

REDUCTION OF CREDIT HOURS REQUIRED BY THE UNIVERSITY UNDERGRADUATE HONORS CURRICULUM

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Board of Governors amend board statute 2.43.05.100, to approve a reduction from a minimum of 36 credit hours to 28 credit hours required for University Honors, effective Fall 2019.

Background

Students in the Irvin D. Reid Honors College may graduate with University Honors, Departmental Honors, or both. Departmental Honors requirements, including required numbers of credits for Honors-designated courses, are set by individual departments. University Honors requirements are set by Board of Governors statutes, which currently require 36 Honors-designated credits among the 120 required for graduation.

Current Statute Language

2.43.05.100 Graduation. For graduation from the Honors College, students must have a minimum cumulative honor point average of 3.3, and must complete a minimum of 36 credit hours in honors-designated course work (including credits in an independent research project, essay, or thesis). Graduates of the University-wide Honors College will be so recognized on the transcript and diploma.

Recommended Statute Language

2.43.05.100 Graduation. For graduation from the Honors College, students must have a minimum cumulative honor point average of 3.3, and must complete a minimum of 28 credit hours in honors-designated course work (including credits in an independent research project, essay, or thesis). Graduates of the University-wide Honors College will be so recognized on the transcript and diploma.

Rationale

The current 36-hour requirement is substantially higher than most of many peers and Michigan publics (e.g. Michigan State University: 21-28; Eastern Michigan University: 24; Western Michigan University: 18). Reducing the requirement to 28, which is a more typical (but still robust) number, would achieve a number of objectives: It would put us more closely in line with our peers/competitors; it would make it more feasible for students to graduate with University Honors within 4 years; and it would make it easier for us to maintain quality-control over Honors-designated courses. Currently, students lean heavily on “Honors Options,” which allow them by agreement of the professor to receive Honors designation for non-Honors sections by way of additional assignments or projects. Many students have reported difficulty in finding sufficient Honors courses to meet the 36-hour requirement within four years.

Submitted by: Keith E. Whitfield, Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs

The National Collegiate Honors Council [website](#) states that in a fully developed Honors College, “The curriculum of the honors college constitutes at least 20% of the student’s degree program.”¹ 28 credits would comfortably meet that guideline; indeed, it would constitute nearly 25% of most degrees.

Accommodations for Current Students

Current students will be allowed to complete their program based on requirements at the time of admission or the revised requirements according to university policy.

Approvals

This change has been voted upon and unanimously approved by the Honors Council, which controls curriculum for the Honors College and consists in a representative from each of the Undergraduate Schools or Colleges, plus two student representatives. This recommendation has also been approved by the Provost.

¹ https://www.nchchonors.org/uploaded/NCHC_FILES/PDFs/NCHC_Basic_Characteristics-College_2017.pdf, point 9.