

Aquinas Scholars Student Board Retreat Meeting Agenda
ASC 341
2/7/2020

6:00pm – Welcome

1. Personal Updates and J-term experiences
2. Semester Outlook

6:10pm – Directors Updates

1. Budget
2. Other informational items

6:30pm – Chair Updates

- 1) Where are we in planning for events?
 - a) Are they on the Outlook calendar?
- 2) Do you have SharePoint access to edit?
- 3) Resources for future board members?

6:45pm – General Board Items

- 1) Fall’s successes and opportunities for improvement
- 2) Integration of diversity and inclusion
 - a) Themes for each month?
 - b) Does this event count as a [subcommittee] event?
- 3) Election process and recruitment
 - a) Board members abroad can vote via email

7:00pm – Executive Board Updates

1. Spring Semester Meeting Dates

Spring 2020 Meeting Dates (All over Convo Hour)	
Full Board	E-Board
Tuesday, February 18th	Thursday, February 6th
Tuesday, March 10th	Tuesday, March 31st
Thursday, April 16th	Thursday, April 30th
Tuesday, May 5th OR Thursday, May 7th	TBD (IF NECESSARY)

2. Cheyanne

- 1) Review and email ideas for “Welcome” orientation packet.
 - a) Send orientation packet to non-incoming first years joining program.
- 2) Event Reminders
 - a) Please make sure points sheets are accurate
 - b) Take pictures
 - c) Introduce yourself and guests!
 - d) Send reminder emails!
- 3) Universal Signatures on Emails

3. Updates from Brette, Heather, and Ben

7:15pm – Brainstorm Session

- 1) Current Student Engagement & Campus Presence
 - a) Encouraging more than just the 5 required points
 - b) Events to bring together specific groups
 - c) Presenting the program to general student body
- 2) Graduating Seniors / Alumni Influence
 - a) Exit Surveys
 - b) How to connect with Alumni
 - i) Pizza with an Alum?
- 3) Textbook Exchange
 - a) When? Where? How? Who?

Remaining Time– Committee Breakout Time to Plan Events

1. What, date, time - Email me by the end of the weekend with events planned

Orientation Packet



Contents:

Welcome and Introduction
Requirements of the Program
Honors Call to Action
Resources



Greetings New Scholar,

Welcome to the Aquinas Scholars Honors Program (ASHP). The program was founded in 1980 as a way to foster community and interaction between the many disciplines at the College. Embracing the spirit of a liberal arts education, the ASHP aims to attract the most academically talented students to engage deeply in interdisciplinary learning and thought. The honors sections and seminars were borne of this spirit. The seminars mandated the input of different (often-disparate) points of view to foster broad learning and conversation. The honors sections are built to allow depth of knowledge, deep conversation about topics, and learning about the details and nuance, not just the essentials. The program continues to build its community of dedicated scholars to join the 1,900 living alumni of the Aquinas Scholars Honors Program. I am one of those alumni, class of 2005, and I took this role so that I can continue the good work of the program and ensure it has a strong foundation for years to come.

Those things do not happen with a casual approach to your education. My guess is that you are in this program because you have taken anything but a casual approach to education in your lifetime. This is where that can come to fulfillment. As a program, we try to find the best professors to teach intellectually stimulating classes. It means that they will challenge you and your assumptions, so that you can challenge the status quo. In fact, team-taught seminars have professors from different disciplines so that they can challenge each other! Many might interpret that statement as *honors courses are harder*, but let me suggest that *honors courses are smarter*. An honors course does not need to have longer papers or more papers. Just writing more, does not make it better than another course. An honors course, though, might expect you to be a better writer, so you can analyze the topic more deeply and truly dissect the words. It might assume you will visit the Writing Center to improve if you are not a better writer, because you will rise to the challenge. An honors course does not need to require more reading, but an honors course might require smarter reading. To be interdisciplinary, you need to read broadly and often. You will need to understand the topics so that you can discuss them, pick them apart, weigh them against each other. It might expect that you have read and formulated your own thoughts to discuss in class. The challenge is not just to finish, it is to be the best.

