It’s about taking our narrow minds – filled to bursting with tiny details about our particular disciplines – and opening them up to a whole world of information.”
Reflections
Why and How the Honors Program Has Worked For Me

Georgia Fiorentino

Initially, I was nervous about being in the Wesson Honors Program. All the extra work and extra classes; I wondered whether I was good enough. After a few honors classes and some time spent in Pathway with Ann Page, I realized that the program was actually quite laid back and flexible. Essay prompts were often open-ended and broad and, in many cases, we, as a class, had a say over the structure of our classes or when due dates would be. Oddly enough, this made me even more nervous! I wondered how I would fare with so much control over my own learning, but this control and open-endedness turned out to be a blessing and an opportunity. I wrote some of my best and most creative essays in my Honors classes. In the Honors Pathway, there were many occasions when I would get on what I like to call, an “intellectual high,” and I couldn’t wait to get to my computer and write. These classes may have been extra work, but they prompted me to think deeply and critically while also giving me the opportunity to explore unique interdisciplinary topics that I might not have otherwise been able to do as an English major. Overall, the Honors Program has proved to me that some extra work can create a feeling of accomplishment; I feel like a more capable human being and I know that, in the future, I will be less likely to underestimate myself.

Experiences
What Have I Gotten Myself Into?

Nicole Morin

One of the first events I attended on campus was the Wesson Honors Program Social during my Freshman Orientation. I remember very clearly that I might not have otherwise been interested whether I was good enough. After a few honors classes and some time spent in Pathway with Ann Page, I realized that the program was actually quite laid back and flexible. Essay prompts were often open-ended and broad and, in many cases, we, as a class, had a say over the structure of our classes or when due dates would be. Oddly enough, this made me even more nervous! I wondered how I would fare with so much control over my own learning, but this control and open-endedness turned out to be a blessing and an opportunity. I wrote some of my best and most creative essays in my Honors classes. In the Honors Pathway, there were many occasions when I would get on what I like to call, an “intellectual high,” and I couldn’t wait to get to my computer and write. These classes may have been extra work, but they prompted me to think deeply and critically while also giving me the opportunity to explore unique interdisciplinary topics that I might not have otherwise been able to do as an English major. Overall, the Honors Program has proved to me that some extra work can create a feeling of accomplishment; I feel like a more capable human being and I know that, in the future, I will be less likely to underestimate myself.

The Perks
Beyond Expected

Caitlin Thornton

There are certainly perks to being intelligent, to being part of a program that fosters that natural ability and gives it a place to grow beyond even our own redoning. But being ‘smart’ comes with its own set of baggage, whole airports of them, actually. For one, there’s the pressure, the overwhelming pressure to succeed at all costs because...it is expected. There are these expectations that you can do no wrong, you will never have a bad semester, you will never not be brilliant, and sometimes you just want to scream.

When I was accepted into the Honors Program as a freshman, I knew my Colby-Sawyer experience was going to be inherently different than others. The Wesson Honors Program sounded so official, so elite, wearing mortarboards and robes to class and only ever discussing Socrates and Plato (for some reason we all had stodgy British accents in these early fantasies), as though I would only ever exist in this world, separate from all others.

But the Honors program asks “what are you interested in?” and leads you down the path, throwing open doors along the way. Carving our places for you to stop and rest and take life in. For me, it was the opportunity to explore and find myself, about crossing thresholds into new and unchartered territories. It was about working hard, but learning it not to take everything so seriously Memoirs and Magnum Opuses, Telenovelas and frisbee.

