**Honors Council**

**Meeting: Wednesday, February 5, 2020**

**12:00 p.m./5:00 p.m., 162 Appalachian Hall**

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

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

* **Updates to the description of the Social Work honors program in the Undergraduate Bulletin were presented and unanimously approved, with suggestions for minor edits.**
* **Honors directors were reminded that this is a great time in the semester to begin program recruitment.**
* **ALL departmental honors programs now have ‘attributes’ in Banner, which will create Honors blocks in DegreeWorks, allow for better tracking of Honors students, and enable Honors to appear on transcripts.**

*Noon Meeting Notes:*

1. Meeting convened at noon.
2. HONORS DIRECTORS PRESENT: Mira Waits (ART), Herman van Werkhoven (ExSci), Rich Crepeau (GEOG/PLN), Ellen Key (PS/CJ), Erin Bouldin (P H), Lynn Mosteller (PSY), Andrew Smith (PSY), Emily Dakin (SW).

HONORS COLLEGE STAFF PRESENT: Heather Waldroup (ART/HON), Jeff Vahlbusch (LLC/HON).

1. A motion to approve the Minutes from December 4, 2019, was made (Mira, Andrew second) and unanimously approved.
2. Curriculum proposal from Social Work were presented by Emily:
	1. Brian had suggested via email to change ‘any’ to ‘all’ in the second to last bullet point. Ellen suggested instead that this word be removed altogether for utmost clarity. A discussion ensued re: whether honors students in 410 cutout sections should be graded to a higher standard. Mira noted that she considers their work for the course as a “collective whole.” Herman explained that he considers their honors work separately from coursework (in a contract situation). Jeff reminded all that honors is “not necessarily more, but different” and pointed out a need to discuss standards and expectations for honors contract work at a later date.
	2. A motion to approve the proposal with suggested changes was made (Herman, Rich second) and unanimously approved.
3. Updates from Jeff: Jeff noted that he should have a draft of an Hon governance structure by next month; we are going to take a serious look at honors contracts, process, and definitions, with input from Honors Council; we will also look at honors thesis approval process – updating forms, etc.. Jeff will report on all of the above as we go. He is also going to work with faculty to develop learning goals and outcomes for HON seminars (1515, 2515, 3515). We are also working on early college admissions: this year we had an increased number of students applying to Honors with over 40 credits; these are often diverse students, who seem to be doing early college/dual enrollment in larger proportion; these are excellent students, yet the Honors College doesn’t yet have a curriculum in place to support these students. Jeff will send lists of students in each department to departmental honors directors so they can reach out to these incoming students.
4. Discussion of recruitment. Ellen wanted to know if anyone has a flyer they use for this purpose; Andrew noted that he sends an invitation email, but he and others noted that many students ignore these. Mira described the ways in which the Art honors program is growing, and asked, in addition to GPA, should she ask for a letter of reference or something similar? Herman noted that Exercise Sciences requires them to have a reference, but students don’t always know faculty well at the time they are admitted. Erin explained that Public Health requires them to have a faculty member onboard, as they only have four tenure-track faculty, and can’t accept students to the program unless a faculty member is committed. Lynn noted that Psychology does thesis info sessions where they go over thesis process; Andrew added that each semester he will meet with students who don’t yet have a thesis advisor.
5. Discussion of issue faced by Languages, Literatures and Cultures (and possibly other programs) regarding writing in the target language versus English: Jeff noted that this is likely to be a rare occurrence and could be treated on a case-by-case basis. Andrew asked why the Honors College has the requirement for an outside reader; Heather responded that this was to fulfill the interdisciplinary requirement of the thesis.
6. Departmental honors courses, especially Gen Ed and 410 cutouts of lower level courses: Heather stressed the need for the Honors College to know about these much sooner. Honors students have early registration and thus receive advising very early, but the Honors College is often not aware of these courses until the schedule comes out (and Honors students have already received advising). The Honors College can work on its communication to departments to communicate with chairs and Honors directors about specific needs for courses (as well as the cycle on which such courses would ideally be offered); departments can make the Honors College aware of these courses as early as possible. Heather noted that many honors students are increasingly coming in with Gen Ed credit, and often have SS designator as well (they less commonly have HS, FA and LS designators). Jeff noted that overall enrollment is down in the Honors College as well. Lynn asked Jeff to email department chairs early in the semester to ask what they were intending to offer. Heather also noted that, ideally, chairs would leave honors sections of Gen Ed courses open until the end of Freshman orientation in June before making decisions about whether to return some seats to non-honors. Erin asked for support with this.
7. Heather circulated designs for Departmental honors medals and requested feedback.
8. ALL departmental honors programs now have ‘attributes’ in Banner! When added to a student’s record, these attributes will add an ‘honors block’ to the student’s DegreeWorks record, enable better tracking of (and thus communication with) these students, and will enable Honors to appear on that student’s transcript. Heather will email directors with instructions re: how to add this attribute to the student’s record.
9. The meeting adjourned at 12:555 pm (Herman, Ellen second).

*5 p.m. Meeting Notes*

1. Meeting convened at 5:00 p.m.
2. HONORS DIRECTORS PRESENT: Alice McRae (ComSci), Marianne Adams (DAN), Jennifer Wilson (ENG), Cole Edwards (GEOL/ENV), Kristan Cockerill (GLS/IDS), Jean-François Fournier (LLC), Bill Cook (MAT), Emily Dakin (SW), Ellen Lamont (Soc), Paulette Marty (THR).
3. HONORS COLLEGE STAFF PRESENT: Heather Waldroup (ART/HON), Jeff Vahlbusch (LLC/HON).
4. A motion to approve the Minutes from December 4, 2019, was made (Jean-Francois, Paulette second) and unanimously approved.
5. Updates from Jeff: he is still working on a faculty governance model; we need to reexamine honors contracts; he is hoping to work with faculty to develop learning goals and outcomes for each HON seminar (1515, 2515, 3515); admissions are completed for Fall – applications are up 10 percent; we made 600 offers hoping for a yield of 150. This year we had even more students with early college/dual enrollment credit pushing them over the 45-credit threshold that makes University Honors accessible to them with the current curriculum; Jeff and Heather are looking to develop a new system to serve these students. With permission of the honors council, Jeff would love to give names of relevant incoming students in each discipline to that departmental honors director so they can consider pursuing departmental honors.
6. Emily presented a curriculum proposal that will make minor changes to the Honors program description of Social Work in the Undergraduate Bulletin. A motion to approve the proposal with some minor suggested edits was made (Alice, Bill second) and unanimously approved.
7. Recruitment discussion: Jennifer asked how doing departmental honors connects with a 4+1 program. Jeff noted that students automatically get honors credit for any grad course taken, but that the honors thesis should be separate from the Master’s thesis. It was noted that a discussion of the ways honors intersects with a department’s 4+1 program would be a good agenda item for the future. Bill noted the need for communication between the graduate director and the honors director. Ellen noted that Sociology’s honors program has beefed up its advertisement; graduates now receive medals and certificates. Paulette noted that Theatre had 8 students apply and the committee chose to accept them all; however, this did engender a discussion re whether they should have additional criteria. They are finding that they have about a 25% completion rate. Emily noted that it can be difficult to predict who will and won’t finish. Paulette did note that Theatre changed its application slightly; they now ask students upon admission to the honors program what they think they might be interested in as a thesis topic. Ellen added that students are admitted after taking a required 3000-level research class; the honors committee checks their GPA and they are required to submit the final paper from that class and a cover letter to be admitted.
8. Jean-Francois began a discussion of students in his department writing theses in the target language rather than English. Students of Spanish are required to write in the target language; for every other language, they have the choice between English and the target language. His department might encounter a situation where there’s a student with two different majors doing honors in both, or student doing University honors and departmental honors who are required to have a second reader outside the department. If the students are writing in Spanish, French or German, writing in a foreign language would be extensive, plus having the second faculty member being able to read in the target language might prove difficult. Kristan offered the possibility of having a second, longer abstract in the target language, as many journals do. Paulette noted that there’s always going to be some kind of issues with cross-disciplinary approaches; there might need to be conversations/flexibility about making sure the project fits the requirements of both majors without making it too prohibitive for the student. Jeff asked, in the unusual case that the student wants to do a 6-credit thesis in a target language, can the faculty be flexible? Marianne noted this issue brings up a broader issue, that is, it is important to stress to students that they need to start their projects early, and that it is the quality of the project rather than the length that matters most. Bill concurred and offered a recent example from Mathematical Sciences.
9. Heather spoke the issue of the Honors College needing to know earlier about departmental honors courses; in return, the Honors College needs to better communicate its needs to the general university – and these are changing with enrollment changes. Departmental honors courses, especially Gen Ed and 410 cutouts of lower level courses: Heather stressed the need for the Honors College to know about these much sooner. Honors students have early registration and thus receive advising very early, but the Honors College is often not aware of these courses until the schedule comes out (and Honors students have already received advising). The Honors College can work on its communication to departments to communicate with chairs and Honors directors about specific needs for courses (as well as the cycle on which such courses would ideally be offered); departments can make the Honors College aware of these courses as early as possible. Heather noted that many honors students are increasingly coming in with Gen Ed credit, and often have SS designator as well (they less commonly have HS, FA and LS designators).
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12. The meeting adjourned at 6 pm (Ellen, Bill second).

Respectfully submitted for review this 10 February, 2020, by Heather Waldroup.

NEXT MEETING: The next meeting will be 4 March, 2020, at 12:00 p.m./5:00 p.m. in 162 Appalachian Hall.