

# Honors Program Proposal

**Rationale:**

In order for the University of Minnesota, Crookston (UMC) to grow in popularity, reputation, and research we need a program to attract the brightest and hardest working students. We must recruit highly motivated students who will stimulate instructors, work to help expand student programs, and form a university community that is focused on expanding research. To accomplish these goals, we must have something specific to offer as an incentive -- something that is potent and speaks about our school's academic commitment. We need to show how serious we are about scholarship and how our university can enhance the education of such a student.

UMC is an ideal choice for such a program because many of the things an honors student requires already exist here and are comparable or preferable to offerings at many private institutions. We offer reasonably priced tuition. We maintain a small student to faculty ratio with access to the actual instructors. We provide many scholarships to attract outstanding students to enhance our university's intellectual community. We possess a friendly, nurturing, and inviting atmosphere which inspires thought and discussion among faculty and students. Lastly, students are already attracted to this college because of the access to up-to-date technology. These are all things that honors programs in larger schools use to promote growth in their population of gifted constituents.

Despite these attributes, there is room for growth. An honors program could address the needs of students focused on academic excellence and benefit the school in a symbiotic fashion.

Good students need recognition; they need value, connection with other exceptional students, and a place to intermingle with a like-minded group of individuals. We need a broad-based program which includes freshmen, transfer students, upperclassmen and non-traditional

students who have different demographics but share a desire for academic excellence. Gifted students need an outlet for research, a place to share ideas, and gain experience in serious academic projects outside of the normal curriculum. Students would greatly benefit from this community and would provide a more powerful cohesive resource for the university, rather than the scattered, disjointed community that now exists.

With an honors program in place, UMC would more easily maintain promising students. Scholarships provided by the program would help stem attrition due to other institutions' transfer scholarships by correcting the current lack of financial incentive for upperclassmen to remain at UMC. It would provide an avenue to entice academically gifted students from surrounding communities. Instructor satisfaction would grow with the opportunity to provide mentoring and instruction to highly motivated and interested students, who are there to absorb knowledge and participate in in-depth projects and discussions. Potentially, research in the university would grow with the interest of an expanding intellectually focused community.

We strongly recommend that UMC establish an honors program to promote the high-quality growth that espouses such programs, for the future of this excellent academic institution.

**Criteria:***Incoming freshmen:*

- High School GPA of 3.25 to 3.49 with an ACT score of 25 or higher
- High School GPA of 3.5 or higher with an ACT score of 22 or higher

*Transfer students:*

- Cumulative GPA of 3.5 or higher from former institution(s)

*Honors Program Members must:*

- Maintain a cumulative 3.5 GPA to join and stay qualified for the program
- Complete community service requirement of 16 hours per semester to receive available honors scholarship monies. Community service from other clubs or organizations can count for the honors program community service requirement.

**Implementation:**

We intend to use the existing undergraduate application format and data provided to invite potential honors students during the application approval process.

We plan to include, with the letter of admittance mailed by UMC, a standard invitation letter providing honors program and contact information for those students who meet the above criteria. Honors program course information will be available at registration. Students who are eligible and subsequently register for honors courses are automatically admitted into the honors program. Students are expected to bring the letter of invitation to registration.

We plan to begin implementation in the fall of 2005 with an honors section of Rachel McCoppin's Composition I course, expanding to a section in Composition II for spring 2006. Then, in fall 2006 we plan to offer an honors section of biology.