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JNCHC

JOURNAL OF THE NATIONAL COLLEGIATE HONORS COUNCIL

Fall/Winter 2006

Vol. 7, No. 2

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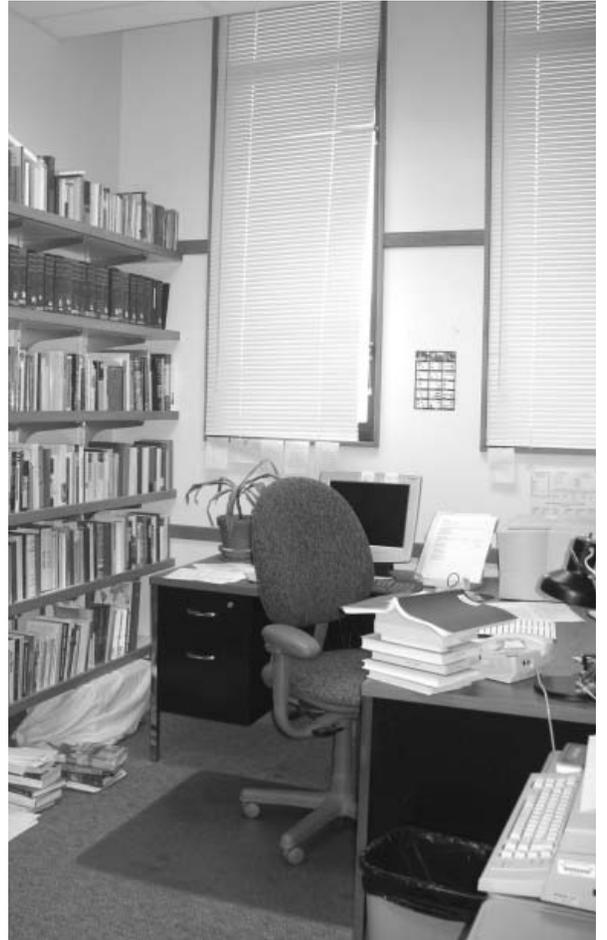
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JOURNAL OF THE NATIONAL COLLEGIATE HONORS COUNCIL

VOLUME 7, No. 2

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A PUBLICATION OF THE NATIONAL COLLEGIATE HONORS COUNCIL

HONORS ADMINISTRATION

JOURNAL EDITORS

ADA LONG

DAIL MULLINS

UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA AT BIRMINGHAM

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EDITORIAL POLICY

Journal of the National Collegiate Honors Council is a refereed periodical publishing scholarly articles on honors education. The journal uses a double-blind peer review process. Articles may include analyses of trends in teaching methodology, articles on interdisciplinary efforts, discussions of problems common to honors programs, items on the national higher education agenda, and presentations of emergent issues relevant to honors education. Submissions and inquiries should be directed to Ada Long at (phone) 850.927.3776 or (e-mail) adalong@uab.edu.

DEADLINES

March 1 (for spring/summer issue); September 1 (for fall/winter issue)

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The cover photograph shows the office of George Mariz, Professor of History and Director of the Honors Program at Western Washington University, Bellingham, WA. Mariz is a member of the NCHC Publications Board and the Editorial Board of *JNCHC*. He has an essay in this issue's Forum on Honors Administration.

CALL FOR PAPERS

The *Journal of the National Collegiate Honors Council* is now accepting papers for Volume 8, No. 1 (spring/summer 2007), which will be a general-interest issue.

The deadline for submissions is March 1, 2007.

The following issue (**deadline: September, 2007**) will focus on the theme of "Managing Growth in Honors." We invite essays that discuss growth in size and/or complexity of individual honors programs and colleges or the growth in numbers and kinds of programs/colleges nationally. We invite essays that analyze the consequences of growth for students, faculty, honors administrators, or institutions. Essays might focus on numbers of students, size of budgets, allotment of space, class size, ambition of extracurricular activities, or any other kind of growth within a program or college. Other essays might focus on the increased size of national honors conferences, intra- or inter-institutional competition, national visibility, or any other developments and consequences of the rapid growth of honors during the past three decades. An underlying question might be, "Is less more, or is more better?"

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

We will accept material by e-mail attachment (preferred) or disk. We will not accept material by fax or hard copy.

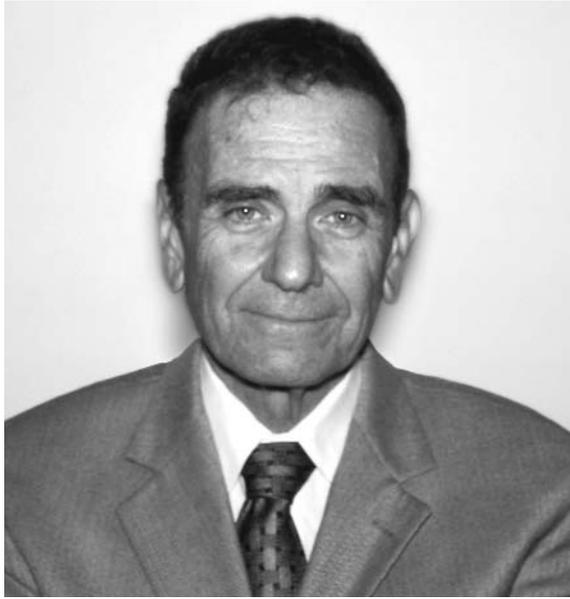
The documentation style can be whatever is appropriate to the author's primary discipline or approach (MLA, APA, etc.), but please avoid footnotes. Internal citation to a list of references (bibliography) is preferred; endnotes are acceptable.

There are no minimum or maximum length requirements; the length should be dictated by the topic and its most effective presentation.

Accepted essays will be edited for grammatical and typographical errors and for infelicities of style or presentation. Authors will have ample opportunity to review and approve edited manuscripts before publication.

Submissions and inquiries should be directed to Ada Long at adalong@uab.edu or, if necessary, 850.927.3776.

DEDICATION



IRA COHEN

The thousands of people who have met Ira Cohen during his decades of service to the National Collegiate Honors Council have all learned within five minutes of first acquaintance that he is an historian. Ira brings the temperament and expertise of his profession to every meeting and chance encounter, serving as the unofficial oral historian of the organization. Ira got paid for his talents throughout his career at Illinois State University, where he was professor from 1965 until his “retirement” in 1998. During his last couple of decades there, he was also Director of the University Honors Program. Soon after taking that position, he started taking leadership roles in honors beyond Illinois State. He was President of the Honors Council of the Illinois Region, then of the Upper Midwest Honors Council, and then of the National Collegiate Honors Council. He was Founding Chair of the NCHC Research Committee, Chair of the Long-Range Planning Committee, and Chair of the Publications Board in addition to sitting on a wide range of other committees, including the NCHC Executive Committee. Subsequent to his tenure at Illinois State, he became Adjunct Professor of History at Hunter College, where he continues to practice his craft in a formal way while also practicing it informally at NCHC conferences and beyond. We are grateful for this and all his other services and thus dedicate this issue of *JNCHC* to Ira Cohen with both pleasure and appreciation.

ADA LONG

Editor's Introduction

ADA LONG

UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA AT BIRMINGHAM

The accelerating shift from honors programs to honors colleges and from honors directors to honors deans during the past two decades suggests a major shift in the nature of honors administration. In preparation for the NCHC monograph *A Handbook for Honors Administrators* that I wrote in 1995, I distributed a survey to all institutional members of the National Collegiate Honors Council. Of the 136 responses I received (a 27% return rate), 110 honors administrators listed themselves as directors, 9 as coordinators, 8 as deans, and 4 as other; 115 were administrators of institution-wide programs, 11 of honors colleges, and 10 other. According to NCHC Handbook listings, there are 325 honors programs today and 71 honors colleges. Although the survey and the NCHC Handbook are not comparable sources of data, they suggest that the ratio of colleges to programs, which was roughly 1:11 in the early 1990s, is today more like 1:5 and is increasing each year.

It seems worthwhile, therefore, to take a fresh look at the nature and quality of honors administration and to consider how the position has and has not changed during the past couple of decades. In 1986, Rew A. ("Skip") Godow wrote an essay called "Honors Program Leadership: The Right Stuff" for *Forum for Honors* (the predecessor of *JNCHC*), an essay that for many of us became the holy text on honors administration. Sam Schuman quoted it at length in his handbook *Beginning in Honors* (first published in 1989 and now available in its fourth edition), and I quoted it almost *in toto* in *A Handbook for Honors Administrators*. Godow's essay, widely perceived as definitive in the mid-1980s, is a valuable touchstone for considering what has and has not changed in honors administration during the past two decades.

The Forum on Honors Administration in this issue of *JNCHC* presents current reflections on Godow's essay and its 1986 perspective on administering honors. With his permission, we distributed the essay on the NCHC listserv and invited brief responses. The invitation stated: "[Godow's] essay depicts an ideal of honors administration that may (or may not) resonate with today's honors directors and deans. In either case, we invite you to think about what comprises 'the right stuff' in honors administrators today."

Of the nine responses to our invitation that were accepted for publication, eight explicitly or implicitly reaffirm the criteria for administering honors

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that Godow enumerated in his essay twenty years ago. The consensus seems to be that running an honors program or college today is about the same as it always has been. However, one response—a compelling and persuasive essay by Len Zane—points to major differences. I have reserved Zane's essay for last in the Forum.

We begin the Forum, of course, with Godow's "Honors Program Leadership: The Right Stuff," first published in 1986. Godow discusses six of the "remarkably varied abilities and aptitudes that are needed to build and maintain a first-rate honors program": the ideal director should be a Lover of Wisdom, Curriculum Reformer, General Administrator, Entrepreneur, Admissions Officer, and Student Activities Coordinator. As Godow pointed out in 1986, all these categories of leadership apply also to other academic administrators, but, unlike most of those other administrators, honors directors are required to exercise all of them simultaneously. Department chairs, for instance, seemed even in the 1980s to be selected less on the basis of their excellence in teaching and scholarship than on their managerial capabilities whereas "perhaps no feature is more important to an honors director than that the person be able to provide academic leadership." Honors directors, Godow maintained, must retain their excellence in teaching and scholarship in order to be effective in their jobs.

Sam Schuman, in "Chaucer, Mountain Hiking, and Honors Program Leadership," picks up on Godow's sense that honors administrators must be academic leaders. Other administrators can and sometimes must neglect scholarship and teaching, but "If an honors director does not possess, maintain, and regularly demonstrate the talents of a really good faculty member, the honors program that individual leads will lose the admiration of the students and faculty she should be leading." While being perceived as an academic, however, the honors administrator must also be an excellent manager of all the matters great and small involved in an honors program. As managers, furthermore, they need to be both "educational philosophers" and "bean counters," constantly shifting their gaze back and forth between the grandiose and the trivial as a mountain climber shifts attention from majestic vistas above to tiny wildflowers below.

The visions that both Godow and Schuman convey of administering honors are grand and noble. Bonnie D. Irwin surely shares this vision, but she also adds a note of comedy in her essay "Riding a Unicycle Across a Bridge While Juggling: the Musings of an Honors Administrator." Like Godow and Schuman, she focuses on the importance of scholarly research to the credibility of an honors dean or director—"We also must model the scholarly life for our students to a greater extent than administrators who do not have quite as much day-to-day interaction with students"—while acknowledging that

the call of research becomes more and more a “siren song” among the daily and diverse demands of a job that requires, for instance, major commitments to inter-institutional collaboration. And so she characterizes honors directors as plate spinners on unicycles, “maintaining our equilibrium while keeping our eyes, hands, legs, and, yes, even minds focused on the achievements of our students.”

Irwin’s image of an honors administrator as a plate spinner on a unicycle leads nicely into the essay by Larry Andrews called “At Play in the Fields of Honor(s).” Andrews agrees with Godow’s catalogue of the ideal qualities of an honors administrator—including the special “affinity for faculty culture”—but puts additional emphasis on the role of play, which he sees as essential to all components of the job. The fun of running honors, he writes, includes willingness to deflate your own ego; to show your students and yourself that you can take a break from your job; to go against the grain and get silly; to indulge the imagination; and to take risks. “Play of this most serious sort will fuel [students’] senior thesis work and guide them in their lives beyond academia—in work, in philosophical questioning, in love.”

While Andrews adds play to the list of Godow’s ideal characteristics of an honors director, Bruce Fox in “Success as an Honors Director: What Does it Take?” suggests another addition: honor. After elaborating on Godow’s list by describing the importance of being a “quick study,” of honing one’s political astuteness and advocacy skills, of developing a talent for planning events, and of learning to say no, Fox emphasizes the importance of honor, of integrity as well as good sense. The addition of this virtue raises the question whether integrity is more imperiled now than it was in 1986—a question, perhaps, for a future essay.

Rather than adding to Godow’s list, which she acknowledges as descriptive of her eight years as an honors administrator, Lisa L. Coleman, in her essay “Being There for Honors Leadership,” proposes a “postmodern supplement” to Godow’s “Renaissance model” and puts forward “an alternative—a kind of philosophical anti-model that reflects a simpler, more power-diffuse, collaborative role for the director of honors in the twenty-first century.” Drawing an analogy between an honors director and the character Chauncey Gardiner in the Peter Sellers movie *Being There*, Coleman suggests that honors directors can perhaps lead best by letting others, especially their students, take both the lead and the spotlight. Such directors tend lovingly to the roots so that the students may blossom; they relinquish enough control to be ready for “something new, something unexpected”; and they exhibit leadership in “being receptive to the talents, abilities, and good will of others. . . .”

Keith Garbutt makes a similar point to Coleman’s in an essay whose title summarizes his thesis: “‘Ah well! I am their leader; I really ought to follow

EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

them': Leading Student Leaders." He argues for the virtue of the behind-the-scenes honors director, whose role is to create opportunities, facilitate ideas, set expectations, and tolerate failure. He concludes, "The essence of a good leader in this administrative role is that of facilitator, mentor, and occasionally sympathetic ear."

George Mariz, in his essay "Leadership in Honors: What is the Right Stuff?," takes a more pragmatic approach, offering advice and encouragement to honors administrators who face the daily challenges of developing, maintaining, supporting, and defending a program or college. Mariz focuses especially on competition for resources, faculty recruitment, and student advising, each of which requires extensive preparation and expertise. Advising alone, for instance, requires knowledge of every major on campus, awareness of any changes that occur in their requirements, familiarity with all the other resources available to students, and knowledge about admission to graduate and professional schools, not to mention willingness to talk about "life in general." "Honors is ultimately about students and being prepared to work with them in any ways necessary."

Like George Mariz, Rosalie C. Otero offers practical advice to honors directors and deans in "A View from the Shoulders." Otero draws an implicit analogy between honors administrators and politicians: both need to maintain close connections to their constituencies, be responsive to their needs, and build a strong base of support while at the same time taking care of daily business. An honors administrator must stand on the shoulders not just of predecessors (as Newton intended) but also of the current students, faculty, other administrators, and community members, just to name a few. Those shoulders must be strong and willing, and Otero gives practical advice about how to build good shoulders.

Len Zane is the only author to point out what he sees as major differences between being an honors administrator in 1986 and 2006. In "Reminiscences on the Evolution of Honors Leadership," he points out that the last two decades of the past century saw a rapidly increasing focus on image and professionalism in honors as a "career path." Honors administrators have gone from relative anonymity and autonomy to high visibility and accountability not only to but within central administrations. In this move from amateur to professional status, the honors administrator's gaze has in many cases shifted gradually away from students toward potential donors. And so Zane adds to Godow's list of roles for honors directors a new one—Skilled Operative in External Relations—that may well sit now at the top of the list.

The position of honors director (or dean) may still be, as Godow claimed in 1986 and as the consensus of Forum responses indicates, the most student-centered administrative position on most campuses, but at the same time

Zane's thesis seems exactly right, as evidenced not just by personal and anecdotal experience but by the proliferation of honors colleges, the increasing shift from directors to deans, the way honors positions are advertised, and the content of sessions at NCHC conferences. His essay calls attention to a substantive change that may have often gone unnoticed but that may have had far-reaching consequences already and may have even more in the future.

