EXTERNAL CONSULTING REPORT

for

THE HONORS PROGRAM

at

WESTERN WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

Robert Spurrier
Oklahoma State University
May 14-15, 2012
This report is divided into four sections and also includes three appendices. Section I provides background for the report. Section II includes a series of general observations about the Western Washington University (WWU) Honors Program. Section III places the Honors Program at WWU into the context of the Basic Characteristics of a Fully Developed Honors Program developed by the National Collegiate Honors Council (NCHC). Section IV includes a number of suggestions for possible consideration by WWU. Appendix A outlines the information requested from the Vice Provost in advance of the on-campus visit by the consultant. Because Provost Riordan requested that I provide a copy of the “treaty” among the six undergraduate colleges at Oklahoma State University that generated campus-wide commitment to a single university honors program (now The Honors College) Appendix B provides, by way of example only, the current version of the policies and procedures of The Honors College at Oklahoma State University. It seems plausible that WWU will wish to consider moving from an Honors Program to an Honors College in the not-too-distant future as part of the national trend in this direction, and Appendix C includes the Basic Characteristics of a Fully Developed Honors College from the National Collegiate Honors Council.

I. BACKGROUND FOR THIS REPORT

A. Procedure and Process — I was invited by Dr. Steven VanderStaay, Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education, to serve as an external consultant for an examination of the WWU Honors Program. As a result, numerous documents and data concerning the Honors Program were requested along with the scheduling of a number of meetings while on campus (see Appendix A), a good deal of information was provided, and various meetings were scheduled. I appreciate the way in which many of the materials were provided in advance of my visit to the WWU. Additional information was provided during my campus visit. I also very much appreciate the gracious hospitality extended to me during my campus visit by everyone at the university.

During my two-day campus visit, I met with the following individuals and groups:

Monday, May 14, 2012 — Residence Life Staff (Jake Acton, Assistant Director of Residence Life, and Dwayne Taylor, Resident Director of Edens Hall); Office of Admissions Staff (Kayle Walls, Assistant Director of Admissions, and Zachery Neuhaus, Admissions Counselor); Dr. George Mariz, Honors Program Director; Honors Program Staff (Ms. Carla Pederson, Office Assistant, and Dr. Tom Moore, Advisor; Lunch with Deans (Drs. Brent Carbajal, Humanities and Social Sciences; Chris Cox, Western Libraries; Dan Guyette, Fine and Performing Arts; Kathleen Kitto, Graduate School & Research and Sponsored Programs; Francisco Rios, Education; Brad Smith, Sciences and Technology; Roger Gilman, Fairhaven); Open Meeting for Honors Faculty (Drs. Jim Hearne, Computer Science; Kathleen Saunders, Anthropology; Nicholas Margaritis, English; Sean Murphy, Liberal Studies); Honors Program Alumni (Sharon Wherland, Jennifer Manking, and Kathryn Mertens); Open Meeting with Honors Program Students (Morgan Schurr, Biochemistry; Michelle Wuerth, Biochemistry; Jacqueline Schaeffer, English; Kyle Waura, Interdisciplinary Film, Art, and English; Caitlin Christopher, Fine Art and Mathematics; Tobias Osterhaug, Chinese and East Asian...
Tuesday, May 15, 2012 — Honors Board (Faculty Representatives Drs. Spencer Anthony-Cahill, Chemistry; Mary Metzger, English; T. J. Olney, Finance and Marketing; Robert Stoops, Liberal Studies; and Student Representatives Ms. Phillipa Hemsley, English, and Ms. Morgan Schurr, Biochemistry); Honors Student Board (Cameron Little, Computer Science; Kyle Waura, Film and Art History; Ruta Nanivadekar, Sociology and Political Science; Filipa Hemsley, English with Secondary Education Focus; Morgan Schurr, Biochemistry); Dr. Steven VanderStaay, Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education; an open meeting time for the campus community that was attended only by Dr. Katie Vuli, interim chair of English, who provided a summary of comments from English Department faculty; Dr. Katherine Riordan, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

B. Scope of the Consulting Report — As noted above, I was asked by Dr. VanderStaay to serve in the capacity of a consultant on the Honors Program at WWU. NCHC Recommended Site Visitors are trained to consult with or serve as external review team members for honors programs and honors colleges as programs or colleges. They do not evaluate the performance of specific honors administrators, faculty, or professional staff per se. That having been said, however, I would like to comment to the extent of noting that the WWU Honors Director has in my opinion done a truly remarkable job of keeping the Honors Program operating, especially in light of the staffing constraints and the past pattern of allocation of budget during an era that demonstrated what might, at best, call to mind Daniel Patrick Moynihan’s famous comment in a different setting—“benign neglect.” I heard numerous comments about the vital role of Dr. George Mariz in all aspects of the Honors Program. The students, faculty, administrators, and staff familiar with his work were uniformly complimentary in their comments—something that most assuredly is not always the case in my experience with honors consulting visits and formal honors program reviews.

C. Possible NCHC Certification of Honors Programs — At present the National Collegiate Honors Council does not certify honors programs and honors colleges, but the NCHC Board of Directors has directed the NCHC Assessment and Evaluation Committee to develop a mechanism for voluntary certification to be brought to the Board for its consideration not later than 2014. It has yet not been decided that NCHC will move to some sort of voluntary certification process within the next few years, but the readers of this report may wish to keep this possibility in mind as they consider the development of the WWU Honors Program in the context of NCHC’s Basic Characteristics of a Fully Developed Honors Program (and possibly the Basic Characteristics of a Fully Developed Honors College). Being able to note that WWU has a nationally certified Honors Program seems likely to be beneficial in the recruiting of high-talent students who frequently have the option to attend a wide variety of colleges and universities.

D. Submission of Draft Version of the Report — In an effort to avoid inadvertent errors on matters of fact, a confidential working draft of this report was provided to Dr. VanderStaay by e-mail so that he could call any such errors to the consultant’s attention before the final version of the report was submitted electronically. [Following submission of the final report, Dr. VanderStaay transmitted information from Dr. George Mariz, Honors Program Director, than necessitated two minor changes in the final report. These are indicated in brackets in the text below.]
E. **The Consultant** — Dr. Robert Spurrier is Director of The Honors College and Professor of Political Science at Oklahoma State University where he has been faculty member since 1972 and an honors administrator since 1988. A Fellow of the National Collegiate Honors Council (NCHC), he is a Past President of NCHC who currently serves as NCHC Secretary. As an NCHC Recommended Site Visitor, he has had the privilege to serve as a consultant or member of an external review team for honors programs and honors colleges over an extended period. This site visit to the Western Washington University represents the forty-eighth time he has served in this capacity. Among other presentations and publications relating to honors education, he is co-author of the NCHC monograph *Assessing and Evaluating Honors Programs and Honors Colleges: A Practical Handbook* (2005). For a number of years he has been a facilitator for NCHC faculty institutes that train new site visitors. His Recommended Site Visitor background information is available at [http://nchchonors.org/faculty-directors/site-visitors/site-visitor-bob-spurrier](http://nchchonors.org/faculty-directors/site-visitors/site-visitor-bob-spurrier) on the NCHC web page along with a link to his abbreviated (honors) curriculum vitae. This document, however, should not be construed to constitute a report from the National College Honors Council as an organization.

**II. GENERAL OBSERVATIONS CONCERNING WESTERN WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY’S HONORS PROGRAM**

At the outset, I am happy to be able to report that the WWU Honors Program is exemplary in many ways (as detailed below). An on-line profile of Honors Program sophomore geology major Angela Gelfer as part of Western Today [http://www.onlinefast.org/wwutoday/features/honors-program-graduates-bright-gifted-students](http://www.onlinefast.org/wwutoday/features/honors-program-graduates-bright-gifted-students) showcases her accomplishments and places them in the broader WWU context while also highlighting many of the excellent features of the Honors Program. The Program’s major challenges are those posed by an inadequate budget, an undersized staff, and significant growth in the number of students it serves without a corresponding increase in honors courses and essential services.

**A. Curriculum** — The curriculum of the WWU Honors Program is well conceived as a broad liberal arts endeavor including both a three-quarter Major Cultural Traditions series (two quarters of western civilization followed by a choice between two courses covering non-western civilizations), honors seminars/colloquia, honors sections of a few departmental courses, and a senior project.

Students and faculty spoke quite highly of their experiences in the “traditions” series and the seminars/colloquia in the context of being academically demanding and rewarding. The alumni with whom I had the opportunity to meet also spoke quite positively about their senior project experiences. One of the strengths of the senior project is that a great deal of flexibility is provided for the students as they work with a faculty mentor to fashion their projects. Detailed guidelines are provided to both students and faculty mentors in terms of the senior project requirement.

Because one faculty member expressed concern about the nature of the senior project in comparison with the senior thesis requirement in his major, I took the opportunity during a break in my schedule to review three senior project reports that I took more or less at random from those shelved in the student room in the Honors Program space in College Hall. One of the three turned out to be in my own area of academic specialization (constitutional law and judicial politics), and I found it to be very well done. The other two were well outside my academic field, so I was more interested in the quality of the presentation of the findings. Again, I was impressed by how well written they were.

A major concern expressed by several of the students and some faculty was the demise of the honors Chemistry series of courses, especially for students with majors in the sciences. These courses were said to be outstanding and to provide an extremely valuable foundation for later work in a variety of science
majors. Given Provost Riordan’s preliminary inquiry about how to make the Honors Program more attractive to science majors (even though they already make up a large proportion of the total number of Honors Program students), it would appear that reinstatement of the honors series in Chemistry would be well advised. Some additional suggestions will be presented in Section IV, below.

B. Students — The students with whom I met were impressive, articulate, and apparently quite dedicated to academic excellence. They expressed satisfaction with their Honors Program experiences, appreciated the fact that the courses were challenging while being offered in a supportive environment, and had high praise for the Honors Director, faculty advisor, and administrative assistant. While honors students at some institutions I have visited demonstrated a surprising lack of curiosity about how honors education is accomplished outside their own campus environment, this most certainly was not the case with the WWU students. The WWU students asked very good questions, and this is all the more impressive because they have not had the opportunity to attend National Collegiate Honors Council (NCHC) conferences to gain a national perspective on such matters.

These WWU honors students are effective spokespersons for the value of their Honors Program experiences, but it always is worth bearing in mind that these same students can become some of the institution’s most articulate critics if they should ever come to believe that the university is slighting their honors education.

Data presented as part of the background material I requested indicate that the Honors Program is effective in attracting both in-state and out-of-state students, both raising the overall Academic Index of the entering freshman class and also generating substantial additional revenue in the form of out-of-state tuition. These data were supported by student comments when I asked how many would have attended WWU if there were no Honors Program. Fully half of the large group of students with whom I met (primarily in-state students) stated that they would not have considered WWU among their choices without the presence of an Honors Program in which they could participate.

C. Faculty — In meeting with some of the faculty who teach honors courses I learned that they tend to use more sophisticated material in their classes, that they tend to cover more material than in a typical WWU course offered at the same level, and that they find the students to be much more actively engaged in discussion in the classroom setting. They also stressed the importance of writing in their honors classes.

Concerns were expressed about the long waiting lists for some honors seminars (sometimes exceeding the number of students actually able to enroll), the demise of the honors Chemistry series, and the need for additional honors courses—especially in light of the ever-increasing number of Honors Program students.

The views of the faculty were very much consistent with those of the students, and the faculty agreed that the teaching of honors courses is a very positive experience.

When I inquired about how more junior faculty might be brought into the teaching of honors courses, I was told that the seminar proposal process is rather daunting and that some junior faculty have begun the paperwork preparation only to give up on the idea before actually submitting an application. Several of the faculty indicated that when a seminar proposal is not approved by the Honors Board the Honors Director attempts to contact the faculty member to explain the selection process and decision. One member of the Honors Board indicated that he thought it might be a good idea to have an initial pre-proposal stage requiring only a one-page application.
D. Administrative Support — When I met with the Deans and Vice Provost VanderStaay, I initiated the conversation with the following question: “What would Western Washington University lose if it were to abolish its Honors Program?” There appeared to be widespread agreement that WWU’s ability to attract high-aspiration students would be diminished, out-of-state students would be less attracted to the university (with the resulting loss in out-of-state tuition), faculty would lose the opportunity to teach top undergraduates in the small honors class setting, and a unique cross-university program would be lost. Interestingly, however, there seemed to be agreement that success in teaching in Honors Program courses is essentially irrelevant in the promotion and tenure process.

Most of the Deans expressed support for continued growth of the Honors Program, although one or two of them said that they would need to defer final judgment until more details were available. There also was an expressed concern that continued growth could lead to having even more honors courses taught by non-tenure-track faculty.

In terms of support from the highest administrative levels of the university, the picture over a number of years appears to have been one that most charitably can be described as “benign neglect” (as noted above) when it has come to reporting lines, budget, and staffing. A former provost eliminated the direct-line report of the Honors Director, and the honors budget was allowed to stagnate for years at the very same time that increasing numbers of honors students were being recruited and admitted—leading necessarily to ever-increasing needs in terms of honors courses and individualized honors advising.

To report that the current arrangement of a half-time Honors Director, a one-eighth time (approximately one hour per day) Faculty Advisor, and a half-time Administrative Assistant with an operating budget of less than $5,000.00—for an Honors Program with approximately 450 students—demonstrates only minimal support is a gross understatement. Being “lean” in times of academic budgetary retrenchment at public institutions across the nation may be understandable and commendable, but the WWU Honors Program’s staffing and budget might best be likened to anorexia.

My understanding, however, is that President Shepard (with whom I did not have the opportunity to meet during my time on campus, as is sometimes the case in consulting site visits) has announced the allocation of an additional $100,000.00 to the permanent budget of the Honors Program for the coming fiscal year. This definitely will be a major first step in the right direction.

