Honors

Undergraduate Honors

There are many opportunities for undergraduate students within the Department of Computer Science to be recognized for their exceptional work. Awards and scholarships are presented each year during the department’s Spring Awards Banquet. The James Scholar program is open to qualified students within the College of Engineering and the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. Each of the colleges recognizes its top graduates during graduation ceremonies.

- College of Engineering Honors
- College of Liberal Arts and Sciences Honors

College of Engineering Honors

James Scholar Program in Engineering

The gifted undergraduate student who is seeking the challenge of advanced and unusual academic opportunities and the maximum freedom in course selection will find such opportunity in the James Scholar Program in Engineering. In addition to the various honors sections, courses, and special educational opportunities made available by the various departments of the college, the program administers several engineering honors courses. These courses are designed to bring together James Scholars from throughout the college to study various interdisciplinary subjects.

The James Scholar Program is voluntary and therefore enrolls superior students who are actively seeking unusual academic challenges. It strives to interact with each student on an individual basis; its foundation lies in the student's interest and academic goals.

Eligibility

The College of Engineering requires its James Scholars to devise an “honors contract” in consultation with the honors advisor. For CS, honors advising, like other academic advising, is handled in the Academic Office. Contact undergrad@cs.illinois.edu for honors advising.

Normally, honors contracts which conform to the following rule will be approved:

- New freshmen are eligible to enter the program if they have an ACT composite score of 33 (or SAT of 1450) or higher. To be eligible for admission and continuation in the program, sophomores must have a cumulative grade point average of 3.3 or better, and juniors and seniors must have a cumulative grade point average of 3.5 or better (A = 4.0).

- Transfer student, with a superior transfer record, may be accepted into the program upon request and the completion of one normal semester in engineering with a grade-point average commensurate with the requirement for their class.

UPDATED REQUIREMENTS (effective November 2006 for anyone who has not already had an honors contract approved).

To complete an honors contract in the Engineering College, a student must complete the following requirements:

1. Two additional CS courses at the 400-level beyond those required for graduation.
2. CS 499 Senior Thesis (Students may not substitute the Software Engineering or Senior Project sequence for this honors contract requirement. However, courses from the Software Engineering sequence and/or the Senior Project sequence may be used to satisfy the “additional” courses of requirement 1. above).
3. In case the above don't add up to 12 hours, you must take an additional course, subject to approval by the honors advisor

OR a student may use a minor to satisfy the honors contract. However, the minor must contain at least 12 hours distinct from those required for graduation (if not, additional courses must be included), and, per campus requirements, at least 6 distinct hours must be at the advanced level.

Graduating with Honors

Honors awarded at graduation to superior students are designated on the diploma as Honors, High Honors, or Highest Honors.

Eligibility

1. Honors Students with a cumulative University of Illinois grade point average of at least 3.5.
2. High Honors Students with a cumulative University of Illinois grade point average of 3.8.
3. Highest Honors may be awarded to any student upon recommendation of the department. The criteria used in selecting individuals for Highest Honors recognition include a GPA of at least 3.95 or a combination of a GPA of at least 3.8 plus one or more of the following: 1) evidence of a broad range of supplementary activities of an academic and/or professional nature, 2) a substantial body of advanced CS coursework beyond that required for the degree (individual study, graduate-level work, senior thesis), 3) a substantial body of advanced coursework outside of CS, e.g. a second major or a minor that does not overlap significantly with degree requirements (e.g. not the Math minor).
College of Liberal Arts and Sciences Honors

James Scholar Program in LAS

Within the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (LAS), the James Scholar Honors Program encourages academically gifted students to fully develop their intellectual abilities and achieve the college's highest academic recognition. Scholars are charged with the responsibility of seeking sustained intellectual achievement as undergraduates by achieving and annually maintaining James Scholar certification.

Only the top 15 percent of the entering freshman are invited to participate in the LAS's James Scholar Honors Program. These incoming students are notified of their admission with a letter from the dean of the college. Continuing or transfer students with a 3.5 (A=4.0) cumulative grade point average may nominate themselves as James Scholars.

James Scholars must meet the requirements each academic year to remain in good standing to continue receiving the program's benefits. To be certified as a James Scholar in LAS each year, scholars must fulfill the following criteria: complete at least two honors courses (one per semester) or Honors Credit Agreements during the academic year and earn a 3.5 cumulative grade point average.

Graduating with Distinction in LAS

To graduate with distinction requires a specified minimum grade point average in all computer science and mathematics courses.

Eligibility

- Distinction: A grade-point average of 3.25
- High Distinction: A grade-point average of 3.5
- Highest Distinction: A grade-point average of 3.75.
- In addition, students must complete at least three semester hours of additional computer science or mathematics courses selected from the following: CS 196, CS 296, CS 397, CS 492, CS 493, CS 499. Any computer science course numbered 411 or higher. Math 412, Math 414, Math 417, Math 418, Math 423, Math 432, Math 448, Math 482, Math 484, Math 496