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Students Engaging Students in the Honors Experience

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Students Engaging Students in the Honors Experience

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[Editor's note: The three authors served together as student representatives on the NCHC Board of Directors. The institutions listed above were the ones they represented at the time, but Sara Brady is now at the University of North Carolina—Chapel Hill, and Shane Miller is at Marshall University.]

Student members of the NCHC Board of Directors often share information about successful student programs at their home institutions in order to promote student engagement in honors. We have found that a key component for student engagement is some type of “Honors Ambassadors” program to benefit not only honors students but also their programs and colleges. When the authors discussed honors ambassadors programs during the Students in Honors™ session at the 2008 and 2009 NCHC national conferences, numerous students expressed interest in learning more about such programs (NCHC Student Board). During these two conferences, students from Hillsborough Community College had an Idea Exchange table titled “Ambassador Programs: Cultivating a Community Environment in Honors,” where many honors directors requested information about starting or retooling their own honors ambassadors programs (Hillsborough). In 2007, West Virginia University addressed student ambassador programs in their presentation “Leadership Positions in Honors Communities: Students Helping Students” at the NCHC national conference (Miller and Cole). Additionally, Northern Arizona University reached out within its region and presented a paper titled “A How-To Guide: Honors Ambassadors” at the Western Regional Honors Council Meeting in 2007 (Hauk).

Since no two honors programs are alike, we will focus on the honors ambassadors programs at three institutions: West Virginia University, Hillsborough Community College, and Northern Arizona University. These

STUDENTS ENGAGING STUDENTS IN THE HONORS EXPERIENCE

three institutions vary in their approach to honors and in their structure, size, and student recruitment tactics. However, all have a strong commitment to furthering student engagement through honors ambassadors programs that enhance the honors experience for current and potential honors students.

Student leadership is important to fostering the goals of honors education. Honors ambassadors are integral to recruitment, providing prospective students with personal accounts about the program and answering questions from a current student's point of view. Additionally, ambassadors encourage current honors students to become active participants in the honors experience. Ambassadors can be trained to inform and advise their peers about honors requirements, ways to become involved, leadership opportunities, and student life in addition to offering their personal feelings about the benefits of an honors education. This form of student leadership engages students to shape and to promote an honors tradition at their college or university. Additionally, honors ambassadors can alleviate some of the workload of often overworked honors staff, recruiters, and advisors.

In reaching out to prospective students, honors ambassadors demonstrate to potential students the value of lifelong learning. Most honors programs and colleges strive for a sense of community and support among the honors student population; honors ambassadors are able to demonstrate this commitment to the student population through personal interactions with the students. Ambassadors can also disseminate information about upcoming honors deadlines, events, and courses.

WEST VIRGINIA UNIVERSITY

West Virginia University is a land grant university with approximately 29,000 students enrolled in undergraduate, graduate, and professional programs. The West Virginia University Honors College includes approximately 1,500 undergraduates and occasional first-professional student members. The college is a multidisciplinary program designed to complement any course of study. The WVU Honors College has only two ambassador positions: one honors student is the Academic and Community Ambassador, and another student is the First-Year Student Ambassador.

Both of these ambassadors are selected by the dean on the basis of an application (see Appendix A); they each serve as members of the honors college staff; and they are paid an hourly rate. In addition to having high GPAs, candidates are expected to exhibit strong skills in leadership and in written and verbal communication. The application form used for these two positions is the same as the form for all honors college staff positions.

The ambassadors provide input on college matters, develop and implement programming from a student perspective, and assist with outreach activities. Originally, the WVU honors ambassadors were elected, but, with the shift to an honors college and expansion of the college's professional staff, these student roles have evolved to serve the growing needs of the college's students.

Additionally, the shift to appointed, rather than elected, ambassadors has allowed for better screening of potential applicants to ensure their success in the positions. Typically, upperclassmen whose majors allow for flexibility in scheduling make the strongest candidates.

