

THE UNDERGRADUATE HONORS RESEARCH PROGRAM IN BIOLOGY AT PEPPERDINE UNIVERSITY

PURPOSE

The Honors Undergraduate Research Program in Biology at Pepperdine University is designed to provide students with a realistic, practical experience of the scientific process. The program provides students with a unique opportunity to integrate and apply coursework in chemistry, mathematics, physics, computer science, and biology to the investigation of biological questions. The goal of the program is to better prepare students for careers in the biological sciences and to aid students in obtaining quality appointments to graduate and professional schools, government, and industry.

ELIGIBILITY

Any student (freshman, sophomore, junior, or senior) majoring in biology is eligible to apply. Applications must be submitted by February 15 of each year in order to begin research in the summer term that begins in May. Students are asked to commit at least one full summer (both Blocks One and Two) of full-time research to their honors project. Seniors who apply will also be asked to make the same commitment of time and will be reviewed on an individual basis to determine if they will have ample time before graduation to complete an honors thesis.

APPLICATION

An application for admission must be completed. It is self-explanatory but questions may be addressed to the Chairperson of the Natural Science Division.

Students will be accepted to the program based on grade point average, recommendations, career goals, and apparent potential for successful completion of the program. Students with grade point averages greater than 3.0 will be given preference, but students with less than a 3.0 average may still apply. The honors program application committee will screen all applicants who have applied by March 15.

Applicants will be notified by letter within fifteen (15) days of the closing date for application of their acceptance to the program. Applicants who are not accepted may reapply at the next available date. Upon acceptance, the research advisor requested by the student on the application form will be assigned as the student's honors program advisor. If the requested advisor does not have room available in his laboratory for the student, the student may be given the choice of accepting another advisor or waiting for a position to open in the lab of the advisor of choice. Upon acceptance, students will be required to submit a written research proposal to the honors program committee within thirty (30) days of receipt of the acceptance letter.

PREPARATION OF PROPOSALS

Format sheets describing preparation of proposals will be mailed with the letter of acceptance. Proposals may be prepared with the assistance of the advisor and should be written in a clear, concise manner. Proposals will be reviewed by the committee and modifications, if appropriate, may be suggested. Note that students are asked to list any special equipment and/or other costs necessary to complete the proposed project.

DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

Students will be evaluated each semester by the honors program committee to determine if adequate progress is being made toward the completion of the honors project.

AFTER DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

Program participants must complete an honors thesis. The honors program advisor can provide information on the format for the thesis, but generally this document will include a literature review, a materials and methods section, results, discussion, and bibliography. Participants will submit copies of this thesis to the members of the honors program committee at least one month prior to its presentation in an oral seminar to the committee. At this presentation the student will be orally examined regarding the contents of the thesis. This presentation is called the thesis defense and the seminar portion will be open to the entire University community. In addition, participants will be expected to present their results in the Natural Science Division Seminar Series and at a professional meeting.

THESIS APPROVAL AND HONORS DESIGNATION

Upon successful defense of the thesis and completion of all other requirements, bound copies of the thesis will be filed in Payson Library, the Natural Science Division office, and with the student's honors program advisor. The Seaver College Academic Council and the University Academic Council have approved the designation "Honors in Biology" to appear on both the transcript and diploma of successful participants.