

## Honors College Action Item Team Recommendation

The Honors College Action Item team met twice to discuss the proposal and the materials circulated by the chair. The team strongly endorses the idea of an Honors College for the IUPUI campus. In order for the campus to take the steps necessary for building a solid foundation on which to found an Honors College, the action team recommends the following:

- Maintain the present schedule, which calls for the Honors Program to prepare an internal self-study during AY 2006/07 and undergo a national external review during AY 2007/08;
- Assess the feasibility of moving from "program" to "college" status in light of the outcomes of this review;
- Adopt the "Basic Characteristics of a Fully Developed Honors Program" (Appendix) as presented by the National Collegiate Honors Council as the keys to preparing a solid academic foundation from which a college might be developed;
- Use the "Basic Characteristics of a Fully Developed Honors College" contained in the Appendix noted above as the blueprint for developing the Honors Program toward fulfilling the nationally established norms;
- Understanding that scholarships are a critical component of attracting students to honors programs, establish and maintain sufficient "full-ride" scholarships for recruiting and retaining high-achieving, motivated students.
- Support schools and departments in the development of free-standing dedicated Honors courses that attract and support Honors students as part of the regular teaching load of Honors faculty.
- Enable existing and future students taking honors activities at IUPUI to receive the full career benefit of these experiences by ensuring that they are clearly denoted on transcripts. Inadequacies of computer and service systems are not acceptable reasons for a failure to support our best students in this way.

The team members recognize that this process would take several years to complete, but it is essential that the Honors Program be developed in accord with the national guidelines before it can become an Honors College. The team also recommends that the campus appoint a committee composed of faculty who are involved in teaching Honors courses to oversee the growth and development of the Program toward College status.

## APPENDIX

The following sixteen observations represent the efforts of the National Collegiate Honors Council to present a standard for a "fully developed Honors Program" to which developing programs across the country might compare themselves. Each of the "characteristics" is followed by my assessment of where the IUPUI Honors Program with respect to these characteristics. The characteristics are available at the National Collegiate Honors Council website: <http://www.nchchonors.org/basic.htm>.

### Basic Characteristics of a Fully Developed Honors Program

No one model of an honors program can be superimposed on all types of institutions. However, there are characteristics which are common to successful, fully developed honors programs. Listed below are those characteristics, although not all characteristics are necessary for an honors program to be considered a successful and/or fully developed honors program.

1. A fully-developed honors program should be carefully set up to accommodate the special needs and abilities of the undergraduate students it is designed to serve. This entails identifying the targeted student population by some clearly articulated set of criteria (e.g., GPA, SAT score, a written essay). A program with open admission needs to spell out expectations for retention in the program and for satisfactory completion of program requirements.

[Mullen's Evaluation] The Honors Program has set the admission requirements for incoming students at the following level: SAT 1200 or higher/ACT 26 or higher; top 10% of high school class; and a high school GPA of 3.5 or higher. Freshmen and sophomores who are already enrolled at IUPUI are invited to complete the Application for Admission and Scholarship to the Honors Program once they have completed at least 12 hours of non-remedial course work with a GPA of 3.2 or higher. Current IUPUI juniors who are interested in completing the Application for Admission and Scholarship should have a GPA of 3.3 or higher and have completed at least 9 hours of honors course work previously. Transfer students who have completed at least 12 transferable hours at their previous institution with an overall GPA of 3.2 or higher are encouraged to complete the Application for Admission and Scholarship. In order to earn the Honors notation, students must complete 18 credit hours of Honors work with a GPA of 3.3 in all university course work completed and a GPA of 3.3 in all Honors course work completed. We have begun tracking non-scholarship participants this academic year.

2. The program should have a clear mandate from the institutional administration ideally in the form of a mission statement clearly stating the objectives and responsibilities of the program and defining its place in both the administrative and academic structure of the institution. This mandate or mission statement should be such as to assure the permanence and stability of the program by

guaranteeing an adequate budget and by avoiding any tendency to force the program to depend on temporary or spasmodic dedication of particular faculty members or administrators. In other words, the program should be fully institutionalized so as to build thereby a genuine tradition of excellence.

[Mullen's Evaluation] The overall mission of the Honors Program was written by the 1998 IUPUI AAHE Summer Quality Academy Team that produced the present development plan. The mission statement that is used was composed on the basis of that document, which was presented to and accepted by the campus administration. With regard to the Program's budget, there is no guarantee of funding contained in the document. Though the document notes that the faculty of University College will be faculty of the Honors Program and awarded Honors medallions to wear at the University College Convocation, they do not, in general, offer Honors courses or serve in an advisory capacity for the Program. It would be inaccurate to suggest that the Honors Program at present is "fully institutionalized." It is not uncommon for the Program to be viewed as a part of University College rather than as a campus-wide program for undergraduates in any degree program.

