



HARDING UNIVERSITY
HONORS COLLEGE

Annual Report 2023-2024

Dean

Dr. Dana Steil

Assistant Dean

Dr. James E. Miller



MISSION

The Honors College seeks to cultivate opportunities for highly motivated students to grow in leadership, service and academic excellence through shared experiences that are informed by faith and focus on the development of the whole person.

The college is committed to building a stimulating undergraduate experience that enhances the academic profile of students as they pursue opportunities after Harding.

VALUES

The College is committed to fostering an environment where **communication** is paramount, ensuring students can effectively convey ideas and collaborate across diverse disciplines; **critical thinking** is cultivated, encouraging rigorous analysis and thoughtful problem-solving; and scholarly **contribution** is championed, promoting original research and active engagement in the academic community.

ENROLLMENT POLICY

The College admits around 100 students annually, representing about 10% of Harding's undergraduate population. Nearly 50 of these students each year include National Merit Scholars and those selected for Harding's Trustee Scholarship. These students are enrolled in the fall semester of their first year at Harding.

All other students may apply to the Honors College at midterm of their first semester, or any subsequent semester, if they have earned a 3.25 GPA at midterm of the semester in which they apply.

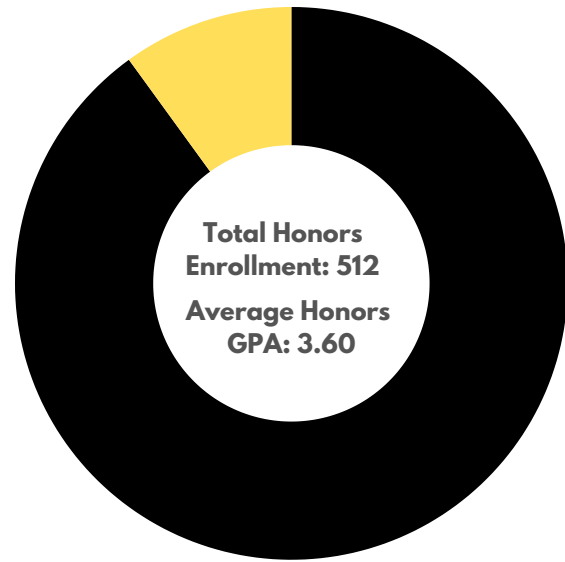
TOTAL ENROLLMENT

The Honors College enrolled a total of 512 students in 2023-2024. This represents 11% of Harding's student population, slightly above national norms in honors education.

The average GPA in the Honors College is 3.60. Women make up 62% of the total enrollment. The College of Arts and Sciences was by far the largest represented college, with nearly 70% of honors students coming from that area. More than 80% of honors students identified as white or Caucasian. Eight percent were international students, mainly from Latin America.

