

## University Honors College Council

Annual Report 2002-2003

**Standing Rules:** The University Honors College Council, referred to as the Honors Council, has jurisdiction over the policies and procedures of the Honors College and advises the Dean of the Honors College. The Honors 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 Council consists of at least six Faculty members and at least two Students, the students appointed from among the Honors College students. Administration of the University Honors College rests with the Dean, who shall be an ex-officio, non-voting member of the Honors Council. (06/95)

**Membership:** Faculty: Bill Bogley (Chair), Kate Lajtha, Al Stetz, Skip Rochefort, Keith Scribner, Chris Sproul; Students: Justin Ihara, Jennie Mieger, Katherine Miles, Ex-officio: Joe Hendricks (University Honors College Dean)

**Charges to the Council:** There were no charges to the Honors Council for the academic year 02-03.

**Meetings:** The Council met once during the academic year on 10 April 2003. Efforts to constitute the Council were hindered by very slow response from ASOSU in certifying student members of the Council; student membership was finalized in March 2003. This report is an expanded version of the discussions at the April 03 Council meeting.

**Degrees, Retention and Graduation Rates:** During the period including Summer 02-Spring 03, the University Honors College (UHC) graduated 72 students, who earned 83 degrees. Honors Baccalaureates were conferred to majors from six Colleges and including four International Degrees. These figures continue a trend of increasing numbers of Honors Baccalaureate degrees conferred. The distribution of Honors degrees by College is also typical in comparison with past years, led by Science (30), Liberal Arts (19), and Engineering (17).

Since 1996, Honors students have earned (at least one) four-year Honors Baccalaureate at about the same rate as OSU students earn a four-year Bachelors degree (28%). Meanwhile, some students leave Honors but still remain at OSU; 50% of students who enter Honors receive an OSU Bachelors degree in four years. At the end of six years, by which time nearly all students have either graduated or dropped out, nearly 90% of students who enter in Honors receive an OSU Bachelors degree. This compares with an OSU six-year graduation of just under 60%. Slightly less than 50% of Honors students receive an Honors Baccalaureate within six years. The OSU graduation rate of Honors students is exemplary. The attrition rate within Honors itself is probably due in large part to the Honors thesis requirement. The effort to ameliorate this attrition and improve "retention-to-thesis" in Honors is a programmatic priority for the UHC.

**Admissions and Recruiting:** Of 557 UHC applications for Fall 03, 274 were offered admission (49%) and the College has received 144 commitments to enroll for a yield among admitted students of 53%. Minorities accounted for 21.7% of UHC applicants and 10.2% of admitted students. The admitted cohort of 144 students is larger than in previous years (117 in Fall 2002) in response to a mandate for 5% annual growth that emerged from the ongoing 2007 university strategic planning process. The achievement profile of admitted UHC first year freshmen for Fall 2003 closely matches that of the previous year. The average HS GPA is 3.95 (identical with Fall 2002), 88% graduated in the top 10% of their HS class (identical with Fall 2002) and the average composite SAT score is 1338 (down from 1377 in Fall 2002).

In an informal straw poll of Fall 2002 UHC freshmen, 50% indicated that the presence of the UHC was a determining factor in their decision to attend OSU. If one removes 50% of the UHC freshmen from OSU's incoming 2002 cohort of first-time, full-time, degree-seeking students, the percentage of that

cohort coming from the top 10% of their HS class drops from 17% to 15% and the average HS GPA drops from 3.44 to 3.43. These effects result from the hypothetical removal of just 2% of the OSU entering cohort (59 out of 2962 new students). Even before the increase in UHC enrollment for Fall 2003, the impact of Honors on metrics related to recruitment of top students to OSU is clearly visible.

Student essays are an important feature of the UHC application process and, as in previous years, Honors Council members and other faculty volunteers assisted in the assessment of essays. The essay questions for the Fall 2004 round of admissions have been finalized. As was the case during 01-02, the Council affirmed the importance of the essay portion of the Honors application.

**Curriculum and Administration:** The UHC is centrally funded, with the majority of its budget devoted to reimbursements to faculty and departments for coursework. This means that most of the funds devoted to Honors are bound to "pass through" Honors and into the hands of other units. This administrative and fiscal efficiency of the Honors enterprise is not widely appreciated.

In an effort to promote participation in delivering the Honors curriculum, the Council has considered and unanimously endorsed a proposal to implement an "SCH multiplier" on Honors instruction into the OSU budgeting process. SCH production is a prominent factor in the Budget Allocation Model. A mandate from Honors' national accrediting body limits enrollments in Honors courses and therefore restricts production of Honors SCH, which is credited to contributing departments. The intent and content of the SCH multiplier proposal is to remove this unintended disincentive for faculty and departments to contribute coursework to the UHC. A draft version of the SCH proposal (appended to this Report) has been presented to Faculty Senate President Bruce Sorte and the expectation is that this proposal will be taken up by the Executive Committee and the Faculty Senate in Fall 2003.

As has been the case since its inception, demand for UHC courses exceeds supply, particularly in popular majors and in technical subjects. The ability of campus units to provide instructional personnel is the principal factor limiting growth of the Honors College. The distribution of UHC students and credits offered by College is detailed in a bar chart that was compiled by UHC staff and which is appended to this report. Comparing the information on that chart with the data on degrees conferred, one notes an apparent correlation between UHC credits offered and Honors degrees conferred. In rank order, the top three colleges in terms of UHC credits offered and Honors degrees conferred are Science, Liberal Arts, and Engineering. The comparison of credits offered and students by College is very different: the ratio of credits to students is  $56/67 = 0.84$  for Liberal Arts,  $92/132 = 0.70$  for Science, and  $23/190 = 0.12$  for Engineering.

**Board of Regents:** The external advisory board for the UHC meets each term during the academic year. The UHCC Chair is an ex-officio voting member of the Board of Regents. The Board's principal activity over the past year has been to consult with the Dean on long range strategic planning for the UHC. This process has resulted in a detailed agenda involving development of scholarship opportunities for Honors students, expansion of Honors course offerings to accommodate increasing Honors enrollment as well as specific needs for coursework in technical disciplines, support for undergraduate scholarship and the Honors thesis requirement, and incentives to faculty and departments to support the Honors curriculum. The plan contains detailed strategies and cost estimates and culminates with a target of recurring funds to be raised through external fundraising efforts and an endowment. The strategic plan was shared and discussed with the Honors Council at its April 03 meeting.

The Board of Regents continues to contribute to the Honors community by hosting and underwriting a number of annual events. For the second consecutive year, the Board hosted a Dad's Weekend BBQ (Fall term) and a Recognition Reception for graduating students and UHC faculty and mentors in May 2003. Awards presented by the Board during the reception included cash prizes for three outstanding thesis posters from the annual UHC Thesis Poster Fair, held the previous day in the MU Ballroom.

**UHC Student Awards and Activities:** UHC students continue to play a significant role in undergraduate research at OSU. This is due in part to the Honors thesis requirement, but also stems from the fact that Honors students are sought after as undergraduate assistants in many roles across campus. UHC students are campus leaders in both achievement and community participation. A brief sampling of the awards and activities of UHC students is appended to this report. Accounting for just over 3% of the OSU undergraduate student population, UHC students have disproportionate impact in both undergraduate achievement and community activity at OSU.

**Appendices:**

- [SCH Multiplier Proposal \(draft: 12 April 2003\)](#)
- [UHC Credits and Students by College 2002-2003](#)
- [UHC Student Awards and Activities](#)

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