

3 Points of the Triangle: HONORS COLLEGE

Liberal Arts Foundation

The Honors College curriculum fulfills the general education requirement at SOU. The first-year foundations seminar meets the university writing requirements, and also prepares students for their “Take the Lead” projects, connects first-year scholars with upper-classmen through class visits and peer-directed reading assignments, and provides a systematic introduction to diversity and inclusion through readings, class activities, and discussions. Sophomores take a yearlong seminar in logic, argumentation, and reasoning. The junior year seminar teaches students about the range of research methods typically used in academic research through a practical seminar on wicked problems in our region. Students develop lifelong learning, service, and leadership skills across their four years of study with the a variety of co-curricular activities designed to entice high achieving students to connect with the university and broader communities, and to develop leadership and project management experience through two “Take the Lead” projects. Electives provide a breadth of experience in topics related to art and humanities, diversity and justice, and science and society. Culminating experiences include an out of classroom experience including but not limited to an internship and/or a study abroad experience, and development of a professional, reflective portfolio.

Regionally Responsive

Regional recruiting efforts focus on attracting students from Oregon (55%) and Jackson/Josephine County (28%). Over the past three years, diversity in the student population has increased to reflect or exceed the diversity found at SOU. Curriculum revisions are underway to teach the junior year research methods through a year-long seminar addressing the wicked problems of our region in coordination with regional leaders. Students already provide service to our region with twice a year service projects, and through their own “Take the Lead” projects. Students are given resources, advising, and organizational support to carry out two projects that address a critical need or problem. Students are required to gain out of classroom experience through their Substantive Educational Experience, which often takes the form of internships in our region. When students travel internationally with SOU’s Democracy Project, they share what they learn with regional high school students and the community through published dispatches and a day-long high school symposium. The Honors College serves the region by retaining students and supporting 4-years graduation rates that exceed 83%. Students have reported success with admissions to graduate school and with employment after graduation.

Creativity and Innovation

The Honors College teaches creativity and innovation in a variety of ways. In the curriculum, this is taught directly with an art in practice course. This course stretches scholars’ imaginations, and teaches forms of expression and research that go beyond the written form. Honors includes innovations in teaching and pedagogy, including student-to-student mentoring, advanced student learning leaders as assistants in courses, and universal design to promote equity and inclusion.

Honors College

Students learn creativity and innovation through their Take the Lead projects, in which they address a critical problem with limited time and resources in a way that they can demonstrate, assess, and reflect on the quality and impact of their projects. Students have taken on major issues such as food insecurity, food waste recovery, homelessness, community disaster preparedness, reforestation, etc. Honors scholars also complete one substantive educational experience that extends their learning beyond the classroom in the form of an internship, study abroad experience, or other out of classroom experience. This gives them the opportunity to discover how their classroom learning applies to real world situations and helps them think creatively and innovatively about how they can apply what they have learned in a practical setting, or expand their understanding of a topic in relation to an international experience.