



# Montgomery College Honors Programs

CREATING LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES FOR HIGH  
ACHIEVING STUDENTS

# Honors Program

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**Eligibility:** meet **one** of the following criteria:

Completion of at least 12 MC credits with  $\geq 3.2$  GPA in transfer-level classes, including ENGL101 or ENGL101A with a grade of A or B.

SAT scores of 600 on each section and a minimum high school GPA of 3.5, unweighted.

Eligibility for ENGL102, as determined by the MC placement process, and a minimum high school GPA of 3.5, unweighted

Acceptance into one of the special honors programs some are open to students directly from high school, others have a more porous boundary – existing MC students can join

**Scholarships:** a limited number of course scholarships are available each spring semester. Specialty programs have scholarship funding.

**Transcript Recognition:** Honors Program recognition is given on the transcript and noted in the Commencement program to students who complete 15 credits in honors coursework across 3 disciplines while maintaining a cumulative GPA of 3.2 or higher.

# The Honors Program and Serving our High Achieving Students

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The Honors Program offers high impact practices around retention, completion, transfer, scholarship funding and seeking employment that could be diffused into the broader student population. There is scholarship funding available both at Montgomery College and at our transfer partner institutions that could help make a difference for students in paying for their education. The Honors Program offers academic and co-curricular activities as well as active mentoring by teaching faculty that is also often critical to student success.

The report prepared by the Association of American Colleges and Universities titled *Assessing Underserved Students' Engagement in High-Impact Practices* clearly documents the success of deep learning practices such as learning communities, service learning, study travel/place based learning, internships, and research opportunities. The report can be found online at:

[http://www.aacu.org/sites/default/files/files/assessinghips/AssessingHIPS\\_TGGrantReport.pdf](http://www.aacu.org/sites/default/files/files/assessinghips/AssessingHIPS_TGGrantReport.pdf)

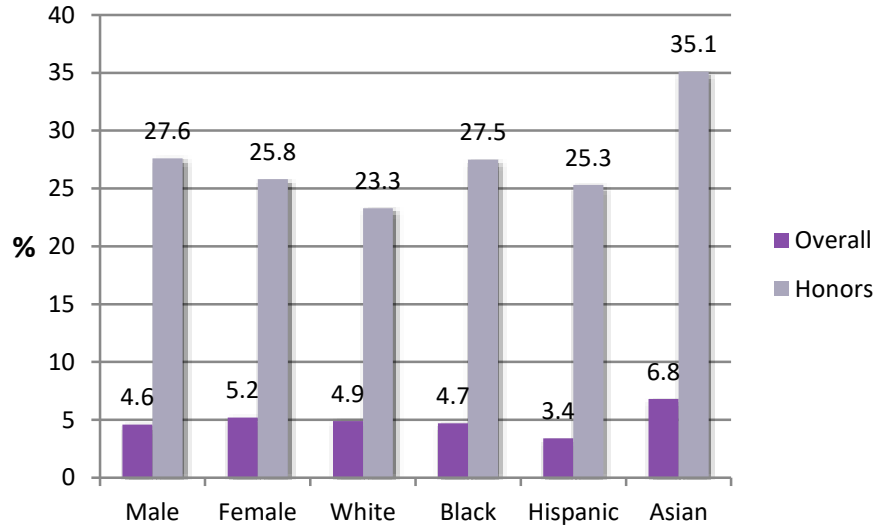
The report shows the cumulative benefit for students who participate in more than one of these experiences with respect to their learning, retention, and ultimate success. These enriched experiences are a hallmark of our Honors Program. While our threshold for honors at a cumulative GPA of 3.2 is comparatively low compared to other institutions, the Honors Program hopes to help create scholars through the emphasis on research and access to enriched co-curricular activities that are directly linked to coursework. Fostering curiosity and developing an appreciation for research early in a student's coursework yield positive outcomes with respect to retention and success. The data for 2016 shows a DFW rate of 9.8% for honors students compared to 25.5% for the non-honors population. The 9.8% is higher than normal due to some student enrollment issues this year.