Outside the Box
Broadening My World

Deborah MacEachern

It’s hard to notice the world around you when you are kept to strict guidelines. These guidelines are meant to keep you going down the right path but they also make it really hard to step back and notice what is really happening. I feel that the Honors Program has truly opened my eyes to the world around me. From the first day of pathway freshman year, to the very last day of classes, I used all of the strategies and knowledge I gained to analyze my surroundings and how my actions are affecting the world around me. Although I found myself challenged, it was a good challenge. The Honors Program did what most other classes couldn’t. It made me think outside the box and dared me to change how I pieced everything together. I will continue to grow and use what I learned here as I leave the college and enter the real world.
As an incoming freshman at Colby-Sawyer College, I figured the Wesson Honors Program would be just like the honors program in high school. There’d be extra work and intelligent conversations to avoid and that would be that. I was sorely surprised when, at our first official meeting, I had to help create a skit in which we had to pronounce the word "Honorificabilitudinitatibus." This was not the honors program I had planned for. As such, it should come as no surprise that I essentially ignored what the Wesson Honors Program was all about that year… And my sophomore year… A little of my junior year, too. I suppose what happened was… Well, I missed the point. Maybe I wasn’t ready to think about the liminal spaces in my life. Maybe I was lazy. Maybe I was too busy focusing on Biology.

“As a first-year student, I wanted to have all my ducks in a row and complete a project that would be a good addition to my future medical school applications. I was assigned to work with a small group of people on a creative writing project based on the theme of childhood. We were expected to interview a kid and turn the interview into a skit. My group and I decided to interview my 9-year-old brother, who is currently in third grade. Little did we know, my older brother turned into a natural storyteller and started to pump out stories about his childhood that we could never have imagined. By the end of our interview, we were laughing and feeling triumphant. It is a reflection of how the Honors Program helped me realize my true potential and allowed me to explore my passions.”

Samantha Ray

Wesson Honors Program

Proved Me Wrong

Kaleigh Flynn

How has the Wesson Honors Program worked for me? What a question. I began my college career with the Wesson Honors Program, and currently find myself tying up the last of my assignments, which happen to be for the honors component of my Capstone.

My freshman year, when I was struggling to grasp the necessity of courses that I found irrelevant to my major and my future, the Honors Program proved me wrong. It wreathed every subject into one another. Simultaneously, Ann Page taught me about liminality, a permanently pertinent concept I will never forget.

During the second semester of my sophomore year, just as I was starting to dig into the narrowing scope of Child Development classes, the Honors Program reignited me in once again with our second Pathway course. It was a good way to reunite, and to remind myself to see my major in a broader sense. Courses are not meant to be separate, the Honors Program murmured. I began to find ways to incorporate knowledge from each class into my papers and my assignments, warranting a “Nice connection,” from my professors and a “This benefits you more than they realize,” from my inner voice.

Without the Wesson Honors Program, I would probably still think that my classes had nothing to do with one another. I would never have been grateful for the breadth of classes I had my freshman and sophomore years. Plus, I would never have known how to pronounce honorificabilitudinitatibus!

“Plus, I would never have known how to pronounce honorificabilitudinitatibus!”

Wesson Honors

An Honors Reflection

Jake Daniele

The Honors Program has had an influence on me since the first day I stepped foot at CSC. Some of my first friends at school were in the honors pathway and some of my best experiences came out of opportunities within the program. As a first-year student, I was fortunate enough to go on a Wesson Weekend in which a group of us went to Washington D.C. This was a great experience for me and exposed our group to places and elements that none of us had ever con-

Liminal

A Personal Uniqueness

Averie Zdon

I remember the very first day that we all came to Colby-Sawyer, in quite a liminal state, between high school and college, still trying to figure out the lay of the land. However, being in the honors program has given me the privilege of exploring academics in a new way—one of which is challenging and allows me to continually hold myself to the highest of standards. The Wesson Honors program has worked for me, because it has allowed me to take specialized courses and do things that I may not have even thought about otherwise (such as our Darwin/350 presentation). The honors program allowed me to take my most challenging classes during my undergraduate career, and has allowed me to maintain a high level of academic work ethic in my other classes as well. Being in the honors program here has a personal uniqueness that I feel allows its students to strive individually, and have that cohort to turn to for support when needed. Being a part of such a group, and being challenged through the honors program, is something that I feel is a privilege. I feel confident that the honors program has additionally prepared me to be able to adequately handle doctoral level work as I enter graduate school this fall for Clinical Psychology.
Coming Together
Honors to Liberal Ed

