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This chapter traces the design and development of the San Diego City College Honors Program and its successful implementation of intersegmental transfer agreements—chief among them being the Transfer Alliance Program (TAP), with the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA). It describes the recent historical context in which community college honors programs took on a strong leadership role in addressing deep systemic problems in the transfer function in California, a role that continues to this day. This chapter identifies the pivotal contributions of intersegmental transfer agreements like TAP in the development of honors programs at community colleges, and it emphasizes their implications for college students and faculty members.

Honors Programs: A Case Study of Transfer Preparation

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The founding of the San Diego Community College District (SDCCD) Honors Program in 1986 came at a time when it bordered on heretical to mention “honors” and “community colleges” in the same breath. Untoward political events and major demographic shifts over the previous decade had dramatically affected the colleges, causing operational changes that seriously eroded public confidence that they could supply students who would be successful after transfer, especially at the University of California (UC). Some colleges showed signs of becoming resigned to their newly emphasized roles of remediation and occupational instruction, and they began to devote less energy and resources to their assigned transfer function.

In the early 1980s, a refreshing new dialogue between California’s university and community college segments set out a new ground of collaboration that seemed promising to all concerned. The University of California would implement new measures of assurance that qualified transfers from the community colleges would be welcomed at the junior level; the colleges in return would agree to provide specially “enriched” lower-division academic preparation to prospective transfer students, assuaging the concerns that those students would not succeed at the four-year institution.

San Diego City College was invited to join the UCLA Transfer Alliance Program (TAP) in 1991, after five years of successful operation of an honors program. Interestingly, it was both the earlier prospect of membership in TAP and the actual membership itself that played an important role in consolidating support for honors among administrators, faculty members, and students at City College. Over a decade later, the relationship with UCLA ripened into an effective partnership with a high level of trust and a gratifying openness to communication in support of individual students on their way through the transfer process.

Throughout the 1990s, the San Diego City College Honors Program elaborated and strengthened its role in enriching the academic and personal growth of its students and faculty members. Its profile both within and beyond the campus community has been buoyed not only by its intersegmental transfer agreements (TAP is now one of over a dozen), but also by its collaboration with regional and national organizations devoted to the widely expanded “honors movement.”

In its next decade, the program aspires to a leading role in attracting many more talented and motivated students to City College and contributing to a spirit and practice of excellence across the entire college curriculum. Fifteen years of enhancing both transfer preparedness and occupational readiness of students has positioned the honors program to take a leadership role in current discussions exploring statewide transfer agreements with all campuses of the University of California and California State University systems. And finally, the commitment to imbed “global awareness and competencies” in the honors curriculum, as described later in this chapter, will encourage and equip students to reach beyond regional and national boundaries to enrich their educational experiences even more.

Transfer: A Classic Conundrum

Honors programs have been known among American community colleges for some time (Bentley-Baker, 1983)—albeit, until the mid-1980s, only among an almost vanishing minority of colleges responding to occasional surveys. For example, one such survey conducted for the American Association of Community and Junior Colleges counted 644 responding colleges but only 47 honors programs (Piland and Gould, 1982). The National Collegiate Honors Council (NCHC), arguably the current *de facto* leader in defining and promoting the national honors movement, had by 1981 dissolved its Standing Committee on Honors in the Two-Year College for apparent lack of interest and participation (Bentley-Baker, 1983).

From these modest beginnings, the revival and rapid expansion of interest in honors in the community colleges have continued without interruption for nearly two decades. The reasons for the dramatic “comeback” are many and interesting. In this chapter, particular emphasis is placed, of

course, on the ways in which the pressure for transfer improvement prompted and promoted such a movement.

