

2014-2015 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

About the Honors Program

The Honors Program at WVSU aims to recruit and retain high-achieving students by enriching their academic experiences while studying at WVSU. In the academic year 2014-2015, the Honors Program served 39 students under the direction of Dr. Genia Sklute who serves as the Honors Program Coordinator. The focus in the last academic year was on growing the program together with increasing the number of academic and experiential learning activities organized by the Honors Program Coordinator and participants.

Honors Student Information

The increased recruitment efforts during the fall 2014 semester led to increased participants in the program, and in January 2015, the number of students in the program was 39 (compared to 30 students in August 2014). Thirty-seven of these participants were actively engaged in the activities associated with the program.

Honors Program Graduates and their plans after graduation

Seven students graduated with the Honors Program Distinction in the AY 2014-2015 (i.e., two in December 2014 and five in May 2015). Those students are as follows:

- Jordan Dillon (Biology) will be working toward a Doctor of Dental Surgery degree at West Virginia University School of Dentistry.
- Ashton Gauff (Economics, Mathematics, and International Studies) will be attending Heidelberg University in Germany, working toward a Ph.D. in Mathematics.
- Hannah Griffith (Psychology) will be attending Belmont University in Nashville, TN, working toward a Doctor in Physical Therapy degree.
- Alnairouz Katrib, (Biology) is currently working at the research lab of Dr. Gerald Hankins, and plans to apply to graduate schools to pursue a Ph.D. in Biology.
- Shayla Owens (English) received a graduate assistantship to Marshall University where she plans to obtain an MFA in English.
- Rishi Reddy (Biology) will attend the Joan C. Edwards School of Medicine at Marshall University.
- Alana Weyant (Psychology) will attend Indiana University of Pennsylvania where she plans to study student affairs in higher education administration.

Scholarly Activities and Experiential Learning

Our aim is to increase the competitiveness of program participants and graduates by exposing them to scholarly activities and experiential learning that helps develop and hone skills necessary to be successful at all levels of education and future careers. Thirteen Honors Program students

gave presentations at four different conferences. One student received scholarship to participate in a travel abroad program. Five students received regional and national scholarships (i.e., two McNair Scholars and three NASA Scholars) and one student participated in a national internship. Honors Program students participated in a graduate workshop that taught them how to prepare for graduate entrance examinations. In addition, Honors Program students made a campus visit to an 1860 land-grant institution where students learned about the admissions process, how to identify a major, and how to interact with potential research advisors.

Experiential learning is an important component of the Honors Program. Students in the Honors Program raised \$3,500 to fight against human trafficking. During the Third Annual WVSU Cares Day, Honors Program students collaborated with experts from Research and Public Service to plant 600 trees and 186 plants at a mine site reforestation and restoration project.

Future Goals of the Program

The goal for the next five years is to continue and expand the Honors Program and the activities offered to its students. The program growth is possible through increasing recruitment and marketing efforts. In addition, we plan to accomplish the following goals for the academic year 2015-2016:

- Offer a new course, Honors 301 – Philosophy of Research.
- Develop a scholarly database to assist students in their research.
- Expand the number of participants in the program by 20 percent.
- Increase the number of students who receive regional and national scholarships.
- Work with the Honors Program Council to develop a strategic plan for the Honors Program.
- Initiate the steps necessary to prepare the Honors Program for a NCHC review.