E. Excessive Reliance on One Key Individual — There simply can be no doubt that the long-time Honors Program Director, Dr. George Mariz, is seen as the very heart of the Program. According to all concerned, his tireless efforts have been and continue to be essential to every aspect of the Program. When asked what would happen to honors education at WWU in the event that Dr. Mariz were to be hit by the proverbial truck, the response seemed to be a collective intake of breath. In other words, he is seen as indispensable. A wide variety of questions over my two-day visit were met with the response that “Dr. Mariz can take care of that” or “this is the sort of thing that George handles.”

An analogy that comes to mind is that of a virtuoso juggler who makes his art appear to be completely effortless. The problem, of course, is that if the juggler were to suffer an attack of some sort while on stage all of the balls, plates, and other objects seemingly in orbit around him would come crashing down. While apparently almost everyone at WWU would be happy with the prospect of having Dr. Mariz continue as the Honors Program Director for another two and half decades, at some point a successor by necessity will be selected—and to expect that person to have the stamina and juggling skills perfected by Dr. Mariz over more than two decades leading the Honors Program at WWU most likely is extremely wishful thinking.
Expecting the Honors Director to teach three courses per academic year in his home department is particularly burdensome, and he indicated that his department wishes him to take on the role of graduate program coordinator in the coming academic year—something that strikes me as being completely unrealistic if the university wishes the Honors Program to prosper.

Beyond the confines of WWU, I should note that Dr. Mariz is respected nationally for his work in the National Collegiate Honors Council—being a long time member of the NCHC Publication Board, numerous national conference planning committees, and (most recently) a nominee for the office of NCHC Secretary in elections that will be held in the fall of 2012.

**F. Honors Residence Hall** — The honors residence life cluster in Edens Hall (composed overwhelmingly of freshmen) receives very favorable comments from students who have lived there. There seems to be general agreement that this honors residence hall is instrumental in the building of a close-knit honors community, and the Residence Life staff with whom I met had similarly positive experiences to relate. They also conveyed a real interest in having their Resident Assistants be actively involved in communicating with the residents about academic matters—something that is not necessarily the case at many other institutions. The fact that the staff reports that there are academic discussions in the student lounge “all the time” supports the other comments that Edens provides an excellent living environment for Honors Program students. The effort by Residence Life to make certain that Resident Assistants are Honors Program students certainly is commendable.

Although WWU does not have a course per se, the Residence Life staff plans to work with incoming freshmen on academic matters such as what constitutes plagiarism at the university level—something that is not necessarily well understood from high school experience.

**III. THE WESTERN WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY HONORS PROGRAM IN THE CONTEXT OF THE NATIONAL COLLEGIATE HONORS COUNCIL’S BASIC CHARACTERISTICS OF A FULLY DEVELOPED HONORS PROGRAM**

This section of the report places the Western Washington University Honors Program into the context of the National Collegiate Honors Council’s Basic Characteristics of a Fully Developed Honors Program. These characteristics are viewed generally within NCHC as agreed-upon best practices in honors education, but they should in no way be viewed as a one-size-fits-all model. With more than 800 institutional members including community colleges, small colleges, mid-size universities, and comprehensive doctoral institutions, the National Collegiate Honors Council is the largest national organization concerned with honors education—but it does not (at present) serve as a formal accrediting or certifying body for Honors Programs or Honors Colleges. As noted above, the consultant is an NCHC Recommended Site Visitor. This document, however, is not be construed to constitute a report from the National College Honors Council as an organization.

**BASIC CHARACTERISTICS OF A FULLY DEVELOPED HONORS PROGRAM**

(Approved by the NCHC Executive Committee on March 4, 1994; amended by the NCHC Board of Directors on November 23, 2007; further amended by the NCHC Board of Directors on February 29, 2010)

*Although no single or definitive honors program model can or should be superimposed on all types of institutions, the National Collegiate Honors Council has identified a number of best practices that are common to successful and fully developed honors programs.*
1. The honors program offers carefully designed educational experiences that meet the needs and abilities of the undergraduate students it serves. A clearly articulated set of admission criteria (e.g., GPA, SAT score, a written essay, satisfactory progress, etc.) identifies the targeted student population served by the honors program. The program clearly specifies the requirements needed for retention and satisfactory completion.

There is more (or perhaps less) to the admissions process for the Honors Program than meets the eye. Although “regular” applicants are expected to provide a range of materials including a writing sample, the Admissions Office “invites” top prospects (those who will be “admitted with highest honors”) to apply for what is essentially automatic admission to the Honors Program without the necessity of submitting the Honors Program writing sample required of the other applicants.

The “regular” review process for incoming freshmen includes a careful review of their high school academic records (with particular emphasis on the nature of the curriculum), a reference letter from a high school teacher or counselor, and a writing sample. Having high standardized test scores, along with an exemplary high school grade point average, does not necessarily mean that a student will be admitted to the WWU Honors Program. Because of the “automatic” admissions process, the Honors Director, with occasional assistance from the Honors Board in borderline cases, thus reviews only a portion of the applications.

Unlike some honors programs across the United States, WWU does not actively recruit from among currently enrolled students who have achieved a record of academic excellence early in their university careers.

Retention in and graduation from the Honors Program requires a 3.50 grade point average in the final 90 quarter credit hours (approximately the last two years).

2. The program has a clear mandate from the institution’s administration in the form of a mission statement or charter document that includes the objectives and responsibilities of honors and defines the place of honors in the administrative and academic structure of the institution. The statement ensures the permanence and stability of honors by guaranteeing that adequate infrastructure resources, including an appropriate budget as well as appropriate faculty, staff, and administrative support when necessary, are allocated to honors so that the program avoids dependence on the good will and energy of particular faculty members or administrators for survival. In other words, the program is fully institutionalized (like comparable units on campus) so that it can build a lasting tradition of excellence.

The WWU Honors Program has a mission statement, as follows:

Western’s Honors Program provides a challenging opportunity for undergraduates of demonstrated academic achievement to realize their potential.

As far as I can determine, however, the Honors Program never has had a clear and detailed mandate or charter approved by WWU’s highest academic administrators.

The budget for the Honors Program has been extremely low for years, and it has not grown with the increase in the number of students. The Honors Director’s position is half-time, there is a half-time administrative assistant, and there is an approximately 1/8-time honors advisor. This simply is not sufficient for a program of its size (even in admittedly tight budgetary times for higher education). At a minimum, the Honors Director’s position should be a full-time, twelve-month appointment
(with the possibility of teaching Honors Program courses), the administrative assistant’s position should be increased to at least 3/4 time, and the honors advisor position should be made full-time (perhaps also taking on the responsibilities of assisting WWU students who wish to compete for major national and international fellowships—something that at many institutions falls within the responsibilities of the Honors Program Office).

The Honors Director has received inadequate funds from which to compensate departments for reassigned time for faculty to teach in the Honors Program.

Further, the Honors Program’s operating budget this fiscal year is less than $5,000 and is woefully inadequate.

This rather dismal picture appears to be about to change for the better, however. As noted above, I was informed that President of the University has committed an additional $100,000.00 in permanent budget for the Honors Program in the coming fiscal year. While this most likely will not bring the Honors Program up to the per capita level of even the least-well-funded college at WWU, it certainly is a significant step in the right direction to make it possible to provide for more adequate staffing in the Honors Program Office, perhaps another honors course or two, and badly-needed additional operating funds.

3. The honors director reports to the chief academic officer of the institution.

Although the Honors Program is housed in Academic Affairs, the Honors Director does not report directly to the Provost—but this was the reporting line in the past. WWU’s Honors Director instead reports to the Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education, a significantly symbolic step below the academic units that report to the Provost. This arrangement, however, admittedly is preferable to that at some institutions in which the Honors Program is housed administratively in one of the undergraduate colleges (typically the college of liberal arts and sciences). Institutions that house the Honors Program administratively in one of their undergraduate colleges run the very real risk that it will come to be seen as a wholly owned subsidiary of that college that is of no real importance to the other undergraduate colleges or to the institution as a whole.

Because the Honors Director does not report directly to the Provost, he is not a member of a Provost’s Council or similar top-level body dealing with institution-wide academic concerns. Making him a member of this group could well increase two-way communication about the Honors Program in the context of the larger university and also greatly improve the frequency of contact between the Honors Director and senior administrators at WWU.

One thing that seems a bit surprising is that the faculty-member spouse of the Vice Provost of Undergraduate Education (to whom the Honors Program Director reports and by whom the Director is evaluated) is a member of the Honors Board that is responsible for the governance of the Honors Program. Both of these individuals indicated their strong endorsement of the Honors Program and are active in supporting it, but because I am not familiar with the academic culture at WWU I cannot gauge whether the arrangement might be viewed as being sufficiently problematic to be a matter of concern. Any such concern presumably would be diminished significantly, if not eliminated altogether, if the Honors Director’s direct reporting line to the Provost were reinstated as recommended elsewhere in this report.
4. The honors curriculum, established in harmony with the mission statement, meets the needs of the students in the program and features special courses, seminars, colloquia, experiential-learning opportunities, undergraduate research opportunities, or other independent-study options.

The honors curriculum at WWU is based on an exceptionally well-conceived liberal arts model that combines western and non-western humanities in the freshman year with colloquia and seminar in subsequent years and concludes with a senior project. This model seems especially well suited for a university such as WWU that sees private liberal arts colleges as its primary competitors for high-talent high school students.

With an anticipated 450 students in the still-growing Honors Program at WWU, however, the number of honors courses, colloquia, and seminars offered during the academic year may well be inadequate even at present. I am told that the waiting lists for some honors seminars contain the names of more students that those who are able actually to enroll for those seminars.

Although not explicit in the published materials about the Honors Program, there appears to be a general understanding that in appropriate situations the Honors Director is willing to authorize substitutions that will allow students to complete the Program’s requirements. This flexibility can be quite important to these students.

Chemistry has been made a foundation course for most science majors at WWU (and science majors make up the largest contingent within the Honors Program), but the extremely popular honors Chemistry sequence is no longer being offered—much to the dismay of many of those with whom I met during my campus visit to WWU.

5. The program requirements constitute a substantial portion of the participants’ undergraduate work, typically 20% to 25% of the total course work and certainly no less than 15%.

Graduation from the WWU Honors Program normally requires completion of 3 cultural traditions courses (in the freshman year) for 12 quarter credit hours, 3 sophomore-level GUR honors colloquia (12 hours), 2 junior-level seminars (8 hours), and a senior capstone project (3-6 hours) for a total of 35-38 quarter credit hours. The minimum number of quarter credit hours required for the baccalaureate degree at WWU is 180, so the honors percentage is between 19 and 21%. This criterion is satisfied, but at the lower end of the scale if students complete only the minimum Honors Program requirements.

The Honors Program Director when academically warranted may authorize substitutions, something that certainly is appropriate.

[Students in fact take more credit in Honors than appears in the published material, chiefly in the area of the Senior Project, where Honors 490, the class for which they can register, is a vehicle for them to receive additional credit in the event that their home departments or programs do not offer them sufficient avenues to reflect the work they are actually doing on the SP. Some students also take Honors 400 if they need additional credit to reflect their actual expenditure of effort. Many, but not all of these students are in the natural sciences, and it is common for them to take as much as 35% or more of their university work through Honors considering the work on the SP and in math or science classes (when those classes exist).]
6. The curriculum of the program is designed so that honors requirements can, when appropriate, also satisfy general education requirements, major or disciplinary requirements, and pre-professional or professional training requirements.

For the most part, this appears to be the case—although some science majors indicated that the sophomore-junior level honors requirements meant that they had to enroll in courses that did not count toward their degree requirements. A suggestion for consideration of a possible research track that appears later in this report might be of value to these students as a new curricular option.

7. The program provides a locus of visible and highly reputed standards and models of excellence for students and faculty across the campus.

Although I am not aware of any systematic data gathering at WWU concerning this NCHC characteristic, it was apparent that the faculty and students with whom I met believed the Honors Program to provide an extremely valuable and rewarding curricular setting for some of the university’s finest undergraduates. Similarly, the students gave the Program high marks for providing supportive honors advising with sufficient flexibility to meet unusual situations that frequently occur for honors students at any college or university—although ready access to honors advising is becoming diminished as the number of student’s increases.

8. The criteria for selection of honors faculty include exceptional teaching skills, the ability to provide intellectual leadership and mentoring for able students, and support for the mission of honors education.

According to the brief self-study provided by the Honors Program Director in advance of my campus visit, he takes special care in selecting faculty to teach those honors courses over which he has staffing authority. While many are tenured or tenure-track faculty, he reports that there has been reliance on very-well-qualified non-tenure-track faculty for a significant number of honors courses—something that could well be a matter of concern if these numbers were to rise.

The process for selecting honors seminars may be overly cumbersome in that junior faculty may not be disposed to completely develop a proposed seminar before it even can be submitted for Honors Board approval.

Given the enthusiastic response students provided in response to my questions about their academic experiences in the Honors Program, it seems apparent that the faculty selection process is leading very positive outcomes in the classroom.

9. The program is located in suitable, preferably prominent, quarters on campus that provide both access for the students and a focal point for honors activity. Those accommodations include space for honors administrative, faculty, and support staff functions as appropriate. They may include space for an honors lounge, library, reading rooms, and computer facilities. If the honors program has a significant residential component, the honors housing and residential life functions are designed to meet the academic and social needs of honors students.

I did not notice any prominent exterior signage that directs a visitor (or prospective student) to the WWU Honors Program Office in College Hall. Although I am told that the space occupied by the Honors Program is vastly superior to the prior arrangement in which offices were scattered across campus, at present there are three relatively small offices for the Director, Administrative Assistant, and Faculty Honors Advisor as well as a large multi-function space that serves primarily as a
student lounge (that was well utilized by students during the time I was on campus) with some computers, bound copies of honors project reports available on bookshelves, and some attractive displays. The Honors Program does not have a dedicated classroom or seminar room. In terms of honors space per se, it does not strike me as being likely to make a particularly positive first impression on prospective students and their families (or on potential donors to the university).