University-Devised Transfer Incentive Programs. The decade of the 1970s was a difficult one for the transfer function in California. Decline in the transfer rates was inexorable and alarming. For the nine-campus University of California system there was a 40 percent drop-off in the period of 1975 to 1981 (Wilbur, 1996). Critics proclaimed an imbedded public perception that the community colleges had become lesser, even unworthy, institutions for the serious academic student (Wilbur, 1996). Perhaps no other stakeholder than the University itself, with the prestige and political power to set the agenda for higher education, could rescue the colleges from this unhappy condition. Simply stimulating the transfer rate by accepting greater numbers of transfers had already been tried and found wanting, because real deficiencies in student preparation to do upper-division work were being reported (Wilbur, 1996). Perhaps the University could link its acceptance of more transfer students to a new, more proactive involvement in stimulating the academic preparation of “its own students-to-be” while they were still in the community college system.

By the mid-1980s, new courtships and relationships between UC campuses and groups of their feeder community colleges began to emerge. UC Davis offered local community college students a signed, individualized guarantee of admission at the junior level if they committed themselves to follow a detailed educational plan with periodic monitoring by an academic counselor. They would also have to complete 56 units of lower-division preparation for the major and general education requirements, with a minimum grade point average (GPA) of 2.40. Several other campuses of the University implemented similar plans, in accordance with the expressed policy of the UC President’s Office, shaping them to fit their own student profile and capacity for outreach. Copies of a glossy, warmly written brochure entitled “Answers for Transfer” began to appear in colorful profusion on community college campuses across the state. The University’s efforts to reach across the divide were growing.

Within the typical transfer agreement, the community college need only provide traditional academic counseling and educational planning services to qualified individual students; the local UC campus would establish a marginally more active presence on the community college campus, providing pretransfer guidance, along with informational materials on academic programs. Transfer workshops for college counselors and on-campus student visitation opportunities could be conducted periodically by admissions officers of the University and be overseen by its Office of Undergraduate Admissions and Relations with Schools. Beyond an incremental increase in outreach effort by the University, these agreements brought little new insight or creative change to the troubled transfer situation. Certainly, they inspired no profound changes in either institution, or in the ways that they related to each other.

Birth of the UCLA Transfer Alliance Program (TAP). TAP has provided perhaps the best model to date of a comprehensive intersegmental mechanism for community college-to-university transfer (Clemons, Kane, and McLeod, 1995). No other transfer agreement—on any other campus of the University of California—anticipated the breadth and depth of the effort it took to launch the Transfer Alliance Program. UCLA academic leaders first established and infused with meaningful levels of financial and personnel resources a new Center for Academic Interinstitutional Programs (CAIP). CAIP was then enjoined to stimulate linkages among UCLA faculty members and their community college and high school counterparts in curriculum review and alignment. Third, the center's directors took the lead in systematically developing a network of working relationships between community college administrators and faculty members and their UCLA counterparts, gradually building a level of trust that released creative problem-solving energies from all concerned. And fourth, capping several years of team building between institutions and addressing the concerns of detractors within each segment, they finally delivered the first version of the Transfer Alliance Program, in 1985.

Indicators of the TAP Philosophy. The goal of the new program was deceptively simple: to contribute to the solution of a nagging problem in transfer and persistence rates of community college students moving to UCLA. This was to be accomplished by offering priority admission consideration to students who completed an enriched lower-division curriculum, including general education requirements and preparation courses for the intended major. But the real wisdom of TAP lay at a much deeper level—namely, in the realization that bonds among people committed to collaboration with their distant counterparts at other institutions, all in the service of needy students, supplied the cohesion necessary to hold the agreement together over time.

UCLA's chancellor and senior administrators had already fought hard within the statewide UC structure to secure approval for extending such a profound measure of openness to the community colleges. They had proclaimed UCLA's belief in two-year college students, offering for the first time a deliberate acknowledgment that our students were, indeed, UCLA students, save only for the short-term growth and tempering experiences currently in progress at the two-year institutions. Their conviction assuaged a real concern that the statewide UC admission policy was going to be affected in some unknown and potentially troublesome ways.

Furthermore, implementation of TAP at a two-year college had the potential to profoundly and permanently affect several aspects of how that college conceived and delivered its transfer curriculum. Benefits were sure to extend beyond the student participants themselves. Faculty and institutional development would certainly follow from the new levels of attention devoted to academic improvement and from new collaborations among faculty members, counselors, and other student support services personnel at the college itself.

