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ABOUT THIS HANDBOOK

Welcome to Honors. This Handbook will help guide you through the Honors College and lead you toward your Honors Diploma. It will familiarize you with our requirements, our policies and procedures, and it will introduce you to the important people in Honors.

Of course, no single handbook will answer all of your questions or concerns. By its nature, an Honors College offers each student his or her own experience in their pursuit of knowledge. We try to provide consistent guidelines that are fair and meant to be followed by all, but sometimes policies may be unclear. Furthermore, since every student is different, policies and procedures may sometimes need exceptions in special circumstances. The Honors Office can answer any questions, and help explain any requirement, policy, or procedure and work with you to achieve your Honors Degree. Feel free to call, email, stop by our offices in Franz Hall and we’ll be glad to help you. The Honors College maintains a website at honors.uah.edu which has up-to-date course listings, student information, forms mentioned in this Handbook, and links to information you might find useful. If there are any changes to policies or procedures in this book, they will be announced through email, on the website, and will be reflected in updates to this handbook. If there are discrepancies between the handbook and the website, check with the Honors Office for clarification; we’ll make sure that the information is consistent.
1. FROM THE DEAN

The Honors College exists for those students who love learning for its own sake, who always strive to better themselves and their abilities, and who value excellence in all areas of their lives. The Honors College provides unique educational opportunities that you can adapt to your needs. It offers special, engaging and intensive sections of your courses, it supports you in your quest for independent research, and offers you a community that can be your home and support as you develop through your college journey.

In order to realize your full potential in Honors, you must step up and own your education. Becoming a part of this community, succeeding in classes, and flourishing in your research is a joint responsibility between your home department, the Honors College, and you. We will do our absolute best to provide you with a rich and rewarding college experience, but you must make the choice to study, to work, and to join in. For some of you, college will come as a welcome relief from the tedium of high school, and you will immediately feel like you have found your place. For others, college-level work will be a sudden shock. You will be expected to do more studying and learning on your own, and you will find you can quickly fall behind. Be sure to keep up, to work hard, and to recognize when you need help. If you need help, talk to your fellow Honors Students, your mentors, your professors, or seek tutoring support, either in Honors or at the Student Success Center.

As for the community: you are surrounded by the best and the brightest. Your fellow honors students engage in a remarkably wide range of activities and hobbies. You will find people with whom you share interests and commonalities, and sometimes you will meet people who are very different from you. You should relish all of these opportunities to learn and to make new friends. How involved on campus you become is your choice, but all students report that their college life is both more enriching and more fun when they choose to get involved. Find a club, join up with activities in Honors, or – if you don’t see something you want – make it right here. We are here to support you.

College should be among the most amazing and transformative times of your life. Together, we can make this happen. Have a great year!

Dr. William Wilkerson
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May 1, 2015
2. **INTRODUCTION TO HONORS**

   The Honors College Mission: To provide an enriched and challenging academic program for high-achieving students in all fields of study that creates community, emphasizes critical and creative thinking, crosses disciplines, and fosters top-quality undergraduate research and creative activity.

   The Honors College experience consists of three pillars: **Academics**, **Community**, and **Service**.

   **Academics**

   The Honors Curriculum seeks to create a well-rounded, thoroughly educated, and highly skilled graduate. The goals of the Honors Courses and curriculum are to foster strong critical thinking skills, independence of thought and research, outstanding written and oral communication abilities, and mastery of the student’s chosen discipline.

   Every section of course that has been designated Honors will cover both the regular material that is covered in the non-Honors sections, but it will also ensure that some of those goals are met. Additionally, the Honors College offers some interdisciplinary seminars (Hon 399) each year that strive to cross disciplines. Look for those courses for some extra academic enrichment. More information can be found in this handbook under Honors Courses (page 8).

   **Community**

   The Honors College provides you a home and a family where you can be yourself and challenge yourself to grow.

   The heart of this community is Frank Franz Hall, where many Honors Students live. But you don’t have to live there to experience all that Honors has to offer. Your Student ID card (your “Charger ID”) will let you into the building, and you can spend time in the student lounges, use the study rooms and computer labs, or just hang out with your friends.