A perspective that will be useful as we anticipate and experience that future is Anne N. Rinn's historical research essay entitled "Major Forerunners to Honors Education at the Collegiate Level." This essay is a substantial addition to the essay Rinn published in the 2003 volume of *JNCHC* (IV.1, 27-39) titled "Rhodes Scholarships, Frank Aydelotte, and College Honors Education." Her research essay in this issue provides an invaluable history of the origins and evolution of honors in the United States. American honors has its roots in the tutorial system of Oxford University and the experiences that Frank Aydelotte and other Rhodes Scholars brought back with them to the United States. Combined with the influence of German university experiences, Rhodes Scholarships became the source of a new "class system" in American higher education, assigning honors based on some combination of tutorial or preceptorial instruction and performance on examinations. Rinn describes early honors "programs" at Harvard, University of Michigan, Princeton University, and Columbia University in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Frank Aydelotte arguably created the first honors program (in no need of quotation marks) at Swarthmore College when he became president there in 1920. Another major contributor to honors was Joseph Cohen, who started an honors program at the University of Colorado in the late 1920s and was responsible for initiating the Inter-University Committee on the Superior Student (ICSS) in 1957. The ICSS created a document entitled "The Sixteen Major Features of a Full Honors Program," which Rinn includes as an appendix to her essay. From this original organization of forty-three people evolved the NCHC (founded in 1966), which produced its own sixteen "Basic Characteristics of a Fully Developed Honors Program" in the 1990s. Rinn's history of this evolution of honors is invaluable reading for anybody involved in honors today, telling us where we've been and perhaps helping us to see better where we are going.

Also invaluable is the four-year research study accomplished by Frank Shushok, Jr., and reported in his essay "Student Outcomes and Honors Programs: A Longitudinal Study of 172 Honors Students 2000-2004." Shushok provides the "substantive and scientifically gathered data about how student learning is enhanced as a result of participation in an honors program" that honors administrators need to prove the value of honors within an institution, to meet accreditation guidelines, and to improve the effectiveness

of honors education. Shushok's study was originally designed "to assess how students were affected by participation in the Honors College at a Carnegie-classification 'Doctoral/Research Extensive' university in one of the Mid-Atlantic states." The students selected for the study—equal numbers of equally qualified honors and non-honors students—were surveyed at the end of their first (2001) and fourth (2004) years in the university. Some of Shushok's conclusions include that (1) GPA and retention rates were significantly higher among honors students at the end of the first year; (2) these differences were no longer statistically significant at the end of the fourth year; (3) honors students were significantly more likely than non-honors students to meet with faculty during office hours, to discuss plans about career and vocational goals with faculty members, and to discuss social and political issues with other students outside of class; (4) the differences in extent and quality of discussions with faculty and other students were far more significant among males than females. What seems to be a greater impact of honors on the quality of out-of-class activities for males than for females, Shushok speculates, may result from the greater likelihood and ability of women students "to find academically supportive peer groups outside of honors participation while men find such support more difficult to find." Shushok also speculates that the greater impact of honors during the first year may have resulted from the fact that many honors students "either departed or became less involved in the Honors College" after their first year. Having these kinds of data about other colleges and universities would be beneficial not just to those institutions but to an understanding of the role of honors in higher education.

This issue of JNCHC provides ample background and analysis of honors for considering what still needs to be done, both in research about honors and in consideration of the many changes and challenges facing honors administrators today. We invite readers to contribute to this consideration by submitting essays for future publication in the *Journal of the National Collegiate Honors Council*.

**FORUM ON
“HONORS ADMINISTRATION”**

REW A. GODOW, JR.

Honors Program Leadership: The Right Stuff

REW A. GODOW, JR.

COLLEGE OF CHARLESTON AND LOWCOUNTRY GRADUATE CENTER

Reprinted from *Forum for Honors XVI.3* (spring 1986), 3-9

In what follows, I shall discuss six leadership roles that I think generally need to be fulfilled in an honors program. Since the leadership of most honors programs is the responsibility of a single person, the director, this can be thought of as a discussion of the various roles that my ideal honors director would play. Accordingly, the list also can be thought of as a general checklist of things that search committees should look for in candidates for a position as honors director.

Before discussing specific leadership roles, a caveat is needed. The leadership needed for a particular program will be affected by the nature of the program and the nature of the college or university. A new program has different leadership needs than an ongoing one; a program of 100 students may need leadership somewhat different than that for a program of 1,100, etc. Moreover, the sort of leadership required will be very much institution-specific. The leadership needs will depend on the view people have of the role of the honors program and may even be, in part, a response to some particular weakness or strength of the previous director. As a result, the “right stuff” for leading one honors program may not be particularly well suited for another program. Given all this, it is risky—some may think it is folly—to try to make generalizations about honors program leadership. Yet, I am convinced that one can make useful generalizations; the roles described below are ones that I think need to be played to at least some degree in virtually all honors programs. Although the discussion below intentionally ignores the myriad of variables that make honors programs different, it should not be forgotten that all these differences would have to be taken into account if one were analyzing the leadership needs of a particular program. With that caveat, I want to turn to the general discussion of honors program leadership.

It used to be fashionable to believe that the chair of an academic department should always be the department’s best senior scholar. The job of the department chair, it was thought, was basically to serve as a role model for

HONORS PROGRAM LEADERSHIP: THE RIGHT STUFF

significant scholarly productivity. By and large, that view has become obsolete. Like it or not—and many in the academy do not like it one bit—chairing an academic department has become increasingly an administrative and managerial job. In very small institutions where a typical department has only two or three members, the role of the chair may not have changed very much. Yet, for the vast majority of institutions, it is viewed as increasingly important that those chairing departments have some expertise in administrative matters such as budgeting, planning, and personnel management. There are now workshops, articles, and books devoted to the skills one needs in order to effectively chair an academic department. Although the idea remains that the chair should be an academic leader and a role model for teaching and scholarship, there is an increasing emphasis on administrative ability in choosing department chairs. Indeed, many have noticed that the attributes that make people distinguished scholars and teachers are not necessarily those of the successful department chair.

And what about honors directors? Though I am amazed at the wide and impressive array of talents of many honors directors I have met through NCHC, I am nonetheless convinced that not enough attention has been given to what seems to me to be a set of remarkably varied abilities and aptitudes that are needed to build and maintain a first-rate honors program. In what follows, I will list and discuss the qualities that I think are the most important. The resemblance between these qualities of the ideal honors director and qualities needed in other academic administrators is in no way coincidental.

THE ACADEMIC LEADER AS LOVER OF WISDOM

The successful director of an honors program must be different from the director of campus security or the director of a bank. Indeed, perhaps no feature is more important in an honors program director than that the person be able to provide academic leadership. Though this is probably the most obvious quality to list, I want to say a bit about the characteristics my ideal academic leader would have.

My ideal academic leader is one whose life exemplifies knowledge as lifelong learning. I do not mean simply that the person is an active scholar; I mean someone who exemplifies the Greek notion of a philosopher—one who loves wisdom. My ideal honors director is a person who is genuinely interested in ideas and the pursuit of knowledge, a person who is a role model for students and faculty alike because that love of pursuing ideas is constantly exemplified. The person seems somehow to be at every lecture and concert, is always reading important new books, and is regularly engaged in conversations with students and faculty about the great books, the great ideas, and the great issues of the times. This enthusiasm about learning is contagious. It

makes students and faculty more excited about learning and more enthusiastic about the pursuit of knowledge. What better way to provide academic leadership than by getting people truly excited about the pursuit of knowledge? It would not bother me if someone were to say that what I have just described is (in part) the ideal teacher; for my ideal honors director would be an ideal teacher.

THE ACADEMIC LEADER AS CURRICULUM REFORMER

My ideal academic leader not only is a lover of wisdom, but is one who constantly strives to find better ways of teaching, better curricula, and other ways to improve the educational process. The honors director as academic leader is able to convince students to be more daring in their curricular choices and to participate in independent study projects, study abroad, tutorials, senior theses, etc. Additionally, the academic leader is able to convince faculty of the virtues of trying new pedagogical approaches. In short, he or she is a constant source of exciting educational ideas for faculty and students. I have purposely avoided using the term “innovative” here, since it conjures up a notion of gimmickery in the minds of some. My ideal academic leader is not interested in innovation just for innovation’s sake; he or she is one who maintains the highest academic standards and the strongest commitment to academic tradition. Still, he or she is not afraid of trying new things in an attempt to provide better educational opportunities for students. After all, the successful honors director must realize that to provide the best educational opportunities that we can to our most outstanding students, we must do more than simply accelerate our standard courses. We must come up with curricular ideas and teaching methods that are specially suited for the honors students that we serve.

Put another way, my ideal honors director maintains the highest standards of academic integrity and excellence, is committed to academic tradition, and yet still has a great deal of curricular imagination. Whether it be through interdisciplinary team-taught courses, special research opportunities, special seminars, or whatever, the honors program serves its institution best when it provides a model for curricular enhancement. By promoting these ideals, the honors director can be—like the honors program itself—an exemplar of academic excellence.

THE GENERAL ADMINISTRATOR

Being an honors program director, like being a department chair, requires at most institutions a good bit of administrative work which includes not only the things which are intrinsically interesting to academics—e.g., designing

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the honors curriculum—but also a good bit of budgeting, attending meetings, writing academic plans, attending meetings, negotiating, responding to numerous requests for information, attending meetings, and doing a myriad of organizing, managing, and monitoring. For most honors directors, this is a big (and sometimes an overwhelming) part of the job. If you cannot do these things well, you generally cannot be an excellent honors director; and if you cannot stand doing this kind of “menial” stuff, then being an honors director (or any other administrator in today’s academic world) is not your ideal job choice.

NCHC has led the way in recognizing the need for special expertise. For many years, there have been sessions at its national meetings designed specifically for new directors. These sessions give the new director a great deal of useful information on what happens in other programs, plus the advice of experienced directors on how to get a program started, on good ideas for extracurricular activities, on curricular ideas that have worked particularly well (or been dismal failures), and even on how to talk the central administration into that much needed Honors Center, scholarship, or travel money. Many an honors program director (me, for one!) has found such sessions to be enormously valuable when starting out. The usefulness of such sessions provides further evidence that one must have certain administrative expertise to direct an honors program.

While some may lament the fact that such skills are now a part of the life of the administration of the academy, the fact remains that they are. The honors director must have these abilities to succeed.

But if you think this is distasteful and that the honors director need only be a good teacher and scholar, please stop reading now. If you do not like talk about an honors director’s needing to be good at budgeting and other paperwork, then you will undoubtedly detest virtually everything else that I say in what follows.

THE ENTREPRENEUR

While it is important to recognize the need for administrative expertise, I think that it is even more important to have the right attitude toward administrative work—an attitude that most academics do not have and do not want to have. Many academics have pursued the academic life in part because they thought they could pursue their teaching and research without having to worry about management, strategic planning, time-schedules, budgets, the infamous “bottom line,” and all those other dreaded things that go on in the business world. Yet when I think of the honors program directors who are “famous” around NCHC, they all seem to have an incredible ability at being—please pardon the expression—entrepreneurial. This is not to say that

they have built empires or made profits, but they have managed to weave their honors program deeply into the fabric of their colleges and universities; the result is an honors program that is not just one of many academic programs, but an absolutely critical part of many aspects of the schools. To do this, one must have a keen “business” sense, one must be imaginative in finding or inventing opportunities to promote the honors program, and must be able to take full advantage of such opportunities.

A related characteristic that marks the successful honors director is the ability to get the system to work to the advantage of the students and faculty in the program. The outstanding honors director develops excellent working relationships with members of the university community and is so persuasive that somehow he or she always seems to convince the provost that his or her latest new idea is worth funding, get the registrar to make a special arrangement so honors program students do not have to stand in line, talk the director of financial aid into increasing a scholarship, get special faculty development funds, etc. The interest in and ability to—again, pardon the expression—manipulate the system for the benefit of the program and its participants is often the difference between a fantastic program and a very good one.

THE ADMISSIONS OFFICER

There are a number of honors programs throughout the country that have been established mainly as devices for recruiting superior students. Though most programs were not initiated primarily for recruiting purposes, the fact remains that honors programs are clearly designed to offer attractive educational opportunities to outstanding students. And in these days of demographic declines, each school is interested in making sure potential students are aware of all the attractive educational opportunities the school offers. As a result, many schools use their honors programs to recruit students, and many honors programs are engaged in recruiting activities of one sort or another. On one end of the spectrum, there are programs that do their own brochures and where the director writes recruiting letters, visits high schools, organizes campus visitation days, and organizes activities with current honors program students to recruit prospective students. At some institutions, there is a person specifically hired to plan programs for recruiting students for the honors program (sometimes such people are employees of the honors programs; sometimes they are part of the staff of the admissions office). On the other end of the spectrum are honors programs that have no recruiting programs of any kind. Yet, even in these programs, the director may have occasional meetings with prospective students (and parents). Although I have not done any survey research, my discussions with other directors convince me that more and more honors program directors are engaged in more and more recruiting activity. I think if you had done a survey six years ago asking

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honors directors about their activities, you would have found that (1) the vast majority of honors directors would not have even listed recruiting as one of their activities, and (2) only a handful would have said that recruiting occupied a significant amount of their time. Now, however, I think such a survey would reveal a dramatic change: virtually all would say that recruiting was among their activities and many would say that they are spending more and more time on recruiting-related activities. It used to be that honors directors and other faculty members saw recruiting as a process that was beneath them; demographics have forced an increasing number of people to give up that view.

The point of all this is that insofar as one participates in admissions work, success at one's job will depend on having the qualities of the successful admissions officer. One has to be part salesman, one has to recognize that like it or not appearances and first impressions make a difference, etc. Moreover, if one takes some responsibility for planning recruiting activities, then the entrepreneurial abilities mentioned above will be very, very useful, as will be some keen marketing instincts. Here, again, these are ideas that the academic community has traditionally found distasteful and demeaning. Yet, I think that these are things that honors directors and those choosing honors directors cannot ignore.

THE STUDENT ACTIVITIES COORDINATOR

Every honors program that I know of—well, at least every good one—aims to give its students special attention both in and out of the classroom. To do this, someone in the honors program needs to be sensitive to the intellectual, cultural, and social needs of honors program students, must exhibit a caring attitude toward the students, and must be genuinely concerned with their welfare. Optimally, someone exhibits this sensitivity and concern by showing that he or she truly enjoys spending time with the honors program students. I am convinced that many honors programs fail to flourish because of this failure in the administration of the programs. By the same token, some of our most well-known “old hands” clearly owe a great deal of their success to their enthusiasm for working with the students in their honors program. That enthusiasm is wonderfully contagious.

I am convinced that many people underestimate the value of student activities to an honors program. Students can, of course, learn a great deal at various intellectual and cultural events. Such events can also “train” students to attend lectures and concerts. These are all worthwhile accomplishments for an honors program. In addition, though, such activities provide a very important benefit for honors programs—they build an esprit de corps, a community of scholars that can make the honors program much more interesting and

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attractive to students. In other words, building a sense of community through extra-curricular activities can be of tremendous value in both the recruiting and the retention of students. Pragmatic benefits aside, though, these things can add a great deal of vitality and fun to honors program life. It seems to me that those who understand this make better honors directors.

CONCLUSION

It should be re-emphasized that the above are only generalizations. Each program has different needs; in different programs the factors will have varying degrees of importance. Yet, if I am right, then the most successful honors program will generally have someone filling roles very much like all of the above. When I think of a scholar, an academic leader, an administrator/manager, a shrewd business entrepreneur, an admissions officer, and a student activities coordinator, I have rather distinct and different images of each. It seems as though different characteristics are needed to do each. And, if there is but one person with administrative responsibilities, as is usually the case, then that director should, at least to some extent, have all the qualities of all these sorts of people. No wonder it is such a hard job; it requires as many diverse skills as almost any other job on campus. Indeed, for me the variability of tasks is what makes being an honors director such a terrific job. While the diversity makes the job interesting and enjoyable, it also makes it difficult. Though it certainly is not the hardest job at a college or university, I think that an excellent honors director needs to have an extraordinary range of skills.

I know that the above list of characteristics is helpful to me as I try to narrow the large gap between the honors director I would like to be and the honors director that I actually am. My hope, though, is that the above might help others to see what an honors director who has these skills can bring to the honors programs at their colleges and universities. Indeed, I would be especially gratified to find the above list useful to some of those who participate in either selecting or evaluating honors program directors.

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SAM SCHUMAN

Chaucer, Mountain Hiking, and Honors Program Leadership

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The narrator of Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde* laments that he is no lover himself but only the "servant of love's servants." I'm in an analogous position in respect to honors program administration: for the past quarter-century, I've been in administrative positions as chief academic officer and as chancellor where I've worked with honors directors but not really had daily responsibility for a program myself. In a way this disqualifies me from writing on the topic of honors leadership with (to quote Chaucer again) the authority of experience, at least contemporary experience. On the other hand, it may be useful to look briefly at honors administration, and at Skip Godow's classic essay on "Honors Program Leadership: The Right Stuff," from an affectionately tangential but outside perspective.

I have always been most impressed by Dr. Godow's clear sense that the leader of an honors program must be a respected academic. College and university presidents, provosts, and perhaps even deans can be effective if their primary skills are managerial. Indeed, at the level of major research universities, chief executives are going to find their skills as teachers and scholars atrophying. They are going to be judged for their ability to seek and manage funds, to influence the political process, to interact persuasively and winningly with alumni, friends and members of the community, and similar tasks. Leading an intense classroom discussion, writing helpful comments on an essay, or crafting a piece of original scholarship won't happen much, or if it does, it won't matter much, alas. The same might be said of registrars, library directors, business managers, facilities overseers, etc. But not honors directors. If an honors director does not possess, maintain, and regularly demonstrate the talents of a really good faculty member, the honors program that individual leads will lose the admiration of the students and faculty she should be leading.

