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The Roles and Activities of Honors Directors: Similarities and Differences across Carnegie Institution Types

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INTRODUCTION

Samuel Schuman rightly observed that there is no one model for an honors program (*Beginning*, 10–11). The sizes and structures that honors programs and colleges may take vary as widely as the colleges and universities that house them. Jim Ford points out in his article on honors culture, “Given the diversity of honors programs and institutions today, the institutional context is certainly relevant” (27), the context perhaps explaining some of the variability. As we undertook a quantitative and qualitative study to examine the different roles of honors directors, variations in programs and institutions was one of the many characteristics that we wanted to capture. We surveyed directors about their institutions, their programs, and their roles, with questions such as: What do you do? How do you do it? With whom do you work? How are you paid? What are the rewards and challenges of your work, and what strategies do you use to deal with the challenges? Essentially, we tried to discover if common roles, rewards, and challenges are shared by honors directors, if meaningful differences exist between the roles of directors at large and small institutions, or if directors are as different as the programs they lead.

Defining and understanding the roles of honors directors is becoming ever more important as honors programs and colleges increase in size, number, and visibility. As K. Celeste Campbell discussed in her article on honors assessment, honors is increasingly seen as a tool to recruit and retain top

students and faculty, attract interest from donors, fight “brain drains” in certain states, and facilitate the success of excellent students (96–97). Len Zane stated that, in the 1990s, “institutions began to recognize the value of honors as an institutional image enhancer” (58). As a result, honors directors are being asked to serve increasingly complicated roles (Andrews 33) and are becoming more visible and more active in higher education administration (Zane 58, Fox 38, Portnoy 56). Much has been written over the years about the role of the honors director, but the focus has often been the philosophy of honors, as in Angela Salas’s interesting musings in “An Honors Director’s Credo” (153–158). The topic also has been discussed at many NCHC conference sessions over the years. At the 2010 NCHC Annual Conference in Kansas City, Kate Bruce and Ada Long presided over a “Best Practices in Honors” session on “The Many Hats of Honors Administrators.” Other sessions touching on the role of honors directors included “When the Winds of Change Shift” and “Honors Director as Bridge Builder” (NCHC 2010 Annual Conference Program). One of the best resources describing the specific roles of honors directors with quantitative data has been the 1995 NCHC monograph by Ada Long, *A Handbook for Honors Administrators*, which included information about her 1992 survey of 136 honors administrators.

Honors directors need data that describe their roles, help determine what resources they need to perform their jobs effectively, and provide rationales for those resources. This topic demands further investigation and discussion, but little empirical work has been done on the typical roles and activities of honors directors since Ada Long’s 1992 survey. In an effort to better describe what honors directors are doing, how they are doing it, how those activities might differ between different institution types, and what constitute the rewards, challenges, and strategies for honors directors, we have endeavored to classify activities into roles and measure how well these roles describe honors directors working today.

One of the earliest examinations of the roles of honors directors was a 1986 article by Rew A. Godow, Jr., entitled “Honors Program Leadership: The Right Stuff,” published in *The Forum for Honors*, in which Godow described six roles that the ideal honors director should play: (1) “lover of wisdom,” (2) “curriculum reformer,” (3) “general administrator,” (4) “entrepreneur,” (5) “admissions officer,” and (6) “student activities coordinator.” Godow’s article was republished twenty years later in the Fall/Winter 2006 (7.2) issue of the *Journal of the National Collegiate Honors Council*, along with commentaries from nine distinguished honors administrators: Sam Schuman, Bonnie D. Irwin, Larry Andrews, Bruce Fox, Lisa L. Coleman, Keith Garbutt, George Mariz, Rosalie C. Otero, and Len Zane. These responses added some important clarifications and nuances to Godow’s list of

roles, but the list remained largely the same except for the addition of two new communications-related activities: Zane framed a seventh role as a “skilled operative in external relations” while Otero described the importance of “stakeholder communication.” We included these two new roles in our research.

First, a description of Godow’s original roles is appropriate. As “lover of wisdom,” Godow described someone interested in the pursuit of knowledge and ideas, a role model for students and faculty alike, who regularly converses about the great books, ideas, and issues of the day. As “curriculum reformer,” the honors director looks for better ways of teaching, improving curriculum, and making other enhancements of the curricular process, such as convincing students to be daring in their curricular choices through independent studies, study abroad, and theses, all while upholding academic excellence. In the role of “general administrator,” Godow acknowledged the importance of performing tasks that many deem “menial” but at which honors directors must be successful, including attending meetings, giving information, budgeting, organizing, monitoring, and communicating with the administration. As “entrepreneur,” Godow said that the honors director needs the “business” sense to make the honors program an integral part of the institution, which involves creatively promoting the program and being able to persuade administrators to give the program, faculty, and students special perks. In defining the role of “admissions officer,” Godow described how honors programs are designed to offer appealing opportunities to excellent students and how recruiting by writing brochures and letters, organizing high school and campus visits, and speaking with prospective students and parents are important parts of the job. Finally, Godow argued that an honors director must understand the cultural, intellectual, and social needs of honors students, arrange activities to fulfill those needs, and communicate enthusiasm in spending time with honors students, thus fulfilling the role of “student activities coordinator.”

Zane’s addition in 2006 of the role “skilled operative in external relations” was a nod to a changing dynamic in honors during the twenty years after the first publication of Godow’s article. Zane asserted that Godow’s article described the role of the honors director of the 1960s to 1980s, when honors programs operated below the radar of administration and were guided by a few dedicated faculty who could be described primarily as “lovers of wisdom” and “curriculum reformers.” They were by necessity “admissions officers” and sometimes “entrepreneurs,” but most did not see themselves as “administrators.” Zane argued that, in the latter part of the 1980s through the 1990s, institutions began to recognize the image-enhancing qualities of honors programs and make them more central to the college mission. A new job

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of professional administrator evolved, which involved promoting honors to donors and off-campus entities—hence, the new role of “skilled operative in external relations.” Zane said that this role was developed as a result of the “professionalization of honors leadership” and “the movement from programs to colleges” (58). Otero echoed the importance of external communications in her article, saying, “Building support for honors is not something an effective administrator does only when time allows. It should be at the forefront of the job . . . ,” adding that communicating effectively and often with stakeholders is the key (54).

In 2008, in an effort to quantify the roles of honors directors, two of the authors of the current paper, Debra Schroeder and Sr. Edith Bogue, surveyed small-college honors directors about the roles they play. The survey was designed to capture Godow’s six roles and the two others added by Zane and Otero, and it was administered via QuestionPro to small-college honors directors. In addition to questions about roles, open-ended items were included about rewards, challenges, and strategies. The results of the survey were presented at the 2008 NCHC Annual Conference in San Antonio. A principal components analysis of the data from this initial survey indicated eleven roles of honors directors (“Being an Entrepreneur” is listed twice for charting purposes but is one role), which are mapped onto Godow, Zane, and Otero’s roles below:

Godow, Zane, & Otero Roles	Schroeder & Bogue Roles
Lover of Wisdom	Modeling Love of Knowledge
	Handling Student Business
Curriculum Reformer	Designing Program
General Administrator	Doing Paperwork
	Retaining Students & Publicizing Program Internally
	Handling Faculty Business
Entrepreneur	Personal/Political Acumen
	Being an Entrepreneur—Internal
Admissions Officer	Recruiting Students to College for Honors
Student Activities Coordinator	Coordinating Honors Activities
Skilled Operative in External Relations (Zane)	Being an Entrepreneur—External
Stakeholder Communicator (Otero)	Building Community

Response to the well-attended presentation was enthusiastic, with the one major suggestion being to expand the survey to include larger colleges and universities and see if the roles remained the same. Thus, in collaboration with Marian Bruce from the University of Alaska Anchorage in 2009, Schroeder distributed a modified survey to the NCHC honors director list via QuestionPro. The survey, on which this article is based, again included closed-ended questions about the activities of honors directors as well as open-ended questions about the rewards, challenges, and strategies used to address those challenges, but two significant sets of modifications were made. The first involved the addition of activities that related to larger universities since the goal of the survey was to better capture the diversity of experiences of honors directors at different types of institutions. The second involved asking honors directors to indicate their institutions' Carnegie classification, i.e., Associate, Baccalaureate, Master's, or Doctoral.

As administrators use Carnegie classifications in making decisions, and as honors directors must collaborate effectively with administrators to gain resources and support for their programs, presenting the data by Carnegie classification would make it maximally useful to honors directors.

In sum, the specific goals with this second study were:

1. To examine the structure of the director position—who is doing it, for how long, course reassignment, money, and who helps.
2. To quantitatively examine the activities of the honors director and determine whether the activities can be grouped into various roles.
3. To examine the rewards and challenges of the position qualitatively to verify the quantitative groupings.
4. To examine whether some roles and activities are more important than others and differ by type of institution.
5. To determine for which roles and activities there are gaps between importance and performance and whether the size of the gaps differ by institutional type.

METHOD

MEASURES

Global Program Ratings

On seven-point scales (7 indicating higher ratings), directors rated the degree to which their program is perceived as an asset by their institution, the caliber of the honors students, the success of the program in meeting its goals, the growth of the program, and the extent to which the program is perceived as elitist.

Positive and Negative Aspects of Role

On seven-point scales (7 indicating higher ratings), directors rated positive aspects of the role: their interest in the role, the rewards associated with it, and perceptions of how much the students, faculty, and administration value the program. They also rated negative aspects of the role: constraints due to time, constraints due to resources, and challenges of the role.

Importance and Performance Ratings on Dimensions of Role

The survey included a series of thirty-five items related to the six dimensions of the honors director role described by Godow, a seventh suggested by Zane (“skilled operative in external relations”), and another described by Otero (“stakeholder communication”). Respondents were asked to rate the importance of each activity on a seven-point scale (1 = very unimportant, 7 = very important) and to evaluate their level of performance of that activity, also on a seven-point scale (1 = very poorly, 7 = very well, with n/a as an option if the importance was rated as 1).

