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JNCHC

JOURNAL OF THE NATIONAL COLLEGIATE HONORS COUNCIL

Spring/Summer 2004

Vol. 5, No. 1

IN THIS ISSUE

RESEARCH IN HONORS

WITH ESSAYS BY:

CHERYL ACHTERBERG

ELLEN BUCKNER

PIERRE VAN EIJL

TED ESTESS

ANNMARIE GUZY

GREG PHILLIPS

ALBERT PILOT

ROBERT ROEMER

SAM SCHUMAN

PETER SEDERBERG

RICHARD STOLLER

MARCA
WOLFENBERGER

KELLY YOUNGER



JOURNAL OF THE NATIONAL COLLEGIATE HONORS COUNCIL

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HONORS EDUCATION

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JNCHC

**JOURNAL OF THE
NATIONAL COLLEGIATE HONORS COUNCIL**

A PUBLICATION OF THE NATIONAL COLLEGIATE HONORS COUNCIL

RESEARCH IN HONORS

JOURNAL EDITORS

ADA LONG

DAIL MULLINS

RUSTY RUSHTON

UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA AT BIRMINGHAM

The National Collegiate Honors Council is an association of faculty, students, and others interested in honors education. Norman Weiner, President, State University of New York at Oswego; Virginia McCombs, President-Elect, Oklahoma City University; Jon Schlenker, Vice President, University of Maine, Augusta; Donzell Lee, Immediate Past President, Alcorn State University; Liz Beck, Executive Secretary/Treasurer, Iowa State University. Executive Committee: Larry Andrews, Kent State University; Kambra Bolch, Texas Tech University; Akofa Bonsi, University of Alabama at Birmingham; Kate Bruce, University of North Carolina, Wilmington; Bruce Carter, Syracuse University; Lawrence Clark, Southeast Missouri State University; Lydia Daniel, Hillsborough Community College; Adam D'Antonio, Long Island University, C. W. Post; David Duncan, University of Florida; Maggie Hill, Oklahoma State University; Holly Hitt, Mississippi State University; Sophia Ortiz, Long Island University, Brooklyn; Nancy Poulson, Florida Atlantic University; Jack Rhodes, The Citadel; Jacci Rodgers, Oklahoma City University; Ricki Shine, Iowa State University; Charlie Slavin, University of Maine.

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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 may be forwarded in hard copy, on disk, or as an e-mail attachment. Submissions and inquiries should be directed to: Ada Long / JNCHC / UAB Honors Program / HOH / 1530 3rd Avenue South/Birmingham, AL 35294-4450 / Phone: (205) 934-3228 / Fax: (205) 975-5493 / E-mail: adalong@uab.edu.

DEADLINES

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

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Cover photography by Michelle Forman

CALL FOR PAPERS

JNCHC is now accepting articles for the Fall/Winter 2004 issue (Vol. 5, No. 2): "The Sociology and Psychology of Honors." We are interested in submissions that deal with such matters as student demographics; personality profiles (perhaps pre- and post-admission); the honors "environment"; campus-wide perceptions of honors programs and students; standardized tests; honors vs. non-honors curricula; "academic dishonesty" in honors courses and programs, including plagiarism; and service learning experiences in honors.

DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSIONS IS SEPTEMBER 1, 2004

The following issue (**deadline: March 1, 2005**) will be a general-interest issue.

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

1. We prefer to receive material by e-mail attachment but will also accept disk or hard copy. We will not accept material by fax.
2. 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 is preferred; end notes are acceptable.
3. There are no minimum or maximum length requirements; the length should be dictated by the topic and its most effective presentation.
4. Accepted essays will be edited for grammatical and typographical errors and for obvious infelicities of style or presentation. Variations in matters such as "honors" or "Honors," "1970s" or "1970's," and the inclusion or exclusion of a comma before "and" in a list will usually be left to the author's discretion.
5. Submissions and inquiries should be directed to:

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DEDICATION



JOAN DIGBY

Joan Digby serves as exemplar, muse, and presiding genius of this issue of JNCHC devoted to Research in Honors. Joan has been on the English Department faculty at Long Island University, C. W. Post Campus since 1969, full professor since 1979, and Director of the Honors Program since 1977. Throughout her almost three decades in honors, Joan has been active in the National Collegiate Honors Council. She has served on the Publications Board and the Honors Research Committee; she has been a referee for the former *Forum for Honors* and the current *Journal of the National Collegiate Honors Council*; she was NCHC President in 2000; and she planned and edited three editions of *Peterson's Guide to Honors Program & Colleges* (1997, 1999, 2002). She has published many other books, essays, and poems, and she has been active in many other organizations (including service as President of the Northeast NCHC).

Joan has been a champion for serious and rigorous scholarship among faculty, administrators, and students in Honors throughout her long tenure in NCHC. She is a woman of many and various passions that include horseback riding, poetry, art, cooking, swimming with dolphins, and feeding large populations of stray cats. The NCHC has been the fortunate beneficiary of her passion for excellence in research, and we thus respectfully and affectionately dedicate this issue of JNCHC to Joan Digby.

The person who speaks best for Joan Digby is Joan Digby, and so, as part of this dedication, we include her wisdom on the subject of student research in honors:

JOAN DIGBY

Undergraduate Research in Honors

JOAN DIGBY

LONG ISLAND UNIVERSITY, C. W. POST CAMPUS

I have very strong feelings about undergraduate honors research, having had a mandatory thesis in my program for more than twenty-five years. I think that the thesis is the most important part of my program. It is the acid test of completion. Many students go through the courses (the way Ph.D. students often do) and then bow out before the final curtain. Either they have gained enough scholarship support to see the light at the end of the tunnel, or they fear a 50-page project, or they are already focused on a professional school, a job, a marriage, a move, or something else. I hunt down the would-be drop-outs because I believe that the decision to be in the program should be a decision to complete the program. I am the hound of hell!

Those who do their research and write their thesis go through a total catharsis when it is complete. I hold a sequence of colloquia to ease them through because I know how important closure is in the whole process.

Is undergraduate honors research “real” research? Who knows? In some fields I have heard faculty speak approvingly of the work accomplished. Recently in music we have had two very fine theses—one on song settings for Blake and another on musical interpretations of Faust. It is clear that the mentors believe these theses to be genuine research that will influence the professional careers of the students who wrote them.

When students present their work to each other and to their mentors in colloquia, I can tell that many represent, if not original work, then at least sustained and extremely compelling studies that are important to the faculty who direct them. The honors thesis, indeed, plays a certain role in binding students to faculty in their majors and affirming faculty conviction that undergraduates can become professionals in the field. I think that alone is an important purpose of the thesis, and it may—though I can’t tell—also have impact on alumni bonding to undergraduate faculty mentors.

Another purpose is to reinforce methods of research and teach the students to write. The honors thesis in my program (with some exceptions in Mathematics, Economics and like departments) is a 50-page paper. In the fine arts it may be shorter but is submitted with CD, performance video, music tape, etc., so the project represents other dimensions of performance and production that are at least the equivalent of fifty pages. Many theses, of course, are much longer. For every student who submits a thesis, it is a testimony to months of work and logic and organization. I believe that a student who has gone through this process can undertake a project in

UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH IN HONORS

any profession and know how to gain control of information in order to interpret it and write coherently about it.

Although undergraduate research is rarely publishable, much of it is readable, and in an age when very little is readable, we should do everything we can to encourage honors students to investigate carefully and compose their findings in a readable thesis. The thesis is the last chance they have to sharpen their language skills.

Finally, I have been—like most us—increasingly concerned about Internet-based and other forms of plagiarism. Undergraduate thesis research gives us an extended opportunity to teach students how to work legitimately with sources, and I think we have the obligation to take this ethical stand with the students we graduate from honors programs and colleges.

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EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

ADA LONG

UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA AT BIRMINGHAM

Faithful followers of the *Journal of the National Collegiate Honors Council* know already that the fall/winter issues center on a particular theme while the spring/summer issues solicit articles on any honors-related topic. The four thematic issues so far have addressed science, creative arts, technology, and multi-perspectivism in honors. The four general issues have serendipitously fallen into and upon themes as well, themes that are broader but that nevertheless allow perspectives on a single topic rather than simple miscellany; so far these emergent themes have been "Liberal Learning in the New Century," "Educational Transitions," "Liberal Learning" (again), and "Students and Teachers in Honors." This ninth issue of *JNCHC* has also fallen onto a theme: "Research in Honors."

Twenty years ago, the predecessor of *JNCHC* as the national refereed journal for Honors, *Forum for Honors*, included a special section called "Writing for *Forum for Honors*," the purpose of which was to be reflective and reflexive about scholarship in the "field" of Honors education. Sam Schuman, Ted Estess, and Bob Roemer each expressed a distinct perspective on what Honors scholarship is and should be. We revive this conversation in the "Forum on Research in Honors," which reprints the three twenty-year-old essays along with two current responses to them.

My own rereading of Schuman's, Estess's, and Roemer's essays convinces me once again that "plus ça change, plus ça reste même." As an editor of *JNCHC* for four years, I have repeatedly pondered the same issues and formulated many of the same responses. All three authors agree that scholarship in honors does not include descriptions of individual programs or curricula or experiences in Honors. Such descriptions might have great value—in some instances, no doubt, greater value to honors administrators, especially new ones, than research in or about honors—but are nevertheless something other than scholarship. Schuman grants, in a way that Estess might not, that such descriptions migrate into the realm of scholarship if and only if they have what Roemer calls a "theoretical moment" and what Schuman calls abstraction, namely the necessity that the content be "generalized or generalizable" beyond a specific time and place. Another way of making this point might be that, in order to count as scholarship, an article about programmatic issues must provide a social, historical, pedagogical, and/or cultural context; it must link the particular subject to broader concerns that will engage the community of Honors intellectually as well as practically.

On this matter of intellectual appeal, Estess makes the strongest case for quality of thinking (in addition to, of course, writing) as the ideal criterion for publication in a journal for Honors. He argues that a two-year moratorium on articles focused

EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

specifically on Honors would liberate scholarship in and about Honors from mundane programmatic affairs and promote genuine thought among Honors scholar/administrators (a juxtaposition that we hope is not an oxymoron).

Both the form and content of Estess's argument reveal his disciplinary background in the humanities, specifically English. And now I come to the issue that has most fascinated me as an editor of *JNCHC* and that does not appear explicitly in the essays by Schuman, Estess, and Roemer—all of whose academic backgrounds are in the humanities (the first two in English and the latter in the philosophy of education, which we can count as the humanities if we squint). Although my teaching for thirty years has been primarily in interdisciplinary formats, I have experienced more interdisciplinary friction as editor of the *JNCHC* than I have at any other time in my career, and this friction has intrigued me.

My field, like Schuman's and Estess's, is English. As a group, we are obsessive about the quality of writing and commit ourselves to eradicating from our students' prose all instances of, for instance, the passive voice. We like originality of voice; we like to be able to guess who the writer is from particularities, even eccentricities, of style. More than 92% of us who teach beyond the high school level embrace the pronoun "I" as far preferable to the wretched pronoun "one." For the past thirty years or so, 52% of us have embraced and even welcomed the personal as a legitimate approach to or inclusion in scholarship. (I made up those statistics, by the way; 73% of us are wary of statistics and the people who use them.) We are far more engaged by a creative interpretation, compelling theory, or startling new idea than by a solid datum. We often begin sentences with conjunctions. And we like to laugh.

In my experience, the majority of contributors to *JNCHC* during my four years as editor probably hail from the social sciences rather than the humanities. Or perhaps Honors administrators, whatever their disciplinary background, have moved into a culture where data, statistics, objectivity, and impersonality are hegemonic values. The responses to Schuman *et al.* by Cheryl Achterberg and Annmarie Guzy seem more in the latter tradition, satisfying the standards set forth by Schuman but perhaps not by Estess. Reading the twenty-year-old essays in conjunction with the brand new ones may alert readers to a significant change in the discourse of Honors.

We do get submissions, though perhaps not as numerous or wide-ranging as Estess might wish, that fulfill his hope for research coming out of the Honors community that is "other-connecting; that is, [reaching] beyond the professional membership of the National Collegiate Honors Council and connect[ing] with issues not of immediate concern to the functioning or operating of an Honors Program." I join Estess in wishing we would get more such submissions. We do get some, however; I think especially of essays by George Maris, one of which will appear in the next issue.

In this issue, I suspect Estess will be most enthralled by Peter Sederberg's essay, "Simple, Pure, and True: An Emergent Vision of Liberal Learning at the Research University." Sederberg writes of the focus on student research that has characterized the evolution of his Honors College at the University of South Carolina. He raises key issues about the mission of universities and the purpose of the research they nurture—namely, "learning," a word he defines with richness and depth in contrast to,

for instance, education in the service of career or status or profit. Sederberg defines university research as an undertaking that encourages disagreement rather than unanimity, and he connects the goals and evolution of his Honors College to this definition. While providing the scholarship about Honors that Schuman and Roemer advocated, Sederberg also does the “other-connecting” that Estess suggested, linking his programmatic practice to major ideas in and about higher education and American culture.

Ellen Buckner’s essay on “Honors Research in Nursing” also posits ideals of student research in a broad conceptual context, examining inductive, deductive, and intuitive reasoning as modes of shaping research projects in the field of nursing. She describes the research projects her students have undertaken as examples of these different modes; she speaks of the ambiguity and occasional frustration some inherent contradictions between the modes can cause her students; and she explains the professional, clinical, and human advantages nursing students derive from trying to resolve these contradictions and learning to work within a multiplicity of modes. Buckner is thus “other-connecting” by showing the links between ways of knowing and preparation for the study and practice of nursing through Honors research.

Buckner and Sederberg both write about student research and thus provide scholarship on scholarship, a subject matter that perhaps lends itself readily to “other-connecting.” The other essays in this issue concern programmatic matters such as admissions criteria, marketing, organizational structure, faculty compensation, and transfer policies. All describe particular programs—as, indeed do Sederberg’s and Buckner’s essays—and all provide Roemer’s “theoretical moment” or Schuman’s “abstract” context. Otherwise, they would not have been accepted for publication in *JNCHC*; a broader general context is an essential criterion now, as it was twenty years ago, for scholarship, as distinguished from practical advice, about Honors. At the same time, these essays appeal to a readership inside, probably not beyond, Honors.

Kelly Younger’s “Honors, Inc.” begins with a fascinating discussion of the “corporatization” of higher education. Most of us think of this trend as a phenomenon that began sometime around the 1960s; Younger traces it back at least as early as 1909. He summarizes some of the extensive literature on the subject, which has become voluminous in these early years of the twenty-first century. He then moves to a description of the corporate pressure at his own institution, Loyola Marymount University in California, and he provides an account of how he has been able not only to accommodate these pressures but even to enjoy them. His is a cheerful essay about making lemonade of what many pundits in higher education and Honors find to be very bitter lemons.

The next two essays describe fairly recent developments at Pennsylvania State University. Richard Stoller, in “Honors Selection Processes: A Typology and Some Reflections,” describes a shift in modes of selecting Honors students that has taken place at Penn State’s Schreyer Honors College and that he surmises is taking place nationally: namely, a movement away from a “skimming” process, where top ACT/SAT scores and GPAs are skimmed off the top of the student body into an

EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

Honors program, and toward a “free-standing” selection process that includes essays, letters, and other materials that “go beyond ‘the numbers.’” He suggests that “student selection is not so much a technical exercise as a subjective and moral one” and that “[i]n an admissions context, practical morality is perhaps best defined as congruence between institutional mission and selection decisions—any admissions process that picks students who best fit the mission [of a program and also of an institution] is hard to criticize in a disinterested way.” Stoller connects this focus on mission to questions about elitism and democracy in American higher education, clearly finding that the “free-standing” process is more congruent with the mission of Penn State University.

Cheryl Achterberg uses Penn State as a case study of the transformation of an Honors program into an Honors college. For many administrators in Honors, this distinction between a program and a college has been a visible and vexing issue in the past decade. We all know programs that are more like colleges than most “colleges” or that change their name from “program” to “college” while changing little else. Achterberg’s essay will be useful to Honors program directors contemplating the shift to a college and also to Honors deans looking for ways to make their colleges more college-like. The NCHC has tried for quite some time now to create some guidelines that would be helpful in the way that the “Basic Characteristics of a Fully Developed Honors Program” were a decade ago. The program/college distinction has so far remained rather thorny and intractable, but Achterberg’s essay may advance our understanding of some advantages of a “college.”

“The Role of Community College Honors Programs in Reducing Transfer Shock” is also an extremely useful study. Virtually all of us in Honors assume that experience in a community college Honors program will produce students better prepared than their non-Honors classmates for transfer to a four-year institution. Greg Phillips has carried out a well-designed, carefully controlled, and convincing study to support this assumption with empirical data. His results should not only encourage and support Honors administrators at community colleges but also motivate Honors administrators at four-year institutions to recruit aggressively from community college Honors programs.

An essay that will interest administrators and faculty at both two- and four-year institutions is “Faculty Compensation and Course Assessment in Honors Composition” by Annmarie Guzy. Guzy addresses “nuts & bolts” issues such as salary, course load, and assessment for faculty teaching Honors composition, as well as resistance to Honors within the larger institutional context. She conducted a national survey to ascertain the options, successes, and problems that Honors programs have had in addressing these matters, and she shares the results of her survey in this essay.

This issue of *JNCHC* concludes with an exceptionally welcome and exciting essay from the Netherlands on the development of Honors programs in that country and, to some extent, beyond. Wolfensberger, Eijl, and Pilot have provided a detailed picture of the kinds, qualities, purposes, and successes of a growing Honors movement in higher education across the Atlantic. The adaptations of honors opportunities to the somewhat different academic culture of higher education in the Netherlands is

one source of interest, but I was more struck by how much we have in common. Much that the authors describe will not only ring true but also provide guidance to those of us administering Honors programs in the United States. I like to think that this essay is a harbinger of what might become the ICHC, the International Collegiate Honors Council.

All the essays in this issue represent good research in and about Honors. All are scholarly; they establish the intellectual and research background in which they embed their own ideas and observations, and they add something new to that background. All the essays depend on evidence. The *kinds* of evidence they use and the *way* they use it, however, cover a wide range: at one end of the spectrum we find Sederberg's essay with its internal references to Habermas, Rorty, and other intellectual leaders of the twentieth century (*sans* bibliography); proceeding toward the other end of the spectrum, we see increasingly data-driven statistical analyses, complete with tables and extensive documentation.

I have not done a statistical study of essays in and about Honors from the earliest issues of *Forum for Honors* to the most current issues of *JNCHC*. (I would welcome reading such an analysis if somebody else wrote it.) I surmise, however, that the drift of research, like the drift in this issue, is away from Sederberg-like essays to, say, Guzy-like essays. This drift is (apologies to George Orwell) not uncomfortable for me personally, professionally, or editorially *unless* it becomes a torrent that drowns out the voices of an Estess or a Sederberg. I see signs everywhere in our culture—both academic and national—that the drift may become torrential and that research which is not data-driven will no longer be recognized as research, that evidence which is not statistical or empirical will no longer count as evidence, that voices which do not adopt the rhetorical stance of objectivity will no longer sound legitimate.

E. O. Wilson's book *Consilience* is at the heart of my worry about the future of research not just in Honors but in all fields of inquiry. Mind you, I am a great admirer of Wilson both as a person (he is a kind and gentle man from Birmingham, Alabama, which is my adopted hometown) and as an intellect. He is a superb writer and scholar whose ideas never fail to excite and provoke more ideas. In *Consilience*, he converts the descriptive truism (and, alas, obvious fact) of the hierarchy of academic disciplines—physics trumps chemistry, which trumps biology, which trumps psychology, which trumps sociology, which trumps...all the way “down” to the humanities—into a prescription for intellectual evolution, an advocacy of the absorption of all the disciplines by those higher in rank until all is physics. (Well, he exempts the creative arts, but that is another subject.). What he predicts and applauds is that we will all be caught up in the torrent toward pure science, and the social sciences are currently streaming away from the humanities and toward the “hard” (read “real”) sciences in a headlong rush.

I would like to propose some dams. In another book, *The Diversity of Life*, Wilson argues that survival depends on multiplicity of species, which is thus not only a biological but a moral imperative. If such be true of the natural world, surely this imperative also applies to the world of ideas and to ways of doing research. We need variety and plenitude in order to thrive.

EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

I therefore applaud all the essays in this issue of *JNCHC*, each of which deepens and enriches our understanding of Honors and, in some cases, matters beyond Honors. We will continue to welcome the broad range of subjects and approaches represented here. At the same time, I would like to make a personal appeal, speaking only for myself and not for my co-editors, a biochemist and a poet, or the Editorial Board, which selects all essays to be published in *JNCHC* and which represents the whole array of academic disciplines. My appeal, really a *cri de coeur*, is to all Honors scholars that they consider writing the “other-connecting” kind of humanistic inquiry, advocated by Ted Estess and best represented here by Peter Sederberg, that is fast becoming an endangered species.

Forum on Research in Honors

Editor's Note: The essays by Sam Schuman, Ted Estess, and Robert Roemer were written and published in 1984 in *Forum for Honors*, the predecessor of *Journal of the National Collegiate Honors Council*. The three essays were distributed by email to all members of the NCHC listserv with an invitation to respond. Two contributors of other essays published in this issue—Cheryl Achterberg and Annmarie Guzy—submitted responses. The three original essays plus the two responses comprise this “Forum on Research in Honors,” but this entire issue of JNCHC is also intended to address this topic and elicit further thought and writing about what research in honors is or should be.

SAM SCHUMAN

Honors Scholarship and Forum for Honors

SAM SCHUMAN

GUILFORD COLLEGE (1984)

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA, MORRIS (2004)

VADIMIR NABOKOV, my favorite twentieth-century author, was the most self-reflexive of novelists: he would have been delighted with our present enterprise, a discussion in the *Forum for Honors* devoted to the subject of *Forum for Honors*. The questions we are attempting to address, although they tend toward the self-referential, are important. Our journal has grown, evolved, and developed into something different than the admirable publication begun by Vishnu Bhatia and ably continued under the direction of Scott Vaughn. It is timely to pause, examine what *Forum* has been and is today, and, most vitally, what it should aim to become in the future.

In suggesting this task to me, the current Editor asked that I consider “what it is to write well about Honors education.” This seemed to me a reasonable task, until I began to do it. At that moment I had two enfeebling thoughts. The first was that Bob’s assignment carried the implicit assumption that one knew what it was to “write well” about ANYTHING, and yet to me at least, the definition of solid scholarship is anything but clear. My second enervating epiphany was that there could be no better way to appear foolish than to write poorly about “what it is to write well.”

Proceeding with a caution approaching cowardice, then, I want to discuss at some length two important characteristics of good scholarly writing, about Honors (or English, or Physics, or Economics, or what-have-you). I will introduce several illustrative examples, and make a special effort to utilize also negative examples and contrary illustrations, designed to make clear my ideas about some of the pitfalls into which serious writers about honors have plunged or are most likely to encounter. The characteristics I wish to discuss are abstraction and documentation.

Good scholarship is abstract. By this I suggest that it is generalized or generalizable; that it articulates insights, suggests actions, or makes propositions which are based upon thoughts and principles; and that it is, to at least some extent, separable from a specific time and place. I need to note, with unseemly haste, that “abstract” writing need and should not be “vague” Nor, as I will suggest further a bit later, should it be grounded in unsupported theorizing or mere opinion. It is “abstract” to say “God exists,” or “good buildings are constructed to last for a long time.” It is vague to say that “the evidence which seems to suggest that God does not exist, in one form or another, is not overwhelmingly persuasive.” Somewhat more pointedly, it would be an admirable abstraction to posit “Honors students are politically more

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conservative than non-Honors students.” I wish to suggest a definition of “abstract” which opposes that term to “particular,” not to “concrete.”

To be specific, I do not believe that *Forum for Honors* should remain a venue for articles which simply aim to describe particular Honors enterprises—programs, courses, budgets, recruitment schemes, or whatever. Such descriptions are not without interest to Honors workers, and I continue to look forward to seeing them in our organizational newsletter, but they do not really belong in a “scholarly journal.” Obviously specific illustrative examples should be cited in support of abstractions—that is what I discuss under “documentation.” If an Honors course is used as an illustration of a thesis about the nature of honors courses, nothing could be more appropriate. But I believe our organization, and its journal, have grown beyond the point where a major preoccupation should be the exchange of straightforward descriptive data: “here is what we do at The University of Ex; now you tell me what you do at Zee College.”

Good scholarly writing about Honors cannot be just abstract, of course. There are some qualifications. I would suggest that the sorts of abstractions about Honors education I would like to see in *Forum* would be: a) important, b) new, and c) interesting.

All of us have seen far too many scholarly journals brim full of articles which are certainly abstract, and adequately documented, but which are not of the least importance. Let us NOT let *Forum* become a forum for the scholarly parading of trivia. What we are doing in the Honors movement is important—we are providing better-than-average educational opportunities for better-than-average students. If educating students is important, and it is, then Honors is important. By way of illustration, the question of what constitutes a general honors curriculum seems to me an important question. By contrast, the question of whether Honors directors should report to chief academic officers or elsewhere (while it may be an issue of some political consequence in some specific situations) seems to me an essentially unimportant matter. To be blunt, I would urge the editorial board and editor of *Forum* to begin their assessment of submitted articles by asking the question “who cares?” about each contribution. If the honest answer is “hardly anybody” or “nobody,” the article should be politely and firmly rejected.

Successful submissions to *Forum for Honors* should represent new insights, conclusions, methodologies, or subject matters. The Honors movement in America is only some two decades old, and up to now, most everything that anybody has said or written about has not been articulated before. But experienced and careful listeners and readers have started to notice us repeating ourselves. One of the major functions *Forum for Honors* can serve, and, indeed, has served, is to be a marker of the state of knowledge about Honors education. As such, it should become an incentive to push the boundaries of that knowledge ahead, not a shrine in which the same ideas are repeated with increasing reverence and decreasing thought.

Finally, the articles in our journal should be interesting. They should be well written. We have an opportunity to buck the trend of jargonism and incomprehensibility which clog the pages of so many of our scholarly publications. I am unable to resist an example. Here is a sentence from an article in the October, 1984 PMLA:

SAM SCHUMAN

Unlike, say, her (probable) contemporary, Chretien de Troyes, who, in his *Le Chevalier de la Charrette* (c. 1177) or his *Le Conte du Graal* (c. 1181-91), explains that he writes at the behest of a patron(ess) who has bestowed on him, in the first instance the *matiere et san* of his romance (*Chevalier*, line 26) and, in the second, the book he is charged with translating (*Conte*, lines 61 -68), Marie prefaces her collection of *Lais* with a contrary statement.

I suggest that we refrain, with enthusiasm, from accepting for publication any piece which contains such a sentence!

Not only should our articles avoid leaden prose, they should also aim to attract and hold our interest, as readers, with an occasional touch of humor or felicitous moment of rhetorical style.

Good writing about Honors education will also be interesting if, as suggested earlier, it is about matters which are both new and important; if it is illustrated with novel or dramatic or noteworthy examples; if it is controversial, clear, and strong.

If good writing about Honors education is abstract and general as opposed to particularized and anecdotal it is also characterized by solid documentation. Indeed it is documentation which marks the difference between opinion and scholarship. If we seek *Forum for Honors* articles which suggest theoretical analyses we must also insist that theory be firmly grounded in verifiable fact.

An abstract thesis can be supported in at least two ways: illustrations which illuminate and undergird the thesis can be presented; supportive statements from authoritative sources can be cited. It would seem to me that most serious writing about Honors education might wish to utilize both sorts of documentation: that is examples drawn from real-life honors situations can explain and clarify an author's points, and relevant writing on related issues can be invoked to help verify them. How will we recognize excellent documentation in scholarly writing about Honors?

First, it will be honest. Of course, we would find inexcusable outright fakery of evidence or blatant misquoting. More common, and less criminal, but equally unacceptable, scholarly authors have been known to cite secondary sources in such a way as to slightly skew the original intent of the author being quoted, or to report experiments or observations with such selectivity as to suggest more clarity of outcome than was strictly the case. Certainly an honors publication should insist upon the highest standards of academic integrity and full-fledged commitment to truth-seeking—in short, to honorable research practices.

Second, genuine documentation is full. Our editorial policies should encourage, even demand, more than token or partial proof. All major points in a good piece will be documented, and all major sources noted.

Third, as noted earlier, good documentation, especially in the area of illustrative examples, can be interesting. It does not hurt if a point is made with a dramatic or humorous illustration.

Fourth, good evidence is authoritative. For better or worse, scholarship tends to be understood as central and as peripheral, and there is almost always some writing "on the fringe" which could be used to support the most outlandish of conclusions. If

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writing about Honors education is to be taken seriously, it should be supported by the citation of scholars who are generally thought to know what they are talking about.

Finally, documentation which is authoritative, honest, full, and interesting will be persuasive: it will tend to convince a rational reader of the truth of the proposition being advanced.

What is it to write well about Honors education? It is to communicate general ideas and insights which are new, important, and interesting, supported by persuasive and forthright documentation. What should such writing be about?

