

## **Honors at Everett – *Stand Out!***

### **Faculty 411: Making Honors Capstone Project Contracts**

The capstone is a 5-credit project required of all Honors Program students who wish to graduate with the Honors designation. The Honors capstone project contract sets out the agreement between the student and instructor as to what the project will entail and how it will be assessed, among other things.

#### ***So is a capstone project like a senior thesis? What is it?***

It could be, but it could be more creative or experiential. ALL capstone projects must emphasize a broader, interdisciplinary view of a topic or more in-depth study of a topic, as might be expected in 300- or 400-level college coursework. ALL capstone projects promote active learning and are assessed with rigorous standards. And ALL capstone Projects must involve work typically done by a professional in that discipline. A scholarly paper might satisfy that criterion, but so might creation of a professional portfolio and website for an art student or a business plan for a business student. A social science student might conduct a study and write an article for potential publication. A drama student might write a play. You get the idea.

#### ***Does the student get credit for this project?***

Absolutely—if your assessment criteria are satisfied. The capstone project contract you write with the student will specify how many quarters the project will take (1, 2 or 3) and how the 5 credits will be distributed in those quarters. The Honors Program has reserved the course numbers 291, 292 and 293 for every discipline in the College. When the first quarter's work is completed, the student receives the course title, (DISCIPLINE) 291: Honors Capstone Contract, on his/her transcript—and similarly for the second quarter (292) and third (293), depending on how many quarters the project spans. The student can get credit for any quarter of the work completed, even if the project is not completed in its entirety and even if that student does not ultimately meet the criteria necessary to graduate with Honors. But only Honors Program students in good standing can get the credit. (See below.)

***Can I make a capstone project contract for credit with any of my students?***

No, only Honors Program students can participate. These are students who have met stringent criteria for entrance to the Honors Program. As such they come to you with established learning skills and a desire to excel.

***Do I have to participate if a student asks me?***

No, of course not. It's a voluntary program. But many faculty want to support students who have the will and desire to do more. These contracts seek to give the student an opportunity to work closely with an instructor, to do learning more in line with 300- or 400-level independent coursework and to do work a professional in that discipline might do. We hope that most faculty want to give their students that rigorous, university-level Honors Experience.

***How do I make a capstone project contract with an Honors Program student?***

Download the form from the website. It is due no later than the 10<sup>th</sup> day of the first quarter in which it is to start. We'll let you know if the contract is approved ASAP, so that your student can get to work!

***Who assesses the student's work?***

You do. If completed in accordance with the assessment standards and along the timetable you set out in the capstone project contract, you let the Honors Program Director know by the first day of the following quarter. The Honors capstone project coursework will then be transcribed as such for each quarter, retroactively. For projects spanning more than one quarter, you let us know if the student met the requirements by the first day of the following quarter for each quarter of project work.

***This could be a lot of work. Will I be compensated?***

Yes, faculty will be compensated for participating in Honors capstone project contracts. You will be compensated for 4 hours (at the standard 30-hour rate) for each credit. If a student completes all 5 credits over 1, 2 or 3 quarters, you will be compensated for 20 hours. Mind you, this project will require you to meet with the student regularly, advise the student, assess the project in steps and then assess the final work product. Meeting dates and assessment results must be documented and must comply with the criteria set out in the contract.

***Are there a lot of these Honors Program students running around campus looking for faculty willing to supervise their capstone projects?***

No. To be admitted to the Honors Program, a student has to have a B or higher in both Honors gateway classes – HUM 195 & HUM 196 – a B or higher in ENGL& 101 and an overall GPA of 3.50 or higher. Because the gateway class offerings are limited, the number of Honors students is somewhat limited.

***I'd like more information about the Honors Program or need help filling out the contract. What resources are available?***

Our website: [www.everettcc.edu/honors/](http://www.everettcc.edu/honors/)

You'll find a whole tab dedicated to info for faculty. The Honors capstone project contract is linked there as well as under the Forms tab. There you will find a few samples of previously-approved Honors Class contracts.