   There are also many student groups within Honors: the Honors Ambassadors, the Honors Mentors, and the Honors Think Tank always need help and support. Many of our most important programs are run by students, who have an office in Frank Franz Hall 103 (part of the Student Lounge). More, the Honors College is always looking for new student groups and new ideas, so if there’s anything you think we need, bring it to the Honors College Coordinator, the Dean, or to some of the Student Leadership, and we will try to make it happen.

   **Service**

   The Honors College supports your highest academic achievement, and provides you with a home. We expect that, at some point in your Honors career, you will give back through service. There are many ways to do this. You can join the Mentors and help incoming students. You can get involved with student leadership in the Honors College or become an ambassador. Maybe you’ll get involved with campus leadership or clubs, or contribute in some way to the community. Or maybe you can think of something new that will help us in great ways. The important thing is to get involved and let us know about it. *Please don’t rush into this, though.* It is vital that you get your feet on the ground and be sure that your academics are strong before you commit more time to service.
3. ADMISSION GUIDELINES

First Time Freshmen

All members of the Honors College must be admitted to UAH before applying to the Honors College. Application is made via the Honors College website (uah.edu/honors).

First time freshman students typically meet the following criteria for the Honors College:

- A high school grade point average higher than 3.5.
- An ACT over 28 or SAT (math and verbal) over 1200.
- Involvement in extracurricular activities.
- Ability to prepare and write a well-written application essay.

If you do not meet only some of these criteria, the Honors College will still consider your application. Our policy is to consider the total application. Deadline is May 1 for joining us in the following Fall Semester, but you should apply as soon as you've been admitted to UAH. Students applying to the Honors College after the deadline may be considered on a space-available basis.

Current UAH Students or Students Transferring to UAH

Any current UAH student or with at least a 3.25 GPA is invited to join the Honors College. First time freshmen in their first semester can still apply on their high school record. Once any student has an official UAH GPA, he or she must use that GPA and apply as a current student.

Transfer students who have earned a 3.25 grade point average at an accredited college or university are also invited to join the Honors College. If you don't meet that guideline, you may still apply and we will make an individual assessment. In most cases, you can transfer Honors credits earned at another institution to be used as Honors credits at UAH. Our policy allows a student to transfer Honors credit from other colleges and universities for up to 50% of the requirements for the Honors Diploma (12 hours). Requirements for the full Honors Diploma are the same for transfer students and for enrolled students entering the college for the first time. The Honors Office will work with you to develop a plan to complete 24 Honors credit hours. If it's not possible to complete the full Honors Diploma, you may be interested in pursuing the Certificate of Completion of the Upper-Level Requirements.

Non-Honors Students in Honors Courses

Non-Honors students are permitted to enroll in Honors courses as long as (a) the non-Honors student has a 3.25 UAH GPA or has permission from the Honors office, (b) they do not take seats from current Honors Students enrolled in the Honors College. The non-honors students should understand that they must meet all the expectations of an Honors-designated course, and that they may be dropped from the roll of the Honors Course up to the first day of classes. The Honors College will make every effort to notify non-Honors students of any changes that must be made to their schedule in a timely fashion.
4. **COLLEGE REQUIREMENTS: EARNING THE HONORS DIPLOMA OR CERTIFICATE**

Summary of Honors Diploma Requirements

The following summarizes the requirements for receiving the Honors Diploma.

- **A minimum of 24 semester hours of Honors course credit earned by time of graduation.** Students are encouraged to take *more* than 24 hours of Honors course credit.

- **A cumulative 3.25 GPA at graduation**

- **Completion of the Honors Capstone Thesis or Project.**

- Honors Diploma is awarded at the time your UAH diploma is conferred, not when students complete the Honors requirements.

- The following three items must normally be included in the 24 hours of Honors Course Credit leading to the Honors diploma. Some of these courses may also count toward the major or general education requirements (GER).
  1. **EH 105H: Honors English Seminar** - 3 semester hours
     - This class fulfills the composition requirement for Honors Students who have not satisfied their Composition requirement. For students who have satisfied their composition requirement, it fulfills a humanities/fine arts requirement.
  2. **Honors Capstone Thesis or Project** – 3 semester hours
     - Students may use either HON 499 or a capstone course in your major that directly supports your Honors Capstone Thesis or Project.
  3. **6 semester hours of upper-level Honors Credit,** not including the Honors Capstone hours. (These 6 hours may be satisfied by contract or concurrent sections or may also include Honors Interdisciplinary seminars.)

