What Is the Honors College?
If you’re curious, ambitious, reflective, independent-minded—and if you thrive on exploring unfamiliar ways of understanding the world—the Honors College at UMass Boston may be for you. It’s designed to offer challenges and support that go beyond your major. An Honors College education allows you to explore local and global issues, solve problems through research, think creatively, connect with faculty experts and other passionate students, invest energy and thought in an issue, and make important contributions in the world.

WHAT DOES THE HONORS COLLEGE PROVIDE FOR YOU?

Close contact with outstanding honors faculty researchers, scholars, and teachers

The opportunity to study alongside academically committed peers

Priority course registration every semester

Unique academic and social Honors College events

Special recognition at graduation

Small seminar-style Honors College courses that fulfill General Education requirements

Practical as well as theoretical learning that complements every major

Hands-on research and scholarly activities

BE PART OF SOMETHING EXTRAORDINARY
Drawing on the Riches of Boston, Massachusetts

UMass Boston is part of a city renowned for its cultural, natural, and historical riches as well as numerous medical, scientific, technological, and entrepreneurial opportunities. Honors College seminars integrate trips to and study of some of the area’s best-known sites and institutions. For example, the seminar on Beethoven includes a trip to Symphony Hall to hear the Boston Symphony Orchestra. The seminar on Boston’s Harbor Islands features several boat trips (which originate right at our very own dock!) to various harbor islands. And a seminar on science in everyday life makes several visits to the Museum of Science.

Learning and Living in Boston

UMass Boston’s waterfront campus is an ideal place to study. Honors College students can be seen reading on a bench by the cove, playing Frisbee on the Campus Center lawn, or strolling and biking along the HarborWalk. Additionally, Honors College students are already benefiting from several campus upgrades that are being introduced to the campus, including new science laboratories and arts facilities, green common space, classrooms, and eateries.

Honors College students live throughout Greater Boston and in apartment communities just steps from the campus, and they enjoy the rich amenities, cultural attractions, and educational opportunities that make the city the biggest and best college town in the U.S. UMass Boston’s Office of Student Housing can help connect Honors College students seeking to live with fellow Honors College students.

Mayor’s Symposium Course

Recently, UMass Boston signed an agreement with Boston mayor Martin Walsh (pictured, right) to offer an annual Mayor’s Symposium seminar, in which Honors College students explore and examine pressing issues facing the mayor’s administration. Their in-class work and fieldwork familiarize them with the communities affected by these issues, and their recommendations for how to address the challenges, while grounded in and committed to local contexts and local perspectives, draw on comparable national and global situations.
“The Honors College propels students to distinguish themselves intellectually through a dynamic curriculum open to all undergraduate majors. We engage them in complex local and global issues, so that after graduation they may exercise transformational leadership, visionary thinking, and thoughtful confidence in the workplace and in graduate study.”

–Rajini Srikanth, Dean and Professor of English

GLOBAL ENRICHMENT

Now more than ever, our world is interconnected—which is why the Honors College encourages students to give deep consideration to their global citizenship.

For example, the college’s year-long cross-cultural symposium “International Epidemics” has been a popular way to analyze global issues. During the fall semester, students examine past and current epidemics with experts from such fields as biology, chemistry, history, economics, literature, theater, and health care. During the spring, they focus on the complexities of HIV/AIDS, TB, and other public health issues. Students enrolled in the symposium have traveled to South Africa and India as a class to learn about these public health challenges firsthand.

Beyond the symposium, students can explore more than two dozen exchange and study-abroad programs to destinations such as Australia, China, France, South Korea, and the United Kingdom.

Dynamic Experiential Learning

Many Honors College courses feature approaches that get students involved in their learning.

- Professor Cheryl Nixon’s recent course Museums, Libraries and the Construction of Knowledge featured field trips to Boston cultural institutions and culminated with the critique and redesign of a museum or library exhibit.
- Professor Paul Watanabe teaches a course on the Japanese American internment during World War II, and he travels with his class to California to visit a former internment camp.
- Professor Rachel Rubin co-taught an Honors class on hip-hop with local rap artist Akrobatik.

Inspiring Internships

From time to time, the Honors College offers innovative experiential learning experiences, which are in addition to more than 400 internships regularly offered by UMass Boston’s Office of Career Services. Recently, the college sponsored nine paid Creative and Social Entrepreneurship Fellows. Over the course of a year, these fellows worked closely with creative organizations to identify and address a strategic or operational challenge, using a $4,000 mini-grant to fund their work.

Unique Events

Expert practitioners, witnesses to historic events, and other dynamic speakers frequently visit Honors College classes and headline special events. Recently, the college hosted American Civil Liberties Union Deputy Legal Director Vanita Gupta, Assistant Professor of Surgery at Boston University School of Medicine Nilton Medina, MD, and US Federal Judge Nancy Gertner.
All honors students spread their wings in substantial, independent senior projects, which include senior theses, service-learning, and teaching opportunities. Many students present their senior projects at the annual undergraduate statewide research conference or to committees of faculty mentors.