As noted above, the honors living cluster in Eden’s Hall is highly regarded by students, the Residence Life staff, and the Honors Program staff.

What occurs to me in the context of space is how much better the arrangement could be if the Honors Program Office were moved to the ground floor of Eden’s Hall in much the same arrangement that is found at the University of Maryland-College Park or Mississippi State University that combine their honors office space with an honors residence hall. Eden’s is a physically very attractive building (and according to Residence Life staff one that makes an extremely positive impression on visiting prospective students and their families), and having the Honors Program Office located in Eden’s would combine the attractive physical space with an informal message that new WWU honors freshmen would have easy regular access to the Honors Program staff. (At any university with such an arrangement, special care should be taken to assure students who do not live in the honors residence hall that they are in no way less valuable participants in the Honors Program than those students who do choose to live there.) Locating a dedicated honors seminar room in Eden’s would have the added benefit of bringing faculty into the honors residence hall on a regular basis and provide the opportunity for more informal communication outside the classroom.

10. The program has a standing committee or council of faculty members that works with the director or other administrative officer and is involved in honors curriculum, governance, policy, development, and evaluation deliberations. The composition of that group represents the colleges and/or departments served by the program and also elicit support for the program from across the campus.

The Honors Board is composed of five faculty members and two student members, and the Honors Program Director is an ex officio non-voting member who serves in an advisory capacity. The five faculty members serve two-year terms (and may succeed themselves) and are nominally selected by the faculty senate but are at this time in reality volunteers who have taught in the Honors Program and who were ratified by the faculty senate. One member indicated that he believed if there were more volunteers than open seats on the Honors Board the faculty senate would vote to select the new member. The two student members are selected by the Honors Program students through an application process and serve two-year terms with staggered expiration dates. [Dr. Mariz indicates that the student members of the Honors Board are elected by the sitting Honors Board members, not by Honors Program students.]

The Board is responsible for approving all Honors Program policies, and it is responsible for reviewing and approving curricular matters before they are submitted to the appropriate committees for approval.

The Honors Board is responsible for selecting proposals for honors seminars, although they indicated that they have not in recent years been flooded with proposals.

In addition, the Honors Board sometimes advises on freshman admissions decisions when requested to do so by the Honors Director.
When queried as to whether the Board was of sufficient size to allow its members to communicate the importance of the Honors Program to all parts of campus, there appeared to be agreement that a larger Board might be more effective in this regard.

11. **Honors students are assured a voice in the governance and direction of the honors program. This can be achieved through a student committee that conducts its business with as much autonomy as possible but works in collaboration with the administration and faculty to maintain excellence in the program. Honors students are included in governance, serving on the advisory/policy committee as well as constituting the group that governs the student association.**

In addition to the two student members of the Honors Board, there is a new Student Board that was formed in 2011 to coordinate social events and engage students after the first year (when most have moved out of the honors residence hall and are no longer enrolled in the common courses of the first-year honors sequence). They have sponsored events such as a potluck dinner that was attended by approximately 60 students. They are in the process of developing a student mentoring system that will pair incoming freshmen with experienced honors students, and they are constructing exit surveys to be administered to seniors graduating from the Honors Program as well as to students who choose not to continue in the Honors Program.

They also participate in the recruiting efforts of the WWU Honors Program by being available to have lunch with prospective students as well as helping with the overnight program for the very top high school prospects who come to campus to attend classes and meet with other honors students.

12. **Honors students receive honors-related academic advising from qualified faculty and/or staff.**

Honors Advising is provided by the half-time Honors Director and the 1/8 time faculty advisor, and on occasion the Administrative Assistant is called upon to give informal advice as well. Given the size of the Honors Program, this arrangement has become untenable, as the program has grown in size.

The National Academic Advising Association (NACADA) has reported that the average load for a full-time academic advisor at a four-year institution is just over 280 students. In some honors programs, the honors program professional staff provides honors advising—and a few institutions including Oklahoma State University require that honors advisors themselves have earned honors degrees as undergraduates. At other institutions, honors advising is handled by carefully selected faculty advisors in academic departments. Yet another model is for key advisors in centralized advising centers to provide honors advising, especially before students declare their academic majors. A few institutions make use of peer advising in which selected honors students provide honors advising. Some institutions mix and match two or more of the elements discussed here.

My own experience has led to me to believe that Oklahoma State University’s commitment of funding for honors advising in our Honors College has been one of the key factors in our success and growth. With just over 1,000 active participant honors students, we have three full-time professional honors academic counselors who each advise approximately 250 honors students, and both the Honors Director and Assistant Director advise approximately 100 honors students because they choose to do so.

Continuing to provide outstanding honors advising to an ever-increasing number of students is extremely important to the success of the WWU Honors Program, and it is one of the reasons that I
advocate a significant increase in the FTE of the Honors Program staff.

13. The program serves as a laboratory within which faculty feel welcome to experiment with new subjects, approaches, and pedagogies. When proven successful, such efforts in curriculum and pedagogical development can serve as prototypes for initiatives that can become institutionalized across the campus.

I am not aware of instances at WWU in which honors courses or pedagogies have spread beyond the Honors Program into the wider campus community.

14. The program engages in continuous assessment and evaluation and is open to the need for change in order to maintain its distinctive position of offering exceptional and enhanced educational opportunities to honors students.

Rather surprisingly, the Honors Director reports that until very recently he was expected only to report verbally on rare occasion to the Provost or to provide a one-page annual report. This level of expectations hardly indicated an interest in continuous assessment or strategic planning and is perhaps another manifestation of the pattern of “benign neglect” noted earlier in this report.

The combination of reported lack of interest on the part of previous high-level administrators in receiving detailed annual reports and the woefully understaffed Honors Program Office seems rather naturally to have led to a lack of data collection and analysis over the years.

More recently, however, more efforts are being made to document the importance of the Honors Program and its successes. A general strategic plan is in place, and it could well be strengthened by including some objective criteria by which to measure successful outcomes. The fact that an outside honors consultant has been brought to campus by the central administration is another indication of increased interest in the Honors Program, as is the commitment of an additional $100,000 to its budget by the President for the coming fiscal year.

The Vice Provost has begun gathering data at the university level that may well be valuable over time to document the value of the Honors Program in additional ways. These data include responses to Honors Program queries added to the university’s systematic exit interview process as well as correlations between Honors Program students with National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) benchmarks that show positive relationships for level of academic challenge, student-faculty interaction, and supportive campus environment.

15. The program emphasizes active learning and participatory education by offering opportunities for students to participate in regional and national conferences, Honors Semesters, international programs, community service, internships, undergraduate research, and other types of experiential education.

Given its extremely small operating budget, the WWU Honors Program is not able to fund student participation in the National Collegiate Honors Council’s annual conferences that allow honors administrators, faculty, professional staff, and students to interact on an equal footing. Other sorts of experiential learning are not required for Honors Program students, with the exception of the senior capstone project that is necessary for completion of Honors Program requirements. (It may well be that the Honors Director on an ad hoc basis allows substitution of some experiences of this type, however.)
16. When appropriate, two-year and four-year programs have articulation agreements by which honors graduates from two-year programs who meet previously agreed-upon requirements are accepted into four-year honors programs.

No such articulation agreements exist with the two-year institutions from which WWU transfer students come. Such articulation agreements are extremely useful in spelling out how transfer honors credit will be counted toward the receiving institution’s honors requirements. I would be happy to share a copy of one of our articulation agreements if requested.

17. The program provides priority enrollment for active honors students in recognition of scheduling difficulties caused by the need to satisfy both honors and major program(s) requirements.

**WWU does not provide priority enrollment for its active Honors Program students.** This privilege (earned by being “active” in the Honors Program rather than being an entitlement of being admitted to the Program) is extremely important to honors students at many institutions because of the importance of being able to schedule their “regular” classes around their honors courses, the latter of which meet at only one time or at best a limited number of times. Whether any of the attrition in the WWU Honors Program can be attributed to students’ being unable to schedule required regular courses around the times of their honors courses is not clear, but it would make sense in the exit surveys being developed by the Honors Student Board to inquire about this as a possible factor in students’ leaving the Honors Program after the freshman year.

IV. SOME SUGGESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION WITH REGARD TO THE WESTERN WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY HONORS PROGRAM

The faculty and students with whom I met are justifiably proud of the Honors Program, and I offer a series of comments and suggestions below for consideration as possible ways to build on a very solid and well-established base in honors education at WWU. These remarks to some degree recapitulate and expand upon what already has been said in the context of the Basic Characteristics of a Fully Developed Honors Program adopted by the National Collegiate Honors Council. No overall rank ordering should be assumed in terms of the sequence of observations that follow—although the recommendations dealing with the Honors Program’s staffing and budget should be understood to be of absolutely the highest priority.

A. The Honors Program Director Succession Process

When the inevitable time arrives to select a successor to Dr. Mariz, I strongly encourage WWU to conduct a national search for the position. Most universities would not limit the search for deans to on-campus candidates, and even fewer would do so for a university-wide academic position. An internal search immediately sends the message that the position being filled is of significantly lower importance to the university than those for which national searches are conducted.

Fortunately, because WWU is an institutional member of the National Collegiate Honors Council, such a national search need not be particularly expensive. There is no cost to NCHC member institutions to post position announcements to the NCHC web page or to communicate with the NCHC membership using its listserv. Thus with no cost for advertising, WWU can reach honors professionals at more than 800 colleges and universities with its position announcement. There of course will be costs to bring an off-campus candidate or candidates to Bellingham for in-person interviews, but that cost should be seen as an investment in the future of the Honors Program. Even if an internal candidate emerges as the best choice to
serve as Honors Director, the search will have been a legitimate national one and the campus will have had the opportunity to gain from the experiences and comments of the external candidate or candidates.

I was asked in one meeting which of the following approaches would be best in terms of selecting new leadership for an academic unit: (1) hire the new administrator first, and then let him or her plan the future development of the unit or (2) develop a comprehensive and detailed plan for the development of the unit and then hire a new administrator to implement the plan. My response was that the second approach could well lead to a shortage of experienced external candidates who likely would not be excited about the prospect of being a mere functionary charged with implementing someone else’s plan. A better approach, in my opinion, would be something of a hybrid in which the general aspects of a plan for the future are put in place and included in the drafting of the position description and announcement while leaving ample room for the new administrator to move the unit forward in consultation with the faculty and administration—realizing that over time some adjustments to any plan will become necessary even in the best of circumstances.

There is no generic job description for an Honors Director, but a few years ago I was part of an external review team that was asked to comment on the position description and qualifications of the administrator responsible for honors education. Because this guidance may prove helpful to WWU it seems appropriate to include it as part of this report.

Responsibilities

The responsibilities of Honors Director might well include the following (in an attempt to achieve what has sometimes been called a “one stop shop” for high-achieving students):

(1) Having responsibility and accountability for the central honors budget and for the [Honors Facilities].

(2) Developing and funding campus-wide interdisciplinary honors courses, special honors seminars, and “overflow” honors sections when departmentally-funded sections reach enrollment capacity.

(3) Providing general supervision for the co-curricular and extracurricular activities [in Honors].

(4) Coordinating the junior- and senior-level college and departmental/college honors experience, including meeting with departmental personnel (who are clearly the backbone of this experience, and whose function might be continued with much support from the central office), and encouraging honors courses in the departments and colleges.

(5) Disseminating information on the honors experiences for recruiting purposes and to assist students to graduate with honors by being an authoritative central clearinghouse for honors information.

(6) Supervising a parallel honors advising system for students with regard to honors requirements, honors courses, and transition from General to Departmental/College Honors in a manner than supplements the academic advising already provided in departments with regard to the major and degree requirements.

(7) Developing and supervising a system for tracking and maintaining records on honors students as well as responding to administration requests for honors information (including statistics on the programs, students, scholarships, and potential recruits).

(8) Certifying students for all honors awards on the transcript and diploma.
(9) Providing the staff to groom students from the freshman year to be competitors in national scholarship competitions (Rhodes, Truman, Fulbright, Goldwater, Madison, Udall, etc.).

(10) Serving as the spokesperson and advocate for the high-ability students in the appropriate councils and forums.

(11) Preparing the honors narrative and data for the [Regional Accrediting Agency] self-study and accreditation efforts.

(12) Serving as a focal point for efforts to raise [additional funds], solicit scholarship funds, and the like.

(13) Teaching honors courses and seminars.

Qualifications

(1) A terminal degree in a recognized academic discipline.

(2) Tenure or tenurability at [Institution].

(3) Significant successful administrative and managerial experience, including budgeting.

(4) Outstanding honors classroom experience.

(5) Substantial interpersonal skills, including verifiable rapport with students and faculty.

B. FTE Requirements for the Honors Director and Honors Program Staff — To paraphrase the Brownlow Committee’s assessment of the American Presidency in 1937, “the Honors Director needs help.”

The current arrangement with a half-time Honors Director (who also teaches honors courses), a half-time Office Assistant, and a one-eighth time honors advisor is not sufficient for the Honors Program at its current size, let alone as it continues to grow. There is no doubt that the Honors Program needs a full-time Director, at least a 3/4 time Administrative Assistant, and at least one additional full-time position (as opposed to the 1/8 time Honors Advisor) to assist with honors advising and perhaps also serve as the coordinator for major fellowship competition preparation.