I believe it would be counterproductive to attempt to define the territory of Honors scholarship. It would also almost surely be humiliating, because I would inevitably excise some absolutely vital area, probably at the expense of a trivial one. Rather than draw borders, I would like to propose a few samples, to suggest, rather than prescribe. I want to suggest a few questions which are important to us, which I have not yet seen completely answered (although some excellent work has been begun on several of these topics already).

Honors Students—What admission criteria for Honors students really work? [Has anyone ever scientifically tested for correlations between SAT, high school record, etc., and success in Honors courses?] What happens to comparable students who do and who do not enter Honors programs? [Do they have the same success as undergraduates? What do they do after college?] What is the “out-of-class” profile of a “typical” Honors student? [Does she or he participate in athletics, in the fine arts, student government, etc.?] Is there a difference between the profile of Honors students at comparable institutions? [How do the students at Ohio State and the University of Maryland; or at Cornell and Guilford Colleges compare?]

Honors Faculty—What Departments tend to contribute disproportionately to Honors faculty? How are Honors faculty members compensated? How do Honors faculty members evaluate their experiences teaching Honors students and Honors courses? Is teaching Honors faculty development? What is the record of Honors teachers as productive scholars?

Curriculum—Has there been a development, a substantial alteration, in Honors curricula in the past decade or two decades? To what extent are Honors courses repositories of “classical” learning on our campuses? To what extent are Honors courses carrying the burden of pedagogical and curricular experimentation on our campuses? Have Honors courses been transmuted into the college-wide curriculum? What is—or should, or could be—the relationship between Honors and “experiential learning?”

Historical Analysis—What were the earliest “Honors Programs” in the U.S., how have they evolved, and what are they like now? How have factors like the growth of the mega-university and the explosion of the community college system changed Honors education in America? How long do Honors programs tend to last at American colleges and universities? Are there patterns evident in the national leadership of the Honors movement? [Who have been N.C.H.C.’s presidents over these two decades, and the members of the Executive Council? What sorts of institutions or areas of the country or academic disciplines have they represented?]

SAM SCHUMAN

Pedagogy/Classroom Issues—Can Honors courses be demonstrated to be different from other courses? Is there a relationship between Honors courses and class size? Is there a pattern of grading in Honors courses which differs from that in other classes? How do students evaluate Honors courses? Are there definable characteristics of “Honors Courses”?

Miscellaneous Samples—Is there a relationship between Honors and politics? [How does a given political climate influence Honors education?] Is there a common career path for Honors directors? [Where do they come from? Where do they go? How long do they stay?] How have women and minorities been included and been excluded from Honors education? [Honors programs in women’s colleges, black colleges, etc., as well as within integrated institutions.] What does “Honors” mean? [A philosophical investigation, perhaps.] Honors and Computers—a microcosm of the academic community? Are Honors students and faculty more liberal, more conservative, or more-or-less the same as other students and faculty within an institution? What are the top 10 “best-sellers” on Honors course reading lists nationally? What is the history of the Honors Semesters, and what has happened to those who attended them? Are certain regions of the country “hotbeds” of Honors? Which? Why?

This list is really a very random sampling of questions that research could answer, and that I hope many of us might like to see resolved. Surely, most readers of *Forum for Honors* could compile a similar or better selection of topics. To paraphrase Dryden’s comment on Chaucer, “here is God’s plenty!” Since there is no lack of interesting and important things for us to write about, and since among our number are many, many thorough and skilled researchers and writers, I have no difficulty in envisioning, and even in predicting, a splendid future for *Forum for Honors*.

TED L. ESTESS

Honors Scholarship: Another View

TED L. ESTESS

UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON

Samuel Beckett, not Vladimir Nabokov, is the most self-reflexive of novelists; and in a flurry of self-reflexivity, one of his narrators finally admits to a fundamental deficit: “if there is one question I dread, to which I have never been able to invent a satisfactory reply, it is the question what am I doing?”¹ In his usual compelling and concise way, Sam Schuman works in his article to invent an answer to the question, What ought we to be doing in *Forum for Honors*? And invent an answer we must, if the *Forum* is to fulfill its lofty ambition of being a serious academic journal. In many ways, Schuman’s answer is satisfactory. Articles in the *Forum* should indeed be concrete, new, interesting, and important; they should of course be models of good scholarly writing in providing sufficient evidence and proper documentation. Schuman’s proposal serves well, in part, because it states principles about which there is broad agreement, though much disagreement will inevitably arise as to whether a particular submission to the *Forum* meets Schuman’s criteria for good scholarship.

Schuman’s answer is satisfactory, moreover, because it provides the ground for excluding parochial and anecdotal articles about individual Honors Programs. Increasingly interesting and useful, the *NCHC Report*, he rightly suggests, is the proper place for such material. Dissemination of information about individual programs in the *Report* remains crucial for the growth of Honors education among institutions of higher education.

But while much about Schuman’s proposal is satisfactory, little about it really excites the inventive spirit. Were I, for instance, sitting on the board of directors of a foundation considering a request to fund *Forum for Honors*, I would not be inclined to support the journal merely on the basis of this proposal. As a Director of an Honors Program, I wonder whether I would encourage students and colleagues to subscribe.

Why is the proposal only partially satisfactory to me? Perhaps I expected too much from it. Perhaps I would be satisfied only by reading an article that embodies the excellent principles that Schuman recommends. Perhaps *Forum for Honors* occupies the same awkward position as Honors Programs themselves: there is no subject matter proper to it. Perhaps the question as set by the editor—“What is it to write well about Honors education?”—overdetermined the answer and obscured the real question, What is the proper content for articles in *Forum for Honors*?

¹ Samuel Beckett, *Molloy* in *Three Novels by Samuel Beckett: Molloy, Malone Dies, The Unnamable* (New York: Grove Press, 1958), 173.

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Finally, however, I think Schuman's response is unsatisfactory because of the way he conceives "Honors scholarship." He takes "Honors scholarship" to mean scholarship about Honors Programs, their students, faculty, curricula, and institutional settings. He clearly wants to avoid narrowly setting the borders of Honors scholarship, but most of the topics he provides could be adequately addressed in the *Report*. In terms of subject matter, the *Report* and the *Forum*, following his proposal, would look much the same: both would be about Honors Programs, though the one would admit the anecdotal and idiosyncratic, while the other would aim at more general insights buttressed with adequate documentation.

This conception of the subject matter of *Forum for Honors*, like Schuman's and my favorite twentieth-century authors, is too self-reflexive. His proposal tends to promote scholarship on in-house issues for Honors directors and academic administrators; the journal will be of interest to the professionals in the Honors movement. Honors computers; Honors professors and their scholarly productivity; admissions criteria; size of Honors classes; comparative studies of Honors students; regional differentiation among Honors Programs—these are all self-reflexive issues, but hardly scholarly, unless Honors Programs themselves are of intrinsic scholarly interest.

Of course, Honors Programs, to some extent, merit research and scholarship, and they provide researchers in the field of higher education another arena for applying various interpretive and investigative methods. But avenues for publishing such research already exist in journals dealing with higher education, and any good researcher will seek to place his or her research in one of those well-established journals. A more serious problem, to my mind, is that the membership of the National Collegiate Honors Council is probably not especially well-equipped to engage in scholarly writing on the kinds of subjects Schuman commends. Knowing about Honors Programs—indeed, being a good practitioner of the craft of directing an Honors Program—does not qualify one as a good researcher on Honors issues, as Schuman conceives them. Honors directors and faculty tend to come from one of the liberal arts, and they write more persuasively about their academic subjects than they do about the territory Schuman describes. Most persons, I think, work in an Honors Program not to add to their research interests, but to enact a vision of liberal education that incorporates, as seems appropriate, the research areas they have previously developed.

My basic question, then, is this: how many NCHC members are capable of, or interested in producing, good scholarship about Honors Programs? Without wishing to offend my colleagues in Honors work, I fear that the answer is, Not many. We simply do better at other kinds of writing, and what we have to say about Honors Programs will likely continue to be more appropriate for the *Report*, not for a serious research journal.

Having confessed my (partial) dissatisfaction with the answer that Sam Schuman has invented, I must sheepishly confess that I am unsure that I can devise a more satisfying one. But, for the sake of provocation, I recommend that the Board of Editors for *Forum for Honors* declare a two-year moratorium on the publication of self-reflexive "honors" research. With this principle of exclusion, I link a principle of inclusion: that *Forum for Honors* publish essays of the highest quality on any

subject that is of general interest to the membership of the National Collegiate Honors Council. For instance, I would like very much to know why Vladimir Nabokov is Sam Schuman's favorite twentieth-century author, and why he thinks (if he does think this) that Honors students and faculty ought to read Nabokov. His discussion of self-reflexivity in Nabokov's fiction would, I am confident, be more interesting, more important, and more original than a self-reflexive article comparing Honors students at various institutions or tracing the career paths of Honors directors.

Honors education will not be well served if *Forum for Honors* devotes itself exclusively to scholarship about Honors education, as though Honors education were some special brand of something (like the equally dubious notions of a "Christian" science or an "American" aesthetic). Rather, Honors education will be served by persons who write thoughtful and thought-provoking essays on topics of interest to the liberally educated reader. I should hope that the essays would measure up to the high standards for good scholarly writing that Sam Schuman describes and exemplifies. I should suspect that, in choosing pieces for publication, the Board of Editors may tend to favor essays that explore a topic in the field of education, broadly conceived. I should think that an occasional article about an Honors Program would appear. But I should argue that engaging essays on almost any topic could well serve *Forum for Honors*.

Instead of being self-reflexive, *Forum for Honors* might seek to be other-connecting: that is, the *Forum* might reach beyond the professional membership of the National Collegiate Honors Council and connect with issues not of immediate concern to the functioning or operating of an Honors Program. If it does, the journal might indeed provide a forum, or a space, where truth can appear as concerned persons talk and listen to one another.

ROBERT E. ROEMER

The *Forum for Honors*: An Expanded View

ROBERT E. ROEMER

UNIVERSITY OF NEW ORLEANS (1984)

LOYOLA UNIVERSITY CHICAGO (2004)

Even though Schuman and Estess disagree on what is appropriate for publication in the *Forum for Honors*, they are both correct. Schuman offers an orthodox view, describing marks of good scholarship and suggesting topics on Honors education suitable for scholarly work. Estess, perhaps because he writes in response to Schuman, is more mischievous and proposes that the *Forum for Honors* should for a while accept no articles on Honors education and in this interim should become a journal of interest to the liberally educated reader. In my opinion, both these opinions should be incorporated in the editorial policy of this journal.

Exercising a form of editorial license, I wish to comment on selected points made by Schuman and Estess, underscoring some and elaborating others.

In distinguishing between the abstract and the particular, Schuman touches the pivotal difference between the *NCHC Report* and the *Forum for Honors*. While the particularities of an Honors Program may well be described in an article prepared for the *Forum*, they need be instrumental to establishing a general, abstract conclusion. This is to say that an article in the *Forum* should have a theoretical moment. In the thicket of the particular an issue needs to appear, an argument develop, a conclusion come forth. The appropriate response to a list of particulars is, What else do you do? The appropriate response to an article in the *Forum* is, You are right/wrong for the following reasons.

Schuman also rightly points out that the literature on Honors education is still sparse. The seminal works on Honors education for the most part still need to be written. Beyond the handbooks published by NCHC, a standard corpus of literature on Honors education is difficult to assemble. And yet I agree with Schuman that, even though the terrain of Honors education is substantially undescribed, exploratory expeditions seem to head for features already familiar. Hackneyed accounts in a movement as young as Honors education are, at the very least, surprising.

This leads me to emphasize a final point from Schuman's article, his invitation that we study certain aspects of Honors education. Even though necessarily limited, Schuman's list of topics is evocative. Let me complement it with my own additions. Some fairly standard philosophical questions bear upon the practices of Honors education: questions of distributive justice since Honors programs allocate more of limited educational resources to a selected group; questions of the organization of knowledge since Honors programs typically select some subjects as basic to

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intellectual formation; questions of the morally good since Honors programs implicitly or explicitly advocate a version of human excellence. But the specific contents of Schuman's list of topics and these additions to it are not the important point. Rather the fundamental claim is that the scope of subjects related to Honors education is broader than might be suggested by the extant literature on Honors education or the previous contents of the *Forum*.

A point of contact between Schuman and Estess is the question of what kind of articles should be published in the *Forum*. Schuman asks for important articles on Honors education. Estess replies that important articles on Honors education are, first of all, not likely to be written by the members of NCHC and, second, when written such articles are likely to be forwarded to more established journals. At the risk of being cute, let me try to accommodate both these positions with the following claim: articles about Honors education that appear in well-established journals are likely not to be important. If for no other reason, the *Forum for Honors* is by default the location for significant thoughts about Honors education.

Rather than cute, my point here may well be cantankerous. There is a problem with scholarship in American higher education, namely too much of it is expected. For various reasons,¹ faculty in American higher education are judged by their record of scholarly publication. As faculty in higher education we are all expected to publish scholarly work annually, in fact several times a year. This pressure motivates American faculty to produce a tremendous quantity of scholarly publication, much of little consequence. In all honesty, how many of us who are successful in publishing scholarly work have written anything of importance? Even worse, how many of us who have published in the most highly regarded journals in our fields can even discuss this scholarship with our students?

The current pressure in higher education to publish and the publishing apparatus that has developed to vent this pressure puts into the public realm a great amount of trivial, normal, albeit competent scholarship. Those who need to publish learn quickly that the surest path to that goal is to choose a very specific subject, sometimes called a manageable project, and treat it in the standard manner. A work of substantial scope, the work of a lifetime, is not fostered by the current terms of academic employment. Nor is the bold claim, the controversial conclusion, the inchoate theory likely to be approved by boards of review who are more comfortable with research that fits the received wisdom. Hence the content of the established journals seems largely unimportant.

The above paragraph exemplifies the situation I am trying to describe. The paragraph represents a style of thinking that I could not publish in the standard journals. Or, in an attempt to publish the fully developed article suggested by that paragraph I would have to do extensive citation analysis in order to establish that a low percentage of articles published in prestigious journals are referenced more than x-number of times during an appropriate span of time. Another scholar might reply that I

¹ For an attempt to explain these reasons see: Robert E. Roemer, "Hard Times and the End of Academic Community," *The Educational Forum*, 49 (Spring 1985): 315-321.

omitted or included too many journals, that the span of time I examined was too long or short, that the x -number chosen to distinguish the important from the unimportant was either too high or low. In publishing these articles the other scholar and I would satisfy the institutional demands placed on us. But the forcefulness of my original claim that most published research is unimportant would be lost. That judgment would be sanitized into an empirical study whose impact is easily mitigated by the same canons of scholarship it employs.

Estess is right: the standard scholarship on Honors education is likely to appear in the established scholarly journals because the authors' institutional interests are better served by articles from those venues. But the *Forum* can still be the place for important statements that cannot be made elsewhere. I am not advocating that the *Forum* should publish unsupported claims, wild assertions, or insubstantial musings. The criteria of sound scholarship described by Schuman, criteria which I accept, are insurance against that. But the *Forum* should not be just another scholarly journal; it should be a journal in which the membership of NCHC can be thoughtful and scholarly in ways not possible elsewhere.

This same point can be made from another angle by examining the provocative proposal put forward by Estess that there be a two-year moratorium on publishing in the *Forum* self-reflexive honors research. But if this category of subject matter is excluded from the *Forum*, what should take its place? Estess suggests "thoughtful and thought-provoking essays on topics of interest to the liberally educated reader." I support this principle of inclusion, but will try a different phrasing: the *Forum* offers the opportunity to write as a teacher rather than simply as a scholar.

Honors programs are curious institutional entities. The usual support base for a curriculum in higher education is the department. (An alternative to the department is the program of studies, e.g., women's studies; but programs of this sort are really nascent departments and for this discussion will be subsumed under that category.) Without a proper subject matter a department would be a misnomer. But an Honors Program is different in that it has no proper subject matter. Not even those Honors Programs that require students to take certain courses can be said to have a proper subject matter. No courses can be identified which an Honors Program necessarily teaches or else loses its identity. What is necessary is that an Honors Program intensify the experience of higher education. That, however, is a matter of form or procedure, not content.

Another difference between a department and an Honors Program is that the former starts with a curriculum and seeks students; the latter starts with students and looks for a curriculum. The ethos of a department, as a function of its being rooted in a subject matter, is that of scholarship. The ethos of an Honors Program, which is essentially a collection of students, is that of teaching. When invited to join a department, a faculty member is expected to engage in the scholarship that nurtures the department's subject matter. When invited to participate in an Honors Program, a faculty member is expected to teach in a manner that sustains the role of student.

What does a teacher *qua* teacher write about? Estess' provocation is an answer to this question. Since Honors Programs often feature interdisciplinary courses, those who teach in these programs are frequently called upon to deal with subjects beyond

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the scope of their professional scholarship. The faculty in Honors Programs are asked to teach as liberally educated persons who can read a text rather than only as authoritative scholars. Even in an Honors version of a regular course, the teacher is expected to place the subject matter within a large and well articulated understanding of Western culture. Simply put, as teachers in Honors Programs we address a larger subject matter than we do as scholars within a discipline. But the comments we make as teachers, however excellent, may not be published in the standard scholarly journals for which we write because these comments are not supported by the required scholarly apparatus. The comments may nonetheless be significant and worthy of being written and read. Enter the *Forum for Honors*, a journal for scholars who are teachers.

Again, I am not advocating that the *Forum* become a locus for idle speculation and wild surmise. Rather I am arguing that our careful thoughts as teachers are at least sometimes, and perhaps quite often when we teach in Honors Programs, of a different genre than our thoughts as scholars. If that distinction stands, then the *Forum for Honors* is a journal in which we can speak as teachers. This publication is accordingly well-titled. *Forum*: a place in which thoughts can be tried out and sifted, a place for discussion. *For Honors*: this phrase has a double reference, honors as subject matter and honors as audience. This journal does indeed invite scholarly articles on the subject of Honors education. But this journal also invites statements by teachers who are able to enlighten and who seek honors as audience.

CHERYL ACHTERBERG

Honors In Research: Twenty Years Later

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“It is evident that the most significant characteristics of the larger post modern intellectual situation—its pluralism, complexity and ambiguity—are precisely the characteristics necessary for the potential emergence of a fundamentally new form of intellectual vision... [one that is] reflected in the widespread call for, and practice of, open “conversation” between different understandings, different vocabularies, different cultural paradigms.”

— Richard Tarnas, *The Passion of the Western Mind*.

Three papers (Estress, 1984; Roemer, 1984; Schuman, 1984) were published twenty years ago on the subject of research in honors. The purpose of this paper is to re-examine those thoughts in today’s context and to build forward on them where possible.

Honors programs have a tremendous, but as yet unrealized, potential to make a difference in the quality of higher education. Of course, honors programs should make a profound difference in the learning experience of all honors students. As Renzulli (1998) noted, we have “a responsibility to develop gifted behavior, not just find and certify it.” Yet, there are few recognized scholars on honors education at the collegiate level and no recognized area of study on the subject. However, honors education in practice is often a learning laboratory for undergraduate education more generally. Honors programs can test the feasibility and impact of various teaching pedagogies, assessment methods, and outcomes from which wider efforts can be launched. From this broader perspective, research that addresses questions about honors education is not only needed but should be a high priority within individual institutions as well as the general community of higher education.

I agree with Roemer (1984) that the *Forum for Honors* (and *Journal of the National Collegiate Honors Council*) is by default the location for significant thoughts about Honors education. I further agree with him, sadly enough, that the literature on Honors education is still sparse. I recently conducted a review (Achterberg, in press) of the literature on the characteristics of honors students. Certain points were clear. After nearly a century of honors education in America, there is still no standard definition of honors programs or honors students, nor is there a systematic, organized, or comprehensive body of knowledge that describes how or

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what honors students should be taught. At the same time, nearly two thirds of all sizes of four-year institutions have Honors programs and such programs are nearly universal at large four-year schools (Baker et al, 2000; see Digby, 2002).

The questions that Schuman (1984) originally posed about Honors research remain unanswered. What admissions criteria for Honors students really work? What happens to comparable students who do and who do not enter Honors programs? What is the “out-of-class” profile of a “typical” Honors student? Is there a difference between the profile of Honors students at comparable institutions? Shuman (1984) also pointed out the need for historical analysis with questions such as what became of the earliest “Honors Programs,” how they have evolved and where they are now. Finally, how has growth of the mega-university influenced them? Austin (1986) posed another important question: “If the ablest students... are to be challenged to the fullest, what opportunities must they have?” These are productive questions that should bear important fruit. There are also new questions to answer. Roemer’s (1984) focus on only Western culture is probably misplaced in today’s context. To wit: what influence has the U.S. honors movement had abroad? What role has internationalization had on honors programs in the U.S.?

The answers to all the above questions should be of interest not only to NCHC members but also to administrators who design and support such programs in their universities and to educators and others interested in the experience and outcomes for gifted children as they mature into adulthood. To move forward, honors education needs some good data. Honors education, in effect, has been a cottage industry for the past many decades. To move it into the academic mainstream, it needs to become more academic. I would go beyond even these musings and suggest that ultimately, honors education needs a theory to drive knowledge construction in honors education. At this point we don’t even have a framework or commonly accepted strategy. Choosing and using theory is an investment in our future; it will help us to structure our conversations, inquiries and work efforts. Theory will help us to both identify and test our assumptions. We should also try to link theories, policies, facts, and values together in our instruction, discussion, and planning; ultimately, this will help us do a better job (Achterberg, 2004).

Of course, a theoretical base for honors education will both require and signify a certain seriousness about research on honors education. Estess (1984) pointed out that good research articles about honors education are unlikely to be written by practitioners in honors education and more likely to be published in places that honors practitioners don’t read. He questioned whether the membership of the NCHC is “especially well-equipped to engage in scholarly writing on the kinds of subjects Schuman commends.” Rather, he advocated that the *Forum for Honors* should be “other connecting,” meaning that it should publish articles about “issues not of immediate concern to the functioning or operating of an Honors Program.” I agree that we ought to be other-connecting but disagree with what we should connect to. I suggest that the point of publication in *JNCHC* (or formerly the *Forum for Honors*) is not to prove that we are scholars in other fields. There are many other outlets for that. Rather, the point precisely is that honors is a rich field for scholarship about highly performing students, including their needs, interests, and attendant issues as well as for the

pedagogy designed for such students, the organizations that support these teaching-learning efforts, and the leadership and management thereof. In other words, there is much to say, and the *JNCHC* is the best place to say it.

If NCHC members are not capable of producing the research described above, then they should actively try to catalyze it elsewhere, partner when possible, and read it when it comes out. *JNCHC* could also publish abstracts of more technical work published about honors in other journals. If NCHC members are genuinely not interested in this kind of work, if they are devoid of even curiosity on the subject, then one must wonder about their suitability for a position in honors education. Having said this, I also recognize that many administrators in Honors education participate on a part-time basis and primarily as a service to their institution and students. This point again re-emphasizes the importance of publishing honors research. Simply put, NCHC publications should assist these members in learning what they don't know about the subject and educating not only these administrators but also their institutions on the seriousness of the venture in honors education.

I think the time is past when we had the luxury of asking if we should be honors scholars. Boyer's (1990) work in *Scholarship Reconsidered* has forever changed what scholarship means. So, Roemer (1984) rightly pointed out that the *Forum* offers the opportunity to "write as a teacher rather than simply as a scholar," but we should go beyond that. Boyer (1990) defined scholarship to include four types: the scholarship of discovery (or traditional research), the scholarship of integration (interdisciplinary interpretive connections), the scholarship of application (or service) and the scholarship of teaching (i.e., teaching as a *scholarly enterprise*). The UniSCOPE 2000 model (UniSCOPE Learning Community 2000) distills Boyer's work even further, converting these forms of scholarship to make them analogous to the three missions of the University: Research Scholarship, Teaching [and Learning] Scholarship and Service Scholarship. Perhaps the *JNCHC* could be organized into sections like this and solicit papers for each section in each issue. I think it is important to include learning specifically, in addition to teaching, as higher education moves toward student-centered rather than teacher-centered policies and pedagogies. Ironically, Honors programs have long led, in practice, the student-centered approach that is loudly trumpeted on college campuses today. The fact may be little recognized, however, for lack of documentation about our experiences, philosophies, or outcomes.

We are presented with an extraordinary opportunity. We work with the best and brightest students every day. They are eager to embrace the intellectual challenges, social changes and new developments occurring around us every day. We need to keep up with them in order to serve them better! Surely there is room in our journal pages for all three forms of scholarship as they pertain to Honors students, Honors education, and Honors administration! Moreover, we must take ourselves seriously if we want others to do so as well. *The Forum for Honors* should offer us all an opportunity to publish as scholars in the field of honors education.

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Research in Honors and Composition

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Throughout higher education, hundreds of writing programs at two-year, four-year, and graduate degree-granting institutions offer special honors sections of composition courses, many in conjunction with their institutions' own honors programs. The wide and varied body of scholarship, however, that comprises composition theory and pedagogy contains very little discussion of honors composition at the college level. At the elementary and secondary levels, journals dedicated to gifted education, such as *Roepers Review* and *Gifted Child Quarterly*, regularly feature articles focused on research and pedagogical practices in teaching writing to gifted children. The two-year college level has produced a few pieces that focus on honors courses, such as Jean B. Bridges' "Honors Composition: A Possible Alternative in the Two-Year College." Aside from sporadic articles, though, such as Kenneth Bruffee's "Making the Senior Thesis Work," published in 1993 in *Forum for Honors*, those who teach honors composition at four-year and graduate degree-granting schools have few resources from which to draw.

This lack of resources can be frustrating for those responsible for teaching honors freshman composition courses; where are the guidelines, the heuristics, the templates for assignment design that distinguish the honors class enough to merit a separate course altogether? As Sam Schuman asks in "Honors Scholarship and *Forum on Honors*," what makes an honors course *different*? It's not as if the composition community does not acknowledge difference; on the contrary, we celebrate it. Much attention has been paid to various "marginal" features of writers and writing, such as gender, ethnicity, English as a Second Language, basic writers, and nontraditional students. Many books, anthologies, and journals that cover the spectrum of theory, research, and pedagogy focus on these specialized communities of writers. Honors composition, however, has no touchstone, no equivalent of Mike Rose's *Lives on the Boundary*, Mina Shaughnessy's *Errors and Expectations*, Geneva Smitherman's *Talkin and Testifyin*, or Elizabeth Flynn's "Composing as a Woman."

I would like to posit two interconnected possibilities for this dearth. First, if we research, write, publish and present, not merely to achieve tenure and promotion as Robert E. Roemer argues, but to identify problems and to propose theoretical and pedagogical approaches to solving said problems, then perhaps we have little to say about honors composition, for these are the classes in which students are intellectually gifted and academically talented, able to speak and write at levels beyond traditional freshman composition students. The romanticized version of the honors course

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is one in which intellectually mature students exhibit exceptional organization and development, complex diction, and, of course, mechanical and grammatical perfection. The reality is, however, that honors freshmen making the transition from high school writing to college writing can benefit from first-year writing instruction regarding all facets of writing. In “Breaking with Tradition,” Elissa S. Guralnick argues for the importance of the honors composition course, and her opening comments are particularly pointed:

Attend to the least proficient students and the best will take care of themselves. Here is an educational philosophy that few university faculty would rush to embrace . . . except with respect to expository writing. If composition courses are the issue, nearly everyone agrees: Students with little discernible talent should be required to take them, while those with a proverbial “good ear” should go free. As for honors composition—a writing course designed not for freshmen who fail to test out of it, but for seniors who succeed in testing into it—the very idea seems oxymoronic, if not moronic pure and simple. But “seems” in this instance is simply dead wrong. (58)

Guralnick proceeds to present and discuss samples of student writing to justify her claim, but her discussion of honors students’ problems is not nearly as dramatic as those presented in the touchstone works listed earlier.

This leads to my second possible reason for the dearth of research in honors composition: we cannot transfer the struggle of the honors freshman writer to the larger political struggles presented in much of our canonical research on writing difference. Honors composition seems antithetical to the Marxist underpinnings in theoretical discussions of composition and gender, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and so forth. Honors composition lacks the narrative pathos of the student who stayed after class, went through five drafts, thought about dropping out of school, but decided to finish and eventually succeeded because of the support of his or her composition teacher. Such anecdotes allow us to feel instrumental in chipping away at the facade of the Althusserian ideological state apparatus of higher education, and honors students simply do not fill this role. In fact, honors students excel within the educational apparatus, and those faculty and administrators who cry that honors education is elitist would argue that it is simply another cog in the Althusserian wheel. Compositionists fight against negative labeling and stereotyping of marginalized groups of students, however, so why should we accept the stereotype of the honors student who excels because of socioeconomic circumstances, who breezes through introductory classes, and who writes more skillfully than other freshmen?