Anatomy of a TAP Program at the Two-Year College. Well beyond the scope of the incentive contracts signed by some UC campuses and individual transfer aspirants enrolled at the two-year college, TAP crystallized the collaboration between UCLA and the college at several levels of each institution. A 1991 version of the UCLA document “Elements of a Transfer Alliance Program” laid out across three domains the considerable expectations to be met by a college aspiring to join TAP—by then a group of about a dozen institutions.

To address structural and support issues, the two-year college president was asked to write a letter assuring UCLA of the desirability of a TAP affiliation and committing the college to support the program administratively. There was to be appropriate release time for a classroom faculty member (specifically not a counselor or administrator) to coordinate the program and represent the college on the UCLA TAP council of directors at its quarterly meetings. There had to be an assurance that academic enrichment would be imbedded in the transfer curriculum; for many colleges, that was the first, and perhaps most forceful, impetus they had had for the development of an “honors program,” or some equivalent that met TAP standards. The TAP or honors program should report directly to an academic dean or vice president and be appropriately represented in the college governance process. There were additional recommendations for a collegewide advisory group, including faculty members, administrators, and students, as well as clerical support, office space, and student space appropriate to the size of the TAP or honors program. Last but not least was the proviso that the college would be expected to assess and evaluate components of its program, both for its own benefit and for UCLA’s.

Strong academic standards were to be established both for student performance and for the enriched transfer curriculum itself. The TAP or honors program was expected to set specific entrance, maintenance, and completion criteria for its group of general education and/or premajor courses, which the two-year college would guarantee to offer regularly. Most colleges in the first TAP group chose a 3.25 GPA criterion for student membership, and program completion was generally set at fifteen units of UC transferable courses—that is, 25 percent of the 60-unit transfer requirement. The faculty program director would be required to monitor the progress of students and officially certify to UCLA that they had completed the program and were eligible for the priority admission consideration.

One of the original driving forces for TAP had been the need to diversify the student body at UCLA, and there was a strong expectation that culturally and ethnically diverse groups of community college students would be recruited to take advantage of the TAP opportunity. UCLA recommended that an active network of faculty members, students, and counselors be gathered at the college to share information about the program and its activities. There should be an interweaving of UCLA resources (outreach visits by UCLA personnel, student visitation to the university, pretransfer counseling

by UCLA staff, articulation documents, and catalogs) with two-year college resources (transfer center, academic and personal counseling offices, financial aid advisers, and so on). Of key importance was the expectation that a particular counselor would be designated to work with individual TAP or honors students throughout their time at the college, and to represent the counseling voice at the quarterly meetings of the TAP council.

UCLA's Responsibilities Within TAP. The level of expectation that UCLA pressed on its community college partners in the first years of TAP had in some cases caused resistance among college leaders, who wondered what they had to gain in return for such extended commitments on their part and such intrusions into their policies and practices by UCLA. It was especially gratifying that when the two-year institutions outspokenly expressed their own high expectations to their prestigious partner, UCLA concurred forthrightly and wholeheartedly. To the many warriors who invested years of intention and energy into its fruition, the word *alliance*—the very center of the TAP acronym, was at last an especially sweet reality.

To oversee TAP, and to provide the incentives sought by their transfer partners, UCLA had designed a triune leadership structure, which enlisted individuals from several offices of undergraduate support services under the overall direction of an academic dean. The College of Letters and Science would provide intersegmental linkages and build student identification with UCLA prior to transfer, facilitate some logistics in the admissions process and advocate for TAP-certified students during the admission cycle, support the UCLA Transfer Student Association in its service to TAP students, and work on special events and privileges that would develop student interest and commitment to the University. Among these privileges were access to library cards and a range of academic, cultural, and sporting events.

The admissions office would be responsible for disseminating information on application procedures and special programs, as well as providing an array of outreach services. Most important, this office would review student applications and determine eligibility for guaranteed priority admission. One of the great successes of TAP from the outset was the extent to which the TAP directors at the two-year colleges were party to detailed discussions, even protracted negotiations, with the UCLA admissions office, concerning the progress of individual students through the transfer application process.

