This handbook is intended to provide families with information about the Lee Honors College, including who we are, a brief history of the college, and an overview of the opportunities we provide our honors students.

This is an exciting time for the Lee Honors College. Last fall, we reached a record enrollment of 1659 undergraduate students; our freshman class had an average high school GPA of 4.0! Our students are academically diverse, pursuing over 120 majors or programs of study in all seven of WMU’s academic colleges.

Each fall and spring semester, we offer more than 30 honors courses, typically capped at 20-25 students and open only to honors students. In the summer, we offer “Study in the States,” a unique opportunity to travel with other honors students and a faculty expert to complete a short course outside of Southwest Michigan. Students in these courses pay tuition, and the honors college covers all other trip expenses. Many of our students choose to study abroad, completing experiences that last from a few weeks to an entire year. The honors college is pleased to offer two annual competitions for study abroad scholarships that are open only to honors students.

Every Thursday evening, the honors college hosts “Mix It Up” night, a series of professional development workshops and social events organized by our graduate assistants and Peer Student Success Team. On Wednesdays at noon, faculty from across WMU present our Lyceum Lecture series; recent series topics include “Climate Change,” “Race Matters” and “Living with Uncertainty.” Our Peer Student Success Team is comprised of dynamic upperclassmen that serve as mentors for incoming freshman and help to organize a variety of group volunteer activities. Our students are engaged in the local community, completing at least 20 hours of community service each year.

Our dedicated staff and WMU faculty are pleased to provide our honors students a wide array of honors courses, opportunities to conduct research and scholarly activities with expert faculty mentors, and other programs intended to help our students build a rich and diverse portfolio of skills and experiences, and to encourage a lifelong passion for learning. We are proud of our students and alumni. Among our graduates are more than two thousand distinguished scientists, physicians, nurses, engineers, attorneys, educators, musicians, and artists.

We invite you to come and visit our lovely facility and meet the honors college staff.
HISTORY OF THE LEE HONORS COLLEGE

The honors program for academically talented undergraduates was founded at Western Michigan University in 1962 with a class of 24 students. Dr. Samuel Clark served as the college’s first director until his retirement in 1986. During his 24-year tenure, membership increased to 750 students and in 1987, WMU President Diether H. Haenicke announced plans to build a separate honors college facility.

In 1990, the honors college was renamed the Carl and Winifred Lee Honors College in recognition of the support provided by the Lees in building the college’s current home. Carl Lee was president, general manager and owner of Fetzer Broadcasting Service, Inc. of Kalamazoo and vice chairperson of the WMU Foundation Board of Directors at the time of the October 12, 1990 dedication ceremony. Winifred Lee passed away in 2012 at the age of 92. Carl Lee resides in Florida.

Now in its fifth decade, the honors college continues to improve its long tradition of providing an environment where each student will grow through productive relationships with other students and faculty, through the challenges of a rigorous academic program, and through the provision of unique opportunities for leadership on and off our campus.

OUR MISSION

The mission of the Carl and Winifred Lee Honors College is to provide an exceptional undergraduate experience for high achieving students, to inspire in our graduates a thirst for the lifelong pursuit of creative inquiry and discovery, to provide our students with the skill and passion to address critical challenges, and to foster personal responsibility informed by a global perspective.
ENDURING VALUES
The Lee Honors College is committed to nurturing and instilling in its students a passion for:
Life-long learning
Critical thinking
Aesthetic sensibility
Civic responsibility
Global engagement

LEE HONORS COLLEGE REQUIREMENTS
● Cumulative GPA >3.5
● Twenty hours of community service per year
● Four honors-college sponsored events in the freshman year
● Two honors-college sponsored events in the sophomore year
● Course requirements as described in letter of admission
● Successful completion of an honors thesis, including submission of all required documents

Detailed information on honors college requirements are in the student handbook as well as online at www.wmich.edu/honors. Freshmen are required to attend a Mandatory Freshman Advising group session in October and all students are encouraged to meet with an honors college advisor at least once per year to ensure they are on track in fulfilling all requirements to graduate from the Lee Honors College.
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

**Question:** Can my student still graduate on time?
**Answer:** Yes! Many honors college courses can be taken for general education credit, and others are available within specific programs of study. Thus, for most students, the LHC required courses are not in addition to a student’s required course load. In fact, honors courses typically provide students the opportunity to substitute one or more non-honors required courses with smaller enrollment or specialized honors sections.

**Question:** Why are LHC students required to participate in community service and honors college sponsored events?
**Answer:** The Lee Honors College strives to challenge students to be informed and engaged citizens of the University and the broader community. These requirements encourage students to become engaged in the local community and to benefit from the tremendous breadth of activities available at WMU and in the broader community.