I would argue that this stereotyping continues into the curriculum itself: if the honors students can take care of themselves, then the courses can take care of themselves as well. In many cases, this is simply not true, and the struggles of honors program directors, faculty, and other advocates of honors composition continue well beyond simple issues such as how to change a regular freshman composition syllabus to make it an honors course. While the decision to include honors in my own

composition research and teaching has always seemed natural and promising (see the preface to *Honors Composition*), the resistance I encounter from time to time always surprises me, thus causing me to wonder why I am surprised in the first place. As a doctoral student, I encountered my first true taste of resistance to scholarly research in honors composition when, during my last semester of coursework before beginning my dissertation, my advisor announced to me that he thought I was a “wild card” for continuing to pursue this topic and that he no longer wanted to be my advisor, recommending another faculty member who turned out to be far more supportive of the whole project. More recently, heartened by the warm responses I received upon the monograph’s publication, I made a first attempt to bring my honors composition research into the composition community by submitting an article to the *Writing Program Administrator* journal. The editor and reviewers liked the material but wanted to see certain sections developed in more detail, so I dutifully revised and resubmitted; in the meantime, the journal changed editors, and the new editor responded that the material in the revision would be more appropriate for honors program administrators than for WPAs, hence its inclusion in this issue of *JNCHC*. I also presented this material at the national 2004 Conference on College Composition and Communication during a session titled “(Re)Constructing Academic Spaces for Differently-Abled Students.” The other two papers presented in the session focused on issues of access and physical (dis)ability in the composition classroom, and as I questioned why my work was placed in this session, I thought back to the 1970s-era national legislation on special education and the ways in which gifted education wrangled start-up funding under this umbrella.

In the end, considering the calls by Schuman, Estess, and Roemer to reexamine what constitutes research in honors, I would argue that honors composition presents unique problems that need to be reexamined as well and not simply in our offices and hallways but in professional forums, such as conferences and scholarly journals, including *JNCHC*, and not simply by honors program directors but by English departments, writing program administrators, and their faculty.

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Research in Honors

PETER C. SEDERBERG

Simple, Pure, and True: An Emergent Vision of Liberal Learning at the Research University

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SOUTH CAROLINA HONORS COLLEGE

Epiphanies, presumably, strike suddenly. This vision, however, was not like Saul's on the road to Damascus; rather, it emerged over 25 years of incremental involvement in creating one of the stronger Honors Colleges in the country at the University of South Carolina. Over the past five years, in particular, my evolutionary experience has been shaped by a growing recognition of an underlying problem confronting the contemporary research university.

In general, the demands faced by research universities have not changed since World War II, though some have fluctuated in intensity. The essential problem, I believe, arises less from external demands and goals than from a certain hollowness at the core of the university. The center most certainly will not hold, if there is no center. Unlike Saul, I did not experience this vision while on a journey; rather, the journey itself built the vision. Moreover, critical colleagues have been accompanying me, constructing and refining what became a major program of academic enrichment for the Honors College—Research Based Learning. Permit me, then, to recap briefly our journey, admitting, though, that this retroactive summary adds a fictive coherence to the lived experience. The journey now has reached a point of recognition of the crisis at the core of the research university, so I then share my response to this recognition.

ORIGINS AND ELEMENTS OF RESEARCH BASED LEARNING

The first step on this journey began with a simple question, "How can the Honors College better prepare its students for their capstone, senior thesis?" The thesis, for many students, was less an exhilarating finale to their undergraduate education than an intimidating, even crushing, burden. Some students in science and engineering were well prepared through earlier involvement in the labs of professors who eventually became their directors, but others floundered. Clearly, many students needed a better foundation and preparation for their theses.

By pulling on this single thread, we eventually unraveled and rewove how we conceived undergraduate education. Our conclusion was that, to better prepare our

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students for their theses, we needed to integrate the research and instructional missions of the university. Through the integration of these two missions, we would also close the gap between graduate and undergraduate educational experiences and synthesize mastery of the substance of a discipline with creation of that substance.

As Doug Williams, my associate dean and a major partner on this journey, remarked, the current gap between these dualities “is largely filled with rhetoric.” We set out to do better by expanding programs that already existed and creating new ones where needed. We gathered our initiatives under the general rubric of Research Based Learning (RBL) and set out to achieve three goals:

- educating the next generation of scholars;
- harnessing the considerable energy and creativity of undergraduates in support of the research mission of the University; and
- enriching the students’ mastery of the substance of their disciplines by involving them in the challenges of its creation.

FIRST BRIDGES

A number of honors students, especially in the sciences, participated in the research programs of professors, preparing a foundation for their theses. Some were co-authors on presentations and publications. We first turned to broadening and deepening undergraduate research opportunities across all research-based liberal disciplines by:

- establishing a Thesis Planning course for the sixth semester;
- expanding undergraduate research fellowships in the college by 500%;
- encouraging students outside the sciences and engineering to pursue these fellowships or consider doing third-year independent study projects.

We next faced the challenge of transcending the basic logistical limits of transplanting the standard apprenticeship model of graduate study to the undergraduate population. Doug Williams designed the Marine and Aquatic Research Experience (MARE), a largely self-directed, self-regenerating undergraduate research team pursuing its own research program (<http://schc.sc.edu/MARE/Mare.htm>). Starting with a half-dozen students in 1998, MARE has grown to over 25 active participants annually. For the last three years, MARE students have been making research presentations at regional and national scientific conferences.

Pleased with the success of MARE, we awarded small grants to faculty in chemical engineering, neuroscience, oral history, and cardio-biology to replicate MARE-like teams in their disciplines. Additional ones have been developed in RNA and disease, exercise and disease prevention, and implications of nanotechnology in spring

semester 2004. Through our experience with MARE, we have now a model that faculty in other disciplines can draw upon to implement analogous programs.

As we encouraged students to engage in research, we realized that the next logical step was to support the presentation and publication of their results. For this reason, two years ago we created a fund to pay the expenses of any student making presentations at regional or national professional conferences.

In another innovative move, Doug Williams and several students associated with MARE earned a grant from the National Science Foundation (2001) to create an online undergraduate research journal in marine science, *MarSci* (first issue, October 2002; <http://schc.sc.edu/marsci/index.html>). Other undergraduate research journals exist, but as far as we have been able to determine, *MarSci* is the only one run by an undergraduate editorial board. Building upon the experience of *MarSci*, the neuroscience team is starting their own on-line journal, *Impulse* (<http://impulse.schc.sc.edu/about.html>), with an international board of student editors.

We believe these programs create a unique web of overlapping opportunities that not only prepares students for a culminating thesis experience but also enriches their understanding of the substance of their particular disciplines and provides exceptional preparation for graduate school.

But we soon realized it was not enough.

THE NEXT LEVEL: CURRICULUM REFORM

Despite our satisfaction with the bridges we had built, we grew frustrated with other limits of the transplantation-apprenticeship model. In this model, followed by most research universities, talented undergraduates are transplanted to the other side of the divide between undergraduate instructional and graduate research missions of the university by becoming apprentices in the research program of particular professors. Their experiences can be profoundly deep, but also decidedly narrow. Only if the lead professor has the time, interest, and knowledge will an apprentice become versed in the many issues originating outside the research program but nonetheless influencing the conduct and course of inquiry within it.

Apprentices, we believe, must understand the epistemology, logic, conduct, and context of inquiry to be fully competent in a particular discipline. We grew to recognize that such issues most appropriately belong in the undergraduate educational experience. Understand, we are concerned with mastering not simply the research design and techniques prevailing in a particular discipline but also the assumptions that lie behind inquiry, the ethical issues raised by inquiry, and the external forces that impinge upon inquiry. We set out, therefore, to connect the students' research and learning experience with such concerns, not in an effort to displace the mastery of substance but to inform students' understanding about how that substance is created in the first place.

Consequently, we began to develop another RBL component in the Honors College—"critical connection" courses, the first of which was "Fundamentals of Scientific Inquiry," offered by Doug Williams in 1997. Students who took the class found it to be a revelation on many levels, as did Doug. They raised, though, a

practical question: “How does this count toward our degree?” We added a second question: “How do we expand this opportunity beyond the sciences?”

We responded to these challenges by creating the Minor in Inquiry (MIQ). We developed two additional “fundamentals” courses in the social sciences and in the humanities. The three serve as the core requirement of the new minor (<http://schc.sc.edu/students/RBLmiq.html>). Currently, we are also experimenting with “Fundamentals of Business Based Inquiry.” The remainder of the minor requires that students take a number of critical connection courses from a variety of departments. The essential intent of these courses is to pull students outside their particular discipline by asking questions about the foundations of inquiry as practiced within their disciplines. For example, someone in the natural sciences might take courses such as History of Science, Sociology of Science, and Philosophy of Science. Where desired courses did not yet exist in the university curriculum, we gave grants for faculty to develop them, including a course in the ethics of inquiry and a second on the political economy of inquiry.

Our goals, therefore, have evolved substantially from improved thesis preparation. Nor are we simply interested in cultivating sophisticated, critically informed applicants for graduate school. We now aim to reform undergraduate education. We are convinced that those who participate extensively in RBL opportunities will animate the substantive mastery of their particular discipline through connecting inquiry to related problems that fall within the conventional domain of other disciplines. They will become better educated.

These curricular experiments, therefore, suggest a redefinition of liberal education for the 21st Century. No person, however gifted, can master the content of any one discipline, much less all disciplines. However, when students develop the critical connections between the conduct of inquiry in a particular discipline and the various contexts—logical, ethical, social, political, and economic—of this inquiry, they will be tied into a multidisciplinary dialogue based not on close substantive relations (like that between biology and chemistry), but on the web of influences informing patterns of disciplinary development. Our fully developed program of RBL, then, may be more than a means for the integration of research and instruction; it represents the core of a model to reform general education requirements in the university.

INTERNAL CONSTRAINTS: TOWARD THE REFORMATION OF THE RESEARCH UNIVERSITY

Our efforts to realize this increasingly ambitious and multifaceted vision have not always proceeded smoothly. Even with sufficient internal resources to support our initiatives, we encountered institutional barriers to our aspirations. Like our students, faculty members want to know how participation in our RBL ventures count within the institution. Frankly, they do *not* count for much in the dominant understanding of the purpose of a research university. Consequently, we set out to reform the reward structure to recognize faculty contributions to RBL and other Honors College programs.

Despite some success in gaining formal recognition of such contributions, we continue to encounter resistance from the entrenched reward structure. At present, our progress with these initiatives largely depends upon the enthusiasm of relatively few individuals whose support is provided primarily *pro bono*. We know of others who express interest in our projects but who limit their participation because the investment of time and energy into RBL activities goes unrecognized, if not actively discouraged, by various home units.

At one level, we might excuse such resistance as the standard response of any entrenched institution to a new pattern of activities. Of course, we were convinced that our programs contributed to the overall mission of a research university, and we just needed to keep drawing the connections between RBL and the guiding vision and goals of the university. Over time, however, we grew more pessimistic. We feared that, in fact, our vision and the one driving the university do not match. I began to suspect that our university and, indeed, all research universities have no central, animating, unifying purpose or vision. At their core, they are hollow. The pursuit of external rankings of success provides only a thin, transient, and ultimately unsatisfying gruel unable to compensate for the absence of an animating, inherent purpose.

When asked to identify what the purpose of a university might be, most people invoke a version of the standard model—"Research, teaching, and service, and the greatest of these is research." Has anyone's heart quickened, has anyone's soul soared to hear this tired trinity incanted? Critics commonly complain that the definition of the trinity inevitably sets its elements in competition. Defenders of the trinity respond by pointing to many productive researchers who are also tremendous teachers and to unproductive faculty who are also wretched in the classroom. Critics retort with examples of the scholars who can't or don't teach and teachers who inspire their students even though their research agenda is minimal.

The best we can conclude from this recurring debate is that great research and teaching and worthy service are not inherently incompatible, but none is necessary nor sufficient to guarantee the others. That said, two structural factors in the contemporary university create conflict within the trinity despite the absence of any inherent incompatibility.

First, time is limited. Time spent in teaching, advising, and grading, or service for that matter, is not available for the pursuit of one's research program. Consequently, research universities commonly release productive researchers from formal teaching and advising obligations. Such policy decisions convert what may not be incompatible in principle into what must become incompatible in practice. Ironically, according to the arguments made by the defenders of the standard model, this outcome places teaching, at least at the undergraduate level, in the hands of those they see as least qualified—the research dead.

Second, the reward structure is strongly biased toward, if not totally based upon, research productivity. Whatever the surviving compatibilities among the elements of the trinity, they are eliminated by this prevailing reward structure. Fortunately, many faculty members remain committed to the inherent values of the teaching profession and make creative contributions to the life of the institution despite growing

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structural discouragement from doing so. Often, the success the university enjoys at the undergraduate level is based on the disproportionate contribution of these members.

Despite the dominant structural tendencies of research universities, they are not the fundamental problem. Borrowing an observation from John Searle on the mind/body problem, the mission trinity insures arguments about the count. Do we have one mission? Two? Or three? Are they equal, or are teaching and service largely afterthoughts? And so on. The mistake, however, is not how we count and rank-order these elements. Our mistake was to start counting at all. As Morse Peckham was fond of observing, "It's the obvious that eludes us." Research, teaching, and service cannot be ends of the university; rather, they are means to an end. Organizational theory generally considers the displacement of ends by means to be a form of bureaucratic pathology.

The problem for the research university is that these three means are neither compelling nor unique. Many organizations conduct research—corporations, public agencies, government weapons laboratories, and so forth. How is the university's research mission distinct? Many organizations engage in teaching; indeed, some argue that corporations can more effectively produce the kinds of workers they need. Does the university's teaching differ from training people to staff the corporate world? Finally, the university, while properly addressing the needs of other communities, is not a service organization, like a governmental department of welfare. So what should be the primary mission of a research university?

My answer might seem prosaic at first glance: The end of the university is learning. All three elements of the trinity of means come into balance when they are seen in the service of this single goal. The goal of scientific research is not Truth, but provisional learning open to falsification, in Karl Popper's apt insight. Inquiry in the humanities, echoing Habermas, similarly proceeds best when the dialogue of contending views is not closed down by the imposition of an ideological consensus. The participants must remain free to exploit, in Peckham's phrase, semiotic indeterminacy.

Of course, other organizations want to learn, but always in service to another, more basic end: corporations for profit, military labs to gain advantage over the enemy, and so on. Precisely because the end of the research university is learning, relations with other organizations often become problematic. A commitment to learning as an end essentially involves a commitment to maintain open dialogue and not merely to tolerate but actually to organize in order to protect negative feedback.

This institutional commitment to open exchange and negative feedback inevitably disturbs some of the external partners of the university. Corporations, in the pursuit of profits, take a proprietary view of the knowledge they create. Governments, in the pursuit of security, take a proscriptive view of knowledge that might aid prospective enemies. Religions strive to preserve orthodoxy. The wider public often is appalled at the tolerance of deviant ideas within the university.

The purpose of teaching within the university also reflects the commitment to learning as an end in itself, not simply training for mastery of a task. Ideally, students and, for that matter, professors share this commitment both for themselves and for the other participants in the community of learning. As such, the members of this community must also be dedicated to maintaining the dialogue; they must resist

premature closure on any discussion. The community of learning focuses more on questions than answers, on intellectual curiosity than fixed truth, and, for this reason, other institutions often view the university as subversive of prevailing societal norms. When charges of subversion are hurled at the university, its members reflexively, and correctly, invoke the principle of academic freedom, a principle that makes sense only in a community whose primary purpose is maintaining the dialogue. Consider the incongruity of invoking this principle of academic freedom in the national security, religious, or corporate community.

The university also must serve the needs of wider communities—local, national, and global—but such service should remain subservient to the end of learning. The university should not be organized to provide services to external clients as an end in itself. Rather, service activities must by design contribute to the end of learning. The mere replication of services that contribute little to learning are more properly left to agencies dedicated to their provision, not pursued by the university.

Let me be clear. These other organizations of our society and members of the wider public are not wrong-headed. They are pursuing ends appropriate to their organizational imperatives or life plans. Of all human endeavors, only the university holds to learning as its *raison d'être*. The overall balance of our social system would be profoundly disrupted by any effort to “universalize” the university.

Recognition of the university as *the* paramount learning community in our society represents a reformation. Like the original Reformation almost five centuries ago, at its heart lie a clearer, simpler focus on what is essential and a skepticism toward, even rejection of, what is superfluous. The inclusion of corporate and security concerns into our core identity, for example, will prove as corrupting as simony was to Christ's church.

Inevitably, this idealization will be compromised as the university engages other institutions in society. The goals of the ideal must often be balanced with the demands of the real. Nevertheless, compromises must come from a foundation that holds true to the core mission and identity. The university must not take the core missions of other organizations (like profit or national security) into its heart, for that will inevitably corrupt its operations. Rather it must enter into negotiations with these other power centers on the basis of a principled commitment to learning as an end.

THE EMERGENT VISION AND THE WIDER UNIVERSITY

What, then, does this vision of liberal learning imply for the wider university. This emergent vision, and the initiatives that generated it, led to the progressive enrichment of the Honors College. We may even succeed in changing the calculus of the entire university to some extent. My vision of liberal learning as the core mission of the College holds certain basic implications for the university:

First, we must work not simply to bridge, but to integrate, the research and instructional missions of the university. I believe this entails developing means of blurring the distinction between graduate and undergraduate instruction and going beyond the apprenticeship model. The integration of research and instruction entails

SIMPLE, PURE, AND TRUE

the vertical and horizontal integration of educational experiences, the reexamination of core educational requirements, and the development of new curricular opportunities. We should look to extend these integrative initiatives beyond the arts and sciences to involve the major professional schools, as well.

Second, if the trinity of research, teaching, and service should all serve the same end, learning, then the university should support, that is, reward, those activities that contribute most effectively to this learning mission. The university should encourage some research even though it fails to attract external funding. It should avoid other research even though it comes with generous external support. Only by focusing on the university's learning mission will we be able to discriminate between these two forms of research.

Activities that creatively weave the elements of the trinity of means together in the pursuit of learning should receive high recognition. We must strive to ensure that the reward structure of the university contributes to this purpose. It follows, as well, that the highest form of service enterprise will be one that integrates service with one or both of the other two paths to learning.

Third, if the purpose of the university is not research, teaching, and service, but learning, then relations with external sources of funding must also be reformed. First, we must avoid those funding sources that undermine the credibility of the learning enterprise, specifically those who would block negative feedback or stifle open discourse. Certain associations with the national security organizations and corporate interests, in particular, must be scrutinized for their potential impact on the university learning community. Just as we now have Institutional Review Boards (IRB) for human subject research, we should create an IRB to review questionable funding associations for their impact on our institutional integrity.

Beyond this internal effort, we must work to transform the funding environment, to educate both government and private sources of support about how the character and strength of the university research environment exists *because of* the commitment to learning, not despite it. Both federal organizations and private foundations show increasing interest in some of the challenges to which RBL responds. Yet their support often lacks vision, ambition, and understanding. Moreover, the organization of their priorities and operations simply reinforces some of the structural barriers within institutions. We must use our institutional leverage to urge external funding organizations to recalibrate their expectations.

CONCLUDING COMMENTS

Research Based Learning represents the most significant academic enhancement in which I have participated since I helped initiate the Honors College a quarter century ago. My vision and our ambition have grown along with our understanding of the nature of the task we have assumed. One common measure of the worth of an idea is the way implications and associations develop far beyond the initial conception. I began with the apparently straightforward challenge of better thesis preparation and have now arrived at a reforming vision for the research university and its relations with other institutional actors.

PETER C. SEDERBERG

In RBL, we invite our students to explore the critical connections between disciplinary inquiry and the factors that shape it. Unsurprisingly, given the thrust of our enterprise, we found ourselves making critical connections for our own project. Most recently, I have realized that students, in their inchoate way, already recapitulate the prevailing, and inadequate, idea of the university when they matriculate. They are not *tabulae rasae* on which we can write at will; they, too, must be brought into the process of transformation.

My vision of a community of liberal learning is, therefore, self-challenging; by definition it must be open to critique and change. I do not expect those who consider my argument to experience conversion upon reading this statement, but I hope they will be intrigued enough to join the journey.

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ELLEN B. BUCKNER

Honors Research in Nursing: Integration of Theory and Evidence-Based Practice using Multiple Modalities of Thinking

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Clinical judgment in nursing requires integration of a broad set of concepts from patho-physiological processes and situation-specific assessments to human caring and interpersonal communication. Nursing students consistently report difficulty in understanding and applying the complexities and ambiguities of care. They often perceive mixed messages and competing perspectives that cannot be resolved; their increasing frustration can produce anxiety about the conceptual tasks of scholarship. Honors research in nursing addresses this problem directly. Students have the opportunity to develop project ideas through all phases of the research process. They select a clinical question, relate it to nursing theory and current literature, design a project plan and implement the plan. In this process they experience first-hand how a single mode of thinking can be tracked through conceptualization to practice. Data-based research supports the student's transition to valuing evidence-based practice. As different students have considered different clinical questions, a variety of modes of thinking have been observed. Deductive, inductive and intuitive ways of understanding have been chosen for varied Honors research projects. This analysis looks at the process of Honors research in the discipline of nursing and how Honors students can use the process to provide an advanced foundation for practice in the discipline.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Different modes of thinking can pose difficulties for nursing students as they attempt to integrate performance approaches to care for a given client/patient or group of clients/patients. Competing approaches produce ambiguities, even for the most mature student or seasoned practitioner. Numerous authors have recognized the inherent complexity of nurses' ways of knowing. Berragan (1998) states that different models and ways of knowing are used for different fields of nursing and different nursing situations. Lauri and Salantera (1998) recommend that we explore the

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relationship between the nurse's structure of knowledge and how nurses use knowledge for decision-making in difficult situations. Other authors have recognized the role of intuition in nursing practice (Benner & Tanner, 1987; Rose & Parker, 1994; Berragan, 1998; McCutcheon & Pincombe 2001; Truman, 2003). Intuition is a manifestation of transpersonal caring and includes understandings of self-awareness through reflection (Leners, 1992).

Tanner (1998), a major national leader in nursing today, states that clinical judgment should be grounded in evidence-based practice. Diers (1995), another nationally recognized spokesperson for nursing, broadens that focus to include clinical scholarship as an alternative, though not a substitute, form of intellectual activity that may be comparable to research as a means of supporting nursing practice. These authors and others have sought to describe the importance of deliberate cognitive processes in nurses' actions.

In the 1990's there was a concerted effort in nursing education to improve students' critical thinking skills. That emphasis, however, has been criticized as developing only negative views of practice components, with the result of increasing frustration among clinicians. Some authors have taken issue with the call to increase critical thinking in nurses as the most important task of nursing education. Greenwood (2000) states that nursing education's emphasis on critical thinking skills fails to take into account the complexity of human cognition and clinical nursing practice. She states that human cognition includes both unconscious and tacit processes and requires interpretation of competing clinical and non-clinical cues and goals. Cody (2002) advocates a broader knowledge base in nursing. She states that using critical thinking as the cornerstone of nursing education leaves the profession with a starkly delimited base. The use of theories and frameworks enriches critical thinking and facilitates processes that are creative, constructive and relational. These authors support an integrated view of the intellectual processes underlying the discipline. It is this breadth of base that provides the foundation for Honors research and scholarship in nursing.

UAB HONORS IN NURSING PROGRAM

The Honors in Nursing Program at the University of Alabama at Birmingham began in 2000. Students participate in three Honors courses, usually arranged sequentially. Students are required to develop an Honors project as the outcome of their Honors work. Two curriculum tracks are possible—clinical and research—but both emphasize the use of data-based findings in clinical practice. Thus, students in both tracks engage in some form of Honors research. Based on a desire to develop students' skills that will enrich the profession for the future, objectives for Honors student experiences include the following:

1. To engage outstanding students in an experience of clinical scholarship in a practice area of their choosing
2. To encourage students to apply evidence-based practice concepts and nursing theories to clinical questions

3. To allow students the opportunity to develop their project using their own intellectual processes to determine the approach to the problem
4. To provide opportunities for interdisciplinary collegial interaction and dialog between nursing and other professions in scientific circles

Students in the clinical track begin with an Honors section of an introductory course in Nursing and Health Care. They identify an area of interest with the Honors advisor, explore clinical mentorships, and write their course paper integrating content from their interest area with the perspective of a nursing theory. In the research track students take an Honors section of the introductory Nursing Research course and engage in a mentorship experience with a nurse researcher in an ongoing funded research study. They develop their critiques and related research bibliography in the area of their research mentor's work. Students in both tracks then participate in Honors Seminar I, which focuses on the student's own project, developing the clinical or research questions, choosing methods and initiating approvals needed to implement the project. In the third course, both groups of students participate in Honors Seminar II, in which the project is implemented and results are written and discussed in a seminar setting. On completion of the Honors sequence, students may disseminate their findings through several mechanisms described below. They graduate with the designation of "With Honors in Nursing."

THEORETICAL FORMULATIONS

In the initial portion of their work, Honors nursing students explore theoretical formulations of nursing and select a nursing theory or model to guide their study of a content area of interest. This step is particularly important as students enter the Honors sequence at the same time as admission to the upper division of the baccalaureate nursing curriculum. The theoretical perspective thus allows them to relate their content interest to concepts underlying the profession. Students who are novices to nursing use the theories and models of nursing to begin viewing content from the perspective of a nurse. Numerous theoretical perspectives are available for their use. These include Florence Nightingale's philosophy of nursing and environment, Sister Callista Roy's Adaptation Model, Betty Newman's Systems Model of bio-physiological processes, Jean Watson's philosophy of caring and science, Imogene King's Interacting Systems Framework and Theory of Goal Attainment, and others (Chitty, 2001).

EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICE

In the second phase of Honors coursework, students focus on their particular content area of interest and explore evidence-based studies that consider the phenomena of interest. Students use databases such as the Cumulative Index of Nursing and Allied Health Literature (CINAHL) to explore what is known about their topical area of clinical practice. Some students work with nurse-scientists who have well-developed programs of funded research. They observe their mentor in research phases of problem identification, instrumentation, data collection and/or data analysis.

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They develop their Honors project in relation to primary research either as a secondary analysis or a parallel study. Other students work with a clinical mentor to identify the components of the clinical setting, client/patient care needs and nursing interventions. They develop their descriptive study or intervention innovation with applicability to clinical nursing. Projects are submitted and approved by the Institutional Review Board of the university and often undergo additional reviews at the agencies where they will be implemented. For both groups, concepts of evidence-based practice provide common ground for the integration of theory, research and applications to nursing practice.

DEDUCTIVE, INDUCTIVE AND INTUITIVE APPROACHES

As students explore the literature, they invariably begin to see themselves as more quantitative or more qualitative in their preferred ways of approaching subject matter. Students who are highly quantitative typically begin developing their ideas through deductive processes. They seek valid, reliable, and often published tools that can quantify their phenomenon of interest. They subsequently collect data from a large number of participants using surveys or observation checklists, and they formulate deductive conclusions. Application of basic descriptive and inferential statistics—t-tests, correlation, Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) and multiple regression—allows deductive conclusions to be drawn and identifies those conclusions as statistically significant or not.

Students who are more interested in investigating experiences of clients/patients typically choose qualitative methods. These students choose methods requiring interviews, using open-ended questions and involving few participants. Case study analysis is one such type of study. The lack of quantitative rigor is balanced by the ability to investigate new phenomena in depth without preconceptions and directional hypotheses. This type of study is particularly important in areas of nursing where there is little published research. Students frequently develop their own instruments and establish initial content validity through peer review. These are usually descriptive studies in which themes emerge from the data and conclusions develop inductively. Themes emerge empirically and converge to form the general abstraction or major theme.

A third approach defies classical logical categorization but has special applicability for nursing. Its focus is predominantly intuitive. Students have applied this approach to situations in which they had first-hand experience and in which a novel approach “made sense” based solely on that experience. Based on their intuitive appreciation of the value of an intervention strategy or recognition of a patient-care need, these students have designed studies to obtain data on these phenomena that would have relevance for practice. Theoretically-based study designs may also fall within this category. Examples of these three types of studies are described below.

DEDUCTIVE STUDIES

Examples from the first three years of the UAB Honors in Nursing Program demonstrate students' use of different ways of thinking to approach clinical questions. Deductive thinking is reasoning which follows from premises, moves from general to specific, and often includes quantitative methods and hypotheses. Conclusions are based on comparison of the findings to the expectations of the original hypothesis. One such Honors research study investigated critical care nurses' attitudes about and knowledge of organ donation (Ingram, Rayburn and Buckner, 2002). The study investigated the hypothesis that nurses' attitudes about organ donation would affect their actions. Findings from two hospitals showed nurses' attitudes were highly positive although their willingness to take individual action (as an indicated donor on their driver's license) was low. The study closely replicated research done ten years earlier and was later published in the same journal. In another study, parental views of the social environment of an outpatient bone marrow transplant unit were measured using an investigator-designed survey. The investigator's hypothesis was that parents would express concerns about lack of privacy in an open waiting room of a bone marrow transplant clinic. Parents reported, however, that the positive aspects of social support overcame any other concerns of privacy or anxiety (Pritchett, 2003).

INDUCTIVE STUDIES

Inductive thinking is the converse of deductive thinking and moves from specific to general. General principles or themes are derived from empirical facts and data. Data are often obtained through qualitative methods. Examples of inductive studies include one on positive characteristics of unmedicated birth experiences. Women were interviewed who had completed an unmedicated birth, some of whom were attended by a nurse midwife (Hardin, 2003). In individual interviews with the Honors student, women shared their birth experiences and characteristics that made those experiences positive. An important theme was the centrality of movement in their experiences. Women interpreted as highly positive the ability to walk in early labor and to assume a wide variety of positions for birth. This theme had been previously unreported in the literature as integral to positive perception of the birth experience.

