

Honors College Council

Annual Report 2020-2021

Membership

Bob Mason, Chair '21	College of Science
Angelika Buchanan '21	College of Business
Viktor Bovbjerg '22	College of Public Health & Human Sciences
Tiah Edmunson-Morton '22	University Libraries
Elizabeth Barstow '23	College of Liberal Arts
Matt Johnston, '23	College of Engineering

Student Members:

- Nya Imani Buckner
- Alex Grejuc

Ex-Officio Members:

- University Honors College – Toni Doolen
- University Honors College – Susan Jackson Rodgers

Executive Committee Liaison – Shannon Riggs

Standing Rules

The Honors College Council has jurisdiction over the policies and procedures of the Honors College and advises the Honors College Dean. The Honors College Council is responsible for admission and other academic requirements including degree requirements; criteria for selection of the members of the Honors faculty; maintenance and regular assessment of program quality; and the curricular structure and content of the Honors College.

The Honors College Council consists of at least six current or former Honors College Faculty members and at least two students, the students appointed from among the Honors College students.

Administration of the Honors College rests with the Dean, who shall be an ex-officio, non-voting member of the Honors College Council

Summary

The main activity of the Council this year was the review of several changes that the Honors College would like to make for contact courses and Honors College admission procedures. Specific items discussed or voted on are as follows:

November 12, 2020 Admissions Ad Hoc Policy Change

Because of the unusual circumstances brought on by the COVID pandemic, some students may find themselves unable to demonstrate that they meet the minimum admissions criteria through GPA or test scores due to circumstances beyond their control due to the pandemic. The Honors College proposes the following language be adopted on an *ad hoc* basis during the pandemic:

The Honors College is currently allowing applications from applicants whose GPA or test scores have been impacted by circumstances related to COVID-19 and therefore do not meet one of the Honors College minimum criteria. If you do not meet the Honors College minimum criteria but wish to apply, you should complete all sections of the Honors College application and ensure that you have provided relevant information on the additional information/circumstances question of the OSU application. All applications will be reviewed holistically and fully considered.

We had a good discussion of this working policy, and the Council came to a consensus that we should not vote to formally change the admissions process that has been modified for the particular challenges brought on by the pandemic. Rather, the consensus was that the Council should endorse this modified admissions process and then revisit this process in the future if permanent changes are desired. The Council

members all agreed to this plan.

January 11, 2021 Honors College Committees and Roles Explained

A question was asked that sought to understand what the role of the Council was as compared to other advisory groups to the Honors College. Dean Doolen gave a very informative overview of the different groups and how they may intersect, but do not significantly overlap. Briefly, there is an Honors College Board of Regents which has a primary role in helping guide the Dean on development (fund raising and external engagement) work. They also provide an external voice and are consulted on broad overarching initiatives, like the new strategic plan. The Parents Leadership Circle seeks the engagement of families in supporting the current Honors College students. The Alumni Leadership Circle engages the alumni in helping the current Honors College students in networking, internships, and other professional skills to aid in their career development. The Honors College also has its own Curriculum Committee which provides guidance on curriculum and assessment. The Honors College Council is mostly concerned with academic policies, admissions and degree requirements. Several ideas were proposed for projects that the Honors College Council could work on for the rest of the year. The number exceeded the amount of meeting times available. We were off to a good start!

February 23, 2021 Approval Process for Petitioning Faculty/Additional Ranks Added to the "Automatically Acceptable" Categories

Associate Dean Sue Rogers proposed changes to the approval process for petitioning faculty. We discussed the changes and agreed to vote on the changes as amended in our next meeting.

We considered additional categories for "automatically acceptable" such as **Clinical faculty, Professor of Practice, Professor of Teaching (if adopted), Faculty Research Assistants**, etc. The Faculty Handbook is currently undergoing revision, so we agreed to wait until those changes are complete before adding other categories. The Honors College Council can revisit this discussion at that time.

April 21, 2021 Approval Process Changes Voted on and Adopted/Reimbursement Policies for Teaching in the Honors College

The amended approval process for petitioning faculty was voted on and adopted. The Council discussed course reimbursement policy in the Honors College. Basically, the Honors College reimburses departments for electives or required courses offered as Honors sections or unique courses. The third category of courses are Colloquia offerings. Often Colloquia are taught by faculty on a topic that is not directly in or directly related to their academic discipline. Faculty can propose colloquia topics resulting from an outside interest or a hobby, for example. Thus, creating and teaching of colloquia is recognized as a form of service to the university or profession, rather than a teaching assignment. The Honors College will JV funds to recognize this service to the unit of the faculty member proposing and delivering the colloquia. These funds are often used to support professional development expenses but can be used for any allowable purpose within the unit. The Honors College works with the unit to identify an index for fund transfers. The Honors College has no role in overseeing the expenditure of these funds. The use of these transferred funds is overseen by the unit head.

May 14, 2021 Thesis Completion Efforts/Plans for Next Year

Currently, there is a differential in completion rates between students from different Colleges. College of Science and College of Liberal Arts have high thesis/degree completion rates. Other Colleges, such as Engineering and Business, have lower completion rates. Feedback from students indicates that some may not understand the value of completing their Honors degrees when these students tend to be quite successful in finding employment after graduation. The Honors College is developing a 1-credit Stage 1 course that would focus on meeting and choosing a thesis mentor earlier on in their careers. Data indicate that many students never even choose a thesis mentor, so they never get fully engaged in the thesis endeavor. By choosing a mentor earlier in their careers, they would be much more invested in the work of conducting their thesis work and that should result

in a higher thesis completion rate. Plans are still being drawn up for this to roll out next year.

Several topics were discussed that would be worthwhile to work on next year. It appears that there is more than enough work to keep the Council busy for the entire year.

A special note here to remark that the work of the Council and the efforts of the Honors College administration was both productive and appreciated by all involved. It appears that the Honors College Council may have found its groove and that there is uniform agreement that this is an effective Faculty Senate voice in the working of the Honors College.

Future Membership

All current members of the Honors College Council would be appropriate chairs for next year. Viktor Bovbjerg was asked and agreed to chair the Council next year.

Representation on the Council is suggested from colleges that are underrepresented in the Honors College.

The student members of the Honors College Council were significant contributors to the discussion. We urged that one student representing each of the academic Divisions be asked to serve on the Council. This would increase the student members from 2 to 4.

Report submitted by Bob Mason, Honors College Council Chair