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JNCHC

Journal of the National Collegiate Honors Council

Fall/Winter 2011

Volume 12, Number 2

The Institutional Impact of Honors



in this issue

Forum on

The Institutional Impact of Honors

Forum Articles

Scott Carnicom

Kevin L. Dooley

Richard England

Benjamin Moritz

Linda Frost

Nathan Hilberg and
Jaclyn Bankert

Bernice Braid and Gladys
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The Roots of the National Collegiate Honors Council

Larry Andrews

Research Essays

Debra S. Schroeder, Marian
Bruce, and Sr. Edith Bogue

Mark Haggerty, Theodore
Coladarci, Mimi Killinger, and
Charlie Slavin

Kenneth J. Oswald and
Ernest Smith

JNCHC

JOURNAL OF THE NATIONAL COLLEGIATE HONORS COUNCIL

A PUBLICATION OF THE NATIONAL COLLEGIATE HONORS COUNCIL

THE INSTITUTIONAL IMPACT OF HONORS

JOURNAL EDITORS

ADA LONG

DAIL MULLINS

UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA AT BIRMINGHAM

The National Collegiate Honors Council is an association of faculty, students, and others interested in honors education. Executive Committee: Bonnie Irwin, President, Eastern Illinois University; Gregory Lanier, President-Elect, University of West Florida; John Zubizarreta, Immediate Past-President, Columbia College-South Carolina; Rick Scott, Vice-President, University of Central Arkansas; Bob Spurrier, Secretary, Oklahoma State University; Gary Bell, Treasurer, Texas Tech University. Executive Director: Cynthia M. Hill, headquartered at University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Board of Directors: Kyoko Amano, University of Indianapolis; Jamie Beko Moore, University of Indianapolis; Bernice Braid, Long Island University – Brooklyn; Ellen Buckner, University of South Alabama; Elizabeth Callahan, St. Louis University; Alex Cler, Eastern Illinois University; Lisa Coleman, Southeastern Oklahoma State University; Barry Falk, James Madison University; Jerry Herron, Wayne State University; Kim Klein, Shippensburg University of Pennsylvania; Jared Knight, Iowa State University; Jon Kotinek, Texas A&M University; Jaskiran Mathur, St. Francis College; Loren McCollom, Hillsborough Community College; Savanna Melius, Central Arizona University; Doug Peterson, University of South Dakota; Elaine Torda, State University of New York-Orange; Audrey Van Acker, Ball State University; Patrick Wanninkhof, University of Florida.

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EDITORIAL POLICY

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

DEADLINES

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

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CALL FOR PAPERS

The next issue of *JNCHC* (deadline: **March 1, 2012**) invites research essays on any topic of interest to the honors community.

The issue will also include a Forum focused on the theme “The Economy of Honors.” We invite essays of roughly a thousand words that consider this theme in the context of your campus and/or a national/international context.

The lead essay for the Forum (available on the NCHC website) is by Richard Badenhausen, Director of the Honors Program at Westminster College in Utah. His essay—titled “Costs and Benefits in the Economy of Honors”—considers numerous perspectives on the topic ranging from the impacts on honors of a faltering national economy to the discomfort some honors directors feel in their roles as money managers, concluding with a call to action to preserve and advance honors in a time of financial peril. Contributions to the Forum may—but need not—respond to his essay or the issues he addresses.

Other questions to consider might include: Under what circumstances should honors administrators accept, protest, or defy budget cuts? What are the best strategies for adapting to funding cutbacks? Are cutbacks always bad for the program, and are funding increases always good?—what might be some counterintuitive consequences to budgets changes? What are the impacts of large (or small) endowments and scholarship funds on the quality of honors education? How have honors programs and colleges fared over the past decade or more in comparison to the institutions in which they are housed?—has the comparison been favorable or unfavorable to the status and success of honors? How has the expanding role of fundraising and money managing affected individual honors directors and deans?—how has it affected the NCHC? What is the best economic model for an honors program: a market, barter, or gift economy, or some other model? What are the implications for honors and for the NCHC of the wide range of compensation for honors administrators, with salaries averaging \$123,198 for honors deans (2011–12 Almanac Issue of *The Chronicle of Higher Education*) while some directors receive no special remuneration for their honors duties?

Forum essays should focus on ideas, concepts, and/or opinions related to “The Economy of Honors.” Examples from one’s own campus can be and usually are relevant, but essays should not simply be descriptions of “what we do at our institution.”

Please send all submissions to Ada Long at adalong@uab.edu.

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

We accept material by e-mail attachment. We do not accept material by fax or hard copy.

The documentation style can be whatever is appropriate to the author’s primary discipline or approach (MLA, APA, etc.), but please avoid footnotes. Internal citation to a list of references (bibliography) is strongly preferred, and the editor will revise all internal citations in accordance with MLA guidelines.

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

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

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

MEMORIAL DEDICATION



Photo courtesy of the University of New Mexico Honors Program

JOHN HOWARTH

With great sadness we learned that John Howarth, former President of NCHC (1988), passed away February 21, 2011. He was a leading figure in honors education and NCHC from its earliest days when he was appointed director of the University of New Mexico Honors Program in 1971.

John studied physics at Cambridge University and received his PhD in physics from the University of London in 1963. He was then invited to New Mexico to serve as a radiological physicist at the Lovelace Clinic in New Mexico and joined the physics department at the University of New Mexico in 1964. His work as honors director at New Mexico was followed by his appointment as honors director at the University of Maryland, College Park in 1978. Though John was also a member of the physics department at UMCP, the possibilities of honors education captured his imagination more and more.

While at the University of Maryland, John introduced several innovative approaches to honors education that remain important today. He introduced the idea of learning communities into the honors curriculum and developed that model of education to reach out to high school teachers in the Washington D.C. area, arranging for them to spend a sabbatical leave embedded in the Maryland honors program. He integrated various developmental models, including the work of William Perry, into the honors program, and he became widely known as an innovator and explorer both in his own classes and the NCHC. He spoke frequently about his insights into education and the processes of learning at national and regional conferences. His love of learning and of learning about learning became a defining and enduring characteristic of NCHC.

In 1988 John Howarth assumed the presidency of NCHC. That he saw a larger role for NCHC in American higher education was evident in his presidential address, “Making the World a Better Place,” a phrase he used long before it became a commonplace. For John Howarth, education and especially honors education was always a transformative process on individual, community, societal, and global levels. In 1994 John Howarth received an Honorary Doctor of Science degree for his contribution to his discipline and to honors education from the State University of New York at Plattsburgh.

Most of all, those of us who were fortunate to know and work with John Howarth found in him an inspiring friend, a tireless spirit, a challenging intellect, and a wise and thoughtful leader. His legacy in NCHC is one from which we all continue to benefit and for which we will always be grateful.

David N. Mowry,
Honors Program Director Emeritus,
SUNY-Plattsburgh

Editor's Introduction

ADA LONG

UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA AT BIRMINGHAM

The lead essay of this issue of *JNCHC* examines the origins of the National Collegiate Honors Council and its publications. In "The Wisdom of Our Elders: Honors Discussions in *The Superior Student*, 1958–65," Larry Andrews of Kent State University describes the first eight years of the honors movement in a way that is informative, surprising, thorough, useful, and humbling. The pioneers among the Inter-University Committee on the Superior Student (ICSS) anticipated virtually every major focus and issue of its descendant organization, the NCHC, in initiating and promoting honors programs throughout the United States. Andrews has produced a concise and insightful analysis of that early organization through a detailed study of its newsletter, called *The Superior Student*.

Included in Andrews's study is the changing focus and structure of the newsletter, prompting the editors of *Journal of the National Collegiate Honors Council* and *Honors in Practice* to take a brief look back at the history of the two current NCHC publications in hopes that these journals will have the good fortune to find a Larry Andrews fifty years from now. *JNCHC* is a semi-annual publication that in the year 2000 replaced the *Forum for Honors* (1970–96) after a four-year hiatus during which the NCHC had no scholarly publication. Unlike the *Forum for Honors*, each issue of *JNCHC* initially focused on a single theme, inviting essays only on that theme. Topics addressed in the first twelve issues were: Liberal Learning in the New Century; Science in Honors; Educational Transitions; On Honors Education; Honors and the Creative Arts; Liberal Learning; Technology in Honors; Students and Teachers in Honors; Multiperspectivism in Honors Education; Research in Honors; and The Psychology and Sociology of Honors.

The year 2005 brought two major changes to NCHC publications. One was the inauguration of a new journal called *Honors in Practice*, which replaced the NCHC newsletter, *The National Honors Report*, and which publishes practical, descriptive, and analytical essays on nuts-and-bolts matters related to honors. At the same time, *JNCHC* started dividing each of its issues into a forum and a section of research essays on any topic. One immediate benefit of this change was that researchers could get their work in print more quickly without waiting for a themed issue relevant to their interests. Another

EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

benefit was the creation of a serious dialogue within the *JNCHC* Forum about topics that have included: Students in Honors; What Is Honors?; Outcomes Assessment, Accountability, and Honors; Honors Administration; Grades, Scores, and Honors; Managing Growth in Honors; Honors Culture; Honors and Academic Integrity; Social Class and Honors; Honors in the Digital Age; Honors and Athletics; Helping Honors Students in Trouble; and Honors Study Abroad. Although contributors to the *JNCHC* Forum often ground their opinions in research, they are freed from the constraints of academic scholarship to speak their minds on matters affecting their everyday lives. Forum essays are above all opinion pieces.

When Frank Rich left the *New York Times*, he titled his last column "Confessions of a Recovering Op-Ed Columnist" (12 March 2011) and wrote: "For me, anyway, the point of opinion writing is less to shape events, a presumptuous and foolhardy ambition at best, than to help stimulate debate and, from my particular perspective, try to explain why things got the way they are and what they might mean and where they might lead." As described by Larry Andrews, the members of the Inter-University Committee on the Superior Student in the 1950s and 60s were perforce trying to "shape events" in a movement that was still in its nascence. Today, the *JNCHC* Forum serves primarily "to explain why things got the way they are and what they might mean and where they might lead."