# Impact of Honors Courses on Completion Time

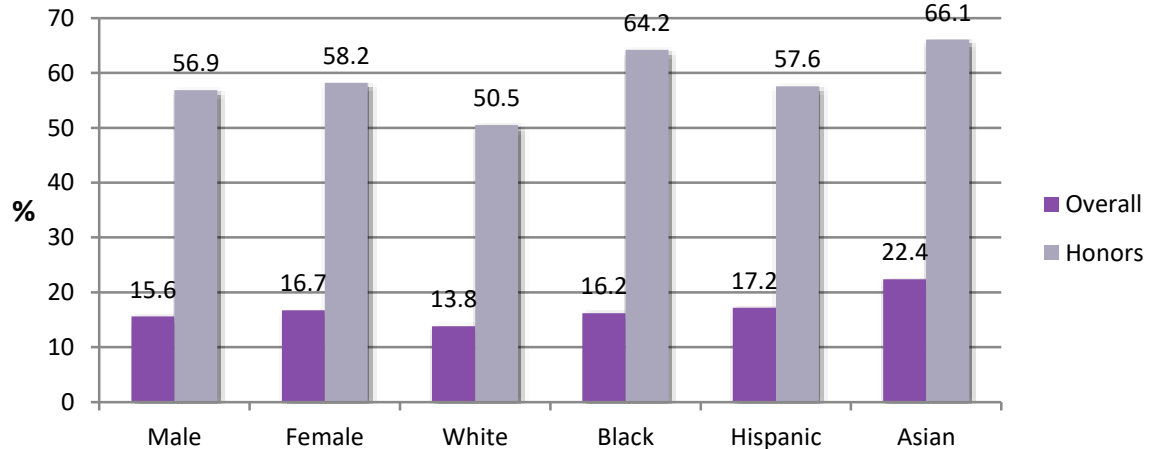
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Professor Rick Penn looked at the data for Honors Program students during the past 6 years and found some interesting facts with respect to Latino and African American students taking honors coursework. Since Rick could not get information on transfer he used the attainment of 60 credits (MC and transferred in combined) as an indicator of success. Since the College uses different measures of success, the data Rick collected gave us some interesting insights. He looked at all students who began at MC during a 4-year stretch starting roughly a decade ago. Among this cohort of students starting during those 4 years, he also identified those who passed at least one honors course. He then computed the percentage that succeeded within 2 years, 4 years, or 6 years, comparing the entire cohort to the Honors sub-group, and considering sex and ethnicity.

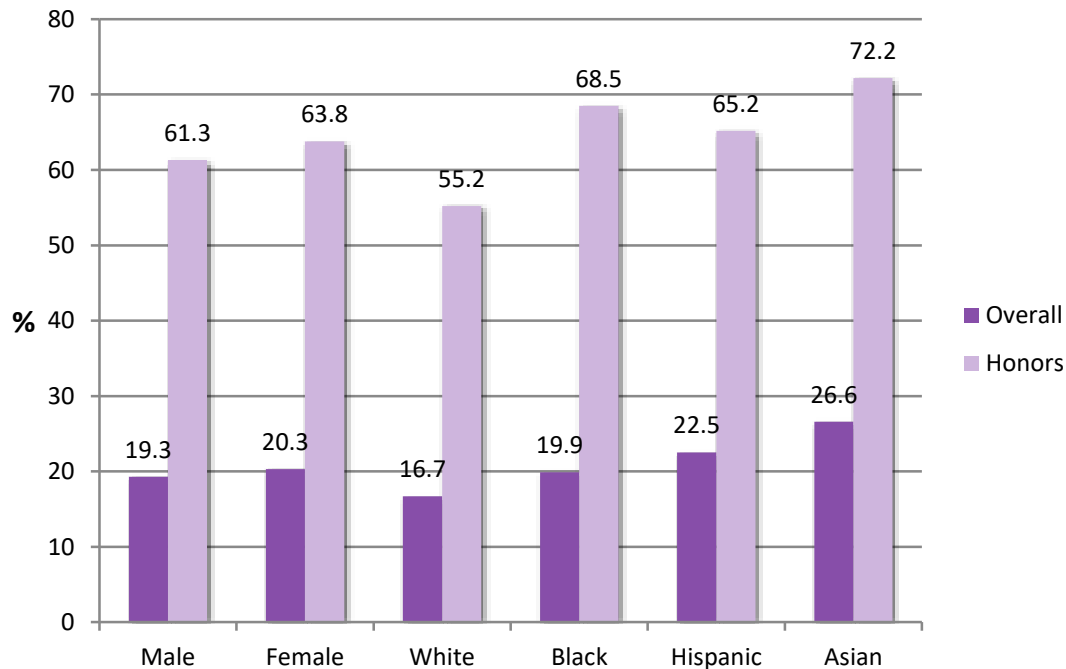
### 2-Year Completion of 60 Credits



### 4-Year Completion of 60 Credits



## 6-Year Completion of 60 Credits



This data raises some interesting questions about the best practices in our Honors Programs and how they can be used to reach more students. While there has been a lot of anecdotal information about student success and which are our honors students, these statistics document that our program is aspirational **and** inclusive. It also points to the need to expand deep learning practices associated with honors to more students. While not every student will be an honors student, advising from faculty mentors that encourages participation in learning communities, internships, place-based learning, etc. will positively influence student retention, completion, transfer, and the ability to find a job.

# Honors Students and Financial Need - Pell Recipients

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Of the 4,382 honors eligible students, 1,561 were Pell recipients in 2016. Of the 487 students who enrolled in Honors classes, 163 were Pell recipients, which contrasts with the 7,358 students in the non-Honors eligible population of 30,009 students. Pell recipients comprise a greater percentage of the honors/honors eligible population compare to the non-honors population.