3. The honors director should report to the chief academic officer of the institution.

[Mullen's Evaluation] Since my appointment as Director in 1998, I have reported directly to the Dean of University College and have also served as Associate Dean of University College. The Executive Vice Chancellor and Dean of Faculties has not had an active hand in the Honors Program.

4. There should be an honors curriculum featuring special courses, seminars, colloquia and independent study established in harmony with the mission statement and in response to the needs of the program.

[Mullen's Evaluation] This is one of the weakest areas of development for the Program. Due to the lack of an Honors tradition on the IUPUI campus, and, in some cases, an anti-Honors attitude, course development has been very difficult. Apart from two Honors writing courses (W140 and W150) and three Honors economics courses (E201, E202, and E270), one or two of which are normally cancelled because of a lack of enrollments, there are no freestanding, dedicated Honors courses on the campus. The H-option remains the most common way in which students earn Honors credit. Embedded Honors courses are growing in number, but these, when done properly, require instructors to invest additional meeting time with students that is equivalent to overload work. The lack of course development is directly related to the issue of enrollments. Departments are generally unwilling to allow faculty to offer dedicated Honors courses with capped enrollments when that same section is capable of enrolling additional students. The lack of institutionalization of the Program means that Deans have not made it a priority to develop and offer Honors courses as part of faculty normal teaching loads. All this has contributed to a type of stagnation for the

Program, which makes it heavily dependent upon scholarship students who are obligated to take Honors courses. This cohort, however, is not sufficiently large to justify independent courses. At the same time, the lack of real Honors courses gives non-scholarship students little incentive to participate in the Program.

5. The program requirements themselves should include a substantial portion of the participants' undergraduate work, usually in the vicinity of 20% or 25% of their total course work and certainly no less than 15%. Students who successfully complete Honors Program requirements should receive suitable institutional recognition. This can be accomplished by such measures as an appropriate notation on the student's academic transcript, separate listing of Honors Graduates in commencement programs, and the granting of an Honors degree.

[Mullen's Evaluation] The IUPUI Honors Program requires students to complete 18 credit hours of Honors course work in order to earn the general Honors notation. This amounts to 14.7% of the standard 122 credit hours required for a degree. Students completing the Honors requirements receive the "General Honors Notation" on their transcripts. If they are in an Indiana University school, they also receive the notation on their diploma. Purdue University does not allow notations on the diploma. Additionally, each student completing the requirements for the notation receives an Honors medallion that can be worn at graduation and a plaque noting his/her achievements.

6. The program should be so formulated that it relates effectively both to all the college work for the degree (e.g., by satisfying general education requirements) and to the area of concentration, departmental specialization, pre-professional or professional training.

[Mullen's Evaluation] The IUPUI Honors Programs strives to complement the school-based curriculum in which participating students are earning their degree. The H-option, though greatly overused by students, is an excellent way for them to earn Honors credits while doing work in the area of their major.

7. The program should be both visible and highly reputed throughout the institution so that it is perceived as providing standards and models of excellence for students and faculty across the campus.

[Mullen's Evaluation] Honors on the IUPUI campus has not achieved this status since it has failed to be fully institutionalized. Because the campus has not chosen to make it a priority, participation by faculty is generally voluntary and subject to departmental expectations with respect to generating enrollments. It is very rare that a faculty member teaching an Honors course has that course counted as a part of the regular teaching load.

8. Faculty participating in the program should be fully identified with the aims of the program. They should be carefully selected on the basis of exceptional teaching skills and the ability to provide intellectual leadership to able students.

[Mullen's Evaluation] The Honors Program, technically speaking, has a faculty composed of the faculty of University College, though, as noted above, these persons rarely have any involvement with the Program or make any discernible contribution. With rare exception, the faculty who participate are faculty who are approached by students to offer a course as an H-option. The growth of "embedded" Honors courses, i.e., courses which make the Honors requirement a part of the regular syllabus and reserve seats for Honors students, are becoming more numerous, but faculty participation is most commonly by choice rather than by selection based on ability.

9. The program should occupy suitable quarters constituting an honors center with such facilities as an honors library, lounge, reading rooms, personal computers and other appropriate decor.

[Mullen's Evaluation] At present the Honors office has access to the University College Reading Room. There is a computer, printer, and fax machine for student use. Additionally there is a small refrigerator and microwave available for student use. There is adequate seating space for approximately 10-12 people. There is no suitable space for programming dedicated to the Honors Program at present.

10. The director or other administrative officer charged with administering the program should work in close collaboration with a committee or council of faculty members representing the colleges and/or departments served by the program.

[Mullen's Evaluation] The Director works with the members of the Honors Council composed of faculty representing various schools across campus. Though they serve to advise the Director, few of the members actually offer courses for the Program. The Council needs to be reconstituted with faculty who have a vested interest in the development of the Program. To the best of my knowledge, there are no bylaws for the Honors Council.