The topic in this issue's forum is "The Institutional Impact of Honors." In the spring of 2011, we invited essays of roughly a thousand words that consider this theme in an institutional, national, or international context. The lead essay by Scott Carnicom of Middle Tennessee State University was distributed on the *NCHC* listserv and website; forum contributors could but did not have to respond to ideas about innovation and conservation that Carnicom addresses in his essay. Other questions that contributors were invited to consider included:

Do honors programs and colleges counterbalance or enable the current emphasis on career preparation within most institutions? Do they raise the level of teaching and learning throughout the institution, or do they drain off the best students from the undergraduate population? Does the concentration of high-achieving students within an institution create a source of intellectual and social leadership for the larger institution? Do institutions use their honors programs to promote recruitment, rankings, and numbers of national scholarships, and, if so, is such prestige-seeking necessarily an asset to the institutions and the programs? Does honors make the larger institution look better or, by contrast, worse? Do honors programs have

impacts of which institutions are unaware? Are such impacts ever subversive?

We received a record number of ten responses.

Carnicom argues in his lead essay—"The Institutional Effect of Honors: Innovation or Conservation?"—that, while honors educators see themselves as innovators, their customary practices more accurately classify them as traditionalists, preserving principles that go back, through Frank Aydelotte, to British educational institutions. While honors preserves a tradition that includes innovation, its history of conserving small-class discussions, one-on-one mentoring, and original research are a crucial refuge from and antidote to the careerism and cost-efficiency that dominate most institutions of higher learning today. Honors programs may incubate new pedagogies, but they do so while preserving the treasure chest of old ones.

Several forum contributors echo Carnicom's view that honors programs are and should be inherently traditionalist. In "Defending the Traditions by Preserving the Classics" for instance, Kevin L. Dooley of Monmouth University makes a strong and unqualified argument for the value of preserving tradition in honors education, concluding with the eloquent assertion that we must impart traditional "wisdom to our students and show them that they are both the heirs to and beneficiaries of this legacy and that hope for the future lies not in the immediate gains of the present but in the lessons of the past."

In "The Helmholtz Maneuver, or *The Idea of (Honors in) a University*," Richard England of Salisbury University follows in the tradition of Hermann von Helmholtz and John Henry Newman in advocating the ideal of honors as the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake. He argues for this pursuit in part for the practical reason that most important discoveries and technological advances are byproducts of pure science and its equivalent, pure education. Our challenge today is to convince academic and political leaders, in terms they can understand, that a traditional honors education has practical value.

Benjamin Moritz of the Metropolitan State College of Denver defends the tradition of elitism in honors in his essay "Can the Elitism of Honors Help Students at Non-Elite Schools?" Moritz thinks that elitism successfully addresses a critical problem in higher education today, namely the low retention and graduation rates of lower-income, high-achieving students. Deploying Carnicom's notion of conservation as innovation in the context of honors, Moritz writes that the small classes, student-faculty interaction, and community bonds in honors programs give their students the peer pressure, self-confidence, and high expectations they need to complete their education. Thus, the elitism of honors, he argues, promotes institutional democratization.

EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

Linda Frost of Eastern Kentucky University expands on the idea of honors programs as traditional loci of high expectations in "Academically Adept," which is a response both to Carnicom's essay and to the recently published book *Academically Adrift: Limited Learning on College Campuses*. Defining honors programs and their students as adept rather than adrift, Frost argues that the common recruitment claim that honors is "not more difficult, just different" is wrong. Honors courses are, in fact, more difficult, providing a valuable service to both their students and their institutions by maintaining high standards, and honors educators should proudly proclaim this difficulty rather than denying or underplaying it.

In "Extra Breadth and Depth in Undergraduate Education: The Institutional Impact of an Interdisciplinary Honors Research Fellowship," Nathan Hilberg and Jaclyn Bankert offer an example of Carnicom's notion of tradition as innovation by describing a summer research program at the University of Pittsburgh. The success of the students in this program, they write, demonstrates not only the effectiveness of innovative approaches to traditional research but also its wider impact on the university.

Bernice Braid and Gladys Palma de Schrynemakers put the conservation of tradition in a context that leans more toward the experimental than the one Carnicom suggests. In "Conservation, Experimentation, Innovation, and Model Honors Programs," they offer a trilateral configuration of approaches that, they write, honors programs are uniquely situated to implement and to contribute to their institutions. The possibility of sequencing courses over a four-year period, during which students and faculty can collaborate on in-depth research and experiential learning, allows honors programs to develop and share innovative projects. The authors offer one multimedia example of their trilateral configuration in process at Long Island University Brooklyn.

In a similar vein, Annmarie Guzy of the University of South Alabama makes an impassioned plea to maintain the innovative, experimental, and risk-taking character of honors education in her essay "*Harry Potter* and the Specter of Honors Accreditation." Guzy argues that the pedagogical freedoms possible in honors go against the standardizing trends in higher education today and thus are all the more crucial not just to honors students and teachers but also to the vitality of otherwise increasingly regimented institutional curricula. Honors accreditation, Guzy further suggests, would imperil such freedoms and thus jeopardize the effectiveness of both honors programs and the institutions in which they are housed.

Taking a different slant on the matter of innovation and change, Becky L. Spritz of Roger Williams University sees among honors educators a resistance to cultural changes in higher education such as assessment, online courses, three-year undergraduate degrees, and career training. In "Emerging

from the Honors Oasis,” she argues that the traditionalism of honors, despite its appeal, threatens to make it backward and irrelevant and that the better strategy is to reconsider and perhaps welcome current educational innovations into the honors culture.

In “The Benefits of Honors Education for All College Students,” James J. Clauss of the University of Washington addresses the forum topic not primarily from the perspective of tradition or innovation but with a focus on what impact honors students have when they fan out from an honors program into the campus for the majority of their coursework. He cites also the important influence of innovative honors curricula and pedagogical strategies—such as portfolios and experiential learning—on the larger institution, effectively providing excellent education to all undergraduates.

Finally, in “Moving Mountains: Honors as Leverage for Institutional Change,” Craig T. Cobane uses his own institution, Western Kentucky University, as an example to claim that honors is the most efficient and effective way to transform a campus by enhancing its reputation. In recruiting high-achieving students and garnering national scholarships, honors increases the academic success of not just honors but also non-honors students who are attracted to the institution because of its reputation.

This issue of *JNCHC* concludes with three research essays on honors topics. The first is a study titled “The Roles and Activities of Honors Directors: Similarities and Differences across Carnegie Institution Types” by three authors: Debra S. Schroeder and Sr. Edith Bogue of the College of St. Scholastica and Marian Bruce of the University of Alaska Anchorage. The authors present data derived from a national survey they distributed to NCHC-member institutions in 2009. Based on a total of 276 complete responses (33% of those surveyed), the authors analyze commonalities and differences in perceptions about administrative responsibilities among honors directors at the four types of Carnegie institutions: associate, baccalaureate, master’s, and doctoral. One conclusion they draw based on these data is that perceived similarities between programs justify general sessions at the national conference while perceived differences warrant specialized sessions.

In “Honors Thesis Rubrics: A Step toward More Consistent and Valid Assessment in Honors,” Mark Haggerty, Theodore Coladarci, Mimi Killinger, and Charlie Slavin describe the background, rationale, and evolution of a series of rubrics they have developed in the University of Maine Honors College. With separate rubrics for students and faculty and for different phases of thesis production, the authors are working on creating greater validity and consistency both in supporting and evaluating honors work. They describe and assess each of the rubrics in their essay so that the models they describe might be beneficial to other honors deans and directors.

EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

In the final research essay, “A Role for Honors in Conservation and Biodiversity Education,” Kenneth J. Oswald and Ernest Smith provide a useful and compelling case for including conservation and biodiversity within an honors curriculum. They argue that these topics are crucial to the education of all students in any major and that honors programs are uniquely situated to reach a broad interdisciplinary spectrum. Using the University of Northern Kentucky Honors Program as an example, the authors also write that conservation and biodiversity are topics that fit well with the core mission of honors education, and they provide concrete suggestions for adapting these subjects to the goals of honors education—goals of conservation and innovation that bring us back full-circle to the primary focus of this issue’s *JNCHC* Forum on “The Institutional Impact of Honors.”

The Roots of the National Collegiate Honors Council

The Wisdom of Our Elders: Honors Discussions in *The Superior Student*, 1958–65

LARRY ANDREWS

KENT STATE UNIVERSITY

The modern honors movement that arose in the 1950s was propelled and supported by the Inter-University Committee on the Superior Student (ICSS) and its newsletter, *The Superior Student*. This first honors serial publication, now relegated to the misty past and unknown to most honors deans and directors, merits examination. Its value lies not merely in its historical interest, but in the usefulness of its discussions of the same issues that arise currently in honors programs, conferences, and publications.

One of the consistent premises that emerge from the ICSS newsletter is the recognition that the wide diversity of honors programs appropriately reflects the diversity of institutional cultures and their varying stages of readiness for an honors approach. At the same time, however, the ICSS through this publicity organ advises certain desiderata—in evolving versions—of a “full” honors program. These desiderata are, of course, the forerunners of today’s “basic characteristics” of honors programs and colleges promoted by the National Collegiate Honors Council (NCHC), the organization that succeeded the ICSS. This balance between tolerance of diversity and the upholding of ideals or standards seems the most salient aspect of the wisdom of our honors elders.

This essay offers first a descriptive analysis of the periodical and its development for the benefit of readers unfamiliar with it. (See Appendix for a partial list of holdings for this periodical.) The second section evokes the historical context for the ICSS and its newsletter by drawing on statements appearing in the newsletter itself. The following and main section analyzes the key themes of the articles. Only a few of today’s issues are absent from these early honors discussions—for example, computer technology, alumni relations, and fundraising. That the following themes were discussed at the outset of the honors revival may seem surprising: international honors, advising, selection of students for creativity and motivation, honors in the visual and performing arts, gender, talented Black students, and even accreditation of honors. The analytical section includes discussion of various start-up

issues faced by new programs and of what later would become the “basic characteristics.” In the process, a number of eloquent arguments and nuggets of wisdom will emerge that may prove useful to current honors leaders as they make their case for an honors education.

DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS

The Inter-University Committee on the Superior Student was conceived at a conference organized by University of Colorado honors director Joseph W. Cohen in June 1957 at Boulder, Colorado and was created with the support of a three-year, \$125,000 grant from the Carnegie Corporation received in January 1958 by its applicants at the University of Colorado. The committee’s general mission was to serve the cause of the “superior student.” Its office opened in February 1958 with Cohen as committee director. (See Rinn, 74–75, for a useful historical summary of Cohen’s contributions.) The eleven charter members of the committee represented almost entirely large state universities. The committee carried out its mission through four activities: (1) providing a clearinghouse of information, (2) holding conferences, (3) visiting various campuses as consultants, and (4) encouraging stronger relations between university honors programs and both high schools and graduate schools. Carnegie renewed the founding grant for an additional three years, and in the final year the committee made plans for transition to a self-supporting professional organization.

The first issue of *The Superior Student*, the newsletter serving as a “clearing-house of information,” was published in April 1958. By the final issue in the summer of 1965, the publication had completed forty-seven issues (including one double issue) in seven volumes, as follows:

- Vol. 1 7 issues April 1958–January 1959
- Vol. 2 9 issues February 1959–January 1960 (Nos. 4 & 5 a joint issue)
- Vol. 3 9 issues February 1960–January 1961
- Vol. 4 9 issues February 1961–May-June 1962
- Vol. 5 6 issues September-October 1962–September-October 1963
- Vol. 6 4 issues November-December 1963–May-June 1964
- Vol. 7 4 issues November-December 1964–July-August 1965

The newsletter appeared primarily during the academic year, and over the course of its publication it shifted from a monthly to a quarterly. In the final year, the ICSS was planning for the newsletter’s successor to be a quarterly (7.1 [November-December 1964]: 2).

The newsletter was mailed to institutional presidents, deans of arts and sciences colleges (where honors programs at first typically resided),

interested faculty, university libraries, honors directors, chairs of honors committees, leading education journals, and even a few major national newspapers and magazines. The mailing list comprised primarily four-year state universities—the ICSS’s target audience—but included a number of private institutions. From an initial mailing list of 2,500, circulation grew to 4,000 within two issues, and editor Cohen reports in the fourth issue that he is adding a dozen or so to the list every week (1.4 [October 1958]: 13). By the end of the second volume (January 1960), he reports a mailing list of 6,000 and an additional 200 requests coming in each month (2.9: 1). By October 1961 the circulation had reached 9,000 (4.5: 3).

The format of the newsletter is octavo in size, and the cover design remains the same throughout its publication. The masthead features a lower-case title and, under a superimposed “ICSS,” a logo of an owl taken from a fifth-century B.C.E. Athenian tetradrachma coin—the owl of Athena, representing wisdom and intellect (1.1 [April 1958]: 16). The background color of the logo varies from issue to issue. Contents are listed on the left side, and the beginning of the editorial introduction appears on the right. Issues typically run twenty to thirty pages; the shortest (1.5 [November 1958]) is fourteen pages, and the longest (6.1 [November-December 1963]) seventy-two pages. A number of later issues run thirty-five to forty pages.

Typically each issue begins with a one- or two-page introduction or editorial, continues through the several articles that form the heart of the matter, and concludes with a “Notes and Comments” section. “Nuts and bolts” articles—“what we do in our honors program”—predominate; I counted 189 of these. Next in prevalence come essays on general honors issues; I counted 119, but separating the two types of articles is a bit artificial because nuts-and-bolts articles usually allude to or argue more general issues. At least thirty-one articles report ICSS activities such as conferences, site visits, grants, policies, surveys, and changes of personnel. Only five articles (aside from summaries of student conference panels) are written by students, and, in addition to about thirty-four short notices of publications, three or four review articles appear. Some twenty-one articles deal with high school topics and liaison activities with college honors programs broader than just one program’s report. About ninety articles or notes concern other higher-education groups, conferences, and initiatives. Of the individual-program, nuts-and-bolts articles, 55% come from public institutions, 45% from private. Of the brief “notes and comments,” 62% come from public, 38% from private institutions. The number of contributions from private institutions is a bit surprising given the ICSS’s primary focus on state universities as needing the most attention in developing honors programs.

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Several trends in content occur over the run of the newsletter. Issues become longer and are published less frequently. Later newsletters give more attention to publications, including government reports, relevant to honors. The third volume offers a new feature called “Issues in Honors,” and the fifth volume presents a new “Dialogue” section devoted to letters, opinions, and responses to previous articles. The “Notes and Comments” section is later renamed “Honors Notes.” Increasingly the newsletters (twelve in all) center on a single theme, such as honors in the arts, assessment and evaluation, student selection, or the impact of honors on the rest of the institution, the theme of this issue of *JNCHC*. In 3.9 (January 1961) appears the first “Inventory” of honors programs (4–40), with key characteristics of each, followed by several supplements in later newsletters—surely a forerunner to *Peterson’s Smart Choices: Honors Programs and Colleges* (Digby). Occasionally in the last two years a newsletter offers a lead essay and published responses to it (e.g., 6.2 [January-February 1964], on evaluation), much in the manner of the current *JNCHC* with its “Forum” sections. One newsletter in 1963 (5.6 [September-October]) reprints in a twenty-one-page special insert a keynote address from an international conference on physics in general education. Twice such inserts are printed on green paper. The longest newsletter devotes forty pages to reports of high school programs for superior students state by state for twenty-two states (6.1 [November-December 1963]). Some annual and cumulative indexes appear, most of them including an extremely helpful index by topic in addition to author, title, and institution indexes. Newsletter 4.5 (October 1961) announces that henceforth the serial will be indexed in the *Education Index* (32).

The last issue of Volume 5 (No. 6 [September-October 1963]) announces the retirement of editor Joseph Cohen, “a condition of the Carnegie Corporation grant for the book on honors” that he is to edit (39). (This book appeared in 1966 as *The Superior Student in American Higher Education*.) The final two volumes of newsletters are edited by Philip I. Mitterling, the new ICSS Director. In its last year (1964–65), the ICSS, having now been a dues-paying organization for two years, is announcing its continuation not as part of an existing higher education association as originally planned but as an independent organization still headquartered in Boulder (7.1 [November-December 1964]: 1–2, 26; 7.3 [May-June 1965]: 1–2). This organization, named the National Collegiate Honors Council, soon distributed a summary of honors programs and in fall 1966 sponsored its first annual conference. (NCHC also published the proceedings of its first three annual conferences.) The newsletter was to be continued as a quarterly journal, which eventually became the *Forum for Honors*, first appearing in fall 1970. Published originally in five issues per year, the *Forum* shortly became a quarterly. In another

decade the NCHC began publishing its *Newsletter*, which with VI.4 (Winter 1985) was renamed the *National Honors Report*.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Why did the new honors movement or honors revival arise when it did? Foremost in the minds of many of the authors in *The Superior Student* were the national ferment caused by the Soviet launch of Sputnik in the same year as the Boulder conference (1957) and by a broader sense that the massive influx of students into higher education institutions was not matched by attention to the *quality* of their education. Talent was being wasted. In an essay in the final volume entitled “Unsolved Problems in Honors,” Robert Clark, president of San Jose State College and ICSS board member, declares, “In the past generation the most serious problem in public higher education in this country has been the neglect of the superior student” (7.1 [November-December 1964]: 5). As causes for “the rapid spread of honors programs,” perhaps “the most significant development of this generation in public higher education,” he cites two “accidents of history”: first, Sputnik I and II, which “awakened the American public . . . to the necessity for more rigorous academic standards in all levels of education”; and, second, the huge increase in the number of students (5–6).

The ICSS mission statement that opens the first newsletter reflects this awareness, defining as its goal:

. . . to serve the cause of the superior student in a time of controversy and great soul-searching in the world of American education. We believe that the problem of the superior student must have an important place in the educational inquiry that is now going on. (1.1 [April 1958]: 1)

Cohen cites the “weak and ineffective form” of most existing honors efforts and notes that in the previous decade educators “recognized that swelling enrollments can endanger the quality of education, unless steps are taken to strengthen the qualitative influences within their institutions” (2). The same newsletter notes a recommendation by the forty-eight educators who had met at the seminal June Boulder conference on the superior student that state universities warrant emphasis because they need “to take special measures to preserve and improve quality in the face of the oncoming tide of new students” (10).

In the third newsletter, Cohen puts the matter even more forcefully: “At a time when unprecedented numbers are about to engulf our institutions, [...] strengthening of quality may be the salvation of our educational future” (1.3 [June 1958]: 2). Later newsletters refer to the concern for quality amid

“landslide enrollments” (2.6 [October 1959]: 3) and to the misplaced pride universities take in large enrollments and achievements in sports at the expense of quality (2.2 [February 1959]: 1).

In the context of the early Cold War, the Soviet lead in the space race was deeply disturbing to Americans and prompted urgent calls for better training in science and technology and improved preparation of future national leaders. A reprinted address by the vice president and director of the Fund for the Advancement of Education calls for a new clarity of educational goals comparable to that of the Soviet space venture and declares that the United States is “on the threshold of a new era in American education” (1.7 [January 1959]: 4). Others refer to “the crisis of educational world competition” (1.5 [November 1958]: 6), the “recent emergence of trained intelligence as a key factor in the current international power struggle” (2.4 & 5 [May & June 1959]: 2), and remedies to the neglect of the talented before Sputnik that were “merely accentuated by that event” (5.2 [November-December 1962]: 9). Typically authors call not just for better education in science and technology but for better science literacy among non-science majors and better humanistic rounding for science students. In the context of an urgent need for leaders in an age of disintegrating values and consensus, Cohen advocates a balance between general and departmental honors—breadth of general knowledge and depth of specialization—and, in fact, “depth in breadth” through honors interdisciplinary colloquia (3.2 [March 1960]: 1–2).

