Honors Transfer Fellowships

Beginning with the 2013-13 academic year, 15 incoming transfer students will be accepted into a special program that will pay $3,500 a semester for four semesters for incoming transfer students who pledge to complete an Honors degree or an Honors Certificate (the latter option is for those who did not have the option to take honors classes at their community colleges). Each student selected will be designated an Honors Transfer Fellow and will take a common class on research methods during the first semester that they attend. Students in the program will be able to register early. The College will also give these students special consideration for extra money to study abroad and participate in research.

For many years, former Honors dean Dr. Phil Mathis advocated what he called the T Squared Program. As Tennessee has adopted legislation rewarding MTSU for the number of transfer students that it admitted and graduated, this seems to be the time to put the new program into action. The Honors College received support to initiate the program through the Student Office, through Student Affairs, through the Provost’s Office, and directly from President Sidney A. McPhee.

The Honors Transfer Fellowship is largely patterned after the Buchanan Fellowship. Whereas that program accepts 20 incoming students, this will accept 15, consistent with the limit that the Honors College imposes on enrollments in its upper-division classes. Like the Buchanan Fellowship, the Honors Transfer Fellowship will require a special application (due by February 15) that allow students to tell about their extracurricular interests and activities and about what they intend to do when they graduate. The College is especially committed to supporting students who are interested in graduate and professional degrees.

In addition to an application, students will be responsible for submitting transcripts and two letters from faculty and administrators. MTSU prefers letters from Honors College teachers and administrators in the case of students who graduate from colleges with such programs. The Honors College already accepts up to 18 hours of honors credit from students who transfer from community colleges.

Dr. John Vile, who has been an avid supporter of the new program, observes that some of the strongest students in the Honors College have been transfer students. Katie Bogle, who transferred to MTSU from Harding University, earned the President’s Award this spring for her service to the University. Jacob Verhoeff, who came to MTSU after earning college credits in the military, recently won the Robert LaLance Award for overcoming adversity. Joseph Quarrels, who transferred from Motlow, is a gifted writer who was the recipient of the LaLance Award last year. Constance Grieves, from Nashville State, was a member of this year’s award-winning mock trial team.

Although the new fellowship is open chiefly to individuals who are transferring with associate degrees, it will also be open to students who transferred to MTSU after a year and subsequently qualify for junior status. To apply, students must have a minimum 3.5 grade point average.

Dr. Vile notes that the introduction of this program should further increase the number of honors graduates, which is already at an all-time high. The program should be especially important for students who attended community colleges in their first two years for financial reasons. “This should help equalize the playing field,” Vile noted. “I can hardly wait to see how many applicants we get! I’d really like to get some friendly competition going between our Honors Transfer Fellows and our Buchanan Fellows!”