

CHAIRS MEETING

March 26, 2019



AGENDA

- University Honors nominations
- University Contract Policy
- Parental leave policy update
- Reconsider drop/add timeline to avoid empty seats
- Conversation with the President
- Announcements

University Honors

University Honors is awarded to less than one percent of the graduating class and is the highest academic award Wesleyan bestows.

Understanding the process:

- Departments/Programs/Colleges nominate exceptional students for this potential award to the Honors Committee.
- The Oral Exam subcommittee on Honors reviews nominations and decides which students will advance to the oral exam phase.
- During the oral exam phase one faculty member from each academic division plus the chair of the Honors Committee spend approximately 45-50 minutes interviewing each candidate advanced beginning with an opening question crafted by the interviewers that is shared with the student prior to the interview.

University Honors

Criteria for the award

Legislation of 1979 specifies that the award is given to candidates with **“breadth and depth of knowledge and intellectual acuity.”** Central to that is performance during the oral exam. To that end, eligibility criteria for students who are nominated is as follows:

- An outstanding thesis that has been awarded High Honors.
- An excellent academic record showing strength in general scholarship as well as in the major.
- General knowledge of substantial scope.
- Ability to perform well in an oral examination.
- All nominees must be fully GenEd compliant by the end of the term.

University Honors

Required Nomination Materials

- University Honors Nomination Form
- Copies of evaluations written by student's thesis readers
- Letter of support from tutor or designated departmental representative (this is very important)

The letter of support should focus on the strength of the student's entire academic record and should not focus exclusively on the thesis. This is where the committee has seen the greatest disparity. The letter of support is the department's opportunity to champion its nominee. Letters should be between 1-2 pages in length and should convey why the department feels the nominee is deserving of the award and should be interviewed.

- A maximum of 8 students can be interviewed which is why the letter of support plays such an important role in the process. On average 15 students are nominated each year.

University Honors

Timeline & Coaching

- All nomination materials are due from departments by 4pm on May 3
- All nominations are shared with the Oral Exam subcommittee on May 3rd so they can review and rank their preferences over the weekend prior to the selection meeting
- May 6th – the Oral Exam subcommittee will meet to decide which students will be advanced to the oral exam phase & students will be contacted and scheduled into interview slots on May 9th & 10th
- All departments will be notified as to whether their candidates have advanced. Departments are then free to meet with their nominees to explain the process and help them prepare for the interview but only the student will take part in the oral exam itself. The structure of the interview is very informal and is meant to be an enjoyable exchange of ideas on a variety of topics.

Important Reminder

Since not all students will be advanced to the interview phase, please remember to keep your nominations confidential.

University Contract Policy

- Outside speakers or performers who will receive an honorarium of more than 500 dollars should sign a university-approved contract. Vouchers may not be approved without such a contract.
- We have a new simplified contract for speakers that should be easier to use, that will be sent to AAs this week and discussed at AA meeting tomorrow.
- Joyce will delegate her signing authority to chairs for simple contracts with honoraria less than 5000 dollars.
- Contract still has insurance requirement. Some speakers will not have this. Dave Winakor (general counsel) will consider waiving insurance requirement on a case by case basis; contact him directly for approval.
- Mark Hovey can address any questions you may have.

Parental Leave Policy Update

- Policy for tenured/tenure-track faculty remains the same
- New policy for all non-tenure-track faculty:

Parental leaves are available for non-tenure-track faculty. The starting point for such leaves is the parental leave policy for staff, but the details will be decided on a case by case basis by the VPAA in consultation with the department and the faculty member. Typical complicating issues include:

- Summer; because faculty members are already not on duty during the summer, there may be adjustments from the staff policy if the leave is partly in the summer.
- Vacation days; because faculty members do not accrue vacation days, the time of paid parental leave for non-tenure-track faculty will generally be extended from the staff policy by the standard number of vacation days that staff accrue yearly (unless part of this time is in the summer)
- Teaching schedules; every case is different and will require consideration of the specific details including the faculty member's standard teaching load.

Consider changes to Drop/Add

- The current policy often leads to long wait lists in certain classes, yet those same classes may end up with some empty seats at the end of the drop/add period
- Should we consider changing the length of the drop/add period to address this?

Conversation with the President

Announcements

- Research prize nominations due April 29
- Ideas for professional development that could be helpful for current or future chairs – send ideas to Sheryl Culotta
- Final Metro Movies Free Faculty & Staff Night – April 24