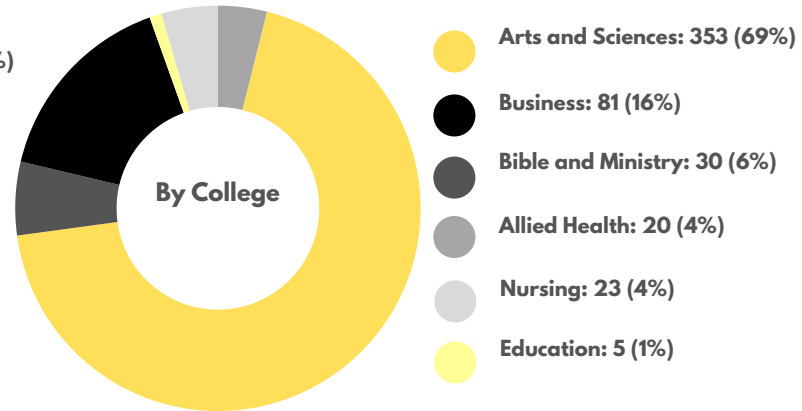
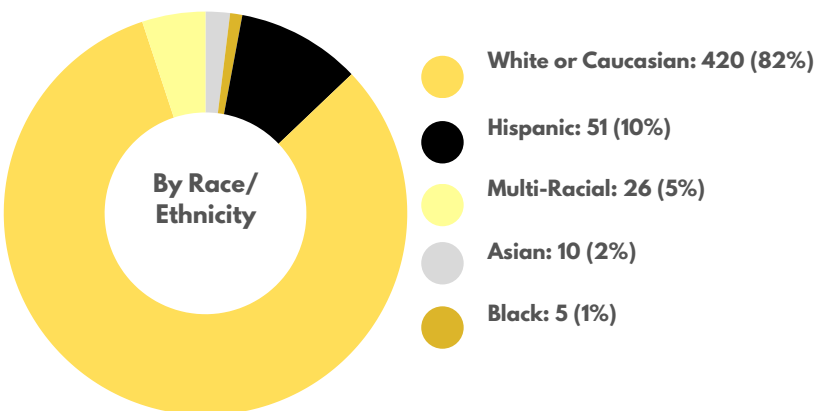
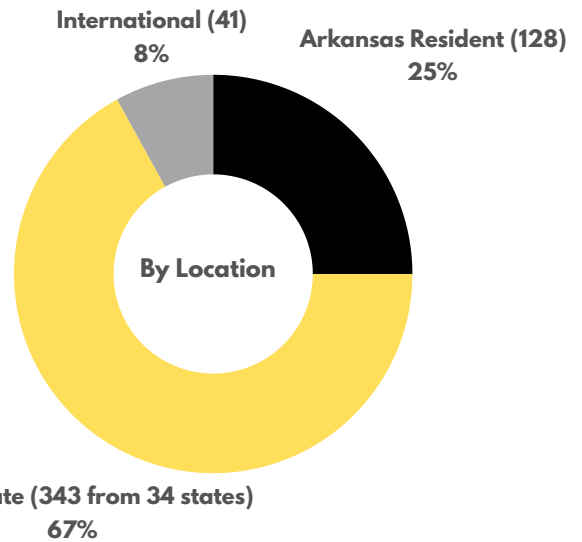
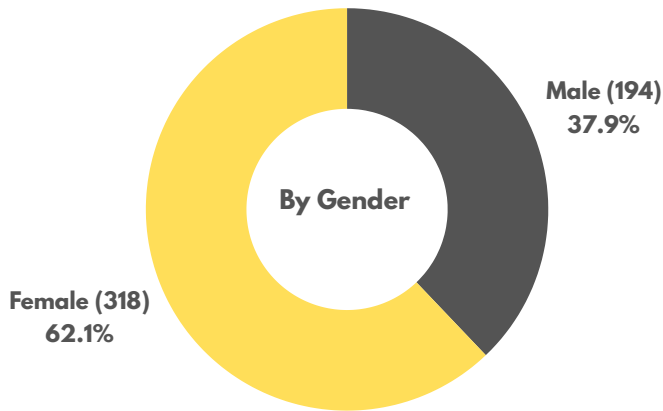
Honors College Enrollment (11%)

