UCCS Honors Program – Cohort 2025

Vision

The UCCS Honors Program aims to foster an academic culture for intentional learners who are committed to service and personal growth, while making positive contributions to the local and global community.

Honors Program Core Values

Central to these aims is an appreciation for Gray Matters, which we understand as the unique perspective, or mindset, that multiple or competing complex views can exist at the same time. Engaging with Gray Matters allows us to appreciate diversity in both ideas and solutions. Gray Matters explores the intersection of the mind and society with a focus on how we think, learn, and live. Topics of discussion are designed to investigate the role of ambiguity in the gray spaces of human endeavor. Honors Program courses anchor the philosophy of our Honors Program, namely, that many, if not all, real-life situations are more accurately characterized as complex or Gray Matters (as opposed to black and white). Students learn adaptability and flexibility through the various Gray Matters interdisciplinary themes from disciplines such as Complex Systems, Leadership, Communication and Education, History, Ethics, Philosophy, Psychology, Mental Health, and others.

This commitment to Gray Matters is the foundation of the Honors Program's core values. Honors Program students are encouraged to embed Honors Program Core Values in their Honors Portfolio (see below).

Honors Program students will strive to embody and promote these core values:
  (a) To foster empathy and compassion for people, including oneself.
  (b) To embrace the realization that there are always multiple and diverse perspectives.
  (c) To recognize that both collective wisdom and individual solutions may be appropriate alternatives in problem solving.
  (d) To support diversity, equity, and inclusion of action and thought.
  (e) To exhibit open-mindedness, self-reliance, intellectual curiosity, personal responsibility, and integrity.
  (f) To promote an understanding of and appreciation for scientific discourse and scholarship.

Honors Learning Outcomes

The Honors Program motivates students who want to broaden their horizons beyond the classroom by promoting their:

- Passion for life-long learning with stimulating peer-group interactions.
- Appreciation for diversity of thought and opinion.
- Development of creative problem-solving skills and analytical thinking.
- Preparation to be outstanding candidates for future education and job opportunities.
- Contributions to the global and the local community.
- Leadership aspirations by including all perspectives in decision making.
- Understanding of Gray Matters, its ambiguity, indeterminacy, diversity, and complexity.

Academic Rigor

Students accepted in the Honors Program will:

1. Complete the "Gray Matters" course (GPS 1010/3010), which is a cornerstone of our program.
2. Engage in regular one-on-one faculty interaction in support of students' initiatives.
3. Complete HNRS 3011 Conversations About Complexity; see plan of study later in this document.
4. Demonstrate learning and growth through their Honors Program Portfolio. Portfolios provide an opportunity to deepen intentional learning in Gray Matters areas that the students are passionate about, encouraging personal growth and community impact, and framing gray matters as complex systems. Good ideas need our clear and personal voices and are to be expressed succinctly and professionally. The assigned Honors Program faculty advisor and the Honors Program Portfolio mentor (selected from the UCCS faculty across all departments) guide the student through the process.
5. Participate in experiential learning outside the classroom with peers and mentors contributing to growth of global awareness through volunteering and engagement.

Admission Criteria and Scholarship Eligibility for 2023 Cohort

Approximately thirty $1000/year Honors Scholarships, renewable with tiered increases for a total of four years of scholarship are awarded, by invitation only, to those students who have:

(a) earned a cumulative high school GPA of at least 3.5 preferred but not required.
(b) submitted a required essay (1000 words),
(c) completed an interview with Honors Program representatives.

The Honors Admissions Committee reviews all applications and selects the invited finalists for a face-to-face interview.

Plan of Study Requirements

Students accepted in the Honors Program will have the opportunity to interact with motivated and like-minded peers, who understand that good citizenship includes contributing to society. The Honors Program accepts students from all degree programs and expects our students to complete our curriculum-based plan of study, as described below, in addition to courses in their individual degree programs.

The Honors Program curriculum is designed to be compatible with university requirements. GPS 1010/3010 (Gray Matters) fulfills a requirement for all degree programs. Many of our students embed HNRS 3011 (Conversations About Complexity) into their degree program to fulfill elective requirements and meet general education requirements for Inclusiveness, Navigate, Sustainability, and Writing Intensive courses. HNRS 4950 provides flexibility for students' degree programs by allowing students to choose to take this course for 1 to 3 credit hours. Students are encouraged to work with the Honors Program Director if they have questions about the Honors Program curriculum and their degree plan.