Who Performs Activities of Each Role

Respondents were asked who primarily performs each of the activities (director alone, director plus colleagues, director plus supervisee, supervisee). N/A was an option for those who rated importance as 1.

Open-Ended Questions

Respondents were asked, in an open-ended format, to describe the three greatest challenges they face in directing the honors program, the three strategies that they use to meet the challenges, and the greatest rewards. No length limitation was applied to these responses.

Demographic Data

Demographic data were collected on each respondent’s honors director position (faculty, staff, administrative/executive/dean); school’s Carnegie classification; primary academic area; amount and percentage of work time devoted to directing the honors program; length of time as director, as honors faculty, and at that institution; receipt of course reduction or overload/stipend; and gender of respondent.

ADMINISTRATION OF THE SURVEY

The survey was administered online using QuestionPro Survey Software. An invitation e-mail message was sent to a mailing list of 829 honors directors received via Excel from the NCHC office. Responses to the initial

invitation revealed changes in the leadership of some honors programs; new invitations were sent to the current directors of those programs. A follow-up invitation was sent two weeks after the first. This project presents the analysis of responses received by October 7, 2009.

A total of 332 people completed the survey, for a 40% response rate. However, inspection of the data indicated that many people had stopped completing the (very long) survey somewhere in the middle. When these responses were eliminated, a total of 276 responses remained, or 33% of the original 829.

PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS

The 276 respondents included 211 honors directors in a faculty position, 57 in an administrative/executive/dean position, 6 in a staff position, 1 in another role, and 1 missing response. Of the 265 participants indicating their institution's Carnegie classification, 22% each were from associate colleges ($n = 59$) and doctorate-granting universities ($n = 59$) and 28% each were from master's colleges or universities ($n = 73$) or baccalaureate colleges ($n = 74$). In terms of primary academic area, most (60.5%, $n = 167$) indicated Arts and Letters/Humanities, with fewer from the Behavioral and Social Sciences (20.3%, $n = 56$) and Natural Sciences (9.8%, $n = 27$). The remainder were in Education ($n = 7$), Business ($n = 6$), Health Sciences ($n = 2$), or Engineering/Technology ($n = 4$). Seven indicated other or nothing.

Men ($n = 135$) and women were equally represented ($n = 136$) with 5 not reporting gender. The average tenure as honors director was 5.17 years ($SD = 4.90$). They had been part of the honors program at their institution for more than 9 years ($M = 9.25$, $SD = 7.29$) and averaged nearly 17 years teaching there ($M = 16.92$, $SD = 10.47$).

RESULTS

STRUCTURE OF THE POSITION OVERALL AND BY INSTITUTION TYPE

Workload

Honors directors reported spending an average of 59.66% ($SD = 28.74$) of their work time or 29.76 hours ($SD = 18.92$) per week doing honors-related work, although both these numbers differed by type of institution ($F(3, 255) = 35.37$, $p < .001$ and $F(3, 247) = 32.58$, $p < .001$, respectively). Tukey tests on both percentage of work time and hours per week indicated that directors at doctoral and master's institutions did not differ from each other, and they spent a higher percentage of their time and more hours per week

doing honors activities than did those at baccalaureate and associate institutions, who also did not differ from one another. See Table 1 in Appendix A for the means and standard deviations for percentage of work time and hours per week by institution type.

Course Reduction

68.3% (181/265) received a course-load reduction as compensation for honors activities, a likelihood that did not differ by institutional type ($\chi^2(3) = 4.78, p > .05$). The percentage reduction did differ, however ($F(3, 177) = 25.02, p < .001$), with follow-up Tukey tests indicating that directors at doctoral institutions received the highest reduction, those at master's institutions received the next highest, and those at baccalaureate and associate institutions received the lowest and again did not differ from each other. See Table 1 for descriptive statistics regarding course reductions.

Monetary Compensation

Whether extra pay represented a stipend or an overload did not seem clear to respondents, so the two were summed. The percentage of directors who received a stipend/overload did not differ by institution (27.2%, 72/265, $\chi^2(3) = 3.81, p > .05$). However, the amount of stipend/overload did. As the monetary data were positively skewed, even with those who received \$0 as compensation eliminated (skewness statistic = 7.159, SE = .281), a one-way ANOVA was determined to be less appropriate than the independent samples median test. The latter test indicated that the type of institution related to median pay ($p < .01$), with directors at doctoral and master's institutions making more than those at associate institutions and those at baccalaureate institutions not differing from the others. See Table 1 for descriptive statistics on monetary compensation.

Others with Honors-Related Duties

In responses about what other individuals work with directors in carrying out honors administrative activities, 42.6% had an associate/assistant director or dean, 60.0% had an administrative assistant or secretary, 24.2% had student volunteers, 39.6% had student employees, and 29.1% had faculty help; 14.3% of directors replied that they were the only ones carrying out administrative duties. There were relationships between type of institution and who helped carry out honors duties, according to χ^2 tests, with the only exception being faculty help, which did not differ by institution. See Table 2 in Appendix A for percentages with each kind of help by institutional type as well as χ^2 values.

Partitioning of the contingency tables, using a criterion of significance of .001 to control for Type 1 error (i.e., to reduce false positives or to reduce the likelihood of erroneously concluding that effects are there when they are not), revealed that the percentages receiving each type of help primarily involved doctoral programs: those in doctoral programs were more likely to have an associate/assistant director or dean, administrative assistant, and student employees in comparison to baccalaureate and associate institutions. Directors in doctoral institutions also reported a greater likelihood of having student volunteers than those at associate institutions and a lower likelihood of being the only person administering the program than those at baccalaureate institutions. Indeed, the option of “nobody besides me carries out honors administrative activities” was chosen by 14.3% of directors but by only 3.4% of the directors at doctoral institutions. The only other statistically significant differences involved master’s programs. Those in master’s institutions were less likely to have an assistant/associate director or dean than those in doctoral institutions and more likely to have student employees than those at associate institutions.

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Grouping of Items Composing Roles

Principal components analysis was used to explore the structure of the thirty-five importance-rating items. Selecting factors with eigenvalues greater than 1.00 yielded ten factors on which a varimax rotation was performed, but the last two factors were uninterpretable. An inspection of the scree plot suggested that eight factors might represent the data more clearly, so the analysis was re-run with eight forced factors. Three items were dropped because of cross-loadings across two or more factors. Reliability analysis (Cronbach’s α) was used to further refine the dimensions, yielding eight scales constructed from thirty-two items. The eight scales, representing eight roles, were labeled as follows: “Being Scholarly,” “Developing and Improving Program,” “Administering Program,” “Having Personal/Political Acumen,” “Recruiting and Retaining,” “Coordinating Honors Activities,” “Being an Entrepreneur,” and “Working with Stakeholders.” The items placed into each of the scales/roles can be found in Table 3 in Appendix A.

Importance of the Roles and Items

While a review of the literature informed the roles and activities included in the questionnaire, it was unknown whether they differed in importance from the perspective of honors directors. To determine whether directors weighted their importance differently, a one-way repeated-measures analysis

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of variance was performed with the eight roles as the levels of the independent variable and with the average across the activities (i.e., items) that composed each of the eight roles (i.e., scales) as the dependent variable. The roles differed in their importance, $F(7, 1869)=156, p<.001$, as can be seen in Figure 1 in Appendix B. Post hoc tests comparing each role with each other role, with a Bonferroni adjustment to control for Type I error, revealed that 23 of the 28 possible comparisons were statistically significant. To simplify interpretation, each role was compared in terms of how many other roles its importance exceeded, equaled, or was lower than. The three roles that stood out as most important were “Working with Stakeholders” (rating exceeded all 7 other roles), “Being Scholarly” (rating exceeded 6 of the 7 other roles), and “Recruiting and Retaining” (rating exceeded 4 of the 7 other roles). The two roles that were rated as least important were “Being an Entrepreneur” (rating below all 7 other roles) and “Coordinating Honors Activities” (rating below 5 of the 7 other roles).

The five items in the most highly rated role, “Working with Stakeholders,” were treated as the five levels of an independent variable in a repeated-measures analysis of variance to determine whether some of the activities were rated as more important than others, as turned out to be the case ($F(4, 1084)=49.67, p<.001$); paired comparisons with Bonferroni adjustments indicated that communicating with students and faculty in honors ($M=6.50, SD=.84$) and developing good working relations with others in the college community ($M=6.27, SD=1.09$) were rated as more important than collaborating with faculty ($M=5.87, SD=1.28$) and students ($M=5.92, SD=1.19$) about program changes and then presenting about honors to other campus groups ($M = 5.58, SD=1.42$). A dependent samples t-test was performed on the two items of the second most important role, “Being Scholarly,” to see if the importance ratings were equal, and they were not ($t(274)=7.81, p<.001$). Modeling the love of knowledge was rated as more important ($M=6.20, SD=1.13$) than coordinating honors students’ research ($M = 5.59, SD=1.50$). The three items in the third most important role, “Recruiting and Retaining,” formed the three levels of the independent variable in a repeated-measures analysis of variance, with results again indicating differences in importance ($F(3, 822)=40.59, p<.001$). Paired comparisons with Bonferroni adjustments indicated that recruiting students ($M=6.13, SD=1.91$), retaining them ($M=6.01, SD=1.11$), and publicizing the program ($M=5.84, SD=1.13$) were more important than fielding honors students’ crises ($M=5.31, SD=1.43$). See Figure 2 in Appendix B for the importance ratings of the activities, from most to least important, of the three most important roles: “Working with Stakeholders,” “Being Scholarly,” and “Recruiting and Retaining.”

