

M O N T A N A B O A R D O F R E G E N T S
LEVEL II REQUEST FORM

Item No.:	136-1503-R0907	Date of Meeting:	September 19-21, 2007
Institution:	Montana Tech of The University of Montana		
Program Title:	Undergraduate Honors Program		

Level II proposals require approval by the Board of Regents.

Level II action requested (check all that apply): Level II proposals entail substantive additions to, alterations in, or termination of programs, structures, or administrative or academic entities typically characterized by the (a) addition, reassignment, or elimination of personnel, facilities, or courses of instruction; (b) rearrangement of budgets, cost centers, funding sources; and (c) changes which by implication could impact other campuses within the Montana University System and community colleges. Board policy 303.1 indicates the curricular proposals in this category:

- 1. Change names of degrees (e.g. from B.A. to B.F.A.)
- 2. Implement a new minor or certificate where there is no major or no option in a major;
- 3. Establish new degrees and add majors to existing degrees;
- 4. Expand/extend approved mission; and
- 5. Any other changes in governance and organization as described in Board of Regents' Policy 218, such as formation, elimination or consolidation of a college, division, school, department, institute, bureau, center, station, laboratory, or similar unit.

Specify Request:

In a continuing effort to recruit and retain top students, Montana Tech of The University of Montana requests permission to offer an undergraduate honors program. The undergraduate honors program will consist of a series of honors seminars, an honors component in existing courses, and newly developed honors courses.

LEVEL II BOARD OF REGENTS ITEMS

Institution: Montana Tech of The University of Montana Tech
Program Title: Undergraduate honors program

Curriculum Proposals

1. Overview

To complement the missions of Montana Tech of The University of Montana and its colleges and departments, faculty/staff have brought forward a proposal to establish an undergraduate honors program on the Tech campus. The proposed undergraduate honors program was developed in support of Tech's vision, "*To be the leader for undergraduate and graduate education and research in the Pacific Northwest in engineering, science, energy, health, information sciences and technology.*"

2. Need

Montana Tech of The University of Montana has done an exceptional job in creating courses to assist students in their successful completion of a university education. New courses in Mathematics and English have been designed and implemented to assist students who do not possess the educational background to successfully complete entry level Mathematics and English Composition courses. However, the faculty and administration on the Tech campus see the need to provide educational opportunities and experiences for the advanced, high-achieving students as well. The need for advanced studies, integration of concepts and curricula, etc. has been expressed repeatedly by students. During summer orientation activities, 18 freshman students expressed an interest in participating in an undergraduate honors program.

3. Institutional and System Fit

Montana Tech's *Vision 2025* document outlines the goal of "developing complimentary and/or experiential curricula at various stages of the student's career to enhance the educational value of each class." Furthermore, the *Vision* document outlines Tech's commitment to academic outcomes in the areas of leadership, ethics, quantitative skills, communications, technical expertise, research, and service. The undergraduate honors program, as described in section four, embraces these notions.

4. Program Details

Draft Mission Statement

To complement the missions of Montana Tech and the participating colleges and departments, broadening and deepening the educational experience of involved students and faculty, by providing an enhanced learning environment for exceptional students.

Required Courses:

- **Freshman Honors Seminar** - Fall and Spring Semester
1 credit each. Starting Fall Semester 2007.
- **Freshman Honors Writing** - Fall Semester – 3 credits (this would substitute for Comm 1046). Starting Fall Semester 2007.
- **Honors Seminar** - Fall and Spring Semesters – 1 credit each (minimum 4 of 6 remaining semesters).
- **Undergraduate Research** – 3 credits minimum (A higher minimum number of credits may be established by accrediting agency for a particular degree program.)
- **Thesis** – 1 credit (Topic would be agreed upon by student, department head from student's major and the Honors Committee. Thesis could be a co-requirement with a particular department; however, the student could not receive credit twice for the same thesis.

Total credits from required courses 14-16, up to 10 credits beyond major requirements.