A second inductive study was a case-study method that investigated the effects on a family when their hearing-impaired child received a cochlear implant (Allegratti, 2002). Through longitudinal interviews of each family member before, during, and after surgery and after programming of the implant, the student tracked the changes they identified in their concerns and feelings, decision-making and family functioning. These intensive interviews used qualitative methods and found themes detailing the processes of change within the family as a whole. This student's work was the first description of this process in the literature and provided a groundbreaking look at an area important to nurses working with families during cochlear implant surgery.

INTUITIVE STUDIES

Intuition is a sense of knowing based not on the use of rational processes but on insight, including the application of models and theories to gain insight into a practice phenomenon. It may include participant observation as a methodological strategy. Examples of intuitive studies include several that students chose because they recognized the clinical significance of the study's central focus. A hospice nurse, returning for his BSN, sought to understand how hospice patients cope with fear of dying (Bothe, 2002). Another student assessed the need for parent-to-parent support in parents with a newborn in a neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) (Li, 2001). A student with interests in mental health nursing made observations on the psychosocial effects of pet therapy visits to hospitalized children (Weddington, 2003), and a student who does marathon running asked women who continue running during pregnancy about the types of support (and non-support) they received (McAfee, 2002). These studies had neither hypotheses nor emerging themes but validate the clinical significance of their respective topics.

Another intuitive approach is to base a study on a theoretical model. A study of burn survivors' adaptation was based on concepts in the Roy Adaptation Model (Roy and Andrews, 1999) and was done through a national website support group for burn survivors (Foster, 2002). The student asked participants to describe adaptive strategies and related findings to nursing practice using the Roy Model. Her work won a national award from the Roy Adaptation Association for its relevance and accuracy in effectively applying the model to pediatric nursing practice. Findings from intuitive or inductive studies may identify emerging clinical trends and provide the basis for future studies with particular hypotheses or larger studies worthy of graduate theses and dissertations.

DISSEMINATION

Honors research in nursing reaches its culmination through dissemination to various disciplinary and interdisciplinary forums. Students present their work as posters and verbal presentations. A local forum for presentations consists of a joint meeting between two local baccalaureate nursing schools; two nursing honor society chapters sponsor an undergraduate research day. A state level meeting allows nursing studies to be presented in an interdisciplinary session dedicated to health science. At the national level students participate in a National Collegiate Honors Council (NCHC) national conference or NCUR: The National Conference on Undergraduate Research, a meeting of over 2000 undergraduate students; both conferences provide an opportunity to present their work to students from all majors and disciplines. Additionally, opportunities for publication and recognition within the discipline and within broader academic circles arise. Case studies, columns and feature articles may be published in national peer-reviewed journals. Honors students' work may also be listed on web publications, and students are eligible to win local, state and national awards, bringing recognition to the institution and profession.

CONCLUSION

Honors research in nursing gives outstanding students the opportunity to create a scholarly work in the discipline and through that process to recognize the functions of multiple modes of reasoning used in nursing practice. The application of research processes to clinical questions facilitates students' development of an evidence-based practice. Numerous skills are used in the research including problem or question delineation and concept description, linkage with current research, application of appropriate methodology, collaboration on implementation, data analysis and interpretation. The ability to persevere in the face of common obstacles is also a hallmark of the Honors experience. Students complete the process through dissemination of findings at local, state and national levels. Thus, the requirement for Honors research is the catalyst for students' development in numerous cognitive processes and skills appropriate to development of a professional practitioner. Through the development of an Honors research project within the discipline, students acquire first-hand the fundamentals of evidence-based practice and theoretically-based intervention that are essential to the future growth of the profession.

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Research about Honors

KELLY YOUNGER

Honors, Inc.

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LOYOLA MARYMOUNT UNIVERSITY

Academics across the country are having an allergic reaction to the corporate model of operation being adopted by many universities. Terms like *branding*, *collateral materials*, *budget controls*, *marketing strategies*, and *outcomes* are causing a panic among faculty who believe that a *customer satisfaction* approach to higher education is anti-intellectual and that it leads to grade inflation, teaching toward evaluations, and learning as *product*, not process.

Honors programs in particular, often the standard bearers of undergraduate academic standards, are being asked to market themselves not only to the top prospective students, but also to the university administration at large. Honors is frequently the default *focus group* expected to show the rest of the university programs and departments 'How it is done,' or rather, 'How it is done according to *standard*.' By 'it,' of course, I mean *marketing* our curriculum, *selling* our program, and *branding* our product.

But what is the *product* of an honors education?

Most honors directors answer this question with phrases like *a distinguished interdisciplinary education*, *a life-long love of learning*, or *a well-rounded individual*, and when speaking to a new student or colleague, honors directors easily articulate who they are, what they do, and why they do it. They speak of smaller classes, advanced and interdisciplinary curricula, faculty mentors, research projects, unique housing, prestigious scholarships, and, of course, the rewarding experience of participating in the intellectual life of the campus. Directors run into difficulty, however, when they must translate this narrative into the *eduspeak* required by various media relations departments, assessment directors, or capital campaign fundraisers, who more often than not are non-academics with little or no contact with honors students. Moreover, when these university administrators require that honors programs hawk their wares through highly stylized *mission statements*, *promotional materials*, *outcomes lists*, and even *a look*, honors directors are forced to market their programs toward administrative approval, not toward prospective students.

To complicate matters further, not every honors director is in a position to resist the administrative pressure of conforming to the corporate model. When vital decisions concerning funding and hiring are determined by the university, it is detrimental to bite the hand that feeds the honors budget. And for the untenured honors director, such resistance is impolitic.

As a result, some questions arise: How does an honors program respond to and withstand the university's corporate leanings without putting the program in jeopardy? How do honors directors promote their programs in an authentic way that

attracts students rather than in a commercial way that simply pleases the administration? And are these two questions incompatible?

The following offers possible answers by tracing the development of the corporate university, providing a personal example of one honors program that attempted to resist it, and discussing the unexpected consequences.

THE CORPORATE UNIVERSITY: AN OVERVIEW

“The men who stand for education and scholarship,” wrote John Jay Chapman, “have the ideals of business men. They are in truth business men. The men who control [universities] today are very little else than business men” (Aronowitz 17). Most academics have recently heard or muttered similar sentiments around university departments. In fact, many assume that the business-model university came into existence during the height of corporate culture in the 80s and the economic boom of the 90s. What is intriguing about Chapman’s seething remark, however, is that he wrote it in 1909. And he was not the only one.

In 1918, sociologist Thorstein Veblen published *The Higher Learning in America: A Memorandum on the Conduct of Universities by Businessmen* where he writes:

Men dilate on the high necessity of a businesslike organization and control of the university, its equipment, personnel and routine. What is had in mind in this insistence of an efficient system is that these corporations of learning shall set their affairs in order after the pattern of a well-conducted business concern. In this view the university is conceived as a business house dealing in merchantable knowledge, placed under the governing hand of a captain of erudition, whose office is to turn the means in hand to account in the largest feasible output. . . .

The university is to make good both as a corporation of learning and as a business concern dealing in standardized erudition, and the executive head necessarily assumes the responsibility of making it count wholly and unreservedly in each of these divergent, if not incompatible lines. (Gould 79)

If, as Chapman and Veblen reveal, the idea of the corporate university already existed by the early 20th Century, then when exactly did it begin and how did it proliferate? In *The Knowledge Factory: Dismantling the Corporate University and Creating True Higher Learning*, Stanley Aronowitz believes the seed was planted by an 1862 legislative act signed by President Lincoln granting federal land to “states that agreed to establish institutions of research and instruction devoted to the production and transmission of scientific and technical knowledge” (16). Aronowitz then maps the corporatization of the American university through to the 1944 GI Bill that “permanently changed the nature and social makeup of higher education’s student

body” (28). He points out that the GI Bill was in fact created to prevent millions of returning soldiers from entering the workforce and causing a dangerous surplus in the labor market. When a million and a half veterans started entering the job market from institutions of higher learning four years later, however, their employers were distressed to find these graduates still needed job training. The demand for work-ready employees quickly collapsed the separation of graduate, undergraduate, and vocational education, especially as the economy and the birth rate continued to boom.

Aronowitz proceeds, claiming that Clark Kerr’s 1963 book *The Uses of the University* is responsible for the new “multiversity” where the humanities take a secondary role to technical research and training (32). Kerr grants the general population access to general education, but he argues for a privileged class of researchers dedicated only to “knowledge production.” Aronowitz concludes with an overview of the last quarter century identifying the professionalization of the armed forces, economic recessions, corporate mergers, and the collapse of the Soviet Union as powerful agents that shaped the current state of higher education in America.

Since the Chairman and CEO of IBM, Louis Gerstner, Jr., published “Public Schools Need to Go the Way of Business” in *USA Today* (1998, 13A), there has been no shortage of literature concerning the corporate-academic model. *The Chronicle of Higher Education* consistently publishes letters, articles, and whole issues dedicated to the trend. In the past year alone, three major books have been published on the subject. *Steal This University: The Rise of the Corporate University and the Academic Labor Movement* is a call-to-arms collection of what the last twenty years of corporate culture have produced: for-profit education like the University of Phoenix and the sale of internet courses; disproportionate rank and tenure standards; anti-intellectualism; labor union forming and union busting, to name just a few.

In *The University in a Corporate Culture*, Eric Gould details six business styles that appear in the operation of a university: management and productivity development systems; budget controls; marketing strategies; redistribution of labor; development of research and ancillary enterprises; and customer service orientation (80-81). Gould expands on all of these with examples of learning outcomes, merit raises, outsourced staff and adjunct faculty, government-funded research programs, and ever-increasing student life programs. He identifies university marketing strategies borrowed directly from corporate models:

Growing use of media advertising with the targeting of key audiences; the development of public relations offices entrusted with producing favorable and focused press releases, the use of promotional rhetoric and corporate-styled logos, the development of public identity themes, the hiring of state and federal lobbyists; the growth of a new rhetoric of corporate eduspeak that focuses on the language of excellence. (80).

Finally, no one has defined the term *corporate culture* more pointedly than Henry Giroux in his essay “Vocationalizing Higher Education: Schooling and the Politics of Corporate Culture.” He reveals that Universities use the term corporate culture . . .

... to refer to an ensemble of ideological and institutional forces that function politically and pedagogically both to govern organizational life through senior managerial control and to produce compliant workers, depoliticized consumers, and passive citizens. Within the language and images of corporate culture, citizenship is portrayed as an utterly privatized affair whose aim is to produce competitive self-interested individuals vying for their own material and ideological gain. Reformulating social issues as strictly individual or economic, corporate culture functions largely to cancel out the democratic impulses and practices of civil society by either devaluing them or absorbing such impulses within a market logic. No longer a space for political struggle, culture in the corporate model becomes an all-encompassing horizon for producing market identities, values, and practices. (30-31)

These examples and definitions are all too familiar to honors directors who are charged with recruiting the best and brightest students to their university. The issue is not so much the efficacy of the directors' methods, but the difficulty in matching their honors methods to the correct corporate vocabulary. Academics and administrators thus waste time struggling to fit square pegs into round holes, *eduspeak* into education.

Former Harvard President Derek Bok addresses this very struggle in his *Universities in the Marketplace: The Commercialization of Higher Education*. He offers his personal account of the struggle to promote excellence in teaching, learning, and research while resisting quick and easy corporate solutions. The failure to do so, Bok argues, leads universities to “[sacrifice] essential values that are all but impossible to restore” (208).

I firmly agree, but, with all due respect, that's easy for a university president to say. If more university presidents followed suit, we would not be in this predicament. Most honors directors, however, answer to a higher administration that is increasingly demanding those “quick and easy corporate solutions.” Be it an Honors Council, a Dean, an Academic Vice President, or an entire University Relations Division, the honors director is thus put into an either/or predicament: resist or accept corporate solutions. Either way, the honors program is potentially at risk.

What follows is a personal example of how the honors program at my university successfully translated who we are, what we do, and why we do it into terms the administrators accepted and the students understood. More importantly, I reveal how we did so without compromising the integrity of our program. After seemingly dancing with the devil, we discovered a way out of the either/or dilemma and avoided the *if you can't beat 'em, join 'em* defeatism. As a result, in the administrators' eyes we produced a program that is a *corporation* of market identities, market values, and market practices. But in our eyes, we created a community where students *in-corporate* academic identities, leadership values, and ethical practices.

THE CASE

Recently, the University Honors Program at LMU was asked to revisit the ways in which it markets itself. Since the program's inception, the Honors Program has offered the brightest students an alternative curriculum based entirely on the university core offerings. Like many programs, the honors core was simply a smaller, more accelerated version of the standard university curriculum. Over the past few years, LMU has increased in size, prestige and, of course, tuition. We were thus informed that, if our honors program were to remain the touchstone of academic excellence, it needed to change the ways in which it promoted itself. In other words, the Department of University Relations wanted the flagship program to get a new flag.

The initial attempt at doing a better job describing who we are, what we do, and why we do it resulted in a narrative about our particular program that emphasized our approach to teaching, the interdisciplinary range of topics we studied, the intellectual and personal community we promoted, and our philosophy of learning for the sake of learning. I will give this narrative in full in order to provide background for the response from University Relations. The original honors document read:

As a means of creatively challenging the potential of the outstanding student and thereby contributing to the intellectual life of the entire academic community, Loyola Marymount University adopted an honors program in 1958. By constant experimentation and periodic revision, the program attempts to keep true to its original intent of providing the student with intellectual adventure.

The program is interdepartmental and does not involve a separate faculty. It relies on the interest and generosity of the entire university faculty, and on the enthusiasm of the truly exceptional students, to become mutually involved in an intellectual experience. Not being a separate unit apart from the rest of the university community, the honors faculty and students thus share with the rest of the school the stimulation of their special academic experience.

Taking advantage of its freedom from some of the restrictions involved in the structure of regular courses, the University Honors Program attempts to challenge as well as to inform, to ask hard questions as well as to examine tested solutions. Its goal is to provide a carefully integrated and demanding interdisciplinary curriculum for the exceptional student.

The University Honors Program is open to students from all the colleges of Loyola Marymount University. The Honors Director administers the program with the assistance of the Assistant Director and the Honors Advisory Council. Faculty members from all disciplines at Loyola Marymount are invited to participate.

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The honors core curriculum begins with an intensive undergraduate experience combining interdisciplinary courses in the humanities and sciences with an individualized sequence in writing, critical thinking, and cultural studies. A second-year sequence in historiography, theology, and natural philosophy prepares the honors student for the third-year seminars in ethics, interdisciplinary seminars, and thesis preparation. The fourth-year results in the publication of the capstone thesis project: the culmination of independent research under the individual guidance of a professor and the participation in the Senior Thesis Forum.

Honors students enter with a minimum 1250 SAT and 3.6 unweighted high school GPA, maintain a minimum GPA of 3.60 at LMU, and display proficiency in a foreign language. Successful completion of the University Honors Program is announced at the annual commencement ceremonies and noted on the student's permanent transcript. This recognition is of lasting personal, professional, and academic value.

We were especially proud of the last line, believing naïvely that it satisfied the *eduspeak* requirements. After patting ourselves on the back, we submitted our copy to the University Relations Department and the committee assigned to the Honors Program (comprised of the Assistant Vice President for Communications and Public Affairs, the Director of Creative Services, the Director of Media Relations, the Media Relations Manager, the Director of Corporate Relations, and the Publications Director), who promptly rejected it.

Why?

Too many words. Not enough pictures. The student will stop reading after fifteen seconds. And those students who opt for an accelerated curriculum are more interested in what they are going to get out of it, not what they are going to create with it.

We were, of course, immediately offended. Was it not clear that our curriculum is geared specifically toward those students who choose to read for more than fifteen seconds? Was it misunderstood that the success of our honors program depends on student contribution and creation? Apparently so.

For some reason or another (read: untenured honors director and untenured assistant director), we agreed to give it another go. We gathered Honors students and faculty into *focus groups*, asking them to describe our honors curriculum as they saw it and discuss the ways we could better promote this unique program. We had all the right tools for a corporate meeting: PowerPoint presentations, tape recorders, video cameras, note takers, brainstorming games, the iconic oversized pad on an easel with colorful markers, and questions given to us by the Media Relations Department like "If the Honors Program were a car, what kind of car would it be?"

What were the *outcomes*? We realized we all had a secret passion for playing *Pictionary* and that our honors program was a Volkswagen. To my displeasure, I

found myself in the position of encouraging students to argue the differences *not* between Plato and Aristotle, but between a Jetta and a Touareg. This was definitely not the purpose of our program, or of my position. The real result was that we were even further away from representing our honors program in a way that placated the administration or, more importantly, that satisfied us.

After several more weeks of brainstorming, meetings with Media Relations staff, lists of terms we thought they wanted us to use (e.g., *brand, logo, slogan*), we finally had a breakthrough. While returning to the drawing board once again with a group of equally defeated students, I tried to hide my own frustration by remarking: "Are you ready for the challenge?" One of the hungrier students replied, "Let's just make *that* the slogan and eat." Everyone laughed, except for the assistant honors director and me. Not because we were annoyed but because she was absolutely right. Why not give them an ambiguous slogan-question? Why not be rhetorical? It was, after all, the closest we had come to a phrase we would actually use in an honors classroom.

Thus, we all agreed on a new tactic: the more ambiguous we were in our marketing, the more specific we might actually be in representing ourselves. This approach led us to realize that we need not change our philosophy, our content, or our program against our will. We could pacify the administration and subvert the corporate model by reclaiming our rhetorical control. For example, the non-Honors University core classes at LMU have similar titles to many general education courses at other Universities, particularly private institutions: American Cultures; College Writing; Communications or Critical Thinking; Critical and Creative Arts; History; Literature; Mathematics; Science and Technology; Philosophy; Social Sciences; Theological Studies; and Ethics.

From 1958-1997, the LMU Honors Program simply offered unique sections of these courses, open only to honors students. The courses were different, but the names were the same. For example, all honors first year students would take the same section of HIST 101 or PHIL 160, but the classes were essentially the same in content as the non-honors versions. In 1997, however, the innovative honors director at the time created two courses called *On Human Dignity* and *Society and Its Discontents*. Although they had no counterpart in the university core, they were approved to fulfill the Philosophy and Social Science requirements. Both of these courses introduced the idea of interdisciplinary studies into the program and enabled faculty from different departments to teach in honors for the first time. For several years, they remained the lone course titles that stood out from the generic core categories and, as a result, piqued the interest of a whole new group of students. Moreover, the new courses led to changes in the course content of the remaining honors classes. Rather than merely offering more accelerated versions of the core, they became more interdisciplinary and experimental. Thus, the honors section of HIST 101 began assigning completely different texts and projects than the regular HIST 101.

Based on these two inherited name changes, we decided to further differentiate our offerings from the regular core curriculum by changing the names of all our courses without changing the newly developed content. The following new titles emerged:

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- HNRS 101: *American Persona*
- HNRS 115: *On the Sublime*
- HNRS 120: *On Human Dignity*
- HNRS 130: *Society and Its Discontents*
- HNRS 140: *On Motion and Mechanics*
- HNRS 215: *Imago Dei*
- HNRS 220: *Republic to Prince*
- HNRS 230: *Age of Leviathan*
- HNRS 240: *On the Nature of Things*
- HNRS 330: *Beyond Good and Evil*

As an explanation of the curriculum, we rewrote the course descriptions that, at first, were lengthy and reminiscent of our first narrative attempt for University Relations. We now presented the following brief course descriptions:

American Persona. A writing intensive course based on readings reflecting the political, social, and literary diversity of the cultures in which we live.

On the Sublime. A Great Ideas series that establishes the overarching themes of the intellectual tradition commonly called the humanities: literature, philosophy, history, theology, political science, psychology, and economics.

On Human Dignity. An examination of what it means to be human as reflected in and fashioned by significant philosophical works, both classical and contemporary.

Society and Its Discontents. A discussion of culture and ideology from the perspective of various 19th and 20th century critical thinkers and political theorists.

On Motion and Mechanics. An experiential course employing the use of scientific and engineering methods to study the environment around us and solve technical problems.

Imago Dei. An exploration of the historical, social, and theological images of creation and the divine.

Republic to Prince. A study of history and the construction of civilizations from the ancient to early modern periods.

Age of Leviathan. An historical presentation of the major concepts, ideologies, and movements which have dominated the path to contemporary globalization.

On the Nature of Things. An examination of the history, philosophy, and nature of scientific discovery, theory, and practice.

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Beyond Good and Evil. A critique of moral problems through the study of ethics, considering select issues in social justice, science and technology, business and society, medicine and bioethics, or media and responsibility.

Obviously, many of our new titles come from famous titles by Longinus, Pico della Mirandola, Freud, Galileo, Genesis, Plato, Machiavelli, Hobbes, Lucretius, and Nietzsche. By renaming the courses, we simply changed the titles, not the contents. Moreover, the new titles were based on intelligent, historically significant, and recognizable titles that reflect what we actually teach in the classroom.

When we presented these new *brand-names* to Media Relations, they finally nodded with approval. In fact, they applauded our efforts to distinguish our curriculum not only from the general core but from other honors programs around the country. In their eyes, we completely reinvented our honors curriculum. In our eyes, we gave new titles to a curriculum we refused to compromise.

With this new strategy, we returned to our first narrative description. The Director of Creative Services reminded us to use terms like *results, learning outcomes, benefits, excellence, and product*. Like our shift from the slogan-statement to the slogan-question, however, we decided to keep the focus on the student, not just our program, by using words we actually use when working with students. And like our question that prompted the student to give us an answer (i.e., what Creative Services would call a *product*), we decided to highlight the fact that our honors program knows who our students are, what they are looking for, and what they can get out of our program as well as what they can bring. We came up with the following:

You're bright. You work hard. You think for yourself and come up with solutions no one has tried. You have an intense intellectual curiosity. You're a natural leader. You're exceptional and proud of it. And you're ready for more.

If that's you, there's a great place for you here at Loyola Marymount University—a place where you can meet the challenges you've set for yourself, where you can grow and thrive.

.....

The University Honors Program is the jewel in the crown of academic programs at Loyola Marymount University. It's for students who value and want to be challenged by an exceptional education, who want to study a variety of subjects intensively. The program creates and supports an academic environment of intellectual adventure and provides a carefully integrated and demanding curriculum.

The Honors Program takes advantage of its freedom from some of the restrictions involved in the structure of core courses. Classes are smaller. Projects are more intensive and demanding. And the rewards are great: High academic achievement. An honors degree for your

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transcript. Public recognition at commencement. And the satisfaction that you faced the challenge. Because you were ready for it.

Again, Media Relations approved. We were on a roll, but they still wanted the *benefits*. When it came to preparing the list of benefits from being in the Honors Program, we looked to Susanna Finnell's "The National Collegiate Honors Council: Living Up to National Ideals." Rather than use Media Relations questions (e.g., *If this honors program were a car, what kind of car would you be?*), we turned to her list:

Where do graduates of your program go next?

How is an honors class different from a regular class?

What are the opportunities for independent learning and undergraduate research?

How are honors students recognized on campus? at graduation? on transcripts?

What input do honors students have into the running of the honors program?

What is this honors program's particular strength?

Are there scholarships available for honors students? Does the program offer preparation for national scholarship competitions? (7)

We then provided the following answers, keeping our student audience in mind:

Since the entire Honors Program is only 120 students total (that's 30 students per year), we are able to assist you with this great challenge every step of the way.

- Your Honors Program courses are smaller than regular core courses (15 or fewer in each class).
- You'll have dedicated Honors Program advisors and counselors.
- We help place you with faculty mentors and directors in order for you to research, present at national conferences, and publish your work.
- We help you pursue and capture scholarships, graduate school placement, internships, awards, grants and study abroad opportunities.

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- Unique housing options and Honors Program facilities include guaranteed en-suite housing with Honors roommates, a dedicated study room with computers, a conference room, a designated classroom and an available outdoor courtyard for social gatherings.
- Honors students receive priority registration every semester.
- Honors Program students often receive Trustee or Presidential Scholarships in addition to regular financial aid.
- Because of the intensity of the Honors Program, you'll build relationships with students, professors and advisors that most likely are stronger than you would build without the benefit of the program.
- We also host frequent events, socials, dinners with professors, guest speakers, and graduate school information sessions.
- Being an Honors student builds bridges to leadership opportunities within the university and the Los Angeles community.

Obviously, the tone and style of the above differ dramatically from our first narrative. There are contractions, sentence fragments, and fast-paced sound bites of information. We did this not to appear 'hip and happening' (and grammatically lax), but to promote ourselves before the correct audience: the smart, academically adventurous, highly motivated, socially aware, interesting high school student who actually is ready for the challenge. In other words, we convinced Media Relations and Creative Services that what they called *product* we called *challenge*.

Our strategy worked. Whereas before they wanted us to use fewer words and more pictures, we now had their authorization to be even more challenging. We revised our honors application, for example, by making it longer and more detailed. We still ask students to provide us with all of their academic qualifications, but we now require more details concerning scholarship goals, personal interests, family traditions and background, travel experience, and expectations of college. We ask for a non-traditional letter of recommendation (i.e., not a high school teacher or family member) from someone who can comment on their uniqueness. Rather than asking them to submit a basic writing sample (which more often than not resulted in AP English essays on *Hamlet*), we now provide them with prompts from LMU Faculty publications. Not only can they read faculty works, but if they come to LMU and join the University Honors Program, they can study with these particular professors as well. Thus we arrived at our ultimate marketing strategy: our faculty and students. We now include an option on our web page where prospective students can request a faculty member to contact them for a conversation about honors, and they can request a current honors student to contact them to answer questions, join them for classes, and even arrange a weekend campus visit.

This is what we wanted all along, and the way we got there was through playing the Media Relations game on our own terms, literally with our own terms.

THE CONSEQUENCES

Since Media Relations officially launched the new University Honors Program marketing campaign, we have noted several significant results pertaining to the students, the curriculum, the faculty, the program profile, and the university administration.

First, our applications from high school seniors doubled, and the applications from current LMU students increased by half. Since our program is limited to approximately 30 students per entering class (for a program total of 120), these increases in applications have created a more competitive candidate pool. Last year, the average high school GPA was 3.84 with an average SAT of 1364. This year, the applicant pool GPA is 3.87 with an SAT of 1422. Our waiting list has also increased by 20%.

While these measurable outcomes are pleasing to the administration, there are also the immeasurable results that we witness personally. Student pride in the program, for example, has visibly increased and is evident in honors student enthusiasm. This year saw more student-initiated social events, guest speaker lunches, and off-campus activities than in previous years. Their attitude toward their honors core curriculum has also changed. Many college students consider core classes something to “get out of the way” while pursuing their major requirements. Because our curriculum is now distinct in its course titles, they take more delight in their curriculum. “I’m off to History” has become “I’m off to the Age of Leviathan.” It’s often followed by, “That sounds cool, what class is that?” Thus, the honors students are marketing without even meaning to, and their non-honors friends are actively inquiring into the program.

Second, our honors curriculum has benefited greatly from our changes. It now has a perceptible continuum. When core classes are simply History, Literature, Science and Technology, etc., the student seldom makes the connections we expect them to make across the disciplines. Now that the honors professors know the course titles, the foundational texts usually taught within the classes, and the priority we place on interdisciplinary studies, they assign papers and lead discussions that incorporate authors and texts encountered in previous courses. Knowing all of your students have read the *Republic* and *The Prince* in their sophomore year makes teaching *Beyond Good and Evil* in their junior year all the more fruitful.

Third, the changes in course titles opened up our honors faculty pool significantly. Before, only an English professor could teach the Literature core, a Philosophy professor the Philosophy core, a History professor the History core and so on. And the dependence of most university core curricula on liberal arts faculty limited the involvement of the other colleges and schools at LMU. Now the broad titles of our interdisciplinary courses allow us to recruit faculty into honors from departments that have not ever been involved in honors. For example, an Art Historian can teach HNRS 215 *Imago Dei*, a Biologist HNRS 240 *On the Nature of Things*, a Film professor HNRS 101 *American Persona*, a Business professor HNRS 130 *Society and Its Discontents*. More professors have thus created more new courses with new texts and new projects. Likewise, the focus is more on depth than

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breadth, abandoning the 'survey' structure of most university core classes. Moreover, faculty requests to teach in honors are up so much that we were able to petition the deans for more sections of particular courses, thus lowering the student-teacher ratio to 10:1 in some classes.

Fourth, the awareness and profile of the University Honors Program increased dramatically, both locally and nationally. Many LMU faculty members (especially those not in the College of Liberal Arts) had little knowledge of the University Honors Program. Since we have begun promoting our program, we have increased our on-campus recognition, which has enabled us to create an Honors Advisory Council comprised of faculty representatives from each of the colleges and schools. The Council members, in turn, are now able to promote the program to their own colleagues and explain how they can become involved with honors as well. Consequently, we are frequently barraged with requests to co-sponsor campus events and to advertise on our website.

Nationally, our profile has increased as well. Approximately 77% of LMU students come from California; beyond that the majority still hails from western states (mostly Arizona, Nevada, Oregon, Washington, and Hawaii). Since the initiation of the new marketing campaign last year, we have received applications and accepted students from several different states (Colorado, Idaho, Wisconsin, Florida, Texas, Minnesota, Kansas, Massachusetts, New Jersey, and New York) and countries (Canada, England, Australia, Mexico, and the Philippines). The Office of Undergraduate Admissions is especially pleased with this information and uses the details quite often in their presentations.