The ICSS was also riding the wave of numerous activities and reports by national education groups and by foundations concerning the need to pay more attention to talented students. Many of these activities found mention in the pages of *The Superior Student*. For example, the first newsletter, in reporting Carnegie Corporation grants to the Universities of North Carolina and Arkansas honors programs, quotes Carnegie’s 1957 annual report on the need for “a greater effort . . . to provide differential programming for different levels of ability, in order that the ablest young people may make the full progress of which they are capable” (1.1 [April 1958]: 5); the report also notes the disproportionate energy and resources already given to the poorest students. Another early newsletter reprints a portion of the section on “Excellence in Democracy” from the Rockefeller Brothers Report on Education, *The Pursuit of Excellence* (1.4 [October 1958]: 2–3). The 1959 Conant report on American high schools comes up repeatedly in discussions of high school programs for the superior student. One newsletter in 1959 prints excerpts from the President’s Science Advisory Committee Report recommending a “nation-wide effort . . . to pay more attention to the academically talented students . . . and to the unusually gifted students” (2.7 [November 1959]: 8). Other newsletters allude to or discuss National Science Foundation grants for

undergraduate science education, Ford Foundation grants for the improvement of teaching, the rise of the Advanced Placement program and the National Merit Scholarship program, and projects undertaken by the National Education Association for increasing attention to superior students in the public schools. Brief reports recur on various state (e.g., Oregon and New York) and national conferences (e.g., the Washington Invitational Conference on the Academically Gifted in Secondary Schools) devoted to the superior student. Several issues respond to the recent publication of C. P. Snow's controversial *The Two Cultures* by asserting that honors curricula offer the remedy, a bridge between sciences and humanities.

The sense of wasted talent permeates discussions of what education means in a democratic society, prompting articulate arguments against charges of elitism in honors initiatives and redefining "egalitarian" education. My subsequent thematic analysis develops this issue further. Some articles also focus on specific victims of waste—underprivileged youth, women, and Blacks. One entire issue reports on an ICSS-Southern University Conference on the Gifted Negro Student (3.3 [April 1960]), including a seminal address by historian John Hope Franklin. Widely recognized is the need to improve teacher education as a way to raise the level of education nationally for the global competition to which public opinion was newly awakened.

The ICSS and its newsletter stand out for responding positively to these challenges of the age. In the reprinted opening statement at the ICSS Western Invitational Conference in April 1960, Frederick H. Jackson, Executive Associate of the Carnegie Corporation, credits the ICSS with the "mushrooming" of programs for superior students in American public universities:

As I look at American undergraduate education throughout the country, programs for superior students strike me as being one of the liveliest and most interesting of current developments. . . . When the history of higher education in the 1950's and 1960's is written, I believe that the honors movement will appear as one of the more significant developments of these two decades. The ICSS has been at the very center of this movement. (3.5 [April 1960]: 3)

Joseph Cohen says early on, responding to the previous "mishandling" of the ablest students and the danger of having come "perilously close to dereliction in the pursuit of excellence" (1.5 [November 1958]: 2),

Our educational institutions are ready for, and urgently need the type of Honors program that will help them find, save, challenge, motivate, mature and if possible bewitch the

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promising, the gifted, the superior, wherever they are to be found. (4)

Clearly the urgent societal pressures for improvements in education to meet what was conceived of then as the challenge of global leadership provided fertile ground for the burgeoning of the honors movement.

THEMATIC ANALYSIS

The dramatic flowering of honors in the late 1950s and the 1960s appears in the intermittent reports in *The Superior Student* of the multiplying numbers of new programs during the newsletter's years of publication. In the January 1961 issue (3.9), for example, Cohen compares his inventory of honors programs with Frank Aydelotte's lists of 1925 and 1944. He finds among contemporary programs much greater variety of institutions, more extensive programming, the new approach of beginning honors with freshmen, and the spread of honors across the campus to professional majors. He notes that most of the current 198 honors programs had begun within the past five years (3).

The newness of honors programs meant that Cohen spent an inordinate amount of time corresponding with institutions and traveling to consult with faculty and administrators about fledgling honors programs or about starting new honors programs. *The Superior Student* reports on these consulting activities, and its articles pay frequent attention to start-up issues. Thus, the first themes I have chosen to highlight in the following analysis reflect such concerns: how to deal with charges of elitism, what models to follow in designing a program, how to select students, and where to start in creating a program. Subsequent themes reflect issues faced by programs once they are in operation: the impact of the program on the university, preparation of students for graduate school, and the evaluation of honors programs.

EDUCATION IN A DEMOCRACY: ELITISM?

The very first issue of the newsletter addresses the need to give special attention to superior students. Robert Bishop, an administrator at the University of Pennsylvania, argues that such students have two basic needs: engagement and liberation. Not to serve these needs "indicates a lack of concern with the advancement of the finest qualities in the moral and intellectual life of our society and may jeopardize the future of the potential leaders of that life" (1.1 [April 1958]: 3). He laments that "in our efforts to create in America a kind of education which is designed—and rightly so in a democracy—to be offered to all the people, the gifted have not been properly challenged to procure an education which can command their high talents" (3).

The democratic principle of education for all, “frankly devoted to the mass production of commonplace types,” neglects the talented. For a “democratic society . . . to survive, [it] must create a real leadership from within itself” (4). This approach might be called the “future leaders” argument: yes, a democracy needs to give everyone access to education, and it may even offer special attention to laggards to raise them to a common standard, but it must also produce great leaders from among its ablest students. This view seems, in fact, to *defend* the need to create an elite rather than to argue *against* any supposed charge of elitism.

Reporting on the 1957 Carnegie Corporation’s annual report, the same newsletter cites the growing consensus among “‘leaders in higher education that a greater effort must be made to provide differential programming for different levels of ability, in order that the ablest young people may make the full progress of which they are capable’” (1.1 [April 1958]: 5). The Carnegie report notes the extraordinary funding and attention given the nation’s weakest college students and records as an initial remedy Carnegie’s grants to the Universities of North Carolina and Arkansas for programming for superior students. This approach might be called the “correct-the-balance” argument. The apparently egalitarian educational system is already giving extra attention to the worst students, so why not also to the best?

The third newsletter takes on directly for the first time the accusation of elitism in large public universities attempting to establish honors programs. Dudley Wynn, Arts and Sciences Dean at the University of New Mexico, finds that such attempts often encounter the view that singling out “any student for special attention or privilege is per se undemocratic” (1.3 [June 1958]: 3). He argues that ability grouping should not “automatically be called undemocratic,” that it is possible “to expand opportunity for some without limiting it for others,” and that a pluralistic democracy and its “multiple purpose” schools can offer “the highest and most intensive cultivation of the mentally superior” (4). At the same time he warns that honors programs should not grant privilege without responsibility and should not “wall off” their students from the rest of the campus (4). This approach might be termed an “equal-opportunity” argument; democracy does not mean the same education for all but the opportunity for all to develop their potential as far as they can.

This argument characterizes most of the further discussions of the elitism accusation in subsequent issues of the periodical. In a newsletter devoted to the ICSS Southern Invitational Conference in Louisville in 1958, Alvin C. Eurich, Vice President and Director of the Fund for the Advancement of Education, argues that “[we] must redefine the concept of equality within our tradition to mean equal opportunity for each child to attain his maximum

maturity in dealing with intellectual matters and in any special talent he may possess” (1.7 [January 1959]: 7; pardon the generic masculine pronoun here and elsewhere). In a later essay entitled “The Cultivation of ‘The Proud Mind of Man’: Education and Leadership in a Democracy,” history professor Max Savelle of the University of Washington states that people are not equal in intellectual endowment and that educational institutions should

provide for every individual the maximum of education that that individual can assimilate. This would mean that the superior student, the so-called “fast learner” would be spotted early in the course of his schooling and would be given every opportunity to proceed as rapidly and as deeply as he might be capable of doing. (2.3 [April 1959]: 2)

He then refutes the elitism argument as based on a faulty notion of democratic equality: “the cultivation of every individual . . . to the utmost limits of his individual capacity, is the true meaning of democracy in education” (3). The natural result would be a *desirable* leadership elite needed to preserve a democratic society.

The February 1960 newsletter, devoted to the college-high-school liaison for the talented, summarizes a Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching discussion by its trustees at the Foundation’s 1959 annual meeting. The group echoes the increasingly popular approval of ability grouping: “the bright student must not be held back to the pace of the less bright but must be allowed to run at his liveliest pace”; differential treatment . . . [will] enable the academically talented youngster . . . to explore the full range of his own intellectual abilities” (3.1 [February 1960]: 4). Democracy cannot afford to waste talent. Opposing forces must be resisted “with energy and determination.” A few months later Robert Angell, Director of the Honors Council at the University of Michigan, affirms these ideas in his reprinted keynote address (“Issues in Honors”) at the 1960 ICSS Western Invitational Conference in Berkeley. He notes the contradiction between the view that it is undemocratic to single out the best and the general acceptance of the common practice of doing just that in college admissions. He finds a “dead-level theory of democracy . . . a mistaken theory” (3.4 [May-June 1960]: 18).

Historian John Hope Franklin gives the equal-opportunity argument a different twist in a keynote address and seminal essay (“To Educate All the Jeffersonians”) in a newsletter devoted to the 1960 Southern University-ICSS Conference on the Gifted Negro Student. Both the ideal of universal education and the recent trend of honors education have been tragically limited by their practice of “education for whites only”:

Perhaps nothing has blighted the drive for universal education in the United States more than the simultaneously held contradictory notion that universal education should be confined to white people. Perhaps nothing has made a caricature of the current drive to identify and encourage the academically talented more than the concurrently prevailing practice of segregated education and cultural degradation that makes such identification and encouragement extremely difficult if not impossible. (3.3 [April 1960]: 5)

A subsequent report of a conference panel focuses on this complex task of identifying and developing, instead of wasting, the talent of the “culturally deprived” (12–15). Despite the equal-opportunity enthusiasts, a “level playing field” still does not exist.