The items associated with the two least important roles, “Being an Entrepreneur” (4 items) and “Coordinating Honors Activities” (3 items), were similarly analyzed via separate repeated-measures analyses to determine whether particular items within those roles were less important. On “Being an Entrepreneur,” there were differences in the importance of the various activities ($F(3, 813)=61.89, p<.001$, with writing honors-related grant proposals being the lowest-rated item ($M=3.55, SD=1.81$) in comparison to cultivating ties with external agencies ($M=4.08, SD=1.87$), raising funds for honors ($M=4.55, SD=2.00$), and maintaining ties with honors alumni ($M=4.67, SD=1.76$). For “Coordinating Honors Activities,” activities involving faculty ($M=4.69, SD=1.58$) and faculty and students ($M=4.79, SD=1.44$) were rated as less important than those involving students only ($M=5.62, SD=1.28; F(2,544)=89.19, p <.001$). See Figure 3 in Appendix B for the importance ratings of the activities for the two least important roles: “Being an Entrepreneur” and “Coordinating Honors Activities.”

Differences Between Importance and Performance Ratings

While it might have been interesting to examine whether, like importance, performance differed across roles and activities, we decided that the discrepancy between importance and performance on the roles and items would be both brief and useful. That is, if the importance was rated low, then low performance ratings would not be cause for concern, but a high importance rating combined with a low performance rating would be problematic. For each item, a dependent groups t-test comparing importance and performance ratings was computed using data from all participants with a non-missing performance rating. Similarly, for participants who were not missing any performance ratings for any of the items composing the roles, mean performance and importance ratings for each role were calculated and compared. Results were considered to be statistically significant only if the p-values were .001 or lower to control for Type I error rate. As can be seen in Table 3 in Appendix A, directors gave statistically lower ratings to their level of performance than to importance on 23 of the 32 individual items. When averages were calculated across the importance items composing each of the eight roles, the same pattern of lower performance than importance was found for all roles except for “Administering Program.”

Open-Ended Questions

The validity of the scales derived from the principal components analysis was confirmed by participants’ qualitative responses to open-ended questions asking them to name their three greatest challenges, their strategies to meet those challenges, and their three greatest rewards in their role as honors

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director. The 1,979 responses to the three open-ended questions (713 challenges, 581 strategies, 685 rewards) were classified according to the eight roles retained from the principal components analysis. Sixty of the responses were classified by another rater with an average 68% agreement. Most responses were fairly easy to assign, but some, especially among the rewards, crossed multiple categories and could be read in a number of ways. For example, a reward such as “Great source of satisfaction working with highly motivated and intellectual students” is one that we placed under “Working with Stakeholders,” but it also reasonably might be placed under “Coordinating Student Activities” or even “Love of Knowledge.” Assigning a strategy like “Empower staff” was difficult as it might fall under “Administering the Program,” “Having Personal/Political Acumen,” or even “Working with Stakeholders.” Table 3 in Appendix A reflects responses most typical of each role for each question.

A component of “Administering Program,” getting adequate funding, resources, and staffing, was the most frequently mentioned challenge (115 responses) although, on the performance-importance discrepancy ratings, this was the only role on which there was no significant discrepancy. The next greatest challenge related to “Having Personal/Political Acumen”: 75 responses had to do with not having the time to get everything done or feeling “information overload.” Another aspect of “Having Personal/Political Acumen,” being politically savvy, also received a large number of responses, specifically in reference to not having access to, and challenges in working with, top administration; successfully communicating the reason and importance of honors; and receiving recognition and respect as an academic unit (75 responses). “Recruiting” (47 responses), and “Retaining Students” (44 responses), and “Developing and Improving the Program,” especially with regard to getting faculty and scheduling classes (53 responses), also were challenges. While quantitatively rated as the two least important activities (yet still important with item/activity ratings ranging from 3.55 to 5.62), “Being an Entrepreneur,” particularly the challenge of raising external funds (36 responses), and “Coordinating Honors Activities,” especially those involving students (30 responses), still caused concern for honors directors. “Being Scholarly” was seldom mentioned as challenging.

The most frequently mentioned strategies fell under “Working with Stakeholders” and included developing good working relations with others in the college community (94 responses) and collaborating with faculty (56 responses) and students (28 responses). Many responses also fell under “Having Personal/Political Acumen,” in particular coping with lack of time and other resources (75 responses) and being politically savvy (77 responses). While “Developing and Improving the Program” and “Recruiting and

Retaining” were other frequently mentioned challenges, respondents named few strategies for addressing them.

Both interpersonal relationships and intellectual matters dominated the rewarding aspects of being honors directors; program administration did not. The most frequently mentioned rewards were classified under “Working with Stakeholders,” in particular working with the students (315 responses). The second highest response on rewards was in the “Working with Stakeholders” dimension, with respondents citing the enjoyment of working closely with faculty (88 responses) and the campus community (11 responses). “Developing and Improving Program,” particularly modifying the curriculum, received a fairly high number of responses (77). “Being Scholarly,” in particular modeling a love of knowledge and coordinating undergraduate research, received a moderate number of responses (44 and 23, respectively) as did “Having Personal/Political Acumen” (35 responses).

DIFFERENCES BY INSTITUTION TYPE

Importance

We expected that institution types might differ in the importance placed on various roles and activities. To test this expectation, a multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was performed to determine whether Carnegie classification was related to a linear composite of the eight role ratings. Because the test indicated that Carnegie classification and role ratings were related ($F(24, 737)=3.31, p <.001$), follow-up univariate analyses were inspected to determine which institution types differed on the importance of which roles. Of the eight roles, differences appeared on three: “Being Scholarly,” “Having Personal/Political Acumen,” and “Being an Entrepreneur.”

On the “Being Scholarly” role ($F(3, 254)=10.54, p<.001$), those from associate institutions gave lower importance ratings than the other three groups according to Tukey tests. This effect was specific to the importance of coordinating honors student research, as indicated by a significant MANOVA with Carnegie classification as the independent variable and both items in this role as the dependent variables ($F(6, 516)=10.52, p<.001$), a significant follow-up univariate test on the coordinating research item ($F(3,260)=20.44, p<.001$), and Tukey tests, with a mean importance rating of 3.85 ($sd=2.20$) for associate institutions and means of 5.86 ($sd=1.24$), 5.50 ($sd=1.66$), and 5.73 ($sd=1.23$), for doctoral, master’s, and baccalaureate institutions, respectively. See Figure 4 in Appendix B for the importance ratings by institutional type for the “Being Scholarly” role and coordinating honors student research item.

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For “Personal/Political Acumen” ($F(3, 254)=6.14, p <.001$), Tukey tests indicated that the importance ratings were similar for doctoral and master’s institutions and exceeded those of baccalaureate and associate institutions. This effect resulted from the item on being politically savvy according to a significant MANOVA with Carnegie classification as the independent variable and both items in this role being the dependent variables ($F(6,512)=4.81, p<.001$), a significant follow-up univariate test for the savvy item ($F(3,258)=9.53, p<.001$), and Tukey tests with mean importance ratings of 6.21 ($sd=1.19$) and 6.33 ($sd=.79$) for doctoral and master’s institutions, respectively, in comparison to 5.53 ($sd=1.65$) and 5.31 ($sd=1.47$) for baccalaureate and associate institutions, respectively. See Figure 5 in Appendix B for the importance ratings by institutional type for the “Having Personal/Political Acumen” role and the being politically savvy item.

With regard to the “Being an Entrepreneur” role ($F(3, 254)=4.987, p<.01$), directors at doctoral institutions gave it higher importance ratings than directors from baccalaureate and associate institutions but not master’s institutions. This effect resulted from the raising funds ($F(3,257)=9.62, p<.001$) and maintaining ties with honors alumni ($F(3,257)=6.25, p<.001$) items according to significant univariate test results on these two items following a significant MANOVA ($F(12,758)=4.37, p<.001$). Doctoral institutions gave higher ratings of importance on the raising funds item ($m=4.90, sd=2.12$) than did master’s ($m=3.58, sd=2.08$), baccalaureate ($m=3.19, sd=2.21$), and associate ($m=3.00, sd=2.13$) institutions. For the maintaining ties item, doctoral ($m=4.90, sd=1.91$) and master’s ($m=4.45, sd=1.92$) institutions gave higher ratings than did associate institutions ($m=3.40, sd=1.91$), with baccalaureate institutions ($m=4.12, sd=1.97$) differing significantly from none of them. See Figure 6 in Appendix B for the importance ratings by institutional type for the “Being an Entrepreneur” role and raising funds for honors and maintaining ties with alumni items.

Importance/Performance Discrepancies

We also expected that there might be greater discrepancies between performance and importance ratings at different types of institutions. Discrepancies were computed by subtracting average importance from average performance items for each of the eight roles so that negative numbers indicate higher importance than performance and positive numbers indicate higher performance than importance. To test institution-related discrepancies between performance and importance ratings, a multivariate analysis was performed to determine whether Carnegie classification was related to a linear composite of the eight role discrepancy ratings. Because the test indicated that Carnegie and role discrepancy ratings were related ($F(24, 653)=3.05,$

$p < .001$), follow-up univariate analyses were inspected to determine which institution types differed on performance-importance discrepancies of which roles. Of the eight roles, differences occurred on two: "Recruiting and Retaining" and "Coordinating Honors Activities."

