

**Guide to the  
Pell Honors Program  
Salve Regina University**



**PELL HONORS  
PROGRAM**

**2024-2025**

# Program Overview and Mission Statement

Established in 2001 and named in honor of Claiborne Pell, who represented Rhode Island in the United States Senate from 1961-1997, the Pell Honors Program aims to realize Senator Pell's vision of a liberal arts education as the route to informed and engaged citizenship. The program seeks to provide students with a lively community of highly motivated peers and faculty mentors drawn from many departments and disciplines, united by a passion for and dedication to academic excellence, artistic creativity, and intellectual curiosity.

Through the Pell Honors Program, students develop their analytical and communication skills by entering into respectful but critical debates on topics such as politics, international affairs, human nature, ethics, religion, and society and culture. They also explore in an academic setting Salve Regina University's Mercy Tradition, which seeks to develop students who work to create a world that is harmonious, just, and merciful.

## Mission Statement:

*The Pell Honors Program seeks to utilize a liberal arts education in the Mercy tradition as a route to engaged and informed citizenship. Through rigorous academics and a variety of co-curricular activities, this community of learners prepares its graduates to improve their world and meet the challenges of today's global society.*



Senator Claiborne Pell

Photo: U.S. Senate Historical Office

# Senator Claiborne Pell

A prominent advocate for human rights and a leading voice in the areas of foreign affairs, education, the environment, and the arts, Claiborne de Borda Pell enjoyed a long and distinguished career in public service. First elected to the United States Senate in 1960, Pell represented the people of Rhode Island for a total of six terms until his retirement in 1997. Born into a family of wealth and privilege, and the son of a U.S. congressman and diplomat, Senator Pell earned a bachelor's degree in history from Princeton University in 1940 and a master's degree in international relations from Columbia University in 1946. He enlisted in the U.S. Coast Guard during World War II, serving on convoy duty in the North Atlantic and remaining in the Coast Guard Reserve until 1978 when he retired with the rank of captain. From 1945 to 1952, Senator Pell served with the U.S. State Department as a foreign service officer in Czechoslovakia, Italy, and Washington, D.C. After leaving the State Department, he spent eight years working in the field of investment banking while becoming active in Democratic Party politics.

Senator Pell's long service in the Senate included eight years as chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee from 1987-1995. Among his numerous achievements as a senator were his leading role in creating the Basic Educational Opportunity Grant program (since 1980 known as the Pell Grants) to provide financial aid to college students, and his sponsorship of the legislation establishing the National Endowment for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Humanities. Senator Pell played a critical role in securing passage of the High Speed Ground Transportation Act of 1965, which improved rail travel within the northeast corridor from Boston to Washington, D.C., and ultimately led to the establishment of the Amtrak system. He was also a strong advocate for environmental protection, particularly involving the world's oceans.

Having a lifelong interest in foreign affairs, Senator Pell attended the 1945 San Francisco conference that established the United Nations, and he remained a strong supporter of the organization for the rest of his life. He was an outspoken opponent of the Vietnam War and, during the later years of the Cold War with the Soviet Union, became a major voice in the push for reducing nuclear weapons. In the words of President Joe Biden, Pell's longtime colleague on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Senator Pell was "one of our nation's most important voices in foreign policy for over 30 years."

Upon his retirement from the Senate in 1997, Pell, a longtime resident of Newport, began a close relationship with Salve Regina University that resulted in the establishment of the Pell Center for International Relations and Public Policy and the Pell Honors Program. Senator Pell's tremendous legacy as a public servant will continue to live on through the educational opportunities provided to Salve Regina students by the programs established in his honor.

# Admissions

The highly selective Pell Honors Program is open to students from all academic majors. Students who demonstrate strong potential for academic excellence, exhibiting both intellectual curiosity and a passion for learning, are identified during the University admissions process. These students are invited to apply for acceptance into the program.

Current students who wish to apply to the program may do so at the end of the fall semester of their freshman year. The process starts by scheduling a meeting with the program director in November. To be eligible for admission into the program, students must have earned a cumulative GPA of 3.80 or above during their first semester and must submit an application packet that includes the completion of the Pell Honors admissions essay, a writing sample (in the form of a course paper from their first semester), and two letters of recommendation from full-time Salve Regina faculty. The application materials must be submitted to the program director by the fall semester's last day of classes.