James Robertson (University of Michigan, ICSS Executive Committee) affirms both the equal-opportunity argument and the correct-the-balance argument in a reprinted address at the 1962 Association for Higher Education conference (“Talents Which Perish Without Use”). With enthusiasm he says that the interest in

challenging our students to use their full intellectual power . . . really means that American education for the first time is becoming fully democratic. In effect, it is now willing to pay the price for providing equal opportunity for *all* levels of our young men and women, to give the promising young man as much attention as we have been lavishing on our remedial student and on those with special athletic prowess. (4.8 [March-April 1962]: 2–3)

Two years later, new editor Philip Mitterling clinches the case: “The American tradition of free compulsory education for all has to mean the complete development of the talents of the individual” (6.1 [November-December 1963]: 2). Meanwhile, Cohen, in summarizing twenty-five institutional site visits, expresses a reassuring view that honors organizers and leaders “refuse to agree that there is a basis for this fear [of elitism]” (3.7 [November 1960]: 21). He also offers a sidebar comparison in the next issue between a paragraph from Frank Aydelotte’s 1925 *Honors Courses in American Colleges and Universities* and a paragraph from a report to the faculty by the Honors Council Chairman at Winthrop College, John Eells, Jr. Aydelotte claims that honors “need not mean any curtailment of the quality of teaching enjoyed by the average student,” but Eells goes further in arguing an additional reason why honors does not cultivate snobbery or elitism, the “most ungrounded

charge” against honors programs: “It serves as a pilot program for the entire institution, establishing . . . techniques and procedures which can be invaluable in non-Honors as well as Honors situations” (3.8 [December 1960]: 6). He asserts that an honors program confirms the importance of the library, aids inter-departmental collaboration, resists anti-intellectualism on campus, and “helps a college to call its soul its own” (6). This new argument refutes the ivory-tower view of honors and sets forth its positive impact on the institution as a whole, a theme taken up below and again the subject of the Forum in this issue of *JNCHC*.

Insofar as anxieties about honors as elitist still surface from time to time, these early arguments bear reviving. Most institutions still spend far more staff and financial resources on remedial programs and athletics than on honors programs. Many in our institutions also still think, almost resentfully, that advising for honors students is unnecessary (“They’re smart; they can take care of themselves”). Within some large state universities education faculty stand firmly against “tracking” not only in the public schools but also in universities. Finally, the preference for funding remediation over honors can be tainted by an economic motivation: amid fiscal difficulties, institutions may choose to trim or cut honors in favor of maintaining strong enrollment and retention of the less prepared for their tuition revenue; honors students are not as likely to drop out.

THE HEALTHY DIVERSITY OF HONORS PROGRAMS

As elitist accusations succumbed to cold-war urgencies and honors programs mushroomed, such programs tended to look different in different institutional settings. This rich diversity is a recurring motif of ICSS director Cohen’s summaries of visits across the country, and it also appears in the dozens of “nuts-and-bolts” articles that dominate the pages of the newsletter. Whereas the few honors programs in the 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s consisted of guided reading, a thesis, and an external exam for upper-division students, often in private liberal-arts colleges, these burgeoning new programs took a wide variety of shapes and sizes and included students in all four years and in large public universities. The ICSS assumed the role of fostering both experimentation and pragmatism: whatever you can manage to do within your institutional context, do it!

In an early report on site visits to fourteen institutions in the South, Cohen sees as positive indicators these schools’ experimentation with programs for freshmen and sophomores, their concern to expand beyond arts and sciences majors to those in the professional schools, and their ability to complement existing specialized and isolated departmental honors programs (1.3 [June 1958]: 19). Two years later he reports that ICSS members have visited

127 campuses, attended 42 conferences and meetings, corresponded with 350 institutions, and acquired hundreds of program descriptions (2.9 [January 1960]: 1). Clearly he and fellow committee members were well informed about the honors scene across the country.

This contact with so many honors programs generated a practical wisdom at the ICSS. Instead of proposing a Procrustean, *a priori* pattern for programs that he visited, Cohen favored a Protean empirical wisdom in his approach. In the very third issue of the newsletter, his editorial, “No Royal Road,” reports his being struck by the diversity of approaches in fledgling honors programs as reported in his survey of four hundred institutions: “Each school has designed its program to suit its own needs and problems” (1.3 [June 1958]: 1). Such diversity reinforces “a basic assumption that went into the founding of ICSS: There is no one correct way to design or run an honors program.” He cites the report of the June 1957 Boulder conference that gave rise to the ICSS:

“There is no royal road to an honors program. The hope that one can devise a foolproof honors program which can be packaged and exported for use on any campus is delusory. Institutional differences and the practicalities of each campus must be faced frankly in creating a successful honors program.” (1)

A year later, reporting on a round of site visits in the Northwest, Cohen replies to a “frequently repeated question . . . whether it is necessary to wait to start a program until all phases of it could be established or whether a step by step approach could be used” with the current ICSS operating assumption: “The answer, was, of course, that one starts where and when one can and works toward a complete program” (2.7 [November 1959]: 23). At the Conference on the Gifted Negro Student two years later Cohen reiterates his opposition to fixed national standards for honors programs, arguing a flexibility to begin “with the best students available on every campus and aiming at the attainment of programs which will eventually achieve something recognizable everywhere as first-rate” (3.3 [April 1960]: 12). Again, in a 1961 summary of ICSS accomplishments, he espouses a pragmatic approach: “we have insisted on doing something and on learning by doing” (4.5 [October 1961]: 3). Warning of the “danger of an ‘Honors lockstep,’” he voices the honors mission in the broadest terms:

We have learned that our task is the creation of an effective and visibly motivating climate of intelligence and imagination in the undergraduate scene—an esprit and a style appropriate to

the fullest engagement, an atmosphere that will release the disciplines into the quick of the good student's life, that will encourage and foster an intuitive as well as an analytic dimension and keep the disciplines from becoming "cribb'd, cabin'd and confin'd." (3-4)

At the same time that Cohen is eager to support any fledgling effort, he recognizes that the ultimate test of an honors program is to become well-established and to create a high-quality education (2.9 [January 1960]: 2).

The defense of diversity has remained a constant in honors discussions ever since, as has the reality of this diversity as new programs constantly come into existence. The countervailing argument that national quality standards are nevertheless necessary also owes much to the earliest positions taken by the ICSS, starting with a list of desiderata first formulated at the 1957 Boulder conference.

"BASIC CHARACTERISTICS"

The first issue of *The Superior Student* offers eleven "suggestions" for "building an Honors Program" arising from the June 1957 Boulder conference of 48 educators (1.1 [April 1958]: 11). These forerunners of the NCHC's "Basic Characteristics" of fully developed honors programs and colleges begin with a caveat in keeping with the ICSS's affirmation of a healthy diversity: "Honors programs need to be adjusted to the problems and practicalities of each campus. There is no fool-proof program that will work everywhere." The remaining ten points, briefly paraphrased, are that honors programs should:

2. be developed with faculty support, not by administrative fiat;
3. be the "epitome" of liberal arts education and not be separated from the rest of the curriculum;
4. have a secure budget and be institutionalized;
5. start preferably in the freshman year;
6. have thoughtful policies for admitting, retaining, and advising students plus good record keeping;
7. have a central meeting place and student library privileges;
8. have degree requirements that can be modified as needed;
9. have an evaluation process for program improvement;
10. have strong liaison with high schools; and
11. be widely publicized on campus and beyond. (11)

This combination of flexibility and guidelines appears soon in Cohen's seminal essay "On Honors Programs." He begins by defining honors very broadly as "whatever may be done in colleges and universities on behalf of the more able student"; institutions "urgently need the type of Honors program that will help them find, save, challenge, motivate, mature and if possible bewitch, the promising, the gifted, the superior, wherever they are to be found" (1.5 [November 1958]: 4). He couples this permissive definition, however, with advice partially echoing the eleven points listed above. A similar short list of advice comes from the ICSS 1958 Southern Conference steering committee, which emphasizes administrative support, faculty quality, high-school liaison, and self-criticism (1.7 [January 1959]: 17). Reporting the following year on an ICSS survey, research analyst Anna Owen's focus on honors budgeting lists categories that reflect desiderata; e.g., honors teaching as part of faculty load, facilities, library support, remuneration of directors, faculty rewards, and scholarships (2.4 & 5 [May & June 1959]: 5–9).

By the October 1959 newsletter, the eleven original "suggestions" have become fourteen "points" that Cohen, in his keynote address to the ICSS Eastern Regional Conference, couches as "an inventory of some of the very specific procedures which on analysis I find being most advocated throughout the country. I present them as a kind of check list" (2.6 [October 1959]: 4). He acknowledges that some of the points are still controversial but modestly asserts that "we seem to be sure of many of these guidelines for action." He presents the list tentatively as a question: "Do the following, in fact, constitute the proper answer to those who ask how to meet the responsibility of the college to its superior students?" (4). What is striking here is his presentation of the advice as a consensus drawn empirically from practice and his reluctance to sound prescriptive. The list of imperative statements can again be paraphrased briefly—at the expense of their richness—as follows:

1. Identify and select students early with a variety of techniques.
2. Start programs immediately upon admission and accept latecomers.
3. Make programs, including counseling, continuous over four years.
4. Formulate programs in terms of both general college work and the area of concentration.
5. Make programs flexible through special and varied curricula and use advanced placement and acceleration as needed.
6. Make programs highly visible as models of excellence.
7. Use appropriate pedagogical methods—small classes (5–20), primary source material, selective coverage and active student engagement, independent study, advising by faculty, terminal examinations.

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8. Select most appropriate faculty.
9. Reduce general requirements to give students flexibility in honors.
10. Use evaluation devices to test both means and ends.
11. Use students as research apprentices to best faculty.
12. Use students for advising and orientation.
13. Establish an honors center with library and lounge.
14. Institutionalize programs with appropriate ongoing budget. (2.6 [October 1959]: 4–5)

Two newsletters later Cohen again embraces the tension between flexibility and best practice: “although programs can be and have been started at any point, the ICSS believes that it is always best, where possible, to start with the freshman year” (2.8 [December 1959]: 1). Reporting on site visits a year later, he adds additional advice on the importance of consulting students and having a student liaison council. He also notes that one dean “affirmed that the ICSS had effectively convinced the country of the validity of the fourteen points” (3.7 [November 1960]: 21).

The next iteration of desiderata occurs as an appendix in the newsletter indexing the first three volumes (4.1 [February 1961]: 23–24). The fourteen points are repeated, but a new item #11 is inserted specifying a student council as liaison with the honors council, to be constantly kept informed and consulted on “evaluation and development” (24). The list is now titled “Major Features of a Full Honors Program” and ends with the appropriate caveat that has continued in spirit to this day: “the inauguration of an Honors program need not await the above full implementation but can be started where feasible and proceed in the direction of a full program” (24).

The final iteration of these “major features” appears in the May-June 1963 newsletter (5.4), prefaced by an explanation of changes (9). The list now contains sixteen items, having been augmented not only by further explanations but by some interesting new ideas. Although advising by faculty rather than full-time non-teaching advisors remains a strong point, a clause is added to suggest that the institution’s professional advisors should include honors specialists. Two other points added under #7 are differential advising for men and women “in the light of the steeper erosion of talents after graduation among the latter” and “embodying in the program the required differentialia between the creative and the formally cognitive approach” (5.4 [May-June 1963]: 11). This item also urges study abroad and summer institutes. Finally, the list includes a new inserted item #15, which recommends a closer relationship between the honors program and the graduate school.