Summary of Honors Certificate Requirements

Students who want to participate in the Honors College but who may not be able to complete the entire 24-hour honors credit hour requirement have the option to pursue the Honors Certificate of Completion of Upper-Level Requirements. Please contact the Honors Office first; you may still be able to complete the full Honors Diploma. Requirements for the Certificate are as follows:

- **12 semester hours of Honors courses.** Students earning between 12 and 24 hours will earn the certificate.

- **A cumulative 3.25 GPA at graduation**

- **Completion of the Honors Capstone Thesis or Project.**

- Honors Certificate is awarded at the time your UAH diploma is conferred, not when students complete the Honors requirements.

- Students must earn at least 3 hours at the 300+ level, not counting the Honors Capstone hours. (These 3 hours may be satisfied by contract or concurrent sections or may also include Honors Interdisciplinary seminars.)
5. **HONORS COURSES**

**Kinds of Honors Courses**

Honors Courses come in several kinds:

1. **Self-standing Honors sections of regular courses.** These are Honors Sections of regular courses. They are typically sections of Charger Foundation courses that count toward a student's General Education Requirements. They are offered by regular departments (Honors history classes are offered by the History Department, for example) and are listed in that department’s course offerings. The Honors College compiles a list of these courses each year and posts them on the Honors College Website, and the Honors College Adviser can help advise on which courses are available. **Honors lab sections:** for some Honors courses, students attend the regular lecture and then a special Honors lab. In these cases, all 4 credit hours will count for Honors, not merely the 1-hour lab, provided they are taken in the same semester.

2. **Specially designed courses just for Honors.** There are some courses that are offered by the Honors College. They carry the designation “HON.” They are:

   - **HON 399 – Honors Interdisciplinary Seminars.** Any course carrying this designation is a special, interdisciplinary seminar offered by the Honors College. These seminars are taught by one or more full-time faculty and are designed to promote analysis of issues that cross disciplinary boundaries. Seminars emphasize intellectual interchange between faculty and students and are aimed at encouraging students to analyze methodologies used by scholars in different fields. Enrollment is normally limited to 18-20 students. Past courses have included Poverty in the United States, The Art of Writing Science, Sound Studies, Tolerance in the Age of Persecution, and Theories of the Universe. These courses offerings are different every year. Check with website, the Honors Dean or the College Coordinator for upcoming offerings. Although these courses are 300-level, they have no pre-requisites and are designed for students at any level. An Honors seminar may also meet degree requirements in different ways, depending on the seminar's content. Students arrange this credit with their major/college on their own, or the Honors Office may sometimes arrange for a given seminar to count toward specific degree requirements.

   Qualified non-Honors students may be admitted to seminars, subject to the conditions for any other Honors course (see above). In addition, the Honors College may cross-list a seminar with an appropriate course in a department. The Honors College strives to see that every college in the University is represented in the seminars.

   - **HON 400 – Honors Internship:** The Honors internship course. The requirements for this course can be found below (Honors Internship, page 12).

   - **HON 499 – Honors Thesis:** The Honors Thesis course. If you cannot use an existing course for your Capstone Project or Thesis, you may use this course. (See the Capstone Guidebook for more information). Please contact the College Coordinator if you need to sign up for this course.

3. **Honors Contract Courses.** Students can turn any regular course, preferably that the 300+ level, into an Honors Course by means of a contract. See Honors Contracts (section 6) below.
4. Undergraduate/Graduate Courses. Some courses at UAH are cross-listed as both graduate and undergraduate courses. Both undergraduates and graduates enroll in the courses, but graduate students typically complete different and more challenging assignments. Honors Students who enroll in such courses at the undergraduate level (400 or below) may opt to do the graduate work for Honors Credit. They will follow the procedure for Honors Contracts below, and simply submit the graduate syllabus along with the contract proposal form. Students who enroll in the graduate course (numbered 500+) will automatically receive Honors Credit for the course, but they still must submit the credit completion form.

Honors Courses Learning Outcomes

Honors courses are designed to fill some or all of the following learning outcomes:

1. **Independence of thought and research.** Honors Students question what they learn, develop their own viewpoints, seek original solutions to problems where possible, and pose their own research questions, problems, or creative activities.

