

Honors Scholars Program's FAQs

Director:

Dr. Brad Gambill
bgambill@jbu.edu
Office: 479-238-8746
Home: 479-238-1448
Cell: 479-220-8446

Administrative Assistant:

Glenda Manos
gmanos@jbu.edu
Office: 479-524-7426

If I have a pressing question, what do I do?

Call or e-mail Brad. He is first and foremost an advocate for the students in the HSP and needs to know when problems arise. Also, do not be afraid to call him at home. (He doesn't have all the answers, but he has a long list of people who do.) You might also check out the HSP's web site for general information: <http://www.jbu.edu/academics/honors/index.asp>

Do I have to apply to be accepted into the program?

Yes, in 2007, we started using a separate application for the HSP.

How do I know if I have been accepted into JBU's Honors Scholars Program?

If you have a composite ACT score of 28 (or SAT of 1240) or better and have submitted an HSP application (available online or via Word document), you should hear back about the Honors Committee's decision within one month. If you do not have a composite ACT of 28 but feel like you are called to join the HSP, you may apply for admission to the program by filling out the application and appealing to the Honors Committee. Contact Glenda Manos for more info.

Who are we?

Part #1: Well, we are a program established twenty years ago by Dr. Shirley Thomas, a faculty member in the English department (and later, a dean), to attract and retain the best and brightest Christian students. We currently have around 200 students, a fairly large program for a school our size; that said, we are a tight-knit group because we are focused on a common mission (see below). If you compare our minimum standards with other schools, you will notice that our standards are very high. HSP students come from all over the country (e.g., Washington, Vermont, Michigan, New York, and, yes, even Texas) to participate in the HSP.

Part #2 (or, The Sequel): In terms of philosophy, we are (1) a community **faithful** in our attempt to fulfill the Great Commandment (Mark 12:33); (2) to be **rigorous** in our attempt to take every thought captive and obedient to Christ (2 Cor 10:5) and to be transformed by the renewing of our minds (Romans 12:2); (3) to be **holistic** (heart, soul, mind, and strength) in our attempt to develop the complete student and faculty member so that we might better love the Lord together and develop the tools to better fulfill the Creation Mandate; (4) to be **creative** in our approach to further the Kingdom and, thus, more closely reflect our maker after whom we are imaged; and, finally, (5) to be **missional** and **intentional** in our approach to using our Christ-centered education to impact JBU, Siloam Springs, the United States, the world, and, of course, the Kingdom.

Why should I participate in the HSP?

The HSP is for students who have always dreamed of being surrounded by like-minded students who want to love the Lord with their minds and who want to use their Christ-centered education to further the Kingdom. Our students hunger for knowledge, are driven by curiosity, and are willing to take an occasional risk; they do not settle for mediocrity. Additionally, they tend to be creative and lively.

They also do more than study. For example, we have HSP students who play varsity sports, who DJ on KLRC, and who climb mountains in their spare time. (FYI, pocket protectors and nerd glasses have been banned from HSP classes and events.) In short, we are an elite force and have a specific role to play on the campus and in the community. Please come to campus mission-ready.

Is there a space for honors students to hang out or study?

We have just opened a new “honors house” at 1635 Holly Place (it’s just south of Admissions). It’s open Monday through Sunday 8:00 AM to 2:00 AM. Brad’s and Mrs. Graham’s offices are there. Plus, there’s all sorts of space to hang out and/or to study. There’s a plasma screen TV for watching movies. In the back, there’s a full porch with a gas grill, and a ping-pong table in the sun room. Finally, there’s a kitchen stocked with pots and pans and plates and utensils, so if you want to cook a meal for your friends, feel free to make use of the kitchen. The house is open to all honors students, and—as long as they’re accompanied by a student in the program—their guests. Security will close the house at 2:00 AM. (Keep in mind that the campus newspaper and yearbook also occupy part of the house.)

What does the program entail?

