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Wright State University

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SHORT PIECES

WRIGHT STATE UNIVERSITY

SUSAN CARRAFIELLO

Technology is indispensable to the University Honors Program (UHP) of Wright State University. Fundamentally, the UHP uses Microsoft Access to maintain a comprehensive student database that allows us to keep track of our students' academic progress and their fulfillment of UHP requirements. We also regularly use an Honors student e-mail list (updated quarterly) to notify students of upcoming Honors events, courses, and scholarship opportunities. And we of course use our web page (<http://www.wright.edu/academics/honors/>) to explain the program, make announcements, and provide links to scholarship information. Additionally, all of our forms and our student handbook are available online at our web site.

With respect to the curriculum, at least 5 of the 75 Honors classes we will offer this year will be online, web-only Honors classes. These courses are both first-year general education Honors sections and special Honors junior/senior seminars. Our Honors students clamor for these sections—indeed, they fill up within the first hour of registration. Most of the students in these classes are onsite students. Drops are rare.

Student evaluations reveal that the students find online Honors classes convenient, flexible, and innovative. In fact, students are requesting more online Honors courses all the time. Nevertheless, we want to explore two related questions before we schedule more of these classes. First, we need to decide whether or not we should restrict the number of online Honors classes that a student can take. Students may currently arrange to take two or more of their eight required Honors classes online. Second, we must examine whether or not these classes provide a true “Honors experience” and make sure these classes fulfill the Program’s broader mission. To help us find the answers to these questions, we plan to develop a special assessment and evaluation instrument before we consider increasing the number of online Honors classes.

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