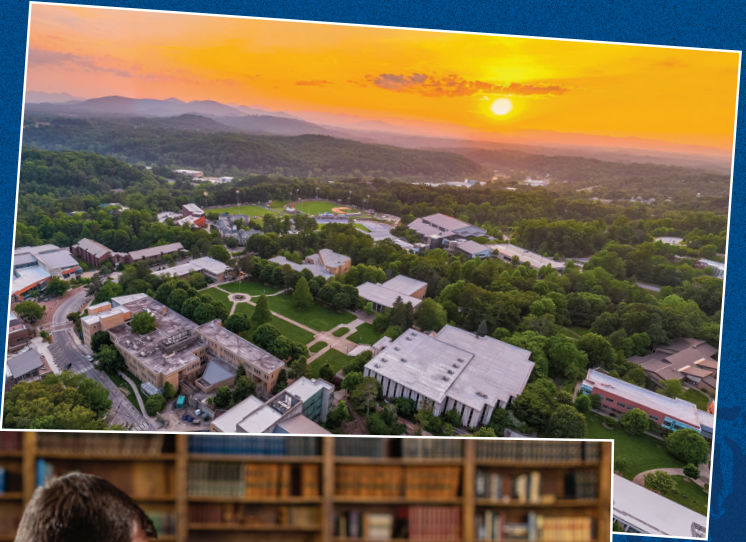


UNC Asheville Honors Program



2023 Annual Report



A Word from the Director

“2023 HAS BEEN THE MOST SIGNIFICANT YEAR IN THE HISTORY OF THE HONORS PROGRAM, SINCE OUR FOUNDING IN 1985.”

What a year for the Honors Program at UNC Asheville!

Over our nearly 40 year history, since our founding in 1985, the Honors Program has seen changes both incremental and substantial. However, this year we are presenting an almost completely revised and renovated program. All Honors spaces, from the seminar room to the Laurel Forum to the program offices, have been completely renovated top-to-bottom. The curriculum has been streamlined to make it easier for Honors students to progress towards Distinction as a University Honors Scholar.

New programs are in place, including Honors Foris and Great Ideas Grants. Our new Program Associate began working with us, and our Student Honors Advisory Council has been reimagined.

Please read on as we share with you our exciting updates from the most significant year in Honors history at UNC Asheville.

R. Graham Reynolds PhD
Director of the University Honors Program
Associate Professor of Biology
Selby & Richard McRae Scholars Faculty Advisor

2023 By the Numbers

STUDENTS ENROLLED IN HONORS

117

52%

PELL ELIGIBLE
STUDENTS IN THE
INCOMING CLASS



Our Process

RENOVATE

All Honors Program academic spaces have undergone a full renovation during the 2022-2023 academic year. Not just paint and carpet, but all new furniture, branding, wayfinding, and decor.

4.3

MEDIAN ADJUSTED
GPA OF INCOMING
CLASS

STUDENTS · FIRST-TIME
44
YEAR · FIRST-YEAR



REINVIGORATE

The entire Honors curriculum has been reimagined. Honors students now have a clearer path to graduating with Distinction as a University Honors Scholar. New first-year courses are being offered by award-winning faculty.

1310

MEDIAN SAT SCORE
OF INCOMING CLASS

29

MEDIAN ACT
OF INCOMING
CLASS



RETAIN

Honors program students now have significant reason to stay involved in Honors beyond their first two years. With a host of new activities, including Honors *Foris*, students can look forward to participation in activities such as study abroad, TedX Asheville, and the Asheville Ideas Fest.

7

NEW
TRANSFER
STUDENTS

1/3

OF INCOMING
STUDENTS CHOSE
HONORS HOUSING

Honors Courses

The Honors curriculum has undergone a transformative update to include Honors offerings of all liberal arts core (LAC) courses alongside many new upper-level offerings. This expansion empowers Honors Students to earn their required 21 credit hours through a broader selection of courses and offers a clearer path to graduating with Distinction as a University Honors Scholar.

THE HONORS HUMANITIES CORE

Language 120: HONORS Academic Writing and Critical Inquiry

Humanities 124: HONORS: Global Humanities: The Ancient World

Humanities 214: HONORS: Global Humanities: Medieval and Renaissance World

Humanities 324: HONORS: The Modern World: mid 17-20 Century

Liberal Arts 478: HONORS: Cultivating Global Citizenship

SAMPLE OF COURSES ONLY HONORS STUDENTS CAN TAKE

First-Year Seminar: HONORS: Religion and Science

First-Year Seminar: HONORS: Nature's Classrooms: The French Broad River and Appalachian Trail

HON 373: Global Change Ecology

HON 374: Understanding Asia: Development, Democracy, Dissent

HON 374: A Cultural History of Rock and Roll

HON 374: The Crusades: Past and Present

HON 374: Religion and the Paranormal in the Contemporary American Imagination

HON 374: U.S. and the Holocaust

HON 374: Cross-Cultural Encounters: Shakespeare in Bollywood and Masala Films

HON 374: Norse Mythology: From Wagner to Marvel

2023 Honors Highlights



First-Year students enrolled in Dr. Julia Webster's course have spent time outdoors rafting on the French Broad River and cleaning up the Appalachian Trail.