The provision of quality honors advising is essential to the success of any honors program or honors college, and there should be a systematic approach to student evaluation of honors advising each year. In terms of the need for mentoring and guidance, it would be a major error to assume that honors students are bright enough to handle college life themselves without the need of special advising assistance. As Dr. Samuel Schuman has written elsewhere:

An important point to keep in mind as regards honors advising is that honors students can be expected to have at least as many, and as complicated, problems as other students. It is sometimes tempting to envision all honors students as especially well rounded, balanced, thoughtful, mature, and self-possessed. This vision does not seem particularly accurate or helpful despite its attractiveness and allure. Honors students, just like their non-honors peers, are sometimes plagued with doubts about their academic careers and their futures; they are going to have problems with their love lives, fights with roommates, scheduling conflicts, health problems, or intrusive parents. In fact, because their academic expectations and goals are oftentimes higher than those of their non-honors peers, honors students will sometimes have more academic and personal counseling needs than other students.” (Samuel Schuman, Beginning in Honors, NCHC 2006, 62-64)
The fact that the Honors Director’s assignment is for an indefinite term at the pleasure of the Provost rather than being for a short time frame is an extremely important and positive feature of the WWU Honors Program. In the context of short terms for Honors Directors, let me quote from the report of a visiting team of which I was as a member for another relatively large university:

The visiting team can attest to the fact that Honors College Deans and Honors Directors at other more established institutions who remain in their positions for a number of years have a greater rate of success and national visibility than those whose commitment to Honors is only for a short period. Longevity is important for continuity and community. A Director/Dean must establish close working relationships with students, other faculty, administrators, the community, alumni, and other state, regional and national honors organizations in order to thrive. In addition, he/she must continue to develop curricula, policies, traditions, and many other facets of honors education that take time.

For the reasons stated above, as part of any deliberations surrounding the Honors Program’s future I would recommend that the Honors Director’s position continue to be one with the possibility of a lengthy period of successful service.

In the context of honors budgets and staffing, I was asked specifically about the allocation of honors dollars in The Honors College at Oklahoma State University. In FY12, our total budget (salaries plus operating expenses—but not including fringe benefits) comes to $702,508, or approximately $702 per capita for the 1,001 active participant Honors College students in the 2011 fall semester. Of this amount, $32,635 is for (purely honors) operating expenses, and $383,493 is pass-through funding that goes to departments for faculty reassigned time (for HONR-prefix courses such as our team-taught interdisciplinary honors seminars and for overflow honors sections of departmental courses—for example American History—when the first honors section has been filled to capacity). Because academic departments typically teach the first section of departmental honors courses (Accounting, Art History, Calculus, Philosophy, etc.) on their own budgets, many of the approximately 70 honors sections offered each semester are not included in the Honors College budget.

The Honors College staff includes the Director, the Assistant Director, three Honors Academic Counselors (all five positions are full-time, 12-month appointments), and several part-time student assistants who serve as office receptionists. Please note in this context that Oklahoma is not a particularly wealthy state and that state dollars for higher education have decreased in recent years while the Honors College’s enrollment and budget have grown.

Many honors programs and honors colleges have scholarship dollars under their control, something that can be of importance in honors recruiting and retention. Others have accounts from which stipends can be provided for senior thesis research and travel to professional conferences. WWU’s Honors Program has neither of these at present.

Some colleges and universities have instituted additional fees for honors program or honors college participation, and apparently these fees are acceptable to the students as long as there is a clear demonstration that the funds are used directly to fund student events and activities.

A few institutions have active honors student organizations that engage in extensive fundraising activities to generate support for student travel to the National Collegiate Honors Council conference each year.
C. Reporting Line for the Honors Program Director — There already is precedent at WWU for a direct reporting line for the Honors Program Director to the Provost, and I recommend that this reporting line be reinstated. In addition, I recommend that the Honors Director be made a part of what at many institutions is called the Provost’s Council (the body of top academic administrators who meet regularly and frequently with the Provost).

D. Funding for the Staffing of Honors Courses — Recapitulating what I have written elsewhere, there are a variety of models across the nation in terms of funding honors courses. A few institutions have designated tenure-track faculty lines in the Honors Program or Honors College leading to tenure in Honors rather than in a regular academic department, but with perhaps one exception, even at these institutions not all honors courses are taught by these faculty.

A variation on this approach is the appointment of Honors Program Faculty Fellows who are reassigned from their departmental responsibilities for a set period (two or three years) for a budgeted half- or full-time assignment in the Honors Program to develop and teach honors courses and also sometimes to provide some of the honors advising for Honors Program students.

The opposite end of the spectrum is the institution at which the Honors Director must rely on the generosity of departmental administrators and his or her own negotiating skills.

Another, less common, approach is for the central administration to recapture faculty lines across campus when they become vacant and assign those lines to the Honors Program under a model in which the Honors Director reassigns the lines to academic departments that show a willingness to participate fully in the university’s honors educational efforts while at the same time serving their own majors and service courses.

Yet another model is one in which the Honors Program is responsible for funding special honors courses and seminars (by providing reassigned-time funding to the departments) but in which the academic departments already offering honors courses fund the first honors section of regular disciplinary courses (Calculus, Introductory Philosophy, etc.) from their own budgets with the Honors Program providing funding for additional honors sections of a disciplinary course if needed.

The cost-sharing model just described allows for a cooperative working relationship between the Honors Program and academic departments rather than placing the entire “budget burden” on either. Supplemental to this approach is sufficient budget to allow the Honors Program to provide “seed money” in the form of course development grants or funding for an initial offering of an honors course, followed by a cost-sharing arrangement in subsequent semesters.

Under this shared-responsibility model the funding provided for faculty reassigned time should be determined in such a way that there is a positive incentive for the department chairs and deans. Ideally, it should give the department chair some budgetary flexibility by providing more dollars than the minimum needed to hire someone else to teach the course from which the honors course faculty member will be released. If a department cannot release a willing faculty member, another option can be to allow that faculty member to teach an overload course with the department “banking” the Honors Program funds to provide the faculty member with salary support in the subsequent summer for research, instructional development activities, or professional travel. Similarly, at institutions that permit overload compensation, a faculty member can be compensated from Honors Program dollars for teaching an honors course on an overload basis.

Having salary dollar incentives can be extremely beneficial to the Honors Director in dealing with departments, but it probably is overly optimistic to believe that all departments (at any institution) will be
willing to cooperate. For this reason, it may be necessary for the Provost to have a “stick” to employ if cooperation is not forthcoming—perhaps in the form of an appropriate budget reduction for departments that do not contribute to the institutional goal of having an outstanding Honors Program fully available to students across campus.

E. Completely Separate Departmental Honors Programs — It came as a surprise to me that the WWU Catalog indicates that a handful of academic departments declare that they have some sort of Departmental Honors unrelated to the University’s Honors Program, and in fact one department seems to go out of its way to indicate that its program is completely separated from the overall university efforts in honors education. In the rare instance of encountering such arrangements at other universities, review teams of which I have been a part have recommended that “honors” have the same meaning across campus and that the Honors Program or Honors College have a monopoly over the use of the word “honors.” At most institutions, this can be accomplished without significantly diminishing the role of the department in developing the requirements for what might be called “honors in the major.” In fact, a well-conceived “honors in the major” option, as an integral part of the overall Honors Program or Honors College, is a fairly common model across the United States and over time can engage more departments in the common honors effort of the institution. (Similarly, I would suggest that admission of top freshmen by the Admissions Office be accomplished with terminology other than admission “with highest honors.”)

As noted earlier in this report, at Provost Riordan’s request I have included the policies and procedures of The Honors College at Oklahoma State University (as Appendix B) by way of example only to illustrate the way in which our university was able to develop an umbrella structure that incorporates both a breadth dimension (the General Honors Award) and a depth dimension (“honors in the major,” called either the College Honors Award or the Departmental Honors Award at the option of each of the six undergraduate colleges). This “treaty” was negotiated among the six undergraduate colleges at the time the University Honors Program (now The Honors College) was created to better focus honors education across the campus while at the same time retaining an appropriate degree of autonomy for these undergraduate colleges and their respective academic departments.

F. The Size of the Honors Board — During my discussions with the Honors Board, it seemed to be agreed that it is perhaps too small to represent the various constituencies on campus and that enlarging its membership could be a positive step. To achieve greater commitment from the undergraduate colleges, it might make sense to have additional faculty members selected by the Deans who could then be expected to keep them apprised of developments in the Honors Program and of the Program’s legitimate needs. If the number of faculty could be increased (along with perhaps adding one more student member), perhaps a better overall representation could be achieved—with a resulting enhancement of the communication function of the Board.

G. Additional Honors Courses — It is apparent that the currently available honors courses are not adequate for a growing Honors Program. Additional honors courses are needed from the Honors Program itself as well as from the academic departments (beginning, not coincidentally, with the reinstatement of the honors Chemistry series). Recognizing that the Honors Program is truly an asset to WWU, both in recruiting and retaining high-ability students as well as increasing the value of their undergraduate experience, more departments should be participating in the offering of honors sections of departmental courses—particularly those that satisfy GUR requirements.
H. Possible Alternative Track in Undergraduate Research — Another option worth considering, after completion of the introductory Major Cultural Traditions sequence during the freshman year, is a research track that could substitute for some of the honors seminars/colloquia. Such a research track might be particularly appealing to students in the science disciplines as well as to pre-med students who realize that undergraduate research is becoming more important in the medical school admissions process. As part of a research track, an interdisciplinary honors seminar might be created that brings students and faculty together from different departments to consider ethical issues in research, discuss what “research” means in a wide variety of disciplines, and explain their own research in a manner that is accessible to those outside their own disciplines. Presumably success in this sort of research track would be a springboard to research-based senior projects for a good number of these students.

I. Possibly Broadening the Concept of Honors Education — Many honors programs permit, and some require, community service work in partial satisfaction of their requirements. Others explicitly encourage internships, study abroad, and other experiential learning in lieu of one or more honors courses. If WWU were to choose to modify its requirements along the lines, care would need to be taken not to destroy the continuity of the freshman honors experience of the three Major Cultural Traditions courses.

J. A University-wide Honors Retreat — With the continued growth of the WWU Honors Program, it may be time to take a fresh look at how honors education is conceived and involve a far wider cross-section of the campus community than simply the Honors Board. With the understanding that WWU already has a very well conceived Honors Program, one approach would be to convene a campus-wide retreat to which faculty who were themselves honors program graduates or who have taught honors courses at WWU or elsewhere are invited. Preliminary work would need to be done at the central administration level by asking that deans and department chairs to poll their faculty to determine who should be added to the invitation list. Although this retreat should be convened by those highest in the university administration in order to give it campus-wide importance and credibility, Dr. Mariz should be involved from the outset in mapping out the structure of such a faculty retreat so that the discussions can be as wide-ranging as possible. It should be understood by all concerned that such a faculty retreat is not to be seen as a decision-making body, but rather it will represent an effort to engage more faculty in the conversation about honors education at WWU and give them the opportunity to share their experiences and what they conceive to be “best practices” in honors education.

K. The Honors Program Admissions Process — The current process of “automatic admission” to the Honors Program by the Admissions Office is problematic in that certain high-talent students are not even required to provide the same writing sample that is required of regular applicants. A good number of my colleagues and I argue that this approach actually cheapens the value of admission to the Honors Program because it can come to seen essentially as a “gift” or “entitlement” by these students—as opposed to an achievement earned by the effort of the normal Honors Program admissions process. Eliminating such “automatic admission” would necessitate the review of a far greater number of files by the Honors Program staff, but this need not be particularly burdensome if an approach is developed that is similar to that used by many law schools in which applicants are divided into three general categories based on their grade point averages and Law School Admission Test scores that lead to a composite admissions index score. The top group is essentially the “automatic accept” group, although they all are playing by the same rules. The bottom group is essentially the “automatic denial” group. In between, and requiring more careful individual attention, are the students who make up the “middle group.” WWU already makes use of an academic index score for admission, so I believe that a more equitable admission process might well be put into place—especially with an expanded Honors Program staff.
L. Gauging the Effect of Honors Program Admission on WWU Recruiting — As indicated above, about half of the students with whom I met said that they would not have considered WWU were it not for the Honors Program. It could be useful to poll entering Honors Program freshmen in a systematic manner. A relatively simple approach to this question has been used at Oklahoma State University for a number of years. The data below are taken from our 2010-2011 Honors Program Annual Report that is available on our web page at <http://www.okstate.edu/honors/assets/annualreport.pdf>.

Acceptance into The Honors College continues to be important to the overall recruiting efforts of Oklahoma State University. The following data were compiled from the 427 new students who had applied for and been accepted into The Honors College before their New Student Orientation and Enrollment session for the 2011 fall semester—and who responded to the following questionnaire item: “In selecting OSU as your university, how important was it that you were accepted into The Honors College?”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Importance</th>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very Important</td>
<td>239</td>
<td>56.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat Important</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>40.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Important</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

M. For the Future:

1. To Be or Not to Be . . . an Honors College — A recent trend in honors education across the United States is the transition from honors programs to honors colleges at many larger institutions (and some smaller ones). It may well be that at some point in the near future WWU will wish to explore the possibility of developing an honors college. For that reason, Appendix D is included to provide NCHC’s Basic Characteristics of a Fully Developed Honors College that go well beyond those for honors programs. With more adequate staffing and budget combined with its already-excellent curricular model, the WWU Honors Program would be in a position to make this transition.

2. External Funding — I was asked by the Honors Board to comment on the success of honors programs in terms of external fundraising, and I consulted with some of my colleagues who have been successful in this regard. It appears that a key factor is the development of a strong personal relationship between the university’s president and the potential donor (although in one instance the relationship was developed by the Honors Director). As the University Advancement Office or Foundation prepares an appropriate case statement to be given to prospective donors, it is essential that the Honors Director be involved at every phase of its development. As Dr. Mariz notes in his brief self-study, within NCHC publications there is significant indication that major donors are more willing to give to honors colleges than to honors programs.

