

# SUNY Orange Honors Program-STAC Honors Program Transfer Proposal

To help achieve the campus wide goal of "Access, Affordability, and Admissions," the following proposal aims to increase enrollment by admitting high achieving members of the SUNY Orange Honors Program to the St. Thomas Aquinas College Honors Program. In collaboration with the SUNY Orange Honors Program Coordinator, Professor Elaine Torda, we plan to begin enrolling students from the Honors Program at OCC to the Honors Program at STAC, beginning for the Fall of 2022, as follows:

To be considered for entry into the Honors Program at St. Thomas Aquinas College, students enrolled in the SUNY Orange Honors Program must first apply and be admitted to St. Thomas Aquinas College. To be eligible for the Honors Program at St. Thomas Aquinas College, transfer students must:

1. Fulfill the following SUNY Orange Honors Program requirements:
  - o Complete at least 60 credit hours of graded academic credit
  - o Earn a 3.50 overall GPA
  - o Complete eight honors courses
  - o Complete the applied learning experience (3 credit course/135 hours of applied learning).
2. Apply to the Honors Program prior to their first term at St. Thomas Aquinas College. Students may apply before completing all portions of the program but must show that completion is imminent; acceptance will be contingent upon completion of the SUNY Orange Honors Program.
3. Submit a complete transfer application (including transcripts, a list of current courses being taken, and a letter of recommendation from the director of the SUNY Orange Honors Program) to Admissions no later than the following dates:
  - Transfer in during Fall Semester: **Applications must be received by July 1st**
  - Transfer in during Spring Semester: **Applications must be received by November 1st**

Once accepted to St. Thomas Aquinas College, applications will be reviewed by the St. Thomas Aquinas College Honors Program co-directors, who will contact eligible students for an interview. The candidate's acceptance status will be determined within two weeks of the interview.

In order to graduate with Honors distinction students who transfer into the Honors Program at St. Thomas Aquinas College are required to complete the following:

- Complete two non-redundant Honors Program courses.
- Complete an applied learning experience at St. Thomas Aquinas College that may include one of the following:

- o A senior thesis on scholarship conducted at St. Thomas Aquinas College with a faculty mentor (via an independent study). Students will be strongly encouraged to present at Ignite.
- o A study abroad program (through UC Berkeley) at the University of Oxford. A 15-page reflection paper on coursework taken at the University of Oxford will be required upon return.
- o An internship at an approved site that includes 120 hours of work and the completion of a 15-page reflection paper describing work completed.
- Maintain full-time status (12 credits) each semester.
- Maintain a minimum 3.20 GPA each semester enrolled at St. Thomas Aquinas College.

If accepted into the Honors Program at St. Thomas Aquinas College, students will earn:

- A scholarship of \$30,000 per academic year.
- The opportunity to study at Oxford University in England the summer between their junior and senior years. All expenses except for the airfare will be covered.
- Admittance to Honors only courses.
- Early registration before the general student body is able to register.
- Access to the Honors community of students, including regular social events.

### **SUNY Orange Honors Program Info:**

#### **Courses offered by the SUNY Orange Honors Program students:**

HON 120H Honors Service Learning 0 lect., 2 lab, 1 cr. (Fall) This course, required of all SUNY Orange Honors Program students, provides an opportunity to gain service learning experiences both within the college and in the broader community. Students maintain logs and provide an essay of activities and learning experiences. This independent study course involves forty-five contact hours, is graded pass/fail, and carries one credit. It may be repeated once for credit.

HON 201H Honors Seminar 1 cr. Cross disciplinary in nature, the honors seminar provides students an opportunity to study various topics from at least four different academic perspectives. Students participate in class discussions, maintain journals and complete projects. Completion of three one-credit seminars is required.