The only significant final reference to the sixteen “features” occurs in Philip Mitterling’s editorial (“The Tenth Point”) in the January-February 1964 issue (6.2). The new editor opens by noting that these “major features of a complete honors program have been debated, delineated, and described” and that most programs “are based on these established recommendations” (6.2: 1). He is puzzled, however, by the “lackadaisical” efforts at evaluation, the tenth point on the list. I will return to the theme of evaluation and assessment at the end of this discussion, but for now I call attention to the close connection between the list of desiderata and the issue of evaluation.

Although Mitterling reports that the sixteen features have been widely “debated,” little controversy over their application appears in the pages of *The Superior Student*. The controversies that do occur center on other themes, such as the general vs. the specialized approach or whether the visual and performing arts belong in honors. The seemingly widespread acceptance of the sixteen points may rest on several causes. First, the ICSS presented them as ideals toward which to strive, not as necessities for legitimization. As evident in site visits, conferences, and editorials, the ICSS preferred to nurture start-up honors efforts with gentle consultation rather than prescribe definitions and methods. No pressure existed at the national level. Second, the very newness of the honors revival meant that most programs perforce focused on the one or two features that would get them started, e.g., faculty approval, a minimal curricular requirement, a freshman seminar, and the right to select students. Third, institutional variety and complexity, including state universities’ lack of experience with honors, placed obstacles in the path of honors efforts, made beginning programs vulnerable, and created a patchwork of practices—the healthy diversity that Cohen recognized and approved at the outset.

During the years of the ICSS newsletter the sixteen features seem to have been eagerly embraced as ideals. All the more striking, then, is the bitter controversy that surrounded the NCHC adoption of the “Basic Characteristics” later, the addition of a second list for honors colleges (though less controversial), and subsequent addition of new planks and proposed changes in wording. The controversy becomes understandable, however, when the basic characteristics are linked to the question of assessment and accreditation, as they are currently. A healthy diversity of honors programs persists, and for the moment the Protean and the Procrustean, the shape-shifting and the prescriptive, forces are held in tension.

STUDENT SELECTION

One of the start-up issues first confronted by fledgling honors programs was how to recruit the appropriate students for the program. In an early newsletter, Cohen sets the tone for the discussion by emphasizing the intense

competition among colleges and universities for the best high school students (1.6 [December 1958]: 1). The next newsletter summarizes an ICSS conference session on the subject of student selection. Participants stress the need for early identification of talented students, preferably as early as the first year of high school, and the use in college honors recruiting of multiple measures—not only grades and intelligence tests but also teachers' assessments of "mind and personality traits" such as excellent memory, abstract thinking, ability to apply knowledge to experience, curiosity, honesty, goal-directed behavior, articulateness, variety of interests, physical well-being, and sound values (1.7 [January 1959]: 10). College recruiters need to locate the gifted "with the same zeal used in finding the athletically gifted."

The topics of early identification and multiple measures characterize most of the later discussions. Several newsletters pay special attention to gifted Black students and other "underprivileged" students, noting the limits of biased standardized tests (2.4 & 5 [May & June 1959]: 3; 3.3 [April 1960]: 13) and acknowledging the need in some cases to provide remedial support (3.3: 14). In a later newsletter, the National Merit Scholarship Corporation reports expanding its research to identify the superior underprivileged student by studying socioeconomic status, gender, and school quality (5.3 [January-February 1963]: 7–8). Other authors call for attention to intellectual curiosity and creativity (Angell, 3.4 [May-June 1960]: 20) and the need to separate the "grade-getter" from the creative thinker by whatever means are available (3.5 [September 1960]: 6).

In the final volume of the newsletter, a special issue devoted to the problem of student selection summarizes the challenge. Editor Mitterling calls for varied measures beyond test scores and grade point averages, including assessments of creativity, personality, and motivation (7.2 [March-April 1965]: 2). A lengthy article by Benno Fricke of the University of Michigan evaluates various techniques of selection. He expresses dismay at the excessive use of the interview, "one of the most confidently used but least valid procedures devised for judging human beings" (3). He argues that interviews "rarely improve the accuracy" of other methods, partly because of the subjectivity and difference of opinion among interviewers. He also points out the limitations of extra material submitted in a candidate's dossier and of standardized tests of academic ability. He calls for assessment of creativity and motivation with the aid of a questionnaire—for example, the Achiever Personality scale embedded in the Opinion, Attitude, and Interest Survey used at Michigan. Honors programs, he says, should use a combination of SAT/ACT, high-school record, and indicators of creativity and motivation. An essay by John Holland of the American College Testing Program argues

that honors programs need first to define their program goals and their criteria for student success in order to know how to select students who will succeed (16–17). Another article on creativity warns against seeking students preoccupied with grades at the expense of the “creative nonconformist” (41).

From these discussions apparently even newly established honors programs at this time saw attrition as a problem and in the selection process were often relying just on standardized tests and records of academic performance. Striking is the call by many newsletter authors for a variety of methods beyond numbers, especially ways of ascertaining motivation, intellectual curiosity, and creativity. Ironically, as honors programs grew in size over the following decades into populations of hundreds or even several thousand students, relying on the numbers became increasingly the norm because of the sheer number of candidates and the lack of staff time or resources to use other measures. Thus the call for attention to motivation, interest in ideas, creativity, and special talents seems timely today.

PROGRAM DESIGN

Choosing the kinds of academic programs to offer these students dominates both general discussions and nuts-and-bolts articles in *The Superior Student*. I will select only a few major strands in these discussions for focus, particularly those critical for start-up programs at that early stage in the history of honors education. One of the first topics discussed is the issue of reconciling breadth and depth, which is related to the tension between general honors and departmental honors, the latter having been historically dominant. In the third newsletter, Robert Angell (University of Michigan) advocates “The General Approach,” which avoids overspecialization, encourages student community, and enables first-year students to become engaged immediately. Various techniques would support this approach, such as discussion and lab sections, interdisciplinary courses, summer reading, and a senior integrative course (1.3 [June 1958]: 5–6). The opposing view appears in an adjacent article, “The Departmental Approach,” by Ray Heffner, Jr., of Indiana University, in which he laments the excessive number of general courses in arts and sciences and in the major that keep students from the rewards of deep specialized research (7–8). In the next newsletter, Edward Najam (Indiana University) attempts to reconcile the two views by calling attention to their common goals: “Does not the one advocate a broadly educated scholar with a special area of interest, and the other a specialist with a broad background?” (1.4 [October 1958]: 4). Both he and Heffner warn against treating undergraduate honors students as graduate students.

A student panel report from the ICSS Berkeley conference (April 1960) affirms the complementary value of both approaches. In the context of C. P.

Snow's *The Two Cultures*, the panel advocates interdisciplinary work to provide broader perspectives, along with opportunities for close research relationships with faculty (3.5 [September 1960]: 14). In an interesting editorial (3.2 [March 1960]), Cohen defines "general Honors" as "a continuous, integrated four-year approach outside the major," with "*depth in interdisciplinary study*" (emphasis his), thus transcending the design—still common today—of a two-year general honors curriculum followed by transfer into a departmental program for the thesis (1). The multitude of articles reporting on specific courses, techniques, and programs seems to affirm this balance. The ICSS encouraged new programs to start with first-year students using a general approach in introductory seminars while affirming the traditional climactic importance of the senior thesis on a highly specialized topic in the major. Of course, tensions between well-entrenched departmental honors programs and upstart general honors or all-university programs continued through this period and subsequent decades. A half century later the NCHC position is clear in item five of the "Basic Characteristics" of honors colleges: "The honors college exercises increased coordination and control of departmental honors where the college has emerged out of a decentralized system."

Beyond curriculum design, the more intangible issue of creating a challenging intellectual atmosphere includes aspects of faculty selection, pedagogy, and academic standards. Early on Walter Weir, Acting Honors Director at the University of Colorado, advocates careful selection of faculty for breadth, flexibility, risk-taking, interest in teaching, superior scholarship, and skill at guiding student-driven discussion in colloquia ("The Vital Ingredient: Superior Teachers for Superior Students," 1.2 [May 1958]: 3–4). The same student conference panel cited earlier calls for "direct contact with enthusiastic, exciting teachers" who are "at their best when they [are] teaching outside their specialty and joined with the students in a search for knowledge" (3.5 [September 1960]: 14). A year later Director Cohen reminds readers that their "task is the creation of an effective and visibly motivating climate of intelligence and imagination (4.5 [October 1961]: 3) but also notes in a summary of honors problems the ongoing difficulty of recruiting the appropriate faculty from departments (5–6).

Pedagogy, of course, reflects faculty selection. A session report from the 1960 ICSS Berkeley conference focuses on "Teaching in Honors" and recognizes the challenges of the colloquium style and of interdisciplinary courses as well as of faculty recruitment and reward (3.5 [September 1960]: 15–18). Standards for thought and writing must be rigorous. Generating intellectual excitement in the early years through interdisciplinary courses compensates for their potential dilettantism. A special newsletter devoted to

the colloquium method offers eloquent descriptions of the ideal by Cohen: the colloquium “is a training ground in the Honors outlook”; it is

the generation of living dialogue, the confrontation of ideas and values with all the vigor, sincerity and aplomb of which superior students are, or can become, capable. It is the realization of the art of conversation; the sense of style both in discussion and in writing; the interplay of poise, gravity, humor, passion, controversy; the effective use of what is known and the expression of what is valued within the full swing of divergent viewpoints . . . The faculty learns when to wait and when effectively to interrupt, to erupt, to explode; how and when to exemplify for the students the relevance of their own mature minding amid the clutter of student opinions and gropings; how not to provide them with the answers but to let them work up to the significant questions. (4.2 [March 1961]: 1–2)

Finally, in an editorial entitled “Acceleration Is Not Enough,” Cohen stresses that honors courses require a different kind of teaching, not just a higher regular-course level or more work, a mantra that continues to this day (3.7 [November 1960]: 1–2).