- For her honors senior thesis, Alaa El Damaty analyzed inequalities and religious strife in Egypt during the Mubarak regime.
- Jo Anne Urra spent two semesters interning at LIFT — a Boston organization committed to uplifting those below the poverty line.
- Alyssa Trinidad co-taught a first-year honors seminar on cities, helping students discover the economic implications of London’s 2012 Olympics.
- For a senior project exploring the role of environmental factors in users’ responses to drugs, Carlos Bock analyzed sensitization to amphetamine in laboratory rats.
- Amelia Atwood spent a semester living on Nantucket Island, measuring water quality at various locations.

“I’ve worked with two talented faculty members on my Honors College thesis, immersing myself in psychological research, bridging the gap between cognitive neuroscience and clinical psychology. After graduation, I’ll pursue a doctorate in clinical psychology.”

–Dan Harris, Psychology and Cognitive Science, 2015, on Professors Vivian Ciaramitaro and Sarah Hayes-Skelton (not pictured)
Fun and Exciting Student Groups

Honors College students can participate in any of UMass Boston’s more than 100 student organizations, which help to build friendships and develop skills such as leadership, teamwork, and problem solving. The Honors Student Union (HSU), which helps organize the college’s entertainment events, such as barbecues and ice-cream socials; Writ Large, a nonfiction literary magazine; and Honors Helping Hands (H3), the college’s community-service organization, are all closely linked with the college.

Impressive Graduates

Honors College graduates are leaders in numerous high-demand and fulfilling fields, have pursued top-level graduate degrees, and are contributing to their local and global communities. Graduates have studied at Tufts University, the Harvard University Kennedy School of Government, UMass Medical School, and New York University Law School. Graduates are currently employed at the Boston University School of Medicine, the Peabody Essex Museum, as well as Dana-Farber Institute, and have been published in The New York Times, Time magazine, and The Washington Post.

Earn a BA and MA in Five Years

For Honors College students seeking a bachelor’s degree in the College of Liberal Arts, the Honors College offers several options to shorten the time it takes to achieve both bachelor’s and master’s degrees. Working with the McCormack Graduate School of Policy and Global Studies, the Honors College offers four accelerated bachelor’s/master’s combined degree programs, in the areas of conflict resolution, gerontology, international relations, and public affairs. Working with the Critical and Creative Thinking Program, the Honors College offers two accelerated bachelor’s/master’s combined degree programs in the areas of critical and creative thinking, and science in a changing world.
“My relationship with Professor Hagar has given me invaluable experience in biochemistry. As a teacher, he’s guided me with patience and positivity. As my Honors College thesis advisor, he’s been so approachable, encouraging me to reach my potential.”

–Bersabel Wondimagegnhu, Biochemistry, 2015, with Professor William Hagar

Applying to the Honors College

First-Year Freshmen (US and International Students)

High School seniors or recent graduates seeking admission to the Honors College should have a cumulative GPA of a 3.5 or higher, strong SAT or ACT scores and a competitive course selection. Students will be considered during the admissions process and are encourage to apply early action. For more information about submitting an application please visit www.umb.edu/apply.

Transfer Students and Community College Commonwealth Honors Program Graduates

Transfer students are encouraged to contact the college to discuss their candidacy. Please note: An Honors College offer of admission cannot be extended until after you have received your UMass Boston acceptance.

Transfer students who are graduates of a Commonwealth Honors Program (CHP) and earned an associate’s degree at a Massachusetts community college are eligible for automatic admission to the Honors College upon admission to UMass Boston. Students who seek automatic CHP admission should contact the honors college directly for instructions.

Current UMass Boston Students

Students already enrolled at UMass Boston who have a 3.4 GPA or higher are encouraged to apply at www.umb.edu/honors. Applications are evaluated twice annually, usually in late September for spring admission and early February for fall admission. Visit www.umb.edu/honors for an application and instructions.

Scholarships and Financial Aid

UMass Boston is proud to meet 90 percent of our students’ demonstrated need by awarding them more than $150 million annually in scholarships and financial aid. Students who have been admitted to UMass Boston and have filed a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) by March 1 have a chance to receive generous scholarships, including:

- The Chancellor’s Scholarship for Excellence (full tuition and fees for four years for in-state students only)
- The Vice Chancellor’s Scholarship ($12,000 for out-of-state students only)
- Dean's Scholarship ($7,500)
- Beacon Scholarship ($3,000)
- Academic Achievement ($3,000 for transfer students only)
- Boston City Scholarship ($1,000 for Boston public school graduates and residents)

Learn more at www.umb.edu/admissions/financial_aid Scholarships
LEARN MORE
Visit www.umb.edu/honors for more information and to schedule a special Honors College info session.

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