The most significant work in maintaining the multifaceted nature of the collaboration between university and community college was assigned to the UCLA Office of Academic Interinstitutional Programs. Its representative, serving also as a liaison to the UCLA faculty, would work with TAP college administrators, faculty members, and advisory committees to develop and expand their TAP/honors academic enrichment programs. Both longstanding and newly created intersegmental faculty dialogues and academic alliances would be nurtured. Recruitment efforts by the two-year colleges, especially when extended to underrepresented populations at feeder high schools or in community settings, would be linked whenever possible

to special UCLA projects and grants. Periodic review of college TAP programs and longitudinal studies of transfer student performance at UCLA would be conducted, and the results would be reinvested in program improvement. The office would organize task forces when appropriate, to work with the colleges to enrich college curriculum, improve teaching methods and strategies, and develop general programs.

Honors Within and Beyond the Transfer Function

For most of the thirty or so two-year colleges who sent representatives to UCLA for a one-day “Build Your Own Honors Program” workshop in December 1995, *honors* had to be defined in the most basic and practical terms. The first program in California had been around for only seven years, and by workshop time only a handful were known among over a hundred colleges throughout the state. The organizers led the participants through the steps of program design that provided both substance and confidence for their work back home. The workshop motto gave them all a battle flag, at once amusing and prophetic: we were joined once and for all in “The Honors Conspiracy.”

By May 1986, a dramatically expanded stage, and a better prepared audience, awaited the players. By now there were fifteen community college honors programs in California. Again hosted by UCLA, and sponsored by the University’s Office of Academic Interinstitutional Programs and the Western Regional Honors Council, a conjoint conference entitled “2 + 2: The Brightest and the Best” attracted over a hundred two- and four-year institutions from around the United States. The call for papers issued “a challenge to two-year and four-year institutions to provide the best post-secondary experience possible for the broad range of our transfer-oriented and highly motivated students.” This time, the agenda stretched over three days, began its first day with a session called “Beginning in Honors,” and presented a full palette of sessions on comparative program designs, administrative and political issues, faculty and student recruitment, honors classroom pedagogy, student advisement, and models for extracurricular support.

The closing session was prophetic, and it perfectly culminated several years of systematic work by UCLA and its regional feeder community colleges. It was entitled “Initiating Two-Year/Four-Year Alliances” and was presented by both UCLA and community college representatives. There, in front of the attendees, was a total template for honors in the CCC—from rationale to design to fruition as a principal mode of transfer for students to the University.

Most of the Los Angeles area two-year institutions that took up the UCLA challenge to implement TAP by committing to enrich their transfer preparation curricula for students built the word *honors* directly into their new programs, and duly took their case for support to campus leaders. Surprisingly, responses were mixed and occasionally negative. Honors

proponents at a number of campuses had to find ways to tiptoe through delicate diplomatic pathways to assure approval. Because the word *honors* itself seemed to be a lightning rod, several programs were driven to use new titles and acronyms for their programs, to finesse the volatile issues of favoritism or elitism that had proven to be endemic to the development of honors programs across the country (Austin, 1991). One college chose HITE (high-intensity transfer experience), several more used “scholars program,” and virtually all construed their program in light of its value in preparing students for transfer.

A serious difficulty faced by many honors proponents was how to address the perception that such programs were inherently elitist because they would serve only a small minority of students. The expectation that enrichment of the curricula for these students would bring more resources and attention their way, and would afford them and their instructors the luxury of smaller class size and extra money and access to college resources, struck many as antithetical to the mission of community colleges. This was worrisome for administrators and general faculty leaders as well, because for them the chronic problem of matching budget deficiencies and the wide range of programs could not be reconciled as it was. Many skeptics brought up the point that if, indeed, honors students were more talented and more motivated, then they were inherently more able to succeed without the extra attention and resources that honors programs seemed to require. And what of the needs of vocational students, part-time students, and reentry students—all part of the student population and all deserving of attention and support? For the community colleges to *fully* implement honors in their own universe, they would have to expand their vision to include vocational or occupational students and faculty members. Following is a description of one of the few comprehensive community college honors programs in the country.

