

WILEY.
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**THELMA DEWITTY
HONORS PROGRAM**

— **SCHOLARS HANDBOOK** —

Dreamers. Doers. Leaders.



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Welcome to the Thelma DeWitty Honors Program

Welcome to Wiley University, and most especially, welcome to the Thelma DeWitty Honors Program (TDHP). We are delighted that you have chosen to join a community of scholars who are committed to academic exceptionalism, leadership development, and purposeful service. Wiley University stands on a proud foundation of faith, scholarship, and resilience. As members of the Wiley family, we walk in the legacy of generations who dared to dream, lead, and create change in their communities and beyond. The Thelma DeWitty Honors Program is an extension of that legacy and a space where scholars are challenged to think critically, lead with integrity, and serve with compassion. By joining TDHP, you have accepted not only an academic challenge, but also a commitment to personal growth and collective responsibility. Here, we learn together, support one another, and hold ourselves to the highest standards of intellectual curiosity, character, and citizenship. You are not walking this journey alone, you are part of a community that believes in your ability, your purpose, and your future.

Mission

The mission of the Thelma DeWitty Honors Program is to cultivate scholars who are academically distinguished, socially conscious, and globally prepared.

TDHP provides:

- Engaged, discussion-centered learning environments where scholars sharpen their analytical and expressive abilities.
- A supportive mentoring community of faculty, staff, and peers who value academic excellence and holistic well-being.
- Opportunities for leadership, research, and service that connect classroom learning with real-world impact.
- A capstone experience that allows scholars to pursue an area of passion through inquiry, innovation, or community action.

Our goal is to ensure that every scholar graduates with the knowledge, confidence, and purpose to pursue graduate study, professional achievement, and a life of meaningful contribution.

Our Community

The strength of TDHP lies in its diverse, dynamic, and dedicated community. Scholars and faculty come from a wide range of backgrounds, experiences, and academic interests. This diversity is not only celebrated, it is essential. It allows us to learn from one another, grow from meaningful dialogue, and honor our shared humanity.

- We respect and uplift each other.
- We engage in open and thoughtful dialogue.
- We embrace challenge as a pathway to growth.
- We serve our campus and our surrounding communities with intention and heart.

Together, we embody the spirit of Wiley University's guiding pillars: Achieving Excellence. Building Community. Inspiring Engagement. And together, we rise as Dreamers and Doers.

Director Fergins – Director, Thelma DeWitty Honors Program

Office: Thirkield Hall, Room 200

Director Fergins is an accomplished higher education leader, educator, and scholar-practitioner committed to cultivating academic excellence, leadership identity, and purposeful community engagement among students. With advanced graduate training in both Education and History, Director Fergins brings a depth of interdisciplinary expertise that informs her student-centered approach to teaching, mentorship, and holistic development.

Throughout her career, she has served in roles that promote academic access, leadership readiness, and student success across diverse learning communities. Her professional portfolio includes curriculum design, honors and high-achieving student programming, community partnership development, and leadership facilitation for emerging scholars. She has presented nationally and internationally educational leadership, resilient learning practices, and culturally responsive academic environments.

As Director of the Thelma DeWitty Honors Program at Wiley University, she leads a dynamic cohort of scholars committed to high academic achievement, ethical leadership, service, and global awareness. Her work focuses on cultivating an honors culture that reflects the legacy of excellence rooted in Wiley University's history while preparing students to lead with purpose in their future academic and professional endeavors.

In all aspects of her leadership, teaching, and service, Director Fergins inspires students to dream boldly, think critically, serve compassionately, and pursue greatness with integrity.

Wiley University Student Success Coaches

At Wiley University, your success is our priority. To ensure every student receives the personalized guidance needed to thrive academically and personally, the University provides **five dedicated Student Success Coaches**. These professionals are here to help you plan your academic journey, select your courses, connect with campus resources, and stay on track toward graduation.

Your Student Success Coach is a valuable partner in your collegiate experience—offering mentorship, support, and direction as you work toward your goals. Students are encouraged to meet with their Success Coach **regularly throughout each semester** to review academic progress, explore opportunities for growth, and discuss strategies for overcoming challenges.

Wiley University Honors Program Librarian

The Thelma DeWitty Honors Program is supported by the full academic resources of the Cole Library and the expertise of our dedicated University Librarian, Professor Elizabeth Bradshaw. Professor Bradshaw provides individualized support to scholars as they develop strong research, information literacy, and academic writing skills.

