

**College of Behavioral & Community Sciences**  
Guidelines for Graduation with Distinction (Undergraduate)  
**Spring 2016-Priority DEADLINE February 29th, 2016 by 5pm**

For purposes of honors recognition at the commencement ceremony, students must have a 3.50 GPA before the term in which they plan to graduate to have honors recognized publicly at the commencement ceremony.

For this distinction, students who do not meet traditional academic honors graduation criteria (3.5 cumulative gpa) but who still deserve some form of official honor recognition may be recognized. To graduate **with distinction** in the College of Behavioral & Community Sciences, the student should clearly stand apart from peers. The criteria for nominating a student for this recognition include scholarly activity, professional development, community service, and/or examples of overcoming adversity/hardships.

The following are provided as guidelines in evaluating applications, with the Dean/Dean's designee using objective individual judgment in making the final decision. **To be eligible for nomination, students should be majoring in a program within BCS; have a min. 3.2 USF gpa; and demonstrate excellence in at least three areas with exceptional achievement in one or more areas.**

**Scholarly Activity** On the undergraduate level, scholarly activity may be exhibited in a variety of ways, depending on the student's program requirements and opportunities provided or sought out by the student. The student must clearly demonstrate evidence beyond the requirements to successfully complete courses. Outstanding students will elect consistently to take advantage of opportunities to increase their expertise in research. These opportunities are not limited to being met within the university; they can also take place outside the university context. Examples include exemplary work within the student's major, demonstration of understanding of research by independently completing research projects, participation in and support of the conduct of research by faculty, participation in research colloquia, and conducting action research as part of field experiences.

**Professional Development** This may include participation in academic and scholarly organizations, professional societies, and honor societies. Beyond membership, students must demonstrate active participation and leadership and/or contribution to professional development activities. Students may participate in and contribute to presentations at professional conferences. The student should also demonstrate that his/her membership had impact on themselves and others.

**Service** Service with distinction may include, but is not limited to, work with organizations such as hospitals, schools, and other community agencies and organizations. Evidence of distinction in service would involve efforts within an organized structure, and those efforts must be verified by an officer or administrator or similar authority of the organization. [Note: Participation in organized service learning activities that are requirements of courses, as well as

volunteer work for which the student receives academic credit or monetary compensation should not be included.]

**Demonstration of Overcoming Adversity/Hardship** The student's life may include particularly compelling activities which reflect highly on the student's character and/or demonstrate overcoming unusual and unique personal circumstances experienced by the student as part of his/her academic career.

**Selection Process** Students may be nominated by individual faculty, faculty groups, or student groups and must be a declared BCS undergraduate major with a min. 3.2 gpa. **The nomination packet should include:** 1) A nomination letter; 2) copy of degree audit or unofficial transcript; and 3) supporting documentation to demonstrate student's excellence in at least three of the four areas (scholarly activity, professional development, community service, demonstration of overcoming adversity/hardship). Documentation might include a personal letter from student, resume, letters of support, samples of work/research/etc. ***It is the responsibility of the nominated student to assist with assembling the necessary materials with supporting evidence.*** Each department/school may submit one nomination packet per semester to the attention of **Lisa Landis**, Director of Advising & Student Services in MHC 1149. Final decisions will be made by the Dean's Office.

Only students who do not otherwise meet the criteria (namely USF and overall gas of 3.5 or higher) to graduate with honors (ie. cum laude, magna cum laude, summa cum laude) are eligible to graduate with distinction.