

Honors

What is an honors program?

Simply put, it is a program of educational opportunity for outstanding students. It takes the form of specially structured academic offerings designed to engage students more comprehensively and intellectually with an institution's best faculty on virtually a one-to-one basis. Honors studies provide top students the opportunity to function in the most stimulating and challenging intellectual learning environment an institution can create.

Earl and Muriel Smittcamp Family

California State University, Fresno planned to establish a program of honors study for many years. With an initial generous gift of \$1 million from the Earl and Muriel Smittcamp Family, the plan for the Honors College is now a reality.

The Honors College

Studying the best programs in the country, the university created a concept for an honors education at Fresno State.

Working to provide the advantages of a small liberal arts college within the resources of a major university, the Honors College offers three types of degrees with honors: *University Honors*, *College/School Honors*, and *Department Honors*. A degree with *University Honors* is based in General Education honors studies and requires 24 lower-division and 9 to 12 upper-division units. All courses are specially designed and will be available only to honors students. The initial offerings are structured so all honors students take these courses together, thereby becoming a special honors learning community in which students and faculty truly share a common experience. In order to stimulate maximum student/faculty interaction, courses will be limited to 25 students each.

College/School Honors are earned at the upper-division level. Students may pursue a special program of advanced study within the college/school of their chosen discipline. Currently, the Sid Craig School of Business has such a program in place. In time, all colleges/schools plan to have comparable upper-division programs for their majors.

Similarly, Fresno State is working on the details for embracing the honors program in the Department of Psychology. Psychology Honors exemplifies the third opportunity for a degree with honors — *Department Honors*.

Honors Colloquium

A distinctive offering of the Honors College over and above the innovative design of the courses is each semester's Honors Colloquium. Designed around the "town meeting" model, each semester's offerings will be focused on a topic of current importance. In fall of 1999, for example, two timely topics would have been "Public Service and Private Life" and "The United States and Social Responsibility: Self Improvement vs. Global Imperatives." A combination of faculty experts, University Lecture Series guests, and various outside authorities address the topic in a weekly public gathering. Honors students then engage with the week's expert in a dialogue that grows from the expert's presentation. The honors director or other faculty is the moderator; our campus community at large is invited as audience.

These colloquia also provide opportunities for faculty to present their own research. The campus can learn about a colleague's research while students experience models for presenting their own research. Finally, Honors students themselves will use the colloquia as a vehicle for publicly presenting their own senior honors projects.

Scholarships

Assisted by Student Affairs and Financial Aid, President Welty pairs the honors academic opportunity with financial opportunity.

All 50 students in each Smittcamp Family Honors College class receive a President's Honors Scholarship Grant. This consists of the equivalent of full tuition and fees, an annual \$200 book allowance, and free housing on campus for all four years of a student's honors study.

The program is designed to attract more freshmen students to California State University, Fresno. The intellectual level of the campus is enhanced by Honors College offerings and activities; the impact resonates throughout the Central Valley.

For more information, contact the director of the Honors College.

The Smittcamp Family Honors College

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COURSES

Honors (HONOR)

1. Honors Colloquium (1; max total 6)
Colloquium for students in the Smittcamp Family Honors College. Overview of the university. Presentation and discussion of current topics. Special presentations by faculty, campus guests, and senior honors project students.

