

## **GUIDELINES FOR THE HONORS PROGRAM IN GEOLOGY AT SMITH COLLEGE**

### **Eligibility and Application**

Students who wish to pursue honors in Geology must have at least a 3.3 grade point average (GPA) in all courses in the Geology major, and at least a 3.0 GPA in all courses outside the major through the junior year. Only Smith College courses (including Picker and Smithsonian), Five College and Smith College Junior Year Abroad (Florence, Geneva, Hamburg, Paris) are counted in the GPA. Smith College grades from the first year are counted in the GPAs outside and inside the major. The students must also write an honors project proposal and have it approved by the Geology Department.

The procedures for applying to the Departmental Honors Programs at Smith College may vary slightly from year to year. Therefore, the students eligible and interested in pursuing departmental honors should consult as early as possible with their major advisor. The students should also review any specifics set by the Subcommittee on Honors and Independent Programs (SHIP), Senior Class Dean's Office, College Hall 101, extension 4930, or [honors@smith.edu](mailto:honors@smith.edu).

### **Early Planning**

Geological research commonly involves fieldwork. Thus, advanced planning of your senior thesis research project is very important. If you wish to pursue honors in Geology, consult with your major advisor no later than the end of the first semester of your junior year. [As major advising in the Geology Department is done by class, your advisor will also be the departmental Director of Honors during your senior year.] At the same time, consider obtaining (online, or from the Senior Class Dean's Office or the departmental Director of Honors) an application information packet. Review all forms and any accompanying instructions included in the package and plan accordingly.

Geology honors students commonly engage in fieldwork in the summer between their junior and senior years. Applications for funding to pursue summer research opportunities are usually due by mid February of your junior year. These opportunities may include working with a Smith College faculty member for up to 10 weeks in the Summer Science Internship Program, participating in a 4-week long field project organized by the Keck Geology Consortium of 18 liberal arts colleges nation wide, or applying for a REU (Research Experience for Undergraduate) or other internship programs elsewhere. In all of these cases, you will choose a Smith Geology faculty member, whose expertise is most closely aligned with your research interests, to serve as your thesis advisor.

### **Project Proposal**

In consultation with your thesis advisor you will prepare an honors project proposal by the end of the first full week of classes in the first semester of your senior year. The

proposals are usually 2-3 pages long and include (but are not limited to): Project Title, Your Name, Honors Project Proposal, Geology Department, Academic Year, Number of Credits (8 or 12), Thesis Advisor, Introduction (stating your project goals/objectives and reviewing any relevant background information), Methods, Significance and Expected Outcomes, and References Cited. It is also common to include a map of your study area and/or any other relevant illustrations, with complete captions and appropriately referred to in the text. Your thesis advisor will review drafts of your proposal and will share the final version with other Geology faculty members for their comments and approval. By the end of the first full week of classes you will also be asked to complete your application to enter departmental honors (signed by your faculty adviser and submitted to the departmental Director of Honors), and in consultation with your thesis advisor you will decide if you need to apply for financial assistance from the Tomlinson Memorial fund.

### **Thesis Completion and Presentation**

Throughout your senior year you will be working, in consultation with your thesis advisor, on completing your honors research project and writing your thesis. Format your thesis according to the Honors Thesis Guidelines provided by the Smith College Libraries (available on the Internet). Submit two copies of your final thesis draft to your thesis adviser by April 15. You will be asked to give a 15-20 minute oral presentation of your Honors research for the department, which will be open to the public. Questions from the Geology faculty will follow your presentation. If there is time, the rest of the audience will be invited to join in the discussion afterwards. Geology thesis presentations are usually scheduled for the last day of the pre-examination study period. The final copy of your thesis, on archival quality paper, should be submitted directly to the Class Dean's Office by the Monday after the final examination period. The departmental copy of the thesis, also printed on archival quality paper, should be submitted directly to your adviser.