**Departmental Honors Program Council**

**Meeting: Wednesday, \_\_, 2022**

**12:00 p.m./5:00 p.m., via Zoom**

**\*\* MINUTES \*\***

**Summary of reminders, new initiatives, and strategic goals:**

* **Jeff would like Honors directors to send him some language so he can better speak to departmental Honors on campus: what are the strengths of departmental Honors programs, and what could be done to make them better? Why is your departmental honors program a good thing? What does it do for faculty, students, and/or recruiting? What are the negatives? If we had resources, what could we do (or do better)?**
* **The Honors College would like to begin to collect more information/history from departmental Honors programs, in order to catalog and record the work being done in these programs. The Honors College will follow up with more information.**

*Noon Meeting Notes:*

Honors directors present: Tim Smith (Anthropology), Mira Waits (Art), Matt Estep (Biology), Libby Puckett (Chemistry), Alison Gulley (English), Ellen Key (Government and Justice Studies), Andrew Smith (Psychology), Jennifer Zwetsloot (Public Health), Ellen Lamont (Sociology), Rebecca Witter (Sustainable Development).

Honors College staff present: Jeff Vahlbusch, Heather Waldroup

1. Welcome and Introductions
2. Approval of minutes from December 1, 2021 (Andrew, Ellen K., 2nd); passed.
3. Reports and reminders:
   1. Jeff: Update on the Honors College:
      1. Whenever Jeff talks about honors on our campus he includes departmental honors programs and directors. We have 36 programs across the University representing 90% of departments and programs. With 550 students in the Honors College and approximately 400 student doing departmental honors, or nearly 1,000 altogether, we’re reaching 5% of undergraduates on campus doing some form of Honors. We do need to get better at advocating for and ppublicizing departmental honors achievements.
      2. Underfunded quality of the Honors College: Honors on our campus has been radically underfunded historically; starting in February 2022, the University has invested in Honors education, including having an instructional budget: replacement funds for departments for faculty teaching HON seminars, funding a total of 40 courses per year. The Honors College also has been getting some additional E&T funding. This is a terrific time not to rest on our laurels but to keep moving forward, and supporting interest at the provost level to make sure we have the resources we need to succeed.
      3. The Honors College would like to have funds to greater support the research and scholarship of departmental honors students; this is an amazing moment that calls for better advocacy. Jeff asks Honors directors to help him better understand and advocate for departmental honors so that he can include these voices in his messaging. Can you send him an email about your program’s successes – why is dept honors a good thing? What does it do for faculty, students, recruiting? What are the negatives? If we had resources, what could we do? (Such as, stipends for thesis supervision, including honors in P&T docs, other ways of recognition/support.) Send him your positives, negatives, and frustrations.
      4. The Honors College would also like to find a way to catalog the thesis work of students: titles, directors, etc., so we can start publicizing the things students and faculty are doing.

Discussion:

* Libby stressed faculty concerns – i.e., Honors as a potential burden for faculty because of lack of resources. Jeff stressed that he hopes to have funds to compensate faculty for their work. Heather noted that honors work should be in departmental P&T documents as well as the Faculty Handbook (in course release calculation matrix)
* Tim asked if we can we add hyperlink to departmental honors web pages? Heather said yes, as soon as we have a designated Web person.
  1. Heather introduced new Honors directors: Matt Estep, Biology; Mark Hills, Computer Science co-director; Alison Gulley, English; Rebecca Witter, Sustainable Development. She also noted the new honors program in Gender, Women’s, and Sexuality Studies, currently without a director.
  2. Honors sections of Gen Ed courses: Heather asks that you please let the Honors College know about any planned Honors sections of these courses as soon as possible, and please feel free to schedule a time to talk more if you have questions.