Other issues of program design discussed in various newsletters include how to move honors into the professional schools, devise science courses for non-science majors, conduct specialized advising for honors and for honors women, and prevent thesis students from being isolated from one another. The remaining controversial issue meriting discussion here is the question of whether teacher education and the studio and performing arts are amenable to an honors approach. The September-October 1962 newsletter reprints a keynote address from the ICSS Conference on Honors and the Preparation of Teachers by Edward W. Strong, Chancellor of the University of California, espousing a view “that became a *pièce de résistance* of the conference” (5.1 [September-October 1962]: 14). Strong is “puzzled” to see how honors could be incorporated into the practice-teaching aspect of the education curriculum, even where it is used in other aspects of that program. In answer to a question, moreover, he goes further to exclude honors from the visual and performing arts: music and art theory and history, yes, practice and skill development, no (17–21). He defines the content of honors course work as “inquiry into ideas[,] . . . inquiry into a body of ideas which has a literature” (19).

A lively debate ensues not only with the speaker at the conference but also in a special issue of the newsletter devoted to the arts and headed by Cohen’s editorial, “The Creative and the Cognitive” (5.5 [May-June 1963]:

1–3). Adding fuel to the controversy is an abbreviated address by W. McNeil Lowry of the Ford Foundation, who argues that universities are not training, and cannot train, artists of a professional caliber as well as conservatories and private art schools (4–9). Various essays follow, largely defending what honors can do for the arts and taking positions such as these: (1) Strong’s separation of the intellectual from the creative is simplistic (10–11); (2) universities can emulate private drama schools and recruit creative students just as they do athletes, separate them and support them with facilities and scholarships, and prepare them to sign with professional companies after three years—or let drama simply be part of the liberal arts curriculum (13–15); (3) honors can recruit drama students not only for creativity and energy but also for “responsiveness to intellectual stimuli, an interest in the life of the mind, a susceptibility to historical knowledge as an essential part of the creative life” so that they become graduates who are “mentally disciplined, versatile, and informed” (17); (4) honors can give creative writing students a climate of personal focus, boldness of expression, “serious playfulness,” and “freedom from the constraint imposed by the necessity of surveying, summarizing, ingesting a fixed body of material before the semester’s end” (22–24); and (5) university arts departments are better than professional schools because they produce less narrow graduates (35).

The question of honors applicability to the visual and performing arts remains today largely in the area of the senior capstone or thesis: some honors programs see artistic projects as problematic, but most accept them, provided that the student contextualizes the piece or project with some historical, theoretical, and/or aesthetic analysis. The problem of combining honors and practice teaching, also largely through the thesis, is the education student’s lack of time for a project that occurs simultaneously with the all-engulfing teaching apprenticeship.

HONORS IMPACT ON THE INSTITUTION

Early on ICSS Director Cohen saw the need to argue for honors programs on the basis of their benefits to the institution at large: “Where honors programs have been soundly established, their influence has been felt by students outside the program, their stimulus has been evident in the morale of faculty members, their effect has been perceivable in the tone and standards of campus life” (1.2 [May 1958]: 1). The honors students bring interesting books and discussion issues into their campus residence, their “knowledge and values” influence campus organizations, and their “questions and arguments brighten classroom discussions,” setting “a standard for others to follow.” Faculty members enjoy both the “stimulus and challenge” of honors teaching and become better teachers in their other courses (2). Especially

when the honors program is large and visible, it “can act as a counter-balance to superficial student activities and the preoccupation with big-time athletics. It can serve as a symbol and a reminder of what an education means and what a university is for” (2). Program advocates must speak to budget-conscious administrators about these larger benefits, the “spillover” effect of honors as “an investment in the total quality of the university” (2). In the same newsletter, the excerpted Vanderbilt honors proposal to the faculty of arts and sciences does just that, aiming “to find ways to better the entire academic structure” (7).

A common criticism honors programs faced, and still face, is that they negatively affect the institution by “skimming off” the best students—and best faculty—from other classes and segregating them, thus depriving the rest of the student body. Acknowledging some truth in this charge in his essay “A Hard Look at Honors Programs: A Critical View,” Hugh Aitken (Economics, University of California) argues that (1) honors programs should not argue their benefits just for the gifted, (2) honors is feasible for the time being only in limited-enrollment institutions, and (3) honors should add courses to the students’ course-load and not remove them from their regular classes (2.1 [February 1959]: 5–6). A reply soon follows, in “A Second Hard Look at Honors Programs,” by Robin Higham (History, University of North Carolina). Oddly, however, Higham tackles only the cost issues, offering several solutions, e.g., amalgamating regular classes into larger lectures and using graduate assistants in them to help the faculty members devote more time to smaller classes of honors students (2.4 & 5 [May & June 1959]: 9–11).

Cohen returns to the issue of segregating honors students, which is akin to the charge of elitism, in a summary of questions raised at a large state university considering establishing an honors program. He responds with practical wisdom gained from countless communications with programs across the country. On the question of whether honors creates “second-class status” for the other students, he claims that, as long as students can move freely between honors and the rest of the campus, “Honors Programs are precisely the most effective feasible means—feasible both in terms of faculty resources and budgetary considerations—of benefiting the whole student body. They provide pilot projects for the rest of the curriculum and concrete versions of more vital approaches to subject matter” (3.2 [March 1960]: 15–16). Here we have a direct foreshadowing of items #7 and #13 of the eventually adopted “Basic Characteristics of a Fully Developed Honors Program,” namely the use of honors as a laboratory for concepts and methods that can be spread to the whole institution. In response to the question of “skimming,” Cohen points out that usually only a portion of an honors student’s work is in honors

and cites experiences at Purdue, University of Kansas, and elsewhere that, in the absence of honors students, the students in regular classes actually participate more in discussion and leadership.

Other newsletters mention minor notes such as the use in program evaluation (University of Oregon) of the question of honors impact on non-honors students (6.2 [January-February 1964]: 23) and the impact of honors programs on the library (University of Colorado) as restoring “to the library its role as the learning center of the campus” (6.3 [March-April 1964]: 43). The primary treatment comes, however, in a special issue (7.1 [November-December 1964]) devoted primarily to the question of honors impact on the institution. Mitterling introduces the term “frontlash” to designate the positive spillover effect of honors—“the experimental arm of the college”—on the institution, saying that “[h]onors methods and approaches and their extension to a larger segment of students than the top five percent should become an integral ingredient of institutional commitment” (4). Subsequent articles attest to the frontlash at several institutions. At the University of Southern California, honors colloquia influenced the redesign of the curriculum of the College of Letters, Arts, and Sciences so that all students in the first two years take “fewer courses in greater depth and for increased credit” (13). In these four four-hour courses, the instructor “is free to schedule as many class meetings a week and for however many minutes as he believes suitable for carrying out the objectives of his course.” The courses also require more writing, more lab and library time, and more freedom to pursue individual student interests. The “Spillover at Notre Dame” shows that upper-level programs for superior students influenced (1) a change in the lower-division required courses for all students to reduce their lock-step homogeneity, (2) the development of directed readings courses available to all students, and (3) the improved character of student leadership on campus (16–17). The University of Kansas reports some improvements in the tone and culture of fraternity houses and residence halls (19–20). Finally, Winthrop College reports an improvement of the college’s reputation as “a place where people study and learn” and a concomitant waning of the “forces of anti-intellectualism” (22). “The honors program also appears to have had a most favorable impact on the reading habits of our students,” on a new zest for discussion and impatience with lectures, and on an improvement in faculty morale reflected in non-honors classes (22–23). Although negative effects occasionally crop up, institutional reports seem overwhelmingly positive and create an additional argument for the introduction and support of honors programs. In the face of resistance even today, the eloquent arguments in *The Superior Student* and institutional anecdotes ever since, supported by data, must become available to support struggling programs.

HONORS AND GRADUATE WORK

A minor theme emerges toward the end of the newsletter run, first, if modestly, in articles on the MA-3 programs in education that recruit honors students into combined programs in education. The primary treatment of the topic of honors students in relation to graduate work comes in the penultimate newsletter (7.3 [May-June 1965]), much of which is devoted to this topic. Earlier it seemed to have been a foregone conclusion, an unspoken assumption, that honors exists partly or even primarily to prepare students for advanced study. This last substantive newsletter (before the final index number) contains three interesting articles: a report of an ICSS survey of 101 former students now in their second year of graduate school, a former honors student's assessment of graduate education, and a conference address on the "Honors Program as Preparation for Graduate Study."

The ICSS survey produced dismaying results on honors students' disillusionment with graduate school, which for "a surprisingly large number of these talented students . . . is not simply an extension of undergraduate interests and efforts. It is, instead a discouraging encounter with intradepartmental personal rivalries, seminars that go nowhere, dogmatic faculty, and social isolation," resulting in the acquisition of a "protective cynicism" (7.3 [May-June 1965]: 3). Science students, however, as opposed to those in humanities and social sciences, seemed better acculturated because of their undergraduate science apprenticeship and were more satisfied because of their good financial support, sense of community, and intellectual excitement. The survey included many detailed questions and a list of 62 descriptive terms respondents addressed in terms of both their undergraduate and graduate experience. Research Associate Cuzzort's conclusion notes that honors students have higher standards for graduate work than those reported in studies of non-honors students, and it points to an urgent need for reforms in graduate schools (13).

The Michigan State student's essay, from the perspective of graduate work at Yale, expresses disappointment with the narrow specialization and lack of integration (14-18). Author James R. Anderson finds, with other graduate students, that "the climate of graduate school is deeply hostile to independent thought, and is hurried, even frantic, instead of reflective . . . the net effect [of which] is to extinguish real curiosity and depress or kill one's desire to learn" (14). Lanora G. Lewis's reprinted address at the 1965 Area Honors conference at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro draws on several studies, including the ICSS survey, showing that honors students more often than non-honors students aspire to doctoral degrees, that as graduate students former honors students often regard their undergraduate education as superior to their graduate experience, and that, just as AP high school courses

nudge colleges to enrich their offerings to talented students, so honors programs should nudge graduate programs to reform for greater flexibility and integration (19–21).

The struggle continues to the present. Just as honors programs must not disappoint gifted high school students with first-year colloquia that are less interesting or rigorous than their honors or Advanced Placement high school courses, graduate programs must greet honors students with an advanced level of intellectual excitement and teacher-student interaction guided by the noblest academic values and ideals.

