Memo

To: Undergraduate Curriculum Committee
From: Vanessa Edkins
Date: 3/22/13
Re: Recognizing the Psychology Honor’s program on student transcripts

Psychology students (B.A., B.S., Forensic B.A., or ABA B.A.) with a major GPA of 3.40 or higher, and who are interested in attending graduate school, are eligible for entrance into our departmental honor’s program. In place of completing the usual student internship, honor’s students spend two semesters creating and executing an honors thesis under the supervision of a faculty member. The honors thesis is in most ways identical to a Master’s thesis, including the makeup of the committee, proposal and defense meetings, and the development of a unique research project under faculty supervision (literature review, IRB application, data collection, data analysis, thesis document), Honor’s students also take 3, 1-credit seminars that are structured like graduate-level research seminars and focus on increasing familiarity with academic research and honing critical thinking skills (e.g., students may be asked to read 3 or 4 journal articles each week and summarize the strengths and weaknesses of the research verbally then in a report). These requirements were developed based on a review of psychology honors program practices at several types of U.S. universities.

We encourage our highest achieving, graduate school bound students to take on this endeavor because we know how well it prepares them for the rigors of a Master’s thesis or a Ph.D. In addition, graduate schools (including our Psychology Master’s and Doctoral programs) are very interested in students who have completed an honors program with a thesis because they know the student has the potential to conduct independent research and to write comprehensive, theory-based, papers. Unfortunately, the current transcript sent out to these graduate schools has no place to indicate that our students have graduated through an honors program.

We would like to propose that a line be added to the transcript that recognizes completion of the honor’s program. Potential wording might be: “Completed the Requirements for Psychology Honors Program.”