

REPORT OF THE HONORS PROGRAM TASK FORCE

April 2010

The Task Force on the Honors Program met several times this semester and used the ANGEL site to discuss issues. We have come up with the following eighteen points for your consideration. We believe that these suggestions, if carried out, will help to strengthen the Honors Program and help to raise the academic profile of the university, thereby also contributing to our recruitment efforts. Some of these suggestions might seem costly, but we were told not to worry about costs and, clearly, we did not. We are grateful that you have taken an interest in the Honors Program and we hope that most, if not all, of the following suggestions can be put into effect.

1. The Program should have a director who has at least a half-time release, plus a stipend. The director should also have secretarial help (50%) and an office devoted to the Honors Program.
2. The new director should create a vision statement for the Honors Program.
2. The university should give students in the Program the option of Honors housing and then use that housing in the service of the Program by scheduling classes or other activities in the vicinity.
3. The number of courses required of Honors students should be raised to 6. This change should not disqualify any Honors students, since these courses will count toward the students' CCC requirements. Advisors should be kept advised about Honors students' requirements
4. The university should continue to encourage faculty to teach Honors Seminars that are interdisciplinary and multicultural so that students will learn how to be global citizens.
5. And the university should then use those Honors Seminars as models for what General Education courses should look like.
6. The university should devise a better system for recruiting faculty to teach in the Program, along with a better system of repaying departments whose faculty are teaching Honors Seminars.
7. The university should investigate the possibility of creating an interdisciplinary upper-level course for students in the Program.
8. The university should encourage all academic departments and programs to propose Honors components for students in their junior and senior years (e.g., theses, research projects, performances). Such Honors components should be open to all students, not only students in the Honors Program. Furthermore, participation in the Honors Program and in departmental Honors should be noted on transcripts and diplomas.

9. The university should offer students more than the \$500 initial award for being accepted into the Program. One option might be that instead of actually giving them more money, we supply tickets to campus performances—plays, operas, and concerts. Another possibility would be something like a 20% discount ticket for students in the Program. The university should find a way to help students in the Program pay for study-abroad programs.
10. The university should investigate the possibility of rejoining NCHC (the National Collegiate Honors Council), if we determine that such membership would be beneficial.
11. The university should create an Honors Lounge, perhaps with computer stations.
12. The university should consider incorporating a service component in the Honors Program, not as a part of courses but as a project to help create a sense of community in the Program while also helping the larger community.
13. The university should involve alumni in the Program, not only for fundraising purposes (though certainly for those) but also for meetings with students on practical topics, perhaps dealing with life after graduation.
14. The university should establish either a newsletter or blog for students in the Program to encourage discussion and interaction among the Honors Students. Such a newsletter or blog would also be valuable for alumni and parents and might serve as a recruitment tool
15. Faculty teaching Honors Seminars should meet to discuss their courses. Students doing Honors theses should make public presentations about their work.
17. The university should publicize that no more than 10% of incoming students are admitted into the Honors Program.
18. In conjunction with #17, students in the Honors Program should be required to maintain a minimum 3.0 GPA, with a probationary status for students who fall below that level. (As appropriate, that minimum GPA might be raised in the future.)

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