She is an invaluable partner in helping you:

- Locate reliable and scholarly sources
- Conduct academic research for essays, speeches, and capstone projects
- Navigate academic databases (e.g., JSTOR, EBSCOhost, ProQuest, etc.)
- Develop and refine research questions
- Cite sources ethically using MLA, APA, or Chicago formatting
- Strengthen your overall research strategy and academic confidence

Contact Information

Professor Elizabeth Bradshaw

University Librarian, Cole Library

ebrashaw@wileyc.edu

Wiley University Honors Standards

The Thelma DeWitty Honors Program Honor Code

The Thelma DeWitty Honors Program at Wiley University is a community of scholars committed to academic distinction, intellectual curiosity, ethical leadership, and service to others. Membership in the Honors community is both a privilege and a responsibility. As such, all Honors Scholars, faculty, and staff affirm their commitment to uphold the highest standards of personal and academic integrity.

As members of Wiley University and the Thelma DeWitty Honors Program, we commit to:

1. Pursue excellence in academic inquiry, research, and scholarly discourse.
2. Demonstrate honesty, accountability, and ethical conduct in all academic and co-curricular work.
3. Treat all members of the community with dignity, respect, compassion, and professionalism.
4. Protect and honor the rights, property, and contributions of others.
5. Contribute to a learning environment that fosters collaboration, innovation, and leadership.

Act as responsible global citizens who positively represent Wiley University in all settings.

Any conduct—on or off campus—that violates these commitments may result in formal review and action through Wiley University's established academic and student conduct procedures. Violations include, but are not limited to, academic dishonesty; harassment or discrimination of any form; intentional misuse of University resources; or behavior inconsistent with the mission, values, and expectations of the Honors Program.

Wiley University strictly prohibits discrimination or harassment on the basis of race, ethnicity, national origin, color, religion, gender, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, marital or parental status, age, disability, citizenship, or veteran status. The Honors Program is committed to fostering an inclusive, equitable, and supportive academic community where all scholars can thrive.

Students found in violation of the Honor Code may face disciplinary actions up to and including dismissal from the Honors Program. Students dismissed or suspended from Wiley University are automatically removed from the Honors Program. Requests for reinstatement may be considered by the Director of the Honors Program on a case-by-

case basis and must demonstrate evidence of growth, reflection, and readiness to return to scholarly life.

By enrolling in the Thelma DeWitty Honors Program, each scholar affirms their obligation to uphold this Honor Code and to model leadership, scholarship, and integrity in all academic and community endeavors.

Thelma DeWitty Honors Program Dismissal Statement

The University Honors Program aspires to be an intellectual community of friends. To maintain this community, scholars must uphold the highest standards of respect, integrity, and responsibility. Actions that compromise the safety, dignity, or cohesion of our community cannot be tolerated.

1. A scholar may be dismissed immediately from the Thelma DeWitty Honors Program for engaging in, but not limited to, any of the following:
2. Verbal Altercations: Using hostile or threatening language directed toward peers, faculty, or staff.
3. Profanity or Derogatory Speech: Using profane, demeaning, or discriminatory language against others.
4. Instigating Fights or Disruptive Behavior: Provoking or encouraging conflict that disrupts the harmony of the program.
5. Failure to Meet Attendance Expectations: Falling below 90% attendance for scheduled program classes, meetings, and required events.
6. Egregious Acts of Disrespect: Demonstrating conduct inconsistent with the mutual consideration expected in the Honors community.
7. Other Violations of University or Program Policy: Any behavior that compromises the academic or communal standards of the University or the Honors Program.

If the student has a cumulative GPA below 3.5, any of the above behaviors may result in immediate dismissal from the the Thema Dewitty Honors Program. Dismissal removes eligibility for the TDHP Honors Scholarship, though students will continue their enrollment in all Wiley University courses.

The Honors Program values respect, academic excellence, and service. Membership is a privilege that requires active commitment to these ideals.

A Message to Wiley University Scholars

The Thelma DeWitty Honors Program is a community of scholars committed to learning with and from one another. We recognize that intellectual growth occurs through curiosity, dialogue, and the respectful exchange of ideas. As members of this academic community, scholars are expected to contribute thoughtfully, listen actively, and uphold an environment that affirms the dignity and perspective of every participant.

Your voice is essential to our shared pursuit of deeper understanding and meaningful impact. We encourage you to engage openly in discussions, ask questions, offer insights, and respectfully challenge ideas as you refine your own thinking. Your lived experiences, perspectives, and reflections enrich the collective learning environment.

In TDHP, scholarships are not a solitary act, it is a shared journey toward knowledge, leadership, and purpose. We are here to support one another as we learn, grow, and contribute to the legacy of excellence at Wiley University.

