

## **Curricular Proposal for Enhancing UK Honors Requirements from 21 credits to 30 credits**

### **Current: 21 credits**

**Plus 3 (to 24 credits): Make WRD 112/CIS 112 compulsory for all Honors students.** WRD 112/CIS 112 (Accelerated Composition and Communication) are accelerated versions of the standard 2-semester composition and communication sequence. They focus on integrated oral, written, and visual communication skill development and emphasizes critical inquiry and research. (CIS 112 differs from WRS 112 in including a community-service obligation). Virtually all current Honors students already take one or the other of these accelerated courses. All current students can be accommodated at current instructional staffing levels.

**Plus 3 (to 27 credits): Add a foundational seminar to be taken by all Honors students by the end of their 2<sup>nd</sup> year.**

#### *Transition Committee description:*

The purpose of this course is to build a sense of intellectual community among students in the Lewis Honors College by engaging them in a shared academic experience. A three-credit, one-semester course taken in the freshman or sophomore year, it will emphasize the development of analytical reading and writing skills. The course will be writing intensive, requiring the students to produce a minimum of 20 pages over the course of the semester and to complete at least one assignment that includes a formal revision process. The overarching theme of the course addresses the relationship of the individual and the world, and students will explore how the three main branches of academic inquiry—humanities, natural sciences, social sciences—address this topic. The course theme is intentionally broad, inviting periodic revision by the course instructors. It is nevertheless desirable that there be a substantial (approximately 75%) degree of standardization in texts and assignments each semester and through successive iterations of the course for the sake of establishing an honors college tradition and building community across grade levels. Course instructors will participate in an annual, late spring retreat during which they will collectively decide on the course's anchor texts and assignments. The course will be composed of seminars capped at 20 students. Each of the three major units will be introduced by an evening lecture by a prominent UK faculty member who will be asked to present a broad historical context and/or epistemological framework for subsequent student discussion within the relevant unit. These lectures will have either the natural sciences, social sciences, or humanities as their broad focus, and speakers will be encouraged to incorporate the broad course theme into their talks. Such events afford students a more robust understanding of the specific texts associated with the subsequent course unit. Class meetings will integrate the lecture material, key texts, and other primary source materials to promote discussion within small groups, the larger class cohort, and among students across the various course sections.

**Plus 3 (to 30 Credits): Require 3 credits of directed elective (to count only as Honors credit – i.e. cannot count toward UK Core credit)**

#### *Transition Committee description:*

A University of Kentucky Lewis Honors College student should not be developing only depth in her or his field of study but also breadth of Honors-level course experience.

Honors students must choose at least three credit hours in HON 301 or departmental Honors sections outside their general discipline\* of study, including declared majors or minors, at the time of course

enrollment. Students must consult with their Honors advisor to secure permission for their intended directed elective prior to enrollment; advisors will guide students to consider courses significantly outside their field of study or in truly elective potential areas of academic growth. Course conversions may not be used for this requirement, and departments may provide guidelines for advisors to help identify strong candidates for especially specialized courses.

Colleges and departments should see this as an opportunity to develop Honors sections, especially for blended enrollments of high-performing non-Honors majors and Honors students pursuing this directed elective. Additionally, departments should consider developing new HON 301 courses to innovate new courses that may eventually be brought back to the home department of the offering faculty member.

\*Broadly classified as life sciences, physical sciences and engineering, fine arts, humanities, and social science and business.

### **Additional Requirement (not credit-bearing): Presentation of independent work**

#### *Transition Committee description:*

The purpose of this proposed curricular element is to define and formalize the already established Honors requirement to promote and ensure high-quality honors independent work and/or capstone experiences, and to consciously assimilate the role and importance of curricular and extra-curricular experiential education as a core element of the Lewis Honors College. To meet this requirement, Lewis Honors College students will be expected to develop a formal proposal and presentation and disseminate their independent work at an interdisciplinary venue. First and second year students will be meaningfully exposed to, and involved in the Honors independent and/or capstone projects as part of a required Honors course. The intent of this recommendation is to recognize the importance of the experiential and capstone elements of the Honors program and to broadly highlight these activities among the Honors student body. Exposing first- and second-year Honors students early to the best independent work of their more experienced peers will raise the expectations bar for students in the early stages of the program while giving exemplary student research the audience it deserves.

To ensure high quality independent work and capstone experiential education within the framework of existing Honors classes and to provide opportunities for dissemination of scholarly work, we propose:

1. A requirement for Honors students to attend and participate in development and presentation of independent work and/or capstone proposals and seminars. This requirement can be embedded within the proposed foundational seminar.
2. Add some structure and requirements to the required honors independent and/or capstone courses (currently 6 credits) that would: a) have students develop and present a proposal for their independent and/or capstone honors course(s); and b) have students formally present their honors experiential work and/or capstone in an interdisciplinary venue, either one that is existing or one developed for this purpose (e.g. Showcase of Undergraduate Research, Global Health Conference, Center for Clinical and Translational Science Conference).
3. The Honors experiential courses would have a course coordinator responsible for approval, viewing and critiquing Honors independent and/or capstone proposals in a group setting with other students (upper class and freshman) and evaluating presentations of the work when it is complete.
4. A select cohort of presentations would be selected by Honors College Faculty for highlighting in an Honors Showcase and representative of projects that embody the ideals and aspiration of the Honors program. These select few projects may be presented as part of a year-end celebration of the Lewis Honors College.

