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# MURRAY STATE UNIVERSITY

Faculty Application Packet

**JUNE 3 – JUNE 29, 2019**

Mail completed application to:

Faculty Application  
Commonwealth Honors Academy  
Murray State University  
304 Lowry Center  
Murray, KY 42071

**Application Deadline: February 1, 2019**



## Information for Faculty Applicants

### What

The Commonwealth Honors Academy (CHA) is a challenging three-week academic enrichment program for outstanding high school students who have completed their junior year. Students will be selected from the Commonwealth and surrounding region. Upon successful completion of the Academy, students will:

- receive six hours of university credit.
- have the opportunity to take six hours of tuition-free university courses at Murray State University during the subsequent year.
- be awarded a four-year, renewable \$2,000 housing scholarship to attend Murray State University.

### When and Where

The Academy will be held at Murray State University in Murray, Kentucky, from **June 8 to June 29, 2019**. Faculty members will report to campus on **June 3** and will be required to participate in two planning workshops on **April 26 and 27**, and **May 18**, to exchange ideas and develop curriculum. After CHA, there will be a fall reunion for all students, faculty, and staff.

There will be 12 faculty members for approximately 114-120 students (max 20 students per class), plus residential counselors and additional staff. Faculty members will be selected from public and private high schools, colleges, and universities in the region.

### Teaching Philosophy

The Commonwealth Honors Academy does not have a permanent faculty. Annually, applications are solicited from gifted and creative teachers, well versed in their subjects and with a broad range of interests and experiences.

Faculty members expand the intellectual horizons of Academy students, providing leadership by integrating subject matter from the humanities, sciences, and arts. They must be willing to use non-traditional and participatory methods, *with little or no traditional lecturing*. Faculty must relate well and communicate effectively with bright high school students. They should be enthusiastic and flexible enough to keep pace with this challenging, dynamic program.

CHA emphasizes a conceptual rather than a skills/memorization approach to learning, and an interdisciplinary approach to teaching, as such all faculty will integrate project-based or problem-based learning (PBL) into their classes. Students should produce projects that demonstrate key factors of PBL such as sustained inquiry, student choice, reflection, and producing some sort of product appropriate for the public. The learning fair at the end of

the academy provides an ideal space to share such projects. You will find a handout that explains PBL as well as provides some resources at the end of the document.

## **Qualifications**

In order to satisfy SACS requirements, Commonwealth Honors Academy teachers must have a minimum of a bachelor's degree and 18 graduate hours in their teaching area.

## **Conditions and Compensation**

Time for faculty to work together to develop curriculum and integrate the theme, "**Leave Great Footprints,**" is crucial to the success of the Commonwealth Honors Academy. Therefore, faculty members are required to participate in two weekend planning workshops (April 27 and 28 and May 18) and to arrive on campus on June 3 to finalize plans for CHA.

Faculty teach either an interdisciplinary humanities and fine arts (IDHFA) or elective course and serve as co-facilitators in a personal development seminar as described under **components** below.

Faculty availability in and out of the classroom is key to the development of the living-learning community at CHA. Therefore, faculty **must** be available to interact with students throughout the day, evenings, and weekends during the three weeks of the Academy.

On-campus housing is provided for faculty for the four weeks of employment. Compensation for the 2016 session is \$5,100.00, and all meals will be provided during the Academy. Housing is available for members of the immediate family who wish to accompany faculty members.

## **Mission**

*The mission of the Commonwealth Honors Academy is to challenge, educate, enlighten, and nurture the next generation of civic, academic and business leaders of the region.*

## **Theme**

The theme of the 2019 Commonwealth Honors Academy, "**Leave Great Footprints,**" will be integrated into the structure of the Academy in a variety of ways.

## **Academic Program**

The Commonwealth Honors Academy is offered with the firm conviction that one of the greatest resources of this region is its academically talented young people. The Academy seeks to reward excellence, broaden horizons, and expand vision. Its academic program stresses the development of each student's critical thinking abilities, adaptability, creativity, and self-confidence. In the Academy, teachers and students deal with the conceptual, historical, and philosophical tenets of human knowledge. Students have opportunities to develop their personal and intellectual skills under expert supervision.

## Components

- All students attend an introductory ***interdisciplinary humanities and fine arts course*** that draws **50%-60%** of course content from **one of the three traditional fine or performing arts** disciplines: visual art, music, or theatre. This course develops the Academy's theme, drawing material from the traditional humanities (e.g., history, literature, philosophy) and the fine and performing arts (e.g., music, visual art, theatre). The interdisciplinary relationship between humanities and fine arts is a requirement of transfer agreements with the Murray State Honors College.