2. **Strong critical thinking abilities.** Honors Students understand the relationship between evidence and conclusions, can sort relevant from irrelevant information, and can decide the best methods for attaining goals.

3. **Good oral and written communication skills.** Honors Students can explain their views and the views of others in clear, well-argued terms.

4. **Masters of their own discipline.** Honors Students know the required content and possess the necessary skills to be fully competent in their discipline. Yet they go further and seek a “depth dimension.” For example, they may know the historical and contextual origin of some of their content knowledge and skills, or they may understand the theory behind a practice or a formula better than other students.

5. **Possess broad-based knowledge.** Honors Students should have a strong arts, humanities, social sciences, and sciences background and strive to forge connections between disparate ideas and disciplines.

6. **HONORS CONTRACT**

**What is an Honors contract?**

An Honors Contract is undertaken when an Honors student enrolled in a regular (non-Honors) course agrees with the instructor to perform some additional academic activity in order to receive Honors credit for the course. The student and the faculty member prepare a short abstract and then submit a proposal form to the Honors Office. The form can be found online here. Once the work is completed, the faculty member submits a Credit Completion form (here), certifying the Honors work was completed. The Honors Office then tells the Registrar to annotate the student’s transcript to show that Honors credit was awarded. The student receives Honors credit for the same number of hours as the course itself.
The steps in the **Honors contract procedure** are these:

1. The student(s) registers for the course in the normal way.
2. The student(s) and instructor agree on what will be done and submit their plans in writing (using the Contract Proposal **Form**) to the Honors Office preferably before classes start. The instructor may want to contact the Honors Office beforehand. The contract should include specific activities, and how they will be evaluated.
3. Student(s) and instructor pursue the plan during the semester.
4. Student(s) must receive a B- or better in the course to receive Honors Credit. If the student receives a grade below B-, the student still receives regular credit for the course, but cannot earn Honors Credit.
5. At the end of the semester, the student(s) submits a signed report that the work was satisfactorily completed (using the Honors Credit Completion **Form**), and a notation is entered on the student’s transcript that Honors credit has been awarded for the course.

**What is the purpose of an Honors Contract?**

An Honors contract is intended to promote close intellectual relationships between faculty members and Honors students, and to meet students' needs and interests in an effective way. It is recommended that students view this as an opportunity to enrich coursework in their major or specific fields of study, and that they should do contracts for classes at the 300+ level.

In developing a contract, the motivating force should be the students’ interest in some aspect of the subject matter and their commitment to more in-depth and advanced work than is required in a regular course. Instructors who supervise an Honors contract take on an obligation to commit additional time and energy to students involved in this work, although they reap the rewards of closer intellectual relationships with excellent students.

The Honors contract work should **never** be simply **more work**. If additional work is required, it should enhance and enrich existing assignments. More typically, students and the faculty will agree to replace some assignments with others that involve more depth, independent research, or some other enrichment. The faculty and student should strive to fulfill some of the Honors College learning outcomes (above). Sample enrichments are listed below.

**Student Responsibility in Honors Contracts**

Honors students have responsibility for initiating Honors contracts. If the instructor and student sign a contract, the student is expected to honor this agreement. The student must also enroll in the regularly scheduled course. Students should realize that instructors may choose not to undertake a contract, for any reason.

Students may rescind contracts. If a student finds it necessary to do so, he or she is obligated to notify in writing the instructor and the Honors Dean of this action and explain the reason for rescinding the contract.

**Faculty Responsibility in Honors Contracts**

Faculty participation in a contract is entirely voluntary. Contracts should therefore be carefully considered, reflecting the interests of both the student and instructor. Whatever general approach is taken, each contract should include:
Honors Contracts share some of the characteristics of guided independent study, except that a contract project should relate closely to the subject matter, concepts, and methods of the course in which it is undertaken. Contracts should be developed before the semester's work begins if possible. After the beginning of the semester, reasonable modifications in the contracts can be made by mutual agreement of the student and the instructor.

If the student fails to meet his or her agreed-upon obligations or does not perform at the appropriate academic level, the faculty member may rescind the contract at any time. The faculty member is obligated to report this action in writing to the Honors Dean and the student.