The Academic and Community Ambassador provides enrichment activities that include working with the Honors Student Association (HSA), recruitment activities, new student orientation, and social events like the annual Honors Ball. The Honors Ball, organized by this ambassador and student volunteers, is a student-conceived formal event that has become the highlight of the college's spring semester. The ambassador also provides support at visitation days, attends college fairs, occasionally visits high schools, and generally offers outreach to prospective and incoming students.

The First-Year Student Ambassador's principal role is to aid the freshman class in adjusting to university life. He or she is actively involved in New Student Orientation, provides advice and outreach, mentors incoming students, and communicates regularly with other university departments and high school guidance offices. This ambassador works closely with the college's HONR 199: Honors Orientation course, which is team-taught by upperclassmen, and coordinates the functions of the Honors Hall's live-in student mentors.

The ambassadors gain a significant portion of their training through on-the-job experience. Both are expected to shadow the incumbent ambassadors in the spring semester prior to assuming their duties, for which they receive independent study credit for an 8-week honors course as compensation. Additionally, both ambassadors generally attend the annual NCHC conference as well as regional and state conferences. In exchange for their attendance, they share the experience and generate new ideas for potential implementation in the college.

Both ambassadors are resources for their fellow students. They are active members of the college's staff, attending regular staff meetings, communicating frequently with the dean and professional staff, and maintaining regular hours in the honors office. They post frequently on the honors college blog and make use of the college's Facebook and Twitter accounts to communicate about upcoming events. Thus, these ambassadors are continuously in contact with their peers and are accessible should students need to reach them with questions.

Strong ambassador positions such as these benefit both the college and the students occupying these roles. The ambassadors have the opportunity to work in significant positions of responsibility and gain experience in higher education governance. The college gets first-hand input on salient issues such as successful programming or student difficulties. The students in the college have both a resource and an avenue for communication with the college's staff. The result has been very positive at West Virginia University, leading to numerous innovations that have ultimately improved the student experience for honors college members.

HILLSBOROUGH COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Hillsborough Community College (HCC) is a public institution of higher learning. Located in Hillsborough County, Florida, HCC serves a population of approximately 43,000 students seeking a range of degrees and certificates. While acceptance to HCC is open to all qualified applicants, acceptance into the Hillsborough Community College Honors Institute is limited to those students who are seeking an Associate of Arts degree and who meet specific academic standards. Applications are open to incoming freshmen and to current HCC students. The honors institute maintains an enrollment of approximately 250 students with a graduation rate near 97%. According to its official website:

Hillsborough Community College's Honors Institute is designed to promote a rigorous academic program for exceptionally talented and motivated students. With the evolving goal of gaining a comprehensive view of the nature of thought, knowledge, and human understanding in an environment of creative interaction, the students will explore the fundamental ideas of human civilization from a variety of academic disciplines. The honors students will be challenged to accept their moral responsibilities which include leadership, thoughtful self-governance, and service to other.

In order to help new honors students make a smooth transition from high school or traditional HCC classes into the honors institute, the student is assigned an honors ambassador. The goal of the Honors Ambassador Program is to create an enthusiastic and active honors student community through strong, personal relationships with peers. Initiatives of the honors institute's ambassador program are diverse. Ambassadors strive to cultivate a community environment in the honors institute, to generate smooth academic and social transitions for new students, to promote participation and retention of students in the honors institute, to mentor students through regular guidance and communication, to educate students about the variety of benefits available to honors students, to promote the honors institute during college nights at local high schools and in the community, and to accept moral responsibilities including leadership, thoughtful self-governance, and service to others.

The responsibilities of the honors ambassadors are as varied as the opportunities afforded students through their participation in honors activities. Ambassadors must lead by example and participate in social events, service projects, class discussions, and Areté, which is the honors institute's student organization. Ambassadors welcome incoming students by initiating contact with them prior to their new student orientation. The ambassadors maintain contact with their assigned students throughout the semester to keep them informed about upcoming honors events, deadlines, and general information. Ambassadors employ a variety of methods for maintaining open lines of communications with their assigned students. Phone calls, texts, emails, and social

networks have been successful in the past. The ambassador/mentee relationship often falls into a comfortable cadence after a few weeks.