Internal relations with other departments have grown in energy and efficiency. Since the executive administration was eager to launch our new web site, we had top priority with the Information Technology division. There were university-wide announcements about the new site and thus requests to create links with several major programs, departments, and offices. The Office of Media Relations is so pleased with the University Honors Program that it is writing the cover story on us for an upcoming LMU Alumni magazine (on our condition, of course, that we write the article). The administration also granted official committee status to the Honors Advisory Council, thus making it easier to find faculty members who agree to participate. Their committee work on the Council now officially counts toward their university service.

Finally, in the context of resisting the corporate model while having to work within it, our most important results pertain to the university administration at large. Once the Media Relations department *green-lighted* the new honors *brand*, including the *slogan*, *collateral materials*, *tag lines*, etc., someone needed to pay for it. The new letterhead, color postcards and brochures, web design software and computer hardware all cost money, and our budget, like that of most small honors programs, could not cover the expense. If we had downright refused to work with Media Relations, chances are that the Academic Affairs and Student Affairs divisions would have increased pressure as well. Our agreement to work with them, however, in the ways I have described, literally paid off in the end. We turned every receipt, invoice, and requisition over to the appropriate Vice President or Director. If administrators

wanted the University Honors Program to be the flagship for academic excellence, we were happy to redesign the flag according to our standards and convictions, but we would not pay for the material.

They agreed.

In fact, they were so pleased with the results that they asked us to order significantly larger numbers of materials so they could distribute program information themselves to students, faculty, Regents, Trustees, potential donors, and even administrators at other universities. The Media Relations staff thus reverted to the role they were originally intended to play: the distributors, not the creators, of our honors identity.

THE CHALLENGE

The most surprising result of this difficult journey is that after Media Relations (et al.) checked the University Honors Program off their to-do list, they left us alone. Once they confirmed that we had a *slogan*, a *logo*, a *brand*, an *outcomes list*, a *look*, and a *marketing campaign* that was consistent with the university's, they moved on to other programs and departments. In fact, it turns out they had very little interest in who we really were and what we really did. The core of our program ultimately mattered less to them than the way we *sold* our core curriculum. Thus, we realized our time spent trying to educate the University Relations administration on the honors program was time wasted. Since they were operating solely under the corporate model, they were only interested in completing a series of tasks (the University Honors Program being merely one of them).

This idea of completion is the difference between the corporate model and the university model. For them, once a task is completed, it is crossed off a list and discarded. They move on to the next item on their agenda. For us, however, their idea of completion is inherently anti-intellectual because we understand that an honors education is never complete. We create academic challenge, foster a love of learning, develop leaders, and encourage the realization of a student's potential, but these are not checklist items. If we sold our students on the notion that these ideals could be completed in four years, we would truly be hawking a faulty product. An education—especially an honors education—is a life-long process, and that is perhaps the most important lesson we can ever teach our students. The product of an honors education, therefore, is knowing that there is no product.

The honors directorship, therefore, is a bilingual position. We must speak one language to the corporate administration and another language to the university honors students. If we confuse the two by speaking to the administrators with the language of honors, or speaking to honors students with the *eduspeak* of administration, then we create frustration and cynicism. If, however, we speak the right language to each, then we keep administration more at bay and draw more students toward honors.

Since the corporate model seems unfortunately to be here to stay, we would be naïve to pretend that we could exist outside of it. On the one hand, actively denying the corporate model puts our programs, our students, and our careers at risk. If the

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corporation has taught us anything, it is that everyone is replaceable. On the other hand, passively accepting the corporate model turns us into customer service providers who *sell* a product.

From this difficult position, an honors director must make decisions that are in the best interest of academic merit and integrity. The honors director, then, may well be the best defense against the complete corporatization of the university. To use a metaphor that Media Relations will understand, the honors director is the last shareholder who, by refusing to sell, prevents the hostile takeover. Karl Jaspers reminds us that Socrates insisted knowledge “is not a commodity that can be passed from hand to hand, but can only be awakened” (8). Our challenge as honors directors is not only to awaken knowledge in our students, but also to awaken the university—and its ideals—from the corporate stupor.

For honors directors who must promote and protect their programs within the confines of the corporate model, the key to success—and survival—is maintaining rhetorical control. By doing so, directors will understand a fundamental marketing principle that Media Relations departments have completely misunderstood. They think marketing creates quality; we know that it merely reflects it.

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RICHARD STOLLER

HONORS SELECTION PROCESSES: A TYPOLOGY AND SOME REFLECTIONS

RICHARD STOLLER

SCHREYER HONORS COLLEGE

PENN STATE UNIVERSITY

Many honors programs advertise that honors education is what all undergraduate education would be in a world without resource constraints, so it is not surprising that honors programs have more interested prospects than available spaces. The question of how to select first-year honors students is therefore of interest both practically (in terms of finding the optimal student body) and philosophically (conformity to an ideal of justice, for instance). This article provides a general overview of current honors selection processes for incoming first-year students and discusses the ingredients of an optimal process.

The two “ideal types” of honors selection processes, in the sense that many actual processes borrow elements from each type, may be characterized as “skimming” versus “free-standing.” In the skimming selection model, usually called “by invitation” or something similar, the overall flow of applications to the institution is scrutinized according to some numerical threshold—generally some combination of SAT/ACT and GPA/rank. Intake may be limited by fixed program capacity (starting downward from the “top student” until offer capacity is reached) or by fixed entry criteria (all applicants with the specified criteria are offered honors admission). In the free-standing model, only those applicants who complete a separate honors application, supplemental to the institution’s general application, are considered. Because the general application almost certainly has SAT/GPA data, the presumption is that a free-standing honors application contains elements (essays, letters, activity listings, etc.) that go beyond “the numbers.”

Almost all U.S. honors programs, as well as similar programs in Australia and Singapore, may be situated along this axis. A few (including those foreign examples) are firmly at the skimming pole, with no recourse for students whose numbers don’t measure up; but most U.S. programs close to this pole offer applicants under the threshold a chance to make a case for themselves. While the skimming model with the qualifications noted earlier is still the majority choice among U.S. public honors programs, there is a slow migration toward requiring supplemental honors applications. The Schreyer Honors College (formerly the University Scholars Program) at Penn State University made the jump in 1988, and others have done the same in the last few years. To my knowledge, no program has moved substantially in the opposite direction in recent years.

HONORS SELECTION PROCESSES

The pros and cons of each method are numerous and complex. Perhaps the most obvious benefit of the skimming model is that it requires little or no additional program-level expense, staffing, or paperwork—except to the extent that exceptions are invited, of course. There are also benefits to the applicant, who now more than ever is faced with a barrage of forms, essays, fees, and form letters to be passed along to high school teachers and counselors. Perhaps the most important benefit is to the overall institution: applicants are rejected for honors *only implicitly*, by not receiving an invitation. While the savviest applicants understand their non-invitation to be a rejection, nobody ends up with the dreaded “thin envelope” that can easily sour high-achieving applicants (just under the honors threshold) on the overall institution. Since these students would be an asset to the institution, in statistical terms and in what they bring to the classroom and campus, any honors selection method that minimizes their alienation, thereby maximizing yield (propensity to attend), has its attractions.

Operating a free-standing application takes resources, including staff, time, and money; it imposes upon prospective students who may not be in the mood for additional impositions; and assuming the honors program has more applicants than places, it requires that one part of the institution reject candidates who are still highly desirable prospects for the institution generally. (Of course, the rejection letter can and should praise the non-honors education at the institution, but that risks “begging the question” of why honors is so attractive.) So why do many programs decide to endure these (and other) challenges?

At Penn State’s Schreyer Honors College, we believe there is a net recruiting benefit to the free-standing model that outweighs the dissuasive aspects. While many high-achieving students certainly would (and do) consider Penn State in the absence of an honors program, and while many would be drawn to our honors program in the absence of a specific application process, we find that the application is a good “hook” to get students familiar with us. When the prospective applicant’s usual questions about quality of program, campus environment, and so forth are supplemented with questions of how to apply and “what we’re looking for,” there seems to be a higher level of interest. The application is, in a sense, our rationale for having brochures and other informational materials.

Having a separate honors application is doubly important to us because the general Penn State application requests very little: like many large public institutions, Penn State’s undergraduate admission decisions are made “on the numbers” except for marginal cases and special programs. Such a process, however necessary from a logistical standpoint, may not convey the sort of regard for the individual that high-achieving prospects expect and generally receive from selective private institutions. In short, if our application process doesn’t look like an Ivy League school’s, prospective applicants will wonder if we really offer a comparable experience.¹ This is not just youthful petulance: prospects are right to wonder whether an honors program

¹ This should not be taken too literally, because Harvard and other top-tier schools accept the Common Application, thereby forfeiting an important opportunity to communicate a distinctive message to prospects, and to evaluate them according to distinctive criteria; this point is not lost on some students. See Yglesias, 1999: 66.

that doesn't need to see their writing, or hear from their teachers, will provide them with a nurturing environment once they enroll.

The specific content of a free-standing application can give an honors program that is so inclined—and that has institutional backing to do it—the opportunity to “filter for mission,” establishing over time a specific identity in a competitive market, in a way that skimming does not permit. When our University Scholars Program became the Schreyer Honors College in 1997, we adopted a three-fold mission statement in which the expected (and pre-existing) commitment to academic excellence was supplemented with internationalization, leadership, and civic/social responsibility. Without being too blatant about it, which would only encourage applicants to “speak to the mission” in a mercenary and tiresome way, our essay questions try to tease out an applicant’s “fit” with the new mission. Some applicants with otherwise competitive credentials fail the test, while some students with less than stellar numbers (although still far above the Penn State averages) do very well. A few might look at the application and decide against applying—not because of laziness or the overwork noted above, but because they determine that what we offer “just isn’t for them.” That is a desirable outcome for both parties, although it is always frustrating to see a nominally qualified Penn State applicant who has not applied to honors when we have no way of knowing whether their reasons for not applying are good ones or foolish ones.

From this cursory discussion, it is clear that an honors program’s choice of selection model (assuming full freedom of choice) should be tied to its characteristics, goals, and mandates. For instance, a program whose stated mission is solely “academic excellence” along traditional lines, or which is not under pressure to bring in a different and better sort of applicant (as opposed to increasing the yield for the top tier of those who have traditionally applied, a big accomplishment in itself), is perhaps best-suited to a skimming model, with its obvious efficiencies. Programs at institutions already recognized as relatively selective may have little need to adopt a model that further advertises their selectivity. On the other hand, some programs might be taking a risk with any free-standing application process, in that they might lose more applicants through added time/effort than they would gain through the “program promotion” aspect, especially if there is an additional application fee associated with it.

In an ideal situation devoid of political, marketing, or resource/logistical constraints, we might develop a selection process with only one factor in mind: what are the predictors of success in an honors program? Those are the traits, then, that we would want to see in our applicants, and the selection method would follow from that. Several recent books and articles have gone in search of these predictors, usually precipitated by ongoing debates about diversity and the apparent negative role of standardized tests in achieving diversity.² Perhaps because it is exasperating to deal with correlation questions when both sides of the sought-after correlation are moving

² The literature on this issue is, of course, enormous. For a scholarly approach, see the Commission on Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education, 1999: 23-35; an interesting general article is Tony Schwartz, 1999.

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targets, these recent studies take a simplified view of what constitutes success in college, reducing it to grade-point average (especially first-year GPA). In other words, a student who ends up with a 3.8 is more successful than one with a 2.8, and it's the determinants of such differential performance that recent studies have looked for.

The logic of this approach is hard to question, in broad-brush terms: it's better to have students who do well than not-so-well, especially if the latter don't meet the usual GPA thresholds for retention in honors.³ But many honors programs (and, of course, many highly selective colleges and universities) have a more complex view of success, one that includes degree of difficulty, dedication to active learning, participation in research, and service to the campus and wider communities (see Steinberg 2002, about Wesleyan's selection process in this regard). In the Schreyer Honors College, we have some students who have 3.9 GPAs but who keep a relatively low profile; we celebrate their academic success, but we would be uncomfortable with an institutional research agenda or resulting selection process that considered them "more successful" than our students with 3.5s and a litany of contributions to Penn State life, or publications in refereed journals, or multiple education-abroad experiences. The recent push for comprehensive "outcomes assessment" in higher education (including honors education) is a response precisely to this understanding that the transcript is not a sole and sufficient record of incremental degrees of student success.

If we embrace this holistic approach—which doesn't devalue academic performance but acknowledges the importance of other factors in a context where most students' GPAs are clustered relatively tightly near the top of the scale—then the most attractive selection strategy would be one that enables an honors program to do what the most selective colleges and universities have long done, which is to look at what an applicant can bring to the institution on multiple fronts. The qualities that go with this notion of "being an asset to the institution" are not a great mystery: a non-exclusive list, in no particular order, would include creativity, intellectual curiosity, talent for self-expression, leadership, and engagement with others. These qualities, although certainly subjective at the margins, are no harder to predict from an applicant's prior trajectory than core academic ability. In fact, they may be easier to predict: the great range of high school academic environments makes it hard to extrapolate future academic performance, especially for students who come from under-resourced or otherwise deprived schools, while non-academic qualities may be more "portable."

³ See David Alan Grier, "A Note on Honors Admission and the SAT," *National Honors Report* (Summer 1997), 2-5. In the Schreyer Honors College, we have so few students who fail to meet the 3.33 (formerly 3.20) GPA level for retention after the first year that it would be inelegant and unjust to design a selection process that focused on further reducing that number if it ended up skewing the overall "offer pool." Our experience is that these students have no clear profile (in SAT, GPA, choice of major, type of high school, etc.) that would permit us to screen against them. For our fall 2002 entering Schreyer Scholars, the first-year GPA differential between the highest and lowest rating increments (of the ratings that produced an offer to the SHC) was only .17, and there is no statistically valid correlation along the way.

Leaving aside the inevitable question of how to value one bundle of non-academic qualities (in the form of an applicant, or more accurately an application) versus another, we are also faced with how to weigh the non-academic versus the academic—a point which I temporarily pushed aside under the guise of a “holistic approach.” We know instinctively that it is problematic to take Applicant A over Applicant B simply because A has a higher GPA by 1/100 of a point, if B has far more impressive non-academic qualities; only a very narrow and tendentious definition of merit could justify such an approach. But we also know that it is worse than problematic to take Applicant C over Applicant D because of more impressive non-academic qualities—and even tangible accomplishments, from class president to published poet—if D has a full GPA point over C. Distinctive missions aside, honors programs are academic units first, and a selection process that forgives serious academic shortcomings, or that selects far less accomplished students over far more accomplished ones, is inappropriate on its face. The question, then, is where to draw the line—at what point are a given pair of applicants (to continue the simplified two-player model) so academically similar that their differences are merely nominal or are more reflective of the high schools the applicants attended than of the applicants themselves, such that we are entitled to move to nonacademic criteria?

Much of the answer, insofar as there is one, is pragmatic—a simple function of supply and demand. If an honors program’s application pool (taking into account predicted yield) is relatively small and/or dispersed—not bunched at the top in academic quality—then a greater focus on academic credentials is the only way to fill the class with students who can make meaningful use of an honors education. Moreover, applicants in this scenario who lose out by a small GPA/SAT margin, even a statistically meaningless one, are low enough in absolute terms that they have no compelling claim on honors selection. But if the applicant pool is larger and stronger—mostly at the top of their respective high schools—then non-academic factors become a more relevant heuristic tool, both for the institution’s own needs and for pre-empting legitimate (or at least understandable) claims by rejected applicants. In plainer English, it’s easier to tell rejected honors applicants that the non-transcript part of their application was rated slightly below the threshold than to tell them that they missed out by a tiny fraction of a purely nominal grade-point.

The rest of the answer, the part that isn’t determined by supply and demand, must come from overall institutional mission and culture, of the sort invoked above: in particular, whether the honors program is considered by the upper administration primarily as a device to bring in a measurably “better sort of student” than the institution usually gets, or whether the program is valued more for what it does (for lack of a better word) programmatically. In the former case, privileging nonacademic qualities would probably not produce the kind of measurable gains in admission credentials that are the program’s lease on life; in the latter case, getting students who “fit the program” is paramount, and depending on the program, particular nonacademic qualities might have particular value. For example, the Schreyer Honors College places great importance on the senior thesis, a major piece of original research or creative work. We consider a student with a 3.7 GPA and an excellent thesis a more exemplary Schreyer Scholar, all other things being equal, than a student with a 4.0

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GPA and a barely adequate thesis. Therefore, we do everything possible to “read the tea leaves” in our applications for evidence of research or creative potential. This part of our mission is sufficiently important, and is sufficiently embraced by the University administration, to enable us to reject applicants who have less research/creative promise even if they are stronger “on the numbers.” Our relatively healthy application pool (the input side) and high level of student achievement during and after college (the output side) underwrite our ability to follow this route. If the outcomes were to decline over time, we would certainly need to look at selection criteria with a new and critical eye.

There have been a number of books in the last several years that offer a privileged look at the selection process at highly selective colleges and universities, most famously the “insider’s accounts” based on the authors’ admissions-office experience at specific schools (e.g. Hernández 1997; Toor 2001; Steinberg 2002). These books depict a striking range of attitudes toward the selection process and in particular toward unsuccessful applicants—from routinized and unemotional to empathetic and agonized. Much of what these books say, with varying degrees of explicitness, can be summed up in two propositions: 1) despite process controls such as multiple readers and numerical scales, the selection process would never come close to Karl Popper’s (or anyone else’s) notion of “scientific”; and 2) selective institutions are looking “beyond the numbers” to see the applicant as a whole person, both retrospectively (as a member of a high school community) and prospectively (as a member first of a college community and then of society-in-general).

Both of these propositions highlight the reality that student selection is not so much a technical exercise as a subjective and moral one. In an admissions context, practical morality is perhaps best defined as congruence between institutional mission and selection decisions—any admissions process that picks the students who best fit the mission is hard to criticize in a disinterested way. (Of course, the mission itself can be susceptible to scrutiny and change.) This notion of congruence was discussed above in the narrow context of the honors program’s mission, but for programs at public colleges and universities there is a broader mission that must be considered and “operationalized” in the admissions process: these institutions have a democratic mission to offer the best and most developmentally appropriate education to the broadest possible range of students, and honors programs are an integral part of that mission (rather than a qualification or negation of it, as Murray Sperber (2000) has famously but naively argued).

At a large public university, congruence between institutional mission and selection decisions should mean special attention to applicants who by virtue of disadvantaged individual or community background tend to be overlooked by elite private institutions. While most of these schools aggressively recruit a select few prospects from such backgrounds and then trumpet that recruitment aggressively, the reality is that they usually do not cast a very wide net—hence the often-noted paradox that high-achieving students from disadvantaged backgrounds generally find it hard to get into elite private institutions even though they are bombarded with propaganda about how sought-after they are. It is our responsibility to step outside the parameters—the hegemonic norms, as theorists might put it—set by a handful of institutions in

defining who is deserving of the most enriched college education. If we believe that someone is a “diamond in the rough,” uniquely suited to our honors program and our university, then what better expression of “practical morality” could there be than to select such a candidate?

Living as we do in the real world, we are always subject to constraints: Are students so “in the rough,” especially in terms of high school quality, that they pose a substantial risk of not meeting the GPA criteria for retention in honors? (Ironically, this is a constraint that Ivy League schools don’t face: Harvard may be Harvard, but students only need a 2.0 GPA to continue from semester to semester. Few if any honors programs set the bar that low.) What legal and political exposure do we have by favoring a disadvantaged student with nominally inferior credentials—or more precisely, credentials seen by the hegemonic norm as inferior, but which we do not—over someone else? What will other constituencies within the institution think? As with all moral exercises, our decisions will inevitably be tempered with practical considerations of this sort. But if we are to solidify the status of public honors programs as a distinctive option within U.S. higher education rather than merely positioning ourselves “opposite” the private school of nominally comparable selectivity, we should always keep the big picture in mind, and take it to heart.

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Differences Between an Honors Program and Honors College: A Case Study

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“Experience will guide us to the rules,” he said. “You cannot make rules precede practical experience.”

— Antoine de Saint Exupéry

Honors colleges are springing up across the country. In the last several years public institutions of higher education from Vermont to Cal State Fresno and from Maine to South Florida have started honors colleges. Private universities such as Baylor, Hofstra, and Auburn have honors colleges as well (see Digby, 2002). At least one writer, Murray Sperber (2000) of Indiana University, has speculated that the primary purpose for creating such colleges is to solicit funds from one or more major donors. Others point out that the transition from program to college is primarily symbolic, signifying a stronger central commitment to honors students and honors education (Zane, 2002). More recently, Sederberg (2003) lists characteristics an honors college should have beyond a fully developed honors program. Most of these characteristics pertain to infrastructure and operations. Generalizations are difficult to make because of the individuality of various honors programs or colleges, but the truth is more complex and textured than these publications depict. There are few publications available to describe either the more subtle or substantial differences between an honors program and college.

The purpose of this article is describe the shift in practices, resources, expectations and scope as an honors program was converted to an honors college at one institution. It may provide a reference point as other programs consider such a change.

Penn State initiated its own university-wide honors program in 1980 with support from the Faculty Senate. It was designed after numerous honors programs were visited around the country and with input from seven local academic departments that had their own pre-existing honors programs. A vision for expanding the honors program was outlined in 1996 by the then-new president, Dr. Graham Spanier. In the fall of 1997, Penn State received a major gift from William A. and Joan Schreyer to found the Schreyer Honors College (SHC). Its purpose was to build upon the successful honors program already established. The gift was to be used to enrich the learning experience of students enrolled in the college and, more specifically, to nurture a global perspective and support international study with student travel grants; to add

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programs that would inspire responsible citizenship; to offer honors seminars across all four years of undergraduate study; to link the development of innovative honors courses to the Schreyer Institute for the Innovation in Learning (a think tank for reassessing and redesigning undergraduate education that was previously endowed by Mr. and Mrs. Schreyer); and to introduce mentors and fellows who would inspire, serve as role models and help students bridge their academic and future public lives. In return, the university was expected to enhance facilities and staff, including a dean's position. A large portion of the gift's funds was directed to scholarship endowments, with none targeted for "bricks and mortar."

Conversations about the conversion of honors programs to honors colleges tend to emphasize public visibility, reporting lines, and enhancement of the quality of applicants and matriculants (Lawrence, 2000; Mass, 2003). Yet, a list of what a program or college has or doesn't have, adds or doesn't add, tells only part of the story. Table 1 is a compilation of the characteristics and program additions made to the honors college in our case. It is admittedly dry and, by itself, unlikely to motivate other institutions to make similar changes. More important is what an honors college *does* that an honors program could not do. The most significant challenge and change, in our case, was one of cultural transformation. The balance of this paper describes the "before and after" differences in vision, mission, and purpose; public visibility and university reach; reporting lines; development and fundraising; operations; and, facilities. The "Discussion and Conclusion" section explores an answer to the "So what?" question and provides examples of some of the college's impacts.

TABLE 1

COMPARISON OF SELECTED ACTIVITIES BETWEEN AN HONORS PROGRAM AND HONORS COLLEGE AT PENN STATE (ADAPTED FROM *ONE MINUTE* SURVEY BY MASS, 2003)

	Honors Program (1997)	Honors College (2004)
Alumni Society		X
Budget		X
Community outreach/ volunteer activities		X
Course innovations		X
Cultural events	X	X
Development/ Fundraising		X
Diversity planning		X

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	Honors Program (1997)	Honors College (2004)
External Advisory Board		X
Faculty Advisory Committee	X	X
Faculty recruitment for courses	X	X
Faculty development seminars		X
Faculty/Student mentorship opportunities	X	X
Guest lectures by alumni		X
Guest lectures by faculty		X
Honors advisors	X	X
Honors course scheduling	X	X
Honors housing	X	X
Honors Medal Ceremonies	X (2 per year)	X (3 per year)
Honors receptions	X	X
Hosting prospective students		X
Incubator for student clubs		X
Informal student advisement	X	X

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	Honors Program (1997)	Honors College (2004)
Leadership development seminars, courses		X
National conferences		X
Newsletters	X	X
Recruitment/ Open houses	X	X
Scholarships	X	X
Senior awards	X (1 per year)	X (4 per year)
Strategic planning		X
Student Council	X	X
Student fellowship assistance		X
Student internship assistance		X
Study/Travel abroad opportunities		X
Technology planning		X
Thesis requirement	X	X
Travel grants		X (~250/yr)
Undergraduate Research Exhibition	X	X
Web site		X

Vision, Mission, Purpose - The single most important element in transforming the honors program culture originally in place to one that would support an honors college was to create an expanded and explicit vision, mission and goals statement (see Table 2). Previously, there was a common, but tacit, understanding that the honors program was essential to recruit stronger students to the university and to promote academic excellence. However, the new mission statement, created with input from many stakeholders and committees within and outside of Penn State, made explicit for the first time what goals honors education was to achieve at the university. The mission-vision statement expanded the scope, focus, programming activities and measures required of honors education at Penn State. The importance of the vision and mission statements is continuously underscored because all personnel and planning activities are driven by the mission.

With the new vision, mission and goals statement in hand, the SHC administration shifted from a management role focused primarily on student selection and honors courses to a larger leadership role that included the start-up of new programs and activities both within honors and across campus. The SHC became associated with new initiatives and innovations in the classroom, office operations and co-curricular programming. For example, it was the first unit on campus to create a separate strategic plan for technology, and it developed a model strategic plan for diversity. New honors courses were associated with service learning, experiential learning and international perspectives. The SHC also led the campus in an electronic imaging project

TABLE 2

VISION, MISSION AND GOALS OF THE SCHREYER HONORS COLLEGE

<p>Vision</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To educate men and women who will make important differences in the world, affecting academic, professional, civic, social, and business outcomes. • To improve educational practice and to be recognized as a leading force in Honors education nationwide. <p>Mission</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To promote academic excellence in all fields of study, internationalization, leadership, and social and civic responsibility in our student body and across the Penn State community. <p>Goals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To provide academically talented and highly motivated students with meaningful learning experiences that will prepare them to continuously learn, apply, and create new knowledge throughout their lifetimes. • To provide our students with meaningful opportunities that will challenge them to reach their full potential as thoughtful, creative, responsible, caring, and productive persons. • To provide university-wide leadership in developing, testing, and modeling outstanding educational practices and community involvement in both in-class and out-of-class settings.
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that saves time, money and space as it incorporates all SHC online forms into a unique Web-based student records system accessible to all SHC staff.

Public Visibility and University Reach - The major gift used to found the college attracted a good deal of publicity that, in turn, led to greater notoriety and attention to some of the changes we sought to accomplish. Greater publicity generally comes at a price. In our case, that price was the assumption that we had \$30 million to spend and thus didn't need additional funds. Both assumptions were wrong, and we had to work diligently over time to correct these misperceptions. The gift was pledged in payments over time, and, of course, any available funds would be only a percentage of the interest, not the principal, of the endowment.

However, on the plus side, the publicity also gave us name recognition both on and off campus. It also allowed us to work towards greater alignment around a shared purpose, both on the main campus and at Penn State's twenty-one other colleges and campuses. In addition, the SHC expanded its reach with a seat on the Faculty Senate, solid representation on various committees in the university-wide Teaching-Learning Consortium and a voice in educational technology developments and undergraduate research. Members of the SHC staff were also invited to serve on various administrative reviews and search committees. Even more importantly, the SHC was at the table for discussion of university resource allocation as well as other strategic decisions. None of these opportunities for university engagement existed before the honors program was converted to an honors college.

Reporting Lines - What difference does having a dean make? First, it increases communication with higher administration through direct and regular access to other deans, the university Provost, the President, and the Board of Trustees. It also creates a new peer group for the dean of the honors college, namely other college deans. The Honors college dean gains a set of powerful colleagues to consult and partner with in resolving problems or starting new initiatives. He or she also gains the opportunity to address undergraduate education and quality concerns at all deans' meetings, has direct access (or at least as much access as other deans) to the development office/foundation, university attorneys and university leadership in Budgeting, Finance, Business, Public Information, Admissions, the Alumni Association and the Registrar's Office. A dean also assures that honors is part of the university-wide strategic planning process.

Having a dean at the helm of the SHC helped to ensure that honors could shift from a mode of transactional leadership with a quid-pro-quo exchange to transformational leadership that incorporates an inspirational element. A key element in this transformation was the opportunity for the SHC to create its own policy for honors education at Penn State such as enrollment numbers, criteria for student admissions, and faculty selection. Such authority was previously beyond reach. Oversight shifted from the Vice-Provost of Undergraduate Education and the Faculty Senate directly to the Provost. Now the Faculty Senate is consulted for curricular issues only. Moreover, the President appointed the SHC dean to a seat on the Faculty Senate, where she routinely participates on all committees that focus on undergraduate

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education or internationalization, thus creating an active partnership between the Schreyer Honors College and the Senate. Finally, the honors administration has always had to work “over, under, around and through” other departments and organizations on campus, and we still do; our primary strategy was and still is “moral suasion,” but fortunately, with new programs, opportunities, resources and authority, the SHC now has a bigger arsenal to work with and a more prominent bully pulpit.