One somewhat quirky way of saying this is that the honors administrator should not be perceived as an administrator, at least not primarily. Skip's essay reminds us that the leader of an honors program should be regarded by colleagues and students as an academic, not a manager.

And yet, honors programs need to be managed! I would like to suggest that the work of the honors leader as scholar/teacher needs to be bracketed by attention to concerns both larger and smaller than instruction and research. My favorite analogy for this model of academic administration is hiking in the mountains. To get the most out of a mountain trek, the hiker needs to keep shifting his or her glance between the broadest vista of the peaks ahead, and the minute beauty of the alpine wildflowers below. To miss contemplating either is to impoverish the hiking experience. Similarly, the fine honors administrator must attend to both the peaks and the wildflowers of the academic world.

It is, perhaps, possible to be a good college teacher just by paying very careful attention to the classes one instructs. But the good academic administrator needs to keep in mind, always, more overarching concerns, the peaks: What is the most effective shape for an undergraduate education for these particular undergraduates, at this particular time and place? What kinds of growth and change do we hope the sequence of the honors program will stimulate in our students? Which pedagogical styles, in what order and at what time, will most effectively interact with the developmental stages of these learners? What subject matters will be most fruitful, within the context of the complete educational program of a particular institution, for contemporary liberal learning? A fine honors director must be an educational philosopher, as well as a faculty colleague.

She or he must also be a bean counter! Except, perhaps, in the largest and most lavishly staffed honors programs, the director (or dean) is going to be responsible for a significant load of "administrivia." Rooms need to be scheduled. Effective student recruitment letters need to be written and sent to the right people at the right time. Meetings need to be called, presided over, recorded. Budgets need to be created, funded, and kept accurately. For too many who come from the world of academe, these daily managerial tasks seem trivial and petty, but together they make an enormous difference in the learning and the collegiate experience of honors students and the professional lives of honors faculty. The honors administrator who is an original scholar and an effective teacher but who runs out of money halfway through spring semester is going to find the collegial affection of her or his peers overwhelmed by ire. And rightly. I argue that the details of running an honors program are, collectively, important. If they are seen as insignificant details, the program will go astray. Daily managerial tasks need to be done thoroughly, carefully, thoughtfully, and even, I would curiously argue, lovingly. If one really cares about a program, its people and what it is doing, its smallest pieces need to be kept as shiny as its major components. The beauty of the wildflowers needs the same attention as the grandeur of the peaks.

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Perhaps an equally engaging, albeit less athletic, analogy might see the honors administrator as a fine chef. Even as the meal is cooking, such a chef must be paying attention to the combination of flavors and colors and textures of the complete enterprise, and the tiny subtleties of spice that bring out the best in the food.

I am grateful for Skip Godow's thoughts on honors leadership, and suggest that his vision is "Olympian." It should be. Academic leadership, and particularly honors administration, is challenging and valuable work. In honors, we can play a major role in shaping the learning and the lives of some of the brightest and most promising young women and men in our nation. The world needs those men and women, and it needs them at their very best. Seen that way, "the right stuff" in honors program administration is about as important and demanding a task and a topic as we can imagine. Seen that way, we might say of the work of honors program leaders, as Dryden said of Chaucer, "here is God's plenty!"

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BONNIE D. IRWIN

Riding a Unicycle Across a Bridge While Juggling: The Musings of an Honors Administrator

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My favorite metaphor for the life of an honors administrator remains that of a plate spinner. Those of us of a certain age remember them from the *Ed Sullivan Show*: frantically running from pole to pole, these acrobats had to keep the plates spinning so that none would fall crashing to the stage. Meanwhile, in the background, some classical, frenetic piece of music, often Khachaturian's *Sabre Dance*, would be playing, faster and faster. Indeed, if a university can be likened to a circus—and many are tempted to do just that—honors administrators are the plate spinners.

The phone and the e-mail alerts on our computers are our background music. Unlike the plate spinners of the circus, however, we often find that our plates are not of uniform size and weight: recruitment, enrollment management, retention, development, assessment, budgets, curriculum, undergraduate research, study abroad, national student exchange, service learning, grant writing, editing, proof-reading, parent worries, student crises, *et alia*. Some of these will begin to teeter at a much faster rate than others. Some we could bear to hear crash to the floor; others we do not dare let leave our sight.

Every new idea becomes a new plate, fragile but crucial to the success of our students, and we find ourselves running at such a pace that the more appealing items on Rew Godow's list of roles get pushed to the background. Can one still be a lover of wisdom, for example, if one only rarely has time to *think*? Indeed, I posed this very question to my provost as I prepared to apply to be an honors dean. After all, should not all leadership positions at a university be occupied by thinking people, those who reflect as well as manage, those who inspire not only through their actions but also because they do still hole up in a library or a lab and contemplate those ideas and questions that led us to this vocation in the first place? Real, deliberate thinking itself thus becomes another plate, spinning perilously close to all the others that far too often brush up against it, sending it skittering across the stage.

RIDING A UNICYCLE ACROSS A BRIDGE WHILE JUGGLING

As a full-time administrator, I am blessed with the opportunity to devote my full energies to administering our Honors College, but at the same time, the siren song of my research, as well as the e-mails and phone calls of the contributors and series editors who await the next stage in my monograph project, are always echoing in my brain. The sparse thinking time I have is often now devoted to my program and not my research, the peril of the new-ish administrator still trying to be a faculty member. Moreover, those administrators who do not have at least a small scholarly agenda often find themselves victim to faculty jibes that we do not have “real” academic jobs. We also must model the scholarly life for our students to a greater extent than administrators who do not have quite as much day-to-day interaction with students.

Sometimes I also think of what we do as a form of civil engineering because, in order to make our programs integral to our colleges and universities, we are road and bridge builders. We not only build connections but often have to design them. The community of honors deans and directors brought together by the National Collegiate Honors Council means that most of us do not have to start with a blank sheet of blueprint or schematic paper, but at the same time, no one director’s bridge will fit each dale or chasm another must cross. The bridge I build with the Business School will have a completely different design, span, and dimension than the bridge I build with the Housing Office or the Foundation. Yet in order to build a vigorous program, all these bridges must be built.

If we are lucky, those whose domains we wish to reach with our bridge will also be building one our way. We watch the two sides magically come together much as Joseph B. Strauss watched the two sides of the Golden Gate Bridge fall into place in the 1930s. Sometimes, however, our potential partners are busy building bridges with others on campus. In these cases we must be *civil* engineers, making our cases politely, diplomatically sometimes but persistently always, until the other half of the bridge starts coming our way. This work is often energizing but can also be mind-numbing, entailing countless meetings, e-mails, meetings, and memos until we can get the designer, the engineer, and the project manager all seeing the same vision from either end of the bridge, making sure we agree on the length of the struts and the placement of the pylons. Those bridges we most need are those that will have to withstand the most traffic, and like the spinning plates of the acrobats, our students must be assured of their safety in crossing those bridges we have built.

At the beginning of the academic year, I learned that one of my new students rides a unicycle and another juggles. We chatted together about how few individuals can do both simultaneously. Yet when I think about it,

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honors administrators do these things figuratively each day. Our success, like that of the plate spinner or bridge builder, hinges on maintaining our equilibrium while keeping our eyes, hands, legs, and, yes, even minds focused on the achievements of our students. And every once in a while, we find time to muse a little, write a little, and share our thoughts with our fellow plate spinners as they make their way across their own bridges, riding their own unicycles, and nodding in understanding.

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LARRY ANDREWS

At Play on the Fields of Honor(s)

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Who could argue with Skip Godow's list of roles and qualities desirable in an ideal honors leader? With appropriate caveats concerning the wide variation in programs and institutional contexts, he envisions well the comprehensive demands of modern-day honors administration, demands that match my experience of over fourteen years as dean of an honors college of 1300 students as I strive imperfectly to embody the qualities he idealizes.

Of course, one might emphasize one of Skip's points more or less. If an honors administrator is required to perform a number of non-honors university duties, the roles are even more complex. One might also stress more the importance of clear and persuasive writing and inspiring and eloquent speech. And despite Skip's healthy dose of realism in emphasizing "management" skills foreign to faculty culture, one might point out that leadership in honors retains perhaps the greatest affinity for faculty culture among administrative positions.

What I would like to discuss here, however, is a quality that can thread its way through all the roles Skip describes so thoughtfully. This quality is a sense of *play*. Only once does Skip mention "fun"—in the final section on "The Student Activities Coordinator." In addition to the "pragmatic benefits" accruing from leadership activities in student life, he tosses in a bonus: "these things can add a great deal of vitality and fun to honors program life." I take this as a cue to expand on why being an honors administrator in all roles can be fun in the highest sense.

One obvious way to express a sense of play is not to take yourself too seriously. Yes, take learning seriously as a lofty mission, take students and faculty seriously, take your multiple duties and responsibilities seriously, but resist smugness about your own role in the successes of your students, faculty, and staff. It wasn't you who wrote that cutting-edge thesis. It wasn't you who changed a student's life during study abroad in Ghana. It wasn't you who taught that freshman how to read Dante or geography or experimental results in a new way. Heading a prestigious program with many points of pride can easily lead to hubris in an honors administrator, just as academic brilliance can lead to intellectual elitism in an honors student. Fortunately, there will

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usually be enough people around to help you by puncturing your balloons! Pomposity and sententiousness are at best unattractive. Sincere self-deprecation has its charm, and it can smooth collaborations with others.

Another form of play is relaxation from stress. You'll be a better leader for making time for the free play of thought and activity. Showing that you know how to play as well as how to work makes you a good model for the balance between work and play that honors students, with their frequent unforgiving perfectionism and overachieving activity level, have difficulty learning. What do you do for fun? Let students, staff, and faculty around you know that you have other lives besides the administrator role. Do they know about your family, perhaps see your children at the office or your partner at events? Do they suspect that you collect trilobites, coach junior-high softball, play string bass, vacation in Newfoundland, or re-enact Civil War battles? If so, you'll be more reassuringly human to them and you'll be giving them permission to be more fully human themselves.

Third, your playfulness can be expressed by an off-beat sense of humor. Intelligent people have a more sophisticated sense of humor that rejects the easy guffaw and evokes instead a chuckle and a shake of the head. Do you have cool stuff in your office? Is your program's writing prize \$187.62 instead of a boring \$200? Do your formal events look like everyone else's in the institution, or do they bear a peculiar stamp? One of our former deans invented a funny oath seniors continue to swear to, amid much laughter, at each brunch ceremony for graduates. Going against the grain in good fun gives students a solidarity with other like-minded souls. Such kinship complements their academic collaborations in creating high-level learning in their honors classes

Finally, let's recognize that play is associated with some of the loftiest human energies. Artists and writers have been described as engaging in "sacred play" because the free play of imagination on which they thrive seems to connect them to a mysterious spiritual force. Many innovative minds have attested to the value of free and relaxed play of the mind following intense labor on a problem; that's when the new idea often arrives. (See Brewster Ghiselin's little anthology *The Creative Process* or Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi's *Creativity*.) Creative play offers fruitful explorations of unknown territories of ideas and feelings, of new fields of discovery. This is a critically important message you can exemplify as well as address explicitly with honors students. Show them that taking risks can be exhilarating, and engage them in "what-if?" thinking. Play of this most serious sort will fuel their senior thesis work and guide them in their lives beyond academia—in work, in philosophical questioning, in love.

LARRY ANDREWS

Let's face it, honors administration, like most jobs, is not worth doing if we can't have fun with it.

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BRUCE FOX

Success as an Honors Program Director: What Does it Take?

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What does it mean to succeed as an honors director? For the purposes of this discussion, I define the successful honors director as someone who builds an honors program, with “build” having a variety of meanings. In this context, “build” can mean starting a program from the get-go, reinvigorating a dormant program, increasing enrollment in an existing program (without decreasing the program’s value to students), increasing the program’s reputation, increasing its budget or other resources, increasing the value a program has to its university, or most importantly (at least to me) increasing the value of the program to its students. As you can see, my definition is quite encompassing. Perhaps a more satisfying, but certainly an even less precise, definition of what it mean to build a program is that the director makes the program better.

Given the above definition, what skills must an honors director have to succeed? Rew Godow has provided us with a comprehensive list of the skills he feels the ideal director should possess. He provides good inspirational goals for all of us. However, at the risk of academic parsing, I offer up for your consideration additional skills for an ideal director to have, many of which refine those posed by Godow. In addition to these skills, I include here one character trait essential for the success of any director.

In terms of skills, a director must be a quick study, especially if hired from outside the institution. A director needs to have the skills to rapidly assess the strengths and weaknesses of a program’s structure, its curriculum, and its faculty. Although any director, and especially an outside director, will have the proverbial “honeymoon” period, this period of grace disappears quickly. Institutions hire directors to lead programs, not to say “I haven’t been here very long, so I can’t really comment on that.” Yes, a quick study.

Second, a director must have political astuteness. A successful director quickly learns the institution’s culture and who really has power and influence. The successful director has a level of astuteness such that knowledge of the institution increases at a rate equal to or greater than the rate of decrease in the honeymoon period of grace.

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Associated with this astuteness, a successful director must have the skills to serve as a strong advocate for the program. Such a skill will bring prominence to the honors program without the program or its director winding up as the “tall poppy” at the institution.

Third, a director must have a subset of Godow’s social planning skills—event-planning skills. From convocations to award ceremonies to symposia to academic celebrations, honors programs often have the lead role in planning and implementing large-scale university events. As academics, most of us did not include event-planning coursework in our programs of study. I wish I had. On-the-job training can be exciting but nerve wracking. Although larger programs may have sufficient staff with event-planning skills, many programs do not. Having the skills to create successful events of this type, either directly or through leadership and management, will well serve any director.

Fourth, a successful director must learn how to say “No” forcefully but with diplomacy. A successful director will have a variety of abilities—organizational, relational, technical, and personal—highly valued in any organization. As a result, a director—or indeed any faculty or staff member having such a set of abilities—will frequently receive a call to serve as the chair of Committee X, as a member of Task Force A, as the facilitator of Community Meeting Y, or in some other service role. Given the position and prominence of honors programs, the director often receives such requests from a provost or president. Clearly directors must delicately craft such refusals. But at some point, such refusals must occur. To accept them all would leave little or no time to run the honors program—or to have a life.

However, the most important skill that a successful director must have is not a skill at all. Indeed, it is a personal character trait. Call it “Integrity.” Call it “Incorruptibility.” Call it “Mean what you say, and say what you mean.” Call it “Walking the talk.” Whatever the moniker, this trait, generally advocated and admired in the abstract, poses great danger to the program and its director. The “stand up” director easily becomes that “tall poppy” subject to the tender—or not so tender—ministrations of a sharp—or not so sharp—scythe. We often receive counsel to “get along” or “this is not worth fighting over,” wise and practical advice. Yet these words often lie uncomfortably in the ear and on the mind. When is “getting along” merely expediency? When is “not worth fighting for” really just cowardice? I wish I had the answer—or even **an** answer.

However, the words of Winston Churchill provide me with some guidance: “Never give in, never give in, never, never, never, never—in nothing great or small, large or petty—never give in except to convictions of honor and good sense.”

BRUCE FOX

Convictions. Honor. Good sense. Old fashioned? Maybe. Naïve? Possibly. Stunningly simplistic? Perhaps. But the successful honors director has such traits in abundance. The successful honors director has honor, but honor tempered with good sense.

Be a successful honors director. Build your honors program. But keep the “honor” in your honors program. If not, why bother?

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LISA L. COLEMAN

Being There for Honors Leadership

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In his 1986 article, “Honors Program Leadership: The Right Stuff,” Rew Godow, Jr., makes a compelling argument for honors program director as Renaissance man or *homo universalis*, someone who is able to do many things well, undaunted by the fact that his job, like the job of astronauts evoked by Godow’s title, exacts commitment, ability, and sheer guts along with daunting paper work, management and budgeting expertise, the habit of building and maintaining a constituency, and the entrepreneurship required to sell a program.

Looking to my eight-year administrative relationship with the Honors Program of my university, Coordinator for two years and Director for six, I see that I have played all the roles that Godow tells us belong to his ideal “Academic Leader”: “Lover of Wisdom,” “Curriculum Reformer,” “General Administrator,” “Entrepreneur,” “Admissions Officer,” and “Student Activities Coordinator”—some with a greater degree of success than others. But as a kind of postmodern supplement to the characteristics of leadership that Godow proposed back in 1986 and to the Renaissance model that they presuppose, I would like to put forward an alternative—a kind of philosophical anti-model that reflects a simpler, more power-diffuse, collaborative role for the director of honors in the twenty-first century.