Aimee Cates

It is difficult now that my undergraduate career is coming to a close to think of my honors experience as a separate part of the liberal education whole. Each experience that I have had at Colby-Sawyer has been different, but has added a new quality to the hopeful graduate about to walk into the commencement tent. It wasn’t until my last semester that the pieces really came together as I worked on my Capstone component for this program. Here I was asked to use my interdisciplinary thinking from the past four years, something that I have learned not just from my Honors classes, but from my Liberal Arts requirements, my Business Administration courses, as well as my Communication Studies classes. Each part of my specialized education finally came together to fit into one final written piece, one that I can say I am proud of. This final requirement fulfilled each piece, one that I can say I am proud of, and would not have it any other way.

Honors What It Meant to Me

Meghan Steele

What has being in the honors program meant to me? It has meant freedom, freedom from the restraints of academia. So many times, students become smothered with the work they need to complete. For me, the honors program has been a release, a way to look at the world in a new light, a time to self-reflect, a chance to explore things that are of interest to me. During my time in the program, I wrote a 30-40 page Magnum Opus where I was able to pour out my emotions and connect my life to the writings of others. I traveled to Santa Fe and Albuquerque, New Mexico where I experienced the culture of the Southwest for the first time. I attended a National Honors Conference in the heart of Washington, D.C. where I was exposed to many different individuals who appreciated academia as much as I. I enrolled in a course, “Theory of Everything,” which changed the way I see myself and see others. At Colby-Sawyer, I have gained knowledge in the areas of science, and the liberal arts. In the honors program, I have gained a deeper respect for the things I have accomplished, the way I interact with others, and for everything around me. All of this could not have been possible without Professor Ann Page Stecker, the other members of the honors program, and the wonderful Wessons for believing in us. I thank you all for allowing me to grow and I hope I have done the same for you.

Thrown Together
A Journey Through Pathway

Jen Creasy

I remember getting a phone call exactly four years ago telling me that I had been accepted to Colby Sawyer College, and that I had earned a scholarship that made me a part of the Wesson Honors Program. My first day on campus, I met a dozen or so other students who would be in the program as well, and who I would get to know pretty well over the next four years, although I didn’t know it then. By the end of the fall semester freshman year, I’m sure we were all sick of each other. Yet by spring semester sophomore year, we couldn’t wait to start the second half of our Pathway class so we could all see each other again.

Over four years, we would be thrown together several times in different Honors classes. These classes were the most challenging experiences I faced while at Colby Sawyer, but they were also the ones that got me to think outside the box. I didn’t take Honors Child Development courses; I took Greek Literature and Thought and From Here to Eternity (a class on the Big Bang Theory, technology, and space). These classes were the most obscure, and also the most memorable of my college career. Wrapping four years up with an Honors Capstone just made sense. And it gave us one more chance to be thrown back together before we all go our separate ways.

How?
It was the Coffee

Verena Korch

When I started my college career at Colby-Sawyer College, I did not know what I could accomplish within the four years. I was not part of the Wesson Honors Program, and I did not think I was smart. When I heard about the program, I did not even think I could be part of it, because I was not one of these masterminds. My goal for college was to do my best and I hoped I would be successful. I lived off campus and usually spent
time between classes in the library, where I had a snack while working on assignments and often ran out of coffee. One of the honors students told me about the honors suite, where honor students had access to a great study area and free coffee. The coffee was my motivation and I wanted to be part of the Wesson Honors Program.

The coffee and the study area were just small motivators, but led me into a program that nurtured my intelligence. I was encouraged to do my best for the honors classes and to think independently in multiple directions. Professors pushed and supported me to do things differently and look at subjects not just from one direction, which helped me to expand my capabilities.

The Wesson Honors Program made me realize I can be one of these brilliant people, one of the masterminds I looked up to, if I worked hard for it and set my mind to it. I have the capability to be successful, and I learned that during my time at Colby-Sawyer College and by being part of the Wesson Honors Program.