Building a Comprehensive Community College Honors Program

The transfer function mandate for honors would not have been enough to convince administrative, faculty, and student leaders in the San Diego Community College District (SDCCD). Fortunately, at the same time that the historic discussions on academic enrichment/honors/transfer alliances were taking place at UCLA, indeed around the country, the SDCCD was undergoing its own comprehensive self-study—the SUCCESS Project. It was ordered by its publicly elected board of trustees, who gave *carte blanche* to a number of broadly representative study groups to scrutinize and recommend improvements in every component of district operations.

A faculty-driven subcommittee of the instructional self-study group was commissioned to determine the feasibility of implementing an honors program in the district. An early, and politically prudent, determination was that an honors program must be made available to all qualified students in

the district. This brought immediate encouragement from district leadership, because it could be defended as consistent not only with the formal mission statement of the SDCCD, but also with the State of California mandates for instruction in the CCC to provide transfer, occupational, remedial, continuing/adult, and community service programs. Another key insight came from monographs supplied by the National Collegiate Honors Council, which stressed that “there is no one model of an honors program that can be superimposed on . . . institutions nominally of the same sort but different in history, administrative structure, disciplinary organization, budgetary support, or student mix. The basic honors question is: What opportunities must we make available in order to assure that the ablest and/or most highly motivated students in this institution may have their educational needs met?” (Austin, 1991, p. 1). It was an easy step to take in declaring that the goal of the new SDCCD honors program would be to enhance transferability or employability of district students.

Resolving Early Issues of Elitism. Perceptions that an honors program would either demonstrate unwarranted favoritism to a small group of “able and motivated” students and their professors or withhold by default scarce resources from students who were more needy of support are common in the honors literature (Austin, 1991). Not unexpectedly, they were raised by detractors in the SDCCD. The honors steering committee/design group was careful to include in its rationale a set of guidelines that would address head-on the issue of elitism. Program literature included the slogan “Excellence with Access,” and it stressed the many ways in which honors experiences were to be made available to students and faculty members. Recruitment initiatives to all area high schools and to all continuing college students would work toward broad ethnic representation and would complement the curriculum vision of enrichment through interdisciplinary and multicultural experiences. Multiple criteria would be adopted for admission to the program, including an ultimate prerogative by an instructor to admit students conditionally by interview.

There were even ways to turn the elitism and favoritism arguments around. In several new and exciting ways, honors would afford to our students the educational opportunities usually reserved for expensive private liberal arts institutions. Once the program was running in the SDCCD and the benefits to both students and faculty members became manifest, expectations and motivation for excellence would spread beyond honors classes to the rest of the curriculum as well, especially as the same students and faculty members were also involved in nonhonors courses. The design group was able to show that although the district’s formal commitment was to serve equally the needs of all its students, there was a great disparity in the attention, services, and resources allotted to the remedial student, over the “able and motivated” student. With opposition mollified, at least to the “wait and see” level, the steering committee could concentrate on issues of curriculum design, course selection, and designation of teaching faculty members.

Affording an Honors Program. Again, the timing of the SUCCESS program was propitious. The board of trustees was able to float the nascent SDCCD honors program on State of California lottery funds, with an eye to monitoring the cost to benefit results for a two-year pilot project that would not have to take money away from existing programs. This option turned out to be very important, with support among the leaders of the three colleges uneven, and the districtwide competition for scarce resources always “one short step from frenzy.” It was especially gratifying that after only one year of operation, and after a systematic evaluation that led to strong endorsement from the Office of Research and Planning, the board voted to institutionalize the honors program and directed that appropriate resources be supplied.

The SDCCD mandate for honors set up a district honors committee, with faculty and administrative representation from each college, and it bestowed authority to set up policies and procedures for the selection of courses, faculty members, and students. In its first few years, the committee’s work was funded from district budget categories. More recently, the instructional components have become imbedded in the operations of the individual campuses, whereas activities common to all campuses—including conference travel, marketing and publications, and faculty-assigned time—remain the responsibility of the district.