# Academic Requirements

To graduate with the Pell Honors designation, all Pell Honors students must complete the following requirements. *No substitutions or exceptions to these requirements can be granted.*

## A. Required Courses

- Pell Honors sections of University Seminar I and University Seminar II.
- Pell Honors sections of required core courses in two of the following disciplines: History, Political Science, Economics, Psychology, or Sociology/Anthropology, for a total of two courses. The two courses must be from two different subject areas. All honors sections will carry the letter P in the section designation (ex: POL120-P1 and HIS113-P2).
- Two Pell Special Topics courses (PEL299). The offerings will vary each semester with topics that are both contemporary and diverse.
  - PEL299 courses that include a letter in their course designation (ex: PEL299R) also fulfill a core requirement in that subject area (R = Religious/Theological Studies, P = Philosophy, H = History, O = Political Science, E = Literature, and S = Sociology/Anthropology).
  - Students can receive credit for PEL299 special topics courses while on study abroad with approval. Courses selected to fulfill a PEL299 should be upper-level courses (i.e., local equivalent to 200-level courses or above) and should clearly relate to the study abroad destination as well as the Pell Honors Program's mission of utilizing a liberal arts education as a route to engaged and informed citizenship.

## **B. Experiential Learning Requirement**

Pell Honors students must complete one of the following options to fulfill the experiential learning requirement. Students must complete an approval form for their experiential learning requirement the semester before they will begin it. The form is available on the Pell Honors Program website (<http://www.salve.edu/pell-honors-program>). Upon completion of their experiential learning requirement, students must email [pellhonors@salve.edu](mailto:pellhonors@salve.edu) to notify Pell Honors administrators that they have completed the requirement.

➤ ***Study Abroad Experience***

All University-sanctioned study abroad experiences fulfill this requirement.

➤ ***Academic Internship for Credit***

An internship for course credit (3 credits required) within a student's academic major or minor.

➤ ***Nuala Pell Leadership Program in Public Service***

Successful completion the Nuala Pell Leadership Program in Public Service.

➤ ***Professional Fieldwork***

Pell Honors students in the Nursing, Education, or Social Work majors complete fieldwork within the major that fulfills the experiential learning requirement.

➤ ***Undergraduate Research with a Faculty Mentor***

The following undergraduate research options will fulfill the Pell Honors experiential learning requirement:

- Biology, Chemistry, or Environmental Studies majors who complete scientific laboratory research for credit (BIO497-498, CHM497-498, ENV497). Students must complete 3 credits to fulfill the Pell requirement.
- Students working as research assistants for faculty members who are McAuley Scholars through the McAuley Institute for Mercy Education.
- Students who complete an archaeological field school program.

- Students who complete an independent study course with a faculty member within their academic major or minor that results in a substantial scholarly project (a research paper, a scientific report, artistic or creative work, a case study, etc.) and a public presentation at either the SRyou Student Exposition or a conference.
- Students who conduct original research with a faculty member that results in an academic conference presentation and/or a scholarly publication. This includes Claiborne Pell Student Research Fellows.

## Policies

### A. Living-Learning Community

Residential Pell Honors students are required to live in honors program housing, with Pell Honors roommates, during their first year at Salve Regina University, with the option for honors housing in the second year.

### B. Academic Standing

To remain in good standing, students must maintain a Cumulative GPA of 3.30 or higher. GPAs are not rounded. If the cumulative GPA is below 3.30 at any one of the following checkpoints – the end of sophomore year, the end of junior year, or the end of senior year – the student will be dismissed from the program. Dismissals will be communicated via email. Please note that dismissals are final. Students dismissed from the program cannot apply for readmission at a later date.

In non-checkpoint semesters, warning notices will be sent via email to those students with a cumulative GPA below 3.30. Students who have received a warning notice may still register with their Pell Honors cohort, but credit overload waiver requests cannot be approved.

### C. Advanced Placement Credits

Although Pell Honors students may apply any AP credits earned to fulfill their University core curriculum and/or major requirements, those credits do not fulfill Pell Honors Program course requirements.

### D. Credit Overload Waiver

Starting in the spring semester of freshman year (once a University GPA is on file), students with a cumulative GPA of 3.30 or higher may apply for credit overload waivers. A credit overload waiver permits students to register for credits above the maximum allowed at no cost to the student. Pell Honors students are permitted up to 9 credit overload waivers during

their tenure at Salve Regina University. Students should not register for more than 21 credits total in a single semester. The request for credit overload waivers can be completed here: <https://salve.edu/overload-approval-form>. *Please note that overload waiver requests cannot be processed over the summer.*

#### **E. Priority Course Registration**

Because they have additional academic requirements to fulfill, Pell Honors students register for classes prior to non-Pell students within their class year.

#### **F. Pass/Fail Grading Option**

Pell Honors students are not permitted to select the pass/fail grading option for Pell Honors Program course requirements.