To graduate from the HSP, you will be required to take 12 lower-division hours (4 classes) in your freshman and sophomore years and 9 upper-division hours (3 classes) in your junior and senior years. You will choose from approximately 20 course options. All the honors classes are “core requirement” courses for JBU’s bachelor’s degree; in other words, a student will need these classes in order to graduate from JBU whether or not he/she is enrolled in the HSP. Certain sections of these core requirement classes will be reserved for HSP students only.

What are classes like?

Our goal is to create a true learning community in each HSP course. These communities tend to be small depending upon the course topic. For example, Honors Composition will have around 15 students; other courses, such as Honors Integrated Humanities, may have as many as 25 students. All HSP classes, regardless of size, resist the common practice of the “banking theory” of education in which the professor opens the student’s brain and simply pours his/her knowledge into the student’s head. In HSP courses, students become active agents of their own learning. For example, HSP students might design their own projects to demonstrate their understanding of course concepts. Under this model, exciting things happen and transformative learning occurs. Starting in 2008, most HSP courses will be taught in the new honors house.

Can I lose my scholarship and be “kicked out” of the HSP?

The HSP no longer uses scholarships as an admissions tool; thus, we do not monitor the scholarships. Talk to Financial Aid about their standards. We are a two-tier program. The first tier includes the freshman and sophomore year; the second tier includes the junior and senior year. In the spring semester of an HSP student’s sophomore year, he or she must apply to the second tier. At this point, he/she must have a minimum gpa of 3.5 (in all coursework, honors and otherwise) and have taken 12 hours of honors work. This is the only time that our program will check the student’s gpa. If the student is promoted to the second tier, he/she will go on to take the remaining 9 hours of honors coursework.

Is there a connection between my merit-aid scholarship (Presidential, Chancellor, Trustee, or Engineering) and the HSP?

Short answer: No! If you receive a major scholarship, you do not have to join the HSP. It’s up to you. However, many of the students who do join will be recipients of major academic scholarships.

Should I take an honors class in my first semester?

Yes. All HSP students are required to take an honors section of the 1-hour HSP Orientation Class; Brad, the director of the HSP, teaches these courses and this first-semester contact allows him to develop relationships with all the new honors students and to orient them to the HSP's features and many opportunities. Also, many students take one or two additional honors classes in their first semester. Taking honors classes in the first semester is especially important for students majoring in a natural science, education, or engineering/construction management. Talk to your advisor for more information.

Will I have an advisor in the HSP?

No. You will be assigned an advisor within your major. He or she will also advise you in terms of your honors coursework. However, if any problems arise, do not be afraid to contact Brad. You might consider Brad your "unofficial advisor." His door is always open.

I've heard about the new Honors Retreat for Freshmen HSP Students. What's up with that?

For the first time, the entire freshman class will be spending the night (in nice accommodations—don't worry) along side the Illinois River in Oklahoma. You will have several workshops and be introduced to your mentor there. Plus, we'll just have time for fun and fellowship with your new classmates. For example, we'll be floating down the Illinois River together—bring your bathing suit!

If I'm an HSP student, will I have the time and opportunity to travel abroad?

We encourage HSP students to travel abroad. Most of our major programs will allow the student to spend one semester abroad; talk to your advisor for more details about fitting the semester into your study plan. One of the most popular programs for honors students has been the Scholars' Semester at Oxford, a program run by the CCCU (and created by Dr. Shirley Thomas, the HSP's founder):

<http://sso.bestsemester.com/overview.asp>.

Students spend one semester studying at Wycliffe College (Oxford's seminary) and taking one-on-one "tutorials" with some of the best Christian minds in England. All coursework at Oxford counts toward JBU's honors requirement. We have also sent HSP students recently to Uganda, China, Russia, and Costa Rica.

Are there other opportunities that the program offers?

