

## Biochemistry Honors Program

Any major who is interested in working towards honors in biochemistry is expected to initiate planning and discussion of possible honors research projects with a faculty mentor no later than his/her junior year or the following summer. Acceptance into the honors program is selective and is based on the following criteria:

1. Availability of research positions and funds in the laboratory of the selected faculty mentor.<sup>1</sup>
2. Approval of an honors proposal prior to the beginning of the student's senior year (or last full year of undergraduate study<sup>2</sup>). The proposal must be submitted to the faculty mentor and an honors committee created by August 1 prior to the senior year.
3. Minimum GPA of 3.30 in courses counting towards the biochemistry major.

Acceptance into the honors program does not guarantee that honors will be awarded. In order for biochemistry honors to be granted at commencement, the following conditions must be met:

1. The student has achieved a minimum GPA of 3.30 in courses counting towards the biochemistry major.
2. The student has conducted, at a minimum, the equivalent of 1.5 course units of research during the senior year<sup>3</sup> and has met the expectations established by the faculty mentor.
3. The student has presented his/her research in a public seminar and discussed the work in an oral examination<sup>4</sup> with honors committee members.
4. The student has submitted a thesis that has been approved by the honors committee.
5. The student has regularly attended the Biology or Chemistry seminar series throughout the senior year, or is otherwise engaged in programs in the Natural Sciences Division.

The honors committee will evaluate the quality of oral and written presentations of the project as well as the research undertaken and the merit of the science. In addition, the quality of all biochemistry course work and the involvement in a seminar series or other engagement will be considered in determining the degree of honors awarded (none, honors, high honors, or highest honors, with highest honors being rarely awarded). In cases where there are multiple honors committees functioning in a given year, all committee members will meet together to discuss the presentation of each candidate's research and determine the degree of honors.

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<sup>1</sup> It is expected that the mentor will be a member of the Muhlenberg College faculty who is affiliated with the biochemistry program. If a student wishes to work with a mentor outside this group, the student will be asked to submit a rationale for his/her choice of mentor and research project to the Co-directors for approval prior to the development of the honors proposal.

<sup>2</sup> Timeline including due dates for the proposal and thesis may be adjusted if a student is planning for a December completion of graduation requirements.

<sup>3</sup> Up to one (1.0) of these equivalent course units may be satisfied by work in summer following the junior year if the honors proposal is approved concurrently. It is expected that most students will invest more than the minimum required time in their research to yield a tangible product.

<sup>4</sup> The oral examination will typically be held directly following the public seminar. The examination will have a question and answer format, in which students should be prepared to be the "expert" on their topic. The discussion shall focus on the thesis work; questions that address fundamental knowledge of theory, etc. are appropriate so long as they have some relevance to the honors research.