

Why capable students may choose not to apply for admission to the Honors College

Note: The UHCC was asked by the Dean of the Honors College to consider this question. The following list of possible reasons was compiled from advisors from across campus and by interviewing several students who are academically capable of being in the Honors College but chose not to apply. Although responses from advisors were anonymous, it's apparent that we heard from folks in Forestry, CLA, Engineering, and Education (there may have been more).

Compiled by Ed Jensen, Chair of UHCC 2/10/12

1. Thesis
 - a. Just the thought of it is intimidating.
 - b. Uncertainty about what's involved/how to do it.
 - c. Unsure if it's worth the effort.
 - i. Not apparent that employers value it (in proportion to what it takes to achieve it).
 - d. Some colleges require comprehensive assignments that, when taken together with the HC Thesis, seem overwhelming.
 - i. Example given was College of Ed. Educational Work Samples (200+ pages).
 - ii. But other colleges require a thesis or a comprehensive capstone project for students prior to graduation.
 1. Is there a way to blend these (if so, is advertised?)
2. Application process
 - a. *From a faculty member who is the parent of a potential HC student:* Laziness on the part of today's students (during the application process).
 - b. Deadline for HC may come before some capable students make the final decision to attend OSU.
3. OSU level considerations
 - a. OSU has lower admissions standards than many "peer" institutions, so our percentage of UHC qualified students should be lower.
 - b. First year adjustment period often sets students back.
 - c. Some beginning classes at OSU do a lot to convince students that they are not worthy/capable of meeting high academic standards (examples given were Math 251 (and above), and Chem 221 (and above))
4. College level considerations
 - a. There are many majors on campus where the curricula are so tightly prescribed that students don't have the leeway to complete extra HC requirements.
 - b. Some programs at OSU offer very few HC classes.
 - i. Without this identity, many capable students don't see a reason to apply to HC.
 - c. Some colleges already offer small classes for majors, so the lure of small HC classes is less.
5. Lack of awareness
 - a. Many students are simply unaware—of what it is and why they should consider it.
6. Intimidation (even by some of our best students). *This is a student comment.*
 - a. Is there are way to "ease into" the Honors College?
 - b. If a student joins during his/her second year, do they still have same requirements, or are they reduced by one year?
 - c. Self-doubt on the part of students
 - i. even from students who performed very well in HS
 - ii. some say they just don't need the extra stress
7. Perceptions of HC and HC students
 - a. Afraid of perception by peers that HC students are "too good" for them

8. Differential tuition seen as too high. (unsure if it's worth it)
9. Overall work load
 - a. Students are uncertain that it's worth it—too much, too hard, will take longer, too costly.
 - b. Uncertain pay-off after graduation (unless they're going to grad school or med school, etc.)

Two potential values in compiling this list:

1. *So these potential reasons can be tackled head-on when talking about the HC with prospective students (either in-person or on-line).*
2. *So we can lower some of the barriers that we have the ability to influence.*