**Question:** What are honors courses like? Are they more difficult than regular classes?
**Answer:** Honors courses are typically smaller in size than non-honors courses. Many incorporate innovative pedagogies such as authentic inquiry, directed discussion, and service or experiential learning. Small courses allow students to get to know and learn directly from faculty scholars who are frequently nationally- and internationally-known for their research, scholarly, and creative activities. Our students report that these courses are not significantly more difficult than non-honors courses, but are frequently more thought provoking and engaging.

**Question:** Are scholarships available?
**Answer:** The Lee Honors College benefits greatly from the generosity of friends and alumni and offers a variety of scholarships. These include scholarships to support study abroad, research and creative activities, and travel to conferences or performance/exhibition venues. Students must apply for scholarships and must be in good standing with the LHC and the University to qualify for these awards. See: www.wmich.edu/honors/scholarships for more information.

**Question:** What is the GPA requirement?
**Answer:** Incoming freshmen with a high school GPA of 3.6 and an ACT score of 26 are automatically invited to join the honors college. All students must maintain a cumulative GPA of 3.5 or higher to remain in good standing in the LHC.

**Question:** Why is my student charged $100 per semester for the honors college program fee?
**Answer:** The $100 program fee enables the LHC to offer special honors courses, field trips, and special events and opportunities only available to honors college students.

**Question:** What if my student’s cumulative GPA falls below 3.5?
**Answer:** If your student’s cumulative GPA falls below the required GPA, we follow the procedure below:

**Good Standing**
A student is in good standing with the honors college when the student’s cumulative grade point average is at least 3.5.

**Warning**
If the cumulative GPA falls below 3.5, the student will be placed on academic warning status, he/she will be placed on academic probation with the honors college, and will be required to meet with an LHC academic advisor.

**Dismissal**
After one semester on academic probation, students who fail to achieve a 3.5 overall grade point average are dismissed from the Lee Honors College.

**Question:** What is the honors thesis?
**Answer:** An honors thesis is an original work of scholarship or creative activity that is required of all Lee Honors College students. The thesis should reflect the academic standards of the student’s field of study, and is completed in close consultation with a full-time WMU faculty mentor and one or more committee members with significant expertise in the area of study or a closely related discipline. Examples of honors theses include senior engineering design projects, creative works of fiction, original documentaries, novel educational curricula, original performances or works of art, as well as traditional research papers (typically 20-40 pages in length). The honors thesis allows students to develop significant expertise relevant to their chosen profession and to benefit from close guidance from a faculty expert.

**Question:** Will my student be recognized at graduation as a member?
**Answer:** We invite every honors college graduate to be honored at a special Lee Honors College graduation event, where they will receive a certificate of graduation from the honors college as well as honors college cords. The official WMU transcript will also recognize students who graduate from the Lee Honors College, and will indicate honors courses and the title of each student’s honors thesis. Honors students are also recognized in the WMU commencement program and on their WMU diploma. Among the honors our students often receive while at WMU are inductions into nationally recognized honors societies including Phi Beta Kappa, Phi Kappa Phi, Golden Key, Alpha Lambda Delta, and Tau Sigma.
PRIVACY LAW—FAMILY EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS AND PRIVACY ACT (FERPA)

Information for parents and guardians...

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA) was designed to protect the privacy of educational records and to establish the rights of students to inspect and review their educational records.

When a student begins attending a post-secondary institution such as WMU, regardless of the age of the student, FERPA rights transfer from the parent or guardian to the student. College representatives are prohibited from:

- Sharing a student’s grades with their parents or guardians
- Changing a student’s schedule
- Discussing information about a student’s academic record without written permission

In sum...

College parents and guardians often feel frustrated by FERPA regulations. They feel that they need, and should have, access to student information. It is important to remember that college students are working toward increased independence and responsibility. To determine who receives their academic information is a part of that growing independence. Students handle this responsibility wisely and some may struggle with it. Many aspects of the college experience, good communication between college parents and guardians and their college students will make the experience go smoothly for everyone.

What does FERPA mean for you as a college parent or guardian?

Generally FERPA rules mean that student academic information such as grades or academic standing (GPA, academic transcript, academic warning, academic probation, or discipline records) will be given to the student and not to the parents or guardians. Colleges have a waiver form which students can sign allowing records to be released to parents or college representatives, such as faculty members, to discuss records with parents or guardians. The student may, or may not, wish to sign this release.

Where can I find out more information about FERPA?

For more details about FERPA, including information about a college’s responsibility to notify parents or guardians in an emergency situation, visit the WMU Registrar’s webpage (www.wmich.edu/registrar/), the U.S. Department of Education website (www.ed.gov), or www.collegeparents.org.
“A person who never made a mistake never tried anything new.” —Albert Einstein