Development or Fundraising - College status has provided access to the university development office that was never afforded previously. Although the SHC has had only a part-time assignment of a development officer with a large portfolio, it has been able to increase the number of donors, the size of donations, and thus the number and amount of scholarships. For example, the SHC became a part of the university’s capital campaign, which gave the college the opportunity to interact with major donors at all development events. A strategic plan for fundraising was also made for the college. More recently an Executive Development Committee was established for the Schreyer Honors College, comprised of ten external alumni and other leaders who share a commitment to the SHC’s mission and a deep desire to help it raise further funds to forward that mission. None of this would have occurred had we remained an honors program.

Operations - Key changes also occurred in the everyday operations of our offices. The organizational chart was revamped, with leadership transitioning from professional staff to faculty with tenure. Four new positions were added, but reorganization, renaming and reassignment of positions and responsibilities were at least as important as new additions in accommodating new functions. Appointments were also changed from nine or ten to twelve months. Significant additions beyond the dean include an associate dean, a full-time information technology officer, a part-time coordinator of alumni activities and a part-time internship fellowship coordinator as well as staff assistants.

Another key change in operations relates to the establishment of an External Advisory Board currently consisting of sixteen members. This board is shared with the Schreyer Institute for Excellence in Teaching and meets twice each academic year. Members review and advise the SHC on recruitment, publications, development, curriculum, assessment and other issues. An Alumni Society Board was similarly established for the newly formed Honors Alumni Society.

Facilities - The former facilities that housed the honors program could only be described as humble and cramped. The inauguration of the Honors college stimulated the university to find a more suitable space for the operation that was larger, airier, centrally located and more functional. We eventually renovated space in one of the honors residence halls along with an addition that created 18,725 square feet of good-looking offices and meeting spaces including study halls, a computer laboratory, conference room, classroom, kitchen and social meeting spaces for students and staff.

DISCUSSION

After cataloging differences in resources, activities and operations between Penn State's former honors program and current honors college, it is important to question what the added value of such an enterprise is. There are numerous quantitative indicators such as number of honors students, the average SAT score of such students, students who study abroad, number of honors courses, students who complete an honors thesis, number of national award winners, students who attend graduate and professional schools, and average college GPA. All of these are important indicators and reflect, to some degree, what impact an honors college might have within an institution. Many might be tempted to stop the assessment with these measures alone. However, measures of this type must always be seen for what they are: *indicators of quality*. An honors college (or program for that matter) stands for nothing if not for quality. Donors, administrators and legislators will not be willing to contribute or invest precious and limited resources into an honors college if it means only "business as usual." **Therefore, honors colleges should make a distinctive qualitative difference in the life of a university as well as a difference in the entry statistics for each freshman class.**

What evidence is there in this case study for important qualitative impacts on a university-wide basis? Several developments are worth noting:

Faculty Travel Fund – The Schreyer Honors College began a program to fund travel costs for faculty who developed and taught short-courses at an international location for honors students as a means to promote internationalization. The model encouraged more faculty and students to go abroad so effectively that the International Programs Office now offers a similar fund to faculty university-wide.

Technology Learning Assistants – The Schreyer Honors College piloted a program where faculty received one-on-one tutoring about computer technology/course management systems from Honors students enrolled in a one-credit course on computer technology consulting. The faculty learned how to use new teaching technologies in the privacy of their offices, and students developed important teaching and consulting skills. Penn State benefited with more syllabi and course materials being made available on the Web as well as more faculty using ANGEL, Penn State's course management tool. The program was so successful it was adopted by all campuses, university-wide.

Leadership Seminars – The value of honors seminars as an educational approach was made evident in the honors program. Faculty experience in this venue helped to instigate and support a university-wide first-year seminar requirement, which is no small feat in itself. The Schreyer Honors College also added a new dimension to the first-year seminar with rigorous academic study of leadership accompanied by outdoor team-building experiences. The approach was so popular that two academic colleges have adopted the model for all their undergraduate students and a third college will now require an introductory course about leadership for all students beginning Fall, 2004.

Signature Courses – The Schreyer Honors College helps faculty develop and implement interdisciplinary honors courses that blend all three parts of its mission. These courses typically cross two semesters, often with an applied summer international experience in-between. For example, one course entitled “Geographic Perspectives of Juarez” had students write a field guide of La Ciudad Juarez (with chapters on water, air quality, education, trade, art, and music, etc.) during spring semester. In May, the class went to Juarez, built a home in one of the poorest neighborhoods and collected in-field information. The following fall, students revised the field guide based on their experiences, wrote self-reflective essays and published op-ed pieces in their home newspapers. The course had a transformative effect on its participants; almost half the students changed majors and/or career goals based on their experience. This model has been replicated in courses on poverty in Philadelphia, housing among the northern Cheyenne, education in Madras, India and freedom of the press in South Africa. These courses have fostered an unprecedented commitment to service learning, promoting dozens of other innovations in a wide variety of courses and colleges.

CONCLUSION

None of the changes, programs, or impacts described in the “Discussion” section alone could have been anticipated or planned at the founding of the Schreyer Honors College. However, none would have taken place without the Honors College. They are the result of having a recognized unit empowered by the resources, authority and imagination to make a difference. The differences observed are both far-reaching and long-lasting. They supercede and enhance the changes in organizational effectiveness that resulted from the early stages of transition from honors program to college. It is important to point out, however, that these university-wide differences in teaching practices and educational culture grew out of the improved environment that the establishment of an honors college created.

To summarize and reframe the discussion about the creation and transition of an honors program to an honors college, I offer the following observations:

- A shift in authority must occur, conferring the legitimacy and degree of freedom to act as a college.
- A change in infrastructure must occur to implement such authority effectively, i.e., the organization must behave like a college.
- Additional resources are required including space, staff and budget to provide the tools necessary to work as a college.

Many honors programs have an infrastructure in place. Some honors programs have the resources in hand already to act as a college. But, few have sufficient authority to lift their honors program to college status. When all three elements are braided together, the outcomes should be qualitatively different, beyond a simple summation. These outcomes have an impact on honors students, advisors and faculty in meaningful ways, but they can also influence the larger university context and

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community. And shouldn't it be our desire to improve the quality of teaching and learning in our colleges and universities overall?

The changes both near-and long-term associated with an honors college will necessarily be different in each institution. However, this case study indicates that the potential impact is important not only to honors students but campus-wide. We urge you to explore what difference an honors college might make in your setting as well.

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The Role of Community College Honors Programs in Reducing Transfer Shock

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BLINN COLLEGE

INTRODUCTION

Community colleges have historically addressed the needs of a diverse population (Walker, 2001). A key goal for community colleges is to be a resource for all segments of the community (Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, 2000). Walker (2001) reinforced this directive by stating that the community college purpose was “to bring higher education in its various forms into the community” (p. 9).

Community colleges have concentrated much of their attention on several sub-populations within the community, such as students in vocational training or certificate programs and academically under-prepared students (Outcalt, 1999). As the numbers of students increase, community colleges are becoming aware of other sub-populations and their needs. A sub-population found at community colleges that is gaining more attention is academically well-prepared students (Skau, 1989). One way that community colleges have addressed the special requirements of this sub-population is by offering honors classes or an honors program to challenge these students and prepare them for transition to four-year institutions (Outcalt, 1999).

Outcalt (1999) maintains that a major function of community colleges is to prepare their students for transfer to four-year institutions. Even as community colleges prepare their students for transfer to four-year institutions, however, 79% of the students experience a phenomenon termed “transfer shock” (Diaz, 1992). This phenomenon was first described by Hills (1965) and was defined as an appreciable drop in grade point average (GPA) upon transfer to a four-year university.

Since Hills first coined the term “transfer shock,” numerous studies have examined the initial decline in the GPA of community college students as they transfer into four-year university settings (Baratta & Apodace, 1988; Britton, 1969; Diaz, 1992; Harrison, 1999; Keeley & House, 1993; Laanan, 2001; Nolan & Hall, 1978; Slark & Bateman, 1983; Sleight, 1990). While these studies and others have examined the phenomenon of transfer shock on community college students as a whole, this researcher found no studies that have investigated the sub-population of honors students at the community college in relation to transfer shock.

Laanan (2001) claimed that the “transfer function [of community colleges] is of paramount importance” (p. 5). If Laanan’s claim is valid, then one unrecognized yet potentially profound benefit of honors programs could be the effect participation has

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upon the phenomenon of transfer shock. The underlying hypothesis for this study is that students who participate in honors programs at community colleges experience reduced transfer shock as they transfer to four-year institutions, based on GPA.

METHODOLOGY

This study involved only those community college students who transferred to Sam Houston State University (SHSU) in Huntsville, Texas. This constraint is placed on the study for two reasons: (a) by focusing on one institution, the study removed the variation found between different universities, allowing the researcher to more accurately determine the effect of the community college programs on future academic success, and (b) by focusing on SHSU, the researcher was assured of having access to the data that are needed to answer the research questions.

The sample included 77 community college students who transferred 15 credit hours or more from a community college to SHSU, had an entering GPA of 3.3 or higher, and had been admitted within the past five years. McKeague (1984) stated that one of the entrance requirements of most honors programs is a GPA of 3.25 or higher. In this study a GPA of 3.3 was chosen to select those students who represented the majority of honors students as well as a comparison group of non-honors students that was equally academically successful. The above data set was separated into two groups: (1) those students who had taken honors classes at a community college, as determined by their transcripts and with the assistance of community college honors directors; and (2) those students who did not take honors classes while attending a community college.

The first group consisted of 37 students who had taken honors classes at the community college, and the second group was comprised of 40 students who had not taken community college honors classes. The mean entering GPA of the honors students was 3.60, which was coincidentally identical to the mean entering GPA of those students who had taken traditional classes at the community college.

The students in the sample population transferred to SHSU from fifteen different community colleges in Texas. The following colleges are represented in the sample population: Alvin Community College, Austin Community College, Blinn College, Brazosport College, College of the Mainland, Del Mar College, Houston Community College System, Kilgore College, Lee College, Navarro College, North Harris Montgomery Community College District, San Jacinto Community College, Trinity Valley Community College, Tyler Junior College, and Wharton County Junior College.

DATA COLLECTION

To access the information used in the study, I worked closely with the SHSU honors director and the honors directors at the various community colleges that had students who had been identified for inclusion in the study. The SHSU honors program office removed names, addresses, social security numbers, and other information that is protected under Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

To increase the pool of students, fifteen community college honors directors were contacted in order to obtain a list of their recent honors participants. Once these data had been obtained, they were submitted to the SHSU honors office with the request that they cross match the names of these community college honors students with those students who had been admitted to SHSU within the past five years.

FINDINGS AND DATA ANALYSIS

The data were analyzed using a *t* test, which compared the mean first-semester GPA at SHSU of community college transfer students who took honors classes to the mean GPA of students with a similar community college GPA who did not take honors classes. Additionally, a paired *t* test compared the mean GPAs of the two groups to their entering GPA.

The mean GPA of the honors students during their initial SHSU semester was 3.52, while the mean GPA of the non-honors students was 3.22 for the same time period. An independent sample *t* test determined that a significant difference exists between the two groups. The *t* test indicated that one could accept that the mean GPA of the honors students was significantly different from the students who only attended traditional classes at the community college. Table 1 summarizes the GPA during the initial semesters of the subjects at SHSU.

TABLE 1

RESULTS FROM A T TEST COMPARING MEAN GPA DURING THE INITIAL SHSU SEMESTER BETWEEN COMMUNITY COLLEGE HONORS AND NON-HONORS STUDENTS

GPA	Honors	Non-Honors
Mean Entering	3.60	3.60
Mean Initial SHSU Semester	3.52	3.22
<i>t</i> (75) = 3.085, <i>p</i> = .003		

In addition to the original *t* test, paired *t* tests compared the initial-semester GPAs of the honors and non-honors students with their entering GPAs. The analysis of those students who did not take honors classes at the community colleges revealed the presence of a statistically significant difference between their entering GPA and the GPA obtained during the first semester at SHSU. Of equal importance, the *t* test highlighted that no significant difference existed between the community college honors students' entering GPA and their initial SHSU semester GPA. Tables 2 and 3 summarize the findings from the paired *t* test.

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TABLE 2

SUMMARY OF PAIRED T TEST COMPARING THE INITIAL SEMESTER MEAN GPA OF NON-HONORS STUDENTS WITH THEIR ENTERING GPA FROM THE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Non-Honors Community College Students	
Mean Entering GPA	Initial Semester GPA at SHSU
3.60	3.22
$t(39) = 5.944, p = .0001$	

TABLE 3

SUMMARY OF PAIRED T TEST COMPARING THE INITIAL SEMESTER MEAN GPA OF HONORS STUDENTS WITH THEIR ENTERING GPA FROM THE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Community College Honor Students	
Mean Entering GPA	Initial Semester GPA at SHSU
3.60	3.52
$t(36) = 1.363, p = .181$	

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

The focus of this study centered on determining if community college honors programs reduced the effects of transfer shock on those students who participated in them. Both the community college honors students and the community college students who had taken traditional classes had entering GPAs of 3.60; however, the data showed a statistically significant difference in the mean GPA between these two groups during their initial semester at SHSU. The community college honors students had a significantly higher mean GPA during their first semester at SHSU when compared to the students who had taken only traditional classes at the community college.

The data indicated that both the non-honors students and the honors students experienced a drop in their mean GPA during their initial semester compared to their mean entering GPA. While the community college honors students did experience a slight decline in their mean GPA (.08) during their initial semester, the difference from their entering GPA was not statistically significant. The drop, however, in mean GPA experienced by the students who only took traditional classes (.38) was significantly different from their entering GPA. One conclusion that can be drawn is that those students who participate in community college honors programs experience minimal transfer shock.

The significance of these findings has implications for community college honors programs. As stated earlier, a main goal of community colleges is to meet the needs of their diverse population (Piland & Azbell, 1984), and those students who excel academically have been identified as one of these groups (Crooks & Haag, 1994; McKeague, 1984; Skau, 1989). One of the requirements for acceptance into most honors programs, however, involves the student's GPA (Cohen & Brawer, 1996; Heck, 1986; McKeague, 1984; Parsons, 1984; Skau, 1989), which limits the access of community college students to the program.

The findings of this research study clearly indicate the ability of the community college honors programs to reduce transfer shock for those students who participate in honors. Community college honors programs are more effective at preparing the academically gifted community college student than traditional classes. In light of this evidence, it may be advisable for community college honors programs to lower their admission requirements; if done judiciously, this would allow a larger segment of the community college population to experience the benefits of honors programs without affecting the integrity of the programs.

In addition, relaxing the admission requirements would address the perennial criticism of elitism within honors programs (Byrne, 1998; Cohen, 1985). This elitist label evolved from having required criteria for admittance into most honors programs (Austin, 1991). These criteria led the opponents of honors programs to claim that, by having academic admission standards and requirements, the honors programs are not available to all students (Eric Clearinghouse for Community Colleges, 1984). By addressing the needs of a broader segment of the community college population, honors programs refute the claims of elitism.

Several important aspects of the community college honors program play key roles in the continued academic success of the honors students and can influence transfer shock. The honors classes provide the students with opportunities to delve into the subject matter in greater depth than is normally experienced in the traditional classes. The community college honors students are expected to carry out in-depth research and to write papers and reflections, along with keeping up with the notes and basic requirements of a class. The level of discussion and interaction within the honors classroom also provides enrichment from which the students can draw to enhance their success at the senior institution. In all of these ways, honors students have their academic skills fine-tuned and honed, enhancing their future academic success when they transfer to a senior institution.

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Honors students often have much more contact with their community college professors. The increased intellectual interaction of the classroom and mentoring nature of honors programs lead the students to engage their professors outside of class more frequently than their peers, thus giving the honors students an opportunity to enhance their communication skills and comfort level when dealing with faculty members. The ability to establish a rapport with professors ultimately serves them well when they transfer to a senior institution. Although non-honors students have access to their professors as well, they may not be expected to meet outside of class with their professor to the same extent as honors students. The difference in ability to seek help and guidance at the new institution can have an effect on a student's performance (Hoffman, 1998; Tinto, 1987).

In addition, honors classes cause community college honors students to enhance their time management and organizational skills. These two factors should not be overlooked when examining the success of students as they transfer to a senior institution. Upon transfer, students are expected to adapt to the new environment, orient themselves to the services at the new universities, establish new interpersonal contacts, and maintain their academic standards. The time management and organizational skills acquired by honors students at their community college provide them with an advantage over those students who did not have those skills refined.

Community college honors students are willing to push themselves academically; they are highly motivated and are willing to take on the extra responsibilities and challenges of honors classes. The personal attention and mentoring provided by highly qualified faculty, the small class size, and in-depth discussions distinguish honors classes from traditional classes and provide the additional benefit of reducing transfer shock for participants in honors programs.

This study highlights the potential of community college honors students to serve as a resource of academically well-prepared students for recruitment to four-year institutions. I would recommend that more four-year institutions look at accepting community college honors credit into their honors programs. Both the community college and the four-year institution would benefit from this practice; the community college honors program could use it as an additional benefit for participating in their program, and the four-year institution could use it a means of recruiting academically well-prepared students to their campuses and honors programs in greater numbers.

A possible criticism of the conclusion drawn from this study might be that honors students are more successful at the senior institution because they are intrinsically more motivated than those community college students who did not take honors classes. This study sought to minimize the effects of this variable, however, by comparing the honors students with other highly motivated and academically successful community college students. In the final analysis, the community college honors students in this study experienced minimal or reduced transfer shock after transferring to SHSU.

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Faculty Compensation and Course Assessment in Honors Composition

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When my National Collegiate Honors Council monograph *Honors Composition: Historical Perspectives and Contemporary Practices* was in its dissertation stage, an early draft contained information about potential administrative problems in offering honors composition courses. The initial questionnaire did not include specific questions regarding administrative concerns, but I was prompted to include such questions in the follow-up interviews after receiving a somewhat troubling email message from a questionnaire respondent, an excerpt of which is included here:

Our program is so different from those typically offered that I am not sure if any of our answers would be relevant to your concerns. Because our mandate was to create a program which would not result in special courses provided only to honors students, the powers (power, really) insist that anything smacking of “elitism” is *verboten*. In addition there is no separate budget or staff; the program simply offers an honors “option” to regularly scheduled classes. This means that each semester a number and variety of General Education courses will be offered with an honors option. Since these classes are part of the regular curriculum, the option for honors is technically open to anyone (thus the claim is made that this program is inclusive).

Contemplating possible paths of resistance, I decided to ask in the follow-up interviews not only if respondents had encountered resistance in general but also if faculty were compensated for honors coursework and in what fashion. I also wanted to determine whether positive outcomes of assessment of honors composition courses might have been used to overcome resistance.

At that early draft stage, however, the dissertation director advised that this section be excised for two reasons: (1) the content touched upon sensitive internal political issues that, as a doctoral candidate, I would do well to avoid, and (2) the nature of the discussion detracted from the overall focus on pedagogical guidelines. As I revised the manuscript toward its final monograph version, the administrative concerns section remained an awkward fit, better suited for separate presentation. This essay, therefore, will address the aforementioned three problem areas in the

administration of honors composition courses: faculty compensation, course assessment and evaluation, and resistance to honors courses. Granted, these issues are relevant to honors courses in all disciplines, not simply composition. The questions were asked, however, during interviews regarding writing courses and components within honors programs, and as noted in the sections below, teaching and assessment actively comprise a more significant portion of scholarly research in composition than they do in most other disciplines, so this essay will, by nature, focus more specifically on the context of honors composition.

HOW ARE FACULTY WHO TEACH HONORS COURSES COMPENSATED?

While the planning and implementation of strong, challenging honors composition courses can be personally and professionally invigorating, the bottom line is that these courses must be supported, funded, and staffed. Frank Aydelotte, a founder of the contemporary honors movement who also taught composition at schools such as Harvard and MIT, identified funding as a key concern:

Where individual tutorial work or honors seminars are counted as a regular part of a professor's duties, the expense of instruction for the college or university is, of course, somewhat increased. The increase could in many cases be wholly or partially met by curtailing the number of small advanced specialized courses offered by departments. The number and variety of such courses represent a great extravagance in American higher education. A few small colleges are courageously limiting the number of courses offered as a means of finding faculty time for honors work, and it may well be that the soundness of instruction in such an institution may in the future be partly judged by the thinness of its catalogue. For the most part, however, this method of economy has not been adopted, and in too many places whatever additional expense honors work may involve is borne by the faculty in the form of extra hours of teaching. (*Breaking the Academic Lockstep*, 59)

Although Aydelotte was commenting on the state of honors education in 1944, some of these statements unfortunately still hold true sixty years later. For many contemporary honors programs, whether at two-year, four-year, or graduate degree-granting institutions, a major challenge is providing adequate incentive and compensation to lure the best faculty into teaching honors courses and away from departmental courses in which they are deeply invested or needed. Many faculty are happy to have the opportunity to work with honors students, but is personal satisfaction enough compensation in the face of budget cuts, demanding courseloads, and research requirements? In addition, faculty assignment to and compensation for honors composition becomes increasingly important given the variety of instructors who teach composition. For example, at a graduate-degree granting institution, it is not uncommon to have composition taught by full-time tenured and tenure-track professors, full- and

part-time instructors, adjuncts, and graduate students at the doctoral and master's levels (who, in most English departments, do not serve as assistants to a professor of record but who are the course instructors themselves). Arguably, select part-time instructors or graduate teaching assistants would certainly be qualified to teach honors composition sections; in fact, several colleagues and I enjoyed this opportunity early in our teaching careers. If a selling point of an honors program, however, is that classes will be taught by full-time professors, then administrators and faculty must ensure that honors sections are staffed appropriately.

In addressing faculty assignment and compensation, respondents reported several options in allocating instructors to honors composition courses. The recommended option, reported by thirty-two of the forty-six respondents to this question, is to incorporate honors courses into an instructor's regular teaching load. If this is not possible for the instructor's home department and/or the honors program, several other options are listed below.

1. Regular Load. The best scenario for honors composition courses is including an honors course as part of an instructor's regular teaching load. Sample responses and variations include the following:

Faculty are paid for all honors teaching by their own departments. Honors courses are part of the regular workload (though a faculty member might opt to teach honors as overload). Honors courses carry departmental numbers (300 level numbers indicate honors). (Joan Digby, LIU/CW Post)

Hours to teach honors courses are part of the normal teaching load. To prepare a new honors course, release time is given. (Lory Hawkes, DeVry Institute)

Part of normal teaching load. Two instructors for the two-semester foundation course (HRS 101-102) and for the third semester course HRS 201 (Leadership Development through the Classics). Faculty brought in to lecture for one class are given a modest honorarium (\$300 currently). (Karl Oelke, Union County College)

It is part of their normal teaching load. There is a stipend (\$500.00) awarded each year to two course proposals (we have an annual competition) for course development for the following year. The teacher(s) of each winning course is awarded \$500.00 by the Honors Program to prepare for and/or run the proposed course. Honors Program money is also available to fund special projects such as field trips, guest speakers, etc. (Thomas W. Albritton, High Point University)

2. Release Time. If the instructor's home department cannot afford to incorporate an honors course into the instructor's regular teaching load, then the writing program administrator, the department, and the honors program can work together to provide optional types of compensation, one of which is release time.

FACULTY COMPENSATION AND COURSE ASSESSMENT

Most Honors faculty will receive overload or release time. We have a special “deal” with some departments that they teach 3 credits of Honors courses and we pay their department for 4 credits so that they might hire an adjunct to teach their normal load courses. All of the monies come from the Honors budget which is rather small. Academic Affairs is currently in charge of our program and some compensation comes from their budget. (Carrie Williams, Mankato State University)

Faculty asked to teach an HC course are released from one course in their department teaching load. (Brian Murphy, Oakland University)

3. *Reduced Load.* The department and honors program may also arrange for an instructor to have a reduced load to teach an honors course.

Faculty who teach Honors courses (writing-intensive by definition) normally receive a one-course reduction in their departments, with the Honors budget compensating departments a little over \$2,000 for the cost of replacing the instructor with a part-time instructor for that one course. (Daniel Rigney, St. Mary’s University)

4. *Other Monetary Compensation.* In some cases, the honors program itself must take the responsibility of providing its own type of funding to instructors.

The faculty mentor receives \$400 for the first student in a contract and \$175 for each additional student up to the maximum of \$1200. There is a line item in our budget to cover this cost. Students do pay for one hour tuition (\$46) for the Honors Contract. (Matt Campbell, Johnson County Community College)

5. *Other.* If no financial compensation is available, instructors, departments and/or program directors can make other types of arrangements.

The only compensation for honors instructors is a reduced class size. (Jean Shankweiler, El Camino College)

Our faculty that teach during the year, Fall and Spring, are not compensated on an individual basis but their colleges/divisions are compensated. (JoAnn Evans, West Virginia University)

No funds exist for this. Departments must donate faculty if the honors program is to offer courses. (Lillian Mayberry, University of Texas at El Paso)

Overall, participation of committed faculty is crucial to the success of honors education, including honors composition. Consider the amount of work that honors program directors and faculty choose to dedicate not only to coursework but also to independent study projects, theses, and extracurricular activities, such as taking students to conferences. Granted, some work is considered part of a normal teaching

load, as noted above, or can be counted in the annual professional activity report, but in some instances faculty are compensated only with gratitude and personal satisfaction.

HOW SHOULD HONORS COMPOSITION COURSES BE ASSESSED AND EVALUATED?

Another bottom-line aspect of honors education is assessing which elements of the program are successful in meeting the instructional goals of both the honors program and the institution. During the period of Aydelotte's surveys (*Breaking the Academic Lockstep*), proponents were still fighting to begin and maintain honors programs, so they worked more to establish the appropriate curriculum and instruction than to construct assessment methods. During the next stage of honors education's development, as documented by Joseph Cohen in *The Superior Student in American Higher Education*, honors educators began to discuss assessment measures used in their programs. One chapter in Cohen's text describes the evaluation of honors programs through student reporting and evaluation of their educational experiences; other types of program evaluation, such as self-evaluation, review by accreditation agencies, or institutional outcomes assessment are not substantially discussed.

Today, honors program directors and composition faculty have a variety of resources from scholarship in both honors education and composition that can be used to assess honors composition courses. Of the forty-four respondents to this question in the follow-up interview, however, only five indicated that the English department had specifically assessed honors composition courses during the previous five years; thirteen respondents listed a variety of other assessment procedures, including internal and external program and institutional reviews; and twenty-six stated that the courses had not been assessed in any fashion. The English department or other home department of the writing program can become more involved in the assessment of honors composition courses by using one or more of the following methods:

1. *Writing program assessment.* First, honors composition courses can be reviewed using criteria established in journals such as *Assessing Writing* and *The Journal of Writing Assessment* and in general writing program assessment literature, such as the following:

Assessing Writers' Knowledge and Process of Composing.

Lester Faigley et al.

Assessment of Writing: Politics, Policies, Practices. Eds. Edward M. White, William D. Lutz, and Sandra Kamuskiri.

Developing Successful College Writing Programs. Edward M. White.

Evaluating College Writing Programs. Stephen P. Witte and Lester Faigley.

Evaluating Writing: Describing, Measuring, Judging. Eds. Charles R. Cooper and Lee Odell.

FACULTY COMPENSATION AND COURSE ASSESSMENT

- (Re)Articulating Writing Assessment for Teaching and Learning.* Brian Huot.
- Teaching and Assessing Writing: Recent Advances in Understanding, Evaluating, and Improving Student Performance.* 2nd ed. Edward M. White.
- Validating Holistic Scoring for Writing Assessment: Theoretical and Empirical Foundations.* Eds. Michael M. Williamson and Brian Huot.

Writing program administrators in particular can contribute valuable professional understanding of and experience with such methods.

2. *Honors program assessment.* Evaluation of honors composition can also be conducted through standards established by the National Collegiate Honors Council, which are available in various NCHC publications:

- Beginning in Honors: A Handbook.* Samuel Schuman.
- Honors Programs: Development, Review, and Revitalization.* C. Grey Austin.
- Evaluating Honors Programs: An Outcomes Approach.* Jacqueline Reihman, Sara Varhus, and William R. Whipple.
- Honors Programs in Smaller Colleges.* Samuel Schuman.
- Honors in the Two-Year College.* Two-Year College Committee.

3. *Institutional review.* Assessment of honors composition courses and projects can also be included in scheduled departmental and institutional reviews. For example, the annual or otherwise regularly scheduled program report to the institution's administration should include reflections on performance in these areas, with more in-depth evaluation of these components on a cyclical basis. Honors programs can also be evaluated during general reviews by external accreditation agencies (North Central, SACS, etc.). Program directors should consult guidelines for evaluation criteria from each institution or agency.

4. *Faculty responses.* Just as faculty input is essential in designing and providing honors instruction, it is also necessary for thorough evaluation. Regular end-of-semester or annual reports can identify effective and ineffective components of honors composition courses. These reports can range from informal meetings and anecdotal discussions to formal written reports.

