

## **Houghton Promise Bonus Year Policy Residential Undergraduate Programs**

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**Purpose:** The Bonus Year began in 2017-18 as one dimension of the enrollment initiative called The Houghton Promise. The bonus year provides one year of free tuition for graduating seniors who are unable to secure employment or acceptance into a graduate program. It is intended to be a safety net that allows them to enhance their educational experience in ways that will expand their opportunities for employment and/or graduate school.

**Application process and deadline:** Interested students must submit an electronic application to the Academic Dean's Office. The application will be available from May 1 – July 1 for May graduates and Nov. 1 – Jan. 1 for December graduates. The application will include such questions as:

- Why are you interested in the bonus year?
- What are your specific educational goals for the year?
- What specific steps have you taken to find employment and/or seek admission to graduate school?
- What is your funding plan to cover your living expenses (room and board)?

**Good Standing:** All bonus year applicants must be in good standing with the following college offices:

- Academic Support & Accessibility Services: Students who were on academic probation during their senior year are not eligible.
- Student Financial Services: Applicants must have a history of on-time payments and bill must be current at time of application.
- Student Life: Applicants who have significant conduct violations in their student file may be ineligible for participation in the Bonus Year. Applicants who have received sanctions of disciplinary or chapel probation more than once or have been suspended during their time at Houghton are prohibited from participation.
- Office of Vocation and Calling: Students must have taken demonstrated steps to pursue employment and/or graduate school.

The Academic Dean's Office will confirm that all applicants meet these standards.

**Residency:** As graduates of Houghton College, those utilizing the Bonus Year are not bound by the same residency requirements as undergraduate students. However, the following residency requirements are in place to ensure that the Bonus Year experience is supportive, communal, and impactful. All full-time Bonus Year participants are expected to live in upper-class residential housing, pending availability, unless they meet any of the following criteria:

- commuting from a family member's home (parents, grandparents, aunts/uncles and non-student siblings)
- married
- have children

- are over the age of 24 as of September 1st of the given academic year.

All expectations of the Vision for and Commitments in a Common Life apply to all members of the Houghton College community, regardless of housing status. Any Bonus Year participant may apply for housing even if they are not required to live on-campus.

**Housing Rates:** Bonus year students will be required to stay in Houghton-owned housing and will be charged at one-half the standard rate.

**On Campus Jobs:** In order to ensure the availability of work and leadership opportunities for undergraduate students, bonus year participants are not eligible for positions such as RA's, executive board positions in clubs/organizations, team captains, etc. Other work study positions may be available to bonus year participants, but only after all current students who want to work have secured employment.

**Off-campus programs:** The bonus year is only available for on-campus studies.

**Financial Aid:** Bonus year students are not eligible for any institutional aid beyond the full tuition scholarship. Students will qualify for in-school deferment and/or federal loans if they are working toward a major or minor.

**Years of attendance:** The bonus year is intended primarily for students who have completed four years of study at Houghton and are hoping to stay for a fifth. Students who have not completed four years of study at Houghton may apply for a bonus year, but priority will be given to students who have completed four years.

**Graduation ceremonies:** Bonus year students are eligible to participate in graduation ceremonies one time.

**Appeals:** If a bonus year applicant or student wishes to appeal any requirement or condition of the bonus year, he/she may do so via a letter to the Academic Dean.

**Sponsorship across the campus:**

Affordability – Finance and Student Financial Services

Academic Quality – Dean's Office

Authentic Christ Centered Community – Dean of the Chapel; VP for Student Life

Acceleration – Dean's Office

Approved by President's staff 10/27/2020