Honors Seminar Series:

- The following is a proposed structure for the seminar series. The series would consist of 8 one-credit classes offered through the undergraduate honors program. Courses would be designed and timed to integrate with the natural progression of learning objectives and needs which occur during a normal undergraduate career.
- **Goals-** Develop and enhance the following: critical thinking and problem solving, independent learning, a strong and professional ability to communicate, community connectedness, cultural fluency, ethics, quantitative skills, research, and leadership. Additionally the series will prepare the student for the transition out of college into his or her career of choice.
- **Format-** Each semester will be uniquely designed around a theme. The theme will be presented as a thesis statement. Depending on the theme, the course will use a combination of the following in an effort to ensure the most complete exploration of the theme: seminar/panel discussions by topical experts, student work-groups assigned tasks and reporting back on the theme (or sub-topic), group and/or individual presentations or reports.
The presentations will be peer critiqued.
- **Topics-** *The following is a proposed list of topics by semester.*
 - Semester 1 Leadership and College Success
 - Semester 2 Resume/vita preparation
 - Semester 3 Independent Study/Research methods/Life-long learning
 - Semester 4 Ethics
 - Semester 5 Community/Service Project
 - Semester 6 Scientific Discovery and Society
 - Semester 7 Mentoring Young Scholars
 - Semester 8 Career Enhancement

- **Grade -** The following grading methods would be adjusted to appropriately fit each semester: attendance, community activity, papers, presentations, class participation, and peer evaluations.
- **Expenses** limited to expense of guest speakers and the acquisition of information as well as standard faculty salary for one credit class.

Admissions Criteria:

First Year – by invitation. The Honors Committee will look at criteria such as GPA, standardized exam scores, extracurricular activities, etc.

Subsequent Years – by application. Minimum thresholds will be established for criteria such as GPA, standardized exam scores, extracurricular activities, etc. and the students will be required to submit an essay.

Continuation in the program will require maintaining a minimum GPA, minimum level of activity associated with the Undergraduate Honors Program, and student interest.

Benefits of an Undergraduate Honors Program:

For the Student

- An Opportunity to Broaden and Deepen One's Educational Experience.
- Enhance One's Personal, Social, and Intellectual Development.
- Recognition for Extra Work Done, On and Off Campus.
- Integration of Knowledge, Concepts, and Ideas from a Variety of Disciplines.
- Belong to a Community of Students with Similar Educational Goals.
- Enhance One's Appreciation for Life-Long Learning and Social Responsibility.

For the Faculty

- Recognition for Extra Work Done with the Exceptional Students.
- Forum for Working on Advanced Materials with Undergraduates.
- Integration of Knowledge, Concepts, and Ideas from a Variety of Disciplines.
- Perhaps Have More than Flashes of Fun and Excitement in the Classroom as We Learn as well as Impart Knowledge.

For Montana Tech

- Recruiting Tool
- Fund Raising Tool
- Enhanced Educational Opportunities for the Campus and Local Communities by the Presence and Actions of the Undergraduate Honors Program.
- Experimental Site for the Development and Testing of New Ideas in Education.

The Montana Tech undergraduate honors program will be presented in the catalog and other promotional materials in a format similar to the following:

First YearFall Semester

Required Courses:

Freshman Honors Seminar	1-credit
Honors Writing	3-credits

Available Courses:

Honors Calculus 1526	3-credits
Honors General Chem 1256	3-credits
Honors Humanities	3-credits
Honors Social Sciences	3-credits

Spring Semester

Required Courses:

Freshman Honors Seminar	1-credit
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Available Courses:

Honors Calculus 1536	3-credits
Honors General Chem 1266	3-credits
Honors Humanities	3-credits
Honors Social Sciences	3-credits

Second YearFall Semester

Required Courses:

Sophomore Honors Seminar	1-credit
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Available Courses:

Honors Humanities	3-credits
Honors Social Sciences	3-credits

Spring Semester

Required Courses:

Sophomore Honors Seminar	1-credit
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Available Courses:

Honors Humanities	3-credits
Honors Social Sciences	3-credits

Third YearFall Semester

Required Courses:

Junior Honors Seminar *	1-credit
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Spring Semester

Required Courses:

Junior Honors Seminar*	1-credit
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Fourth YearFall Semester

Required Courses:

Senior Honors Seminar *	1-credit
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Spring Semester

Required Courses:

Senior Honors Seminar*	1-credit
Thesis	1 credit (Topic would be agreed upon by student, department head from student's major and the Honors Committee. Thesis could be a co-requirement with a particular department; however, the student could not receive credit twice for the same thesis.)