The San Diego City College Honors Program. Even as the district honors committee set criteria for the selection each semester of courses at all colleges, via a department-initiated proposal mechanism, each college began to explore its own institutional options for honors offerings. At City College, a landmark decision by the faculty and administrative leadership in the mid-1990s—nearly ten years after the first courses were offered on campus—established a setting aside of funds to guarantee the scheduling of ten honors sections per semester (which, at this writing, is about to be expanded to twelve). Faculty coordinators continued to work hard to ensure that course proposals would come from as many departments as possible, deriving special satisfaction (and general kudos) from the inclusion of courses from constituencies not traditionally served by honors: nursing, cosmetology, business, health science/physical education, manufacturing technology, and computer and information sciences. Furthermore, it was possible to participate in honors courses even if one were a part-time or evening student or professor.

In the past several years, the total number of honors students at City College has increased dramatically. The implicit maximum of just over two hundred students—roughly the agreed-upon capacity of our ten honors sections—has long since been matched by the number of students who have independently initiated honors contracts with their professors. At this writing, contracts provide supplementary honors-level objectives in over ninety courses across the college curriculum and serve more than two hundred additional students.

Launching “The World of Ideas,” an Honors General Education Core Curriculum. It would turn out in the long run that the curriculum created to serve transfer students would receive the most attention from stakeholders—both inside and outside the college community. As a set of interconnected courses with thematic linkages, assignment and grading patterns that bridged course boundaries, and extensive collaboration by instructional faculty members, this “core” of classes was an easy conceptual sell to prospective students, faculty curriculum leaders, college and district administrators, and the four-year institutions to whom our students would transfer. “A World of Ideas” was structured around courses that had already been articulated with four-year institutions, and which would soon be fully compatible with the Intersegmental General Education Transfer Curriculum (IGETC) course pattern already approved throughout California by all three systems of higher education. It would serve its design philosophy well: not only would it develop curriculum diversity under the rubrics of interdisciplinary and multicultural/multinational education, but it would also help draw students from diverse populations who could benefit from its possibilities and challenges.

Developing “Our One World,” a General Education Honors Curriculum with a Global Theme. The first iterations of the honors general education core had paired first-semester courses in philosophy and English composition, followed by a second-semester pairing of Humanities I and English Composition II/Critical Thinking, and then concluded in the second year with a second humanities course and an open elective from among the other honors-level sections taught collegewide. The current version of the core curriculum, “Our One World,” has permuted slightly, leading off with stand-alone cultural anthropology and English Composition I courses, maintaining the second-semester humanities/English pair, and generally offering a more flexible and open selection of courses, including honors contracts, to fill out a completion requirement of fifteen university-transferable units. It is flavored by the work of a two-year, districtwide project that infused key honors courses with a set of student-centered “global competencies.” This development reinforces our view that both our honors curricula and the students we send on to four-year institutions should reflect a high level of preparation to contribute in the broadest way to the “global culture in the making.”

What Makes Our Honors Courses *Honors*? This question has been unremitting, sometimes abrasively so, over the past fifteen years of the SDCCD program. On one front, the district honors committee has responded with a set of general criteria for course selection, which are employed during the process of proposal review and recommendation. Compared with a nonhonors course on the same content, an honors course must be distinguished by an appropriate combination of its relative rigor, depth, intensity, cross-disciplinary or interdisciplinary character, and/or its innovative teaching/learning modalities. A

more extended and detailed response is provided in the document that sets up honors contracts between students and the faculty, which suggests that the inclusion of five or more “honors attributes” distilled from an archive of honors course syllabi would constitute an honors-level experience when added to the objectives of the nonhonors course to which the contract is attached. Presuming comparison with a regular, nonhonors course, the attributes for honors courses include (1) more advanced supplemental reading—especially of primary sources, (2) more opportunities for writing—and at a higher standard, (3) more opportunities for student presentations to class or campus audiences, (4) stronger enhancement of skills in critical thinking, analysis, and interpretation, (5) greater depth and/or breadth of subject matter—especially requiring synthesis of different perspectives or points of view, (6) more opportunities for research—particularly when student-conceived, (7) use of resources or consultants from beyond the campus itself, such as university libraries or interaction with business, academic, or industry personnel, (8) opportunities for publication or public presentation of work, (9) integration of concepts and information from a variety of sources and experiences, particularly in cross- or interdisciplinary contexts, (10) community-based experiences, such as field trips, interviews, and cultural events, and (11) leadership experiences within the class structure, such as leading study groups, leading class discussions, and assisting faculty members in preparation and delivery of instructional material.