Furthermore, the ambassadors must provide monthly updates about their mentees and provide self-evaluations to the honors coordinator, a full-time staff member of the honors institute who is responsible for the ambassadors program. Most importantly, the ambassadors must be positive and enthusiastic. The ambassadors become “the face” of the honors institute, and honors students generally respond in kind to the ambassadors’ enthusiasm, participation, and dedication.

The honors ambassador is a highly competitive, volunteer position. Applicants are vetted through a three-step process before they are assigned mentees. The first step is a written application. The honors theme, which is selected by the honors coordinator, is unveiled during the written application process and is present during all ambassador activities. Examples of past themes include a construction site theme entitled “Making the Honors Connection”; a nautical theme entitled “Setting Sails Toward Student Success”; and a space theme entitled “2009: An Honors Odyssey.” The application, which is distributed to each honors student early in the spring semester, consists of a series of short-answer questions and an essay. The short-answer questions gauge the student’s availability and dedication to the ambassador program. The essay elicits why the applicant wants to participate in the program. The written applications (see Appendix B-1) are reviewed by the director and coordinator, who also evaluate the applicants’ past involvement with the honors institute and then decide which applicants will move forward to the second step of the application process: the individual interview.

The interview panel varies yearly. The director, coordinator, and academic advisor for honors are always present. In the past, the panel has also included the honors senior staff assistant, honors professors, deans from outside departments, previous honors ambassadors, and the president of the honors student organization. During the interview, the panel asks questions (see Appendix B-2) in order to gauge the applicant’s working relationship with others, communication and time-management skills, and ability to handle constructive critiques. After all of the applicants have been interviewed, the panel discusses each applicant’s strengths and weakness. While the panel is highly selective, it may also chose a candidate with the potential for personal growth through their participation in the program. The interview panel then votes on which candidates to advance to the final step in the selection process: the overnight ambassador training.

The honors director and coordinator lead the training process at a local retreat center. Prior to departing for the ambassador training site, the candidates receive a packet detailing the items they need to pack for the overnight training, but nothing is revealed to them about what to expect once they arrive. The honors theme is prevalent throughout the training process through festive décor and t-shirts that the coordinator provides to the candidates. The training process

STUDENTS ENGAGING STUDENTS IN THE HONORS EXPERIENCE

includes extensive study of the college catalog, graduation requirements, scholarship policies, and the honors institute's policies and procedures as found in the *Honors Institute Student Handbook*, which is updated yearly by the honors director. The training process also includes team building through physical activities such as rock climbing and a high-ropes course. Upon successful completion of the training retreat, a candidate officially becomes an Honors Institute Ambassador.

The honors director and coordinator do not select ambassadors based on a particular number; instead, they evaluate each candidate on his or her own merits. Since giving the ambassador opportunity to each honors student is important, there is neither a minimum nor a maximum number of ambassadors in the program.

Once the overnight training is complete, the ambassadors embark on a yearlong journey of development. They begin their term late in the spring semester and continue throughout the summer during a series of new student orientations for the students who will enter the honors institute the following fall. Outreach in the summer includes organizing outings to play laser tag, watch a movie, eat lunch, or grab a cup of coffee. In these unofficial events, the ambassadors and incoming students are responsible for paying their way. The ambassadors are willing to invest their free time and their personal money because the new students often cite the summer activities as the catalyst for their participation in official honors activities. Throughout the academic year, the ambassadors continue to plan activities for students outside of the honors institute in order to encourage deeper personal connections among the students.