If the university decides to make the transition from an honors program to an honors college, it is least possible that a major donor could become interested in making a naming gift for the new [Donor Name] Honors College at WWU.

A significant Honors Program scholarship fund will require a major fundraising effort, most likely over a period of years. One possibility that comes to mind for the short run, however, is a way to address the needs of students who do not receive large scholarships as entering freshmen by approaching a prospective donor who might be interested in rewarding students who have demonstrated a strong work ethic and succeeded. Especially in light of WWU’s history as an
institution with a strong egalitarian ethos, this sort of a scholarship for continuing students might appeal to alumni who demonstrated a great work ethic themselves over the course of their lives.

Another possibility might be to implement a giving program for recent Honors Program graduates who would be asked to give small amounts in the years immediately following graduation (perhaps at little as $10 multiplied by the number of years since they graduated). At first the costs involved might well outpace the gifts generated, but over time such a plan might well develop into a sustained and ever-increasing pattern of giving to the Honors Program by its graduates.
APPENDIX A
CHECKLIST FOR AN EXTERNAL HONSORS PROGRAM
OR HONORS COLLEGE REVIEW

1. Please provide a self-study containing a brief history of the Honors Program or Honors College. As part of your self-study, use of the National Collegiate Honors Council’s “Basic Characteristics of a Fully Developed Honors Program” and (if applicable) “Characteristics of a Fully Developed Honors College” to help the site visitors assess how the Honors Program or Honors College meets or does not meet each of the characteristics. Please specify any short-term or long-term goals with regard to these characteristics.

2. Additional documents to be provided in advance of the visit if not contained in the self-study report:
   a. college (university) catalog
   b. mission statement of the Honors Program/College
   c. Honors Program (Honors College) strategic plan [if applicable]
   d. position descriptions for Honors director (dean) and Honors office staff
   e. recruiting materials for the college (university) in general and the Honors Program (Honors College) in particular
   f. Honors Program (Honors College) budget for the past five years, including salary for the Honors director and an average salary figure for assistant or associate deans and directors across campus (or of the Honors dean and an average salary figure for deans across campus)
   g. Honors Program (Honors College) policies and procedures documents
   h. Honors Program (Honors College) annual reports for past five years
      i. listing and description of Honors courses offered in past five years (if not included in annual reports)
   j. longitudinal data of Honors course offerings and student participation in the Honors Program (Honors College) over the past five years (if not included in annual reports)
   k. participation in NCHC and Regional Honors Council activities (if not included in annual reports)
   l. evaluation materials used for Honors classes
   m. evaluation materials used for Honors advising
   n. Honors Program (Honors College) assessment approaches and results
   o. information about any scholarships or scholarship programs dedicated to Honors students
   p. information about links between Honors and overseas programs
   q. guidelines or manuals for thesis or creative projects
   r. information about any privileges (early enrollment, etc.) that Honors students receive
   s. information on role, if any, of the Honors Program (Honors College) in promotion and tenure decisions
   t. structure of and administrative policies concerning the student Honors organization
   u. facilities of the Honors Program (Honors College)
   v. prior review reports, if applicable.

3. Conversations while on Campus
   a. college (university) president and the chief academic officer of the college (university)
   b. vice provost for academic affairs
   c. deans of undergraduate colleges involved with Honors program (Honors college)
   d. Honors Program (Honors College) director (dean)
   e. Honors Program (Honors College) office staff
   f. open meeting with faculty for Honors courses [limited to these faculty]
   g. faculty and student Honors committees
   h. open meeting with Honors students [limited to these students]
      i. representatives of honors alumni organization (in person or by conference call), if applicable
   j. others thought appropriate by those responsible for the review process

NOTE: Please provide a draft schedule of meetings as far in advance as possible. Upon arrival of the Site Visitor(s) on your campus, please provide a more detailed schedule of meetings that includes the names and titles of those likely to be in attendance at each meeting.
APPENDIX B

POLICIES & PROCEDURES OF THE HONORS COLLEGE
Oklahoma State University

Approved by the Provost on April 20, 2012 [All previous editions are superseded.]

Section 1 — The Honors College Mission Statement

Section 2 — Honors Councils
2-1. University Honors Council
2-2. University Student Honors Council

Section 3 — Admission, Continued Eligibility, and General Honors Award Requirements
3-1. Admission
   3-1-1. Entering Freshmen by ACT (SAT) Score, High School Grade Point Average, and Optional Essay
   3-1-2. Entering Freshmen by Petition
   3-1-3. Transfer and Continuing Students
3-2. Eligibility for Continued Enrollment in Honors Courses
   3-2-1. Grade Point Averages Required
   3-2-2. Review of Records and Notification of Ineligible Students
   3-2-3. Appeals Committee for Extraordinary Circumstances
   3-2-4. Regaining Honors College Eligibility
   3-2-5. Violation of University Academic Integrity Policy (F! on Transcript)
      3-2-5-1. Honors College Eligibility
      3-2-5-2. Honors College Awards and Degree
3-3. Requirements for General Honors Award (Certificate and Transcript Entry)
   3-3-1. Breadth Requirements
   3-3-2. Honors Seminar/Interdisciplinary Honors Courses
   3-3-3. Additional Honors Hours
   3-3-4. Grade Point Average
   3-3-5. Honors Contracts
   3-3-6. Transfer Honors Credit
   3-3-7. OSLEP Credit
   3-3-8 Special Experience Option
   3-3-9. Certificate and Transcript Entry

Section 4 — College or Departmental Honors Award Requirements (Transcript Entry)
4-1. College or Departmental Honors Award Requirements
   4-1-1. International Study Option Credit Toward College or Departmental Honors Award
4-2. Double Majors with Honors Awards in Both Majors
4-3. Grade Required for Honors Credit
4-4. Cumulative and OSU Grade Point Averages Required
4-5. Application for College or Departmental Honors Award
4-6. Defense of Creative Component
4-7. Colloquium Presentation
4-8. Filing of Approved Copy and Abstract
   4-8-1. Provision for Electronic Archiving of Honors Theses
4-9. Transcript Entry

Section 5 — The Honors College Degree (Transcript Entry, Special Diploma)
5-1. General Requirements for The Honors College Degree
   5-1-1. Special Experience Option Credit Toward Honors College Degree
   5-1-2. International Study Option Credit Toward Honors College Degree
5-2. Grades Required in Honors Work
5-3. Top Ten Percent Option for College
5-4. Hoods for The Honors College Degree Candidates
5-5. Community Service Option
5-6. International Study Option
5-7. AP and CLEP Credit Option
5-8. International Study Endorsement to Honors College Degree

Section 6 — Honors Courses
6-1. Definition
6-2. Faculty Teaching Honors Courses
6-3. Honors Laboratory and Discussion Sections
6-4. Content and Grading in Honors Courses
6-5. Enrollment in Honors Courses
6-6. Maximum and Minimum Enrollment for Honors Courses
   6-6-1. Maximum Enrollment
   6-6-2. Minimum Enrollment
6-7. Evaluation of Honors Courses

Section 7 — Honors Contracts
7-1. Content
7-2. Course Instructor with Faculty Rank Required
7-3. Deadlines
7-4. Grades in Courses with Honors Contracts
7-5. Reporting
7-6. Maximum Number of Contracts
7-7. Honors Contracts Permitted Only in Courses Acceptable for Degree Credit
7-8. Honors Contract Permission After Non Completing Honors Contract in Earlier Semester

Section 8 — Honors Academic Advising
8-1. Qualifications for Honors Advisors
8-2. Evaluation of Honors Advising

Section 9 — Honors Status Reports

Section 10 — Privileges Earned by Active Participants in The Honors College
10-1. Definition of an Active Participant in The Honors College
10-2. Priority Enrollment
10-3. The Honors College Study Lounge
10-4. Extended Library Check-out Privileges
10-5. Active Participant Status—Exceptions Under Extraordinary Circumstances

Section 11 — Honors Alumni Board
11-1. Purpose of the Board
11-2. Membership Selection and Terms
11-3. Board Chair or Co-Chairs

SECTION 1. THE HONORS COLLEGE MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of The Honors College is to provide an enhanced and supportive learning environment for outstanding undergraduate students. This goal will be accomplished through the active involvement of faculty noted for their excellence in undergraduate teaching in small honors sections of regular catalog courses, interdisciplinary Honors courses, special Honors seminars, and opportunities for research. The Honors College shall be a unit with its own budget with a Director who is administratively responsible to the Provost through the Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs. The Director shall work in close cooperation with a faculty
University Honors Council and a University Student Honors Council to establish and review policies and procedures for The Honors Colleges. Consistent with these policies and procedures, The Honors College shall:

1. disseminate information about Honors requirements, benefits, awards, and Honors College Degree recipients to prospective Honors students and other interested publics through direct communication, university publications, teleconferencing, and the news media;

2. admit students to The Honors College, maintain records concerning their continued eligibility for The Honors College and their progress toward Honors College awards, and certify their Honors College awards and Honors College Degrees to the Registrar;

3. provide special Honors academic advising through The Honors College Office by faculty and professional staff who themselves have earned Honors Program or Honors College degrees;

4. encourage and coordinate the creation and scheduling of Honors sections of courses taught in the undergraduate colleges;

5. develop, schedule, and budget interdisciplinary Honors courses and special Honors seminars using the HONR course prefix;

6. promote Honors students’ involvement in research which will culminate in a senior Honors thesis or project and public presentation of the research;

7. facilitate communication within the OSU community among students, faculty, staff, and administration with regard to Honors matters;

8. arrange special programs and events for the larger university community;

9. equip and maintain The Honors College Study Lounge and computer facility in Old Central; and

10. participate fully in the activities of the National Collegiate Honors Council and the Great Plains Honors Council.

SECTION 2 — HONORS COUNCILS

2-1. UNIVERSITY HONORS COUNCIL. The University Honors Council shall be composed of the Director of The Honors College (ex officio chair of the Council) and seven faculty members whose budgeted assignment includes at least 0.25 FTE undergraduate instruction and who have a demonstrated interest in The Honors College, appointed by the Provost upon recommendation by the Deans of the OSU undergraduate colleges, as follows: Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources (1), Arts & Sciences (2), Business Administration (1), Education (1), Engineering, Architecture and Technology (1), and Human Environmental Sciences (1). Members shall serve a term of three calendar years, beginning in the fall semester, and they may be reappointed.

Terms shall expire at the beginning of the fall semester of the years indicated below and every three years thereafter: Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources, 1991; Arts & Sciences (#1), 1992; Arts & Sciences (#2), 1993; Business Administration, 1991; Education, 1992; Engineering, Architecture and Technology, 1991; and Human Environmental Sciences, 1993.

The University Honors Council shall be chaired by the Director of The Honors College and shall: (1) recommend to the Provost policy concerning course requirements and other criteria for Honors College awards; (2) represent the interests and concerns of faculty in the members' respective colleges concerning The Honors College; (3) represent The Honors College to the faculty of the members' respective colleges and serve as contact points for faculty; (4) serve, along with two members of the University Student Honors Council, as a committee to which students may appeal, in extraordinary circumstances, to be permitted to continue enrollment...
in Honors courses even though their cumulative grade point averages do not meet normal requirements under Honors College policy; (5) provide recommendations to the Director on any special situations concerning admission, etc., which may be referred to it by the Director; (6) review faculty proposals for honors seminars and other special honors courses which are to be funded through The Honors College; and (7) encourage and support faculty members seeking external funding through grants and contracts related to Honors College development.

2-2. UNIVERSITY STUDENT HONORS COUNCIL. The University Student Honors Council shall be composed of seven undergraduate students active in The Honors College, appointed by the Director of The Honors College upon recommendation by the Deans of the OSU undergraduate colleges, as follows: Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources (1), Arts & Sciences (2), Business Administration (1), Education (1), Engineering, Architecture and Technology (1), and Human Environmental Sciences (1). Members shall serve a term of one calendar year, beginning in the fall semester, and they may be reappointed. The University Student Honors Council shall elect its own chairperson at the first meeting of the fall semester.

To serve on the University Student Honors Council, a student must have completed a minimum of fifteen honors credit hours prior to appointment, have Oklahoma State University and cumulative grade point averages of at least 3.50, and continue to be an active participant in The Honors College as defined in Section 10-1, below. It is recommended that Deans nominate students who have completed the requirements for the General Honors Award or, if such students are not available, students who will complete the requirements for the General Honors Award at the conclusion of the semester in which they begin service on the University Student Honors Council.

The University Student Honors Council shall: (1) represent the interests and concerns of honors students in the members’ respective colleges; (2) represent The Honors College to the students of the members' respective colleges and serve as a contact point for student concerns with regard to The Honors College; (3) meet, as appropriate, in joint session with the faculty University Honors Council to discuss matters of common concern; (4) provide two of its members to serve with members of the University Honors Council as a committee to which students may appeal, in extraordinary circumstances, to be permitted to continue enrollment in Honors courses even though their grade point averages do not meet normal requirements under Honors College policy; (5) recommend and plan special events for Honors College students; and (6) make recommendations to the Director on any other matters concerning The Honors College.

SECTION 3 — ADMISSION, CONTINUED ELIGIBILITY, AND GENERAL HONORS AWARD REQUIREMENTS

3-1-1. Entering Freshmen by ACT (SAT) Score, and High School Grade Point Average, and Optional Essay

Regular Admission: Entering freshmen whose applications are postmarked or submitted electronically by February 1 prior to the fall semester in which they enter Oklahoma State University shall be eligible by meeting the following criteria: a composite score of 27 or higher on the ACT (or comparable SAT score) and a high school grade point average of 3.75 or higher. (Weighted high school grade point averages certified by high schools may be used for this purpose.)