# Honors Course Options

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## Coursework:

Honors modules (HM suffix) – honors enriched coursework, paired with standard class section.

Honors sections of existing classes (HC suffix) – classes with all honors students for standard course offerings.

Honors special classes (HONR prefix) – Honors Internships, Honors Study Travel, Independent Study- student initiated independent research projects guided by faculty

Additional Educational Opportunities: Smithsonian, Library of Congress and United States Holocaust Memorial Museum internships, Maryland Collegiate Honors Council Conference, Beacon conference paper submissions, Honors Colloquia and other conference presentations, academic mentorship for scholarship and transfer.

# Definitions of Honors Work

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A. Honors course options require students to produce honors level scholarship which reflects either research, analysis, critical thinking, or creativity. The proposal must demonstrate honors level assignments to the Honors Steering Committee. Possible options include any one OR any combination of the following:

Research / documented paper

Annotated bibliography

Short analytical and/or reflective papers

Journal

Project, experiment, or oral presentation accompanied by written explanation (examples of projects –creative writing, scientific experiment, theatrical performance, production of video or internet materials or oral presentation). Projects must be accompanied by a written explanation of appropriate length; the page requirement is flexible, according to the discretion of the instructor.

# Definitions of Honors Work (cont.)

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A minimum of 35 pages of written material is required. However, the equivalent may be achieved through projects, experiments, and oral presentations, each accompanied by written explanation. The faculty member who proposes the module will explain how the alternative equivalent to 35 pages can be achieved.

B. Honors courses must include research in at least one of the above assignments. Research should involve the following:

Library or on site (lab, museum, field etc.) research

Standard documentation style for the discipline

Standard “library” sources of books, journals, etc., selected reliable websites, field / lab (on site) data, or a creative project.

C. Honors course options should require more than one assignment to give a fair assessment of the student’s ability and work

# Student Learning Benefits

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To be part of a community of students who are similarly motivated

To be part of a class with people who like to engage in ideas – both in and out of the classroom – Honors Club (RV), Honors Writers Group (GT)

To be part of a class that will challenge you and promote intellectual and academic growth

To explore course material not covered in a non-honors section or to cover some topics more deeply

To conduct research that may help define future education and career paths

To provide students with extra-curricular activities not associated with a non-honors course: Honors Internships through the Paul Peck Humanities Institute at the Smithsonian, Library of Congress, and United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Beacon Conference, Maryland Collegiate Honors Council Conference as well as special co-curricular programming

# Transfer and Scholarship Benefits

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Students earn additional credentials needed when applying for scholarships and transfer admissions

Increase honors transfer agreements programs at transfer institutions such as Dickinson College, McDaniel College, University of Maryland Baltimore County, Notre Dame of Maryland University

Honors advising for transfer and scholarship – documented higher completion rates and shorter completion time than non-honors students. Data shows this is also true for minority students - Asian, Black and Hispanic

Better letters of recommendation from faculty – honors instructors can write a more substantial and detailed academic portrait of students' abilities

Honors courses count favorably when applying for merit based aid or prestigious scholarships. Traditionally about 75% of the winners of the Transfer Academic Excellence Scholarship to the University of Maryland College Park have taken honors coursework.

# Honors and National Scholarships

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Montgomery College has had twelve winners of the Jack Kent Cooke Undergraduate Transfer Scholarship, all but two were honors students (one was a Hillman Entrepreneur). Honors Programs represented – 1 Macklin Scholar, 3 Scholars Circle, 6 Renaissance Scholars (5 –GT, 1 – TP/SS).

We have had four male winners – one was African American, one Afro-Latino, one Hispanic and an immigrant from India. Of our eight female winners – three were African, one was Hispanic, and four were Asian (1 Chinese-Malaysian, 2 from Viet Nam, and 1 of Filipino descent). The two Hispanic students were undocumented.

Five of the women were in the STEM fields and 1 was in nursing.

The majority were first in their families to attend college. Of the 12 winners, 1 was a Takoma Park/Silver Spring student, 5 were primarily Rockville students, and 6 were primarily Germantown students.

# Scholarship and Transfer

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Our students have received transfer offers from:

American University, Amherst College, Boston University, Catholic University of America, City University of New York (Skadden Arps Honors Legal Studies Program), College of William and Mary, Columbia University School of General Studies, Cornell College, Cornell University, Dickinson College, Drexel University, Emerson College, Georgetown University, George Washington University, Georgia Tech, Goucher College, Hampshire College, Howard University, Lehigh University, M.I.T., McDaniel College, Mt. Holyoke College, Saint Mary's College of Maryland, New York University, Rice University, Smith College, Stanford University, Stevenson University, Temple University, Texas Tech University, University of California, University of Colorado, University of Southern California, University of Illinois, University of Maryland Baltimore County, University of Maryland, College Park, University of Miami, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, University of Pennsylvania, University of Texas, Austin, University of Tulsa, University of Virginia, Washington College, Wells College, York College