You do not have to do it alone. The Aquinas Scholars Honors Program is a *community of scholars*. As part of the program, everyone in the program supports you in these goals. The classes introduce you to peers with the same goals. You might live together in a Living and Learning Community supported by your RA, roommate, and hall-mates. Dedicated study rooms and the lounge give you the resources to keep on track. The best professors are the best at teaching as well as the best at advising. I am here for you too, every step of the way.

Welcome to the program!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Eric H. Fort".

Eric H. Fort, Ph.D.

Associate Professor - Department of Chemistry
Director - Aquinas Scholars Honors Program



Requirements of the Program

The Aquinas Scholars Honors Program requirements encompass three main categories:

- Curricular Requirements - Classes and Seminars
- Academic Requirements - Grade Point Average
- Community Requirements - Aquinas Scholars Points Program

As you read below, you will find the details for each of these requirements. If at any time you have questions, please contact the Program Director. Special circumstances often arise that might adjust the requirements for an individual member of the Program. These adjustments are reviewed on a case-by-case basis. If in doubt, reach out.

Curricular Requirements:

Honors Courses: Scholars entering the program as incoming fall semester freshmen must complete the following honors class requirements by time of degree completion in order to graduate as an Aquinas Scholar:

- Four (4) Honors Sections (e.g., an honors section of a Philosophy course)
- Three (3) Honors Seminars (2-credit seminars, HONR 480 designation)

Scheduling (4-Year Planning): Scholars should coordinate with their faculty advisors to make a plan to complete their honors requirements in time for graduation.

Academic Requirements:

Scholars must maintain an Overall GPA* of 3.60 or higher. Scholars whose Overall GPA dips below 3.60 will be given one semester of probation to raise their GPA back to 3.60; Scholars whose Overall GPA remains below 3.60 for two consecutive semesters will be removed from the program.

*Overall GPA includes all credits on a student academic transcript, including transfer credits.

Community Requirements:

In 2011, the Aquinas Scholars Student Board instituted a points policy to ensure active involvement in the Program. As a community of scholars, this policy is intended to build community by providing scholars with a multitude of programming to shape your honors experience to fit your needs and interests.

Scholars are required to obtain five (5) points each semester while in the Honors program. Points



are obtained by attending a service, social, or academic event designated and facilitated by the Honors program. Most events on campus will be worth one (1) point, while most events off campus are worth two (2). Organizers clearly indicate the point value for each event before it occurs. A typical semester has over 30 opportunities to earn five (5) points.

There are several nuances that apply to special circumstances. For Example:

- For scholars that chose to participate in the **Honors Living Learning Community (LLC)**, two (2) out of their five (5) points must come from Honors LLC events. The LLC is run by Residence Life; however the Aquinas Scholars Honors Program facilitates special academic events specifically for this community. A failure to obtain two (2) LLC event points will require that you earn an additional point for each event missed. (e.g. If you only earn one (1) LLC point, you will need to earn six (5+1) points for the semester.
- If a scholar chooses to participate in an approved **Study Abroad** program over the course of a semester, their 5 points may be obtained by submitting a journal entry encapsulating their experience or a series of photographs with short descriptions. These submissions should be of high enough quality to be placed in our monthly Scholar's Journal.
- Scholars who are members of the **Student Board** will be exempt from point requirements with the understanding that their time and commitment to the program will make up for the exception.
- If an event **requires an RSVP**, a student signs up for an event and does not attend, they *may need* to get an extra point that semester (6 points instead of 5 points) and will be notified of this requirement by the Student Board.

If a scholar does not receive five points in a given semester, they will be placed on points probation. If the scholar does not obtain at least 5 points in the following semester then that will be grounds for removal from the program.

