

University Honors College Council

Annual Report 2016-2017

1. Activity

The Honors College Council met for the first time in at least two years. Two meetings were held in Fall, 2016. The Council reviewed the state of the Honors College with Dean Doolen, including structure, evolution of curriculum and requirements for graduation, recruiting, and faculty engagement. The preliminary response to the 2015 Program Review was shared prior to its discussion in the Curriculum Council; notably, there are a series of initiatives identified by the College in response to the review that provide opportunity for Council reflection and input.

Due to scheduling challenges on the part of the Chair, no meetings were held Winter or Spring term.

2. Opportunities and Recommendations for Action Next Year

A. As noted, the response to the Program Review is ongoing and provides opportunity for the Council to help monitor progress. The Council has not provided feedback on the recommendations or actions laid out in the response. Given that the Council was behind the curve by not participating in the review in 2015-16, it would be best to formulate a selective choice of the most critical strategic challenges for the College. From the discussions during Fall term, these would appear to be:

- Maintaining effective recruiting of the best students, and broadening the demographics of each incoming cohort.
- Understanding and responding to factors that impinge on student success within the College, and documenting whether students who fail to complete an Honors degree persist to a successful degree completion at OSU.
- Understanding and responding to factors that can promote faculty involvement either as thesis mentors or as instructors in Honors courses.

B. The Council must formulate a vision and work activity that provides value both to OSU faculty and to the College. The Council is not intrinsically concerned with operational aspects of the College—it cannot work fast enough to be as responsive as needed, and the College has a number of other structures that allow for more effective action on day-to-day issues. The Program Review might have been a good forum in which to exert a strong influence on strategic issues; the Council can still play a useful role in monitoring progress. However, a central issue remains that the Council lacks a well-defined task and is dependent either on the Chair or the Dean bringing items in front of it for consideration.

C. There needs to be a revision to the Standing Rules defining membership that recognizes some necessary qualifications for service on the Council. Because of the unique structure of the College, not every faculty member brings the background necessary to function effectively. This leads to a steep learning curve for faculty who have not engaged with the College. Further, relatively few professional faculty have the experience with teaching to provide useful input. The faculty broadly do have an interest in the policies and success of the College, but the Chair's recommendation is to add the following to the Standing Rules:

A majority of the Council shall be appointed from Honors College faculty (defined as faculty who have either mentored an Honors College thesis, or taught an Honors College course). The chair(s) of the Council shall be Honors College faculty.

The Faculty Senate Executive Committee should take care that appointments to UHCC should be made with a conscious understanding of what skills each appointee brings, and that this understanding should be communicated to the chair(s). The Council should not be filled with members who bring no obvious connection to, nor knowledge of, the College.

Where necessary, the published list of Honors College faculty should serve as a resource for identifying candidates regardless of the Senate committee interest responses.

Further, it is this Chair's strong recommendation that the Senate establish a co-chair leadership structure (as it has for other committees and councils) in order to provide short-term and long-term continuity.

Membership

Kevin Gable, Chair '18	Chemistry
Kate Hunter-Zaworski '17	Civil & Construction Engineering
Indira Rajagopal '17	Biochemistry and Biophysics
Jeewon Cho '18	College of Business
Tim Jensen '19	School of Writing, Literature & Film
Matthew Johnston '19	Electrical Engineering & Computer Sciences
TBA (v. Iltis) '17	

Student Members:

- Nicole Frydenlund (UHC)
- Lexi Welch (UHC)

Ex-Officio Member: University Honors College – Toni Doolen

Executive Committee Liaison – Jon Dorbolo

Respectfully,



Kevin P. Gable
Chair, UHCC, 2016-2017