- In addition, each Academy student selects an ***elective course*** from among the following academic areas:

Business	Science/Math
Health Sciences/ Human Services	Communications/Media Studies
Social Sciences	Humanities & Fine Arts

- Each elective course will address the theme of the Commonwealth Honors Academy from its own perspective **and must include a service learning component**, an ideal place to integrate your PBL component. Interdisciplinary cooperation in this effort is encouraged.
- Each student participates in a **seminar** focused on issues related to personal and social development. In small group discussions, students explore topics relevant to their lives such as interpersonal communication, family and peer relationships, choosing a university, civic responsibility, and the relationship of the program's theme to their own lives. Faculty members and resident counselors serve as co-leaders of these seminars.
- An **Academy reunion** will take place in September 2019. Students, faculty and residential counselors are expected to return to the MSU campus to renew friendships, evaluate the Academy, and receive certificates of achievement during a ceremony honoring Academy graduates.

## Student Life

A rich, diverse range of recreational opportunities, cultural and artistic events, field experiences, distinguished convocation speakers and classroom guests will enhance the academic curriculum. Faculty members and residential counselors participate in enrichment activities with students.

Commonwealth Honors Academy students live in a residential college with separate floors for men and women. Students learn about themselves and others as they experience what it means to become a community. Outstanding, experienced residential counselors provide guidance and supervision. They develop meaningful friendships, even in the few weeks they live and learn in the Academy.

## Selection Process

All students applying for the Commonwealth Honors Academy should have a 3.5 GPA (on a 4-point scale) and 25 Composite ACT (or the equivalent PSAT, SAT, or ACT-Aspire score). High school juniors throughout Kentucky as well as the Murray State University out-of-state service region are invited to apply. Applicants must be at least 16 years old prior to the beginning of the academy.









9. Please give a brief content overview of a course you would like to develop to teach in the 2019 Commonwealth Honors Academy.

## References

Please include this page with your completed application. You must provide at least two references (three maximum): (1) your immediate supervisor, (2) one other person familiar with your work (may be a student, colleague, or former employer).

Provide each reference with one of the attached reference forms. Be sure to print your name at the top of each form. Each reference may mail his or her recommendation directly or enclose the recommendation in an envelope, signed across the seal, and give it to you to be mailed with the completed application packet.

Please list:

1.  
Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

2.  
Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

3.  
Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Faculty Applications Due:

**Interview Dates:**

Initial Planning Workshop:

Second Planning Workshop:

Academy Dates:

February 1, 2019

**February 20 and 21, 2019**

April 26 and 27, 2019

May 18, 2019

June 3–June 29, 2019 (students arrive June 8)

**Mail completed application to:**

Faculty Application

Commonwealth Honors Academy

Murray State University

304 Lowry Center

Murray KY 42071

**Questions may be addressed to:**

Dr. Danielle Nielsen, Academic Dean

Phone: 270-809-2407

Email: dnielsen@murraystate.edu



## Faculty Reference

Duplicate as needed

If possible each reference should enclose the recommendation in an envelope, signed across the seal, and give it to the applicant to be mailed with the completed application packet. If preferred, mail the reference to: Faculty Application, Commonwealth Honors Academy, Murray State University, 304 Lowry Center, Murray KY 42071-3318.

**This form must be postmarked by February 1, 2019.**

Applicant's Name \_\_\_\_\_

The above named person has applied for a teaching position in the Commonwealth Honors Academy. Please read the description of the Academy on the back of this form and provide your evaluation of the applicant's qualities as a gifted teacher and leader for academically talented students.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name (please print) \_\_\_\_\_

Position \_\_\_\_\_

Institution \_\_\_\_\_

Daytime Phone \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail Address \_\_\_\_\_

## Introduction to the Commonwealth Honors Academy

The Commonwealth Honors Academy (CHA) is an exciting, challenging three-week academic and personal growth program for outstanding high school students who have completed their junior year. Students will be selected from the Commonwealth and surrounding region. There is no cost to students except for personal articles and laundry, snacks, and incidental expenses. Upon successful completion of the Academy, students will be awarded six hours of university credit. Furthermore, these students will have the opportunity to enroll in six hours of tuition-free university credit during the subsequent year. All successful Commonwealth Honors Academy scholars will be awarded a scholarship to attend Murray State University.

The Academy differs from the traditional high school in its approach to learning and creation of a living-learning community. CHA offers students a chance to make friends and work with other enthusiastic, energetic students with high intellectual capacities. The interaction of students with different backgrounds is one of the most valuable aspects of the program.