## **Student Opportunities**

#### **A. Student Activities**

The Pell Honors Program provides opportunities for Pell Honors students to attend cultural events, trips, and special guest lectures, as well as participate in social activities. Examples of past events include:

- Day trips to points of historical and cultural interest
- Walking tours of historic Newport
- Live-streaming theater performances at the Jane Pickens Theater
- Book reading and discussion groups
- Lectures by esteemed visiting scholars on a variety of topics

#### **B. Center for Global Education and Fellowships**

Pell Honors students are encouraged to study abroad in order to prepare for working and living in an interdependent world. Study abroad offers the opportunity to view your major and minor academic fields through the lens of a different educational system and culture while also developing your intercultural communication skills and global knowledge through direct lived experience. In addition, employers, graduate schools, and distinguished fellowship programs often look for candidates who have skills sharpened by study abroad, such as independence, flexibility, and broad-mindedness.

Study abroad programs range from 1-8 week “short” programs offered during winter, spring, and summer breaks to semester and academic year long programs. Pell Honors students are encouraged to consider taking part in multiple study abroad programs if possible. For example, many honors students have participated in the four-week summer Oxford program

during the summer of freshman or sophomore year and then studied abroad the spring semester of their junior year, in Oxford or another global location suited to their major and interests.

Pell Honors students should plan their study abroad well in advance and take a thoughtful approach to how study abroad can be integrated in their academic plans. Students take a mix of major, core, and elective courses abroad. With careful planning Pell students can leverage study abroad to add a global dimension to thesis work or to develop institutional research contacts to support future fellowship applications.

All Pell Honors students should consider themselves as viable candidates for fellowship applications and should take an active approach early in their undergraduate career to researching and preparing to apply for fellowships. Fellowships are exciting funded opportunities that support study, research, and work overseas and in the U.S. during or after your undergraduate studies and help build your academic and professional credentials. A sample of fellowship opportunities such as the Fulbright, Rhodes, and Marshall scholarships are introduced here: <https://salve.edu/distinguished-fellowships>. Salve Regina offers information and advising support for students interested in applying for these fellowships.

Students should begin in freshman year to craft a four-year experience that will support a strong fellowship application. Successful applicants will have several of the following qualities and experiences:

- Strong academic record
- Research experience
- Experience living or studying abroad
- Second language proficiency
- Internship experience
- Community engagement and/or service
- Tutoring, mentoring or teaching experience
- Student leadership experience
- Strong faculty references
- Ability to write well
- A vision for their future that builds on their academic and extracurricular experience

### **C. Claiborne Pell Fellowship Program**

The Claiborne Pell Research Fellowship, funded by a generous donation from Bernie and Mary McKay and administered by the Pell Honors Program, is intended to enhance Salve Regina University's academic profile by providing funding for faculty-student collaborative research that will result in a peer-reviewed work of scholarship. The Pell Honors Program will be offering two \$5,000 research fellowships each year to research teams composed of a full-time faculty member and a Pell Honors student. The faculty member will propose a research project and select a Pell Honors student to serve as their co-researcher or research assistant.



In an effort to continue the legacy of Senator Claiborne Pell, all research projects that receive funding must directly relate to Senator Pell's legislative interests and public service legacy. Possible research subjects include: International Relations/Diplomacy; International Conflict Resolution; Democracy and Human Rights; American Foreign Policy; Global Politics; Domestic and Global Economics; Cybersecurity; Environmental Protection/Conservation; Maritime/Ocean Studies; Global Health; Women's Leadership and Education; Education Policy; The Arts/Humanities and Public Affairs.

#### **D. Pell Center for International Relations and Public Policy**

The Pell Honors Program has a longstanding relationship with the Pell Center for International Relations and Public Policy at Salve Regina University. Located in the historic Young Building on Bellevue Avenue, the Pell Center is a multidisciplinary research center focused at the intersection of politics, policies, and ideas. Dedicated to honoring Senator Claiborne Pell's legacy, the center promotes American engagement in the world, effective government at home, and civic participation by all Americans. The Pell Center hosts a variety of events throughout the academic year including an evening lecture series featuring distinguished speakers and a lunchtime roundtable series where faculty and students discuss a broad range of contemporary public issues.

The Pell Center also administers the Nuala Pell Leadership Program in Public Service, which provides opportunities to a select number of diverse, high-achieving student fellows, exposing them to both the theory and practice of leadership. Named in honor of the late Nuala Pell, wife of Senator Claiborne Pell and an avid supporter of public service, the program aims to build leadership skills that can be used in the classroom and beyond. Accomplished leaders from the public sector leaven the experience with practical real-world lessons from their own lives and students travel to Washington, D.C., for immersion with policy-makers at the federal level.



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