512



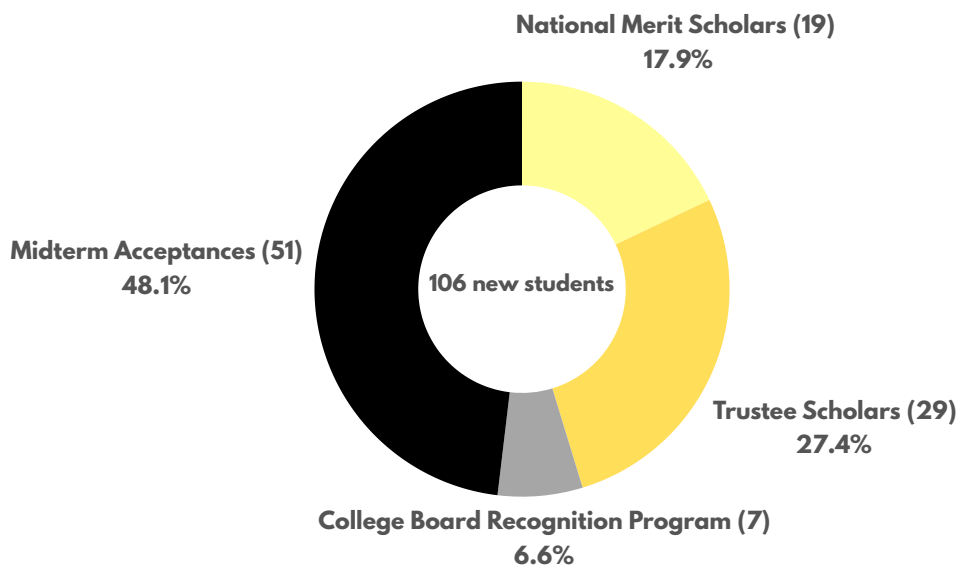
HU Enrollment (89%)

4608



NEW STUDENT ENROLLMENT

In Fall 2023, the college enrolled 55 new students, including **19 National Merit Scholars**. The fall class's average high school GPA was 3.90, with an average ACT score of 31. In Spring 2024, the college accepted 51 new students who applied after earning a 3.25 midterm GPA in Fall 2023. In total, the college enrolled 106 new students this academic year.

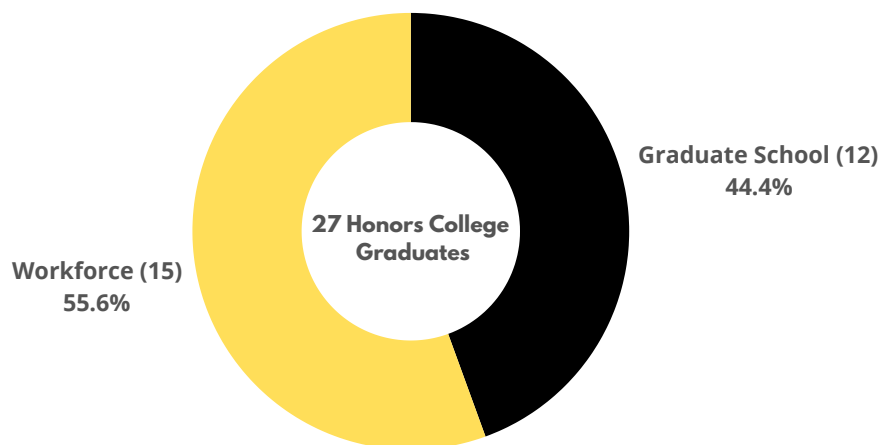


GRADUATE OUTCOMES

Honors students may choose to graduate from the Honors College at two levels.

1. Honors College Graduates with Distinction must earn a minimum of 26 hours of honors credit, including three honors contracts and an honors thesis or capstone project while maintaining a 3.5 GPA. Twenty-three students graduated from the Honors College with Distinction in 2023-2024. Their theses and capstone projects titles can be found on the Honors College website.

2. Honors College Graduates must earn a minimum of 20 hours of honors credit, including four honors contracts, while maintaining a 3.25 GPA. Four students graduated from the Honors College in 2023-2024.



Graduate School Acceptances Include

Baylor • Catholic University • Point Loma Nazarene University • Loyola University Chicago • Purdue • Rice • Sam Houston State University • University of Alabama • University of Arkansas • University of Georgia • University of Missouri

Employers Include

JP Morgan • Deloitte • U.S. National Guard • International Healthcare Foundation • Pricewaterhouse Coopers • Arkansas Game and Fish

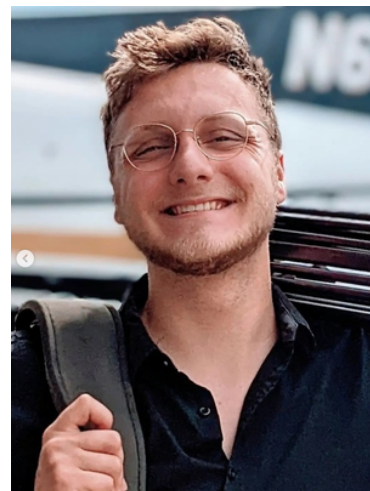
STUDENT ACHIEVEMENTS

Several honors students took home awards this year at national and international conferences for their scholarly and professional contributions.