Many of our students are as good as any student at Harvard, Stanford, or the University of Texas, but they don't always believe this to be true. (And humility is a good thing.) These scholarships are external to JBU. However, we are looking for students who want to challenge a few spheres that Christians tend to "surrender" to non-Christians. We don't have time to list all of the scholarships, but let me offer up two. First, Barry M. Goldwater Scholars: <http://www.act.org/goldwater/yybull.html>. This scholarship is for junior or seniors at four-year institutions who want to eventually go on to work in science, math or engineering. The Goldwater Scholarship will pay the recipient \$7,500 annually to finish his/her undergraduate degree. Second, Rhodes Scholars: <http://www.rhodesscholar.org/>. This scholarship is for graduates of a four-year American institution who would like to do graduate work at Oxford. Many of our country's "movers and shakers" served as Rhodes Scholars; Christians need to take their rightful place next to these future leaders. There are others: Fulbright, Truman, Marshall, Cambridge-Gates, James Madison, Udall, etc. The HSP mentors applicants (one-on-one and in small groups) for these scholarships. For more info, contact Brad.

I've been hearing about a voluntary program that the HSP is running—the Shalom Project. What is it and what do I do if I'd like to participate?

Good question. In the fall, we will be looking for volunteers to join one of two 15-member teams. These teams will be made up of a number of majors (History and Engineering, Education and Bible,

etc.) and will have the opportunity to study, research, and address one major issue in their four years here at JBU. For example, the group may focus on developing accessible playground equipment for area handicapped children. Or, they may have a collective passion for ensuring safe water for the people of Arkansas and Oklahoma. In their senior year, they will collaborate on a thesis in which their issue is addressed and a solution proposed. These groups will be expected to work together, pray together, hold each other accountable, and—with God’s help—to impact the Kingdom. Each group will be mentored by a member of the honors faculty. This program is not for everyone, but we believe that this is the future of Christian honors education and would love to tell you more about the Shalom Project. For more information, contact Brad.

How do I get involved?

There’s a lot to do—the best thing to do is to jump right in (the water’s fine)! As freshmen, you can run for the HSP Senate or become a director of, say, our outreach program or help plan our annual BBQ Bash and Softball Classic or serve on the staff of our new on-line journal for undergraduate research or volunteer to play your guitar for next year’s Scholarship Weekend. Lots of possibilities. The best thing to do is to talk to one of our officers. They’ll plant a few ideas with you.

Do I have the opportunity to complete a senior thesis or capstone project?

Yes, but it’s optional. We have two graduation tracks in the HSP: Presidential Honors (or highest honors) and University Honors. With Presidential Honors, you complete the usual 21 hours of honors, but part of your coursework is a three-hour course for your capstone project. For University Honors, you complete the same amount of coursework, but you don’t attempt a thesis or capstone project.

What is a capstone project?

You tell us! The idea is fairly simple. Pick a topic within your major that you’re passionate about and want to explore further. You’ll find a professor who wants to mentor you through the project, and the two of you spend the entire semester completing the project. This is an opportunity for you to think creatively and apply the skills you’ve been building since you first arrived on campus. A person studying art might want to submit a portfolio of his or her paintings (along with an introductory essay). A person in business may want to submit a business plan. A person in theology might want to submit his or her research on the early church. Toward the end of the semester the HSP community (and invited guests) will celebrate your hard work by listening to you present your project. Talk to me about the capstone project; it’s never too early to start thinking about the possibilities.

Who is this “Brad” and what do I call him?

Brad directs the honors program (and also directs the JBU Leader Scholars Institute). He believes that God has given the HSP a calling, and he is here at JBU to help facilitate this God-given mission. He prays daily for patience and for God to send him Christians who want to further the Kingdom by developing their minds and doing His work. (So far so good!)

Yes, Brad has a PhD, but he would prefer that his students call him by his first name. If they are uncomfortable with first names, then they may call him “Coach Brad.” Brad’s educational background is in English and Native American literature. He is currently co-editing a collection of essays on integrating faith and learning within English studies (literature, creative writing, film, and composition). He has also started a book-length study of the representation of Christianity by Native American writers, artists, and filmmakers. He is married (Patty), has two boys (Tucker, 11 and Will, 8), and he serves as an elder on session at the First Presbyterian Church of Siloam Springs.