The Honors Institute Ambassador is a voluntary position. The ambassadors are provided uniforms consisting of one long-sleeved, button-down shirt and one short-sleeved, collared shirt. Additionally, the ambassadors receive training materials and books about leadership. Since leadership development is critical to the success of the ambassador program, the honors coordinator invests a great deal of time in it, meeting with the all the ambassadors on a bi-monthly basis and on an individual basis once a month. The purpose of the meetings is to inform the ambassadors about upcoming activities, to assess their connection with their assigned mentees, and to encourage continued personal and professional growth. In order to work with each ambassador on areas of communication that may need improving, the honors coordinator asks for feedback from the new students about the work of the ambassadors.

Additionally, the coordinator allows ambassadors to develop and implement new initiatives within the ambassador program. As a team-building exercise, the ambassadors create and execute various community service projects throughout the summer. For instance, each ambassador plans a community-service event that has special meaning for him or her, and all of the ambassadors, the coordinator, and the director help execute the project.

The ambassadors also work closely with the honors institute's student organization to promote upcoming events and to encourage student participation. Furthermore, the ambassadors may be called on to represent the honors

institute at a campus-wide event or to assist the college during a number of campus activities like summer programs and graduation.

The Honors Ambassador Program for the Hillsborough Community College Honors Institute is not a static program. As the institute continues to grow and to evolve, so does the ambassador program. While critical to the integration of the new students into the honors institute, the program allows the ambassadors significant personal and professional development, which is the reason it continues to be a successful volunteer program.

NORTHERN ARIZONA UNIVERSITY

Northern Arizona University is a doctorate-granting public institution with 23,600 students among its multiple campuses and distance-learning sites; of these students, 18,310 are undergraduates, and 5,971 are first-year. The Northern Arizona University Honors Program is the oldest honors program in Arizona with a current enrollment of approximately 500 students. The educational objective of the program is to prepare its students for citizenship and leadership in the twenty-first century. Current honors students are hired as honors ambassadors to help recruit and prepare students for the program and to address potential students' questions and concerns. As stated by the honors program:

Honors Ambassadors are a group of highly trained honors students who represent NAU and the Honors Program at NAU recruitment events and act as a personal contact and a general resource for prospective and current honors students and their families. Current NAU honors students are trained to serve as resources for NAU in general, but more importantly for the Honors Program. They attend college fairs as well as individual high school junior or senior recruitment functions. They also communicate with admitted students, sending personal letters of congratulations and extending an offer of assistance. They may also attend NAU functions for prospective students, such as on campus visits and high school junior events. Ambassadors will also be asked to correspond with potential and accepted honors students through email, phone, and mailings.

"Honors Ambassador" is a paid student leadership position within the NAU program. Overseen by the honors program's senior coordinator, a full-time honors staff member, the ambassadors position seeks highly motivated and charismatic individuals who care to engage in educating potential students about honors education and the honors program's unique opportunities. Open to all continuing honors students, the ambassador position attracts applicants from all class standings. With two application due dates, one per semester, interested students begin the application process by first completing a peer leadership application (see Appendix C-1). Used for multiple leadership positions within the

STUDENTS ENGAGING STUDENTS IN THE HONORS EXPERIENCE

honors program, the application asks students to highlight their past student experiences, skills, and potential contributions to the position. Beginning each March, the senior coordinator and existing ambassadors review the applications and hold personal interviews (see Appendix C-2). Decisions are based on the number of returning ambassadors from the previous school year and on the candidate's field of study as well as potential to contribute positively to the program's mission. Ten to twelve students serve as honors ambassadors each academic year.

Honors ambassadors provide many services to prospective and incoming students. Their roles include attending a required ambassadors orientation meeting, attending monthly meetings, hosting morning information tables at Discover NAU Days (formerly called open houses), attending joint afternoon information sessions with the honors director at Discover NAU Days, holding phone campaigns for prospective and admitted NAU honors students, and attending honors program events for new and first-year students. Additionally, ambassadors are assigned either office hours or on-call hours each semester. These assignments are made once per semester dependent on each ambassador's schedule availability.