5. *Student evaluations.* Because these courses are designed to help honors students become better writers through interesting, challenging discussions and assignments, the students themselves can provide valuable feedback regarding whether various types of writing instruction and projects are useful, demanding, manageable, and so forth. End-of-semester, qualitative course evaluations allow students to discuss the positive and negative aspects of a course in their own words. As students complete the honors program, they can also compose self-reflective essays that include discussion of how their honors composition course(s) prepared them to write for other classes.

Overall, any assessment measures should be discussed by the honors program director, the writing program administrator, and the honors faculty, who should work together to decide on the most appropriate measures for their program and institutional needs.

HOW DO PROGRAM DIRECTORS ADDRESS RESISTANCE TO HONORS?

Resistance to honors work can be found at all educational levels—elementary, secondary, and postsecondary—in a variety of forms: resisters argue that honors programs siphon off money and instructional resources, pull all of the good students out of classes in which other students can learn from them, promote elitist segregation in an age of open admissions and liberatory approaches to higher public education, and so forth. Honors composition courses are no exception to this resistance; for example, department chairs or writing program administrators may be reluctant to schedule multiple sections of honors composition that cap at 15 and must be taught by full-time professors when they must first staff forty or fifty or sixty sections of regular composition that cap at 25. Of the forty-seven respondents to this question regarding resistance, twenty-seven indicated that they had experienced little or no resistance to honors work while twenty acknowledged that they had dealt with, or indeed were still dealing with, varying amounts of resistance.

1. Little or no resistance. In this section, honors program directors indicated that they have faced little or no resistance to their honors programs. Sample responses include:

There is no significant resistance here, apart from an occasional grumble that honors programs in general are “elitist” or that this or that honors student is bratty (and why don’t I do something about it?). I go out of my way to avoid creating the impression that our program is “elitist” in the pejorative sense of being arrogant, disdainful of other students, etc. The fact is that some of our students do have tendencies in this direction. On the positive side, I emphasize to faculty and administration that our program has what I call a “leavening effect” on the quality of students and academic performance at St. Mary’s, attracting students who might otherwise have gone elsewhere and upholding high academic standards as an ideal. I also like to point to our extraordinary track record in placing honors graduates in top graduate and professional schools. We do all this on a shoestring budget, so we’re not perceived as a major threat to anyone so far as I know. We rely on the cooperation of other departments to “loan” us faculty, etc., and generally we get it. However, this often requires subtle diplomacy and effusive expressions of gratitude, especially with colleagues who are congenitally difficult to work with. So far, it works. (Daniel Rigney, St. Mary’s University)

FACULTY COMPENSATION AND COURSE ASSESSMENT

No resistance from the administration during this, our “re-building” program (I took over as Director in summer 1995 to reinvigorate a program in serious decline)—since then, I’ve received great support from the administration in offering faculty development opportunities to develop courses, in funding lecturers from within and without, and in released time to recruit and administer. Faculty generally support the efforts, although some remain skeptical of results, and some resent what I call the “siphon” effect (the great sucking sound of “all the good students” leaving their classes for honor classes—more their perception than reality). My argument is that if the program succeeds, it will bring students to the College who would not otherwise have come and who will take courses other than Honors Program courses too. (Karl Oelke, Union County College)

We have numerous faculty who are active researchers but who take on an extra honors course simply because they love it so; we have numerous U Distinguished professors who teach basic honors courses or seminars and mentor students. We need a bigger budget to help some departments with heavy service components to do more teaching and certainly some faculty will not go to the trouble. Generally those who do undertake honors teaching are hooked on the type of exciting “R & R” presented by this type of teaching. Our campus has quite a record of getting known scholarships such as the Rhodes, Marshall, Goldwater and Truman, and folks know that many of the students who get these grants have had experience with honors, so that gives the program a good reputation as well as having all of these very special profs regularly endorsing it with their teaching. (Judith Zivanovic, Kansas State University)

2. *More significant resistance.* These program directors had faced more significant resistance from faculty and administrators. They discussed particular examples of resistance and the ways these problems were solved, either partially or in full.

Faculty are faced with the need to research and publish extensively in addition to their class loads. We have trouble finding faculty, the best faculty, who have time to keep up their scholarship and teach their other classes. Some depts. support us by making the Honors sections part of the regular course load, but some depts. don’t have enough faculty to do that. In that case, faculty teach Honors classes on an overload. (Alison Trinkle, Texas Christian University)

Our faculty, individually, are eager to be involved in honors. As members of a dept. unit, however, they resist peer faculty having smaller classes and release time for research/advising activities with honors students. We have a new director to take a new approach.

In the past we have simply avoided those depts. (Sally Cone, Indiana University Purdue University, Indianapolis)

SIGH! SIGH! SIGH! The problem comes with the territory, doesn't it? I believe that I have very solid upper-echelon administrative backing for the Honors and Scholars Programs. (It helps that the Associate Provost for Faculty and Academic Affairs, to whom I report, was the founder of the Honors and Scholars Programs here in their present manifestation!) I am less sanguine about the support from the various Deans and their staffs, although there is usually a very healthy level of cooperation between their offices and the Honors and Scholars Programs. Enrollment pressures sometimes make departmental chairpersons acutely chary of offering courses or sections that are designed for small enrollments. And the University has an anti-elitist heritage that makes some resistance to any privileged status for Honors Program students and/or University Scholars inevitable.

The strategy for countering such objections is probably two-fold. We have worked diligently to integrate the University Scholars and especially the Honors Program students into the University community. Thus their academic achievements and their considerable extracurricular involvement can be seen as leave enriching the quality of life for the whole community. The second part of that strategy is to keep reminding people of the ripple effects of the Honors Program students' successes—they heighten the University's reputation, they offer case studies that have high value in recruiting new students and new faculty, they help succeeding classes of students have better chances at good jobs and places in good graduate and professional programs, etc. (R. Alan Kimbrough, University of Dayton)

From these anecdotes, we can see that faculty and administrative resistance to honors work, as well as adjoining financial and course load matters, can be addressed and resolved in a variety of professional and collegial efforts; such resolution is critical for proponents of honors composition who wish to argue for honors sections that have lower caps and are taught by full-time faculty as part of their regular course loads.

Overall, responses to questions regarding administrative concerns in offering honors composition courses reveal the amount of hard work that honors program directors and faculty members invest in the design and implementation of honors courses and programs. These directors have acknowledged not only their successes but also the areas of their programs that need improvement, such as political relations among other administrators and faculty or economic shortfalls incurred by honors courses. Faculty who go beyond what is required by their course load and service agreements are compensated in some cases only by their personal satisfaction in working with academically talented students. This commitment to quality instruction should be fostered by honors program directors and departmental administrators

through both the effective allocation of resources and the assessment experience necessary to improve and maintain honors composition courses that challenge students and faculty alike.

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Honours Programmes as Laboratories of Innovation: A Perspective from the Netherlands

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SUMMARY

Honours programmes are a recent and fast growing development in Dutch universities. The first such programmes started in 1993. Ten years later 25 programmes have been launched at ten universities. Significant are the diversity in the type of programmes, their length, and their positioning in the curriculum. In this study we describe the types of programmes, the certificates involved, the procedures for selection of the students, and the factors that influence their functioning as experiments for educational innovations. We also present a typology of honours programmes in The Netherlands and describe their spin-off effects in the regular programmes. At least 16 of the 25 programmes did indeed have the function of a living laboratory for educational innovations in the regular programmes. We indicate key issues in understanding spin-off effects. Our main question whether honours programmes have innovative capacities for the normal curriculum is answered positively. After proven success, many innovations of the honours programmes are indeed implemented in the regular curriculum.

THEORY AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

An increasing number of Dutch universities have developed honours programmes for students wanting more and being able to do more than the regular curriculum offers them (Van Eijl et al., 2003). Within this recent trend in the Dutch context, gifted and motivated students have many new opportunities. Only a portion of the really good students with a high GPA join honours programmes, and particularly good students often have other priorities. Van den Berg (2001, p. 10) states that 9.6% of the full-time university students actively follow a double bachelor's degree. "Those double-degree students are, generally speaking, the best students, who study at high speed with good results" (p. 71). We are interested in honours programmes because they can offer another alternative and a different kind of challenge to evoke excellence.

HONOURS PROGRAMMES AS LABORATORIES OF INNOVATION

We define honours programmes as programmes specifically developed to offer educational opportunities that are more challenging and demanding than the regular programmes. They are meant for the more motivated and gifted students who want more and have the capacity to do more than the regular curriculum requires from them.

Selection and admission procedures are one component in the definition of honours programmes. Especially because official selection is a rather new phenomenon at Dutch universities, admission procedures attract some criticism. In US literature, we have found discussions about the elitist character of honours programmes, which is reinforced by the selection of students. Also, in Dutch society, a focus on talent and selection is an issue for discussion (Keesen, 1998). An emphasis on grades can lead to competition among students, which is a new phenomenon in the Netherlands. Selection, admission procedures, competition and differentiation in tuition are often said to be strange elements in the Dutch educational system, which has an emphasis on broad educational participation without selection (Hofstede, 1991; Wolfensberger et al., 2003a). However, Wilbrink (2003, p. 52) challenges this common point of view, arguing that “the Dutch educational system does have its selection methods.” Selection takes place at the start and after three years of secondary education, when students need to make a choice between different types of secondary education with different levels. For this selection, among others, pupils take a test at the age of 11. Only ‘atheneum en gymnasium’—the type of secondary school with the highest-level—allows students to start a study at a Dutch university. Wilbrink’s view is supported by Passow (1988), who states that European secondary education is selective in nature, with specific schools aiming to serve the needs of intellectually able youths. Once a student has obtained this kind of diploma, he/she can enter any university. This is the opposite of the American situation, where high schools are rather inclusive and the selection of students is carried out by admissions offices of colleges and universities based on standardised tests. We decided to explore selection and admission procedures as possible characteristics of honours programmes: can anyone gain access who wants a challenge to perform at the highest level of excellence?

There have always been debates about what creates excellent educational outcomes in terms of students results: motivation, giftedness or social context. Intelligence is not the exclusive nor always reliable predictor for success (Terman, 1967; Oden, 1968). Personality characteristics such as perseverance, creative thinking and problem-solving ability (Reis & Renzulli, 1984) as well as the talent to organise and the power to employ intelligence and wisdom (Sternberg, 1986, 2003) are of great importance. Mönks (1988) demonstrated the significance of the contexts like family, school and friends. From the perspective of honours work, one could also argue that it would be more appropriate to decide who is gifted after participation. In this article we do not attempt to solve this issue. Our definition, however, focuses on motivation and giftedness (or talent) because the programmes are specially developed for the target group who *want* to do more (motivation) and who are *able* to do more (giftedness) than the regular programme.

We focus on honours programmes in the Netherlands because the implementation of the bachelor-master structure is in an advanced phase. All over Europe, the

realisation of the 'European Higher Education Area' is now the single most important issue on the agenda of universities and other institutes of higher education. The main issue is to implement the structure of bachelor and master programmes that will make student mobility and the comparison of grades easier. Implementation started in 1999 when the Ministers responsible for higher education from 29 European countries signed the Bologna Declaration. They agreed on important joint objectives for the development of a single and cohesive European Higher Education Area by 2010. In September 2003, the Ministers from 33 European countries met in Berlin in order to review the progress achieved and to set priorities and new objectives for the coming years, with a view to speeding up the realisation of the European Higher Education Area (Conference of Ministers, 2003). The Netherlands seems to be way ahead of many of the 33 countries because, in nearly all Dutch institutions in 2002, the bachelor-master programmes were introduced for all new students along with many of the reforms associated with the Bologna process. Further details can be found in the reports of all countries to the Berlin Conference (<http://www.bologna-berlin2003.de/>).

Analysis of the European documents on bachelor-master reveals that they contain almost no references to honours programmes. One study on Master Degrees and Joint Degrees (Tauch and Rauhvargers, 2002) refers to honours programmes because they might become important in the selection for master programmes. In general, however, little if any reference is made to European honours programmes. This may change in the near future, however. In the Netherlands, 10 out of 13 research universities at present have honours programmes. Why is this so? Firstly, because with the bachelor-master implementation, many undergraduate programmes have been broadened, thus creating new opportunities for honours programmes that allow for enrichment. Secondly, because it is becoming more important for students to distinguish themselves in order, for instance, to be admitted to (selective) master programmes in the Netherlands or abroad. Honours programmes should thus be designed in such a way that students are distinguished by the results of their efforts while enrolled. Also, an honours certificate/diploma after successful completion of the honours programme is important. Thirdly, recent political discussions on the knowledge economy and the need to strengthen the Dutch and European innovative capacity have led to a renewed emphasis on the need to cherish talent and research. Excellence in teaching and research is now on the political agenda of the government (Balkenende, 2003), and honours programmes fit in well. Traditionally, the emphasis has always been placed on equality, equity and access in the Netherlands (Hofstede, 1991), and this new focus on excellence seems to support the rapid development of honours programmes at Dutch universities. Maybe in the end the Dutch culture will be able to add excellence to the list without displacing the other traditional emphases. Fourthly and finally, the growth of honours programmes at Dutch Universities may be explained by the fact that the Anglo-Saxon Higher Education system served as a model for the European bachelor-master implementation. Honours programmes are a widespread phenomenon in this system. Considering the forward position of the Netherlands in the introduction of the bachelor-master system and in the implementation of honours, it can be expected that honours programmes will also spread to

other European countries as they adopt the system. Therefore, the remainder of this article will focus on developments in Dutch honours education.

Honours Programmes demonstrate a great variety in pedagogical design and organisation. Their main goal is to provide academic opportunities that challenge students to perform at their highest level of excellence. Additional goals range from the stimulation of talent and the attraction of new teachers and students of outstanding academic ability to creation of a ‘living laboratory’ for educational experiments that can be adopted by the regular programme (Wolfensberger et al., 2003 a & b; Van Eijl et al., 1999; Van Dam & De Klerk, 1998). The latter is also cited as an important goal of honours programmes in the United States: “educational innovation and honours have often been allied. The development of honors courses and curricula is necessarily an exercise in innovation” (Austin, 1991, p. 16). It is also one of the basic characteristics of a fully-developed honors program as considered by the NCHC Evaluation Committee: “The honors program, in distinguishing itself from the rest of the institution, serves as a kind of laboratory within which faculty can try things they have always wanted to try but for which they could find no suitable outlet. When such efforts are demonstrated to be successful, they may then become institutionalized, thereby raising the general level of education within the college or university for all students. In this connection, the honors curriculum should serve as a prototype for educational practices that can work campus-wide in the future” (NCHC Evaluation Committee, 1999, p. 18).

Considering the (explicit or implicit) goal of innovation, we should explore to what extent innovative honours programmes are able to generate spin-off effects on the regular programmes. Additionally, a thorough analysis of the factors stimulating these spin-off effects is important, as the diffusion of educational innovations is often difficult—even when it has obvious advantages. A demonstration that honours programmes are a source of innovation will strengthen the position of and appreciation for these programmes. It may also help to refute the point of view that they are exclusively for ‘a happy few,’ the participating students. In this study, we analyse programmes and their characteristics, such as selection and credits. We have excluded other possible common features such as their educational goals (e.g. teaching critical thinking and promoting an attitude of self-reflection or leadership) or the typical characteristics of honours faculty members. The experiences in the United States show that such an inventory can be usefully made: “the Teaching and Learning Committee of the National Collegiate Honors Council has found significant agreement on the goals of honors education and some important similarities among faculty members teaching in honors” (West, 2002). In addition, the different ways in which content is modified in the honours programmes—acceleration, enrichment, sophistication, or novelty (Gallagher, 2000, p. 689)—are not included in our inventory because we considered them to be outside the scope of this study.

As mentioned before, our motivation for the research questions is twofold: to test whether honours programmes reach the goal of being a living laboratory for the benefit of regular programmes and to investigate whether honours programmes benefit all students or only a happy few. After all, various educational strategies and special courses recommended for talented and motivated students in honours

programmes might be profitably used for all students. The pedagogical innovations of honours programmes include many approaches such as critical thinking, creative writing, problem solving, free choices, inquiry, and discovery. All students profit from the challenge of learning to do their own thinking and making their own choices. We do realise, however, that not all practices in honours programmes should be transferred to regular programmes: some are not beneficial to students in regular programme since—naturally—honours students differ from non-honours students (Gerrity et al., 1993). “For gifted students, the content level involved in the discovery and problem solving could be at a higher level of abstraction than possible for the average student.... Also, Shore and Delcourt note that ability grouping, acceleration, and differential programming are particularly useful for gifted students” (Gallagher, 2000, p. 688). Our focus was, therefore, on innovations that were *realised* in regular programmes and had *their origin* in honours programmes, whether or not this was planned at the outset.

The following, therefore, are the main research questions of this article.

- To what extent do Dutch honours programmes function as an educational laboratory for regular programmes?
- What kind of innovations and changes in regular programmes do honours programmes generate?
- What characteristics of honours programmes are related to the strength of the spin-off effect?

After a short explanation of our research methods, the paper continues with three empirical sections: first, a description of the main characteristics of Dutch honours programmes such as the number of credit hours, their duration, and selection procedures; second, a typology of Dutch honours programmes; and finally, a description of their spin-off effects. These empirical sections are followed by a paragraph on the key factors for success in terms of spin-off effects. The paper ends with a conclusion and discussion.

RESEARCH METHODS

We selected honours programmes defined as programmes specifically developed to offer educational opportunities that are more challenging and demanding than the regular programmes. The programmes are meant for the more motivated and gifted students who want more and have the capacity to do more. A first inventory of all honours programmes at Dutch research-based universities was made in January 2003. These were all programmes that their organisers viewed as honours programmes and that more or less satisfied our definition. The inventory is reasonably complete; some programmes that were currently being developed have also been included, as well as information received till April 2003. It remains possible, though, that we missed an honours program or two because some are known under a different name. Because of the introduction in the Netherlands of the bachelor-master system, we expect great changes in the near future.

HONOURS PROGRAMMES AS LABORATORIES OF INNOVATION

Our prime focus of analysis was programmes and their characteristics. We recorded: target group, educational methods and subject of the programme, selection and admission procedures, duration, assessment, recognition, awards and laboratory function. We thus limited our research to programmes that usually consist of a series of courses or modules. Individual ‘honours’ assignments within courses are not included in this inventory except when they are part of a more extensive honours programme.

We looked for innovations that were realised in the regular programmes and had their origin in the honours programmes. We categorized those innovations according to their field of outcome. We did not make an inventory of those innovations nor of all factors that possibly stimulated those innovations. Of course, features other than the characteristics of the honours programmes (like institutional policy and human resource management) might have played a role in the innovation process as well. In this study, we have not included these factors. We also did not ask for intentional plans to move or share the innovations of the honours programme spin-offs, and we did not analyse whether any such plans were successful.

For this research, we have used the nationwide ‘Plusnetwork,’ a platform for academic honours programmes, and available documents and websites. Additional information came from interviews with some teachers, co-ordinators, and directors of honours programmes. For the analysis (quantitative and qualitative) of the data, the method of grounded theory was used (Savenye & Robinson, 2001). Two researchers independently coded the data and compared the characteristics of the programmes. Our inventory included the effects of the programmes on the regular curricula. This part of the inventory was based only on interviews with the coordinators and teachers. Although most co-ordinators and teachers work in both the honours and regular programmes, and even though most spin-off innovations were not planned for at the outset, the answers could be self-serving and of questionable reliability. Therefore, we also interviewed several directors of studies and did an in-depth study of several cases. The influence of government policy making on universities, e.g., changes in the secondary education system and financial support of students, was not included in this analysis. Examples of honours programme spin-offs are derived from an in-depth study of individual cases so we could gather characteristics and control the overall picture regarding educational innovation (Van Eijl et al., 2003, Wolfensberger et al., 2003a). Those cases are typical for each different type of honours: disciplinary, interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary.

INVENTORY ANALYSIS: CHARACTERISTICS OF HONOURS PROGRAMMES AT DUTCH UNIVERSITIES

The inventory resulted in 25 honours programmes at ten (of the thirteen) different research-based Dutch universities and at one inter-university foundation. All honours programmes are relatively young: the first started in 1993, and the last ten programmes were started after 1999. Some universities intend to start an honours

programme in the near future, or their honours are still 'under construction.' As mentioned above, this recent growth in programmes is probably related to the introduction of the bachelor-master system, as can be seen in university plans and policies. Consider the Erasmus University of Rotterdam, for example: "In the competition, the quality of the educational programmes will be of decisive importance.... Development of an 'Honours Program' for the gifted students is considered necessary" (chairman of the Committee for Educational Innovation, Van der Graaf, 2002). And at the Technical University Eindhoven, it has been understood that "...if the university wants to have the best students, it should have an honours program.... With such a program students are motivated to use and develop their talents fully and the university shows that it values the good students" (Groep Eén, 2003). Also, students are discovering that it is becoming more important to distinguish oneself in the competition for (international) master studies.

CHARACTERISTICS OF HONOURS PROGRAMMES

The key characteristic of honours programmes we included in our study is that these programmes are developed for a specific purpose, heavier and more challenging, meant for motivated and talented students. This purpose is reflected in their selection procedures, in their more demanding study tasks and in their forms of assessment and certification. In such a way, students are offered an extra possibility to develop intellectually and academically. The programme variations are wide. They differ in duration and structure, types of students involved, years of study in which they are scheduled, number of credits required, total credit hours, educational methods, and assessment (Van Eijl et al., 2003). Despite all these differences in design and content, there are also a number of common characteristics, as shown in Table 1. Many of these are not unique to the Netherlands but are also found in the United States (Austin, 1986; Groot Zevert et al., 1997). We explain these characteristics here in items a through j:

- a. Honours programmes use mainly small-scale educational methods varying from individual education to groups of 20 students. This can enhance the interaction between the participants and between students and teacher, and it provides more opportunities to follow the individual interests of students.
- b. Active participation is evident in, for instance discussion and feedback, presentations of research design, and excursions. Peer-interaction is also an important characteristic of an honours programme.
- c. Many context-specific and pedagogical innovations as well as updated content are found in honours programmes. Special attention is paid to academic skills, interdisciplinary pedagogy, a reflective student portfolio, strong student participation, challenging course content, new ways of assessment, (peer) feedback and discussion among peers.
- d. Honours programmes are completed with a testimonial, a certificate, an additional text on the diploma, or a special diploma such as Master in Veterinary Research. The graduation is sometimes an official academic event, for instance at Leiden University or Nijmegen, where the vice-chancellor personally presents the honours diploma to the students.

HONOURS PROGRAMMES AS LABORATORIES OF INNOVATION

- e. The programme is more demanding. In 18 honours cases, students receive ‘honours credits,’ which have no legal status, but the time spent on the honours programme is shown in a testimonial. We expect that more programmes will give official credits on top of the regular programme soon as the financing is changing. In five of the honours programmes, students receive credit points because they have participated in these programmes instead of in the regular programme. The programme is more demanding through content only, not through quantity.
- f. Honours programmes use different types of entry selection for admission, including GPA and level of motivation, the latter of which can be ascertained from candidates’ letters of application. Letters of recommendation from mentors also play a role. We did not find any programme which uses *only* average number of credits or average GPA.
- g. In sixteen cases, the Honours programme is considered a laboratory for innovation in content and pedagogy for the regular programmes. Most honours programmes do not provide a clear mission statement or vision, as is often seen in the United States. The laboratory function is usually not stated as an objective of an honours programme, but this is certainly one of its side effects.
- h. Most honours programmes are meant for non-freshman students. Two programmes are for freshman students only, five are meant for all students, and thirteen are explicitly for seniors. (This is in the old situation where bachelor and master are included in one programme with one diploma). This pattern is in contrast with the situation in the United States, where the honours programmes are organised only for bachelor-level students.
- i. In a number of programmes, special attention is being paid to research and design skills. Nine programmes offer honours students possibilities to do research at an earlier stage and at a more advanced level than in regular programmes. In upper years, the connection is made with a Ph.D. dissertation. The honours programme can be seen as a nursery for research talent.
- j. In three quarters of the programmes, a co-ordinator or director is present to run and develop the programme. Sometimes, he or she is also a teacher or a coach in the programme. In the United States, coaching is seen as a point of prime importance (Groot Zevert et al., 1997, p. 16). A coach can encourage the student to work on his academic achievement and to start on a new challenge. There were no explicit questions about the role of the coach or counsellor in our inventory.

TABLE 1

CHARACTERISTICS IN PEDAGOGICAL DESIGN, ORGANISATION, AND CONTENT OF HONOURS PROGRAMMES IN DUTCH RESEARCH UNIVERSITIES (N=25)

Characteristic	Present	Not present	Unknown
a. Small scale education	25	0	0
b. Active participation of students	25	0	0
c. Pedagogical innovations	23	2	0
d. Testimonial or diploma for honours certification	22	2	1
e. 'Honorary' credit points	18	6	1
f. Selection procedures	21	2	2
g. Laboratory function	16	6	3
h. Only non-freshman	18	7	0
i. Special attention to research and design skills	9	14	2
j 1. Coordinator	17	0	8
j 2. Coach/mentor/tutor	8	0	17

DISTRIBUTION OF HONOURS PROGRAMMES AMONG DISCIPLINES

There is a rather uniform distribution of honours programmes in the disciplines of the (13) Dutch universities. The medical disciplines appear to be an exception (the rapid growth at the end of 2003 is not included in this research). We included one programme in medicine: the Track of Excellence in Veterinary Science at Utrecht University. This is the oldest honours programme offering a small group of selected students the possibility to qualify themselves thoroughly in Veterinary Research (Table 2). About 5% of the student population is joining this one-year programme. Students primarily do research but also take some courses. Students get a small salary. This honours programme is particularly meant as a breeding ground: a challenge for good students and a way to stimulate students to stay at the university as Ph.D. students.

The Science and Technology domain is well represented with five programmes. Four of the five honours programmes in the field of Science and Technology are multidisciplinary within this field, consisting of a combination of two disciplines. Four programmes are completely interdisciplinary with special interdisciplinary courses, and two programmes are liberal arts colleges which we categorise as multidisciplinary. The "network society" asks for both specialisation and the interdisciplinary capacity to integrate knowledge. A new element in the discussion is the idea to create leadership courses within honours programmes (Wijffels & Wolfensberger, 2004). Most Dutch teachers consider this type of courses risky as well as challenging.

TABLE 2

HONOURS PROGRAMMES (N=25) IN DIFFERENT DISCIPLINES

Disciplines	Number
Arts and Humanities	5
Science and Technology	5
Social Sciences	8
Medical	1
Interdisciplinary	4
Multidisciplinary	2

(Four of the Science and Technology programmes are interdisciplinary within this field. The Interdisciplinary programmes involve an integrative combination of disciplines + special courses. The Multidisciplinary courses are offered at University College Utrecht and University College Maastricht.)

ETHNICITY AND GENDER IN THE STUDENT POPULATION

Although we have no specific data on gender and ethnicity in the population of honours students in the Netherlands, it is our impression (based on visits and interviews) that the male/female ratio equals roughly 50% and that only a few ethnic students participate in honours programmes. Research to get a better understanding of the differences between honours and non-honours students in the Netherlands is lacking.

Ethnic students form an interesting group. The statistical data show that the percentage of ethnic students coming from secondary schools and going on to higher education (professional universities) is rapidly rising in the Netherlands: it doubled in the last four years as a percentage of the whole group of new students (Onderwijsinspectie, 2003; HBO-raad, 2003).

In Dutch universities, the number and percentage of female students has been steadily rising. The percentage of female students entering the university is higher than that of male students (52% were female in 2002/2003). The percentage of female students among graduating students is also rising rapidly: in 1989/1990, 41% of the graduates were females while in 2001/2002 this percentage rose to 52%. Females graduate faster: 58 months versus 64 months for their 'doctorandus' degree (equivalent to a master's degree) in 2001/2002.

Both groups are interesting when we look at honours programmes, raising questions about the distribution of such students, their access to honours programmes, and any barriers they might have to overcome.

FINANCING HONOURS PROGRAMMES

We see a lot of diversity in the way honours programmes are funded. Some are financed by means of grants for educational innovation, some directly by the central administration of a university, and some by a department. Until now, there has been no differentiation in the costs for students for bachelor or master programmes: students pay a fixed annual amount determined by the government. Also, none of the honours programmes require students to pay an extra amount for participation. We assume that the rapid growth of the number of honours programmes will lead to new debates on the financing of honours programmes.

A BREEDING GROUND FOR RESEARCHERS

Many Dutch honours programmes are intended for students with at least two years of academic experience. In these programmes, special attention is paid to research and design competencies, sometimes by way of a temporary term at a research institute. Thus, the honours programme gives students the opportunity to discover whether they are really interested and competent in research. For the university, it has the function of a breeding ground for highly talented students. After a positive evaluation of their activities by the student and university, many of them enter a Ph.D. programme. This function of honours programmes will be an issue for further development and evaluation because of the restructuring of academic programmes into the bachelor-master system.

ANALYSING THE INVENTORY: A TYPOLOGY OF HONOURS PROGRAMMES AT DUTCH UNIVERSITIES

Based on analysis of the data in the inventory, we have drawn up a typology of honours programmes. From a disciplinary perspective, we can distinguish three types of honours programmes: (mono) disciplinary (14), interdisciplinary (6) and multidisciplinary (5). We expected different spin-off effects from these three groups of programmes because of their differences in character and organisation.

