

Reconsidering the 3.5 Departmental GPA Requirement for Departmental Honors Thesis

*proposed by Linda Frost, Dean of the Honors College
14 October 2022*

When it was instituted at UTC, the departmental honors thesis (course 4995 with the relevant department's prefix) required that a student have a 3.5 GPA in the major in order to undertake it. Since that time, the process for approving these "DHON" theses has been decentralized and is no longer determined via a Faculty Senate committee. While still administered by the Associate Dean of the Honors College, departmental honors theses are now approved via individual departmental processes. **We believe it is time to reconsider the 3.5 departmental GPA requirement to undertake thesis.** Many faculty and departments are not aware of this requirement and truthfully, it is more than likely the case that students have completed theses with less than a 3.5 departmental GPA. The Honors College maintenance GPA is now 3.2 and it is not routine procedure for us to check a student's departmental GPA as part of our process; we monitor the maintenance cumulative GPA for purposes of the Honors College. Therefore, it seems wise to reconsider this requirement and continue to allow individual departments flexibility with their own DHON processes, giving them the opportunity to use other measures to decide if a student should be able to undertake a departmental thesis. Indeed, a proposed new honors program in the College of Engineering and Computer Science is poised to do just this.

We propose that the faculty consider one of the following options, or another, as they see fit:

- Leave the requirement as is, leaving individual departments to monitor the GPA.
- Change the departmental GPA requirement to undertake honors thesis to a 3.2 in keeping with the Honors College's maintenance GPA of 3.2. Departments will need to monitor this change as part of their own process.
- Allow individual departments to determine their own GPA requirements to undertake departmental honors thesis. These varying requirements will need to be included in course modification forms for each department as well as be widely communicated in order to avoid confusion.
- Remove the departmental GPA requirement from the DHON process altogether.

Given that the Honors College is *only* still involved in the administrative duties of registering students for their relevant 4995 hours, and that the approval of DHON proposals is handled *within* each department, changing this requirement is not something the Honors College can or should dictate. We do think it deserves the attention of the Faculty Senate in order to ensure that all departments are working in concert regarding what is or is not required to undertake a departmental honors thesis.