- **Taylor Appleton** was co-author on two papers published in medical journals. "Segmental Spinal Dysgenesis: A Case Report" was published in the *Annals of Pediatrics in August* and "Child Health and Unilateral deep brain stimulation (DBS) of nucleus ventralis intermedialis thalami (Vim) for the treatment of post-traumatic tremor in children: a multicentre experience" was published in *Child's Nervous System* in April.
- **Brinson Davenport** won both the Short-Form Documentary category and Best of Festival in the overall documentary category for "The Ambassadors" at the Broadcast Education Association's Festival of Media Arts in Las Vegas in April.
- **Avery Hawkins** won the undergraduate research paper competition at the Stone-Campbell Journal Conference in April. Her paper was titled "Following Christ in 21st Century America: How a Christology of Kenosis Informs Anthropology and Discipleship for Our Current Moment."
- **Isaac Raymond** won best undergraduate paper at the North Carolina Philosophical Society and South Carolina Society for Philosophy Joint Conference in March. His paper was titled "Undesired Desired Encounters: A Speech Act Analysis of Verbal Microaggressions and Examples of Verbal Microaggressions in Claudia Rankine's *Citizen*."



Hawkins



Davenport

GRANT FUNDING FOR STUDENT RESEARCH

Three students were awarded Undergraduate Research Fellowship grants from the Arkansas Department of Higher Education this year.

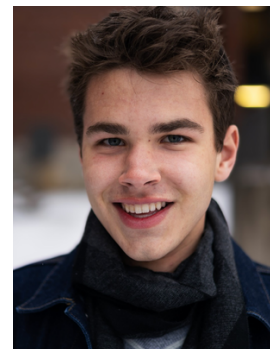
- **Julianna Beehn** is working with Dr. James Huff on a project titled, "The Professional Shame of Christian Ministers: Examining the Lived Experiences of those with Societal Platforms." Beehn also received the Trey Carlock Rising Scholar Award from the Honors College.
- **Grace Bing** is working with Dr. David Donley on a project titled, "Exploring methylation as a mechanism of modifying inflammatory responses in the presence of iron and amyloid-beta."
- **Noah Opperman** is working with Dr. Gabe Foust and his external mentor, Dr. Terry Rickard, on a project titled, "Computing with Words in Diagnosing Psychopathy." Opperman also received the Trey Carlock Rising Scholar Award from the Honors College.



Beehn



Bing



Opperman

FACULTY PUBLICATIONS

Honors College faculty are active scholars, publishing and presenting research in their respective disciplines.

Dr. Nathaniel Wiewora, associate professor of history and Honors College faculty fellow, published his book, *Sins of Christendom: Anti-Mormonism and the Making of Evangelicalism*, in March. In his work, Wiewora uses the diverse animus expressed by evangelicals to illuminate how they used an imaginary Church as a proxy to disagree, attack, compromise, and settle differences among themselves.

Dr. Jaime Murphy, associate professor of biology and Honors College faculty fellow, was first author on a study published in the *Journal of Chemical Crystallography* titled, "Disulfide Versus Diselenide Complexes of Copper: Air-Free and Air-Exposed Syntheses Result in Variable Ligands and Coordination."

Dr. James Huff, associate professor of engineering and Honors College senior faculty fellow, was co-author on a paper published in the *International Handbook of Engineering Education Research* titled, "Advancing an Integrative Perspective of Identity in Engineering Education."