- a. In the 14 disciplinary honours programmes, deepening the understanding of subjects in a discipline is the main goal. The department finances this kind of honours programmes, and participating teachers and students originate from the department. The Disciplinary programmes are organised as an extra opportunity for deepening a student's understanding of the contents of the subject, academic education, methodology and research. Students usually take these courses as an extra to the regular programme.
- b. In the 6 interdisciplinary honours programmes, the focus is on subjects and themes that cover and go beyond different disciplines and also on interdisciplinary methodologies. These programmes are an 'extra' for students wanting to broaden their academic education beyond the scope of their main subject. This type of honours programme is organised and financed at the level of the university as a whole. In most of them, all (selected) students can join and teachers are drawn from all over the university.

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- c. The 5 multidisciplinary programmes are made up of different disciplines. In these programmes, relations between the disciplines are not an explicit issue for discussion. These programmes are a complete substitute for the regular programmes. An example is the kind of so-called TWIN Programmes that lead to a double (doctorandus \approx master's) degree (for example in chemistry and physics) or to a full bachelor degree at honours level. The departments involved finance the programme.

Of course, in practice, combinations of programmes exist, e.g. a disciplinary honours programme with an interdisciplinary component. In this study, we classified these mixed forms according to their main characteristic.

Otherwise, there are some differing opinions on whether the third type (multidisciplinary) should be labelled an honours programme. According to our definition, they are programmes specifically developed to offer educational opportunities that are more challenging and demanding than the regular programmes. The programmes are meant for the more motivated and gifted students. It is relevant to give a short comment on this.

Three of the five multidisciplinary honours programmes are programmes in the fields of science and technology called 'TWIN-programmes.' Students are offered an opportunity to study a combined programme of two interrelated degree programmes instead of one. We include these programmes even though they consist largely of existing regular courses because the TWIN-programmes are specifically designed for more gifted students. This does not mean that any student who chooses to pursue two bachelor's degrees can be called an honours student; such a student must participate in a specifically designed honours programme. An honours programme not only requires extra effort but also confronts students with more complex content and challenges students to excel.

The other two multidisciplinary honours programmes are liberal arts and sciences colleges offering a kind of honours bachelor degree. Selection is strict, and once the student has entered one of these international programmes, a high GPA must be maintained. These complete degree programmes—somewhat analogous to Honors Colleges in the US—are distinct from the other honours programmes we have discussed that are parallel to a regular programme.

RESULTS: SPIN-OFF EFFECTS – CHANGES IN THE REGULAR PROGRAMME

Our main research questions are: To what extent do Dutch honours programmes function as an educational laboratory for the regular programmes? What kind of innovations and changes in the regular programmes do honours programmes generate? What characteristics of the honours programmes are related to the strengths of the spin-off effects? To answer these questions, we concentrate on those outcomes of honours programmes that can be seen as visible effects of the laboratory function. The analysis is confined to the 24 university honours programmes. The inter-university programme is left out of consideration.

The outcomes can be categorised into four main fields of innovation: course content, pedagogy, educational instruments, and programme structure. By spin-off of 'course content,' we mean the development of a new course or a change in the content of a course in the regular programme that is directly induced by the honours programme. By spin-off in pedagogy, we mean changes in the outline of courses in the regular programme or in the way the teachers are now teaching these courses. By spin-off in 'educational instruments,' we mean instructional systems intended as a template for students, such as portfolios or a learning contracts. And finally, spin-off in the field of programme structure leads to changes in the overall structure, sequence, and outline of the programme. As mentioned above (section on Research Methods), other external factors, like the influence of government policy on universities, were not included in this analysis. Table 3 shows the distribution of the spin-off effects of the three types of honours programmes in the four fields of outcomes. We will elaborate on the process of innovation per type of honours programme and will give an example of each.

TABLE 3
THREE TYPES OF HONOURS PROGRAMMES (N=24) AND THEIR
SPIN-OFF EFFECTS IN FOUR FIELDS OF OUTCOMES

	Course content/ new course	Pedagogy	Educational instruments	Structure of the programme
Disciplinary (14)	7	12	No data	No data
Interdisciplinary (5)	4	4	2	No data
Multidisciplinary (5)	No data	2	2	5

SPIN-OFF EFFECTS OF DISCIPLINARY HONOURS PROGRAMMES

The fourteen disciplinary honours programmes largely appeared to have spin-off effects in the field of 'Course content' (7 out of 14, or 50%) and 'Pedagogy' (12 out of 14, or 85%). It is evident that there is a strong content relationship between the disciplinary honours programme and the regular programme. The innovative and experimental content of honours programmes is in most cases closely connected to the regular programme and can be easily integrated into it after proven success.

In our research, we found examples of new courses developed for the regular programme as an effect of spin-off (sometimes as a duplicate of an honours programme course). In disciplinary honours programmes, teachers acquire a 'new' understanding and skills in the domain of instructional methods. And it appears that they use these skills rather easily in the standard programme, which in most cases they also teach. Spin-off is also stimulated by the flow of information between students involved in an honours programme and students not involved. This information flows naturally because most honours students follow both paths. The students function as agents of innovation. The spin-off effects of the disciplinary honours programmes were visible in a relatively short time, and we see that departments as a whole do indeed profit from the educational innovations.

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Example. A study in more depth of some programmes gives more details of the spin-off from the honours programmes (Van Eijl et al., 2003). One interesting and illustrative example of the effect of a disciplinary honours programme on the content of the regular programme was found in the Track of Excellence of the Utrecht University Faculty of Geosciences. A group of students did their course of research activities within this Track of Excellence from January to June 1999 at universities in Bergen (Norway) and Barcelona (Spain). They discovered that abroad considerably more attention was paid to qualitative methods of research than was the case at Utrecht University. The students were of the opinion that they did not have enough freedom at their home institution to choose their research problem and research methods. Back in Utrecht, this lack of freedom was their motive to start a discussion with their teachers of research methods, in turn leading to a discussion in the Faculty newsletter. The first result was that the next group of students in the Track of Excellence were offered special lectures on qualitative methods of research. The course was evaluated using a questionnaire, which showed positive opinions, and the opinions of the faculty were also positive. Within a year, these special lectures were made available to all 150 students. The spin-off of this Track of Excellence can be recognised in changes in the regular curriculum, such as changes in content, and also in changes in the pedagogy and in a growing understanding among teachers to focus more on the interests and input of students and to work with more interactive instructional strategies. In October 2000, the dean wrote that the Track of Excellence should be seen not only as a challenge for students and staff members, but also as a breeding ground for the new undergraduate programme, because this programme “will ask for a more active attitude on the part of the students. More so than in the past, they will influence the game. This will also require a different role of the teachers. Next to instruction, the analysis of strong and weak aspects of the work of students and feedback on the enhancement of competencies will be a more important task” (Hooimeijer, 2000). Based on those insights, and recognising the considerable initiative the institute showed in this programme, the Minister of Education gave in 2000 the ISO-prize for Educational Quality to this Track of excellence.

SPIN-OFF EFFECTS OF INTERDISCIPLINARY HONOURS PROGRAMMES

The interdisciplinary honours programmes aim at large groups of students and are mostly organised and financed at the central organisation level of the university. These honours programmes appeared to be an excellent place for experiments with educational instruments (e.g. portfolio). Experiences and evaluations of success factors were used for the implementation of these instruments in the university as a whole.

The interdisciplinary honours programmes also develop new courses on interdisciplinary subjects. Those courses aim at a deeper understanding of interdisciplinary relations between subjects and are specifically meant for students in the honours programme. These courses are rather new and (until now) not available for students in the regular programme. It was difficult to get reliable data about the spin-off

effects on the pedagogy. However, it appears that the teachers in such an honours programme become more conscious of their responsibility and feel more involved in trying to raise the educational quality within their own regular programme. The teachers and students of these interdisciplinary programmes come from various departments but join together in the programme. These teachers take their new understanding and skills in the field of pedagogy back to their regular programme. Because the setting in their department is different and their students have virtually no communication with those of the honours programme, it will be more difficult for them to apply their new skills (and for us to get reliable data on the effects). However, we found some clear instances of those effects.

Example. The University of Amsterdam uses its interdisciplinary honours programme for motivated first-year students as a breeding ground for a digital portfolio. Thanks to this honours programme and through the dissemination within this university of information about this instrument, an important step in the development of the reflective digital portfolio for students was taken. Many regular programmes at the University of Amsterdam have now taken the initiative to implement the portfolio system, and the experiences within the honours programme with assignments on reflection and coaching have contributed substantially to the increased understanding of this instrument within these regular programmes. In this case, we also discovered that the outcomes of the honours programme and its spin-off effects have also influenced the honours programme itself. The programme started with first-year students (freshmen) of six large departments. The results of the programme have had a great influence on the educational policy of the University of Amsterdam, and in 2003, the honours programme was implemented for all students of the university and involved almost all departments.

SPIN-OFF EFFECTS OF MULTIDISCIPLINARY HONOURS PROGRAMMES

The two liberal arts and sciences colleges included as multidisciplinary honours programmes differ from the other multidisciplinary honours programmes in the sense that the former offer complete degree programmes. Consequently, participating students work together only with other honours students and do not interact with students at the 'mother universities' of these honours colleges. Hence, these students cannot function as agents of innovative change in the regular programme. Faculty often have a position both at the honours college and the 'mother university,' which means that they, at least, can function as liaisons.

The other three multidisciplinary honours programmes are the TWIN-programmes, in which students follow two related bachelor's programmes. Here, the spin-off effects flow more naturally since faculty are engaged in both the honours programme and the regular programme. Typically, the TWIN-programmes offer a rare opportunity for faculty members of two scientific fields to co-operate and co-create an educational programme. TWIN-programmes require a re-thinking of the disciplinary kernels and often an adaptation of the schedules.

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Example. The University College Utrecht (UCU) of Utrecht University is a multidisciplinary honours programme that has influenced many other university programmes. Initially, there was within Utrecht University a great deal of resistance to the UCU programme. The innovation, however, found a solid base when the UCU concept proved to be a success: the learning results were outstanding; the students made great progress and were very motivated; the faculty were amazed about the results and the concept of this kind of learning and teaching. The students, the University Board, and many professors involved in UCU (selected from the university faculty because they were known as outstanding teachers) began showing their commitment to this innovative programme in the discussions about curriculum reform that was needed for introduction of the bachelor-master system. After this green light, UCU was largely used as a breeding ground. UCU had attracted a group of teachers that had authority among their peers and showed enthusiasm for trying out new educational concepts. Another factor was (as participants revealed in the evaluation data) the diversity of the student population (international, brought up in different educational systems), which forced College teachers and staff into experiments with instructional content and form. The fact that teachers from different academic disciplines meet each other here has to a certain extent also been a source of inspiration for spin-off. The selection system, which does not exist in regular programmes elsewhere in the Netherlands, brought a capable, motivated and also diverse group of students together, making it easier to experiment with content and instructional methods. Teachers thus gained experiences that were later on to be disseminated in the regular programme.

With this international bachelor programme at an honours level, Utrecht University obtained a wide-ranging expertise in liberal arts and sciences learning, a new educational concept in Dutch universities. When in 2002 Utrecht University introduced the bachelor-master structure in the whole university, the UCU programme had the function of a visionary model for the new programmes: specifically, the design of a more liberal arts and sciences learning curriculum with an emphasis on a broad spectrum of academic education and skills, more freedom of choice in the requirements of the programme, more coaching of the students, more tests and feedback within the courses, and a marked reduction of the number of re-sits of a test (or re-examinations). These elements have been more or less adopted and adapted in the university-wide framework for the implementation of the bachelor-master structure (Vermeulen & Van Kammen, 2002a, 2002b).

KEY ISSUES IN UNDERSTANDING THE SPIN-OFF EFFECTS

In this study, we saw that all three types of honours programmes have spin-off effects in four different fields (Table 3). The question now is whether we can get a better understanding of the spin-off effects by looking at the characteristics of the honours programmes (Table 1). At least four of the characteristics appear to be important for the dissemination of innovations from honours programmes to regular programmes.

a) *Innovation as a goal*

In most honours programmes (16), the administration has implicitly or explicitly opted for the laboratory function. In some, innovation has been explicitly mentioned in the mission right from the start, while in others this function proved to be effective in practice. The new interdisciplinary honours programmes, established at the start of the bachelor-master structure, mention their laboratory function explicitly (Table 4). Five programmes mention that they do not have a laboratory function because they were established with a different goal and do not aim at educational innovation. Some of these programmes state that they have an extraordinary character and that spin-off effects would diminish this character.

However, even three out of five programmes that mention not having an explicit laboratory function indicate that they do see spin-off effects in the regular programme. For example, the double degree programmes of the faculties of Physics and Mathematics at Utrecht University have led teachers of these faculties, who previously did not communicate very much, to more interaction about subject matter and pedagogy.

TABLE 4**LABORATORY FUNCTION OF THE THREE TYPES OF HONOURS PROGRAMMES (N=24)**

Type of honours programme	Laboratory function	<i>Innovations realised</i>	No laboratory function	<i>Innovations realised</i>	No data	<i>Innovations realised</i>
Disciplinary (14)	10	10	2	0	2	No data
Interdisciplinary (5)	4	4	0	0	1	No data
Multidisciplinary (5)	2	2	3	3	0	No data
Total	16	16	5	3	3	No data

It appears that some teachers (and/or the director) involved in honours often are innovators. They are eager to experiment with new ideas and play a liaison role in the flow of new ideas into a social system. Aspects of personality are related to the goal and realisation of innovation and spin-off effects. Some of the other teachers (or the director) have the characteristics of 'early adopters and persons with authority.' Their role is "to decrease uncertainty about a new idea by adopting it and conveying a subjective evaluation of the innovation to near-peers by means of interpersonal networks" (Rogers, 1971, p. 240). It is quite possible that one of the reasons why the diffusion of innovations from honours programmes to regular programmes proceeds at a relatively quick pace is that those early adopters work in the honours programmes as well as in the regular programmes, thus making communication about innovations easier. We also saw teachers learning about innovation-decision processes. These processes start with knowing and understanding an innovation and forming an

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opinion on it before deciding on implementing it. It was much easier for a teacher to implement an innovation in the regular programme after it proved successful in the 'safe' environment of an honours programme with a small group of enthusiastic students. Poucke (2004) similarly indicates that, for an innovation to be successful, it needs to go through the full process of development, crystallisation, and realisation.

The conclusion can be drawn that honours programmes that have innovation as a goal are successful with this mission. They do have spin-off effects in the regular programme. We found that nearly all honours programmes do function as a laboratory for educational innovations, whether they have the explicit function to do so or not.

b) Educational innovations: honours programmes as breeding-place

In the inventory we found that twenty-three honours programmes report using pedagogical innovations (Table 1), an important factor in spin-off. Teachers report being stimulated to use their creativity by working in honours and experiencing freedom as well as responsibility to create new courses serving the needs of the students. Teachers also report doing all kinds of experiments with content and pedagogy, such as discussions, small groups, student intervention, peer feedback, and peer assessment. Pedagogical innovations and interdisciplinary courses are risky for teachers. Students report challenge and stimulation. The honours programmes, many of which are evaluated on a regular basis, often change because of the innovation-flow that teachers and students together create.

Where many innovations are used in such breeding-places, spin-off effects can easily be realised. Often spin-off effects that result from an honours programme transform a regular programme while the honours programme is evolving even further. Some honours programmes, like that of the Geosciences in Utrecht University, even mention this spin-off effect in their mission statement: "It has to be seen as a platform for innovation in the regular program" (Harms & Hogestijn, 2001, p. 8).

Educational innovations that are found in honours programmes include subject matter and educational instruments as well as pedagogy. Examples include the reflective digital portfolio, a personal tutor (coach), feedback and discussion with peers, seminars, student participation, motivation stemming from freedom and responsibility, talent coaching, research projects, peer feedback, peer teaching, peer assessment, and the reduction of resits for a test. We see that innovations from the honours programmes are transferred to regular programmes by faculty without any official policy.

The conclusion is that honours programmes stimulate innovations and that spin-off of successful innovations is realised. Thus honours programmes can be a bottom-up innovation strategy.

c) Credits or no credits – influence on the capacity for innovation

The question is whether innovations are more easily accepted by and implemented in regular programmes when no credits are given to the students. The idea behind this relation is that the intrinsic motivation of students is higher when no credits are given. More research on the motivation of students to join or not to join a programme and the effects on their learning would be interesting. Also we do not know whether students would appreciate getting credits or being graded.

Honours programmes vary in assignment of credits and/or grades. As most programmes are an extra activity, honours evaluations or credits have no influence on students' grades in the regular programme. In addition, the ways the programmes are completed differ (Table 5). For most honours programmes (fifteen), the study load is extra—so the students do the honours programme and the regular programme simultaneously; students get no credits for the honours programme, or else they receive so-called honorary credits. These are not official credits, but they do indicate the workload of the course. Some programmes give 'extra credits'; these are official credits, but students can use them not as credits for compulsory courses but only for elective credits. The five multidisciplinary programmes offer a complete curriculum instead of the regular programme, so of course those programmes give official credits and provide an official bachelor diploma.

As students mostly do not receive any official credits for their study efforts in the honours programme, their intrinsic motivation must be high. Honours programmes are something extra, a surplus, and students follow them because of the challenge, the joy of learning, and the honour. Teachers join the program because of the challenge. Those honours programmes have a strong appeal, and the fact that people join them without getting something official in return makes the programmes strong persuaders. So, the innovations of the programmes should be more easily accepted by and implemented in the regular programmes.

TABLE 5
AWARDING CREDITS IN HONOURS PROGRAMMES (N=24)

	No credits or honorary credits	Extra credits	Official and extra credits	Credits	Unknown
Disciplinary (14)	6	4	2	1	1
Interdisciplinary (5)	3	2	0	0	0
Multidisciplinary (5)	0	0	0	5	0
Total	9	6	2	6	1

d) Selection and motivation enhance spin-off effects.

The question is whether (self) selection and admission procedures contribute to a sufficient and safe learning environment, favour experimentation and stimulate spin-off effects of innovation. Most honours programmes (21) have selection and admission procedures (Table 1). These procedures result in a strong self-selection before the official procedure even starts. A student has to enrol, show some intellectual achievement, write a letter of motivation, *et cetera*. Average credits are important in the admission procedures of nineteen programmes (Table 6). This indicator provides information about intellectual performance but not about academic potential, creativity, and the personal performance of the students. In the admission

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procedure, one therefore mainly looks beyond average study marks, and motivation plays an important role (Table 6). We found that for admission to honours programmes motivation is considered as important as average GPA. Students selected in this way are primarily seeking a challenge to perform at their highest level of excellence and appreciate working with other strongly motivated students, as is shown for example in the evaluations of the honours programmes of the Faculty of Geosciences at Utrecht University (Wolfensberger, 1998). These students are really committed to each other and to their subject contents, and so teachers are able to experiment. The professors also mention the useful feedback from the students on their teaching. This is important when faculty implement innovations and want to test them. Birdwell-Pheasant (1997) recognises the value of honours students' participation and feedback to professors: "the single most important distinction between honours and non-honours courses are the honours students: dedicated, motivated, fascinated students with solid foundations in prior work and with new creative insights. They spark each other (and the Professor), and learning takes on a whole new dimension...The essence of honours programmes, I believe, is putting gifted people in touch with one another." The resulting high level of authority which is an important factor in the process of educational innovation (Havelock & Huberman, 1977; Ruijter, 2002).

TABLE 6

ADMISSION PROCEDURES BY TYPE OF HONOURS PROGRAMME (N=24)

	Average credits	Motivation	Progress	Other	None	Unknown
Disciplinary (14)	13	8	5	4	0	1
Interdisciplinary (5)	3	4	1	2	0	0
Multidisciplinary (5)	3	Unknown	0		2	0
Total	19	12	6	6	2	1

Honours students also can be facilitators of innovation as liaisons between programmes, especially in situations where they also participate in designing the course. Students can function as trend watchers. They perceive new needs and translate those needs into their own educational system.

The selection and admission procedures might create a context in which educational innovations are more easily developed and tested. Faculty feel free to use the honours programme as a laboratory, and these students are hard working and clever people, so the chances of study-delay are minimal, even when an innovation is not successful. Moreover, self-reflection and peer interaction/feedback are important elements within honours. Mistakes are allowed and then are used to improve the results (a safe 'learning' process). Furthermore, as the courses are often extra, the consequences of failure are low.

The available evaluations of honours programmes are good (Van Eijl et al, 1999; Wolfensberger, 1998): the programmes motivate the students, who are positive about the ways they are being challenged. The atmosphere and the challenges are very attractive to them. Students do prepare themselves. They learn a lot about their discipline, and they learn academically. One gets the impression that honours programmes put a strong emphasis on challenge and academic education, stimulating students and teachers to take new initiatives. The focus on talent empowers the success of those innovations. Formulated in a context of innovative infrastructure, success breeds success (Havelock & Huberman, 1977).

The conclusion is that there are strong arguments for a positive answer to the question: do selection and motivation enhance spin-off effects? Yes, the selection process brings together a group of strong students and teachers who stimulate spin-off effects of innovations from the honours programmes into the regular programmes.

CONCLUSION

The inventory of the honours programmes in research-based Dutch universities showed us 25 honours programmes at 10 different universities and one inter-university honours programme. Honours programmes are a recent, fast-growing development at Dutch universities. With the introduction of the bachelor-master system, the interest in honours programmes is growing. In the Netherlands we are way ahead of other European countries in implementation of honours programmes. A further increase of interest is expected. All of the honours programmes have the mission to provide more challenges to motivated and talented students. The diversity among the programmes is great, but all programmes emphasize small-scale education. Other distinguishing features include active participation, educational innovations, absence of official credits (most of the time), a special diploma, special procedures for selection and admission, innovations (which influence programmes outside of honours as well), focus on non-freshmen, and often a separate director of studies. The honours programmes can function as a breeding ground for research talent. The focus on talent is experienced as something positive by the interviewed teachers, students, and policy makers and is supposed to attract new talent. There is self-selection and central selection, and the admission procedures are diverse with a focus on GPA, motivation, and references. We found strong differences in duration, study load, organisational structure, award of credit, and financing. Looking at content, we found three types of honours: disciplinary, interdisciplinary, and multidisciplinary.

Questions concerning the extent to which honours programmes function as a laboratory for the regular system can only be partially answered. Honours programmes do have strong spin-off effects; students in regular programmes do profit from honours programmes. However, we have only examined the actual results and have not done research into expected effects and the extent to which they are being realised. Also, the influence of national and university policies is not included in this analysis. Nevertheless, we think the relationship is important. Educational innovations seem connected with honours programmes, and, after proven success and obvious advantages, the participants in regular programmes easily adopt the new ideas.

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Sixteen of the 25 honours programmes function as a laboratory of educational innovations. The experiences with educational innovations have a strong spin-off effect on the regular programmes. The spin-off effects can be categorised into four fields: course content (changes in and new design of courses through disciplinary and interdisciplinary honours), pedagogy (especially through disciplinary honours), educational instruments (especially through interdisciplinary honours), and programme structure (multidisciplinary).

Honours programmes are a new and growing part of Dutch universities. The so-called ‘Hawthorne effect’ suggests that implementation of any innovation leads to temporary spin-off effects. Sustainable, long-term spin-off effects can be expected only through thoroughly embedded innovations. The spin-off effects of honours programmes that we found may thus be explained by their recent implementation. We assume that the recent implementation and some characteristics of the honours programmes *both* contribute to the innovative capacity of these programmes. It is therefore important to establish which programme characteristics are essential in creating sustained spin-off effects.

Knowing the key characteristics that lead to strong spin-off effects allows us to provide specific advice to management teams (Wolfensberger et al. 2003-a). We found four important features. First: innovation as a mission is important, enhancing the innovative capacity of the programme. Honours programmes that do not have an explicit function as a laboratory do, however, also have spin-off effects that are probably inherent to the nature of honours programmes. The second feature is the strong appeal of honours programmes to students, evidence for which lies in the fact that students enroll even though no credits or supplemental credits are given. With the exception of the multidisciplinary honours programmes, almost none give official credits. Teachers and students have a strong commitment, and participants join because of the quality of the programme and the passionate teachers. The diffusion of innovations is thus easier and positively driven; an innovation is implemented because it is inherently good, not because it is necessary to solve a problem.

The third feature is the (self)selection of the students and the admission process. A safe learning environment is important for experimentation and for learning. Honours programmes can function as a laboratory because they offer a safe learning environment with highly motivated students. Teachers are able and willing to experiment with new content and new teaching methods.

The fourth feature is the quality of educational innovations that are designed within the honours programmes. After their success is evaluated, innovations are often implemented in the regular courses. And the honours programmes continue to evolve with new innovations. Honours programmes are dynamic and ongoing.

Honours programmes are rapidly developing in Dutch universities as a way to evoke excellence in students. They are on-going programmes, and they seem to fulfil the function of a ‘laboratory’ for innovation in the regular programmes. Successful innovations indeed spread to the regular programmes.

DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

We identified four key characteristics of honours programmes that we believe will lead to a sustained innovative capacity, but we do realise that our assertion is based on just an indication. We strongly recommend following up on this research in a few years' time to find out whether the relation between honours programmes and innovation will still be as strong as it currently is. It will be extremely interesting to compare our findings with the experience of US honours programmes, which have been offered across the country for many years. Do the US programmes still function as educational laboratories with strong spin-off effects on the regular programmes? In our explanation of the innovative capacity of honours programmes, we mainly focused on characteristics of the programmes themselves. However, we found evidence that the way an honours programme is integrated within a department can also explain its innovative capacity (Van Poucke, 2004). Research indicates (Wolfensberger et al., 2003-b) that the commitment of policy makers to the programme is a condition for large spin-off effects. Guest-teachers can play a key role by introducing new perspectives, new content, and new instructional activities. Honours programmes with teachers who do not teach in the regular curriculum probably have fewer spin-off effects. The formal and informal exchange of knowledge and experience among honours directors, teachers, students, and policy makers appears to be crucial. In this respect, it will be particularly interesting to obtain a better understanding of the process of innovation as well as the transfer of innovations from the honours programme to the regular curriculum. The concept of 'learning organisations' (Senge, 1990) and the application of Rogers' (1971) typology of persons involved in the innovation process (innovators, early adopters, etc) might provide a better understanding of this innovative process and capacity. More specifically, we consider the following concepts from the domain of educational innovation literature as very helpful for the understanding of the innovation process: consensus, authority, infrastructure, and three phases (Havelock and Huberman, 1977; Fullan, 1991; Senge, 1990; Ruijter, 2002): (1) initiation, reaching consensus on the problem, concrete scenario on the innovation, deciding on process factors; (2) implementation; and (3) consolidation .

We expect that, with the implementation of the bachelor-master structure, the interest in honours programmes will grow and will even make honours programmes necessary from the perspective of selection and allocation for the master's programmes. The fast pace of this evolution will also lead to new questions:

- Will honours programmes concentrate on bachelor students or on master students?
- How will the institutions finance those honours programmes: institutionally, at the departmental level, with outside funding? (It would be interesting to know how much the cost of education for an honours student differs from that of regular students and how one should decide whether the difference is 'worth it' for the institution as a whole: added value *versus* costs.)

HONOURS PROGRAMMES AS LABORATORIES OF INNOVATION

- Should students have to pay a higher tuition fee for honours programmes? (In general, most honours programmes in the Netherlands are an extra opportunity for students while in the US and Canada honours can replace the regular programme. The latter involves a different financing system. Which way should the Dutch honours financing go?)
- What is the added value of honours programmes?
- Can honours be a context to provide leadership courses?
- How can the organisation and the rules for giving credit best be regulated?
- How can the assessment of learning results be organised in a valid and reliable way?
- What are the forms of assessment and certification (as referred to in the section on “characteristics of honours programmes”)? Do they differ in important ways from those employed in the regular programs and courses, and, if they do, what implications does that have for transferability to regular programs?
- What kind of feedback or evaluation of their efforts do students receive, and do they get evaluation in the form of a grade? (Can this be seen as an obstacle to risk taking and even participation?)
- When all universities offer honours programmes, what will be the differences between the honours programmes and the certificates?
- How can quality assurance (with accreditation procedures and benchmarking now coming into practice in the Netherlands) be organised? (Content and context of extra educational activities for talented and motivated are permanently evolving—evoking excellence stimulates continual renewal—so what other procedures are advisable?)
- Will the role of the Dutch ‘Plusnetwerk’ evolve? (The Plusnetwerk now organises seminars and conferences on the topic of honours programmes and evoking excellence. Will a more scholarly mechanism of sharing experiences evolve that can accelerate this process of innovation?)

We formulated as our vision that honours programmes ask for a more active attitude on the part of the students. More and more they should influence the content and structure of the programme, and this will require a different role for the teachers. This insight, involving considerable risks, should be a new focus for research and development. Research about characteristics of honours students, their motivation to join or not to join honours programmes, the effects on their learning and their opinion about the added value is in our view very relevant to the future of honours programmes.

Dutch honours programmes claim to place a strong emphasis on a challenging and stimulating academic atmosphere. However, until now no comparable evaluations of the honours programmes have become available. It would be interesting to conduct evaluations of honours programmes based on a common evaluation method, as is provided by the NCHC (Austin, 1991).

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