Effective with freshmen matriculating in the 2012 fall semester an optional essay in response to a variety of prompts designed to elicit evidence of traits not measured by the ACT (SAT), but correlated with success in college and life after graduation, may be submitted as part of the application to The Honors College. The Honors College may consider the optional essay as part of a review of the student’s application if it provides additional evidence of potential for success.

Entering freshmen who are not admitted based on these criteria may petition for admission according to Section 3-1-2 below.
**Conditional Admission:** Entering freshmen whose applications are postmarked or submitted electronically after February 1 prior to the fall semester in which they enter Oklahoma State University who meet the criteria above shall be considered for admission on a rolling basis and be eligible for admission dependent upon a projection of the number of regularly-accepted freshmen likely actually to enter the university, enrollment dates actually scheduled for regularly-accepted freshmen, and anticipated number of continuing Honors College students. Conditionally-admitted freshmen may enroll for honors classes during the summer enrollment period as long as space is available.

**3-1-2. Entering Freshmen by Petition.**

Entering freshmen who fall just short of the criteria specified above may submit a written petition for admission to The Honors College, using a form provided by the College at the request of the student. The Director shall review the petition and supporting documents provided by the student and, in consultation with a University Honors Council faculty representative from the undergraduate college in which the student proposes to major (if a faculty representative is available), determine whether the student appears to demonstrate high potential for success in The Honors College and merit admission under this section. The number of new freshmen entering by petition shall be limited to no more than approximately five percent of the number of entering freshmen admitted to The Honors College.

**3-1-3. Transfer and Continuing Students.** Transfer and continuing students who have earned at least seven (7) college credit hours will be eligible on the basis of a cumulative college grade point average which meets eligibility requirements for honors course enrollment. [See §3-2-1.] Students other than new freshmen who do not meet the OSU and cumulative grade point average requirements because of grades earned at least two years prior to application for admission to the College may petition for provisional admission on the basis of a written OSU faculty recommendation and at least one semester’s academic performance at Oklahoma State University which shows to the Eligibility Appeals Committee (see Section 3-2-3) that it is highly probable that the student’s OSU and cumulative (not “retention”) grade point averages will be at least 3.50 at the time of graduation.

**3-2. ELIGIBILITY FOR CONTINUED ENROLLMENT IN HONORS COURSES**

**3-2-1. GRADE POINT AVERAGES REQUIRED.** To be eligible for continued enrollment in honors courses (defined as courses, sections, seminars, etc., with section numbers in the 700-range), students must maintain the following minimum OSU and cumulative (not “retention”) grade point averages:

1. Fewer than 60 hours earned: 3.30 (See note below.)
2. 60 - 93 hours earned: 3.40
3. 94 hours earned and thereafter: 3.50

**Note:** Freshmen failing to earn at least 3.20 OSU and cumulative grade point averages during the fall semester shall not be eligible for continued enrollment in honors courses in the subsequent spring semester unless truly extraordinary circumstances justify approval of continuation in The Honors College by the appeals committee.

**3-2-2. REVIEW OF RECORDS AND NOTIFICATION OF INELIGIBLE STUDENTS.** At the end of the fall semester, the Director of The Honors College shall review the academic records of all freshmen and all students granted one-semester appeal eligibility. [See §3-2-3.] In the case of freshmen who failed to achieve Oklahoma State University and cumulative grade point averages of at least 3.00, and in the case of students granted one-semester appeal eligibility who failed to achieve the cumulative grade point average required for continued enrollment in honors courses, the Director shall notify the students by mail at their permanent addresses and by e-mail sent to their OSU e-mail addresses in the files of The Honors College that they are no longer eligible for honors course enrollment and that they will be dropped from their spring semester honors courses unless truly extraordinary circumstances have contributed to their failing to maintain the minimum grade point average required at the end of the fall semester. The Director also shall notify the Registrar to drop these ineligible students from the class rolls for spring semester honors sections in which they had enrolled unless an electronic appeal is filed by the second day university offices are open after December-January holidays.
At the end of the spring semester, the Director of The Honors College shall review the academic records of all students in the files of The Honors College to determine whether they meet the Oklahoma State University and cumulative grade point average criteria for continuation in the College. If it is determined that ineligible students have pre-enrolled for honors courses for the fall semester, the Director shall notify those students by mail at their permanent addresses and by e-mail sent to their OSU e-mail addresses on file with The Honors College that they are no longer eligible and that they must arrange to drop the honors courses within fourteen days. If the students fail to make the schedule changes within the time period specified, the Director shall notify the Registrar to drop the ineligible students from the class rolls of the honors courses for the fall semester.

3-2-3. APPEALS COMMITTEE FOR EXTRAORDINARY CIRCUMSTANCES. At the time students are notified of their ineligibility to continue in the honors courses for the fall semester, they also shall be notified that if their ineligibility is the result of truly extraordinary circumstances they may petition a faculty-student committee made up of members of the University Honors Council (with the Director not voting) and two students from the University Student Honors Council (if they are available) for an exception to the Oklahoma State University and cumulative grade point average requirement for continuation in honors courses. The student must notify the Director of The Honors College (in writing, in person, or by telephone) of his or her intention to petition for an exception within the fourteen-day period specified in the ineligibility letter. (Upon receipt of such notification, the Director shall refrain from directing the Registrar to drop the student from honors courses for the fall semester until the committee has reached a decision.) The student shall then transmit to the Director of The Honors College a written statement outlining his or her extenuating circumstances in time to be received within seven days from the end of the fourteen-day period specified above. The committee shall consider the petition, and a majority of those voting shall be necessary to grant an exception to the cumulative grade point requirement. The committee, at its discretion, may grant a one-semester exception or a two-semester exception to the OSU and cumulative grade point requirements for continued enrollment in honors courses. The Director shall notify the student of the committee's decision and, if an exception is not granted, shall direct the Registrar to drop the student from class rolls of fall semester honors courses in which the student had pre-enrolled. (In the case of appeals by freshmen at the end of the fall semester, appeals specifying in detail the truly extraordinary circumstances must be sent by e-mail to the Director of the Honors College by 5:00 p.m. on the second day university offices are open after December-January holidays.)

3-2-4. REGAINING HONORS COLLEGE ELIGIBILITY. If a student becomes ineligible for continuation in The Honors College and later regains eligibility by improved OSU and cumulative grade point averages, the student may reenter The Honors College and enroll in honors courses which are available at that time. The student must provide The Honors College Office with official verification of the additional work which will restore the OSU and cumulative grade point averages to the level required for eligibility. (In the case of work appearing on the student's OSU transcript, such verification may be obtained electronically in The Honors College Office.)

3-2-5. VIOLATION OF UNIVERSITY ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY (F! GRADE ON TRANSCRIPT)

3-2-5-1. HONORS COLLEGE ELIGIBILITY. No student who receives a grade of F! as a result of violation of the university’s academic integrity policy shall be eligible to continue in The Honors College until the F! has been removed from his or her transcript. It shall be the responsibility of the student to notify The Honors College when the F! has been removed.

3-2-5-2. HONORS COLLEGE AWARDS AND DEGREE. No student who receives a grade of F! as a result of violation of the university’s academic integrity policy shall receive any Honors College Award or Honors College Degree until the F! has been removed from his or her transcript.

(A) If an F! is recorded for a course in the same semester in which an Honors College award or Honors College Degree is certified to the Registrar, that Honors College award or Honors College Degree shall be removed from the student’s transcript.
(B) If an F! is recorded for a course in a semester subsequent to the semester in which an Honors College award or Honors College Degree was certified to the Registrar, the Honors College award or Honors College Degree shall remain on the student’s transcript.

3-3. REQUIREMENTS FOR GENERAL HONORS AWARD (CERTIFICATE & TRANSCRIPT ENTRY) — 21 HOURS

3-3-1. BREADTH REQUIREMENTS. Twelve hours of honors credit (grade of “A” or “B”) with a minimum of three credit hours per area from four of the following areas:

[1] Courses Required of All OSU Students (English Composition, American History, American Government)
[2] Humanities (courses designated “H”)
[4] Natural Sciences (courses designated “N”)
[5] Social Sciences (Courses designated “S”)
[6] Other Courses with Honors Credit (which are not included in areas 1 through 5, above)
[7] Approved Special Experience Option (study abroad, off-campus internship, cooperative education semester, research or other creative activity, or leadership or service)

In the case of students for whom, because of AP or CLEP credit, it is impossible to earn honors credit in four breadth requirement areas without adding hours to their undergraduate degree requirements, the Director of The Honors College may waive one (1) of the four areas of the breadth requirement.

3-3-2. HONORS SEMINAR/INTERDISCIPLINARY HONORS COURSES. A minimum of two honors seminars or interdisciplinary honors courses with a minimum of four credit hours in honors seminars or interdisciplinary honors courses (which also may be used to satisfy a portion of the breadth requirement), grade of “A” or “B” required.

3-3-3. ADDITIONAL HONORS HOURS. Sufficient additional hours of honors credit (grade of “A” or “B” required), including at least three honors credit hours in upper-division work, to reach total of twenty-one credit hours. [Note: This amendment becomes effective for freshmen matriculating in Fall, 2008, and thereafter.]

3-3-4. GRADE POINT AVERAGE. At the time of completion of the requirements for the General Honors Award, a minimum cumulative grade point average of 3.50 must have been maintained. In the case of students who have transferred hours from other institutions, a 3.50 grade point average in all hours earned at Oklahoma State University must have been maintained as well as a cumulative grade point average of 3.50 for all college work undertaken.

3-3-5. HONORS CONTRACTS. Under normal circumstances, no more than nine credit hours within the 21-hour General Honors requirement may be earned by honors contract. In the case that scheduling conflicts make it impossible for a student to meet the 12-hour minimum in honors sections, courses, or seminars (all designated by section numbers in the 700-range), upon recommendation of the student's academic college the Director of The Honors College may permit an additional three hours of honors contract credit. Honors contracts may not be utilized by transfer students to meet the minimum of six hours of honors credit earned at Oklahoma State University for the General Honors Award. [See §3-3-6, below.]

3-3-6. TRANSFER HONORS CREDIT. In meeting the breadth requirements and honors seminar/interdisciplinary honors course requirements for the General Honors Award, students who have transferred from other institutions may utilize a maximum of fifteen (15) transfer honors credit hours, including hours graded “P,” “S,” etc., when letter grades are not awarded in these honors courses at the institution from which the credit has been transferred. The remaining six (6) honors credit hours must be earned at Oklahoma State University through honors sections or honors seminars/interdisciplinary courses. Honors contracts may not be used for these six hours.
3-3-7. **OSLEP CREDIT.** With the approval of the Director of The Honors College, up to four (4) credit hours graded pass (“P”) earned through the Oklahoma Scholarship-Leadership Enrichment Program (OSLEP) may be utilized toward the General Honors Award. The Director shall designate the area(s) in which such hours may be counted on a case-by-case basis.

3-3-8. **SPECIAL EXPERIENCE OPTION.** Students who complete (1) a study abroad experience, (2) an off-campus internship, (3) a cooperative education semester, (4) research or other creative activity, or (5) leadership or service may use one of these experiences as one of the four distribution areas for the General Honors Award.

If academic credit is granted for the experience, a grade of “A” or “B” shall be required, unless the experience is graded pass-fail, in which case a grade of “Pass” shall be required. If academic credit is granted for the experience, the student may be exempted from an equal number of General Honors Award hours, up to a maximum of three (3) credit hours.

If academic credit is not granted for the experience, the student shall petition for Honors College approval in advance of the experience and then provide documentation of successful completion of the experience as well as a reflective paper about what he or she learned as a result of the experience and how this knowledge may be used in his or her future as well as for the benefit of others. The Director of the Honors College may exempt the student from up to three (3) credit hours of the requirements for the General Honors Award on the basis of the documentation and reflective paper. If the Director does not approve the exemption, the student may appeal the decision to the University Honors Council.

3-3-9. **CERTIFICATE AND TRANSCRIPT ENTRY.** Upon the student's completion of the curricular requirements for the General Honors Award with the necessary grade point average, the Director of The Honors College shall prepare an appropriate certificate of award and notify the Registrar that the student is entitled to the “General Honors Award” transcript entry.

SECTION 4 — COLLEGE OR DEPARTMENTAL HONORS AWARD REQUIREMENTS (TRANSCRIPT ENTRY) — 12 HOURS

4-1. **COLLEGE OR DEPARTMENTAL HONORS AWARD REQUIREMENTS.** A college may elect to utilize a single College Honors Award, separate Departmental Honors Awards, or provide a choice between the College Honors Award and the Departmental Honors Award in the student’s academic major, all subject to college-established minimum requirements. Criteria for admission to college/departmental honors programs and for continuation in those programs shall be established by the academic colleges, subject to the general requirement of 3.50 OSU and cumulative grade point averages and a minimum of twelve hours of upper-division honors credit including a creative component. In the case of students who have transferred hours from other institutions, a 3.50 grade point average in all hours earned at Oklahoma State University must have been maintained as well as a cumulative grade point average of 3.50 for all college work undertaken. [See “Top Ten Percent” alternative calculation in Section 4-4, below.]

4-1-1. **INTERNATIONAL STUDY OPTION CREDIT TOWARD COLLEGE OR DEPARTMENTAL HONORS AWARD.** With the advance approval of the student’s college, up to three (3) upper-division credit hours earned using the International Study Option (Section 5-6, below) may be counted toward the College or Departmental Honors Award without honors credit being required in these credit hours. These credit hours may not also be used for the waiver provision of Section 5-6, but additional credit hours may be used for that waiver provision.

4-2. **DOUBLE MAJORS WITH HONORS AWARDS IN BOTH MAJORS.** In the case of students seeking to earn a double major with honors (any combination of Departmental and/or College Honors Awards), the student shall fulfill the requirements for both awards (including a creative component in each) and shall earn a minimum of six (6) upper-division honors credit hours beyond the requirement for the College Honors Award or Departmental Honors Award for the student's first major. The student may count a particular course toward the honors requirements in both majors if the course may be counted in the curricular requirements for both
majors, subject to the requirement that six additional honors hours must be earned beyond the first major's honors requirements.