The Academy provides students, faculty and staff an opportunity to share the joy and discovery of learning and to exchange ideas in a warm community atmosphere. Supportive secondary and university teachers, chosen from the region, work closely with the students in classes, seminars, and extracurricular activities. Outstanding speakers, performers, films, interesting field trips, special events, and recreational experiences offer students an array of stimulating activities that provide fun and enjoyment, as well as learning opportunities.

The Commonwealth Honors Academy seeks applications from gifted and creative teachers, well versed in their subjects and with a broad range of interests and experiences. Faculty members will expand the intellectual horizons of the Academy students, providing leadership by integrating subject matter from the humanities, sciences, and arts. They must be willing to use non-traditional and participatory methods, *with little or no traditional lecturing*. They must relate well and communicate effectively with bright high school students. They should be enthusiastic and flexible enough to keep pace with this challenging, dynamic program. CHA emphasizes a conceptual rather than a skills/memorization approach to learning and an interdisciplinary approach to teaching.

### MISSION

*The mission of the Commonwealth Honors Academy is to challenge, educate, enlighten, and nurture the next generation of civic, academic and business leaders of the region.*

## **Problem-Based Learning (PBL)**

### **What is problem-based or project-based learning?**

Though there is a difference between problem-based and project-based learning, they draw from similar ideologies. In many ways, problem-based learning can be considered a subset of project-based learning, where students are charged with solving a problem. In project-based learning, students are asked to complete a project. Within this project they should face “unclear and uncertain challenges,” and the project should illustrate “realism, opportunities for students to synthesize material, uncertainty, and risk” (Nilson). In a project-based learning class, students “solve real-world problems by designing their own inquiries, planning their learning, organizing their research, and implementing a multitude of strategies” (Bell). In addition to these characteristics, projects should allow students to have “voice and choice,” to reflect on the work they have completed, to participate in “critique and revision,” and to produce some sort of “public product” (Larmer and Mergendoller).

### **What might PBL assignments look like?**

The ultimate deliverable, or the public product, should clearly show how the students in the class meet the learning objectives for the course. These assignments might include white papers or reports, budgets with analysis, a plan of action or policy recommendation, or oral presentations.

### **What challenges might we expect from students?**

Some CHA students are probably already participating in project-based learning in their classrooms, and they might be familiar with the concepts. For other students, you might expect to see “frustration with the open-endedness, complexity, and ambiguity of the problems; the lack of task structure and guidance; and the murky standards for performance” (Nilson). In many ways, these are the same frustrations that we see from students in their first weeks in college, as faculty provide them with tasks that are not as clearly defined as they have experienced in their high school classrooms.

### **Why are we integrating PBL into the CHA curriculum?**

In short, project-based learning fits with the CHA mission of developing future leaders within our region. If students learn to solve problems through inquiry, experience frustration, and learn that not all problems are well-defined, they will grow both as students and as leaders.

Additionally, project-based learning is good pedagogy for all students, but especially for the gifted students who attend CHA. A 2003 study of gifted high school students found that students who experienced “control, choice, challenge, complexity, and caring teachers” were more likely to be engaged in their learning experiences. These are all fundamental characteristics of the PBL classroom.

Finally, it fits into the classroom structure of CHA already. Many of the faculty who teach in CHA are already using and integrating PBL into their classrooms. The service-learning

projects from past years' courses such as completing oral histories for the senior citizen's center, working through the design thinking process with the Humane Society of Calloway County, or producing a benefit concert all fit within the parameters of project-based learning. In our IDHFA courses, students have written missing scenes, filmed interpretations of plays, and adapted works for different media. Public projects are presented during the learning fair. For faculty already integrating these ideas into the classroom, I hope to see students reflecting on these experiences and looking to connect their learning experiences.

### **Resources**

Bell, Stephanie. "Project-Based Learning for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Skills for the Future." *The Clearing House*, vol. 83, 2010, pp 39-43. DOI: 10.1080/00098650903505415

Larmer, John, and John Mergendoller. "Gold Standard PBL: Essential Project Design Elements." *Buck Institute for Education*. 21 April 2015.  
[www.bie.org/blog/gold\\_standard\\_pbl\\_essential\\_project\\_design\\_elements](http://www.bie.org/blog/gold_standard_pbl_essential_project_design_elements)

Larmer, John, John Mergendoller, and Suzie Boss. *Setting the Standard for Project Based Learning*. ASCD, 2015.

Nilson, Linda. *Teaching at its Best: A Research-Based Resource for College Instructors*. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Jossey-Bass, 2010. [www.spu.ac.th/tlc/files/2016/02/Teaching-at-its-best.pdf](http://www.spu.ac.th/tlc/files/2016/02/Teaching-at-its-best.pdf) (see especially Chapter 20).