Ambassadors are assigned office hours in the honors program's main office, and prospective students are able to contact them by email and voicemail to ask questions about campus life, program requirements, student living, admission offers, application status, and more. The website <http://home.nau.edu/honors/h_ambassadors06.asp> provides information on all the ambassadors, including their school email, year in school, major and minor, hometown, why they decided to come to NAU, and why they joined the honors program.

When assigned on-call hours, ambassadors are given a specific day of the week to come to the main honors office and meet with prospective students and their families. The ambassadors program works closely with NAU's admissions office to coordinate campus visits. After prospective students have met with the director, the ambassador takes them on a tour of the honors office, the classrooms, and the residence hall for first-year and continuing honors students. Although on-call hours run Monday-Friday between 11:15AM and 12:15AM, ambassadors are only called in when a perspective student sets up an appointment to visit the honors program.

Ambassadors occasionally attend off-campus recruitment days in various west coast cities; work and usher special campus events such as NAU's annual Celebration for Academic Achievement and the University Symposium Keynote Speaker address; host information sessions for special interests groups, middle schools, and high schools; and write letters to prospective students detailing their NAU and honors program experience.

Although the ambassadors participate in a variety of events, from meetings to on-call and office hours, phone campaigns, new ambassador hirings, and special events, the requirement of the position is to complete a minimum of fifteen hours per semester. Upon completion of the fifteen-hour commitment,

each ambassador receives a stipend of \$150. These funds come from the honors budget.

Although the senior coordinator heads the ambassadors program, a student ambassadors coordinator is hired to assist in planning, organizing, and running the program. The ambassadors coordinator reports to the senior coordinator and plans a required ambassadors orientation, calls monthly meetings, organizes event signups, and schedules the on-call and office hour assignments. In the required ambassadors orientation, for example, the ambassadors coordinator discusses the purpose of the program, answers crucial logistical questions, and presents likely scenarios in response to frequently asked questions. The ambassadors coordinator is also responsible for keeping a record of every ambassador's involvement and reports the hours to the senior coordinator. The ambassadors coordinator, selected from the returning ambassadors each academic year, receives a stipend of \$250 per semester.

The Northern Arizona University Honors Ambassadors Program demonstrates how student leaders positively affect the perceptions of prospective and incoming students. An asset to both the honors program and wider university community, ambassadors are often sought out by departments for their ability to impart information crucial to student success. Students often express gratitude for the guidance they received from the honors ambassadors, thus motivating future ambassadors to apply and to continue the mission of the honors program, which is to enhance students' self-awareness and responsibilities as citizens in the world.

PROGRAM COMMONALITIES

Ambassadors programs vary significantly depending on the needs and contexts of their home institutions. Honors administrators often turn to peer leadership for recruiting and assisting new students. An ambassadors program can be large or small; it can focus on recruitment or mentoring; and it can provide stipends or rely on volunteers. These different strategies reflect the differences between the honors programs and colleges that the ambassadors represent.

Although different, the ambassadors programs at West Virginia University, Hillsborough Community College, and Northern Arizona University are linked by common traits. One such trait is the approach to student leadership. A careful review of students through an application process identifies motivated students who exhibit the potential to communicate pertinent information to future honors students. With resources provided by each institution, including appropriate training and orientation, ambassadors participate in campus-wide recruitment events, often leading presentations and interacting with potential and new students face to face.

Table 1 provides a component overview of each institution's ambassadors program. Despite varying components, each program affords its participants the opportunity to develop into more successful leaders. Each also provides benefits to their institution in terms of outreach to current and prospective honors

Table 1: Comparative Components Between Honors Ambassadors Programs

	West Virginia University	Hillsborough Community College	Northern Arizona University
Type of Institution	Land-grant Public State University	Community College	Public State University
Size of Institution	28,839– 21,145 undergraduate and 6,968 graduate and professional	43,000 degree and certificate seeking students	23,600– 18,310 undergraduate and 5,290 graduate and professional
Honors Program or College	College	Program	Program
Size of Program/College	1500	250	500
Ambassador Title	Academic and Community Ambassador; First-Year Student Ambassador	Honors Institute Ambassador	NAU Honors Program Ambassadors
Application Process	Paper application with essays and recommendation, followed by an interview	Paper application with essay, followed by an interview	Paper application with essays, followed by an interview
Number of Ambassadors	2	Varies– dependent on the number of applications	10-12
Paid/Volunteer	Paid hourly; expenses paid for NCHC conference	Volunteer	Paid by stipend each semester