Using as my guide the existential movie *Being There* and the character, Chance, played by Peter Sellers, I am figuratively pointing toward what I take to be one of the common ways that honors directors begin and stay in their positions, especially perhaps in smaller institutions, more by chance than by design. In such cases this surrealistically inflected movie artfully provides us with some basic maxims that can facilitate the growth and development of our programs, the investment of the university in those programs, and our own growth as honors directors.

Being There is the tale of Chauncey Gardiner—Chance—a distinguished looking middle-aged man of uncertain intellectual means who is forced by the death of his employer to leave his sheltered life-long role as the man’s impeccably dressed gardener and go out into the world of late 60s Washington, D.C. to fend for himself. Unable to read or write and without a

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car, education, or experience anywhere outside his garden, Chance's knowledge has been gleaned from gardening and from watching a television that he controls using a remote—a tactic for switching off unpleasant stimuli that he unsuccessfully tries to apply to the teeming life around him when he leaves his protected environment for the very first time.

Due to a series of fortuitous misadventures, Chance is first injured by a limousine and then rescued and befriended by its occupant, the wife of a fabulously wealthy Wall Street tycoon and presidential advisor. The wife, played sympathetically by Shirley McClain, hopes to stave off a lawsuit by taking him home to the family's estate and the private doctors caring for her terminally ill husband. Choking out his name and occupation ("Chance, the gardener") while downing the alcoholic drink McClain offers him, McClain thinks she hears "Chauncey Gardiner"—and thus, due to her misperception, he is renamed.

Misperception follows misperception as Chauncey is taken for a distinguished, down-on-his-luck business professional. McClain and her dying husband are both smitten with this unassuming peaceful man who speaks so simply about caring for a garden when quizzed on the economy of the United States. Taking his gardening maxims for metaphors, the two ennoble his advice into simple words of wisdom fit for the ears of the President and the American public, and they provide him with private and public venues whereby he may influence both.

Of course, the movie is satirical, and I do not mean to suggest that the supplemental roles honors directors play should include comedian or genius savant (though either role might be helpful), but underlying the rather unbelievable premise I have put forward for you, there is a message that may be of value to us.

Jerzy Kosinski, whose 1970 novel inspired the screenplay he wrote for the 1979 film, does not allow Chauncey to stay in the realm of the ordinary human. When the car that injures Chauncey drives away, the camera homes in on the license plate, which enigmatically displays the letters ER, not the much later 90's emergency room TV drama, but perhaps a reference to Plato's "Myth of Er," the last chapter of *The Republic*, in which the hero, Er, dies but then revives to relate back to us what awaits in the life beyond this one. In the world of the dead he sees purified souls being allowed to choose their own lot in their next life rather than having it decreed by the Fates. Yet despite this opportunity, in their haste they often choose poorly, snatching up the role of powerful tyrant without seeing that they are destined to eat their own children.

The "Myth of Er" tells us that there is a cycle to life and that we have a larger role to play in life and death than we may know. *Being There*, echoing this cyclical perspective, takes place in the winter, with Chauncey saying

many times that there is much to do to prepare for spring. As long as the roots are there and properly nourished, he says time and time again, the plant will return. It will come forth in spring, prosper in summer, and die back again in fall and winter, but the roots are critical; they must be nurtured above all in every season or the plant will ultimately wither and die.

So what do life cycles and roots have to do with honors programs? I don't think that the cycles and roots of all programs are identical, but I am certain that all programs have them, even the very newest seedling programs. As I see it, it is the job of the director to understand these cycles and to seek out and nurture those roots. The roots could be honors alumni, the incoming group of freshmen, the involved and committed sophomores, juniors, and seniors, or the honors faculty or administrative advocates. The seasons could be reflected by the waxing and waning of honors student time and commitment as they negotiate their way through their college career, the spring could come in the boom years of generous state or private funding, while winter might arrive in the wake of tragedies like 9/11 that diminish those same coffers. By nurturing the roots, honors directors no longer have to snatch up that all powerful lot in the course of these seasons: the roots will gain strength when there is sun and rain enough, and the program will prosper.

Taking these lessons of cultivation and chance from Chauncey, sometimes simple wisdom, a desire for service and the ability to let others do what they do well—including students—may be enough. While in another world the Honors Director may be able to play all the roles critical to honors—be all things to all people—in this one it may not be feasible, possible, or even desirable. Of course the director must carefully prepare, understand the exigencies of time, personnel, and key players, but the director must also existentially *be there*, open to the *kairos*, the *chance* of the moment—the opportunities of human circumstance which can be pushed through when they present themselves, even when they are not necessarily part of “the plan.”

In the closing scenes of *Being There*, the wealthy Wall Street mogul dies, and his widow contemplates her future with Chauncey; meanwhile, the gossip of D.C. speaks of making him President. Chauncey for his part, sporting what appears to be a Magritte-inspired bowler hat, is depicted walking near a pond. He takes a turn toward the water and walks *on* it, measuring the depth of the pond with his umbrella. In this moment of wonder, this allusion to miracle, the movie ends.

Being receptive to the moment, to the possibility of something new, something unexpected may bring us the miracle, the inspiration for our program, our students, and ourselves that we do not even know we seek. Of course there must also be planning and planting, of course we need to be prepared to play many roles to be successful in honors, but leadership can also

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consist of nurturing and being receptive to the talents, abilities, and good will of others who wish to make an investment as well. Unlike Chauncey, unlike the astronauts and pilots depicted in *The Right Stuff*, we may not be superhuman, but we can do what we can. We can be there for honors, nourishing the roots, knowledgeable of natural, economic, and academic cycles, trusting in the moment—and ourselves.

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KEITH GARBUTT

“Ah well! I am their leader; I really ought to follow them”: Leading Student Leaders

KEITH GARBUTT

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INTRODUCTION

One of the privileges of being the dean of an honors college or the director of an honors program is that you are allowed to work with some of the brightest, most motivated, and most innovative students in your institution. One of our responsibilities when working with these individuals is to provide them with an environment in which they can develop their skills and potential as leaders. This important element of leadership in honors is one item missing from Rew Godow’s essay. When I was thinking on this topic, a line came to mind from Gilbert and Sullivan’s comic opera “The Gondoliers” (Gilbert 1889). In the song, which with Gilbert’s usual wit and sarcasm spears appointed military leaders, we hear of the leadership style of the Duke of Plaza-Toro:

He led his regiment from behind—
He found it less exciting

Not a very heroic stance, yet in many ways leading from behind is precisely what one needs to do in order to facilitate the developing skills of leadership among one’s students.

How can we ensure that the students who are part of our programs actually have the opportunities to develop their own leadership skills as part of the honors experience? There are at least four ways we can help leaders emerge from our programs.

CREATING OPPORTUNITIES

The first way we can help develop leadership is to create opportunities. Make sure that there exists within the program areas where students can be leaders, where they can take on responsibility for components of the program, social or academic, so that students can enhance the program and get the experience they need to develop their leadership skills.

“AH WELL! I AM THEIR LEADER; I REALLY OUGHT TO FOLLOW THEM”

When we structure the governance of our programs, we should be cognizant of the roles available to our students because different structural models can have different impacts on students. The Honors Council model of a governing board of faculty and students can, especially if the faculty do not have strictly limited and short terms of service, lead students to feel like second-class citizens and to be unwilling to challenge faculty with new ideas. A model with separate student and faculty advisory boards can alleviate this problem and allow for more student participation, but it also runs the risk, if not carefully managed, of making students feel they are given only trivial topics for consideration.

There are other ways one can integrate students into the governance structure of a college or program. You can set up student associations where the leaders are elected from the student body and act as the students' representatives directly to the dean or director in much the same way the leader of a student government association represents the student body to a president or provost. Creating these sorts of student leadership committees and positions within a college or program allows students to develop their skills as leaders of the student body and, perhaps more importantly, to be responsible to the constituency they represent, not simply to themselves.

FACILITATING IDEAS

The second way to assist leader development is to be open to and ready to facilitate good ideas. One of the joys and challenges of being in charge of honors students is that from time to time a student will walk through the door and say, “Hey, I have this idea, do you think we could . . . ?” It is amazing how many times one is able to say “Yes.” The Duke of Plaza-Toro school of leadership suggests getting out of the way; however, there is no guarantee it will be less exciting—sometimes in fact it is nerve wracking! We need to give students permission to move forward with sometimes extremely ambitious projects. The trick is to be a mentor and behind-the-scenes facilitator of students' endeavors; the occasional phone call to a colleague or senior administrator can make a big difference. Doing this is a risk: you might be allowing students to move forward to an outcome as glorious (in its own way) as Wellington's victory at Waterloo, or you might be watching the “Charge of the Light Brigade.” Regardless of the outcome, you need to facilitate such opportunities if you are to build leadership skills in your students.

SETTING EXPECTATIONS

The third way we can help is to set clear expectations. Whether working with appointed or elected students or those students bringing their own projects, it is vital to be clear about the parameters under which they will work.

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Clear expectations, challenging but not impossible goals, and careful but not intrusive monitoring can go a long way in facilitating student success. It is sometimes important to leaven the enthusiasm of the students by ensuring they have a clear understanding of the appropriate time frame needed for a project to be completed. We all like instant gratification, and research on the “millennials” suggests they are used to it and expect it (Howe and Strauss 2000). However, experience teaches us that we must sometimes take a longer-term view.

TOLERATING FAILURE

The final way we can help leaders develop is to be aware that from time to time we must expect and allow failure to occur. It is trite but true that one does not always learn from one’s success but one always learns from one’s failures. Tolerating failure is probably the hardest thing for any leader to do, particularly those of us who lead honors colleges and programs. We are by our very nature success-oriented individuals who have high expectations of our students because in general they meet them. We also tend to have high expectations of ourselves and have a hard time accepting our own failures, so allowing students the room to fail can be a significant challenge to us. However, the lessons learned from a project gone awry may, for the students involved, be far more beneficial in the long run than a success. If we are willing from time to time to allow failure to happen, take a deep breath, help pick up the pieces, and ensure that students understand what they have gained from the experience, we will find we have a program where students are active, where they learn, and where they garner wisdom.

CONCLUSION

Happily, the failures are less frequent than the successes. In general, if deans and directors of honors provide the opportunities, give the background support, and create the environment in which student leadership can thrive, then good ideas and leaders will come forward, and student leaders will succeed. As such leaders improve the programs we lead, we will find ourselves in the position to quote with pride the nineteenth-century French politician, statesman, and sometime revolutionary Alexandre Auguste Ledru-Rollin: “Eh! Je suis leur chef, il fallait bien les suivre”—“Ah well! I am their leader, I really ought to follow them” (de Mirecourt 1857).

So stand at the back, grit your teeth, and let them charge; you never know what remarkable things your students will produce. The essence of a good leader in this administrative role is that of facilitator, mentor, and occasionally sympathetic ear.

“AH WELL! I AM THEIR LEADER; I REALLY OUGHT TO FOLLOW THEM”

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GEORGE MARIZ

Leadership in Honors: What is the Right Stuff?

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It may come as disappointing news, but as far as honors administrators go the “right stuff” in many ways resembles sound medical practice: there are seldom cases of heroic intervention; good protocols and practices are better formulas for success than sheer talent or the bold stroke; and so good preparation counts for more than genius. A comprehensive essay on an honors administrator’s role in academic leadership, curriculum design, administrative organization and reportage, and other honors desiderata would make a hefty book, and so these brief remarks will address specific but important aspects of administration, faculty recruitment, and student advising.

Above all, being well prepared in administrative terms means having a clear, consistent, well developed message describing in detail honors’ importance to the institution, its benefits to colleges, departments, and programs, its role in improving academic standards, the competitive advantages it provides in recruiting the most able students, and its place in fundraising for itself and the institution. The message must be concise, and it must highlight honors as the single most important element in improving overall academic quality and in maintaining academic standards in an era when they are increasingly challenged.

The ability to meet opportunities when they are presented, whether as a result of the expected or the completely fortuitous, is another prerequisite to success. A director with full, accurate information ready to hand—including relevant statistics on everything from feeder high schools to acceptances into graduate and professional schools—is likely better prepared to take advantage of opportunities that come honors’ way than the one who must consult with records or ask others for answers.

An honors administrator therefore must always be prepared to deal with other administrators, both superiors and equals, and to seize the initiative. It is essential to fight for honors’ place at the administrative table and to be prepared to absorb verbal punishment that may come with that fight. It is sometimes difficult to make honors’ case with a peer or superior who is willfully and persistently ignorant—e.g., “since honors is chiefly a first-year program

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. . .” or “because you serve only a few students and are not part of the institutional mission . . .”—and who must constantly be reminded of the nature and importance of the program. One must find a strategy that meets distortion, misinformation, disinformation, and sheer sloth with an accurate and up-to-date picture of the program front and center in the reporting structure.

An honors dean or director inevitably competes with other deans and directors for scarce funds, and the contests can be heated and personal. Others have legitimate claims to resources, so they will, and should, protect their turf fiercely and seek to increase it. No dean worth the name will yield lightly to a rival for money, and honors is and always will be seen as another mouth at the funding trough, one that will deprive deans and directors of resources they believe are legitimately theirs by right, tradition, and necessity. Honors’ claim is equal to theirs: smile and stay the course.

It is always necessary to be on the lookout to recruit faculty to teach in the program, and often the skills of a near magician are necessary in this area. Staffing and recruiting arrangements are many, and they sometimes vary from one year to the next. The task may be fairly straightforward. With a generous budget, the administrator may simply buy faculty time and provide funds for replacements in contributing departments. Of course, that situation is exceptional, and in most programs the budget is much less lavish while in still others honors must depend on the generosity of departments to staff courses.

Honors must make certain that it puts the best faculty it can find in front of its classes—the most vibrant, active members. Of course, these are the instructors a department or college will be most reluctant to release. Almost always these faculty also will have research and scholarly agendas that complicate the equation: not available that term, not teaching on Thursdays, and so on. Good working relationships with department chairs and deans, as well as with the faculty members themselves, are essential if such faculty are to be made available for honors. It is important to stress the advantages of honors teaching to individual faculty, departments, and colleges. An instructor will be working with a group of highly motivated, well-prepared students, almost always with a high tolerance for intellectual frustration with disciplines and concepts unfamiliar to them. Faculty, departments, and colleges should understand that honors classes are often their best recruiting grounds for majors, exactly the kinds of students they want in their departments, and the likelihood of landing such students if outstanding faculty are teaching honors classes only increases. Vital, talented faculty are ultimately as much the life blood of honors as are students, and every effort is necessary to bring the best of them into the honors fold. It follows that an honors administrator must always be on the lookout for new faculty who are good candidates to teach in

honors. A director must be as flexible as possible to secure the best classroom instruction.

Faculty recruitment is no easy task; the battle is never finished, but waging it is easier if one is accommodating, maintains a sense of humor, provides a consistent message, and operates in good faith.

Honors is ultimately about students and being prepared to work with them in whatever ways necessary. While dealing with them can be hectic and sometimes stressful, this area also provides significant personal rewards. Advising is a crucial part of the job, and usually only the dean or director will have the necessary time and expertise to take care of it. Advising is time consuming, but it is also a learning experience that can become a pleasure. Each institution will have its own unique mix of majors, and an administrator must be prepared to work in that specific milieu. More honors students in my program, about 40%, major in natural science than in any other fields, and the students cover the gamut from environmental science, a particularly strong area at this institution, to pre-medicine and physics; virtually every academic major area is represented in honors. I am a humanist (European intellectual history and the history of religion). It was therefore necessary to learn a great deal about prerequisites for science classes and requirements for science majors. For instance, at this university chemistry is a prerequisite for biology, and a first-year pre-medical student, eager to begin the biology major, is sometimes unsettled when told to start with the chemistry sequence. A good grasp of the biology major requirements, as well as an idea of the importance of chemistry relative to biology as it is taught in the major-level biology classes, is absolutely necessary if one is to command the confidence of such students. One must know as well the suite of courses students planning to major in environmental science or business must complete before applying to these programs, both of which are highly selective, upper-division colleges in my university, and both of which have quite specific entrance requirements.

On a campus with more than 12,600 students and more than 200 major programs, broad and detailed advising expertise is a necessary arrow in the quiver, and the points must always be sharp. One also must be aware of changes in majors and of campus resources, e.g., program advisors and printed information, to stay on top of this area. Of course, advising does not stop with the academic major, and everything from discussions of life in general to applications to professional or graduate schools falls in an administrator's lap at one time or another. It is necessary to be prepared to the fullest extent possible and to understand that there are times when it is best to send a student to someone else with better and more up-to-date information. Finally, remember that honors students will be engaged in their education to a very high degree, and advising them is more akin to working with graduate students than with the average undergraduate.

