA to the required minimum, she or he will be removed from the UHP.

In addition to meeting the required QPA, in preparation for the honors' thesis, all students must attend the Undergraduate Research Conference each year in the spring semester. Additionally, students who fail to make progress towards meeting the Honors Program curriculum requirements or whose actions are not consistent with that of a Patriot Scholar may be removed from the honors program at the discretion of the Honors Program Directors.

Participation in the Honors Student Advisory Council and other honors' activities is highly encouraged.

## The University Honors Program Curriculum

To increase further the cohesion and sense of community among Patriot Scholars, all Patriot Scholars will complete 27 credits of honors curriculum:

COURSE	NUMBER OF CREDITS	COURSE LISTING(S)
<b>RMU Core Courses</b>	<b>12</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• COSK1221, Honors section</li> <li>• COSK2220, Honors section</li> <li>• COSK2221, Honors section</li> <li>• COSK2230, Honors section</li> </ul>
<b>General Education Credits</b>	<b>6</b>	<p>Students will choose 2 of the following General Education Courses (this list will expand as Honors sections of other courses are developed):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HIST 1500, Honors section</li> <li>• ELIT 2055, Honors section</li> <li>• SOCI 2320, Honors section</li> <li>• HUMA 1010, Honors section</li> </ul>
<b>Honors Seminar</b>	<b>3</b>	<p>Students will complete an Honors Seminar Course with a grade of “B” or better. Additionally, select pre-approved Study Abroad Experiences may stand-in for the Honors Seminar requirement.</p>
<b>Thesis Project</b>	<b>6</b>	<p>HNRS4900 (3 credits)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research and Methodology course taught by the UHP directors (3 credits)</li> </ul> <p>HNRS4910 (2 credits)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Honors Thesis Research supervised by the faculty thesis advisor (2 credits)</li> </ul> <p>HNRS4920 (1 credit)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Honors Thesis Completion and Presentation supervised by faculty thesis advisor (1 credit). All Honors Theses will be presented as part of the Undergraduate Research Conference</li> </ul>

### **RMU Core Courses (12 credits)**

Given that the core is a set of courses that all RMU students have in common and was agreed upon by university faculty, we do not support redesigning or re-imagining the core for Patriot Scholars. However, all Honors sections of COSK courses will be capped at 15 students. To compensate for potential low enrollment in Honors designated sections and to help boost enrollment in the UHP, any student who is not a Patriot Scholar but has a QPA of 3.5 or higher may petition the UHP Director to enroll in the honors section of the course.

### **Honors General Education Courses (6 credits)**

Patriot Scholars will be required to take two courses from the core curricula outside of Communication Skills designated as honors sections. The list will include, HIST 1500: Western Civilization I, ELIT 2055: World Literature, and SOCI 2320: Contemporary American Social Problems. It will expand to include other courses, possibly in Economics, Computer Information Systems, Statistics, Science, and Mathematics.

### **Honors Seminar Course (3 credits)**

Each Patriot Scholar will complete at least one Honors Seminar course, to be taken during their junior or senior year. Students not enrolled in the UHP with a QPA of 3.5 or higher will be allowed to enroll in these courses. In lieu of completing this required course, Patriot Scholars may instead complete an approved Study Abroad experience. The Honors Seminar Course will be an interdisciplinary course taught by the UHP directors and professors from different disciplines on a rotating basis.

## **Honors Thesis Project (6 credits)**

All Patriot Scholars are required to complete an Honors Thesis Project to graduate from the program. The honors thesis project is the culmination of the honors experience. Students, working with a faculty advisor, earn six credits for work that most often culminates in a thesis that reflects substantial scholarship and demonstrates outstanding research, writing, and presentational skills. In some fields the culminating experience could be a creative work that demonstrates imagination and originality in addition to craftsmanship and professionalism in production. The honors thesis project consists of a total of six credit hours:

- **HNRS 4900: Research and Methodology (3 credits)**

This course is designed to assist students in selecting a thesis project, advisor, and appropriate methodology. Students examine examples of research from many disciplines and learn about various styles of research design. At the end of the course, students have selected an advisor, decided upon a thesis project and methodology, and submit a prospectus. This course is taught by the UHP Directors.

- **HNRS 4910: Honors Thesis Research (2 credits)**

This course is designed to assist students as they begin conducting and interpreting their original research for their thesis project. At the end of the course, students have completed their literature review, all data collection, and analysis. This course is supervised by the student's thesis advisor.

- **HNRS 4920: Honors Thesis Completion and Presentation (1 credits)**

This course is designed to assist students as they synthesize their findings into the completed thesis. Students will present their thesis to members of the Honors community at the end of the semester at the Undergraduate Research Conference. This course is supervised by the student's thesis advisor.