On the "Recruiting and Retaining" role ($F(3, 266)=4.51, p < .01$), those from doctoral institutions had ratings on performance that were more consistent with their ratings of importance ($m = -.30, sd = 1.01$) than did those from associate institutions ($m = -.99, sd = .98$), according to Tukey tests. While four items composed this role, the effect was specific to two: recruitment of students and retention of students, according to a significant MANOVA with Carnegie classification as the independent variable and all four items in this role as the dependent variables ($F(12, 716)=3.07, p < .001$), significant follow-up univariate tests on the recruiting ($F(3,243)=6.82, p < .001$) and retaining items ($F(3,243)=3.64, p < .05$), and Tukey tests. For the recruiting item, associate institutions had larger discrepancy ratings ($m = -1.53, sd = 1.35$) than did doctoral, master's, and baccalaureate institutions, where performance ratings more closely matched importance ratings ($m = -.66, sd = 1.28$; $m = -.68, sd = 1.34$; $m = -.48, sd = 1.42$, respectively). A slightly different pattern characterized the retention item; those from associate ($m = -1.30, sd = 1.28$) and master's ($m = -1.31, sd = 1.58$) but not baccalaureate institutions ($m = -1.02, sd = 1.29$) rated their performance on that item as much lower than its importance in comparison to doctoral institutions ($m = -.53, sd = 1.67$). See Figure 7 in Appendix B for differences between performance and importance ratings (i.e., discrepancies) by institution type for the "Recruiting and Retaining" role, recruiting students to honors item, and retaining students in honors item.

On the "Coordinating Honors Activities" role ($F(3, 266)=7.76, p < .001$), whereas those from doctoral institutions believed that their performance exceeded the importance of the role ($m = .45, sd = 1.16$), those from master's ($m = -.21, sd = 1.25$) and especially associate ($m = -.63, sd = 1.18$) institutions rated their performance on this role as lower than its importance, according to Tukey tests. A MANOVA with Carnegie classification as the independent variable and the three items composing the role as the dependent variables was significant ($F(9, 647)=2.99, p < .01$) as were the follow-up univariate tests on the coordinating faculty activities ($F(3,219)=6.83, p < .001$) and coordinating faculty-student activities ($F(3,219)=4.74, p < .01$) items. Tukey tests indicated that, like the overall "Coordinating Honors Activities" role finding, doctoral institutions' ratings of performance on the coordinating faculty activities items exceeded its importance ($m = .35, sd = 1.39$), whereas performance was lower than importance at the other institutional types: $m = -.28, sd = 1.13$ for master's; $m = -.32, sd = 1.31$ for baccalaureate; and $m = -.82, sd = 1.34$ for associate institutions. With regard to the coordinating faculty and

student activities item, directors at associate institutions rated performance as lower than importance ($m=-.66$, $sd=1.21$) in comparison to directors at baccalaureate institutions, which gave equal performance and importance ratings ($m=0$, $sd=1.26$), and those at doctoral institutions, where performance was rated as higher than importance ($m=.29$, $sd=1.22$), mirroring the overall “Coordinating Honors Activities” role. See Figure 8 in Appendix B for differences between performance and importance ratings (i.e., discrepancies) by institution type for the “Coordinating Honors Activities” role, coordinating honors faculty activities item, and coordinating honors student-faculty activities item.

DISCUSSION

Previous work on the roles of honors directors has been primarily qualitative in nature, with some exceptions (e.g., Ada Long’s 1995 handbook), and has lacked comparisons to quantitative information about the validity of those roles. Additionally, little attention has been paid to how the activities of honors directors differ by institutional type. The goals of the current project were to fill these gaps in the literature, specifically (1) to collect quantitative data on what directors do, who helps them, what roles and activities they deem as most important, and whether there are gaps between importance and performance of the activities; (2) to determine whether the qualitative data on the rewards, challenges, and strategies to meet the challenges could be classified according to the roles addressed by the quantitative questions; and (3) to examine potential differences in the structure, roles, and activities of the position according to institutional type.

The thirty-five-item quantitative measure for this study was based primarily on material in the Fall/Winter 2006 (7.2) issue of the *JNCHC* that included the republished work of Godow from twenty years earlier and commentaries from several honors administrators regarding the validity of the six roles he discussed; a presentation at the 2008 NCHC Conference by Schroeder and Bogue on the roles of honors directors at small colleges; and the insights of the second author, Marian Bruce, who works at a larger university.

While Godow listed only six roles—“lover of wisdom,” “curriculum reformer,” “general administrator,” “entrepreneur,” “admissions officer,” and “student activities coordinator,”—the current research showed evidence confirming eight by means of a principal components analysis on importance ratings of the 35 items, only 32 of which were retained after the analysis. The eight roles roughly mapped onto the previous work of Godow: (1) “Being Scholarly” was like Godow’s “lover of wisdom”; (2) “Developing and Improving the Program” was like “curriculum reformer”; (3) “Administering

the Program” was like “general administrator”; (4) “Having Personal/Political Acumen” was one aspect of Godow’s “entrepreneur,” i.e., getting “the system to work to the advantages of the students and faculty in the program” (21); (5) “Recruiting and Retaining” was like his “recruitment officer”; and (6) “Coordinating Honors Activities” was like his “student activities coordinator.” There were two primary differences between Godow’s work and our own: Godow referred to the entrepreneur as getting resources from within the institution, but our corresponding label “Being an Entrepreneur” referred primarily to procuring resources from outside the institution, like Zane’s “skilled operative in external relations” in his article from the Fall/Winter 2006 issue of *JNCHC* mentioned above. Rosalie C. Otero’s addition to Godow’s list in that same issue was confirmed by our final role: “Working with Stakeholders.”

The relative ease with which qualitative comments regarding rewards, challenges, and strategies to address those challenges could be classified according to the eight roles distilled from the quantitative data confirmed the validity of our measure. However, the qualitative comments are also useful in and of themselves, illuminating the quantitative data in a way that captures what many honors directors experience on a daily basis. Specifically, honors directors said they are short on resources and time to do the important work of honors: adding value to the lives of students, faculty, and institutions through well-designed, effective, dynamic, and challenging programs. At the same time, honors directors like what they do, especially communicating with students, faculty, and others in the college community about honors.

While all data collected could not be reported in the results section, the ratings of how rewarding as well as how challenging it is to be an honors director are relevant here. In both cases, regardless of Carnegie classification type, the average reward rating and challenging rating exceeded 6 on a 7-point scale. The fact that directors rated their performance on 7 of the 8 roles, and 23 of the 32 activities, as statistically lower than their importance can certainly help to explain the high challenging rating. The nature of the discrepancies between performance and importance related to Carnegie classification type. Specifically, those at doctoral institutions had ratings of performance on the “Recruiting and Retaining” role that were fairly consistent with their ratings of importance and even exceeded their ratings of importance on the “Coordinating Honors Activities” role. This pattern was in greatest contrast to ratings at associate institutions, where ratings of performance were lower than ratings of importance.

While directors at doctoral institutions indicated performance ratings more similar to their importance ratings on the “Recruiting and Retaining” and “Coordinating Honors Activities” roles than did directors at other types

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of institutions, these were not the activities differing in importance by institution type. Instead, “Being Scholarly,” “Being an Entrepreneur,” and “Having Personal/Political Acumen” were generally rated as more important at doctoral than at other institution types, perhaps consistent with the research, fund-raising, and political emphases of larger institutions.

Structural matters, in particular the workload and staffing, also revealed some clear differences by institution types. Honors directors at master’s and doctoral institutions appeared to work more hours on honors-related activities, corresponding to a greater percentage of their work time. However, they also received higher overload/stipend pay, and those at doctoral institutions were typically more likely to have an associate or assistant director, administrative assistant, student employees, and student volunteers, all of which might ease some of the burden. Still, when percentage of work time and hours per week associated with honors were used to compute the average number of hours worked per week by directors, those at master’s and doctoral institutions spent more time at work (53 and 54, respectively) than those at baccalaureate (48) and associate (40) institutions.

CONCLUSION

The results of the current project could be useful for several reasons. First, it produced an instrument that operationalized the varied roles of honors directors in a way that mapped onto past writings and research, according to a principal components analysis. Having a quantitative, validated instrument can be helpful for further research examining the lives of honors directors. Second, as many of us do not receive job descriptions when we take on our positions as honors directors, this instrument can inform new and even seasoned directors about what the job entails.

Third, because the data were presented by Carnegie institution type, honors directors can focus on their Carnegie classification in prioritizing the roles and activities they perform as well as in making more effective pleas to the administration for resources. Finally, the data showed similarities in the jobs of honors directors, thus confirming the importance of general sessions at NCHC conferences; at the same time, the data also indicated differences by institutional type, suggesting that the specialized sessions and committees at NCHC for large universities, small colleges, and two-year colleges are necessary.

Some weaknesses of the project are worthy of mention. The first is potential lack of applicability to honors institutions that are not members of the NCHC; among these institutions might be ones that do not have the funds for membership or that may not be developed enough to be aware of the NCHC. The second weakness is that some data had to be dropped because of

failure of respondents to complete the survey, probably because of its length; if those who did not complete the survey differed in important ways from those who did, application of results to non-completers might be questionable. Finally, while steps were taken to control Type I error rate, such as performing multivariate analyses before univariate tests and using Bonferroni corrections, some Type I errors may still have occurred due to multiple analyses on the same data.

On the qualitative data, the large number of responses (1,979 individual responses) meant that we were unable to do a detailed analysis on the data by, for instance, classifying them by Carnegie type as well as by role. Seeing the differences between challenges, rewards, and strategies according to institution size could be valuable and would certainly be a direction for future research. Some responses that were difficult to classify into a single role, such as the strategy of “empowering staff,” a response more likely to be given at a large institution than a small one, might indicate that our roles still may not be capturing all the activities of honors directors at every institution. We believe that future research would be beneficial to replicate, clarify, and perhaps extend the roles we described.

NOTES

This article is based on research first presented at the 44th Annual Conference of the National Collegiate Honors Council in Washington, D.C., October 28–November 1, 2009. We have used the words “director” and “program” in this paper for the sake of clarity, but our research extends to honors deans and colleges as well.