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Readiness is no guarantee, but it is a necessary if not sufficient condition for success. Tolstoy's observation that luck is the residue of design is nowhere truer than in honors.

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A View from the Shoulders

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“If I have seen farther than others it is because I was standing on the shoulders of giants.”

—Isaac Newton

So, you have been asked to administer the honors program at your institution. You have no idea what it means since, for the past fifteen years, you have been teaching three sections of English composition and literature courses each semester. No one tells you that overnight you will have to become a public relations guru, an expert in planning and organization, a specialist in stretching a meager budget, a top-notch communicator and consensus builder, an effective fundraiser, and an authority on honors education.

Most honors administrators receive no training. They are generally thrown in to sink or swim. In some cases, administrators have served a stint as department chair, which certainly helps. The NCHC has, for many years, provided some training through Beginning in Honors© and Developing in Honors. Very often these conference workshops are the only training that honors administrators get. However, as important and valuable as these workshops may be, they are often fragmented, and folks hear important information only once. The Developing in Honors workshop makes some attempt at building a sequential accumulation of knowledge or skills, but again, much of the training depends on the topics offered at any given conference. Also, given the limitations of rooms and times, we cannot attend every session.

A further challenge to new honors administrators is that no single leadership quality accounts adequately for all of the dimensions of successful performance, and no single set of administrative or supervisory skills will solve every problem facing honors administrators today. So, why are some honors administrators more successful than others? In some cases, persistence and longevity seem to be the key to growing and strengthening honors at a given institution, but then again we have all had experience with administrators who occupy their position for years without any tangible progress or change. New Mexico had a governor once who kept getting elected, and the consensus seemed to be that, although he was not effective in making important changes for the state, at least he did not do any harm.

Once someone is appointed administrator of honors, that person will, of course, confront issues concerning admissions, curriculum, and staffing that

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require immediate attention. Building support for honors is not something an effective administrator does only when time allows. It should be at the forefront of the job. The skills required by administrators to gain support must include an understanding of the political climate of their institution and the patience to visit with various people on campus. The methods used by those successful politicians who build a support base in the community are not that different from those used by successful honors administrators: they become informed, listen carefully, and respond appropriately to the needs of the honors community.

Honors administrators build support by connecting and communicating with their constituents. The art of communication has many dimensions. Any message coming from honors is, for better or worse, a communication that can ultimately influence somebody's attitude. Although we often rely on newsletters, brochures, annual reports, flyers, and, of course, email messages, these can have only limited impact on attitudes. For one thing, producing a written document with universal appeal to all constituents is difficult. Moreover, sociological research has shown that the written word is rarely persuasive at all except to a small segment of people. Written documents do, however, reinforce seeds planted by other means. Hearsay is often very helpful, too. I had a student stop me recently to ask how he could get on the honors listserv. He had heard that I sent funny messages and felt he was missing out. I don't know how amusing my messages are, but I do know that frequently sending short but important messages helps to keep the students in the loop and engaged in honors.

Face-to-face communications are still the most effective means of getting our messages across, hence the seemingly endless meetings that we must attend. In the epigraph above by Isaac Newton, he was, of course, referring to all of the people who preceded him and whose knowledge and experience allowed him to make new discoveries. The quotation, however, can also apply to the people around us. We should involve others in the process of directing the honors program including students, faculty, staff, and alumni. Biweekly meetings with the faculty, attendance at honors students' events, and volunteering to serve on key university committees are some of the ways that we can have face-to-face contact with important constituents.

An honors student organization is an excellent way of staying in touch with the student body in the program. The students can be our best allies since they are, for the most part, assertive, bright, and serious about their education. Because they are involved in many other aspects of university life and because they are in contact with many more people than we can be, they can speak well about the honors program and about their positive experiences. They interact frequently with non-honors students and with non-honors

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faculty in their other courses and in organizations. Very often they are the leaders in these organizations and can influence a positive attitude toward the honors program. Through student efforts and recommendations I have received many proposals for Honors courses from faculty in many departments. This semester, for example, we have an outstanding mathematics professor who received the UNM Outstanding Teaching Award teaching “Math in the Modern World.”

Meeting frequently with faculty who are teaching honors courses keeps them informed and involved in honors activities. It is important to train faculty to teach honors seminars. I generally have a faculty orientation session in which we talk about issues such as ordinary housekeeping items (making copies, office hours, etc.) to expectations of both faculty and students and, of course, the mission and goals of the UNM Honors Program. During the semester, I set aside two hours on a Friday once a month to explore issues that may be of interest to faculty members. We have had sessions about liberal arts education, plagiarism and the internet, research, and service-learning. Unlike our full-time honors faculty, our adjunct faculty members come from several departments on campus and can be liaisons for honors within their departments.

Most honors programs have an advisory council. Our Council consists of faculty from a variety of units on campus and is sanctioned by the university’s faculty senate. Several years ago, I discontinued the practice of encouraging certain faculty, especially those I know well or like, to volunteer to serve on the Council. I have found that by allowing faculty to self-select, we end up with people who have little or no clue about honors but a real interest in learning and becoming involved. This strategy has given me an opportunity to educate these faculty members about the Honors Program and thereby gain allies. I can say with all honesty that the Council is not made up of only supporters of the UHP. That admixture goes a long way toward making the UNM Honors Program dynamic and legitimate in people’s eyes.

Having an advisory board composed of business people in the community and alumni of honors is also beneficial to the visibility and endorsement of the honors program. Currently we have on this committee a legislator who is an alumnus; an attorney from a prestigious law firm, who is also an alumnus; and an arts director who knows the community well. These people can speak to university administrators and others in the community the way that the director may not be able to do.

We also must not forget our alumni. They completed the program, and the majority of them had a great experience. They are in a position to speak powerfully about the value of honors in their lives. We must keep in touch

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with our alumni through newsletters or a listserv. We have a special Honors Alumni Open House event during Homecoming Week. We invite them to continue to be involved by serving on search committees or on our Board and by giving talks to individual classes or to the honors community. As a result of our ties to many of our alums, we have established an Honors Alumni Endowment. I feel confident that, should I need our alumni to support the Honors Program in a specific, important way, they will do so because they have done so in the past.

Often the most effective leaders are those who surround themselves with capable people. I cannot imagine trying to run an honors program by myself. Our staff, faculty, students, and advisors are an enormous help to our program. My job as Director has primarily been to build trust, communicate, reinforce, and encourage. These are attributes that good teachers have. So, if you have been teaching, you already have the most important skills for becoming a successful director. Most important, however, is to make the people around you know that they are at the very heart of things. Everyone should feel that they make a difference to the success of the honors program. Your responsibility becomes much easier when you realize that you have many shoulders on which to stand.

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LEN ZANE

Reminiscences on the Evolution of Honors Leadership

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Las Vegas, Nevada. It was a hot and sultry Friday night in August. Pardon the redundancy—if it is Las Vegas in August, nights are hot and sultry. Though many diversions beckoned, I decided to check my email before heading to bed for the evening. Sitting in front of the computer with a bowl of ice cream and a glass of cognac, I downloaded Rew A. (“Skip”) Godow Jr.’s 1986 article from the *Forum for Honors* that was attached to an email from our journal’s enterprising editor, Ada Long. The essay was there as part of Ada’s call for journal submissions spawned by or somehow connected to Skip’s article.

Whether it was the weather, the ice cream, the cognac, or Skip’s insights, I found the article fascinating. In 1986, the year the article appeared, the Honors Program at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV) was in its first year of operation. So I was in the infancy of my fifteen-year stint in honors and was probably too immersed in getting things up and running at UNLV to have paid much attention to Godow’s article when it first appeared. Therefore, at least some of my fascination with the article was because Skip did such a wonderful job of articulating much of what I found most enjoyable about starting and nurturing an honors program, which evolved into an honors college in 1997.

As I read the article, the potential existed for a slight attack of second guessing about my decision in 2000 to step down as Dean of Honors and resume my career as a mere professor. But, *au contraire*, Skip also unwittingly presaged the changes in the responsibilities of honors directors that slowly but surely led to my decision to return to the classroom. During the past twenty years there has been tremendous growth in the number and types of institutions that have honors programs or colleges. This has led, almost by default, to a major evolution of the leadership qualities required to be a successful practitioner of honors today.

Although I may be romanticizing, my anecdotal sense is that in the early part of the modern honors movement, 1960s through 1980s, many honors programs began almost surreptitiously under the radar of the central administration and were guided by a small number of dedicated faculty who

possessed one or both of the first two qualities listed by Godow, namely **The Academic Leader as Lover of Wisdom** and as **Curriculum Reformer**. Few if any of these early honors practitioners saw themselves as **Administrators** (quality 3) though some were also talented **Entrepreneurs** (quality 4). Almost by necessity people beginning an honors program during that early period were **Admissions Officers** (quality 5) since programs began with some vision, clearly articulated or implied, of the type of student who ought to be involved in honors. Hence these honors practitioners had some vested interest in rounding up the type of student who could benefit the most from their particular incarnation of honors. The last quality Skip lists is **The Student Activity Coordinator**. Of the six, this quality resonated less with me than the others. Consequently it will play no further role in this essay.

Some of the most talented honors people who were involved during the last few decades of the twentieth century not only used their skills to build wonderful robust programs on their home campuses but also worked to “professionalize” honors as a career path within academia. During this same time, and possibly not coincidentally, institutions began to recognize the value of honors as an institutional image enhancer. Both of these movements had the natural effect of changing honors leadership from an informal sort of campus position with a myriad of institution-centric reporting lines to a position more central to the mission of the university. An obvious consequence of these trends was the rise of honors colleges led by deans who sit on deans councils and report to the chief academic officer of their campuses.

These changes have not fundamentally altered the role of an honors leader on campus, but they have drastically changed the institution’s perception of the role of the honors director/dean. For much of the early history of honors, the honors director labored rather anonymously on campus. Now the position is much more visible and is often seen as part of the central administration. Consequently, many honors directors/deans have a much more visible and important role as **Skilled Operatives in External Relations**, a quality that Godow did not list in 1986 and one that most of us who were involved in honors back then did not foresee. But with the advantage of hindsight, the trends that were beginning in the 80’s and 90’s, the professionalization of honors leadership as an accepted academic career path and the movement from programs to colleges had the unsurprising result of morphing the student-centered professor turned amateur administrator into a professional administrator with a primary or at least major role in promoting honors to potential donors and other off-campus personages.

So as I finished off Rew Godow’s article and my ice cream and cognac, I was fondly reminded of the good times in honors, working with talented students and dedicated faculty from across campus and enjoying their diverse

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interests. I was also reminded of the fact that the skill set that I brought to honors worked better when honors was less professional and more informal. In fact, my evolution out of honors and back to the classroom was probably foreordained when I first took Henry David Thoreau's advice "Beware of all enterprises that require new clothes" as a guiding principle for my modest academic career. After all, the normal garb for a physics professor does not meet the sartorial standards of a twenty-first-century dean!

So, though fascinated by the article, I lost no sleep over it that night.

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Research Essays

ANNE N. RINN

Major Forerunners to Honors Education at the Collegiate Level

ANNE N. RINN

WESTERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY

ABSTRACT

In this paper, the author explores the major forerunners of the modern-day honors program as well as the purposes behind the formation of honors programs in the United States. Although given much attention in the 1920s with the work of Frank Aydelotte and again in the 1950s and 1960s with the work of Joseph Cohen, university honors programs and colleges have grown so rapidly over the past few decades that we sometimes forget our origins. By examining the foundations of honors programs, this history allows researchers and administrators to better understand modern honors programs in light of the past.

INTRODUCTION

A history of honors education at the collegiate level in this country dates back far before the honors programs most educators are now familiar with and did not even originate in the United States. Indeed, many researchers believe collegiate honors programs to have their beginnings in German and English higher education. Around the late nineteenth century, attempts at honors education began in the United States and then experienced rapid periods of growth in the 1920s and again in the 1950s. Collegiate honors education now encompasses all attempts at differentiated instruction for gifted students, and no real standard exists for what constitutes an effective honors program. However, the founders of modern collegiate honors education in the United States did hold strong beliefs about appropriate education for intellectually advanced students.

Knowledge of the forerunners to modern collegiate honors education is important because “the past is intelligible to us only in the light of the present; and we can fully understand the present only in the light of the past” (Carr, 1961, p. 69). Therefore, the purpose of this paper is to describe and analyze the major forerunners to honors education at the collegiate level so

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that honors administrators and educators may more fully understand the present state of collegiate honors education in the United States.

PREDECESSORS TO HONORS

Antecedents to major movements in history always provide important insights, and this is certainly true for honors education at the collegiate level. The rich and varied history of the honors program dates to more than two centuries ago and includes such predecessors as the Oxford University tutorial system, the Oxford University pass/honors approach, and the implementation of Rhodes Scholarships for American students at Oxford University. Other predecessors to the honors program include the Socratic dialogue, German universities, and the guild apprenticeship (Austin, 1985). The history of the honors movement also coincides with the history of higher education in general and the history of gifted education at the pre-collegiate level. However, none of these influences are as great as those contributed by Oxford University.

Oxford Tutorial System

The tutorial system at Oxford dates far into the university's history, although many changes have occurred over time. Beginning in the sixteenth century, tutors served a social purpose. They acted as personal guardians to young students, instructing them in good manners and controlling their financial expenses. Throughout the seventeenth century, the tutorial system became a recognized part of the university system in that all students were required to have tutors and the role of the tutor began to take the form of an educational advisor. By the nineteenth century, the tutorial system had assumed a primarily intellectual purpose (Bailey, 1932; Mallet, 1927).

The role of the tutor was thus to support a student in his academic endeavors and to guide him towards the successful acquisition of knowledge needed to pass his comprehensive examinations (Aydelotte, 1917/1967). The tutorial system was highly individualized in that students met about once a week with their tutor, either individually or in groups of two or three. Students prepared essays based on their individual readings and read them aloud to the tutor or to the group, resulting in informal discussion (Bailey, 1932). The tutor's role was never to teach in these discussions but to challenge the student and encourage him in trying new ideas (Moore, 1968).

The majority of instruction at Oxford was given by method of individual tutorials (Aydelotte, 1944; Learned, 1927). Students did not attend classes or obtain credit as they did in American colleges and universities. No courses were ever required, attendance was never taken, and even lectures were not mandatory. Independent work was the basis of the Oxford education, with the Oxford tutorial acting as the foundation (Aydelotte, 1946).

Oxford Pass/Honors Approach

As students at Oxford did not obtain a degree based on hours or credits, the Bachelor of Arts degree was obtained by passing two examinations. The first examination was taken during the first or second year of study for the purpose of demonstrating intellectual competency, and the second examination was taken as a final at the end of study (Learned, 1927). A student could take the examinations in the form of pass or honors.

The development of the pass/honors approach at Oxford began in the early part of the nineteenth century. In 1800, a statute originally designed by Dr. John Eveleigh, the Provost of Oriel College of Oxford from 1781 until 1814, was passed that required all students to take a comprehensive final examination as a means of obtaining their degree. Alongside this examination, "Extraordinary Examinations" were offered as a means for superior students to separate themselves from the rest of their classmates (Mallet, 1927).

In 1807, a class system was introduced whereby the scores from the extraordinary examinations were divided into two classes. The First Class consisted of those students "worthy of some eminent commendation" and the Second Class of those students who showed "laudable progress." A third category existed for those students not worthy of special mention but who had satisfied the examiners (Mallet, 1927, p. 169). In 1809, a Third Class was created, and by 1830 a Fourth Class. Oxford thus awarded the degrees of First Class, Second Class, Third Class, Fourth Class, and pass. The honors examination was thereby separated from the examination for the pass degree, resulting in the first notion of modern honors education (Guzy, 1999).

Rhodes Scholarship

Cecil Rhodes established the Rhodes Scholarship in 1899, with the first selection of Rhodes Scholars entering Oxford University in 1904. Rhodes established scholarships enabling students from the British Dominions, the United States, and Germany to study at Oxford (Wylie, 1932). Men were awarded scholarships on the basis of scholastic ability and achievement, solid character, leadership abilities, and a proficiency in sports. Rhodes Scholars could work toward a Bachelor of Arts degree (B.A.) in one of the Honor Schools or could enter for a research degree, which was an advanced degree such as the Bachelor of Letters (B. Litt). Since applicants had to have completed at least two years of college or university in their home country and since most applicants had already attained a B.A. in their home country, many Rhodes Scholars went on for a research degree (Aydelotte, 1944).

Rhodes' motive for these scholarships was explained in 1901 when he said, "A good understanding between England, Germany, and the United

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States of America will secure the peace of the World, and educational relations form the strongest tie” (as cited in Wylie, 1932, p. 291). While world peace may not have been secured as a result of the Rhodes Scholarships, they opened the eyes of many American men to the importance of the Oxford method of instruction (Aydelotte, 1944). Between the years 1904 and 1914, more than one third of all Rhodes Scholars chose academia as a profession (Aydelotte, 1922). Among other important ideas, these Rhodes Scholars have served to heavily implement the tutorial method, the comprehensive examinations, and the distinction between the pass and honors degrees.