Applicants for the honors thesis project first register for HNRS 4900, a three-credit course taught by the UHP directors, in their junior or senior year. During this course students will consult with their faculty advisor and the UHP directors, and are expected to write the proposal for the project and review the pertinent literature. Students whose proposals have been approved for an honors thesis project will then register for HNRS 4910, a two-credit course, the following semester. This independent study includes the research and writing of the project. Next, students register for HNRS 4920, a one-credit course, to be taken during the third and final semester of the project. During this independent study, students are expected to complete the writing, make the necessary revisions after consultation with the faculty advisor and readers, prepare the final document for submission to the Honors Program, and deliver an oral presentation of the thesis at RMU's Undergraduate Research Conference. The faculty advisor will assign a grade at the end of each semester of HNRS 4910 and HNRS 4920 that reflects the progress made during that stage of the project.

## Patriot Scholars' Suggested Course of Study

### Incoming Patriot Scholars' Suggested Course of Study

Academic Year	Fall Schedule	Spring Schedule
<b>First Year</b>	<b>FYSP1000 (Honors Section) COSK1221 (Honors Section)</b>	<b>COSK 2220 (Honors Section)</b>
<b>Sophomore</b>	<b>COSK 2221 (Honors Section) General Education Course (Honors Section)</b>	<b>COSK 2230 (Honors Section) General Education Course (Honors Section)</b>
<b>Junior</b>	<b>Honors Seminar Course</b>	<b>HNRS4900 Honors Seminar Course (if not already completed)</b>
<b>Senior</b>	<b>HNRS 4910 Honors Seminar Course (if not already completed)</b>	<b>HNRS 4920 Honors Seminar Course (if not already completed)</b>

### Continuing Patriot Scholars' Suggested Course of Study

Academic Year	Fall Schedule	Spring Schedule
<b>Sophomore</b>	<b>COSK 2221 (Honors Section) General Education Course (Honors Section)</b>	<b>COSK 2230 (Honors Section) General Education Course (Honors Section)</b>
<b>Junior</b>	<b>Honors Seminar Course</b>	<b>HNRS4900 Honors Seminar Course (if not already completed)</b>
<b>Senior</b>	<b>HNRS 4910 Honors Seminar Course (if not already completed)</b>	<b>HNRS 4920 Honors Seminar Course (if not already completed)</b>

In their second year, Continuing Patriot Scholars are required take one honors COSK course each semester. In the third year, usually in the spring, they should begin their honors thesis project, by completing the research and methodology course and submitting the project proposal. The final year should be devoted to completing the Honors Thesis Project. All honors requirements must be completed **before** students are acknowledged as graduates of the UHP in the commencement program and at the commencement ceremony.

**Transfer Patriot Scholars' Suggested Course of Study**

<b>Academic Year</b>	<b>Fall Schedule</b>	<b>Spring Schedule</b>
<b>Sophomore</b>	<b>COSK 2221 (Honors Section) General Education Course (Honors Section)</b>	<b>COSK 2230 (Honors Section) General Education Course (Honors Section)</b>
<b>Junior</b>	<b>Honors Seminar Course</b>	<b>HNRS4900 Honors Seminar Course (if not already completed)</b>
<b>Senior</b>	<b>HNRS 4910 Honors Seminar Course (if not already completed)</b>	<b>HNRS 4920 Honors Seminar Course (if not already completed)</b>

If students transfer with all COSK courses satisfied, then they do not have to complete the Honors sections of COSK courses; however, if students still have a COSK course(s) to complete, then they **must** enroll in and successfully complete the Honors section of the course(s).

If students transfer to RMU at the beginning of their sophomore year and are selected to be Patriot Scholars, then they are required take honors sections of two COSK courses in addition to the general education, honors seminar and honors thesis requirements.. If students transfer to RMU at the beginning of their junior year and are selected to be Patriot Scholars, they must complete two general education honors section courses, the seminar course, and the thesis requirements. All honors requirements must be completed **before** students are acknowledged as graduates of the UHP in the commencement program and at the commencement ceremony.

### Patriot Scholars' Checklist

	Course Name	Semester and Year Completed or Anticipated	Check if Completed
<b>Honors Sections of Communications Skills Classes</b>	<b>COSK 1121</b>		<input type="checkbox"/>
	<b>COSK 2220</b>		<input type="checkbox"/>
	<b>COSK 2221</b>		<input type="checkbox"/>
	<b>COSK 2230</b>		<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Honors Section of Two Core Classes<sup>1</sup></b>			<input type="checkbox"/>
			<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Honors Seminar or pre-approved study abroad</b>			<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Honors Thesis</b>	<b>HNRS 4900</b>		<input type="checkbox"/>
	<b>HNRS 4910</b>		<input type="checkbox"/>
	<b>HNRS 4920</b>		<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Total Number of Honors Credits Completed (to date)</b>			

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<sup>1</sup> Currently the core classes with honors sections include HIST 1500: Western Civilization I, ELIT 2055: World Literature, SOCI 2320: Contemporary American Social Problems and HUMA 1010: Humanities Art and Music. Other selections may be added to this list as honors sections are developed.

## **Patriot Scholars' Benefits**

### **Priority Registration**

Because of the Honors Curriculum requirements and in order to recognize Patriot Scholars, all honors students will be given early access to registration each semester.