Students will graduate with University Honors if they successfully complete the following requirements:

■ Students must take the Honors Program's **Gray Matters course (GPS1010/3010) (3 credit hours), the Honors version of this required first-year seminar**. This course anchors the philosophy of our Honors Program, framing gray matters with complex systems. During this class, students are assigned to their Honors Program academic advisor.

■ Students must take **Conversations About Complexity (HNRS 3011) (3 credit hours)** during their first year at UCCS**.** This course is typically offered in spring and summer semesters. This course is designed to help students explore ideas for their Honors Program Portfolio (HNRS 4950).

- On a case-by-case basis, students who cannot take HNRS 3011 due to restrictions in their degree plan may petition the Honors Program Executive Committee to substitute a course.
- Students who do not take HNRS 3011 will be asked to read and produce written commentary on one or more of the core values of the UCCS Honors Program to cover all four designations for this course in the Compass Curriculum framework including completion of the blueprint requirement as the outcome. Details for this additional assignment will be arranged between the student and their Honors program advisor, on a case-by-case basis, and a syllabus will be provided for these students that includes the assignments, and the blue-print for meeting the HNRS 3011 course outcomes.

- Students must take the **Honors Program Portfolio independent study (HNRS 4950) (variable 1-3 credit hours)** by the end of their second year at UCCS unless a variation is in place for the student in consultation with their HP-advisor and approved by the HP-Director. This class, which can be taken individually or with a group of students, is organized with the student's Honors Program Portfolio faculty advisor. Portfolio reports must be submitted to the Honors Program between October 30 and November 15 for the fall semester graduation, or between March 30 and April 15 for spring semester graduation. HNRS 4950 is also offered during the summer with July 5 through July 31 submission dates. Submissions are reviewed by an Honors Program Portfolio mentor, which could be any UCCS-faculty (based on student requests) or the student's UCCS-Honors Program advisor. All portfolios must be reviewed by at least two Honors Program Faculty members. Their feedback must be provided to the student within ten days after the student submits their report.
  - HNRS 4950 may be taken for 1 to 3 credit hours, based on students' preferences, portfolio scope, and degree program constraints. This option provides an opportunity for students to extend their HNRS 3011 blueprints. Select HNRS 4950 students may contact UCCS ICORE faculty to mentor Honors Program portfolio[1]. Honors program students should consult with their Honors Program Advisor, the UCCS-Honors Program Graduate Studies Advisor, and the UCCS Honors Program Director to determine how many credit hours to take in HNRS 4950 and to identify readers for their portfolios.
  - All HNRS 4950 Portfolios are published as part of Kraemer Family Library's Digital Collection preferably using the template of UCCS-Honors Program portfolio available on UCCS Honors website or through UCCS-Honors Program advisors. Other available venues for possible publication and presentation include CSURF (Colorado Springs Undergraduate Research Forum), Mountain Lion Research Day (poster presentation), UCCS Honors Program and UCCS-ICORE's Summer School of Gray Matters and Complex Systems Symposium, regional conferences specific to student majors, and research synthesis/case studies for nursing students. Publication or presentation in national and international conferences and

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[1] UCCS Honors Program AMP advisor may guide the student.

journals, coauthored with mentors, provides another method to satisfy these requirements and is encouraged by the Honors Program. Alternative forms of portfolio presentation will be available to disciplines where emphasis is on visual or performing arts.

- Students must **maintain a minimum overall cumulative GPA of 3.5 for scholarship renewal each academic year**. Honors Program students whose cumulative GPA is 3.49 or below will undergo extensive review by the HP-Faculty in May and June. These students will be expected to have an upward trajectory plan for their GPA in place by June 7th. Scholarship renewal is determined on an individual basis as recommended by Honors Program faculty. These students will be required to meet with their Honors Program advisor twice a year.