EARLY ATTEMPTS AT HONORS IN THE UNITED STATES

At the turn of the twentieth century, many scholars were returning to the United States from study in German and English universities. With them, they brought methods of instruction largely unknown to most American colleges and universities. Many of these American scholars were beginning to recognize a need for differentiation of instruction, resulting in several early attempts at honors in the United States. Most noteworthy were attempts at four universities, namely Harvard University, the University of Michigan, Princeton University, and Columbia University.

HARVARD UNIVERSITY

According to the Harvard University catalogue in 1873, comprehensive final examinations were required for honors candidates, and as early as 1882 Harvard allowed advanced students to enter college as sophomores (Rudolph, 1962/1990), which is similar to what we now call early entrance to college. In 1909, it was proposed that all students be required to take comprehensive final examinations, or general examinations as they were called at Harvard. The proposal was passed, and examinations began for all students in 1917 (Hanford, 1931).

By 1931, general examinations consisted of two or three written tests lasting approximately three hours each. Honors candidates also had to take an oral examination. Because general examinations might be difficult for the average student, the tutorial system was implemented. At the beginning of the sophomore year, students were assigned a tutor in their field who became an academic advisor. A tutor met with his students once a week, either individually or in small groups, for about an hour, much like the Oxford tutorial (Hanford, 1931).

The general examinations were adopted for all students because it was believed that by changing “the entire mass and rais[ing] the intellectual level of the college all along the line, it [was] desirable that all students and not

merely a selected few should be put through an *honors curriculum*, although of course only a certain proportion [would] finally achieve honors” (Hanford, 1931, p. 57). In 1925, President Lowell of Harvard described that university as peculiar in that it applied an honors curriculum to all students, resulting in all students having to partake in independent work with the guidance of a tutor. However, honors were only awarded to those that passed the general examination with distinction (as cited in Aydelotte, 1925). Working toward a degree “with distinction” was comparable elsewhere to honors (Learned, 1927). However, a general honors program never existed, and honors were confined to departments. Taking a degree with honors was popular, though, and by 1930 one-third of all Harvard graduates had graduated with honors (Cohen, 1966).

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

The “University system” was adopted in 1882 at the University of Michigan, which challenged the previous credit-hour system and excused its more talented students from regular requirements (Aydelotte, 1944). After two years of regular undergraduate coursework, a student could choose to participate in the University system, whereby he would not be held accountable to complete a fixed number of courses and could instead enter an individualized program that consisted of three fields of study of his choosing. At the end of two or three years of this individualized study, the student took comprehensive examinations for honors. Upon satisfactory performance, the student received a bachelor’s degree (Hinsdale, 1906).

The University system was described in university catalogues until about 1900, but no students graduated under it after 1891 (Aydelotte, 1936). In 1924, John Effinger, then dean of the University of Michigan, wrote in the *Educational Record* that 48 students had graduated under the University system from 1883 until 1891 (as cited in Aydelotte, 1936). There is no clear reason why the University system was abandoned. Aydelotte (1936) offered two hypotheses: 1) Independent instruction required a great amount of time from professors, often interfering with their regular course loads, and no monetary allowances were in the budget to compensate the professors; and 2) the 1890s was a period of rapid growth in colleges and universities, and a system of individualized instruction did not fit into the development of courses, grades, and the credit system.

PRINCETON UNIVERSITY

In 1904 at Princeton University, the preceptorial system, which was similar to the tutorial method, was announced and then inaugurated in 1905. Woodrow Wilson, the president of Princeton from 1902 until 1910, was

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responsible for outlining and implementing this system (Brooks, 1927). It was first outlined in 1894 in an article Wilson published in the *Forum*, and his election as president of Princeton put him in the position to experiment with his ideas and finally implement the preceptorial system (as cited in Ford, 1916).

Wilson first described his preceptorial system as a modification of the Oxford tutorial in that “teaching, to him, was a matter of advice and guidance by those more mature and experienced in fields of human learning for those less so, and was therefore a matter of intellectual companionship and joint participation in the pursuit of learning in its various aspects” (Craig, 1960, p. 7). At the beginning of the junior year, each student was assigned a preceptor to cover all the courses in his or her major field of study. This was the key difference between the preceptorial system and the tutorial method. The preceptor guided his students by treating each course separately while the tutor guided students by treating a subject as a whole (Hanford, 1931).

The preceptorial system was similar to a group tutorial in that students completed assigned readings each week and then met with their preceptor in small groups once a week. A student’s grade for the preceptorial was based on participation and performance in these weekly meetings. A noteworthy fact is that students were placed in groups according to abilities and interests, and the more advanced students were sometimes excused from weekly meetings (Leitch, 1978). Wilson had already envisioned a form of differentiated instruction for students based on ability.

In 1923, a plan was announced that all students should have to partake in independent reading outside their regular coursework and then take comprehensive examinations at the end of both their junior and senior years, much similar to what Harvard implemented in 1917. Supervision of independent work would be determined by a student’s department, and departmental supervisors eventually took over the role of preceptor (Aydelotte, 1925; Leitch, 1978). The 1924 catalogue of Princeton stated that honors would be awarded only at graduation on the basis of a student’s coursework. The awards of Highest, High, and Honors were given (as cited in Aydelotte, 1925). Princeton thus became a sort of honors college in itself since all students engaged in an honors curriculum but honors were only awarded to a select few.

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

Columbia University inaugurated an early attempt at honors in the form of a three-year program with supplementary reading and yearly final examinations in 1909 (Keppel, 1914). The coursework consisted of three three-year sequences of three-hour courses, and the student had to take yearly final

examinations that covered both the course content and the supplementary readings. Then, at the completion of three years of study, a comprehensive oral examination was given. Degrees were given in the pass/honors approach in that students could receive a pass, honors, high honors, or highest honors (Trilling, 1954). This program did not last more than a few years (Cohen, 1966) but was seen as an attempt to create a place for undergraduates with strong intellectual curiosity and ambition (Keppel, 1914).

F. J. E. Woodbridge, John Erskine, and Cassius Keyser began another program called the Conference Program in 1912. Although not an honors program *per se*, the Conference Program influenced the development of a later honors program. The program was intended for juniors and seniors only and consisted of one three-hour course continued through two years. The students and instructors met once a week in addition to a student's regular coursework. Over the course of these weekly meetings, a student was expected to present an essay on some aspect of the material covered at least twice a year. At the end of two years, a student had to complete a thesis of sorts that showed mastery of its topic (Trilling, 1954).

Erskine eventually turned the Conference program into a course called General Honors, which was a Great Books course. In 1917 he proposed a course wherein, during their junior and senior years, students would read one great book a week and then discuss it in a two- to three-hour weekly meeting (Erskine, 1948), much like the tutorial method of Oxford University and preceptorial system at Princeton University. Largely in response to faculty complaints about students' relative lack of knowledge about the classics, Erskine designed the General Honors course to give students acquaintance with great authors (Trilling, 1954). Although students would only study each great book for a week, Erskine felt that some knowledge of the classics and of the great authors was better than none at all (Brown, 1948).

Because World War I interrupted his efforts, Erskine finally received faculty authorization in the fall of 1919, and the Great Books course was inaugurated in 1920 (Erskine, 1948). In addition to the General Honors course, honors students had to take Special Honors, in which they wrote a thesis on an independent study topic of their choice under the direction of a supervisor (Trilling, 1954). The honors program at Columbia thus became an attempt to combine common reading with individualized study (Buchler, 1954).

The inauguration of the General Honors course in 1920 divided the junior class of honors students into sections of between fifteen and thirty with two instructors of different disciplines allotted per section. Each Wednesday evening, the students and instructors met for two hours to discuss a different book each week, although groups usually ended up meeting for longer than two hours. Like the tutorial method and the preceptorial

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system, the instructors were not supposed to instruct. Rather, they were supposed to guide and shape the conversations. Erskine believed that in “exchanging ideas for two hours, they [the students] will probably teach each other more about the rich aspects of Shakespeare’s genius than any one of them is likely to think out for himself, or than any lecture is likely to convey” (Erskine, 1948, p.169). A version for the students’ senior year was added in 1921.

The General Honors course was abandoned in 1929, largely due to its exclusion of non-honors students. It was revived in 1932, though, as the Colloquium on Important Books (Trilling, 1954), which was divided into four terms with the material covered in four successive time periods. The format for instruction was the same as the General Honors course (Buchler, 1954). Erskine’s inauguration of a great books course at Columbia was significant in that many honors programs across the country adopted the idea, and similar courses are now typical at modern honors programs and colleges.

FRANK AYDELOTTE AND SWARTHMORE COLLEGE

Frank Aydelotte was “in every way the originator of the honors strategy” (Cohen, 1966, p. 12). Although attempts at honors programs had previously been made in the United States, it was Aydelotte’s program at Swarthmore College that started a trend in honors among American colleges and universities. The first honors program was implemented at Swarthmore in 1922 as a direct result of Aydelotte’s vision for improving higher education for advanced students, and it was based largely on his experiences as a Rhodes Scholar at Oxford University.

AYDELOTTE’S BACKGROUND

Frank Aydelotte was born October 16, 1880, in Sullivan, Indiana. He was academically a strong student, entering college at Indiana University at the age of fifteen. He graduated four years later in 1900 with a bachelor’s degree in English. He later went on to receive a master’s degree in English from Harvard University (Blanshard, 1970). In 1904, Aydelotte was accepted as a Rhodes Scholar, allowing him to attend Oxford in 1905-1907. Here he became familiar with the Oxford methods of instruction, including the tutorial method and the pass/honors approach (Brooks, 1927).

Aydelotte returned to his alma mater in 1908 as an Acting Associate Professor in the Indiana University Department of English, and in 1915 he accepted a position teaching English at Massachusetts Institute for Technology (MIT; Blanshard, 1970). In both positions, Aydelotte revolutionized the teaching of English to undergraduates. He found English to be taught

as separate courses in composition and literature, a process he believed inefficient and ineffective. By instead combining the study of composition and literature and by writing about the literature, a student would both develop the capacity to think about what he or she read and gain knowledge in the areas of composition and literature (Aydelotte, 1917/1967). Aydelotte wrote two pioneering textbooks as a result of these courses, namely *College English: A Manual for the Study of English Literature and Composition* (1913) and *English and Engineering* (1917). Aydelotte's rationale for these English courses and these textbooks centered on his definition of education as "the development of one's power to think" (Aydelotte, 1917/1967, p. 104), which also affected the later design of his honors program at Swarthmore College.

In 1921, Aydelotte accepted the position of president at Swarthmore College with the intent of eventually inaugurating an honors program there. Due to faculty interest and enthusiasm, though, plans for honors were initiated immediately upon Aydelotte's arrival at the college (The Swarthmore College Faculty, 1941).

HONORS AT SWARTHMORE COLLEGE

Aydelotte's rationale for honors was based on his experiences both as a Rhodes Scholar at Oxford and as a teacher at Indiana University and MIT. He was also greatly influenced by what he called the academic lockstep. At the end of World War I, American higher education experienced a tremendous increase in enrollment, providing educators with direct evidence of individual intellectual differences that had never before been so extreme. The great numbers of students set an average intellectual pace, forcing educators to wonder how best to meet the needs of the brightest students on campus (Coss, 1931). The influx in enrollment had practically forced educators to focus only on the average student in order to serve as many students as possible. By making the same requirements of all students, the brightest students were being held back and limited in their intellectual potential. "The academic system as ordinarily administered is for these better and more ambitious students a kind of lock step; it holds them back, wastes their time, and blunts their interest by subjecting them to a slow-moving routine which they do not need" (Aydelotte, 1944, p. 14).

In his inaugural address at Swarthmore College (1921), Aydelotte outlined his ideas for honors education and his hope to break the academic lockstep. As previously mentioned, planning was immediately undertaken, and the first honors program was inaugurated in the fall of 1922 after one year of planning. Only two programs were ready for implementation the inaugural year, namely English Literature and Social Sciences. In 1923, French, German, Mathematics, and Physics were added; in 1924, Electrical

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Engineering; in 1925, Greek and Latin; and in 1926, Education and Chemistry. By 1940, all departments at Swarthmore offered honors work (The Swarthmore College Faculty, 1941).

From its conception, the honors program at Swarthmore was only open to juniors and seniors. The first two years of college would be spent taking regular courses and gaining a broad base of knowledge, and then at the end of their sophomore year students would be allowed to apply for honors. Acceptance was based on both intellectual achievement in the department in which the student wished to major (Aydelotte, 1931; Brewster, 1930) and individual personality characteristics, including independence and self-regulation (Aydelotte, 1936). Aydelotte did not wish for honors students to major in only one subject, though, because he believed the interrelation between courses to be a valuable asset. A “major” generally consisted of three core departments, all of which were related (Brooks, 1927). For example, a student studying English Literature might focus on English, which was the major subject, and history and philosophy, which were the minor subjects.

Also, from its conception, Aydelotte had carefully planned for the structure and implementation of the honors program at Swarthmore. Although he did not directly transplant the Oxford methods of instruction, Aydelotte adapted the methods with which he was familiar to fit American higher education (Aydelotte, 1931; Brooks, 1927). The honors program at Swarthmore was initially based on the philosophies of active learning, the tutorial system, which Aydelotte called the seminar method, and the pass/honors approach of Oxford.

Aydelotte believed that the best education should be an active process, not passive. By merely attending a class and sitting through a lecture, a bright student would not learn to his or her best ability. According to Aydelotte, “the best and only education is self-education” (The Swarthmore College Faculty, 1941, p. 6). Thus he removed the lecture method for honors students, making attendance at all classes and lectures entirely voluntary. Aydelotte called his approach “reading for honors,” as students would be required to learn on their own almost entirely through reading, much like the individualized learning at Oxford. Students were given an outline of the material they were expected to master during their final two years at the beginning of their junior year (Aydelotte, 1931). The readings rarely included textbooks, instead relying almost entirely on original documents and classics (Brooks, 1927). Learning was largely individual from that point on. Aydelotte’s reasoning for this individualized method was also related to the degree of responsibility placed on the student. He believed honors students were capable of taking on the responsibility necessary for individualized learning, thereby cultivating their knowledge at a much deeper level than the average student (Aydelotte, 1927).

Instead of using the highly individualized tutorial method of Oxford, Aydelotte adapted this method to what he called a seminar. The seminar was “a system of informal instruction by the professor to a small group of students” (Bryce, 1959, p. 472), although Aydelotte’s seminar involved little instruction and relied mostly on discussion. Aydelotte chose this method for several reasons. First, he believed American professors were more likely to lead a seminar well than a tutorial, which was usually reserved for only the best and most experienced professors at Oxford. Also, Aydelotte believed that discussion of ideas in small groups of students and one or two professors could be intellectually stimulating to all involved (Aydelotte, 1931; 1944).

The course and credit system was completely eliminated for honors students at Swarthmore. Instead, a method was adopted much like the pass/honors approach at Oxford. An honors degree was based solely on passing a final examination given at the end of the senior year. The honors student was given a syllabus of material he or she was expected to master, as previously mentioned, and then the same syllabus was given to an examiner who was unaffiliated with the college and who designed the final examination (Aydelotte, 1944). After two years of regular coursework and two years of independent study, the honors student took between seven and ten three-hour written examinations and an oral examination, all conducted by external examiners (Aydelotte, 1936; Learned, 1927). Each student had three examiners, one from the major subject and two from the minor subjects of his or her honors work. Upon completion of the written and oral examinations, the three examiners decided on the award of Highest Honors, High Honors, Honors, or, in rare cases, a pass degree (Aydelotte, 1931).

This type of comprehensive examination did not require that students merely memorize facts and regurgitate the information. Rather, they had to have a firm grasp of the principles, the capacity to interrelate the content areas, and the ability to think about and evaluate all of the material they had covered (Aydelotte, 1936). The exams allowed students to see their field as a whole.

External examiners were used for several reasons. First, students were believed to take the exams more seriously if they were given by someone outside the college. Second, external examiners had no bias toward any one student since they did not know the Swarthmore students and had never worked with them. This system served to create a fair testing environment for all students (Aydelotte, 1931). The students were therefore able to turn their attention to knowing a subject rather than emphasizing a certain professor’s intellectual biases or focusing on how a professor administered an exam (Brewster, 1930; Spiller, 1933).