Contract: *All incoming Scholars must sign a contract acknowledging their acceptance of the program's requirements.* The above are summaries of the policies related to the program. Each student should refer to their official contract for details directly related to their standing in the program.

Honors Call to Action



Dear Scholars,

The Aquinas Scholars Honors Program is first and foremost a community. Since 2007, the program has represented students from nearly every discipline on campus. With 245 student members, we are a microcosm of the undergraduate student body. The nature of our program suggests that when we work on a unified goal, we can make an impact on all facets of the University of St. Thomas. It is with this in mind that we write this letter.

In the recent past, acts of hatred on campus led the Aquinas Scholars Honors Program to re-commit to be leaders in developing a living and thriving culture of respect and support. We seek in our everyday interactions as Scholars and as the Aquinas Scholars Honors Program to show and grow an inclusive campus culture. We should make it a daily habit, a stated goal, an explicit act to work toward making this campus welcoming to all.

We ask that you commit to the following:

- Pause and reflect. Consider ways you can personally contribute to a welcoming campus culture. Consider ways the Aquinas Scholars Honors Program can support all members of the university, and provide us with that feedback.
- Strive, as Aquinas Scholars, to grow beyond academic excellence and seek excellence in our humanity toward one another. We are all in this journey together, as a community, a community who can and must embrace an opportunity for change.
- Understand and support the Action Plan to Combat Racism and Bias as outlined by President Julie Sullivan in 2018. Use it as a guide to improve the lives of all Scholars and students on campus.

Thomas Aquinas writes, “It is better to illuminate than merely to shine...” – do so!

With Respect,
Dr. Eric H. Fort

with

Aquinas Scholars Student Board

and

Aquinas Scholars Faculty Board



Resources

Contact Information:

If at any point during a scholar's involvement in the Honors program a question should arise, feel free to reach out the Director of the program at aquscholarsdir@stthomas.edu, the Honors Program's administrative assistant at aquscholars@stthomas.edu, or any of the student board members. A full list of contact information can be found at the Aquinas Scholars Honors Program website (www.stthomas.edu/aquinasscholars) and on the Program SharePoint page found through OneStThomas under "Tools". A list of current contacts can be found on the adjacent page of this folder.

Campus Resources:

There are many resources for those who choose to participate in the Honors program other than the typical service, social, and academic events.

The **Honors Lounge** is one of the most frequented resources of the program. The lounge is located on the 2nd floor of Murray-Herrick Campus Center. To gain access, one simply needs to enter their UST ID number followed by the "#" symbol or swipe your UST ID.

Computers designated for Honors Scholars and **Free Printing** (up to 125 pages per month) can be found in the Lounge. Hot and Cold water, snacks, and K-Cups for beverages are available in the lounge as well.

Academic Resources:

Seminars are required coursework in order to graduate from the honors program. Seminars are offered in all academic terms, including summer. Seminars are listed in the course catalog under the designation "HONR" and are searchable in MurphyOnline and ClassFinder. A list of current and upcoming seminars can be found on the Aquinas Scholars website and SharePoint. Scholars are allowed to register for seminars at their normal registration time except in the case of seminars taught by one professor. For one-professor seminars, scholars can register by emailing the professor and letting them know they would like to take the course. Detailed instructions are emailed each registration period.

Honors Courses (sections) are a unique opportunity to take classes in smaller class sizes with a stronger emphasis on discussion and/or other learning styles. These classes typically overlap with classes that a student would already be required to take (theology, philosophy, etc.). These courses can be found by searching for the Honors "course attribute" in MurphyOnline or ClassFinder or on the website and SharePoint. They will often have a section number in the 40s (e.g. THEO 111-41).

Beginning January 2020, many Honors sections and seminars will count toward **curriculum designations** such as Integrations in the Humanities, Writing Across the Curriculum, and First-Year Experience. Please work with your academic advisor to seek out and register for these as needed.