Dr. Anessa Westbrook, associate professor of Bible and Ministry and Honors College faculty fellow, published her book, *Reaching & Discipling Women: A Guide to Women's Ministry in Your Church*, in winter 2023.



Wiewora

HARDING RESEARCH CONFERENCE

The Honors College and Alpha Chi co-sponsored the fourth-annual Harding Undergraduate Research Conference (HURC) in April. **Dr. Russell Keck**, Honors College faculty fellow and associate professor of English, served as conference chair.

More than 30 honors students who were mentored by nearly 20 faculty from across campus presented original research and creative scholarship. From AI and Autism, to British Romanticism and microbiological behaviors, to chemistry of metal and capital punishment, to personality types, a documentary on custodians, and qualitative investigations into social and academic experiences, the conference was truly interdisciplinary. Participants also heard a keynote address from **Alan Howell**, 2023 Alpha Chi Faculty Scholar.



HONORS SYMPOSIUM

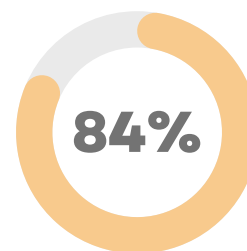
The Honors College hosted the 31st-annual Honors Symposium for rising high school seniors in Summer 2023. We offered four two-week sessions and enrolled 215 students who earned three hours of college credit in humanities. We increased the cost of the program by \$100 to \$895 per student this year and also increased each counselor's and faculty member's pay. The college employed 14 faculty/staff and 10 student counselors for Symposium.

In 2022, 219 students attended Symposium, and **184 (84%) of them enrolled at Harding full time** in Fall 2023. Thirty-two (14%) of these students were accepted into the Honors College this year.



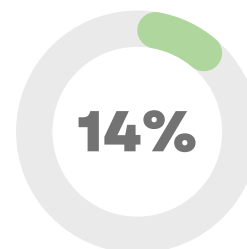
Enrolled at HU full time

184 of the 219 2022 Symposium students enrolled at HU full time in Fall 2023



Accepted to Honors College

32 of the 219 2022 Symposium students were accepted to the Honors College in 2023



SPEAKER EVENTS

In November, the Honors College co-hosted Pulitzer Prize-winning author **Beverly Gage** from Yale University. Dr. Gage spoke to honors students in small groups and gave a public presentation about her most recent book, a biography on J. Edgar Hoover, in Cone Chapel to over 200 people. The Honors College also hosted in November **Dr. David Arencebia**, Texas Principal of the Year and National Principal of the Year finalist.

The 1924 Experience

THE 1924 EXPERIENCE AND HONORS COLLEGE
INVITES YOU TO HEAR FROM
Dr. Beverly Gage
PULITZER PRIZE-WINNING AUTHOR

Dr. Beverly Gage is professor of 20th-century U.S. history at Yale University. Her book, *G-Man: J. Edgar Hoover and the Making of the American Century*, received the 2023 Pulitzer Prize for Biography, the Bancroft Prize in American History, the National Book Critics Circle Award for Biography, the Los Angeles Times Book Prize in Biography, the Barbara and David Zalaznick Book Prize in American History, and the Ellis W. Hawley Prize of the Organization of American Historians.

G-Man was named a best book of 2022 by The Washington Post, The Atlantic, Publishers Weekly, The New Yorker, The New York Times and Smithsonian.

CONE CHAPEL • NOV. 2, 2023 • 7 P.M.

Free — no ticket necessary



NEW FACULTY FELLOWS

The Honors College hired three new faculty fellows in 2024.

Professor Tessa Davidson of the Department of Art, Architecture and Design will teach an honors art class, assist with the honors contract process, and further expand the honors thesis track into artistic spaces.

Dr. David Donley of the Department of Biology will teach an honors science class and co-lead the Honors College's preparations for program review by the National Collegiate Honors Council in Fall 2025.

Dr. Mac Sandlin of the College of Bible and Ministry will teach sections of multiple honors Bible courses and oversee aspects of the college's student life activities, including advising the Honors Student Government Association.