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CONTRIBUTIONS

In an attempt to disseminate information about honors in the United States, Aydelotte wrote *Honors Courses in American Colleges and Universities* in 1924. Due to the popularity of the report and the growth in honors across the country, he updated the report only one year later (Aydelotte, 1925). Indeed, the first publication resulted in a doubling of the amount of honors programs in the United States, allowing the second edition to include nearly one hundred programs. *Honors Courses in American Colleges and Universities* served as a major springboard for other honors programs, including Joseph Cohen's program at the University of Colorado.

JOSEPH COHEN'S CONTRIBUTIONS

Joseph Cohen contributed greatly to the honors movement in the United States in two ways. First, he established an honors program at the University of Colorado that served to spread the honors movement into large, public universities. Second, he established the Inter-University Committee on the Superior Student (ICSS), which was the first national attempt at the unification of honors programs in the United States. Cohen took Aydelotte's place as the major advocate for the advancement of collegiate honors education (Guzy, 1999).

In 1928, Cohen and a small committee were to decide on a method of honors that would eliminate the prevailing method of awarding honors on the basis of students' grades. By 1930, an Honors Council was developed which would work out the details of both a general honors program and a departmental honors program, both of which eliminated the award of honors based on grades. General honors and departmental honors were offered to students, and a student could choose to take one or both offerings (Cohen, 1966). The honors program allowed students to go beyond regular course offerings and complete some two hundred hours of independent reading during each academic year. In return, the students benefited from the tutorial supervision provided by faculty members (Allen, Foster, Andrade, Mitterling, & Scamehorn, 1976).

Cohen had a chance to attend Columbia's Colloquium on Important Books in 1947. He left the visit so impressed with what he saw that he immediately implemented the colloquium principle at the University of Colorado. A senior-level colloquium was established in 1947, and the following year a junior-level colloquium was established. Both were very successful (Cohen, 1966).

Immediately following the launch of Sputnik and Aydelotte's death in 1956, the Inter-University Committee on the Superior Student (ICSS) was

founded in 1957. The Rockefeller Foundation had awarded a grant to the University of Colorado to aid in the expansion of its honors program and also to allow the director of the honors program (Cohen) to travel to other honors programs across the country. In June of 1957, a national conference on honors was held in Boulder, Colorado, marking the first meeting of the ICSS (Cohen, 1966).

Forty-three people from a total of twenty-seven institutions constituted the first conference. In discussing all aspects of the honors movement, the conferees drafted ideal features of a full honors program, which were further developed into the "Sixteen Major Features of a Full Honors Program" that set the standard for the ICSS (as cited in Cohen, 1966, pg. 46-48; see Appendix A). Several of these features resemble various ideas from both Oxford University and from Aydelotte's honors program at Swarthmore College. For example, the ICSS called for final examinations and the elimination of lecturing and passive note taking, features that are in line with the methodology of Oxford. Parallels to Aydelotte's program include smaller class sizes for honors students and the use of primary sources when available.

The ICSS also had several other important functions. First and foremost, the ICSS was to act as a source of information for new and developing honors programs across the country. The ICSS traveled to hundreds of honors programs, with nearly every member of the ICSS participating in these visits at some point. The visits allowed the ICSS to evaluate and compare programs for the purposes of growth and improvement. In addition to these visits, the ICSS published a newsletter, *The Superior Student*, which was sent to honors faculty and administrators. *The Superior Student* largely communicated the results of the ICSS visits and updated its readers on developments in honors education, but it was published only from 1958 until 1964 (Cohen, 1966). The ICSS was disbanded in 1965 because the leadership believed the honors movement in the United States was no longer in need of guidance (Guzy, 1999).

THE NATIONAL COLLEGIATE HONORS COUNCIL

As was anticipated even by the former director of the ICSS, Joseph Cohen, a new organization was founded to replace the ICSS (Cohen, 1966) and eventually named The National Collegiate Honors Council (NCHC). Educators and honors administrators saw a need for a national organization to continue to guide the honors movement. The major difference between the ICSS and the new organization, though, was that the ICSS was funded by grants while the new organization would be financially self-supporting (O'Brien, 1994). The NCHC represented a growing need for the further development of honors education at the collegiate level and symbolized the

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increasing importance of providing the necessary instruction and opportunities for academically talented undergraduates.

The NCHC was founded in 1966, and the first annual conference was held at the University of Kansas October 22-24, 1966. Since then, the NCHC has served to provide educators and honors administrators with an outlet for discussion related to issues in honors education (O'Brien, 1994), and it currently has well over 600 member institutions (Guzy, 1999). The NCHC mission statement has since defined the functions of the NCHC to "serve honors professionals and students, and to advance undergraduate education" (National Collegiate Honors Council, 2004, n.p.).

The NCHC also defined major features of an honors program, in a document similar to that of the ICSS, titled "Basic Characteristics of a Fully Developed Honors Program" (NCHC Executive Committee, 1994). Many of these features are similar to those defined by the ICSS, and others are more specific and advanced. For example, both the ICSS and the NCHC called for a visible program that serves as a model for excellence; seminars, colloquia, and independent study; special counseling for honors students; a student liaison; and an honors facility (Cohen, 1966; Long, 1995). The NCHC also called for experiential education in such forms as international programs and community service; a mission statement or mandate; and honors program requirements that constitute approximately 20% or 25% of a student's course work (Long, 1995). In 2005, the NCHC outlined the differences between an honors program and an honors college, endorsing a document entitled "Basic Characteristics of a Fully Developed Honors College" (NCHC Executive Committee, 2005). Both NCHC documents are available on the website: <http://www.nchchonors.org/basic.htm>.

In order to meet the purposes of the NCHC, the organization provides several types of services for those involved in honors education. First, the NCHC hosts an annual national conference centered on a different theme and located in a different part of the country each year. Administrators, educators, researchers, and undergraduate honors students are invited to attend and participate. Second, the NCHC is host to several regional honors associations that also hold annual conferences. Third, the NCHC has two current national publications and two discontinued publications. Previously, the NCHC published *Forum for Honors*, which was a refereed journal that predominately published research articles. This journal has since been replaced by *The Journal of the National Collegiate Honors Council*. In addition, a new journal, *Honors in Practice*, also a refereed journal, publishes articles concerning practices within individual honors programs and nuts-and-bolts type issues. *The National Honors Report* was a newsletter about issues in honors education, but it has been discontinued. Fourth, the NCHC has special projects that connect several institutions and cross several disciplines

each year for honors educators and students. Finally, the NCHC serves as an advocate and source of information for honors education (Guzy, 1999).

THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

The modern honors program and/or honors college is as rich and varied as its history and development. Variations in honors programs are housed in two-year programs, four-year programs, junior colleges, early entrance programs, and selective colleges and universities. Debates about honors education at the collegiate level include the acceleration versus enrichment debate, traditional versus experiential education, and departmental versus general honors, among others. One fact remains constant: honors programs and honors colleges have continued to grow and change over the past century.

In 1927, Learned wrote of talented students:

Our schools [American universities] are scoured for promising candidates, who, when they are safely landed, are turned over to the most remarkable tutorial organization in existence, exemplifying in high degree all the elements enumerated above. Unfortunately, however, this commendable treatment is confined to athletic material. The student of intellectual parts, for whom these same institutions theoretically exist, appears at the gate unsought and unheralded. Neither president, nor dean, nor professor, nor instructor has serious intellectual contact with any one of them individually except in an irregular or accidental way. They wander through their eight semesters undistinguished in the mass, until their names appear in italic letters on the Commencement program as a final tribute from the registrar's comptometer. (p. 85-86)

Although collegiate athletes, who represent a different sort of talent, are sometimes still sought after with greater urgency than academically talented students, the development of the honors movement in the United States has served to provide academically talented students with educational and extracurricular opportunities more closely associated with their needs. Like the athlete who receives the best possible training, the academically talented student is now receiving a stronger educational experience through honors programs and honors colleges than he or she would in a college or university at large.

A few questions remain, though: How strong an educational experience are the most academically talented students receiving in honors programs and honors colleges? Are honors programs at the collegiate level still fulfilling the early rationales of honors educators in this country? Has the gifted student clientele dramatically changed in the past century so as to require a different

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sort of education than before, or has the American system of higher education changed in the past century thus forcing change upon honors education?

Honors programs were initially designed to provide a better education for students who were more talented and motivated than the average student. Independent study, the tutorial method, and the seminar method have long dominated the honors movement in the United States in an attempt to provide individualized instruction for the academically gifted students in a college or university. The founders of collegiate honors education believed methods that provided close student-teacher relationships would benefit the advanced students because of the active learning that was involved. Yet, with the efficiency provided by modern-day lecture and survey courses, researchers and administrators are left to wonder how much individualized education is being afforded to those gifted students who really need it.

By examining the origins of the honors program in the United States, researchers, educators, and administrators are provided with information on which to base comparisons with present-day honors programs and honors colleges. In some instances, we should perhaps be reminded of our forerunners' rationales for honors in this country so we can revisit some of their original intentions and provide opportunities for restructuring or redesigning honors programs and honors colleges. In other instances, revisiting our history serves to remind us how far we have come.

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APPENDIX A

“THE SIXTEEN MAJOR FEATURES OF A FULL HONORS PROGRAM” (DEVELOPED BY THE ICSS IN 1957 AND CITED IN COHEN, 1966, P.46-48)

1. Identify and select students of higher ability as early as possible. This involves far closer cooperation than has hitherto been the case with high school and preparatory schools. It also involves making full use of the new experience that has accumulated on the proper uses of predictive techniques, past records, entrance tests and interviews, as well as of studies of aptitude, motivation, readiness, and achievement.
2. Start programs for these students immediately upon admission to the college or university, and admit other superior students into these programs whenever they are later identified by their teachers.
3. Make such programs continuous and cumulative through all four years, with honors counseling especially organized and equally continuous.
4. Formulate such programs so that they will relate effectively both to all the college work for the degree and to the area of concentration, departmental specialization, or preprofessional or professional training.
5. Make the programs varied and flexible by establishing special courses, ability sections, honors seminars, colloquia, and independent study, all with course credit. Advanced placement and acceleration will serve in a contributory role.
6. Make the honors program increasingly *visible* throughout the institution so that it will provide standards and models of excellence for all students and faculty, and contribute to the substitution of an “honors outlook” for the “grade outlook”. For the latter purpose, gradelessness in some honors offerings—i.e., a “pass-fail” approach—is a frequent advantage.
7. Employ methods and materials appropriate to superior students. Experience has shown that this involves:
 - a. Bringing the abler students together in small groups or classes of from five to twenty
 - b. Using primary sources and original documents rather than textbooks where possible
 - c. Eliminating lecturing and predigesting by the faculty of content to be covered; approaching the subject matter to be covered selectively;

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- discouraging passive note-taking; encouraging student adventure with ideas in open discussions—the colloquium method with appropriate modification of this method in science and professional schools
- d. Supplementing the above with increased independent study, research and summer projects, honors study abroad, and imaginatively conceived summer institutes
 - e. Providing for continuous counseling in the light of the individual student's development by teaching personnel rather than by full-time non-teaching counselors; but the professional counseling staff should include specialists in honors
 - f. Differentiating between the needs of men and women in counseling in the light of the steeper erosion of talents after graduation among the latter
 - g. Embodying in the program the required differentia between the creative and the formally cognitive approach
 - h. Giving terminal examinations to test the honors results
8. Select faculty qualified to give the best intellectual leadership to able students and fully identified with the aims of the program.
 9. Set aside, where possible, any requirements that restrict a good student's progress, thus increasing his freedom among the alternative facets of honors and regular curriculum.
 10. Build in devices of evaluation to test both the means used and the ends sought by an honors program.
 11. Establish a committee of honors students to serve as liaison with the honors committee or council. Keep them fully informed on the program and elicit their cooperation in evaluation and development.
 12. Use good students wherever feasible as apprentices in teaching and as assistants to the best men on the faculty. Even freshman can sometimes serve in this capacity. There is increasing use both of available research institutes and laboratories in the area for a semester or a summer. Foundation funds in support of such undergraduate research and independent study projects are increasingly available.
 13. Employ honors students for counseling, orientation, and other appropriate honors purposes within the general student body.

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14. Establish, where possible, an honors center with honors library, lounge, reading rooms, and other appropriate décor.
15. Work toward closer liaison between the undergraduate honors program and the graduate school.
16. Ensure that such programs will be permanent features of the curriculum and not dependent on temporary or spasmodic dedication of particular faculty members or administrators—in other words, institutionalize such programs, budget for them, and build thereby a tradition of excellence. (Cohen, 1966, p.46-48)

FRANK SHUSHOK, JR.

Student Outcomes and Honors Programs: A Longitudinal Study of 172 Honors Students 2000-2004

FRANK SHUSHOK, JR.

BAYLOR UNIVERSITY

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS ABOUT WHY ASSESSMENT MUST BE A PRIORITY FOR HONORS PROGRAM DEANS AND DIRECTORS

Since this edition of the *JNCHC* is dedicated to honors administration, it seems appropriate to offer a few introductory remarks about the usefulness of this study. College and university administrators participating in the accreditation process are well aware that assessing student learning is not the passing fad that some had suspected it might be. In the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, for example, administrators are familiar with Core Requirement 2.1—the institution engages in ongoing, integrated, and institution-wide planning and evaluation processes that incorporate systematic review of programs and services (Handbook for reaffirmation of accreditation, 2004). All accreditation bodies in higher education now require systematic assessment of student learning.

Honors programs have been generally slow to adopt ongoing assessment strategies, and calls for intentional evaluation of honors education are not new. In a National Collegiate Honors Council monograph published in 1995, for example, Reilhman, Varhus and Whipple noted that “. . . the paucity of evaluations of honors programs is surprising” (p.2). A decade earlier, Randall and Collier (1985) observed, “examples of efforts to evaluate the effect of honors programs on the college career . . . are extremely rare”(p. 2). A search of relevant literature today suggests that only marginal progress has been made toward providing substantive and scientifically gathered data about how student learning is enhanced as a result of participation in an honors program.

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Until honors deans and directors make assessment and evaluation a priority, evidence that honors programs produce valuable outcomes for student learning will go largely unsubstantiated. The risks associated with such a condition will be especially amplified when resources are tight and financial officers are prowling for places to reduce costs. As Derek Bok (2005) admonishes, “Throughout undergraduate education, a great wall separates the world of research from the world of practice—even though practitioners involved are professors, trained in research, who would seem ideally prepared to take full advantage of whatever findings empirical investigations have to offer” (p. 9).

More important than proving the value of honors education and meeting accreditation guidelines, however, is the likelihood that improved assessment practices will unearth practical findings relevant to improving overall effectiveness of honors education. The following is a case in point and offers honors administrators a practical example of how the scientific method can assist in evaluating honors student outcomes.

BACKGROUND OF STUDY

This is a follow-up study of 172 honors students selected during their first year of college. The original study (Shushok, 2002) was designed to assess how students were affected by participation in the Honors College at a Carnegie-classification “Doctoral/Research Extensive” university in one of the Mid-Atlantic states. These 172 students were surveyed at the conclusion of their first year (2001) and again at the conclusion of their fourth year (2004). The 2001 study utilized a quantitative, quasi-experimental design using the College Student Experiences Questionnaire (CSEQ) as well as qualitative focus groups (Krueger, 1994) conducted after data analysis. The original study was funded, in part, by the National Collegiate Honors Council (NCHC). The 2004 study was funded by the participating institution.

SELECTION OF ORIGINAL STUDY PARTICIPANTS AND FINDINGS

For the purpose of this research, two groups of similarly credentialed students were selected and studied in April 2001 and again in April 2004. Half of these students (86) applied and were selected to participate in the Honors College. The other half (86) were equally qualified students who did not apply and therefore were not participants in this program. All students were beginning their first experience with postsecondary education (defined as having no more than nine semester hours of college-level work). Further, all students were of “traditional” age (defined as 17-22 years of age) and had achieved a high-school grade point average of at least 3.5 and a minimum

combined SAT score of 1250. In addition to SAT scores and high-school grade point averages, each group was controlled to achieve a balance in race, gender, and place of residency (on- or off-campus housing), see Table 1.

To ensure that students in both groups were as similar as possible, caliper matching (Anderson et al., 1980) was utilized to match each of the randomly selected honors students with a non-honors student. As described in Anderson et al., “Caliper matching is a pair matching technique that attempts to achieve comparability of the treatment and comparison groups by defining two subjects to be a match if they differ on the value of the numerical confounding variable by no more than a small tolerance” (p.79). At the conclusion of the matching process, a perfect match was achieved between honors and non-honors students in the categories of race, gender and residency. Since finding an identical match in grade point average and SAT score was unlikely, differences within .15 of a standard deviation were considered acceptable. In the event that a student did not matriculate or declined to participate, another student was selected from the pool of students. In addition, when a match for an honors student could not be found, the honors participant was dropped from the study, and another student was selected.