11. The program should have in place a committee of honors students to serve as liaison with the honors faculty committee or council who must keep the student group fully informed on the program and elicit their cooperation in evaluation and development. This student group should enjoy as much autonomy as possible conducting the business of the committee in representing the needs and concerns of all honors students to the administration, and it should also be included in governance, serving on the advisory/policy committee as well as constituting the group that governs the student association.

[Mullen's Evaluation] At the present time, the President of the Honors Club is included on the Honors Council. Otherwise, there is no student committee to work in cooperation with the Honors Council or to represent student interests to the Honors staff.

12. There should be provisions for special academic counseling of honors students by uniquely qualified faculty and/or staff personnel.

[Mullen's Evaluation] In March of 2006, Ms. Deborah Grew left the Honors Program to take a position as a student advisor in the School of Nursing. Prior to that time she had served as the Honors advisor. A search is presently underway for an Assistant Director for Academic Affairs, who will have the responsibility of coordinating Honors advising on the campus, and who will work closely with the Assistant Director for Recruiting and Retention to provide special Honors advising for students.

13. The honors program, in distinguishing itself from the rest of the institution, serves as a kind of laboratory within which faculty can try things they have always wanted to try but for which they could find no suitable outlet. When such efforts are demonstrated to be successful, they may well become institutionalized, thereby raising the general level of education within the college or university for all students. In this connection, the honors curriculum should serve as a prototype for educational practices that can work campus-wide in the future.

[Mullen's Evaluation] The Honors Program actively encourages faculty to develop innovative courses, such as "integrator" courses for Honors students. The main tool it has used in this endeavor is the Honors Summer Faculty Fellowship, which is a \$3000 grant to faculty who propose new course development in Honors and who agree to offer the course at least two times. The Program could support as many as ten of these grants per year, though it has never had that number of applicants.

14. The fully-developed honors program must be open to continuous and critical review and be prepared to change in order to maintain its distinctive position of offering distinguished education to the best students in the institution.

[Mullen's Evaluation] The Honors Program is preparing an internal review during AY 2006/07 in preparation for an external review of its progress in AY 2007/08. It remains open to review and to changes that will allow it to serve students to the best of its ability.

15. A fully-developed program will emphasize the participatory nature of the honors educational process by adopting such measures as offering opportunities for students to participate in regional and national conferences, honors semesters, international programs, community service, and other forms of experiential education.

[Mullen's Evaluation] The IUPUI Honors Program revised its curriculum during AY 2004/05 to make it possible for students to earn Honors credits for foreign language study, study abroad, community service, and cross-cultural studies. It also participates in the National Student Exchange Program. It actively encourages students to participate in the Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program and to make presentations at appropriate venues.

16. Fully-developed two-year and four-year honors programs will have articulation agreements by which honors graduates from two-year colleges are accepted into four-year honors programs when they meet previously agreed-upon requirements.

[Mullen's Evaluation] Qualified transfer students and graduates from two-year colleges may be admitted to the Honors Program and may receive Honors credits for up to nine credit hours for Honors work done elsewhere.

Approved by the NCHC Executive Committee (3/4/94)

### Basic Characteristics of a Fully Developed Honors College

An honors educational experience can occur in a wide variety of institutional settings. When institutions establish an honors college or embark upon a transition from an honors program to an honors college, they face a transformational moment. No one model defines this transformation. Although not all of the following characteristics are necessary to be considered a successful or fully developed honors college, the National Collegiate Honors Council recognizes these as representative:

A fully developed honors college should incorporate the relevant characteristics of a fully developed honors program.

A fully developed honors college should exist as an equal collegiate unit within a multi-collegiate university structure.

The head of a fully developed honors college should be a dean reporting directly to the chief academic officer of the institution and serving as a full member of the Council of Deans, if one exists. The dean should be a full-time, 12-month appointment.

The operational and staff budgets of fully developed honors colleges should provide resources at least comparable to other collegiate units of equivalent size.

A fully developed honors college should exercise increased coordination and control of departmental honors where the college has emerged out of such a decentralized system.

A fully developed honors college should exercise considerable control over honors recruitment and admissions, including the appropriate size of the incoming class. Admission to the honors college should be by separate application.

An honors college should exercise considerable control over its policies, curriculum, and selection of faculty.

The curriculum of a fully developed honors college should offer significant course opportunities across all four years of study.

The curriculum of the fully developed honors college should constitute at least 20% of a student's degree program. An honors thesis or project should be required.

Where the home university has a significant residential component, the fully developed honors college should offer substantial honors residential opportunities.

The distinction awarded by a fully developed honors college should be announced at commencement, noted on the diploma, and featured on the student's final transcript.

Like other colleges within the university, a fully developed honors college should be involved in alumni affairs and development and should have an external advisory board.

Approved by the NCHC Executive Committee (6/25/05)

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