4-3. GRADE REQUIRED FOR HONORS CREDIT TOWARD AWARD. A grade of “A” or “B” shall be required in all work counting toward College or Departmental Honors Awards.

4-4. CUMULATIVE AND OSU GRADE POINT AVERAGES FOR AWARD. At the time of completion of the requirements for the College or Departmental Honors Award, a minimum 3.50 cumulative grade point average must have been maintained. In the case of students who have transferred hours from other institutions, a 3.50 grade point average in all hours earned at Oklahoma State University must have been maintained as well as a cumulative grade point average of 3.50 for all college work undertaken.

A college may, at its option, adopt a “Top Ten Percent” calculation for the College or Departmental Honors Award (for the entire college or for specified degree programs) to provide an alternative to the grade point average criteria specified in Sections 4-1 and 4-4, subject to a 3.25 OSU and cumulative grade point average minimum. Such a “Top Ten Percent” policy shall be specified in writing by the college, approved by the dean, and submitted to the Director of The Honors College. It shall be the responsibility of the college to determine which, if any, students qualify for the College or Departmental Honors Award under the alternative calculation and to notify the Director of The Honors College of the names and class rank of students meeting the criteria established by the college.

4-5. APPLICATION FOR COLLEGE OR DEPARTMENTAL HONORS AWARD. Candidates for the Departmental or College Honors Award shall file an award application form, as specified by The Honors College Office, before the beginning of their final semester or summer session. The award application form shall contain a working title for the senior honors thesis, report, or creative component as well as the names of two faculty members who will serve as the student’s committee. Prior to submission to The Honors College Office, the award application shall be approved and signed by the faculty member responsible for directing the senior honors thesis, report, or creative component and by the Honors Director of the student’s College. If credit hours earned under the International Study Option are counted toward the College or Departmental Honors Award, they shall be specified as such on the award application form.

4-6. DEFENSE OF CREATIVE COMPONENT. The senior honors thesis, report, or other creative component shall be defended before a minimum of two members of the faculty who have been selected to serve as the student’s committee by the Department or College.

4-7. COLLOQUIUM PRESENTATION. Candidates for the Departmental or College Honors Award shall make a public presentation of a summary of their thesis, project, or creative component in a colloquium sponsored by a Department, one of the undergraduate Colleges, or The Honors College. The method of presentation shall be that deemed appropriate for the discipline by the faculty members who serve on the student’s committee. Only in circumstances in which the Dean or Honors Director of a College petitions the Director of The Honors College for a waiver of the presentation requirement may a student be excused from this requirement.

4-8. FILING OF APPROVED COPY AND ABSTRACT. Candidates for the Departmental or College Honors Award shall file one approved copy of the thesis, report, or other creative component and a one-page abstract of findings with The Honors College Office. In addition to the text, in a style and format appropriate to the discipline, the copy filed shall include an approval page as specified by The Honors College which shall contain the original signatures of at least two faculty members and of the Honors Director of the student’s College along with the date of the successful defense of the senior honors thesis, report, or creative component. The deadline for filing the approved copy of the thesis, report, or other creative component shall be the last day on which grades may be reported for the semester or summer session.

4-8-1. INCLUSION IN ELECTRONIC DATABASE. At the written request of the student (and with the written recommendation of the faculty thesis director and the Honors Director of the student’s College), the student’s thesis, report, or other creative component along with the student’s one-page abstract and the approval signatures page may be provided to the Edmon Low Library for inclusion in the electronic database of theses.
In such case, the student shall provide electronic copies of the thesis, report, or other creative component and of the one-page abstract to The Honors College. The Honors College shall provide a form with which the student may make such a request and on which the faculty thesis director and the Honors Director of the student’s College may indicate their recommendation for inclusion on the electronic database of theses.

4-9. TRANSCRIPT ENTRY. Upon completion of the College or Departmental Honors Award, a transcript entry shall be made indicating “College Honors in [College]” or “Departmental Honors in [Department].”

SECTION 5 — THE HONORS COLLEGE DEGREE (TRANSCRIPT ENTRY, SPECIAL DIPLOMA) — 39 HOURS

5-1. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS FOR THE HONORS COLLEGE DEGREE. A student who completes a minimum of thirty-nine (39) honors credit hours with a grade of “A” or “B,” including the requirements for both the General Honors Award and for the College or Departmental Honors Award in his or her academic major with a minimum 3.50 cumulative grade point average at the time of graduation, shall receive The Honors College Degree. A special honors diploma shall be prepared, a transcript entry showing “Honors College Degree” shall be made, and the interpretative information provided by the Registrar along with transcripts shall indicate that an Honors College Degree is earned by meeting the curricular requirements of The Honors College as well as the requirements for the bachelor’s degree. In the case of students who have transferred hours from other institutions, a 3.50 grade point average in all hours earned at Oklahoma State University must have been maintained as well as a cumulative grade point average of 3.50 for all college work undertaken.

5-1-1. SPECIAL EXPERIENCE OPTION CREDIT TOWARD HONORS COLLEGE DEGREE. Students who are exempted from General Honors Award credit hour requirements under the Special Experience Option (Section 3-3-8, above) are exempted from the same number of credit hours for the Honors College Degree requirement.

5-1-2. INTERNATIONAL STUDY OPTION CREDIT TOWARD HONORS COLLEGE DEGREE. Up to three (3) upper-division credit hours earned using the International Study Option (Section 5-6, below) and counted toward the College or Departmental Honors Award (Section 4-1-1, above) may be counted toward the Honors College Degree without honors credit being required in these credit hours. These credit hours may not also be used for the waiver provision of Section 5-6, but additional International Study Option credit hours may be used for that waiver provision.

5-2. GRADES REQUIRED IN HONORS WORK. A grade of “A” or “B” shall be required in all work counting toward the Honors College Degree.

5-3. TOP TEN PERCENT OPTION FOR COLLEGE. A college may, at its option, adopt a “Top Ten Percent” calculation for the Honors College Degree (for the entire college or for specified degree programs) to provide an alternative to the grade point average criteria specified above, subject to a 3.25 OSU and cumulative grade point average minimum. Such a “Top Ten Percent” policy shall be specified in writing by the college, approved by the dean, and submitted to the Director of The Honors College. It shall be the responsibility of the college to determine which, if any, students qualify for the Honors College Degree under the alternative calculation and to notify the Director of The Honors College of the names and class rank of students meeting the criteria established by the college.

5-4. HOODS FOR HONORS COLLEGE DEGREE CANDIDATES. Colleges may elect to hood candidates for The Honors College Degree at their respective convocation exercises. If they elect to do so, only those students who are candidates for The Honors College Degree shall receive the undergraduate hood. (Colleges wishing to recognize students who have earned the Departmental or College Honors Award at their convocation exercises may do so, but some form of recognition clearly distinct from the honors hood shall be employed.) The Director of The Honors College shall transmit to the Student Union Bookstore a list of candidates for The Honors College Degree at a point near the middle of the semester.
5-5. COMMUNITY SERVICE OPTION. During the sophomore and junior years, an honors student with OSU and cumulative grade point averages of at least 3.50 may undertake community service with an agency or organization in Stillwater or its immediate vicinity to earn waiver of one (1) to three (3) of the thirty-nine (39) honors credit hours required for the Honors College Degree (not including any honors hours used toward the General Honors Award or the Departmental or College Honors Award). Such community service must be undertaken while the student is enrolled on campus. A minimum of fifteen (15) hours of verified satisfactory community service shall be required for each honors credit hour to be waived, and no more than thirty (30) hours of community service may be counted from any one semester or summer session. Community service hours shall be verified by a supervisor from the agency or organization on a form approved by the Oklahoma State University Volunteer Center or by The Honors College. With the exception of tutoring performed through University Academic Services, on-campus activities shall not be considered community service under this option. The student must certify to The Honors College that the community service hours are not being used for any course, program, requirement, or assignment on or off campus other than The Honors College’s community service option under this section. Approval from the Director of The Honors College must be obtained before beginning volunteer service with an agency or organization that is not approved through the Oklahoma State University Volunteer Center. Freshmen and seniors are not eligible for this option.

5-6. INTERNATIONAL STUDY OPTION. Honors students are encouraged by The Honors College to participate in international study. An OSU honors student with 3.50 OSU and cumulative grade point averages may earn a waiver of up to six of the six honors credit hours required for the Honors College Degree beyond the General Honors Award and the Departmental or College Honors Award requirements.

This waiver will be awarded for college credit earned while participating in the Reciprocal Exchange Program through the OSU Study Abroad Office. One honors hour will be waived for each three (3) semester credit hours earned (with grade of “A” or “B,” or the equivalent grades in the institution attended) that count toward OSU graduation requirements. Courses completed with grades of “P,” “S,” etc. will be acceptable for this option when regular letter grades are not awarded in the courses at the international institution from which the credit has been transferred. The student is obligated to provide a detailed explanation of the grading system when applying for a waiver under this section.

Permission to make use of this option must be obtained in advance from the Director of The Honors College or the University Honors Council.

Students wishing to earn a waiver under this Section by participating in international study other than through the Reciprocal Exchange Program administered by the OSU Study Abroad Office must petition the Director of the Honors College or the University Honors Council in advance to do so and must demonstrate that the educational experience will be the equivalent of that offered through the Reciprocal Exchange Program in terms of classes at an international institution taught by that institution’s faculty and with that institution’s students.

5-7. AP AND CLEP CREDIT OPTION. Students who earn credit hours by examination through the College Board’s Advanced Placement Program (AP) with a score of four (4) or higher or an equivalent score on the College Level Examination Program (CLEP) may earn waiver of one (1) to six (6) of the thirty-nine (39) honors credit hours required for the Honors College Degree (not including any honors hours used toward the General Honors Award or the Departmental or College Honors Award). One honors hour will be waived for each three (3) semester credit hours earned by AP and/or CLEP. This option applies only for courses that may be counted for credit toward the student’s undergraduate degree.

5-8. INTERNATIONAL STUDY ENDORSEMENT TO HONORS COLLEGE DEGREE. Honors College students may earn the “Honors College Degree with International Study Emphasis” transcript entry and diploma notation by meeting one of the following sets of requirements:

(1) Completion of the requirements for one of the following academic minors with a minimum of three (3) credit hours earned in a study-abroad experience (which may be in an independent-study format): African American Studies, American Indian Studies, Ancient and Medieval Studies, Asian Studies, Central Asian Studies, Classical Studies, Foreign Language, Hispanic and Latin American Studies, Russian and East European
Studies, International Business, or International Studies. The Honors College shall provide appropriate forms for this option.

(2) Completion of an international study program approved by The Honors College that includes a minimum of eighteen (18) credit hours of related courses, at least six of which must meet the requirements of the International Study Option (Section 5-6, above). The Honors College shall provide appropriate forms for this option. The student shall submit the proposed plan of study before undertaking the international study portion of the plan. If the Honors College Director does not approve a proposed international study program, the student may petition the University Honors Council and University Student Honors Council for approval of the proposed program.

SECTION 6 — HONORS COURSES

6-1. DEFINITION. An honors course is any undergraduate course, section, seminar, tutorial, or other academic credit offering designated as such by the college in which it is offered by assignment of a section number in the 700-range. The designation of an honors course is the prerogative and responsibility of the college granting credit.

6-2. FACULTY TEACHING HONORS SECTIONS. Honors courses normally shall be taught only by persons holding tenured or tenure-track faculty appointments. Upon recommendation by a department head and with approval of the Director of The Honors College, visiting or adjunct faculty at the rank of visiting, adjunct, or clinical assistant professor and other persons holding terminal degrees appropriate to the discipline may teach honors sections when appropriate tenured or tenure-track faculty are not available. Honors laboratory sections may be taught by graduate students when there is a separate and distinct honors theory section taught by a person qualified to teach honors courses as provided in this section.

Except in highly unusual circumstances with the advance approval of the Dean of a college and notification of the Director of The Honors College, honors sections shall not be taught by faculty members in their first year on the faculty at Oklahoma State University.

6-3. HONORS LABORATORY AND DISCUSSION SECTIONS. When the honors component of a course is an honors laboratory or an honors discussion section (with honors students having the same theory section experience as other students in the course), the honors laboratory section or honors discussion section must be taught by a person holding faculty rank.

6-4. CONTENT AND GRADING IN HONORS SECTIONS. Consistent with National Collegiate Honors Council institutions, the term “honors section” at Oklahoma State University denotes a different type of learning experience rather than a necessarily more difficult course in terms of grading expectations. Honors sections may well cover more sophisticated material than that covered in the regular sections of the same course, more active student participation should be encouraged, and the method of evaluation of students’ work (examinations, reports, etc.) may be different. The grading standards at the end of the course, however, should not be designed to force a normal or otherwise preconceived distribution of grades.

6-5. ENROLLMENT IN HONORS COURSES. Only undergraduate students eligible to participate in The Honors College may enroll in honors courses (those with section numbers in the 700-range). The student's eligibility is certified to the Registrar by a trial study form stamped “Honors” by the student's academic college and also stamped “Approved” by The Honors College Office. If a student uses the drop-and-add process to add an honors course, the drop-and-add card must be stamped “Honors” and “Approved.” Simply having a copy of a trial study form stamped “Honors” and “Approved” will not allow the student to add an honors course at a later date through the drop-and-add process without having both required stamps on the drop-and-add card.