To verify that the matching process had been successful, the SAT and GPA means were calculated for both groups, and an Independent Samples T-Test was utilized. After the matching procedure, the mean SAT score for the honors group was 1346 compared to 1339 for the non-honors group. The Independent Samples T-Test using an alpha level of .05 indicated no

Table 1. Comparison of Original 172 Study Participants

	Honors Group	Non-Honors Group	All New Students
Mean SAT	1346	1339	1186
Mean GPA	3.96	3.95	3.45
Female	51.1%	51.1%	49%
Male	48.9%	48.9%	51%
On-Campus Living	83.8%	83.8%	67%
Off-Campus Living	16.2%	16.2%	33%
White	81.4%	81.4%	66%
Black	4.7%	4.7%	15%
Asian	11.6%	11.6%	16%
Hispanic	2.3%	2.3%	3%

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statistical difference in SAT scores between the two groups. Moreover, the two groups varied by only 11 percent of one standard deviation. The mean GPA for the honors group was 3.96 while the mean GPA for the non-honors group was 3.95. The Independent Samples T-Test using an alpha level of .05 reported no statistical difference in GPA between the groups. Additionally, the variation consisted of only three percent of one standard deviation. From the sample of 172 students (86 honors and 86 non-honors), 85.4 percent (147 of 172) returned usable data. Four students had left the university (two honors and two non-honors) at the time of data collection, see Table 2.

PRIMARY FINDINGS OF THE INITIAL 2001 STUDY

1. Honors students outperformed non-honors students as measured by cumulative grade point averages at the conclusion of the first year (Honors 3.41, Non-Honors 3.18). This study, therefore, suggested that participation in the Honors College had a positive effect on students' academic performance as measured by GPA during the first year.
2. Honors students had higher retention rates into the sophomore year (Honors 97 percent; Non-Honors 90 percent).
3. Honors and non-honors students engaged in extracurricular activities at similar rates (excluding statistical interactions). The measurement of perceived gains in the liberal arts, sciences, or technology, however, showed differences. Honors students estimated gains in these areas that were statistically significant when compared to those reported by non-honors students.

Table 2. T-Test Indicating No Significant Difference between Honors and Non-Honors Study Groups after the Matching Process

Group	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Significance
<i>SAT</i>				
Honors	86	1346.16	62.36	.784
Non-Honors	86	1339.18	62.14	
<i>GPA</i>				
Honors	86	3.96	.27	.944
Non-Honors	86	3.94	.27	

* $p > .05$

4. Honors programs may encourage outcomes for male students in a way that they do not for female students. For example, when considering interaction with faculty outside of the classroom, male honors students reported significantly higher levels of engagement than traditional students while female honors students reported essentially the same engagement with faculty when compared to traditional students. If participation in honors had a positive effect on student engagement with faculty, it was only for male students. Satisfaction with college followed a similar pattern and suggests that participating in honors has a large effect on this dependent variable for male students and no real effect for female students.

THE 2004 STUDY

In the April 2004, three years after data collection of the original study, the researcher returned to the university to study these students again. Of the original 172 students, 24 had left the institution without completing a degree (9 honors and 15 non-honors students). Of the 148 remaining students (including 6 honors and 7 non-honors students who had already received a degree from the institution), 104 students (70.2 percent) returned usable data. Of the 104 respondents, 90 completed both the 2001 survey and the 2004 survey (86.5 percent). Therefore, 14 participants, although selected to participate in 2001, only completed the 2004 questionnaire. For the calculation of grade point averages and retention data, however, all 148 students were considered.

METHODOLOGY

Quantitative data for this study were collected using a self-designed 33-item survey to measure the type and frequency of student interaction with faculty members (6 questions); the type and frequency of participation in specified activities (15 questions); the level of student satisfaction with specified components of the learning environment (6 questions); and finally, student estimates of gains in specified areas (6 questions). Some questions were modeled after the College Student Experiences Questionnaire that was used in the initial 2001 study.

The questionnaire was reviewed and modified numerous times by a staff, faculty, and student steering committee on the researcher's campus. To estimate test reliability, 6 focus groups of 8 students completed the instrument twice over a four-week period. Based on the focus group administration of the instrument, test-retest correlation coefficients ranged between .72 and .89 while internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha) ranged between .79 and .90. As noted in Gall et al., (1996), reliability of .80 or higher suggests that results are generally suitable for most research purposes. At the request of the campus Honors College, data were also collected about students' intended graduation

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dates and post-graduation plans such as attending graduate school. Participants were contacted by way of their university electronic mail accounts. If a student agreed to participate, \$5.00 cash was provided for a completed survey. The questionnaire was administered in the campus library.

A logistical regression was employed to analyze the ordinal data collected in the questionnaire and provide comparative statements by way of odds ratios. These describe differences in the attitudes or behaviors between honors and non-honors students. Comparisons also considered subsets of the surveyed group of students. These subsets included male, female, majority, and minority students. The ordinal responses represented opinions on a scale of 1,2,3,4 and are depicted below in Table 3.

Focus group techniques (Krueger, 1994) were used to collect data for the qualitative phase of the study. Focus groups are discussions facilitated by a researcher in order to identify variables and patterns in perceptions. Three focus groups were conducted with six students in each. Focus groups were conducted in a library classroom on campus and lasted approximately 90 minutes.

RESULTS FOR 2004 STUDY

GRADE POINT AVERAGES

Table 4 indicates that honors students and non-honors students as measured by cumulative grade point average in the spring 2004 performed similarly. While the 79 remaining honors students (still enrolled or graduated) earned a mean grade point average of 3.46, the non-honors students earned a mean grade point average of 3.40. This difference is not statistically significant and is in contrast to what was found at the conclusion of the first year. As presented in Table 5, while honors students outperformed non-honors students at the conclusion of the first year, grade point averages had leveled by 2004. Evidence, therefore, would indicate that participation in an honors program had a positive effect on students' academic performance as measured by

Table 3. Survey Ordinal Responses

Questions	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
1 to 13	Very Often	Often	Occasionally	Never
14 to 21	Very Involved	Involved	Somewhat Involved	Uninvolved
22 to 27	Extremely Satisfied	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Extremely Dissatisfied
28 to 33	Very Much	Quite A Bit	Some	Very Little

cumulative grade point average after the first year of study but not after four years of study.

SURVEY RESULTS

Since the sample size was limited to 104 students, the levels were collapsed. Analysis, therefore, was performed on two levels of response. This allowed the researcher to make more valid conclusions. Table 6 represents how survey responses were collapsed. All odds ratios reported statistically significant at the .05 level and satisfied certain assumptions related to sample sizes and expected values. Odds ratios provided below represent survey questions that were statistically significant.

Table 4. T-Test Results Comparing Grade Point Averages of 2004 Study

Group	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Significance
<i>GPA</i>				
Honors (all)	79	3.46	.47	.68
Non-Honors	69	3.40	.40	

*p<.05

Table 5. T-Test Results Comparing Grade Point Averages of Study Participants after the Completion of First Academic Year (2001)

Group	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Significance
<i>GPA</i>				
Honors (all)	86	3.41	.59	.07
Non-Honors	86	3.18	.75	

*p<.05

Table 6. Collapse Method

Questions	Compares
1 to 13	1&2 to 3&4
14 to 21	1&2 to 3&4
22 to 27	1&2 to 3&4
28 to 33	1&2 to 3&4

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ODDS RATIOS (ALL SURVEYED STUDENTS)

Met with a Faculty Member During Office Hours

Students in the honors program were 2.5 times more likely than students in the non-honors program to meet with a faculty member during office hours very often/often (compared to occasionally/never).

Discussed Career Plans and Vocational Aspirations with a Faculty Member

Students in the honors program were 3.1 times more likely than students in the non-honors program to discuss career plans and vocational aspirations with a faculty member very often/often (compared to occasionally/never).

Discussed a Social Concern, Political Issue, or World Event with Another Student Outside of Class

Students in the honors program were 2.5 times more likely than students in the non-honors program to discuss a social concern, political issue, or world event with another student outside of class very often/often (compared to occasionally/never).

METHOD (MALE STUDENTS ONLY)

Discussed Career Plans and Vocational Aspirations with a Faculty Member

Male students in the honors program were 4.7 times more likely than male students in the non-honors program to discuss career plans and vocational aspirations with a faculty member very often/often (compared to occasionally/never).

Discussed a Social Concern, Political Issue, or World Event with Another Student Outside of Class

Male students in the honors program were 5.3 times more likely than male students in the non-honors program to discuss a social concern, political issue, or world event with another student outside of class very often/often (compared to occasionally/never).

In Activities with an Academic Emphasis (Outside of Class)

Male students in the honors program were 3.6 times more likely than male students in the non-honors program to be very involved/involved (compared to somewhat involved/uninvolved) in activities with an academic emphasis (outside of class).

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

Honors student retention and grade point average advantages detected at the end the first year appear to have leveled by the time students ended their fourth year of study. Of 148 students eligible for the 2004 study (79 honors and 69 non-honors), the grade point averages were 3.46 and 3.40 respectively. As mentioned earlier, of the 172 original students selected for the 2001 study, 21 students were retention casualties (9 honors and 15 non-honors). Neither the grade point average nor retention differences between honors and non-honors students were statistically significant in 2004. One might argue, however, that this is less important since the greatest risk for a student departing an institution takes place during the first year.

As in the 2001 study, there were generally no statistically significant differences in the type of activities in which honors and non-honors students participated with three notable exceptions.

Honors Students Appear to have a Quantitatively and Qualitatively Different Experience when Looking at the Type and Level of Interaction with Faculty Members. This is Especially Pronounced for Male Students.

Honors students were 2.5 times more likely than non-honors students to meet with a faculty member during office hours and 3.1 times more likely than non-honors students to discuss career plans and vocational aspirations with a faculty member. This difference appears to be even more pronounced for male honors students, who were 4.7 times more likely than non-honors males to meet with a faculty member during office hours and 5.3 times more likely than male non-honors students. This result supports evidence in the 2001 study that suggests honors programs may encourage outcomes for males in a way that it does not for female students. Especially for male students, both the 2001 and 2004 studies suggest that participation in an honors program has a statistically significant effect on student engagement with faculty. Focus group follow-up discussions exhibited the same pattern.

Honors Students Appear to be More Engaged with Peers in Discussing Contemporary Issues such as Social Concerns, Politics, and World Events. This is Especially Pronounced for Male Students.

Honors students were 2.5 times more likely than non-honors students to discuss a social concern, political issue, or world event with another student outside of class. Again, this difference appears to be more pronounced for male honors students, who are 5.3 times more likely than male non-honors

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students to discuss a social concern, political issues or world event with another student outside of class. Especially for male students, both the 2001 and 2004 studies suggest that participation in an honors program has a statistically significant effect on student engagement with peers as it relates to discussions about contemporary issues.

Male Honors Students are More Likely to Engage in Activities Outside of Class with an Academic Emphasis.

Male honors students were 3.6 times more likely than male non-honors students to be involved in activities outside of class with an academic interest. This difference again underscores the potential value of male student participation in the honors program.

KEY FOCUS GROUP RESULTS/THEMES

Focus group discussions suggested that the Honors College created an infrastructure for bright students to connect and feel comfortable with “like minded” students who, as one student suggested, “Value learning and feel that it’s okay to be smart and study.”

These discussions also supported quantitative data suggesting that this kind of connection may be especially important for male students, who found it “less culturally acceptable” to be academically oriented. As a result, participation in an honors program may facilitate male student entry into an environment where they feel safe developing academic inclinations and interests more readily. This may be a plausible theory for why males appear to benefit more substantially from honors participation when compared to females. Women, it may be, are able to find academically supportive peer groups outside of honors participation while men find such support more difficult to identify.

Focus group participants affirmed the notion that faculty contact is more frequent for those involved with the Honors College. In one exchange, a non-honors student listened to an honors student describe his strong contact with faculty; in response, the non-honors student said, “I really haven’t had the access you had with the faculty.”

Focus groups also revealed that many students either departed or became less involved in the Honors College during their sophomore, junior, and senior years. Students left or became less engaged either because they were asked to depart by the Honors College (for not meeting grade requirements, failing to take an honors class each semester) or, more frequently, because coordination of class schedules and degree requirements became too complicated. It could be suggested, therefore, that the strength of impact for the Honors College was most intense during the first year. This appears to be a

reasonable theory for why the influence of honors participation on GPA and retention leveled between the years 2001 and 2004. Some investigation of “administrative obstacles” for returning honors students may help retention in honors programs and therefore learning outcomes.

FINAL REMARKS

The four-year study discussed here is but one example of the types of data that can be gathered to bolster support for honors education as well as improve it. The most important point, however, is that assessment efforts can uncover valuable information to improve the effectiveness of honors programs and the influence such efforts have on student learning outcomes. In this example, university officials will want to explore more thoroughly the possibilities for the differing impact on men and women. There are also more practical issues, including whether or not the institution can reduce unnecessary barriers that often prevent students from remaining in the program and thus being recipients of the influence such programs have on student learning. Since the urgency of daily administrative demands will always push assessment activities to the margins, honors deans and directors must be vigilant in demanding that such efforts be priorities. This may, however, require active involvement in assessment and research activities rather than delegation of them elsewhere.

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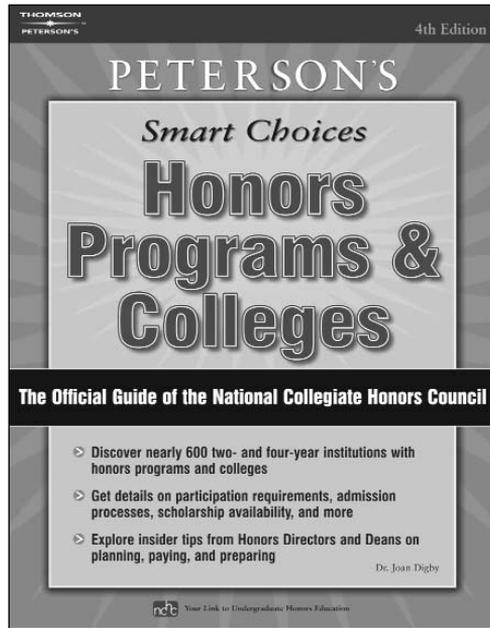
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Len Zane, a past president of NCHC, started the honors program at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas in 1985 and was the founding Dean of UNLV's Honors College. He is currently enjoying himself as a professor of physics at UNLV.

NOTES

NOTES



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Beginning in Honors: A Handbook by Samuel Schuman (Fourth Edition, 2006, 80pp). Advice on starting a new honors program. Covers budgets, recruiting students and faculty, physical plant, administrative concerns, curriculum design, and descriptions of some model programs.

A Handbook for Honors Administrators by Ada Long (1995, 117pp). Everything an honors administrator needs to know including a description of some models of Honors Administration.

A Handbook for Honors Programs at Two-Year Colleges by Theresa James (2006, 136pp). A useful handbook for two-year schools contemplating beginning or redesigning their honors program and for four-year schools doing likewise or wanting to increase awareness about two-year programs and articulation agreements. Contains extensive appendices about honors contracts and a comprehensive bibliography on honors education.

Honors Composition: Historical Perspectives and Contemporary Practices by Annmarie Guzy (2003 182 pp). Parallel historical developments in honors and composition studies; contemporary honors writing projects ranging from admission essays to theses as reported by over 300 NCHC members.

Honors Programs at Smaller Colleges by Samuel Schuman (Second Edition, 1999, 53pp). How to implement an honors program, with particular emphasis on colleges with fewer than 3000 students.

Innovations in Undergraduate Research and Honors Education: Proceedings of the Second Schreyer National Conference Edited by Josephine M. Carubia and Renata S. Engel (2004 145pp). Essays on the importance of undergraduate research, course models, connections to service learning, and learning strategies that support undergraduate research.

Place as Text: Approaches to Active Learning edited by Bernice Braid and Ada Long (2000, 104pp). Information and practical advice on the experiential pedagogies developed within NCHC during the past 25 years, using Honors Semesters and City as Text[®] as models, along with suggestions for how to adapt these models to a variety of educational contexts.

Teaching and Learning in Honors edited by Cheryl L. Fuiks and Larry Clark (2000, 128 pp). Presents a variety of perspectives on teaching and learning useful to anyone developing new or renovating established honors curricula.

Journal of the National Collegiate Honors Council (JNCHC) is a semi-annual periodical featuring scholarly articles on honors education. Articles may include analyses of trends in teaching methodology, articles on interdisciplinary efforts, discussions of problems common to honors programs, items on the national higher education agenda, and presentations of emergent issues relevant to honors education.

Honors in Practice (HIP) is an annual journal that accommodates the need and desire for articles about nuts and bolts practices by featuring practical and descriptive essays on topics such as successful honors courses, suggestions for out-of-class experiences, administrative issues, and other topics of interest to honors administrators, faculty and students.

NCHC Handbook. Included are lists of all NCHC members, NCHC Constitution and Bylaws, committees and committee charges, and other useful information.