1. New business: Holistic admissions in departmental honors?
   1. Matt: can we be more inclusive in admissions to our dept honors programs? His department (Biology) has many students doing research, but they don’t necessarily meet the GPA standards for Honors. How can we recognize that? Is holistic admissions one option?
   2. Andrew: this is not currently happening in his program (Psychology), but is an interesting concept.
   3. Jeff will circulate an article on [holistic/test-optional admissions at Wake Forest and its positive outcomes](https://www.insidehighered.com/admissions/views/2022/08/29/test-optional-admissions-works-opinion?utm_source=Inside+Higher+Ed&utm_campaign=947ee2ed54-AdmissionsInsider_COPY_01&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_1fcbc04421-947ee2ed54-197779253&mc_cid=947ee2ed54&mc_eid=231dbf379b), especially for diversity/equity and inclusion. Since the introduction of holistic admissions in 2016, the Honors College is 21.3% diverse.
   4. Tim noted that the holistic process can include GPAs within the context of institutions.
2. General questions: Alison asked about special activities that departments/programs are planning for their for Honors students
3. Matt: possible field trip (Biology)
4. Medals (supplied by the Honors College)
5. Rebecca: lunch (Sustainable Development)
6. Alison wants to have a coffee meeting for Honors students with faculty (English)
7. Adjournment: the meeting was adjourned at 12:40 pm.

*5 p.m. Meeting Notes*

Honors directors present: Lori Medders (Walker College of Business), Jennifer Gray (Communication), Mark Hills (Computer Science), Marianne Adams (Dance), Jonathon Stickford (Exercise Science), Michael Behrent (History), Bill Cook (Mathematical Sciences), Erik Rabinowitz (Recreation Management), Emily Dakin (Social Work), Reza Foroughi (Sustainable Technology and the Built Environment), Paulette Marty (Theatre).

Honors College staff present: Jeff Vahlbusch, Heather Waldroup

1. Welcome and Introductions
2. Approval of minutes from December 1, 2021 (Bill, Paulette 2nd); passed.
3. Reports and reminders:
   1. Jeff: Update on the Honors College:
      1. Whenever Jeff talks about honors on our campus he includes departmental honors programs and directors. We have 36 programs across the University representing 90% of departments and programs. With 550 students in the Honors College and approximately 400 student doing departmental honors, or nearly 1,000 altogether, we’re reaching 5% of undergraduates on campus doing some form of Honors. We do need to get better at advocating for and ppublicizing departmental honors achievements.
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      4. The Honors College would also like to find a way to catalog the thesis work of students: titles, directors, etc., so we can start publicizing the things students and faculty are doing.

Discussion:

* + Emily noted that the College of Health Sciences has a standard of 12 credits = 1 course release.
  + Bill noted that his department (Mathematical Sciences) has been having similar conversations about their 1-credit capstone (ie, possibly leading to an eventual course release).
  + Jeff noted that Honors work has been traditionally hidden across campus.
  1. Heather introduced new Honors directors: Matt Estep, Biology; Mark Hills, Computer Science co-director; Alison Gulley, English; Rebecca Witter, Sustainable Development. She also noted the new honors program in Gender, Women’s, and Sexuality Studies, currently without a director.
  2. Honors sections of Gen Ed courses: Heather asks that you please let the Honors College know about any planned Honors sections of these courses as soon as possible, and please feel free to schedule a time to talk more if you have questions.

1. New business: Holistic admissions in departmental honors? Some departments are having discussion around this, particularly as a DEI issue.
   1. Paulette noted that this sounds logistically complicated, because we don’t already have an application packet as a basis for review: would be asking students to provide a lot of information to apply; might deter students from applying.
   2. Reza: we do ask for a statement and letters of recommendation, and do accept some students with lower GPAs, but they are expected to bring these up.
   3. Erik noted that Recreation Management rejected this idea, because they thought that students could apply midstream and get their GPA up; he would hate to admit students who couldn’t make the minimum GPA in the end.
   4. Marianne noted that in Dance they might consider how they state the requirements in the catalog, considering the language we use to invite students to the program. For inclusivity’s sake, it could be great to encourage more students to apply to the program.
   5. Jeff noted that every year several students complete their coursework and thesis but don’t officially graduate with honors because of their GPA – but the value of the Honors experience is significant.
2. Announcements:Paulette and Lori noted forthcoming expected AP&P proposals.
3. Adjournment: the meeting adjourned at 5:45 pm.

Respectfully submitted for review this 15 September 2022, by Heather Waldroup.

NEXT MEETING: The next meeting will be October 5, 2022, at 12:00 p.m./5:00 p.m. via Zoom.