Pre-orientation students tour behind-the-scenes at the chocolate factory and visit the local wildlife at the WNC Nature Center.

Announcing Honors *Foris*

OUR OPT-IN “AWAY FROM HOME” PROGRAMMING

Every academic year the honors program will offer one or more opt-in honors foris experience(s).

ASHEVILLE IDEAS FEST

Honors Students may participate in the nationally recognized Asheville Ideas Fest. Enjoy lectures by global thought leaders focusing on the most consequential issues of our time, as well as small-group discussions and local experiences that celebrate all that Asheville has to offer.

CONFERENCES

Participate in regional or national conferences, such as the Southern Regional Honors Council or discipline-specific conferences. See what other Honors Students are doing, and present your own work.

REGIONAL TRAVEL

A weekend in NYC or DC to visit museums and take in a lecture. Or perhaps a community service trip downstate. Honors students have the chance to create off-campus experiences that enrich their learning.

INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL

Study abroad or visit other countries to build upon Honors coursework with your peers. Options are available for semester or short-term international programs.

AFFORDABLE EXPERIENCES

Honors Foris programs are subsidized by the Honors Program. Students are not charged for most experiences, while some only require a very small participation fee that is a fraction of the program cost.

HONORS *FORIS*

Honors Students Out and About



CATHERINE ANDERSON '24

“I had the opportunity to broaden my experience within my biology minor and go on a study abroad trip to Ecuador, led by two of the biology faculty at UNC Asheville. This experience not only allowed me to expand the scope of courses I have taken within my minor, but also bring me into contact with other cultures, ideas, and real-world issues such as threats to biodiversity, climate change, and research opportunities abroad.”



JAZZY KHALAFALLA '24

“Studying abroad in Japan has been a goal of mine for as long as I can remember...Japan was everything I expected and more. My experience studying abroad has given me a lot to reflect on. It has challenged my world view and expanded my thoughts, feelings, and ideas.”

Award Winning Honors Faculty

DR. KEYA MAITRA, PROFESSOR OF PHILOSOPHY

2023 Board of Governor's Award for Excellence in Teaching

"Her approach to education truly inspires one's own drive to understand the world and themselves. Particularly helpful for the content in a humanities course, her background in philosophy and consideration of all viewpoints, not just Western, rounds out the class in a manner that truly evinces the essence of the humanities department. I will greatly miss being one of her pupils, but now step more confidently into any educational environment than ever before." —Former student

Recognitions include:

- Award for Excellence in Teaching in the Humanities (2011)
- Fulbright-Nehru Academic & Professional Excellence Senior Research Award to India (2015)
- Ruth and Leon Feldman Professorship for Scholarship (2015-16)
- Champion of Students Award (2018)
- Thomas Howerton Distinguished Professor of Humanities (2018-22)
- Board of Governors Award for Excellence in Teaching (2023)

Maitra has also authored, co-authored, or co-edited seven books, and published numerous journal articles and book chapters.

DR. KATE ZUBKO, PROFESSOR OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES

2022 Board of Governor's Award for Excellence in Teaching

"Dr. Z, as she's affectionately called among students, created a classroom space of inclusion and a rigorous, compassionate pedagogy that helped us reframe how we consider ourselves in the pursuit of meaningful engagement with our worlds." —Cameron Langford Barlow, former student

Recognitions include:

- Award for Excellence in Teaching for Untenured Faculty (2013)
- Award for Excellence in Teaching in the Humanities (2016)
- NEH Distinguished Professor in the Humanities (2018-23)
- Board of Governors Award for Excellence in Teaching (2023)

Zubko also serves as general editor for the Equinox journal, *Body and Religion*, and has authored or edited seven books in addition to numerous articles.

Meet Our Student Honors Advisory Council

Student Honors Advisory Council (SHAC)

SHAC is an important leadership development program within Honors, where students are elected to office positions and serve in diverse roles to support their peers and help shape the future of the Honors Program. Whether organizing study halls or facilitating connections with community partners like TedX Asheville, these students cultivate invaluable leadership skills while creating opportunities for fellow Honors students to thrive.

STUDENT HONORS ADVISORY COUNCIL



Theadora Welland
PRESIDENT



Lena Aamir
VICE PRESIDENT



Mars Zappia
ADMINISTRATIVE
COORDINATOR



Olivia Pirnat
COMMUNITY
LIAISON AND SOCIAL
MEDIA ASSISTANT



Anaya Harry
SOCIAL MEDIA
AND MARKETING
COORDINATOR



Support Honors



SUPPORT HONORS STUDENTS

Support Honors Students: Honors students actively participate in high-impact practices such as internships, study abroad experiences, and undergraduate research, all of which greatly enrich their learning journey. These immersive opportunities not only leave a lasting impact on students but also significantly augment their career prospects. Your support is instrumental in supporting students to participate in these activities.

TO SHOW YOUR SUPPORT FOR THE HONORS PROGRAM AT
UNC ASHEVILLE, PLEASE VISIT GIVING.UNCA.EDU OR
REACH OUT TO HONORS@UNCA.EDU



University Honors Program
828-251-6227
www.honors.unca.edu
honors@unca.edu
[@uncahonors](https://twitter.com/uncahonors)