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Table 1. Workload and Compensation by Institution Type

	Institution Type			
	Associate N = 59	Baccalaureate N=74	Master's N=73	Doctoral N=59
Workload of Honors				
<i>% of Work Time*</i>	M =41.92 <i>SD</i> =24.94	M =46.47 <i>SD</i> =24.24	M=69.67 <i>SD</i> =25.69	M=80.36 <i>SD</i> =21.86
<i>Number of Hours Per Week*</i>	M=16.97 <i>SD</i> =13.11	M=22.41 <i>SD</i> =15.31	M=36.61 <i>SD</i> =18.95	M=42.59 <i>SD</i> =16.10
Compensation				
<i>Course Reduction</i>				
<i>% Receiving Course Reduction</i>	57.6 (n=34)	67.6 (n=50)	74.0 (n=54)	72.9 (n=43)
<i>% Reduction **</i>	M=41.74 <i>SD</i> =23.28	M=38.07 <i>SD</i> =18.04	M=63.86 <i>SD</i> =27.32	M=76.91 <i>SD</i> =28.01
<i>Stipend/Overload Amount</i>				
<i>% Receiving Stipend/Overload</i>	27.1 (n=16)	27.0 (n=20)	34.2 (n=25)	16.9 (n=10)
<i>Dollar Amount Per Year ***</i>	M=2770 <i>SD</i> =1230 Mdn=3000	M=4107 <i>SD</i> =2792 Mdn=4000	M=6988 <i>SD</i> =4690 Mdn=5000	M=10219 <i>SD</i> =9420 Mdn=7000

* Master's and doctoral institutions did not differ from each other but had higher means than baccalaureate and associate institutions that did not differ from each other.

** Doctoral institutions had higher means than master's institutions; both were higher than associate and baccalaureate institutions that did not differ from each other.

*** Doctoral and master's institutions had higher medians than associate institutions. No other differences were significant.

Table 2. Others Helping to Administer Honors by Institution Type

	Institution Type				$\chi^2(3)$ value
	Associate N = 59	Baccalaureate N=74	Master's N=73	Doctoral N=59	
Associate/Assistant Director or Dean	28.8%	29.7%	42.5%	72.9%	31.72**
Administrative Assistant/Secretary	44.1%	43.2%	67.1%	88.1%	35.90**
Student Volunteers	11.9%	23.0%	24.7%	37.3%	10.49*
Student Employees	15.3%	29.7%	45.2%	69.5%	40.63**
Faculty	32.2%	24.3%	23.3%	39.0%	5.09
Only Me	18.6%	23.0%	11.0%	3.4%	11.82**

**p<.01 in χ^2 tests*p<.05 in χ^2 tests

Table 3. Ratings of Importance; Perceptions of Performance; and Examples of Challenges, Strategies, and Rewards Associated with the 8 Honors Director/Dean Dimensions

Dimension	Importance Performance				Challenges	Strategies	Rewards
	M	SD	M	SD			
Being Scholarly ($\alpha = .405$)**	5.92	1.04	5.55	1.06			
Being a model of a love of knowledge **	6.20	1.13	5.90	1.09	inspiring students to rise to challenge of honors work (18)		seeing students embrace academic challenges and grow (44)
Coordinating undergraduate research of honors students **	5.59	1.50	5.19	1.49	motivating students to attempt and complete thesis, finding faculty to advise theses (9)	maintaining contact, hiring asst. director, having undergraduate research program (3)	seeing students successfully complete and present projects (23)
Developing and Improving Program ($\alpha = .776$) **	5.74	.88	5.23	.96			
Modifying the curriculum	5.75	1.36	5.48	1.25	balancing the honors curriculum with other programs (32)	including civic engagement in curriculum, creating honors-only course for juniors (4)	developing innovative courses/program, leading campus in change (77)
Training honors faculty **	5.15	1.42	4.28	1.51	helping faculty to understand what constitutes an honors course (7)		
Evaluating honors faculty **	5.14	1.43	4.50	1.56			
Improving the program **	6.39	.94	5.61	1.09	maintaining small class sizes, quality course offerings (5)	continuous review of program (1)	

**Importance is greater than performance at $p < 0.001$ level (2-tailed) using dependent groups t -tests

Table 3. Continued

Dimension	Importance Performance				Challenges	Strategies	Rewards
	M	SD	M	SD			
Scheduling honors courses **	6.26	1.10	5.70	1.21	finding faculty to teach honors classes, getting release time for faculty (37), time conflicts with students' majors (16)	recruiting new engaged faculty (7)	
Revising honors program/college mission	5.25	1.59	5.17	1.43			
Administering Program ($\alpha = .767$)	5.61	.92	5.50	.88			
Managing the budget	6.00	1.33	6.06	1.26	lack of money and resources (115)		
Updating student files **	5.94	1.18	5.62	1.23	tracking student progress (9)	using IT to assist, hiring part-time staff to create data files (6)	
Writing/editing internal publications	4.72	1.60	4.95	1.51			
Collating honors related institutional data	4.95	1.60	4.93	1.48	keeping track of data, assessing program (15)	using technology and finding ways to document program success (14)	
Maintaining an honors website **	5.34	1.57	4.89	1.66			
Answering questions about honors	6.37	.84	6.37	.81			
Having Personal/Political Acumen ($\alpha = .638$)**	5.69	1.14	4.69	1.29			
Being able to say no to requests for your time **	5.33	1.50	4.06	1.74	lack of time, information overload(75)	putting in long hours (18), being more organized, saying	

**Importance is greater than performance at $p < 0.001$ level (2-tailed) using dependent groups *t*-tests

Table 3. Continued

Dimension	Importance Performance				Challenges	Strategies	Rewards
	M	SD	M	SD			
						no, delegating (22), other, like don't sweat what can't change, patience, candor (35)	
Being politically savvy **	5.98	1.22	5.31	1.40	administrative indifference, ignorance about why honors matters (75)	networking, cultivating relations with higher ups in administration, (72), using NCHC (5)	getting support from administration, learning more about university administration (35)
Recruiting and Retaining ($\alpha = .709$) **	5.81	.92	5.15	.98			
Recruiting students to honors **	6.13	1.91	5.31	1.32	limited resources, difficulty reaching right students (47)	working with admissions, recruiting in summer, using students (14)	helping students and parents with decisions (5)
Retaining students in honors **	6.01	1.11	4.98	1.36	motivating students to continue, advising (44)	publicizing student successes, staying in contact with students, peer or faculty mentors (20)	knowing that students will benefit in the future (5)
Fielding honors students' crises	5.31	1.43	5.47	1.17	dealing with student crises (4)		
Publicizing the honors program/college **	5.84	1.13	4.89	1.32	publicizing program with limited resources, misperceptions about program (14)	working with admissions office, having events, developing a graphic brand, spotlighting honors on college web page (11)	

**Importance is greater than performance at $p < 0.001$ level (2-tailed) using dependent groups *t*-tests

Table 3. Continued

Dimension	Importance Performance				Challenges	Strategies	Rewards
	M	SD	M	SD			
Coordinating Honors Activities ($\alpha = .776$) **	5.11	1.19	4.85	1.29			
Coordinating honors student activities **	5.62	1.28	5.28	1.39	time to organize, lack of participation, low sense of community (30)	using students to organize, coming up with creative, low-cost intellectual activities (16)	
Coordinating honors faculty activities	4.69	1.58	4.43	1.61			
Coordinating honors student-faculty activities	4.79	1.44	4.82	1.49	scheduling, faculty don't participate (18)		community service, creating a learning community (7)
Being an Entrepreneur ($\alpha = .807$) **	4.14	1.61	3.30	1.42			
Writing honors related grant proposals **	3.55	1.81	2.88	1.83			
Raising funds for honors **	4.55	2.00	3.56	1.89	difficulty raising external funds (36)	cultivating relationships with development office, creating student organization (15), finding funds creatively (12)	
Cultivating ties with external agencies **	4.08	1.87	3.50	1.87	becoming a college, keeping major donors engaged (2)		
Maintaining ties with honors alumni **	4.67	1.76	4.00	1.77	obtaining data about honors alumni, alumni having multiple allegiances (7)	cultivating relationships with alumni, seeking their input (7)	hearing from alumni and success stories (10)

**Importance is greater than performance at $p < 0.001$ level (2-tailed) using dependent groups *t*-tests

Table 3. Continued

Dimension	Importance Performance				Challenges	Strategies	Rewards
	M	SD	M	SD			
Working with Stakeholders ($\alpha = .790$) **	6.03	.90	5.33	1.04			
Communicating with students and faculty in honors **	6.50	.84	5.55	1.16	staying on top of communication, getting responses (10)	e-mail, newsletters, internal chat room, multiple occasions to meet (15)	
Collaborating with faculty about program changes **	5.87	1.28	5.17	1.30	coordinating with, retaining, getting help from faculty (7)	partnering with faculty, using faculty committees to help make program changes and major decisions (56)	enjoyment of working with engaged faculty outside of discipline (88)
Collaborating with students about program changes **	5.92	1.19	5.24	1.33		finding good students to help with honors activities and initiatives, getting feedback from students, trusting them (28)	working with students (315)
Developing good working relations with others in the college community **	6.27	1.09	5.58	1.23	raising profile of honors on campus, other units don't see value of honors, lack of trust (32)	getting to know people in other departments, administrative units; finding allies; being friendly (94)	having a positive impact on campus (11)
Presenting about Honors to other campus groups **	5.58	1.42	5.07	1.48			

**Importance is greater than performance at $p < 0.001$ level (2-tailed) using dependent groups *t*-tests

APPENDIX B

Figure 1. Comparison of the Average Importance Ratings of the Eight Honors Director Roles

