Dear Student of High Achievement,

I would like to tell you about a special opportunity available to you through the Humanities Center at the University of Hartford.

The Humanities Center is accepting applications for Student Fellows for next year’s honors seminar. Students with a minimum of a 3.0 grade point average who will be sophomores, juniors, or seniors in the 2018-2019 academic year are eligible to participate in the Humanities Center as Student Fellows.

As a Fellow, you attend a year-long honors seminar on the yearly theme. Lauren Cook, Associate Professor of Cinema, will lead the Humanities Center Seminar for this next year. She has selected the theme of “Evidence in a Post-Truth World” for the seminar. Here you will get to know some of the brightest and most articulate students at the University of Hartford. You will also attend lectures by both university faculty who are doing research on this theme and visiting speakers. Here is a description of the seminar:

“Fake news” and “alternative facts” are recent additions to our political discourse. While political dishonesty is nothing new, there is an alarming new trend of rejecting overwhelming evidence in favor of emotional appeal. In 2016, the Oxford Dictionaries selected “post-truth” as the word of the year. It defines the word as “relating to or denoting circumstances in which objective facts are less influential in shaping public opinion than appeals to emotion and personal belief.” The aim of this course is to understand what has contributed to this trend, survey past and present examples, and to develop strategies for critically evaluating evidence, sources, and attempts at emotional appeal. As part of this course, students will be challenged to become media content creators. By learning the methods of creating media, students can experientially understand just how much they can influence and also be influenced by advertising, news, and any other form of storytelling.

The Fall semester project will be to create content for a TV show, entirely designed and developed by the class, on the subject of Evidence in a Post-Truth World. The show will air on campus on STN2 in the Spring and be available for web streaming. No previous media experience is needed to take the class or complete assignments, just an interest in the subject. Subjects and topics will be developed by each student in the class, drawing upon their discipline specific backgrounds. Media content could take the form of video essay, parody, documentary, interview, panel discussion, artistic response, performance, etc. Students will be asked to reflect on their position as media creators-- critically analyzing issues of representation, ethics, and their own rhetorical approaches to creating media. The Spring semester will be a series of lectures by faculty fellows and visiting speakers.

Students who are selected for this seminar are awarded a fellowship and will receive a stipend of $500 and take the seminar for a total of six credits, three in the fall term and three in the spring term.* The courses are listed as HON 389 in the fall 2018 schedule and HON 390 in the spring 2019 schedule. The
class meets both semesters on Tuesday evenings, 7:30-10:00 pm, and student fellows must take both semesters.

You may also receive credit toward your major or minor with the permission of your department and college. The chair of your department can contact Lauren Cook with any questions.

To apply, send an email by Friday, April 13, to Lauren Cook (lcook@hartford.edu) and to me (Nicholas Ealy, Humanities Center Director at ealy@hartford.edu) that includes the following information:

- a brief explanation of why you want to participate in the Seminar (1 page)
- your major and minor (if you have one)
- your grade point average
- your local AND home phone number and mailing address
- your e-mail address
- your student ID number (not your social security number)

You will be notified of acceptance by Friday, April 27, with instructions for registration. Do not attempt to register for HON 389 (Fall ‘18) until you have been notified of your acceptance. If you have any questions about the application process, please contact me at ealy@hartford.edu. In the meantime, I recommend you register for four classes for fall 2018, as this would be a fifth class for you.

Sincerely,

Nicholas Ealy
Director, Humanities Center

* Students who already receive a full tuition discount are not eligible for the stipend.