*Honors Seminar Fall and Spring Semesters – 1 credit each (minimum 2 of 4 remaining semesters)

Required Course:

Undergraduate Research – (Minimum number of 3-credits. A larger number of undergraduate research credits may be taken; however, only 3-credits will be counted towards the required honors credits.) The credits may be earned in one or over several semesters.

Total credits from required courses 13-15, up to 10 credits beyond requirements for any major.

Other requirements:

6 Credits of Social Sciences or Humanities with an honors component or an honors course or a foreign language.

6 Credits of math or science with an honors component or an honors course.

A minimum of 26 Honors Credits will be necessary for completion of the Undergraduate Honors Program. The minimum credits and credit distribution meets the standards of the National Collegiate Honors Council

Other Courses, Course Components, or Labs can and will be encouraged to be added to the list of Honors Courses.

5. Resources

A preliminary budget has been developed and allocated to the undergraduate honors program. The monies will be available upon the approval of the undergraduate honors program by the Board of Regents. The budget was designed to cover start-up costs and anticipated costs for

the first year of the program. No new faculty resources are required for this program. The undergraduate honors program budget will be reviewed periodically to determine changes that need to be made to ensure the quality remains at a level expected by our students.

Montana Tech has joined the National Collegiate Honors Council (NCHC). Membership in this organization provides a wealth of published and on-line resources ranging from program organization and curriculum design to course, faculty, and student assessment. In addition, Dr. James McCusik (Dean, Davidson Honors College, The University of Montana) and Dr. Michael Miles (Director, The University Honors Program, Montana State University) have offered their support and advice to the developing program at Montana Tech. The potential for collaborative activities between the three schools have been discussed.

6. Assessment

Early and effective assessment of the nascent undergraduate honors program will be essential. The assessment tools at Montana Tech will be employed in addition to those that are provided by the NCHC. After the program has completed its first four-year cycle, an external reviewer will be brought to campus from NCHC to assess the program.

7. Process Leading to Submission

The process leading to this submission can best be demonstrated using the following timeline:

February 2007

Faculty and staff personnel met to discuss the feasibility of establishing an undergraduate honors program on the Montana Tech campus. Staff from the admissions office as well as faculty from engineering, sciences, humanities, and the mathematics departments “brainstormed” concerning the feasibility of an undergraduate honors program and developed a preliminary outline for the program.

March 2007

The proposed undergraduate honors program was discussed at a general faculty meeting. A small number of faculty voiced concerns of creating an “elitist” program on the campus as well as possibly siphoning the top students from freshman level general education courses. However, these concerns were mitigated through further dialogue with the concerned faculty.

April 2007

The proposed undergraduate honors program was approved by the dean’s council.

May 2007

Faculty were asked to submit proposals for course sections of existing classes that would be designated as honors courses. This request resulted in the following four honors courses for the Fall 2007 semester:

COMM 1046-12, English Composition Honors
MT 2956-01, Freshman Seminar Honors
CHEM 1256-01 Honors General Chemistry
MATH 1520-02 Honors Calculus

June 2007

Tech representatives met with the Dean of the Davidson Honors College at The University of Montana-Missoula and the Director of University Honors at Montana State University – Bozeman. Both UM and MSU were supportive of Tech's efforts in developing an undergraduate honors program. Also, Montana Tech's curriculum review committee approved the undergraduate honors program.

August 2007

The proposed honors program was approved by the Montana Tech faculty at the August 17th faculty meeting.