Faculty-to-Student Relationships in Honors. From the first moments of the “Build Your Own” honors workshop at UCLA in 1985, it has seemed axiomatic that a close working (and occasionally playing) relationship between a student and a faculty member can illuminate the honors experience for both, and it is a key ingredient in the ultimate success of the student. From an institutional point of view, supporting faculty members in their efforts to recreate curriculum, enrich and broaden their teaching strategies, and open themselves to a more intense and collaborative experience in presenting and discussing their course content is all of major benefit. For those colleges that were close enough to take advantage of the opportunity, the UCLA model of intersegmental “academic alliances” among faculty members in various disciplines (previously described) was especially beneficial in providing a stimulating and confidence-building experience for the college professor—one that gave a pronounced boost to the quality of classroom experiences as well as the commitment to ensure transfer readiness of honors students back home (Banks and Byock, 1991). Students flourished in the interactivity in and away from the honors classroom—with peers, with faculty members, and with other college figures as well (Banks and Byock, 1991). For many students, the intellectual and personal mentoring that accrued in the safe, if demanding, relationship with faculty members was acknowledged as a principal factor in their eventual success, even after transfer. Although not all studies concur (Laanan, 1995, 1996), it has been found that “informally, there was a socializing process within the TAP [UCLA] that suggested [that] the combined effects of the program’s cur-

riculum, activities, and interactions with the faculty developed a 'political capacity' within students. This political capacity refers to the student developing an understanding for how academic systems work and a self-confidence in how to manipulate them" (Banks and Byock, 1991, p. 105).

The Role of Extracurricular Experiences in Honors. Students report unflinching that the most enjoyable aspect of participating in a college honors program is the collaborative work, personal support, and social bonding with their peers. It has become a significant priority in the planning process at City College to include special activities to encourage this end: academic events (for example, a visiting lecturer), cultural events (discount tickets to an Old Globe play, perhaps), and purely social events (mid-term beach party, or impromptu in-class pizza delivery). Levels of trust and willingness to share confidences and future plans are built and sustained, and feelings of isolation and lack of commitment seem to diminish markedly. A gratifying level of interest has developed among honors students to participate in community service and honors societies such as Alpha Gamma Sigma—a California organization, and Phi Theta Kappa—an international two-year college organization. Students enrolled in honors classes (not a requirement for either of the honors societies) launched the Honors Student Council, a new student club meant to serve the honors program goals and activities more closely. With our continuing membership in honors organizations outside San Diego proper, there are occasional opportunities for our students to propose and deliver presentations in professional conference settings. The Honors Transfer Council of California (HTCC)—a forty-member community college consortium—held its first annual conference for student participants at the University of California at Irvine in March 2001, and the Western Regional Honors Council (WRHC) and the National Collegiate Honors Council schedule annual conferences open to student participants.

Summary and Conclusion

Community college honors programs have proliferated in California (indeed, across the country) since the mid-1980s. Although principally concerned with transfer students in most cases, *honors* has emerged on many campuses as a flexible and adaptable component of a comprehensive enrichment strategy that is used to enhance both the transferability and the employability of students. A range of ancillary benefits is easily discerned as well. Among them are faculty development, curriculum innovation, and a markedly higher perception of institutional quality by both prospective and matriculating students, as well as the external community in general. The development of intersegmental honors transfer agreements and alliances, launched with the enthusiastic support of the University of California and California State University segments, has regenerated confidence in the excellence of community colleges as transfer institutions.

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