In the case of upper-division honors courses, if space remains after eligible undergraduate students have completed early enrollment, a dean or college honors program director may, at his or her discretion, permit participation by graduate students along with the undergraduate students from The Honors College under the following conditions: (a) the graduate student has earned an Honors Program or Honors College Degree or
maintained at least a 3.50 cumulative undergraduate grade point average, (b) the graduate student enrolls in a non-honors section of a course number other than that of the honors course, (c) such enrollment is approved by the honors course faculty member on an individual basis, and (d) the total combined enrollment does not exceed the maximum originally established for the honors course. There is no right or presumption in favor of graduate student participation under the conditions specified in this section of The Honors College policies and procedures.

6-6. MAXIMUM AND MINIMUM ENROLLMENT FOR HONORS COURSES.

6-6-1. MAXIMUM ENROLLMENT. The anticipated maximum enrollment for an honors course is twenty-two (22) students, provided however that the Director of The Honors College may, with the approval of the responsible department head, permit additional enrollment when it is likely that the normal attrition of the drop-and-add process will bring the maximum size to twenty-two students early in the semester or when requested to do so in special circumstances by the Dean of one of the college offering the course.

6-6-2. MINIMUM ENROLLMENT. The anticipated minimum enrollment for an honors course is twelve (12) students in lower-division (1000- and 2000-level) and eight (8) students in upper-division (3000- and 4000-level) honors courses and seminars. These minima are not applicable to independent study, supervised research, tutorial, or senior thesis/project courses, nor shall they preclude a department or college from offering smaller honors courses with the approval of the dean of the college.

6-7. EVALUATION OF HONORS COURSES. All faculty members teaching honors sections shall be encouraged to participate in the course evaluation process by distributing the University Student Honors Council’s course evaluation questionnaire in their honors sections shortly before or during pre-finals week and having the questionnaires returned to The Honors College Office. In the case of faculty teaching honors sections funded by The Honors College, participation in the University Student Honors Council’s evaluation process shall be required. Participation by faculty in the University Student Honors Council’s evaluation process will be a factor taken into consideration for future funding by The Honors College.

SECTION 7 — HONORS CONTRACTS

7-1. CONTENT. Approval of the content of honors contracts shall be obtained from the dean or honors program director of the academic college of the faculty member responsible for the course. The honors contract project should be one that can be completed with 20 to 25 hours of work. In the case of undergraduate students enrolled in graduate courses as part of their undergraduate program, an honors contract may be filed indicating that the students are being graded by the same standards as graduate students in the course without requiring additional work for the honors contract.

7-2. COURSE INSTRUCTOR WITH FACULTY RANK REQUIRED. Honors contracts may be undertaken only in courses taught by persons qualified to teach honors sections under the provisions of Section 6-2, above. Petitions for exception to this policy may be considered by the University Honors Council and University Student Honors Council only in those cases, verified by the student’s honors advisor, in which it is not possible for the student to maintain active participant status in The Honors College by other means. In the case of courses taught by persons not holding faculty rank as specified above, if the student’s petition is granted, the faculty member responsible for the course or some other faculty member designated by the department head shall be responsible for all aspects of the honors contract and the evaluation of the contracted work.

7-3. DEADLINES. Honors contracts must be approved by the appropriate academic dean or honors program director (see Section 7-1, above) and filed by the student with the Director of The Honors College not later than the end of the third week of the semester or the end of the second week of the summer session. The Director of The Honors College may approve the late filing of an honors contract on the recommendation of the student's academic college if the faculty member supervising the contract verifies that sufficient time remains in the semester or summer session to complete the contracted work.
7-4. GRADES IN COURSES WITH HONORS CONTRACTS.

If a student violates the university Academic Integrity Policy on an honors contract portion of a course in such a manner that would justify a grade of F! in the course if it were a graded assignment, the student may be awarded a grade of F! in the course as well. In all other cases, a student’s grade in a course in which an honors contract is undertaken shall not be affected by the honors contract work but any other violation of the Academic Integrity Policy on an honors contract not meriting an F! may result in denial of honors contract credit for the course. A grade of A or B must be earned in the course before any honors credit will be reflected on the student’s transcript.

7-5. REPORTING. The Director of The Honors College shall be responsible for obtaining reports on completion of honors contracts from faculty and shall submit to the Registrar a list of all students for whom honors credit should be reflected on the students’ transcripts, regardless of the college in which the faculty member is housed. The Registrar shall enter “honors” for each course so reported.

7-6. MAXIMUM NUMBER OF CONTRACTS. Honors contracts may not be undertaken in more than two courses in a semester or summer session. The Director of The Honors College may make exceptions to this limit on the basis of a student’s outstanding record in The Honors College, but no more than two honors contracts in a semester may be counted toward the number of honors credit hours required for active participant status in The Honors College.

7-7. HONORS CONTRACTS PERMITTED ONLY IN COURSES ACCEPTABLE FOR DEGREE CREDIT. Honors contracts are permitted only in courses that, at the time they are taken, may be counted for credit toward the student’s undergraduate degree.

7-8. HONORS CONTRACT PERMISSION AFTER NOT COMPLETING HONORS CONTRACT IN EARLIER SEMESTER. Students who undertake honors contracts are expected to complete the contracts. When a student fails to complete an honors contract in a course in which she earns a grade of “A” or “B,” the following procedures shall apply:

After not completing the first honors contract, the student’s Honors Advisor shall contact the student concerning honors contract expectations. The correspondence or other communication shall ask the student for a brief explanation of the reason that the contract was not completed and shall inform the student that upon receipt of such explanation, verbally or in writing, additional honors contract work may be undertaken.

After not completing a second honors contract, the student shall be required to petition of the University Honors Council and the University Student Honors Council in writing to request permission to undertake a subsequent honors contract. Based upon the explanation contained in the written petition, the Councils (with the Honors Director not voting) shall determine whether or not the student will be permitted to undertake a subsequent honors contract. If the Honors Councils approve the student’s petition, the deadline for filing the honors contract shall be extended to one week following approval by the Councils.

SECTION 8 — HONORS ACADEMIC ADVISING

8-1. QUALIFICATIONS FOR HONORS ADVISORS. The Director of The Honors College and the Administrative and Professional Staff of The Honors College shall provide honors academic advising to Honors College students concerning the requirements for The Honors College awards. Honors College personnel who provide honors academic advising shall have earned an undergraduate Honors Program or Honors College Degree.

8-2. EVALUATION OF HONORS ADVISING. Active participants in The Honors College shall be provided an opportunity to evaluate honors advising at least once each academic year using an evaluation form approved by the University Honors Council and University Student Honors Council.
SECTION 9 — HONORS STATUS REPORTS

The Director of The Honors College shall report to each of the academic colleges the names of their students active in The Honors College at least once a semester and, following the conclusion of the semester, shall prepare a status report on each student to be distributed to the student, the student's college, and the student's academic advisor.

SECTION 10 — PRIVILEGES EARNED BY ACTIVE PARTICIPANTS IN THE HONORS COLLEGE

10-1. DEFINITION OF AN ACTIVE PARTICIPANT IN THE HONORS COLLEGE. An active participant in The Honors College shall be defined according to the standards set forth below:

(1) For students who have completed 0-59 credit hours (and who will not at the end of the current semester have earned the General Honors Award and six additional honors hours (including hours waived under the Community Service, International Study, and AP-CLEP Options), a minimum of six honors hours in each semester as well as a minimum of twelve honors hours in each two consecutive semesters shall be required to maintain active participant status. Calculation of the twelve-hour-per-two-consecutive-semesters minimum shall include the honors hours earned (grade of “A” or “B” required) in the immediately preceding semester and the number of honors hours in which the student is currently enrolled (in honors courses or by honors contracts). Summer session honors hours shall not be included in the computation.

(2) For students who have earned (or at the end of the current semester will earn) the General Honors Award and six additional honors hours (including hours waived under the Community Service, International Study, and AP-CLEP Options), and for students who have completed 60 or more credit hours, a minimum of three honors hours in each semester shall be required to maintain active participant status, subject to the exceptions provided in Sections 10-1(3) and 10-1(4).

(3) Students who have earned the General Honors Award and six additional honors hours (including hours waived under the Community Service, International Study, and AP-CLEP Options), and who continue to be eligible for Honors College participation based upon their OSU and cumulative grade point averages, may be considered active participants for one subsequent semester without enrollment in honors courses or undertaking honors contracts by submission of a written request received by the Director of The Honors College not later than the end of the third week of classes during the fall or spring semester.

(4) Students who have completed all of The Honors College curricular requirements for the Honors College Degree but have not yet graduated (and who remain eligible for Honors College participation based upon their OSU and cumulative grade point averages) may be considered to be active participants until their graduation by submission each semester of a written request received by the Director of The Honors College not later than the end of the third week of classes during the fall or spring semester. Students who have completed all of The Honors College curricular requirements for the Honors College Degree except the senior honors thesis or senior honors project (and who plan to complete the senior honors thesis or senior honors project prior to graduation and remain eligible for Honors College participation based upon their OSU and cumulative grade point averages) also may be considered to be active participants by filing the same form of written request.

(5) Part-time students (defined as students enrolled for fewer than twelve credit hours in either the fall or spring semester), upon their request, shall be considered active in The Honors College if the number of honors hours successfully completed in the immediately preceding semester and the number of honors hours in which the student is currently enrolled (in honors sections or by honors contracts) is equal to the proportion of honors hours normally required of a full-time student enrolled in twelve hours per semester under subsections (1) and (2), above.

(6) Students participating in the International Study Option of The Honors College (Section 5-6, above) who are enrolled in at least as many credit hours at the international institution as would be required by Oklahoma State University to be considered a full-time student for the current academic semester.
(7) Students participating in a fall or spring semester special experience option (Section 3-3-8, above).

10-2. PRIORITY ENROLLMENT. The Director of The Honors College shall report to the Registrar, through appropriate channels, the names and student identification numbers of those students who meet the definition of an active Honors College student (see Section 10-1, above) during a given semester and therefore qualify for priority enrollment for the next academic semester and/or summer session.

Active Honors College students will be permitted to begin priority enrollment at 7:00 a.m. on the date specified by the Registrar.

10-3. HONORS COLLEGE STUDY LOUNGE. Active participants in The Honors College are entitled to use The Honors College Study Lounge in Old Central.

10-4. EXTENDED LIBRARY CHECK-OUT PRIVILEGES. Active participants in The Honors College are entitled to check out materials from the Library on the same basis as graduate students.

10-5. ACTIVE PARTICIPANT STATUS — EXCEPTIONS UNDER EXTRAORDINARY CIRCUMSTANCES. In the event of extraordinary circumstances that prevent a student from undertaking the necessary number of honors credit hours for active participant status in a given semester, a student may submit a written petition the Director of The Honors College to be considered an active participant in The Honors College.

The petition process under this section may not be used by students who have failed to earn the OSU and cumulative grade point averages required for eligibility in The Honors College.

Approval for such petitions shall be limited to unusual circumstances in which no reasonable alternative exists for the student.

Such petition may be approved by the Director of The Honors College or referred at the student’s request to the University Honors Council and University Student Honors Council for a decision on the basis of the student’s petition and record of performance in The Honors College.

SECTION 11 — HONORS ALUMNI BOARD

11-1. PURPOSE OF THE BOARD. The Honors College may establish an Honors Alumni Board for the purpose of obtaining advice concerning special alumni events, career as well as graduate and professional school opportunities for Honors College graduates, ways to strengthen The Honors College, and cooperation with the OSU Foundation in developing external support for scholarships for Honors College students and external support for other appropriate projects.

11-2. MEMBERSHIP SELECTION AND TERMS. The Board shall consist of nine to twelve Honors alumni members appointed by the Director of The Honors College after consultation with the University Honors Council. Each of the six undergraduate colleges shall be represented on the Honors Alumni Board if possible. Members of the Honors Alumni Board may be reappointed. Initial appointments shall be designated for one-, two-, or three-year terms. Thereafter, members shall be appointed to three-year terms with approximately one-third of the Board being appointed each year. Terms shall expire on December 31. In the event of a vacancy, the Director of The Honors College may appoint another member.

11-3. BOARD CHAIR OR CO-CHAIRS. The Director of The Honors College shall designate the chair or co-chairs of the Honors Alumni Board for its first year. Thereafter the Honors Alumni Board shall select its own chair or co-chairs each November for the following calendar year.
APPENDIX C

BASIC CHARACTERISTICS OF A FULLY DEVELOPED HONORS COLLEGE
(Approved by the NCHC Executive Committee on June 25, 2005,
and amended by the NCHC Board of Directors on February 19, 2010)

The National Collegiate Honors Council has identified these best practices that are common to successful and fully developed honors colleges.

1. An honors college incorporates the relevant characteristics of a fully developed honors program.

2. The honors college exists as an equal collegiate unit within a multi-collegiate university structure.

3. The head of the honors college is a dean reporting directly to the chief academic officer of the institution and serving as a full member of the Council of Deans if one exists. The dean has a full-time, 12-month appointment.

4. The operational and staff budgets of honors colleges provide resources at least comparable to those of other collegiate units of equivalent size.

5. The honors college exercises increased coordination and control of departmental honors where the college has emerged out of a decentralized system.

6. The honors college exercises considerable control over honors recruitment and admissions, including the appropriate size of the incoming class. Admission to the honors college may be by separate application.

7. The honors college exercises considerable control over its policies, curriculum, and selection of faculty.

8. The curriculum of the honors college offers significant course opportunities across all four years of study.

9. The curriculum of the honors college constitutes at least 20% of a student’s degree program. The honors college requires an honors thesis or honors capstone project.

10. Where the home university has a significant residential component, the honors college offers substantial honors residential opportunities.

11. The distinction achieved by the completion of the honors college requirements is publicly announced and recorded, and methods may include announcement at commencement ceremonies, notations on the diploma and/or the student’s final transcript, or other similar actions.

12. Like other colleges within the university, the honors college may be involved in alumni affairs and development and may have an external advisory board.