UPDATES TO THE WAYS TO EARN HONORS CREDIT

**Petition for Honors Credit way: Eliminated**
Research last year indicated that the vast majority of the experiences for which students were petitioning for honors credit actually already fit into existing ways to earn honors credit, like research or professional development experiences.

**Field Study way: Eliminated**
In each of the past two years, fewer than 10% of the ways to earn honors credit that involved professional development experiences were categorized as field study by honors students. Of the two years combined, over 70% of these experiences actually fell under undergraduate research or other formal professional development experiences.

**Undergraduate Research and Independent Study ways: Expanded**
In accordance with University policy, the Honors College will recognize up to twelve combined honors credits of undergraduate research and independent study. Research experiences that do not appear on the VT transcript as “Undergraduate Research” or do not appear on the transcript at all now count under the Undergraduate Research way.

**Internship or Co-op way: Redefined**
This way will be renamed to Professional Development and explicitly defined as an internship, externship, or co-op. Normally, an externship is a shorter-term, unpaid shadowing experience. This distinction opens a standardized opportunity for students who shadow instead of intern (or perform other field study-type work) to earn honors credit.

A review of other departmental professional development programs for credit across campus suggests that while our original work time ranges were on par with Registrar requirements for academic credit, we were still requiring less of our students compared to those other departments. Therefore, the hours required for honors credit will be increased.

An updated Guided Experiential Learning form with step-by-step instructions has been created to match these changes. Moving forward, this form will not be required until after the experience is completed and must include a supervisor/supervising faculty member signature along with any additional required documentation.