<p>Training and Meetings</p>	<p>8-week, 1-credit spring course; both ambassadors attend Honors College weekly staff meetings</p>	<p>Ambassador training each spring semester; bi-monthly group meetings and monthly individual meetings conducted by the honors coordinator</p>	<p>Training orientation at beginning of each fall with subsequent monthly meetings</p>
<p>Uniforms</p>	<p>Professional dress with Honors Staff name badge</p>	<p>2 Honors Institute Ambassador shirts</p>	<p>2 NAU Honors Program shirts</p>
<p>Main Responsibilities</p>	<p><i>Academic and Community Ambassador:</i> new student orientation, advising, recruitment, social activities, and Honors Student Association; <i>First-Year Student Ambassador:</i> Coordination of live-in Honors Hall mentors, Honors Orientation course assistance, New Student Retreat, and other first-year student activities.</p>	<p>Attend high school college recruitment nights, lead orientations for incoming Honors Institute students, maintain communication with new students throughout their first semester in Honors</p>	<p>Attend open house events, meet with perspective students, answer perspective calls/e-mails, participate in phone campaigns, participate in new student and first-year Honors Program events</p>

STUDENTS ENGAGING STUDENTS IN THE HONORS EXPERIENCE

students. The key components in all three programs are that the student ambassadors have the opportunity for peer leadership, that they effectively advise their administration about what is important to the students, and that they spread information about the innumerable benefits of honors education to incoming students from those who are actively experiencing it.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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APPENDIX A

HONORS STUDENT JOB APPLICATION THE HONORS COLLEGE AT WEST VIRGINIA UNIVERSITY

Personal Information

Name: _____
Last First Middle

Campus Address: _____
Street (Apt) City, State, Zip

Permanent Address: _____
Street (Apt) City, State, Zip

Contact Information: (____) _____ (____) _____
Home Phone # Cell Phone # Email

Position Sought (check all that apply):

- Academic & Community Ambassador (at least 20 hrs a week)
- Summer Program Intern
- First Year Ambassador

Education

I am a (check ONE box)

- rising Sophomore (2nd year)
- rising Junior (3rd year)
- rising Senior (4th or 5th year)

Major(s): _____

Minor(s): _____

How many credit hours are you planning to take in Fall 2009? _____

How many credit hours are you planning to take in Spring 2010? _____

Please attach a copy of your WVU transcript (this can be an unofficial transcript printed off STAR) with your Honors classes highlighted.

STUDENTS ENGAGING STUDENTS IN THE HONORS EXPERIENCE

Previous Experience

Please list your previous leadership positions or other experience that you feel would relate to your ability to excel in the position you are applying for.

*Please keep these experiences to within the past 3 or 4 years.

Date _____ **Role/Title** _____

Organization _____ **Location** _____

Describe this leadership experience: _____

Date _____ **Role/Title** _____

Organization _____ **Location** _____

Describe this leadership experience: _____

Date _____ **Role/Title** _____

Organization _____ **Location** _____

Describe this leadership experience: _____

Please attach a brief, typed statement (no more than 250 words) that explains why you are the best candidate for the job, and also describes or illustrates your ability to be an effective verbal and written communicator.

Please attach a list of three references, with names, titles, contact information, and a brief explanation of your relationship with them (no family members).

Please include one letter of recommendation from a faculty member that you have or have had class with.