### **Honors Lounge**

Beginning in the fall of 2009, Patriot Scholars will be given exclusive access to the Honors Lounge. A designated, centrally-located space on campus for honors students to study, gather and socialize.

### **Honors Networking Lunches**

Several times each semester, Honors students are invited to meet with Faculty and graduate students on campus for the Honors Networking Lunches. These gatherings provide students with the opportunity for informal, personal interaction with faculty from across the university. It is a great chance to learn about research going on around campus and to meet faculty who may serve as honors thesis advisors.

### **Scholarships**

In recognition of the academic accomplishments of the Patriot Scholars, each honors student will receive a \$1000 scholarship per semester at RMU for a maximum of eight semesters. These scholarships are conditional on meeting eligibility requirements for and remaining active in the University Honors Program.

### **Honors Travel Fellowships**

A limited amount of funds is set aside each year for Honors Travel Fellowships. Honors Travel Fellowships will help to partially offset the expenses associated with travel, lodging and conference fees for Patriot Scholars who attend research conferences. Attendance at these conferences will permit the students to interact with leaders in their fields and make presentations.

Honors Travel Fellowships will be awarded through a competitive process taking into account participation in the Student Advisory Committee and other University Honors Programs events. Preference will be given to those students who have been invited to make presentations at the conference.

### **Student Engagement Transcript (SET) Listings**

Each semester a student is enrolled in an honors class, a line will be added to the SET indicating "Honors Curriculum." Each semester that a student participates in a designated number of eligible Honors Program events, a line indicating "Honors Program Participation" will be added to the SET. Each semester of active membership on the Student Advisory Committee is eligible for a Leadership activity listed on the SET.

## **Patriot Scholars' Opportunities**

### **Student Advisory Council**

The Student Advisory Council will be composed of interested honors students. The Student Advisory Council will offer recommendations and suggestions to the UHP Director and the Honors Program Committee concerning the policies, regulations, curriculum and activities of the Honors Program. There will be two subcommittees of the Council, a service subcommittee and a cultural subcommittee. The service subcommittee will recommend possible service-oriented projects in which Patriot Scholars could take part. The cultural subcommittee will identify cultural events which they could attend, as well as faculty to give lectures on topical subjects. Attendance for all service projects, cultural events and faculty lectures will be voluntary.

### **Study Abroad Opportunities**

The University Honors Program has a strong track record of participation in study abroad opportunities. Working with the International Programs Office at RMU, the University Honors Program supports students in identifying, planning for and making the most of their study abroad experiences. Honors students have traveled to Australia, Ireland, Italy and Finland, and Prof. Harold has a course every spring which takes students to Israel for two weeks in May.

### **Internships**

Working with the RMU Career Center, the University Honors Program Co-Directors identify internship and internship-funding opportunities for Patriot Scholars. One example is the Washington Center Internship and Academic Seminar program. Through this program students earn college credit while engaging in a professional work experience tailored to their individual interests. The Washington Center internship programs include government agency placements, positions in local companies, Peace Corps opportunities and study abroad programs. Scholarship money is set aside for Robert Morris University students and additional scholarships are available for Patriot Scholar to help defray the costs of participating in this program. Other internship opportunities are available. Contact the RMU Career Center or the University Honors Program Co-Directors for more information.

### **Summer Research Programs**

Many national agencies and foundations provide funding for undergraduate research opportunities at universities and labs across the country. These programs provide RMU students with an expanded curriculum in their major, research experience for future careers or post-graduate study and the opportunity to interact with talented students, scientists and professors from outside the RMU community. Check the RMU University Honors Program website for a list of these summer research programs.

## **National Collegiate Honors Council Supported Opportunities**

The National Collegiate Honors Council sponsors the *Partners in the Park*, the *City as Text* and *Honors Semesters* programs. RMU Patriot Scholars are eligible to apply for these programs and for scholarship money set aside by the NCHC for these programs.

*Partners in the Park* is a learning experience run by university faculty in cooperation with the U.S. National Park Service. Students travel to a national park and spend one week camping, attending seminars on historical, cultural and scientific aspects of the park and enjoying the recreational features of the park. Past *Partners in the Park* programs have included Acadia, Fire Island to Ellis Island, Big Thicket, Bryce Canyon, Zion, Grand Canyon-Parashant and Saguaro/Organ Pipe national parks. The NCHC offers student stipends for up to \$200 towards travel experiences. These stipends are awarded through a competitive application process.

The *City as Text* and the longer-term site-specific *Honors Semesters* are structured learning opportunities that take advantage of the location. Students explore the environment and local culture in small teams through short-term laboratories or longer-term research projects. Past *Honors Semesters* have been in Washington, D.C., the Grand Canyon, New York City, El Paso, Appalachia, the Maine Coast, Iowa, Puerto Rico, Mexico, Greece, the Czech Republic, Spain, and the Southeast coast of the United States, on topics ranging from local culture to global concerns. Some of the programs provide students with upper-division honors transfer credit that can be applied to their graduation requirements.