

INFORMATION FOR THESIS DIRECTORS

Except for the requirements given in this document entitled "Requirements of the Honors Program," the Honors Program expects that you and the student whom you are directing will make decisions together regarding the scope of the project, meeting to discuss work in progress, format, documentation, and so on. The Honors Director offers the following advice compiled from comments from recent Directors of Honors Thesis.

1 **A student WILL NOT be allowed to graduate as an Honors Scholar unless the signed thesis has been submitted to the Honors Director no later than the day senior grades are due.**

2 As you talk with your student about the scope of her project, you may want to chart a course which is somewhere between the conventional undergraduate research paper and a master's thesis. Although a senior honors thesis will likely not be as extensive a project as a master's thesis, it should require more time and talent than an ordinary term paper.

3 Early on, reach a clear and understanding of what the honors student proposes and/or what you or your department specifies that an honors thesis should be. Some advisors require a student to submit a written proposal outlining her plans for her thesis or project. Although this is not a requirement of the Honors Program, it may certainly be your own. The student's proposal might be required during the preregistration process, thereby requiring the student to begin reading prior to the semester in which the work is actually to be done.

4 When setting up meetings to discuss work in progress, make clear that you also want to **SEE** work that has been done—drafts of written texts, collected data, results of surveys, preliminary sketches, photographs, or whatever relevant material you need to examine in order to make sure the project is on track. Doing so will help protect both you and your student from the unpleasant discovery, near the end of the term, that the work which has been done is unacceptable.

5 For a research paper, specify the documentation style you require, and be prepared to offer examples of correct form. Remind the student that a bibliography, a reference list or a Works Cited page **MUST** accompany all honors theses and creative projects.

6 Remind the student doing a creative project which is not a paper, such as a recital, an art exhibit, or a videotape, to submit an explanatory text or description of the project. Ideally, the student should submit a video or photographs of the creative project. Whatever the format of the creative project, a bibliography or Works Cited page **MUST** be included.

7 You and your student should discuss an oral presentation of the project. So that she can share her work in some public forum, most departments require such a presentation either for the department or at an event such as the Meredith Celebrating Student Achievement Day in April. If an oral presentation is to be given, the student should be informed at the beginning of the semester. Often, fellow majors, honors students, faculty, parents, and friends are invited to the presentation.

8 Evaluate both content and form as you check the work-in-progress, and do not hesitate to require revisions in either area. Convey to your student that both you and the Honors Program expect completed papers to be free of errors in content, grammar and spelling.

9 It is generally expected that an honors thesis should be completed during the semester the student is enrolled in the course, unless the course has been designed as a two-semester project. An incomplete grade should be given only if good reasons for granting an "incomplete" grade apply. This is one reason for the importance of regular meetings with your student and careful charting of work in progress.

10 **The Honors Program must receive a final, unmarked copy of the thesis or project with no errors in content, grammar and spelling no later than the last day of senior exams in order for the student to graduate as an Honors Scholar.** Remind the student that she is responsible for providing the copies of the completed thesis or creative project.

11. As the thesis director, you may assign whatever grade you consider appropriate to the honors thesis/project. Since the honors theses and projects are housed in a special collection of the Carlyle Campbell Library, you may be reluctant to sign a thesis or project which represents merely passing work. To avoid this dilemma, meet regularly with your student and carefully review the work-in-progress. This way you should be able to "redirect" a thesis or project which has taken a wrong turn early on, and save yourself and your student from end-of-term difficulties.