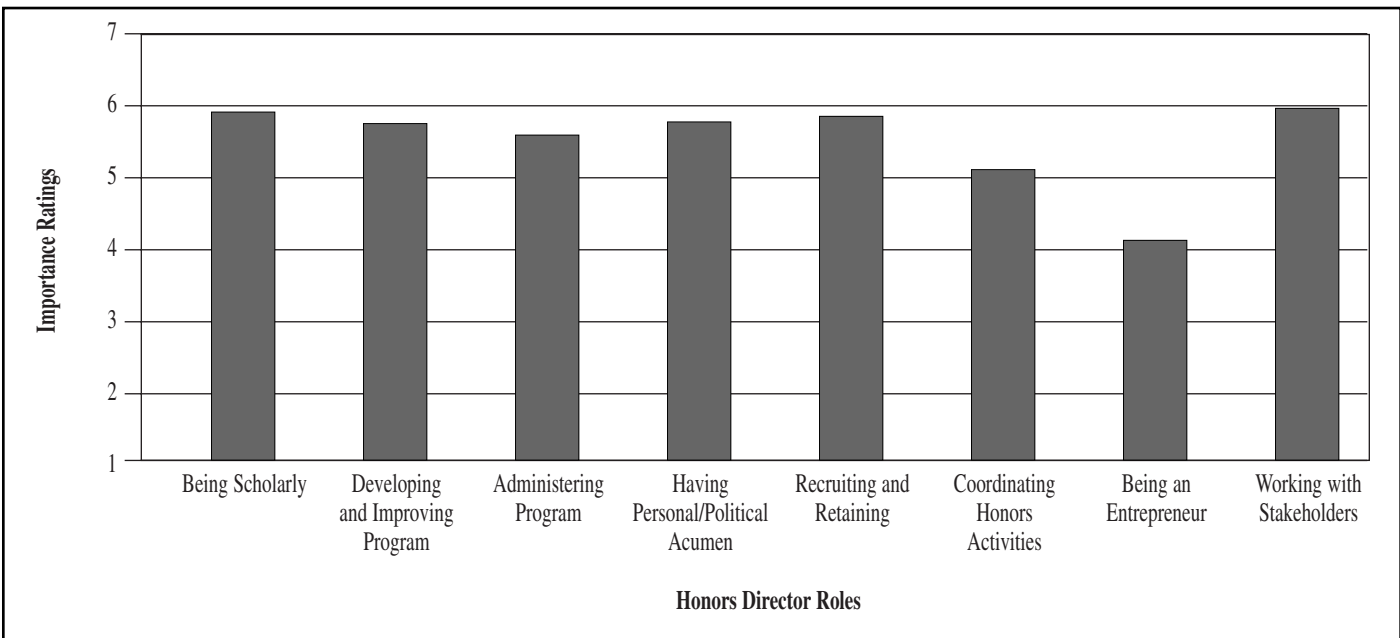
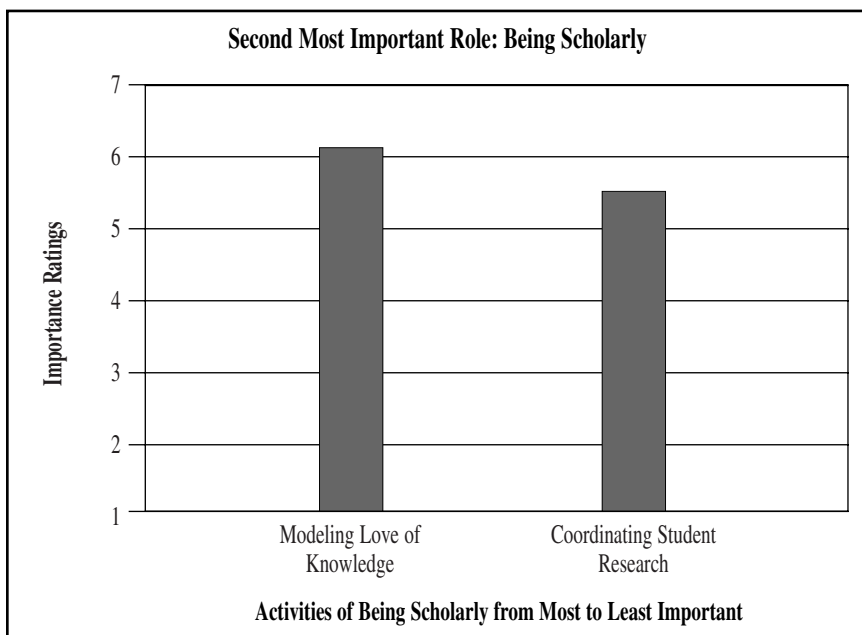
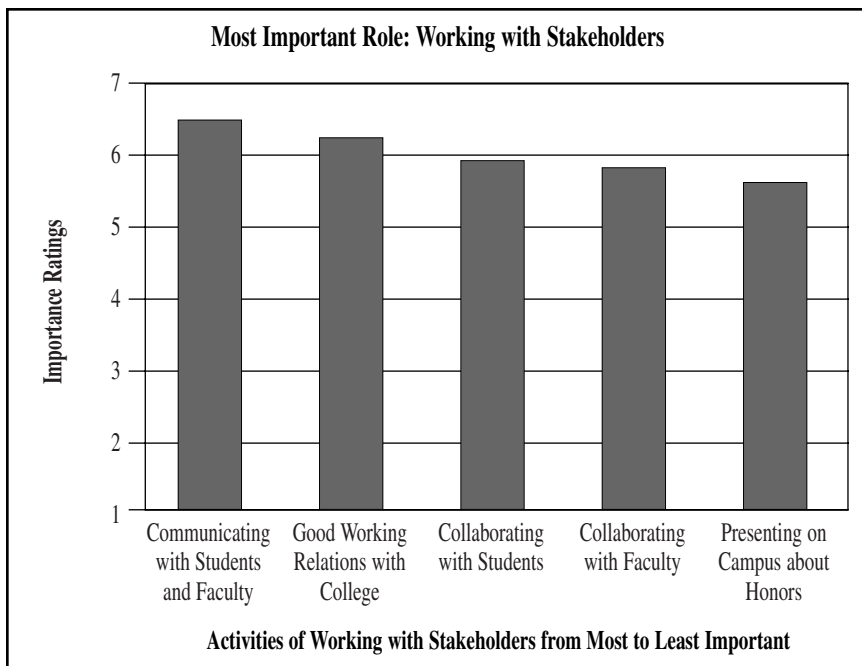


Figure 2. Importance Ratings of Activities of the Three Most Important Roles: “Working with Stakeholders,” “Being Scholarly,” and “Recruiting and Retaining.”



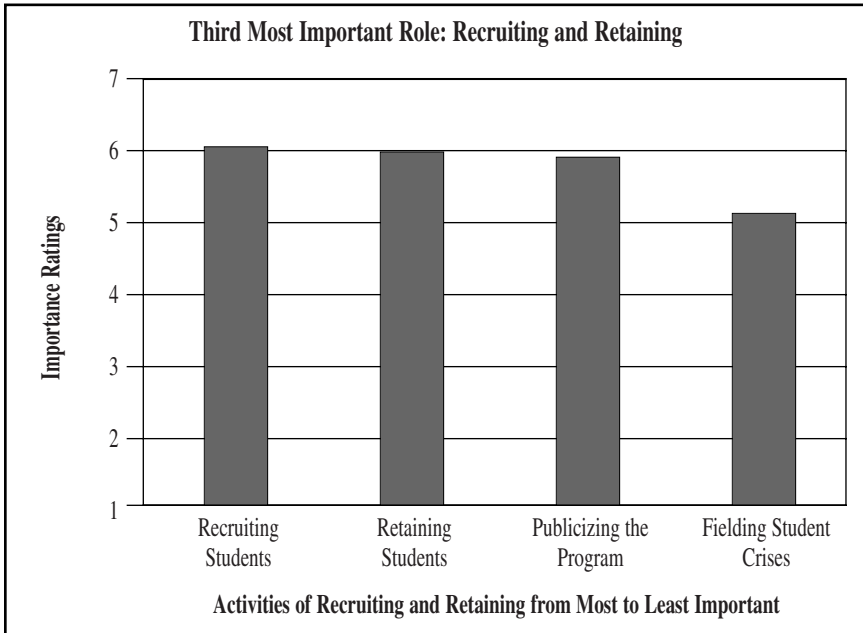
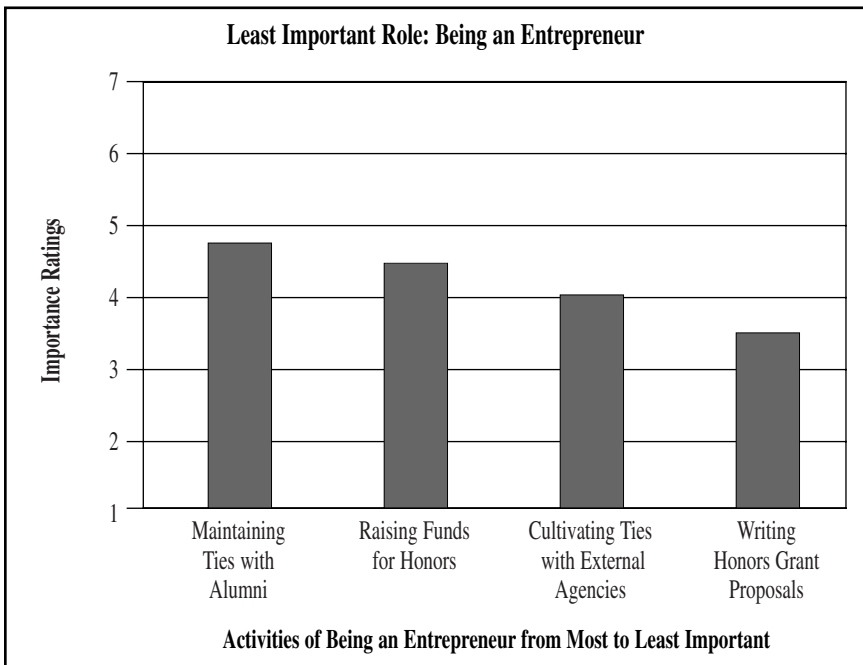


Figure 3. Importance Ratings of Activities of the Two Least Important Roles: “Being an Entrepreneur” and “Coordinating Honors Activities”