GPA Requirements and Academic Standing

The Thelma DeWitty Honors Program upholds rigorous academic and personal standards that reflect the integrity, discipline, and leadership expected of Wiley University scholars. Academic excellence and character are equally important in sustaining a thriving community of scholars.

Minimum GPA Expectations

- Incoming Honors students must earn and maintain a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.50 by the end of their first academic year.
- Continuing Honors students must maintain a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.50 for continued participation in the program.

Honors Academic Warning

If an Honors student's semester GPA falls below 3.50, the student will receive an Honors Academic Warning. This communication is intended to offer support and guidance. Students are strongly encouraged to schedule a meeting with an Honors Academic Advisor to discuss strategies for improvement.

Honors Academic Alert

If a student's cumulative GPA falls below 3.50, the student will be placed on Honors Academic Alert and will have one semester to return to good academic standing. Students who do not meet the academic requirement after one semester may request an extension by submitting a formal petition to the Academic Standards Committee.

The petition must explain the factors contributing to academic difficulty, and specific strategies to restore academic performance.

First-Semester Students

First-semester Honors students who do not meet the standard will receive an Academic Warning, recognizing their adjustment to the university environment.

Behavior Standards and Community Conduct

Membership in the Thelma DeWitty Honors Program is a privilege that requires exemplary conduct, respect for others, and alignment with the values of Wiley University. Honors scholars are expected to contribute positively to the academic community and uphold standards of professionalism, civility, and personal responsibility.

Behavioral Warning and Dismissal Policy

A scholar who engages in disrespectful, disruptive, harassing, or unprofessional conduct will receive one formal Behavioral Warning. Any repetition of the behavior, or a new violation, will result in immediate dismissal from the Thelma DeWitty Honors Program. Students dismissed for behavior violations will retain their university course enrollment but forfeit the TDHP Honors Scholarship for subsequent semesters.

TDHP Handbook Appeal Process

Purpose

The TDHP Appeal Process exists to ensure fairness, accountability, and due process while maintaining the elevated academic, leadership, professionalism, and conduct standards of the Honors Program. Appeals are reviewed on a case-by-case basis. Students found responsible for violations of the Wiley University Student Code of Conduct and violations of TDHP policies, and in danger of removal from the TDHP, may be eligible to submit an appeal.

Grounds for Appeal

- Sanction was too severe
- Due Process was not followed
- Failure to maintain required GPA
- Scholarship loss
- Program probation
- Dismissal from TDHP
- Conduct or professionalism violations
- Attendance or participation concerns
- Extenuating circumstances affecting performance

Examples of extenuating circumstances may include serious medical issues, death of an immediate family member, documented mental health crisis, significant financial hardship, or other verified emergencies beyond the student's control.

Appeal Submission Requirements

Students must submit to the Dean, Academic Student Services:

1. A formal written appeal letter including: grounds for appeal, explanation of

circumstances, accountability and reflection, corrective action plan, and commitment to TDHP standards.

2. Supporting documentation such as medical documentation, counselor verification, obituary or funeral

documentation, academic improvement plans, faculty communication, names of witnesses or support persons who may corroborate the supporting documentation.

3. Any requested academic records or progress reports.

Timeline

Appeals should be submitted via email within five (5) business days of receiving official notification to the Dean, Academic Student Services at gamazan@wileyc.edu

Review Process

Step 1: Initial Review (1-2 days)

The TDHP Director and the Dean, Academic Student Services reviews academic records, conduct history, attendance and participation, supporting documentation, and alignment with TDHP expectations.

Step 2: Dean, Academic Student Services Informal Meeting with the student and applicable witnesses or support persons (3-5 days)

Step 3: Formal Hearing (if applicable) (5-7 days)

Step 4: Appeal Outcome (10-12 days)

Students receive a written outcome that may include:

- Appeal Accepted
- Appeal Accepted with Conditions
- Appeal Denied

Possible Conditions for Continued Participation

- Attend mandatory check-ins
- Complete tutoring or academic coaching
- Maintain weekly progress reports
- Participate in counseling or support services
- Complete community service expectations
- Maintain a semester GPA benchmark
- Demonstrate professionalism and attendance compliance

Finality of Decision

Decisions made by the TDHP administration are considered final unless additional institutional review is warranted through Wiley University policies.

Honors-Level Expectation Statement

Because TDHP scholars represent Wiley University through leadership, scholarship,

and service, all scholars are expected to uphold elevated standards of professionalism, academic excellence, integrity, and conduct both on and off campus.

Failure to maintain these expectations may impact continued participation and scholarship eligibility.