- Additionally, to continue receiving their scholarships, students must **participate in Honors Engagement events adding up to at least 6 hours per semester** (i.e. 12 hours per academic year). The Honors Program records attendance at these events. Honors students get many opportunities to interface with faculty and peers during Honors Program events, including several seminars and Gray Matters film series discussions organized by the Honors Program. Participation in required Honors Program events enables students to appreciate diversity of thoughts and actions; recognize that different perspectives that may allow a better solution to emerge; become life-long learners; engage with diversity, equity, and inclusion; adjust more quickly to new situations; and be more marketable for employment and highly competitive for admission to graduate studies.

- Students may earn engagement hours by attending UCCS-Honors Program's Summer School of Gray Matters and Complex Systems Symposium which is held in June or July every year in collaboration with ICORE and the GMI Program.

- In cases of an unavoidable scheduling conflict, students may receive permission to count "outside" engagement hours toward their required total. In order to receive such permission, students should do the following: (1) contact the Honors Program team ahead of time, explaining the nature of the scheduling conflict; (2) propose an alternative event; (3) explain how this alternative event (or engagement opportunity) will involve themes, concepts, or ideas valued by the Honors Program, specifically gray matters framed as complex systems; (4) produce a 2-page written overview and analysis of the event, after attending it. Approval of alternative engagement hours will be subject to the discretion of the Honors Program team who may provide suitable alternatives to the student with their own online or in-person programming or events.

    *After April 15th, any student lacking engagement hours will be asked to view online modules and submit a 2-page written overview and analysis of the module to the Honors Program. **The yearly deadline to satisfy all engagement hours is the end of***

> ***Spring semester.*** *Engagement hours must be completed for faculty to recommend renewal of honors scholarships.*

- ■ A Public Speaking course (COMM 2100) is recommended but not required.

Honors Program Portfolio (HNRS 4950) Requirement (variable 1-3 credit hours) Details:

An Honors Program Portfolio can take a variety of forms, including**:** a project, a capstone, a thesis, a document, a piece of art, a framework, a movie, an animation, a poster, or a computer program, a simulation, a 2D/3D game, or another form where a student, using topics and tools in their chosen area of study including online gray matters and complex systems resources.

Under the guidance of UCCS-Honors Program Advisors, portfolios (1) explain their narrative and understanding about an experience, a problem, a case study, a theater production, a research project, a study abroad experience, or a computer program analysis (2) while also exhibiting an understanding of Gray Matters.

All portfolios are part of UCCS's digital collections.

The Honors Program provides students with access to the UCCS-Honors-Program-HUB resources for students whose portfolio projects include using LIST RESOURCES. These may include building reasonable partnerships with any UCCS Faculty, Staff, and/or other students working with those faculty and staff, as well as attaining access to HUB resources. Honors Program student portfolios have collaborated with centers, institutes, graduate students, UCCS-ICORE faculty and staff, and other computer related resources. HNRS 4950 portfolios have also been supported by staff and other students working with portfolio-mentors. These valuable support systems are included in HNRS 4950 courses offered all Honors Program advisors throughout the year and between semesters. If relevant, ask your Honors Program advisor for compensation details for support services connected to HNRS 4950.

HNRS Portfolio Guidance, UCCS-HP HUB Partners, Pre-Med, Pre-Law; and UCCS Accelerated Masters' Program Support

HNRS 4950 (Honors Portfolio) courses are available to students every semester, and students should register under their Honors Program advisors' sections. Based primarily on students' interests, each honors program portfolio has one mentor and at least two UCCS-Honors Program Faculty readers. Any UCCS Faculty member can serve as a portfolio mentor. A student's assigned Honors program advisor will serve as either a reader or mentor. Two additional UCCS-HP Faculty members will serve as readers. Honors Portfolios may also be supported by UCCS staff or graduate students. Portfolio readers must ensure that staff and graduate student support (as well as any online course content) is acknowledged in the final

portfolio. All portfolios must be based on proper academic sources and methods and those must be cited by the student.

The UCCS Honors Program Accelerated Master's Program Advisor works with the UCCS Community to make relevant resources available to students. These resources include pre-med information; pre-law information; and coordination with all of UCCS's Accelerated Master's Programs (AMPs).