**Sample Changes for an Honors Contract**

Most Honors contracts involve some academic experience for the student different from the regular course requirements. This experience frequently results in some sort of deliverable presentation or report. These are some examples of activities that have been approved in the past.

- In-depth written review of one or more research papers
- Implementation and/or elaboration of an advanced algorithm, experiment, or idea
- Preparation of a term paper or other independent research
- Preparation of an annotated bibliography
- In-depth written review of a book, film or other media
- Compilation and critical evaluation of Internet sources on a topic
- Comparison of texts
- Review of supplemental materials provided with texts
- Preparation of a photographic/video essay, Web page or portfolio
- Preparation and presentation of an entire course lecture or lectures

**“Group” Contracts**

If several Honors Students are taking a regular section of a course, they may all participate in an Honors Contract with the instructor. The procedure and requirements are the same as laid out above, with a few changes.

1. The students together with the instructor decide on the changes to the course that will make it an Honors Section.
2. The students may wish to engage in a group project for their Honors Enrichment.
3. Students should each do an individual Contract proposal form, and an individual credit completion form.

**Undergraduate/Graduate Courses.**

Some courses at UAH are cross-listed as both graduate and undergraduate courses. Both undergraduates and graduates enroll in the courses, but graduate students typically complete different and more challenging assignments. Honors Students who enroll in such courses at the undergraduate level (400 or below) may opt to do the graduate work for Honors Credit. They will follow the procedure for Honors Contracts, and simply submit the graduate syllabus along with the contract proposal form. Students who enroll in the graduate course (numbered 500+) will
automatically receive Honors Credit for the course, but they still must submit the credit completion form.

7. Honors Internship

What is an internship?

An internship actively involves the student in an organization outside of an academic unit at the university. Many internships are pursued off-campus, although students sometimes find internship opportunities at UAH Research Centers and even in Honors. Honors Internship is conducted through a degree credit-earning course. Students pursuing an Honors internship must register for HON 400. Here is the course description:

Student Responsibilities

Students who are interested in the Honors Internship should let the Honors Office know of their interest. If you already have a placement in mind, feel free to contact them in advance but the final credit arrangements will have to be approved by the Honors Dean. In all cases, the student must communicate with the Honors Dean prior to the start of the internship.

The duties and responsibilities of the internship itself are determined by the sponsoring organization, the mentor and the student. The Honors Office will be glad to give further guidance if requested. Make sure that the sponsoring organization’s arrangements meet the guidelines below; exceptions must be explicitly granted in advance by the Honors Dean.

As soon as the internship is arranged, the student submits a filled our Honors Internship Form.

During the internship, the student is required to submit a brief summary of their activities four times during the internship. Each summary needs to be at least 300 words. It may be submitted to the course through Canvas.

Interns are also required to submit a final report of their experience, also through Canvas. The final summary should be submitted after the completion of the internship, in time for a grade to be posted for the internship course. It should include 200-word summary of your activities and another 1000 words including a reflection on your activities, with particular emphasis on what you learned with respect to:

- critical thinking skills
- exposure to a discipline
- communication and interpersonal skills
- research and technical expertise
- personal growth and career development

General Guidelines

These are the overall guidelines for participating in an internship:

1. Activities in this internship are meant to broaden the student’s knowledge and experience in their field of interest. Within the organization’s established procedures, the intern will be expected to perform duties similar to those of a full-time entry-level person in that organization.
2. The internship activities should normally cover the same period as the semester for which credit is given. For a normal 3 credit hour course, it is expected that the intern will work at least 12-15 hours per week. Students must arrange in advance with the Honors Office in order to register for differing credit hours if the expected workload varies from this guideline.

3. The internship is recorded as participation in an HON 400 course for a semester, and will count as 3 hours of Honors credit. The internship may be counted as a general elective, an elective in a program of study or a substitute for another course in a program of study; however, such determination is made outside the Honors College and rests solely with the student’s degree program advisor.

4. A student may not undertake an internship in an organization for whom they are already working, unless the intern’s new duties are substantially different from their current position.

5. Internships may be paid or unpaid. Any such arrangements are the responsibility of the sponsoring organization and student.

6. In special cases, a student may take HON 400 for a second semester, but only if the organization and/or position is substantially different from the previous one(s). The Honors Director must approve any repeat and determine whether the additional hours may be counted towards the Honors Diploma.