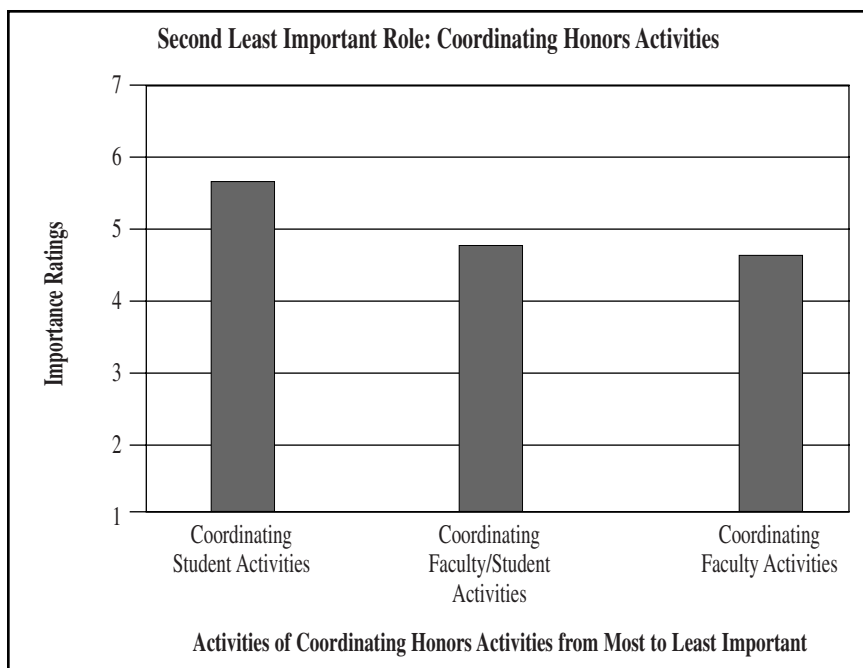
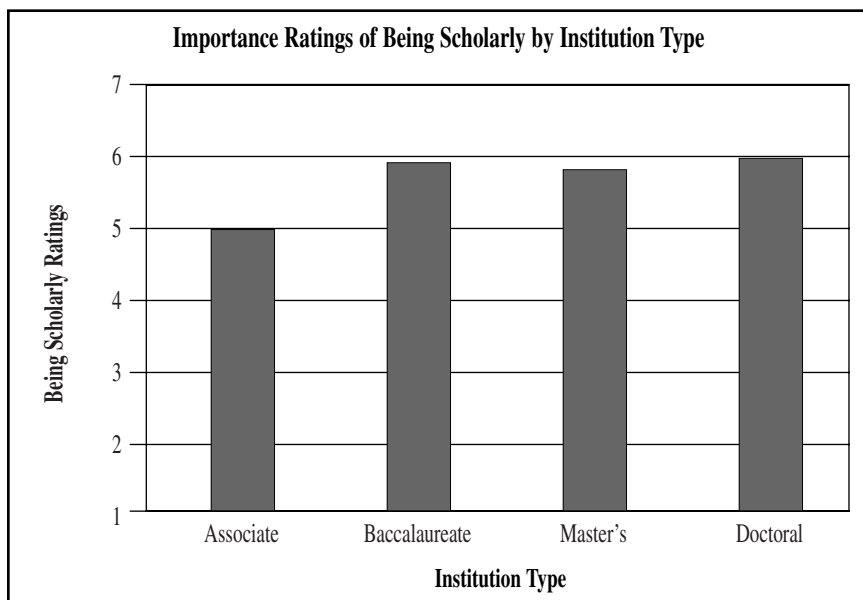


Figure 4. Institutional Differences in Importance Ratings for “Being Scholarly” Role and Coordinating Honors Student Research Item Associated with That Role



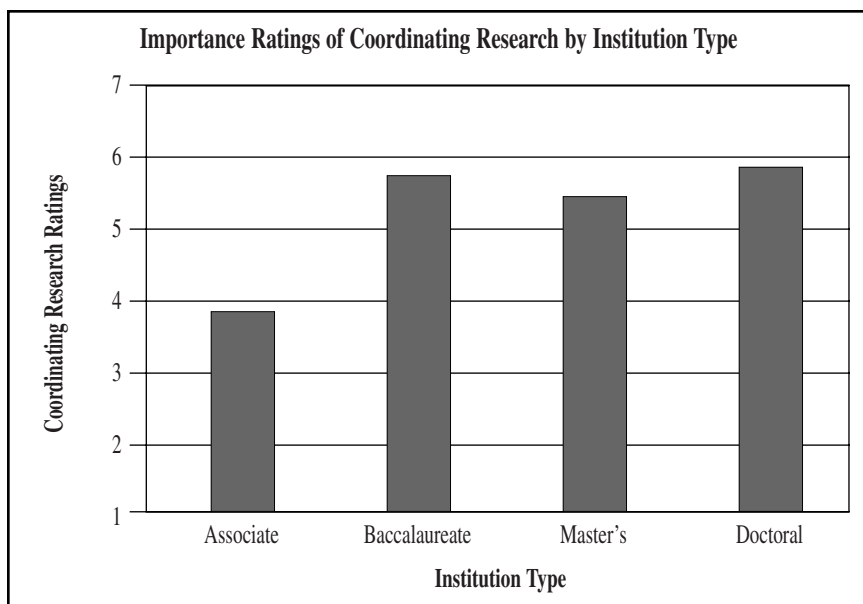
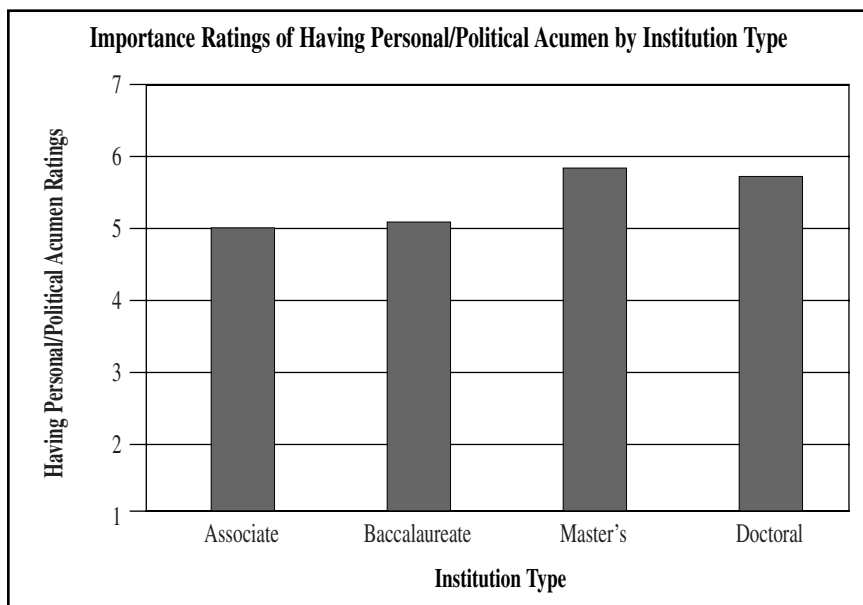


Figure 5. Institutional Differences in Importance Ratings for “Having Personal/Political Acumen” Role and Being Politically Savvy Item Associated with That Role



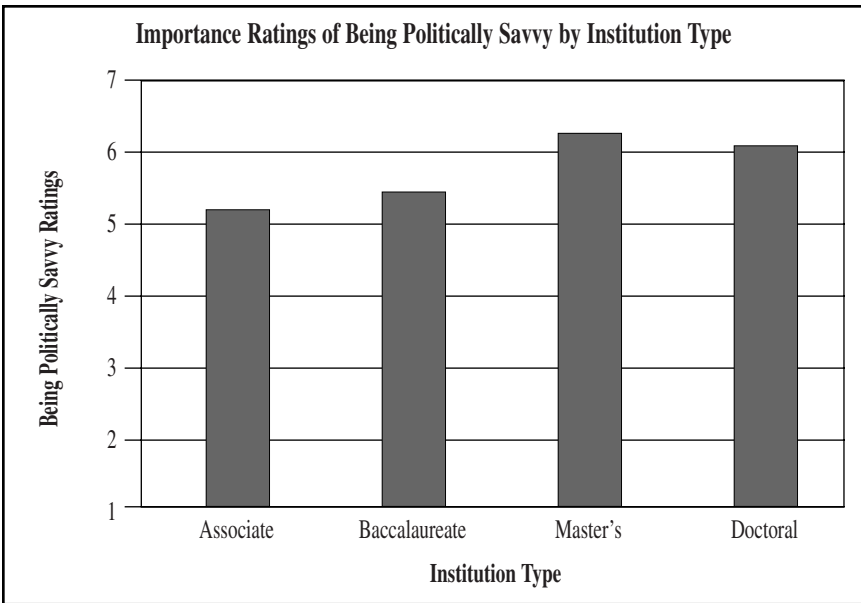
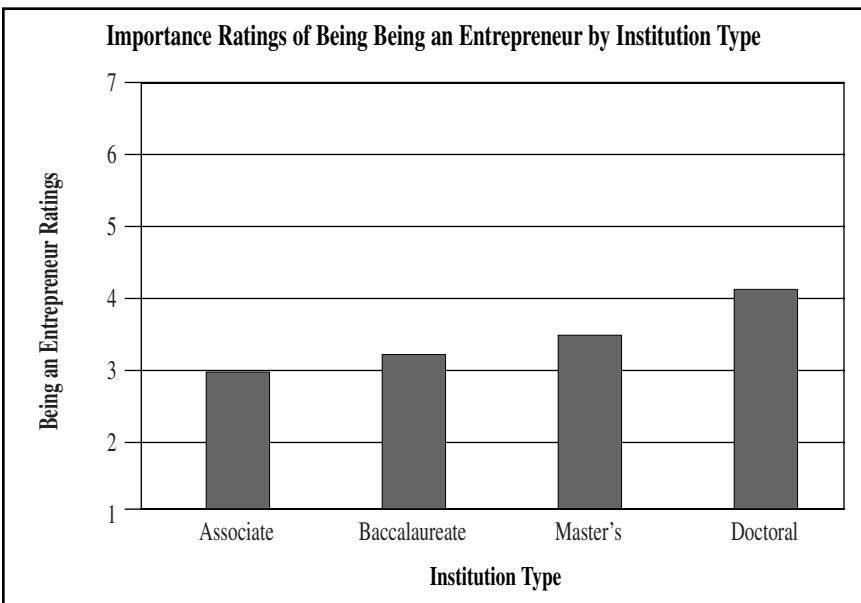