#### **HON 290H Honors Capstone I: Planning and Research 1.5 cr. (Fall)**

This course (the first half of a two-semester capstone sequence required of all Honors Program students) provides an opportunity to synthesize information and skills acquired in the program. Students choose argument topics or conduct original research. Class sessions help develop the skills and process necessary to complete their project and presentation. Weekly meetings with assigned faculty mentors provide discipline-based knowledge, guidance, and support. This course focuses on the planning, research, and elements needed to complete the initial stages of the capstone. Prerequisite: ENG 101, ENG 102; cumulative CGPA of 3.2 and/ or permission of the Honors Program Coordinator

HON 291H Honors Capstone II: Writing and Presentation 1.5 cr. (Spring) This course (the second half of a two-semester capstone sequence required of all Honors Program students) continues the process of synthesizing information and skills acquired in the program. Students complete their argument topics or original research from Capstone I. Class sessions focus on revising to create a final paper and transforming that paper into a public presentation. Weekly meetings with assigned faculty mentors provide discipline-based knowledge, guidance, and support. This course focuses on the completion of the capstone project. Prerequisite: HON 290H, cumulative CGPA of 3.2 or permission of Honors Program Coordinator

Now, for a less formal, but perhaps more descriptive overview:

Honors Service Learning (1 credit) is designed to get our students into their local communities and (hopefully) develop a sense of lifelong learning and service.

They must do a minimum of 45 total hours of volunteering, split up as they see fit, for at least 3 different organizations. While we give them some ideas for opportunities, we do not set up anything for them. They are responsible for seeking out and making arrangements with various organizations, submitting proposals to us, and if approved, doing their hours and logging them. They can propose group projects as well. Part of this is finding out what is in their communities and learning about themselves and others.

Once they finish their hours, they write a paper that a) overviews their choices, b) reflects on each experience, and c) asks them (incorporating 2 sources) to develop their own definition of service. The papers often show their trajectory from perhaps dreading service to wanting to be more involved after the course ends. It can be rather transformative for some and definitely enlightening to most. They learn leadership and service skills.

Honors Seminars (1 credit).

Students must complete a total of three of these (and they hold liberal arts and general elective credit status--as does service). In these seminars, students truly get a sense of the interdisciplinary nature of honors and life. Whatever umbrella topic an instructor chooses (or students suggest for development), the instructor must approach it from at least four different academic disciplines. The class is discussion based, founded on readings, video, etc. Generally there are short writing or creative assignments, student lead-ins, and then a creative project (with presentation) at the conclusion. We have had many topics over the years from "The Real CSI" to "The History of Piracy" and "The Brain" to "Stories from the Pandemic." The topics change every semester (though we do bring back favorites) and we offer four per semester. This year, we instituted our first required freshman seminar "So You Think You Can Think," which is grounded in critical thinking. After they complete it, they can choose two other seminars of interest.

### **Honors Capstone typically include:**

Honors Capstone 1 & 2 (1.5 credits each for a total of 3 credits).

This is our year-long semester project. We describe it as similar to a college senior or master's thesis, but at the sophomore level. Students choose a topic to research. Capstone 1 is about process and pieces: they define their research question, write annotated bibs, do a full outline, and pieces of a draft. Generally it is an argument paper--much like a lit review. The second semester is about product: they produce a 25 page paper and 18 minute presentation/mini-defense. A few in the sciences do original research, using their lab/study/experiment to bolster or test their argument. Engineering students tend to build things; bio majors may develop and conduct an experiment.

Students come to class each week to work on the skills and pieces; each also has a discipline-specific mentor who works with them one-on-one--assisting with research, organization, writing, and even bolstering flagging spirits. Those who make it through what is, admittedly, a daunting task, are very well prepared for upper level work. In addition to learning about their topics, they gain experience with time and project management, enhance research, writing, presentation and critical thinking skills, and discover a great deal about themselves.

# Acknowledgment

Please sign and date below acknowledging approval and agreement of the Transfer Agreement between the SUNY Orange Honors Program and the St. Thomas Aquinas College Honors Program, beginning in 2022.

## SUNY Orange:

Elaine Ordo  
Honors Coordinator

17 March 2022  
Date

Marie Letterici (alt)  
Honors Advisory Board Member

03/17/22  
Date

Stacy Maggs

3-15-22

Associate VP for Liberal Arts

Date

Eric Heller  
VP for Academic Affairs

03/16/2022

Date

[Signature]  
President

3/16/22

Date

## St. Thomas Aquinas College:

Ghan Dewitz  
Honors Co-Director

2/2/22

Date

Paul Dent  
Honors Co-Director

2/2/22

Date

[Signature]  
Provost

1-31-22

Date

[Signature]  
VP for Enrollment Management

1/31/22

Date

[Signature]  
President

2/2/22

Date