TDHP Leadership Lecture Series & Distinguished Speaker Events

The Thelma DeWitty Honors Program is committed to cultivating scholarly curiosity, intellectual leadership, and purposeful engagement. As part of this mission, the TDHP Leadership Lecture Series and Distinguished Speaker Events provide opportunities for Honors scholars to interact with thought leaders who are shaping academic, professional, and civic landscapes.

Throughout each semester, we welcome Wiley University faculty, senior administrators, community leaders, national scholars, industry professionals, and Honors scholars themselves to share their expertise and lived experience. These sessions are designed to broaden academic horizons, deepen critical thinking, and inspire students to consider the role of leadership in their own educational and professional journeys.

Presentations may include:

Faculty sharing current research, scholarly innovation, or disciplinary perspectives across the liberal arts, sciences, and professional fields

Administrators discussing institutional leadership, strategic vision, and the impact of higher education on social advancement

Honors scholars presenting study abroad reflections, internship outcomes, research experiences, and emerging academic interests

Community partners and external experts offering insight into service, advocacy, entrepreneurship, and civic responsibility

These events are intended to enrich the Honors experience by fostering dialogue, expanding worldview, and encouraging scholars to engage with ideas that shape both our local communities and the global society. Participation in these programs is a vital component of the TDHP commitment to leadership, scholarship, and service.

Participation Requirement

Active engagement in the Leadership Lecture Series is a required component of the Thelma DeWitty Honors Program. All Honors scholars are required to attend a minimum of three (3) Leadership Lecture Series events each semester. Students must sign in at each event to verify attendance.

Following each event, students must submit a Reflection Response (250–350 words) connecting the session to personal leadership growth, academic or professional interests and community engagement and service

TDHP Service, Leadership, and Community Outreach

The Thelma DeWitty Honors Program recognizes service as a core expression of scholarship, leadership, and moral responsibility. Wiley University students understand that education is not solely for personal advancement, but also a catalyst for meaningful contribution to society. As such, the Honors Program is committed to cultivating a culture of service that extends beyond the classroom and into the broader community.

Throughout each semester, TDHP scholars engage in structured service and outreach initiatives that address campus needs, local priorities, and regional partnerships. These experiences allow students to apply academic learning to real-world contexts while developing empathy, civic awareness, and collaborative leadership.

The Honors Program frequently collaborates with:

- Wiley University departments and organizations
- Local schools and youth empowerment programs
- Community service agencies and non-profit organizations
- Civic and cultural institutions across Marshall and the surrounding region

Through these partnerships, scholars participate in initiatives such as educational mentorship, food and resource distribution, neighborhood revitalization efforts, literacy and tutoring projects, and community engagement events.

These activities are designed not only to serve but to build capacity, strengthening both the communities we engage in and the leadership competencies of our students.

Service Requirement

All TDHP scholars are required to complete a minimum of 10 service hours per semester, documented and submitted through the Honors Program Service Log.

Service hours may be completed through TDHP-sponsored events or approved community-based service activities on campus or off campus.

Scholars are encouraged to reflect on their service experiences as part of their leadership development and personal growth.

TDHP Co-Sponsored Campus Events and Academic Enrichment Experiences

The Thelma DeWitty Honors Program actively collaborates with departments, academic units, cultural organizations, and student leadership groups across Wiley University to provide scholars with enriched intellectual and cultural experiences. These **co-**

sponsored events expand learning beyond the traditional classroom setting, allowing Honors scholars to engage with the arts, public scholarship, leadership development, and interdisciplinary dialogue.

Co-sponsored events may include, but are not limited to:

- Author talks, literary panels, and scholarly discussions
- Cultural and performing arts productions
- Academic forums and symposia led by campus and visiting scholars
- Student leadership and professional development programs
- Special initiatives coordinated by Student Engagement and campus partners

Participation in these programs encourages students to broaden their perspectives, deepen their understanding of diverse intellectual traditions, and engage meaningfully with the cultural and academic life of the University.

Recognition for Academic and Co-Curricular Engagement

Active participation is a hallmark of Honors distinction. Therefore:

Students who attend ten (10) or more TDHP-approved events within a semester will be awarded the *Certificate for Outstanding Service Engagement*.

Award recipients will be recognized publicly at the close of the semester for their demonstrated commitment to intellectual community, scholarly curiosity, and meaningful campus involvement.

This recognition signifies not only participation, but a sustained dedication to leadership, scholarship, and service within the Wiley University community.

Honors Courses (every course is not required)

- HNRS 1100 Honors Academic Success
- HNRS 1200 Honors Financial Literacy
- HNRS 2300 Honors African American Studies
- HRNS 1301 Honors U S History I
- HRNS 1302 Honors U S History II

COMPLETION PATHWAY FOR WILEY UNIVERSITY STUDENTS WITH A 3.5 GPA

