**Honors Council**

**Meeting: Wednesday, April 3, 2019**

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

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

1. Meeting convened at 5:00 p.m.
2. PRESENT: M Waits (ART), L Sieffermann (BIO), J Cecile (CHM), L Medders (COB), M Adams (DAN), J Wilson (ENG), C Edwards (GEOL/ENV), H van Werkhoven (ExSci), E Shea (GEOG/PLN), J Gonzalez (GLS/IDS), W Hicks (PS/CJ), B Cook (MAT), L Ammon (P&R), E Bouldin (P H), A Smith (PSY), E Dakin (SW), P Marty (THR), H Waldroup (ART/HON), J Vahlbusch (LLC/HON).
3. A motion to approve the Minutes from March 13, 2019, was made (B Cook, M Adams, second) and approved.
4. Reports and reminders:
   1. J Vahlbusch reminded faculty to send email addresses for departmental honors students to H Waldroup so that they can be included in the departmental honors Google Group.
   2. J Vahlbusch also gave an update on budgetary requests, including $24,000 earmarked for student scholarships. He also noted in this years’ budget that there was a desire for funds to recognize/reward the otherwise largely invisible labor of honors teaching, advising, mentoring, etc.
   3. H Waldroup reminded faculty of the thesis submission process (available at <https://honors.appstate.edu/academics/thesis/submit>).
   4. H Waldroup reminded directors to please send announcements of departmental honors defenses to the Honors College so they can be publicized and attended.
5. Discussion of Honors teaching strategies:
   1. J Gonzalez began the conversation. He noted that he has had the pleasure of teaching honors students in many capacities, both here and abroad, and has found the following to be “absolutely essential”:
6. Empathy: honors students come to us intellectually mature, and it can be easy to forget that their emotions are not always as caught up. Stress is a big issue. Need to meet students where they’re at and help them identify what they’re thinking. They may be intellectualizing their feelings rather than identifying them/experiencing them. He finds that he needs to make sure he’s budgeting time for one-on-one time with students.
7. Authenticity: in terms of research. Students are intellectually engaged; they are ready to move beyond testing into higher order thinking. In his honors courses he front loads the reading; the second half of the semester is a project where they can pursue their own curiosity.
8. Fixed vs growth mindsets: most honors students have confirmed fixed mindsets because they have achieved/been rewarded.
   1. Two things work really well for honors students: scaffolding. Do projects in stages and give formative feedback along the way.
   2. Making mindsets visible: how are you thinking right now?
      1. J Vahlbusch added: make pedagogies visible: what are our intentions for them?
   3. M Waits continued the discussion with an overview of her honors-only section of Art 2130 (art history survey from 1400 to the present). Normally these classes are capped at 32; the honors section was capped at 20. The honors version of this course became a way to teach a survey in an ‘ideal’ way. Even though students were mostly new to the discipline, she found more space for discussion; not necessarily ‘more work’ but ‘work with intent’ ie response papers; used alternative spaces ie outdoors; built in opportunities for independent research; incorporated writing workshops. While it’s still an intro/gen ed class, she hopes they get more out of it. Hopes to build in a day trip to the Mint Museum in Charlotte this Fall.
   4. L Medders noted that they are restructuring the College of Business honors program, which is a unique experience on campus as it is college-wide. It has been a bit difficult to get away from the ‘more work’ mindset and consider ‘more creative approaches.’ Students in the program do have an interest in research (including at industry level). Faculty understand what outcomes students would like but are fixated on ‘rigor’ first – content being more intentional/compelling comes second. She asked the group for input on how she might address this issue.
   5. P Marty noted that the “blessing of honors contract model is that you can work directly with the students” and ask them what skills and knowledge would they like to develop. This might be a possible approach for the College of Business.
   6. J Cecile noted, whatever assignment you give them, they do want the guidelines of the assignment to be clear. Otherwise this can mean students stepping outside their comfort zone.
   7. M Waits also suggested that faculty “think about honors as a mini-community” – working together as a group, faculty office hours, etc.
   8. L Medders noted that having a growth mindset means creative thinking, and it can be a hard sell to building intentional creativity into COB courses.
   9. J Vahlbusch suggested that taking a slower approach towards change could be an option: thinking about introducing change in smaller increments.
   10. M Suggs has taught honors cutout sections of Early Dance History with both dance and non-dance majors, and seeks to have them find connections across disparate fields. This could be another possible approach for COB students.
9. The meeting adjourned at 6 pm (L Sieffermann, M Adams, second).

Respectfully submitted for review this 4 April, 2019, by Heather Waldroup.

NEXT MEETING: The next meeting will be May, 1, 2019, at 5:00 p.m. in 161 Appalachian Hall.