Figure 6. Institutional Differences in Importance Ratings for “Being an Entrepreneur” Role and Raising Funds for Honors and Maintaining Ties with Alumni Items Associated with That Role



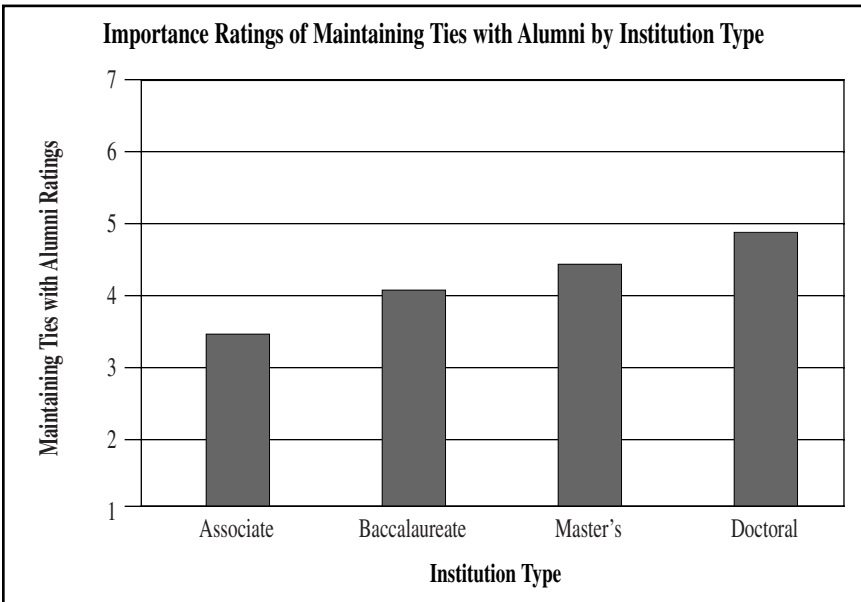
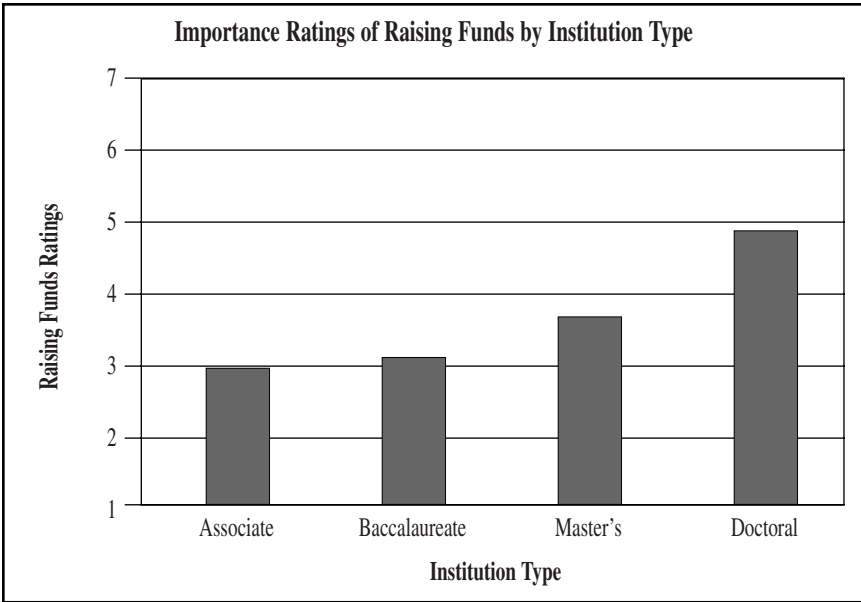
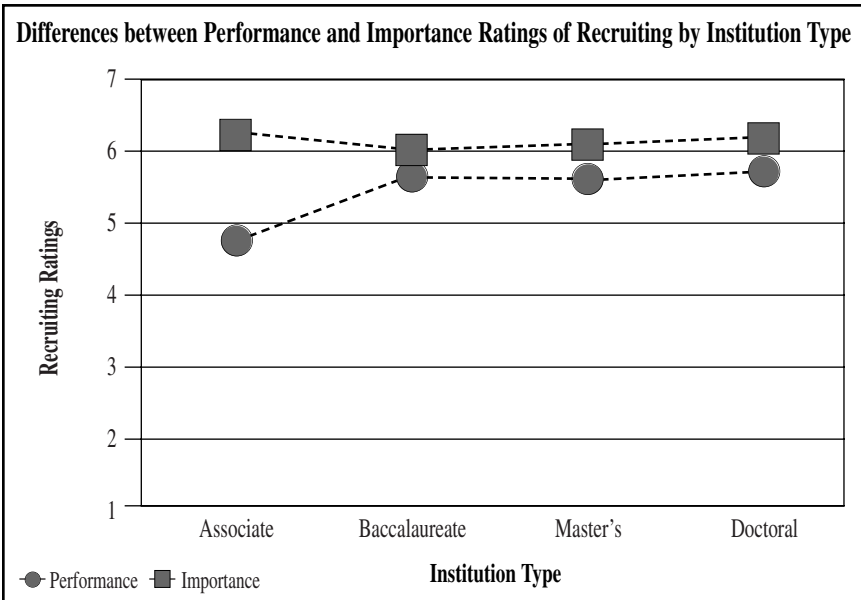
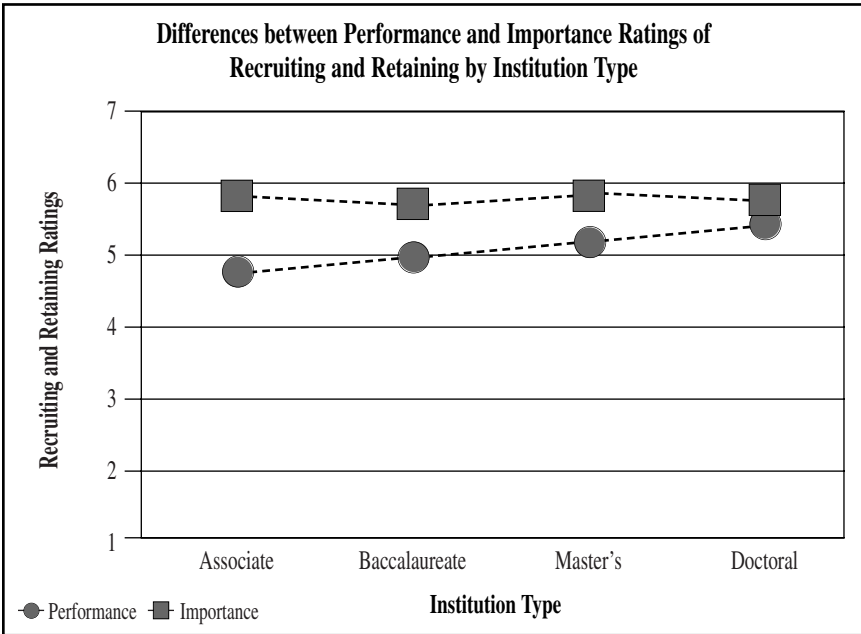


Figure 7. Differences Between Performance and Importance Ratings for “Recruiting and Retaining” Role and Recruiting Students to Honors and Retaining Students in Honors Items Associated with That Role by Institution Type



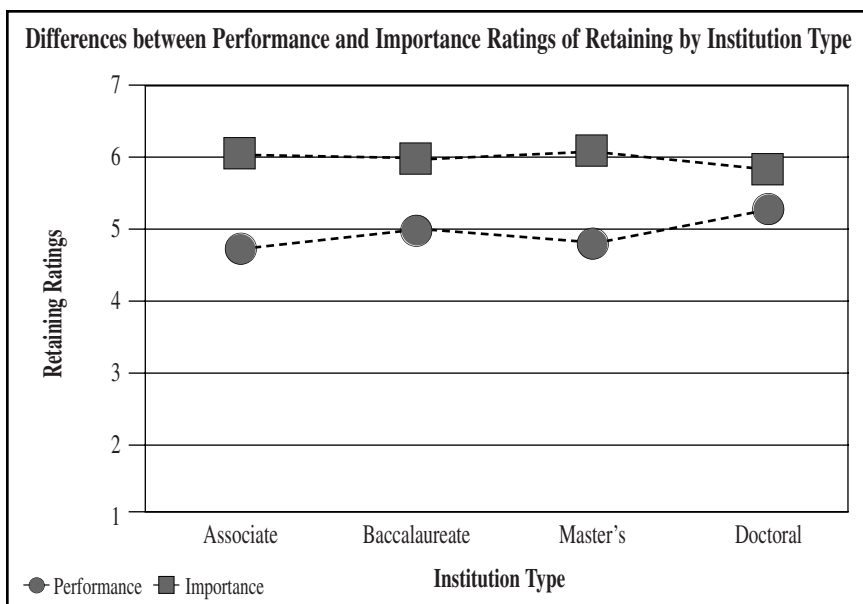


Figure 8. Differences Between Performance and Importance Ratings for “Coordinating Honors Activities” Role and Coordinating Honors Faculty Activities and Coordinating Honors-Student Faculty Activities Associated with That Role by Institution Type

