

American Honors at Union County College

This Fall, Union County College launched its first class of the nationally recognized American Honors Program.

Union's first cohort of American Honors includes about 60 of Union County's brightest students. American Honors students benefit from an enhanced curriculum that qualifies them for transfer to top universities across the country and the Garden State.

Since early in 2014, Union has partnered with Quad Learning, Inc. to develop an American Honors program at Union. Together with American Honors personnel, College faculty have developed Honors curricula and in September will begin teaching classes for an American Honors cohort. Says Union County College President Margaret McMenamin, "We have a strong, talented and dedicated faculty that understands how to teach all students—from those who come to us academically underprepared for college to those who have excelled academically."

American Honors students will work closely with honors advisors to ensure they take the classes they need and navigate the transfer process smoothly. Once they graduate from Union with an associate degree, American Honors students can complete their bachelor's degree by selecting from a growing network of over 35 top four-year college and university partners in American Honors. These senior institutions include Stanford University, Cornell University, Ohio State University, Rutgers University, and George Washington University.

To recruit the first American Honors cohort for Fall 2014 classes, the College and American Honors staff conducted a successful outreach campaign throughout Union County. College faculty and staff ironed out the details on Honors admissions criteria as well as a tuition premium for American Honors students. The cost of tuition per semester for in-County honors students will be about \$1,000 higher than the standard rate.

American Honors advisors also assist students in receiving financial aid both at Union and at transfer institutions. For about a third of the Fall cohort—that is, the students who are residents of Elizabeth, NJ—a donor has stepped forward to pay all unmet tuition and books expenses. The JC Kellogg Foundation has pledged up to \$100,000 in scholarship assistance annually to support Elizabeth high-school graduates in American Honors.

Union's Chief Academic Officer Maris Lown sees American Honors as a valuable new asset for the Union County College portfolio. "This selective, cohorted Honors Program will bring to the College yet another opportunity for our students, one that is focused on college-ready students."

The plan is to double American Honors enrollment in Fall 2015 and to continue to expand the program in the coming years. As Dr. Lown points out, "For the other community colleges that have already introduced American Honors, such as Ivy Tech, the program has proven scalable."

Dr. Stephen D. Nacco

Vice President, Administrative Services &
Executive Assistant to the President

Union County College
1033 Springfield Avenue
Cranford, NJ 07016

908-709-7005 (office)