APPENDIX B-1

Hillsborough Community College 2009: An Honors Odyssey Honors Ambassador Application

Last Name _____ First Name _____ Middle Initial _____

Street Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

E-mail Address _____

Home Phone Number _____ Cell Phone Number _____

Please check the following date(s) and time(s) that you are able and willing to devote to being an Honors Institute Ambassador:

- 3–5 hours per week (average)
- Big Friday (once a month)
- Honors Ambassador Retreat
- All New Student Orientations

Are you employed? Yes No

If yes, then please provide the number of hours you work per week _____

Do you have two semesters (excluding summer semesters) remaining at HCC?

Yes No

Essay

Why do you want to be an Honors Institute Ambassador? (500 words or less)

APPENDIX B-2

HILLSBOROUGH COMMUNITY COLLEGE HONORS INSTITUTE HONORS AMBASSADOR INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What is the Honors Institute?
2. Can you describe a time where you have been required to perform as part of a team? What was the situation? What part did you play in the team and what was the outcome of the exercise?
3. How do you establish a working relationship with new people?
4. Give an example of a time when you were able to successfully communicate with another person even when that individual may not have personally liked you (or vice versa). How did you handle that situation? How did you deal with them?
5. Give an example of a time when you motivated others.
6. How do you determine priorities in scheduling your time? Give examples.
7. Describe a situation where others you were working with disagreed with your ideas. What did you do?
8. Please provide an example where you were given constructive criticism. Explain how you handled receiving the criticism and what you did with the advice.

APPENDIX C-1

NORTHERN ARIZONA UNIVERSITY UNIVERSITY HONORS PROGRAM PEER LEADERSHIP APPLICATION

Please review the next two pages of this application for more detailed information about each Honors Peer Leadership position available.

Since these opportunities are somewhat different from each other, we ask that you provide a written response for each opportunity you are interested in.

Applications are due **Wednesday, October 28, 11:00 am**. Applications can be submitted via email attachment to <honors@nau.edu> or in person to Honors Program Office, Room 104, Cowden Hall.

1. Provide **separate, typed responses for each** type of Peer Leadership opportunity for which you are you applying (please provide one response for each opportunity) on a separate piece of paper. Be sure to include the following in your response:
 - a. Detail your involvement in extra-curricular activities.
 - b. Outline what skills or experiences you would anticipate each opportunity requiring. How well do you meet these experience(s) or skills? What can you contribute to each?

2. Include a copy of your resume with your application.

Upon review of your application, we may request a secondary application or an in-person interview specific for the opportunities you indicated of interest.

Please contact the Honors Program at 523-3334 or email <honors@nau.edu> if you have any questions.

Honors Peer Leadership Application—Fall 2010 and Spring 2011

Name: _____ Student ID Number: _____

Current Mailing address: _____

Phone Number(s): _____ E-mail: _____

Major: _____ GPA: _____ Units completed: _____

I'm interested in the following Honors Program Peer Leadership Opportunity(ies):

- Honors Ambassador Honors Program Assistant
- Honors 100 Seminar Facilitator Honors GURUS

I verify to the best of my knowledge that the information I have provided is accurate.

Signature _____ Date _____

PEER LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTIONS

Honors Ambassadors . . .

. . . are a group of highly-trained Honors students who represent NAU and the Honors Program at NAU recruitment events and act as a personal contact and a general resource for prospective and current Honors Students and their families. Current NAU Honors students are trained to serve as resources for NAU in general, but more importantly for the Honors Program. They may attend college fairs as well as individual high school junior or senior recruitment functions. They will also communicate with admitted students, sending personal letters of congratulations and extending an offer of assistance. They may also attend NAU functions for prospective students, such as on campus visits and high school junior events. Ambassadors may also meet with individual students who drop Honors and perhaps attend a class with, a prospective student. Ambassadors will also be asked to correspond with potential and accepted honors students through email, phone, and mailings.

Ambassadors will be selected based on this application and interview. Considerations will be made based upon availability, field of study, and ability to work well as a representative of Honors. Ambassadors currently receive a semesterly stipend. While applications are being accepted for Ambassadors, selection will not occur until March 2010.