UCCS Honors Program HUB access may extend to staff as well as graduate and undergraduate students to reasonably support student portfolios. The Honors Program HUB also maintains a few notebooks and other paraphernalia to support UCCS-Honors Program HUB facilities and its partners.

Course Sequencing for Scholarship renewal

1. By first year or sophomore: complete GPS 1010/3010 and HNRS 3011.
2. By junior year or earlier, complete all requirements for HNRS 4950. Advisors will provide guidance for students to complete the UCCS-HP paperwork.
3. In graduating year, complete Honors Program Intent to Graduate form for in-house Honors Program Certificate of Completion.
4. Satisfy yearly engagement hour requirements (by the end of Spring semester) to continue receiving scholarship.

Students who satisfy items 1-4 will receive an in-house Certificate of Completion on Gray Matters and Complex Systems (Designated Areas) during the Honors Program's fall or spring graduation ceremony. Summer graduations are typically included in UCCS-Honors Program's fall ceremony.

UCCS Graduate School's Accelerated Master's Programs (AMP) and Advising for Pre-Med and Pre-Law Students

Honors Program students are encouraged to explore the possibility of an [Accelerated Master's Program](#) at UCCS. Students should see the [AMP website](#) for more information and contact their UCCS-HP advisors about their interests, preferably by sophomore year. Honors Program advisors will connect the students to UCCS Honors Program Graduate Program Advisor to connect with existing resources, for example, UCCS-ICORE members, or guidance for pre-med and pre-law students.

For Honors students interested in and accepted into the Accelerated Master's Program in Gray Matters and Complex Systems and who aspire to pursue MSCS-GMI program graduate studies in Gray Matters and Complex Systems, the UCCS Honors program has negotiated limited permission numbers for CS 4/5800, CS 4/5790, CS 6770, CS-GMI program courses. Interested

students should contact the UCCS-Honors Program AMP Advisor for a plan of study at least two semesters ahead of the desired semester and work with Honors Program staff, Ms. Carol Pina, for permission numbers to register for these classes.

Good Standing Requirement and Tiered Scholarships

A UCCS Honors student shall not violate other University, College or Departmental rules and policies sufficient for disciplinary action.

To maintain the Honors Program Scholarship, the Honors Program expects students to have a cumulative GPA of 3.5 or higher and completed engagement requirements each academic year. By the end of spring semester, students maintaining a GPA of 3.5 and above, satisfying engagement hour requirements, and making continued scheduled progress, as described in the Program's plan of study, towards completing the Honors Program curriculum, will continue to receive the Honors Program Scholarship for the next academic year.

Honors Program students whose cumulative GPA is equal to or less than 3.49 who have completed full engagement hours will undergo extensive review by the HP-Faculty in late of May and early June. If they continue, they must show progress towards completing the HP curriculum as indicated in the Program plan of study. These students will be expected to have an upward trajectory plan for their GPA in place by June 7th for scholarship renewal, on an individual basis as recommended by their Honors Program advisor. Additionally, these students are required to meet with their Honors Program advisor twice a year.

Students with a cumulative GPA of below 3.0 and who have completed full engagement hours will undergo extensive review by the HP-Faculty in late May and early June, and if they continue, they must show progress towards completing the HP curriculum as indicated in the Program plan of study. These students will be expected to have an upward trajectory plan for their GPA in place by about June 7th for scholarship renewal, on an individual basis as recommended by their Honors Program advisor. Additionally, these students will be required to meet their Honors Program advisor twice a year.

Students with a cumulative GPA below 3.0 and lacking engagement hours will not receive any scholarship, but they may still complete the Honors Program curriculum if they choose. Any student leaving the Honors Program must do so in writing to the Honors Program Administrator.

All students MUST satisfy 12 engagement hours per academic year.

COHORT 2025 Scholarship amounts

	Scholarship amount	Scholarship amount for GPA of 3.5+ *and* required engagement hours	Scholarship amount for GPA of 3.0–3.49 *and* required engagement hours *and* upward trajectory requirement, if recommended by Honors Program advisor	Scholarship amount for GPA < 3.0 *and* required engagement hours *and* upward trajectory requirement, if recommended by Honors Program advisor
First-year Student	$1000			
Sophomore or 30 credit hours or more		Progress check *and* $1500	Two one-on-one advising sessions *and* $1500	Two one-on-one advising sessions *and* $1000
Junior or 60 credit hours or more		Progress check *and* $2000	Two one-on-one advising sessions *and* $2000	Two one-on-one advising sessions *and* $1000
Senior or 90 credit hours or more and not enrolled in AMP Program		Progress check *and* $3500	Two one-on-one advising sessions *and* $2500	Two one-on-one advising sessions *and* $1000
Senior or 90 credit hours or more and enrolled in AMP programs		Progress check and *minimum* $4500 (*Additional AMP-Scholar eligibility)	Two one-on-one advising sessions *and* $3000 (*Additional AMP-Scholar eligibility)	Two one-on-one advising sessions *and* $1500

(*) AMP Scholar Eligibility: Students enrolled in AMPs program must register for graduate credit according the Graduate School so that 6 credit hours apply to their graduate work. Budget permitting, AMP HP-scholars completing 6 credit hours of graduate courses by the end of their junior year, may become eligible to apply for one-time additional funds on recommendation by student's HP-Advisor and *if AMP honors portfolio significantly advances the UCCS Honors Program initiatives* based on UCCS-HP Faculty vote. Limited number of these additional funds may be available and these additional funds are not guaranteed. Student should consult the HP-Advisor and AMP-advisor, and contact HP staff before Spring break. Also, it is students' responsibility to enroll in correct courses for AMP credits, tracking and accuracy with specific degree AMP Advisors.

Honors Program Graduation Designations

Students will be recognized with appropriate designations, as outlined below, at the Honors Program spring or fall graduation ceremony.

Students who have a cumulative GPA of 3.75 for all their (four or more) years at UCCS who have satisfied all the academic requirements of their cohort year will be recognized as *Dr. Michael Hackman UCCS Honors Program Scholar*s.

Students who have a cumulative GPA of 3.5 after their last semester and who have satisfied all the academic requirements of their cohort year, including required engagement hours, will graduate with the *Peak Performer* designation from the Honors Program.

Students who have a cumulative GPA of 3.25 or above (but less than 3.5) after their last semester and who have satisfied all the academic requirements of their cohort year, including required engagement hours, will graduate with the *Mountain Lion* designation.

Students who have a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or above (but less than 3.25) after their last semester and who have satisfied all the academic requirements of their cohort year, including required engagement hours, will graduate with the *Honors Graduate* designation.

Students whose cumulative GPA is below 3.00 but who have completed all other Honors Program requirements (see Plan of Study above) will graduate with the *Spirit in Action* designation. This designation acknowledges the Honors Program's commitment to the "once a cohort always a cohort" idea.

Honors Program Student Ambassadors

Any UCCS Honors Program student who is in good standing and who has completed a minimum of two semesters in the program is eligible to apply to be an Honors Program Student Ambassador. Student Ambassadors perform a variety of duties, such as: supporting setup at engagement events, mentoring other Honors Program students, helping during class time, and serving as a liaison between Honors Program cohorts and Honors Program staff. Student Ambassadors who successfully perform their assigned duties will automatically satisfy all engagement requirements for that year.

Retention, Scholarship and Graduation from the Honors Program

All cohorts will remain part of the Honors Program with or without scholarship eligibility, as the Honors Program supports the "once a cohort always a cohort" idea. When admitting a cohort, the Honors Program commits to providing the same academic opportunities for all students and is invested in helping students plan their degree program and complete our curriculum. All students who complete our curriculum are recognized in a fall or spring graduation ceremony.

Students must complete the **Honors Program Intent to Graduate form** (available on the Honors "Forms" web site) within 6 weeks of the start of either the fall or the spring semester. The Honors Program sends a customary email reminder about this requirement to students, but it is the students' responsibility to fill out and submit the form.

If a student wants to leave the Honors Program, they can do so by informing the Honors Program administrator, in writing or by email, that they no longer wish to be part of the Honors Program.

Honors Program Curriculum Faculty Members

Dr. Karen deVries (UCCS-Honors Program AMP and Graduate Advisor)
Dr. Joseph Kuzma (UCCS Honors Program Associate Director, Portfolio Internship)
Ms. Carol Pina (Admin, Engagement hours, All Cohorts communication)
Dr. Deborah Pina-Thomas (Honors Program HUB at Simulation Learning Education Center[2])
Dr. Rob Sackett (Professor Emeritus, Graduate Studies, Portfolio Internships)
Dr. Sudhanshu Kumar Semwal (UCCS Honors Program Director, Graduate Studies and Portfolio Internships)

Our Faculty Portfolio Mentor List is updated yearly and posted on our website. Any UCCS Faculty (including Honors Program curriculum faculty) can serve as an Honors Program portfolio mentor or reader. The Honors Program continually updates this list.

UCCS-ICORE & UCCS Honors Program Local Interaction Policy
Addendum from May 1, 2024

UCCS Honors Program Policy on Transfer Students
Addendum from March 10, 2017

Up to five incoming transfer students, who did not qualify for an Honors Program scholarship based on the standard criteria in place, may be admitted into the Honors Program in the fall of each year. The deadline to apply for the fall semester is April 15th. Applicants will need to submit their GPA and a statement explaining why they want to be part of the Honors Program without the scholarship.[3] Based on the recommendation of the Honors Program Admissions Committee, which will be binding, the Honors Program will inform these students of their final decision by July 1st.

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[2] Honors Program HUB on Complexity, Creativity and Gray Matters with McGMI Program Lab at Simulation Learning Center, Helen and Arthur E. Johnson Beth-el College of Nursing and Health Sciences
[3] After completing the first year with no scholarship at UCCS, transfer students automatically become eligible for the Honors Program scholarship, if they meet the program's criteria for all cohorts for the following year at the suitable level, and for a maximum of up to two years of scholarship at the junior and the senior level for transfer students.

Transfer students must complete the entire Honors Program curriculum. Transfer students should enroll in the fall offering of GPS 3010 (Gray Matters) course, instead of GPS 1010 (Gray Matters), as GPS 3010 (Gray Matters) may provide a better fit in their plan of study to complete required Honors Program curriculum. Transfer students with more than 60 credit hours counted towards a degree program at UCCS can petition to UCCS HP-faculty to waive the requirement of GPS 1010/3010 from their plan of study for the UCCS-Honors Program. The UCCS Honors Program expects the equivalent of GPS 1010 has been taken by the transfer student at their previous institution.

Students can review the criteria for their cohort year on the Honors web site. Interested students should contact the Honors Program Associate Director or Director for further information and instructions.

Honors Program HUB, Partnerships, Resources, and Scholarship Announcement

The Honors Program serves rigorously trained students who share a desire to become intentional learners. Honors student privileges include access to Honors Program HUB resource, early registration; extended library check-out options; and recognition at graduation. Students work with Honors Program faculty in small Honors Program class settings, thus encouraging them to engage in a collaborative, vigorous intellectual life that prepares them for admission to and success in graduate and professional schools.

The UCCS Honors Program prefers, but does not require, that our students enter their first year with a cumulative high school GPA of 3.5 or above. Standardized test scores are optional for Cohort 2025. All students must enroll in the Gateway Program Seminar section on Gray Matters (GPS 1010/3010) in the fall of the first year. Visit the Honors Program website for detailed graduation requirements and other information about the program.

Scholarship finalists are contacted for an interview by the end of February. Interviews are held in March, and applicants are notified of scholarship decisions in April. The scholarship is $1000 for first-year students. Amount for subsequent years will   follow the Cohort 2025 Scholarship Table presented earlier in this document. Scholarships are dependent on students (1) making good progress towards the Honors Program curriculum requirements and receiving UCCS Honors Program Scholars designation or not; (2) satisfying annual engagement hours criteria; and (3) maintaining the expected GPA of 3.5 or above. Once accepted into the Honors Program, students are encouraged, with or without scholarships, to complete the Honors Program curriculum.

An Honors Program advisor is assigned to the student for the duration of their participation in the Honors Program, and the student is required to meet with their advisor every semester to assess the progress towards completing the Honors Program Curriculum.