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**8. HONORS CAPSTONE PROJECT OR THESIS**

**What is the Capstone?**

The Honors College Capstone is the culmination of your Honors College academic experience. Your Honors classes have stressed student-generated work and scholarly independence. The Capstone project is the extension of this training. Now you get the chance to join the company of the scholars, designers, experimentalists, or artists with whom you have been working. You will produce something new and original in your chosen field of study. The purpose of this project is to build the skills of independent thought and research, to prepare you for graduate or professional studies, and to demonstrate your own excellence.

You can expect this work to be difficult but rewarding. You will work closely with your Project Director, and possibly with other students if your project has a group component. Your project should be something you are proud of. It becomes a public document, published through the University Library and permanently archived for all to see.

**Project or Thesis?**

A **thesis** consists of extensive research process that results in a lengthy, well written, and thoroughly researched paper. You can think of it either as an extended term paper, or as a small version of a Master’s Thesis. You can write a thesis in any field, from philosophy to biology to nursing practice to thermodynamics to music theory and so on.

A **project** consists of more “hands-on” activities, even though these hands-on activities typically grow from an extensive knowledge base and require a great deal of theoretical background. Examples of projects include: a new computer program; the design of a new piece of equipment or technology; devising, implementing, and evaluating a new clinical or educational practice; a collection of short stories, poetry, or other literary creation; an art installation, musical composition,
or direction of a theatrical production; devising a business plan or creating a marketing and advertising campaign. The project still involves a written component, usually much shorter than the writing involved in the thesis.

Where and When to Begin?

Students are encouraged to begin early: for many disciplines, it's possible to begin work as early as the end of your sophomore year, or to work over summers. Whenever you decide – don’t wait too long!

Details, processes, and forms for the Honors Capstone Project or Thesis can be found in Honors Capstone Handbook on the Honors College website [here](#). The best place to begin is by consulting this document, or talking with the Honors College Research Coordinator or the Honors Dan.

9. **HONORS ADVISEMENT**

Accurate and timely Honors advisement is a key factor to student success in the Honors College. It is the responsibility of the Honors College advisor to make sure that academic advisors in colleges and pre-professional programs are familiar with Honors offerings and requirements. It is the student’s responsibility to stay in touch with the Honors Office – we try to make this easy, beneficial and even enjoyable!

Student Advisement

Students in the Honors College should seek Honors advisement as soon as they have been admitted and are on the campus. There are several ways to get advice about the college.

- **Freshmen Orientation** – Freshmen orientation is required for all first time students at UAH. The Honors College holds an information/advisement session during each orientation session. You're required to attend one of these Honors sessions. There is no special sign-up for the Honors portion of orientation. Please check your orientation schedule for location and time.

- **Honors Advisement** – Honors students are required to meet with the Honors Office once per semester for Honors advisement. Advisement appointments can be scheduled through [https://uahhonorscollege.youcanbook.me/](https://uahhonorscollege.youcanbook.me/).

The Honors College advisor can gauge your progress towards the Honors diploma and keep you informed of changes and new Honors course opportunities. It’s recommended that students meet with their college advisor first and then meet with the Honors College advisor.

The Honors College has college specific worksheets that can be used to keep track of a student's progress toward their Honors College requirements. These worksheets found at [http://www.uah.edu/honors/honors-advisement](http://www.uah.edu/honors/honors-advisement).

**Stay in touch!** The best way to complete the Honors College curriculum is to keep in touch with the Honors Office. **Ask questions!** The Honors College Dean and Advisor are here to help with whatever you need, so feel free to ask questions. If we don’t know the answer, we’ll find out!
10. HONORS OFFICE CONTACT INFORMATION

Communicating with the Honors College Office

The Honors College communicates with Honors students and the campus in a variety of ways. Listed below are the most common methods of communication:

- Canvas course management system (every Honors student is automatically in the Honors College group)
- E-mail (to your official university email)
- Facebook (for informal announcements and information)
- Postal mail
- Phone
- Text message (for those who opt to receive them).

Office Contact Information

Honors College
Frank Franz Hall
The University of Alabama in Huntsville
Huntsville, AL 35899
256-824-6450 (voice)
256-824-7339 (fax)
Email: honors@uah.edu
Website: honors.uah.edu