Honors Program Assistants

Program assistants work in the Honors Office performing various clerical and administrative tasks for the Honors Program including answering phones, responding to incoming questions, and working on specific assigned projects that the Honors Program coordinates throughout the year such as Early Enrollment Information Night, Honors Week events and the Celebration of Academic Achievement. These positions are paid (hourly wage) experiences. Employment is sought beginning as early as spring 2010.

Honors Student Advisory Board

Advisory Board positions are not available at this time. We anticipate a selection process in mid Spring 2010.

Honors First Year Seminar (HON 100) Facilitator

HON 100 is a highly-interactive freshman seminar designed to help new NAU students get an excellent start to their college career. Students explore academic, navigational, and life skills with the help of an upper-class peer Facilitator.

Peer Facilitators are expected to serve as role models to no more than 20 first-year students while providing dynamic and relevant classroom instruction. The position's professional responsibilities include collaborating on the curriculum and instructional design of the course, implementing classroom activities based

on a set curriculum, reading papers and providing appropriate feedback to students, and functioning as a member of a larger team of Facilitators. ***Preference will be given to students in their third or fourth year at NAU*** at the time they will facilitate HON 100. This is anticipated to be a paid (semesterly stipend paid bi-weekly) and credit-bearing experience. Credit is earned as a 2-unit class (full 16 weeks) in spring and a 1-unit class (full 16 weeks) in fall.

- Facilitate at most 2 sections of HON100.
- Develop curriculum topics by conducting independent research, and designing classroom activities to encourage student engagement and learning.
- Hold at least one office hour per week per section and be available to meet with students.
- Read student journal entries and assignments and provide appropriate and timely feedback.
- Read and discuss the book chosen for the NAU Reads Program.
- Complete weekly progress reports.
- Actively participate in all training and read all supplemental materials.
- Assist with departmental projects and programs.
- Perform other duties as assigned.

Honors GURUS

Honors GURUS seek to build a community within the classroom by contributing to discussion, facilitating activities and serving as a resource to students. They aim to strengthen the relationship between the professor and student by encouraging communication in and outside the classroom, seek to foster community within the Honors Program and encourage success in the Program and the university.

The Honors GURUS selection process will require additional information. You will be contacted at a later date regarding these materials and submission processes.

APPENDIX C-2

NORTHERN ARIZONA UNIVERSITY HONORS PROGRAM AMBASSADORS INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Applicant Name: _____

Interviewer: _____

NOTE: We are looking for individuals who are able to communicate well with others. Note at how the candidate presents him/herself and how s/he would be able to present him/herself to our prospective students. If they don't answer the role-play questions completely accurately, do not hold it against them—remember, you all had to be trained before you knew exactly what to say.

Please also make sure you look for individuals who show diversity. We want to reach all of our prospective students, so we want a variety of Ambassadors.

1. What do you find most appealing about the Ambassador Program? I.E. Why would you like to be an Ambassador?
2. What do you think are some criteria for a successful Honors student? Prompt (if needed): AP classes, high test scores, study skills, extracurricular activities, etc.
3. Role Play: You are at Discover NAU (open house), and I approach the Honors booth (explain). I am a high school senior and interested in the Honors Program and have taken honors classes in high school, but am not sure about pursuing Honors in college. What would you say?
4. Role Play: I am a concerned parent who is looking out for the best interests of my incoming NAU Freshman. I have heard great things about the Cowden Learning Community. Would you suggest they live there as a Freshman.
5. As an Ambassador, you will be required to act as a campus resource, by answering questions, giving your opinion and advice to prospective students and their parents. Please describe a previous position you held, or experience you had where you acted as a resource for that specific program.
6. We would like you to think of a time when you were involved with an organization or other group, and something went wrong. What did you do to remedy/resolve the situation? What was your involvement in the solution process?
7. Please comment on your time management skills: strengths and weaknesses. Follow-up: What are your commitments for the Fall?

Additional Comments: