**Honors Council**

**Meeting: Wednesday, March 13, 2019**

**5:00 p.m., 161 Appalachian Hall**

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

1. Meeting convened at 5:00 p.m.
2. PRESENT: M Waits (ART), L Siefferman (BIO), J Cecile (CHM), J Grey (COM), A McRae (ComSci), M Adams (DAN), J Wilson (ENG), C Edwards (GEOL/ENV), H van Werkhoven (ExSci), J Gonzalez (GLS/IDS), JF Fournier (LLC), B Cook (MAT), L Ammon (P&R), R Gray (PHY/AST), A Smith (PSY), E Dakin (SW), E Lamont (Soc), S Doll (STBE), H Waldroup (ART/HON).

Guests: Alexandra Sterling-Hellenbrand (LLC), Jeanne Dubino (IDS), Howie Neufeld (BIO), Derek Davidson (T&D).

1. A motion to approve the Minutes from February 2, 2019 was made and approved.
2. H Waldroup reviewed the various types of Honors courses offered on campus: interdisciplinary seminars for University Honors Students (HON 1515, 2515 and 3515); departmental honors courses offered by some, but not all, departmental honors programs; Honors dedicated sections of Gen Ed courses, such as SOC 1000 or ART 2130; and honors ‘cut out’ sections of Gen Ed courses.
3. Discussion: what makes an Honors course?

* A Sterling-Hellenbrand reviewed some things that differentiate the interdisciplinary University Honors courses she has taught from other courses. At the macro level, honors courses are completely unlike anything she is able to teach in her department. Honors courses allow her to create experiential opportunities for students and teach classes that she really wants to teach. Honors students are willing to accept that the kind of questions she wants them to engage with and enter uncomfortable situations. In these courses, she strives to “train students to think at a graduate level” and has higher expectations of students.
* H Neufeld noted that Honors courses enable him to engage in higher-level discussion and interaction with students because of smaller classes and “challenge [students] with big topics that they don’t otherwise get. He strives to develop classes in which “everyone feels they can participate no matter what their major/interests” and emphasizes interactive discussion, “engaging your brain,” and reflective writing. He develops broad reading lists that include newspaper articles, peer reviewed articles, UN reports, books, CliFi novels. Assignments/activities including writing a book review; bringing in outside experts, including talking about the research process; connection with current events; and things they don’t get in other courses/things that aren’t taught in other places.
* Jeanne explained that she tries to turn her classes into “project-oriented experiences.” Noting that honors students “like a lot of direction,” she uses technology in innovative ways; assigns a heavy reading load; and makes the courses both “experimental and experiential.” Sometimes, she noted, these strategies “don’t always work” but Honors can be a place to practice/try out new things and then apply in regular classes. Honors classes can be a place to both students and faculty to experiment and be introduced to other disciplines. All students like to have freedom of choice, and she builds that into her honors classes, enabling students to “own the material.
* H van Werkhoven asked how to incorporate interdisciplinary fields in departmental honors courses? H Waldroup explained that that was a key difference between University honors seminars and departmental ones; that departmental honors courses are not necessarily interdisciplinary.
* J Gonzalez stressed the need to “promote a growth mindset vs a fixed mindset” in honors courses. He encourage revision (ie of papers) and this can dial down the grade anxiety that some Honors students maintain.

1. Discussion: how do we implement these ideas in the classroom?
   1. Honors learning is ideally discussion-based;
   2. additional/more challenging readings;
   3. project-based learning;
   4. experiential learning;
   5. In ‘cutout’ (410) sections and contracts: honors students can do an extra project; present at different locations ie student research day; think about what they’ll do after they graduate and build up portfolio.

This discussion will be continued in the next Honors Council meeting.

1. The meeting adjourned at 6 pm (L Ammon, L Siefferman, second).

Respectfully submitted for review this 20 March, 2019, by Heather Waldroup.

NEXT MEETING: The next meeting will be April 3, 2019, at 5:00 p.m. in 161 Appalachian Hall.