Innovation in the Honors College: Experiential Learning Credit

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Overview
By changing the way we assess honors learning to recognize experiential learning as well as classroom learning, we have created a new way to retain students through completion of the Honors Degree.

Problem & Solution

Problem:
- Students who enter college with substantial transfer credit have often already taken many of the general education classes typically used to satisfy the General Honors Award breadth requirements
- Major requirements and extracurricular commitments leave little room for interdisciplinary electives

Solution:
- Recognize students’ work outside the classroom for the meaningful honors learning it yields
  - Values experiential learning
  - Incentivizes extracurricular activity
  - Integrates out-of-class experiences into formal education
  - Enables retention of students through completion of the Honors Degree

Process

1. Propose an activity
2. Join the online community
3. Attend two required workshops
4. Complete your activity
5. Write a reflective essay
6. Get honors credit!

Results

Participation
- In Fall 2018, we received 86 proposals, of which 73 were approved. Fourteen were withdrawn; fifteen are ongoing. Forty-four activities were successfully completed.
- For Spring 2019, we’ve received 102 proposals, of which 96 have been approved.

Points Awarded
- In total, 66 honors points were awarded to 38 unique participants for activities completed in Fall 2018.

Completed Activities by Category

- Arts
- Academics
- Leadership
- Study Away
- Service

“Working as a research assistant for Dr. Holley Hansen, a professor of Political Science at OSU, as well as attending the International Studies Association Midwest Political Science Research Conference with her from November 13-18, expanded my faith in myself to overcome challenges, my professional network, and my knowledge of public speaking.”

Eden Patton, Political Science

“Last fall semester, I attended the University of Minnesota, participating in the National Student Exchange program (NSE). I [now] have a stronger knowledge of myself, a grasp on the transition to adulthood, a better understanding of a world outside of Stillwater, and more confidence when interacting with others. I had a great time too.”

Austin Lucas, Industrial Engineering & Mgmt

“In my time as a Supplemental Instruction leader some of the things I have learned include: time-management, professionalism, and adaptability. Without this job, my college experience would have been completely different. I would not have my current skill set, my connections on campus, or some of my best friends.”

Hunter Tolliver, Biochem & Molecular Biology