Davidson, Donley, and Sandlin will begin their three-year term in fall 2024, joining a team of three other fellows selected last year: Dr. Russell Keck, Dr. Anessa Westbrook, and Dr. Nate Wiewora.

Dr. Jaime Murphy, associate professor of chemistry, was named Senior Faculty Fellow in the Honors College in spring 2024. This is a permanent halftime position in the Honors College. Dr. Murphy will direct the capstone and thesis experience for all students pursuing the requirements to graduate with honors distinction.



Davidson



Donley



Sandlin

NATIONAL COLLEGIATE HONORS COUNCIL

The Honors College is a member of the National Collegiate Honors Council (NCHC), and members of the college's faculty attend and present workshops at the national conference nearly every year. In November, Drs. **Jim Miller**, assistant dean, and **Jaime Murphy** and **Anessa Westbrook**, faculty fellows, attended the conference in Chicago. The college submitted an application in April for a grant to fund an NCHC program review of the College in Fall 2025. In addition to NCHC, the Honors College is a member of the Great Plains Honors Conference and Honors Arkansas.



Miller, Westbrook, Murphy

HONORS ABROAD

Twenty-one honors students studied in Greece for two weeks during Christmas break. They enrolled in a course with **Dr. James Huff**, Honors College senior faculty fellow, that explored cultural identity through the lens of immigration in the Mediterranean World. Students visited the cities of Athens, Corinth and Epidaurus. They also toured the National Archaeological Museum and attended a dinner hosted by refugees from Afghanistan. The College will offer its next study abroad opportunity in Florence, Italy, during Christmas break during the 2025-2026 academic year.



HONORS STUDENT GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION

Led by President **Aiden Davenport**, the Honors Student Government Association was very active this year. The officers planned community-building activities, including a semiformal, pickleball tournament, holiday parties, weekly chapel services, and movie and game nights, just to name a few. They also organized service projects, including preparing meals for needy families in Searcy and playing Bingo with residents at local retirement homes.



ALPHA CHI NATIONAL HONORS SOCIETY

The Honors College houses Harding's chapter of Alpha Chi National Honor Society, which aims to promote contributive scholarship among students. Membership is open to the top 10% of the junior class (3.85 grade point average on 80+ hours) and of the senior class (3.75 grade point average on 104+ hours).

This year, Harding's chapter had 173 active members led by President **Carson Stewart**, senior biochemistry major, and Vice President **Abby Long**, senior international business major. **Dr. Anessa Westbrook**, Honors College faculty fellow and associate professor of Bible and Ministry, advises the organization.

In April, five members presented research at Alpha Chi's national convention in Birmingham, Alabama. Junior **Ada Lawrence** won the Clark Youngblood Prize in Philosophy and Religion for her presentation, "Redemptive Relational Suffering: The Cross in Crime and Punishment and Christian Mission Work."

Paulette Bane, assistant professor of English, and **Dr. David Donley**, assistant professor of biology, were named the 2024 Alpha Chi Distinguished Faculty Scholars in April. They were announced at the fourth-annual Harding Undergraduate Research Conference (HURC), co-sponsored by Alpha Chi and the Honors College.



Lawrence

FELLOWSHIP ADVISING

The Honors College supports the Office of Fellowship Advising. **Dr. Russell Keck**, Honors College faculty fellow and associate professor of English, began overseeing the office this year. As part of his new assignment, he participated in the Fulbright Association's 46th-annual conference in Denver in October.

This year two honors students applied for the Rhodes Scholarship and another student and recent alumna applied for the Fulbright U.S. Student Program. None of these applicants were selected for the prestigious and highly competitive awards, but, with the support of the fellowship advising office, they completed strong applications.

As this office develops, the Honors College is confident it will produce scholars who will secure competitive, internationally recognized fellowships to help them pursue their academic goals and contribute value to the world through scholarly endeavors.



Keck