PROGRAM EVALUATION AND ASSESSMENT

The final theme for discussion in this essay touches a tender spot among NCHC members today. Very early in the honors revival in the late 1950s, the issue of program evaluation arises. Joseph Cohen, as consultant and editor, insisted from the outset, drawing on item #9 of the Boulder conference's eleven desiderata for honors development, that programs must develop a self-critical habit. By late 1959, however, he reports from a session panel at the ICSS Ann Arbor conference that "on his visits to more than 120 colleges and universities during the past year and a half he had found only a small number of institutions concerned with evaluating the results of their special programs for superior students" (2.6 [October 1959]: 14). He argues that "appropriate" evaluation studies could refute charges of elitism and views that good students can take care of themselves. Members of the same panel report significant evaluation efforts at the University of Kansas and the University of Michigan, in the latter case supported by a three-year Carnegie grant (13), and Michigan distributed a summary of its first faculty evaluation of honors classes at the conference (23–26). Evaluation procedures underway or desired range widely from faculty and student course evaluations through statistical comparisons of grades and test scores to reviews of extra-curricular activities, advising, and alumni surveys, all looking to support honors "value-added" qualities of "better command of a subject-matter field, with a deeper sense of values, and with greater self-motivation for learning and research" (13). The conference steering committee's summary report stresses that "Honors work has to be demonstrated by results" and calls for close examination of student work (21).

Cohen's urgings for evaluation recur in the newsletters. In the October 1960 issue, he reminds readers that "[f]rom its beginning the ICSS has advocated the inclusion of evaluation procedures in every Honors program; and a recommendation to this effect is included in the ICSS checklist of elements for a full program" (3.6 [October 1960]: 1). He plans to publish in future newsletters the results of evaluation programs and elicit suggestions from

social scientists. Reports follow, for example, from Loyola University of Chicago in the same newsletter and the University of Oregon in the 5.4 (March-April 1963) newsletter. Significant portions of the 3.7 (November 1960) and 4.5 (October 1961) newsletters are devoted to essays on how social science research methods can be applied to honors program evaluation. A motif coloring these discussions is the tension between traditional subjective and anecdotal evaluation procedures and the data-based techniques of the social sciences, newly developed to deal with the complexities of educational research and of a program such as honors. Ralph Tyler, director of the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences, concludes these essays with a proposal for the Social Science Research Council to facilitate honors program evaluation by coordinating with on-campus social scientists invited by honors directors to assist in their evaluation process (4.5 [October 1961]: 25). In the same newsletter, the ICSS Executive Committee lists among its recommendations for future activities (assuming a renewal of the original Carnegie Grant) the establishment of “a research fund to subsidize small-scale local evaluation studies in sums of \$500 to \$1,000” and the publication of a brochure about honors evaluation (28).

The special 1964 newsletter that is devoted to the question of evaluation—“The 10th Point” (title of the editorial) in the “major features” list—came up in my earlier discussion of “basic characteristics.” Mitterling here calls attention to the connection between the sixteen “major features” and the necessity for evaluation (6.2 [January-February 1964]: 1). The articles that follow tackle various aspects of program evaluation and offer glimpses into evaluation processes at specific institutions (University of Oregon, University of Arkansas, University of North Dakota, Hiram College). William R. Catton, Jr., in excerpts from a paper given at a 1962 Conference on Research on Honors Programs, outlines a process of comparison between honors students and non-honors control groups that would take programs beyond mere testimonials (2, 45). ICSS Research Associate Ray P. Cuzzort then discusses the results of an ICSS survey of 117 honors programs (of the 167 invited) on the kinds of evaluation procedures they do or do not use; results included the salient fact that fewer than half the programs were doing or beginning any kind of evaluation at all (5). He asserts that “[t]he problem of appraisal is the problem of professional education” (4, his emphasis) and presents three alternatives: (1) reject evaluation, (2) use subjective opinions of a key person or committee based on discussions with participants, and (3) use data-producing instruments. He concludes that formal evaluation instruments can be useful but that they “will probably never supplant the subjective and often intuitive judgments of key administrative officials” (5). Like current *JNCHC* forum lead essays, Cuzzort’s report then generates several

responses: Robert B. MacLeod (Psychology, Cornell) discusses “Validity Versus Reliability” (11–13); Benno R. Fricke (University of Michigan) argues the importance of assessing in terms of the goals or objectives of the program (13–15); Paul A. Heist (Berkeley) clarifies the distinction between “appraisal of satisfaction” and student “growth and change” (15–17); and Ralph W. Tyler echoes the call for more objective data (17–19). Fifty years later, methods of evaluation of honors programs, if ripened a good deal, still lag behind other honors procedures in sophistication and prevalence.

And now, finally, the issue of accreditation. As the honors movement has matured along with its supportive organization, the National Collegiate Honors Council, some honors leaders find that the balance between healthy diversity and advisable desiderata for all programs should be tipped toward the latter. For them, the “Basic Characteristics” documents can be used not just as a set of ideals toward which to strive but as measuring sticks for awarding accreditation or certification of honors programs by the NCHC. In the last decade or so, the debate over this question has often been fraught with intense feeling. What do our honors elders say about this issue in the early days of the honors revival? In a newsletter (3.5 [September 1960]) devoted to the ICSS Western Invitational Conference at Berkeley in April 1960, the conference steering committee’s summary report ends with a “Concluding Discussion on Evaluation.” Members of this final interchange voice something of the same variety of opinion heard today. One member claims that “Honors programs are concerned with intangibles which resist precise and objective analysis,” but another immediately counters that this attitude is just “an excuse for avoiding evaluation” (25). Cohen then inserts the notion that evaluation “of a most meaningful kind” is constantly being done by faculty members, who know their students best, but, although much standardized educational research “is undertaken for the comfort of administrators and to justify budgets,” objective evaluation must supplement subjective approaches (25). When the question of evaluation leads to a discussion of the “advisability of accreditation of Honors programs themselves,” one member speaks against establishing yet another accrediting agency and suggests that, if such a process is desired, existing agencies should be used. Another member finds that the ICSS’s consulting site visits constitute a sort of informal accreditation that is all that is needed now and “avoids the rigidities of more formal procedures” (26). The absence of further discussion of accreditation in *The Superior Student* suggests a consensus against it at that stage of honors development nationally.

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The liveliness of the newsletter’s discussions over seven and a half years that emerges from this presentation of key themes grows in energy if one

reads the articles I have deemphasized, articles describing, with analysis and often theoretical discussion, activities and procedures in specific honors programs. My resuscitation of these early honors discussions has been eye-opening for me. Not only were most of the issues raised then perennial, as it turns out, but many honors leaders in the early days of the flowering possessed a good deal of wisdom and common sense that can benefit all of us in our continuing struggle to provide the best in honors education for our students.

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APPENDIX

**PARTIAL LIST OF HOLDINGS OF
*THE SUPERIOR STUDENT***

In addition to the NCHC national office at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and the Kent State University Honors College, the following university libraries contain this honors periodical:

Arizona State University

Harvard University

Iowa State University

Michigan State University

New York University (minus vol. 6)

Northern Illinois University

Ohio State University

SUNY Buffalo

University of Colorado

University of Florida

University of Illinois at Chicago

University of Kentucky

University of Maryland

University of Michigan

University of Minnesota

University of North Carolina

University of Texas

University of Wisconsin

**Forum on
“The Institutional Impact
of Honors”**

Honors Education: Innovation or Conservation?

SCOTT CARNICOM

MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY

Over the last ninety years, we have witnessed an explosion of diverse honors programs and colleges throughout the United States, often with the sole common feature of providing differentiated experiences and individualized instruction for an institution's most academically talented students. Concomitant with the tremendous growth in the number of honors programs and colleges in the U.S. has been the growth of honors as a separate and distinct niche in higher education. Indeed, the National Collegiate Honors Council, which publishes two journals and a monograph series, recently held its forty-fifth annual meeting in Kansas City. Additionally, a small yet increasing number of academics are slowly being recognized for their work within honors, not only applying some of their honors contributions towards tenure but also being selected for top administrative posts and prestigious fellowships. Given the proliferation and professionalization of honors, the time is ripe to evaluate the impact of honors on institutions of higher learning in the U.S.

Honors education in the United States can trace its roots in large part to the groundbreaking curricular changes that Frank Aydelotte introduced at Swarthmore upon becoming its president in 1921 (Rinn, 70). Reacting to increased enrollment and influenced by his experience as a Rhodes Scholar, Aydelotte wanted to break the lock-step, homogenizing approach of American higher education that catered to the average students in a group or class, holding back the best and brightest. Using Oxford-style tutorials as inspiration, Aydelotte wanted to create a more individualized educational experience for gifted students that focused on the creation of knowledge more than its mere reproduction.

College and university ranks in the U.S. swelled again after World War II, the G.I. Bill, and the baby boom that followed. To deal with this amazing growth, America applied its business savvy to higher education and led the way in efficient, mass-production approaches, with introductory college classes sometimes taught in theaters, auditoriums, or even basketball arenas capable of holding thousands of students. Like Charlie Chaplin caught in the gears of progress in "Modern Times," we became capable of churning

students out on an educational assembly line that would make the most ardent Fordist proud (Huxley). One can easily see the immense benefit of the wide availability of higher education opportunities; the U.S.'s high GDP and standard of living are directly related to the education level of its inhabitants and, quite frankly, who among us wouldn't want to live in a society surrounded by well-educated neighbors? However, as Aydelotte noticed years before, the massive expansion of our colleges and universities came at a cost, particularly for students of high ability.

During the many social changes of the 1960s and 70s, colleges and universities revisited Aydelotte's approach and attempted to raise academic quality by initiating a host of new honors programs specifically tailored to smaller groups of students with higher academic credentials and/or intellectual abilities (Wolverton et al, 27). Consistent with Aydelotte's original vision and rooted in the liberal arts tradition, most honors programs continue to complement high-achieving students' curricula with an individualized experience that uniquely challenges their talent and encourages original thinking. Honors at most institutions is by design *different*, providing a counterpoint to the mass-production model of education. While honors is now noted for its diversity of pedagogical approaches, individualized teaching practices (e.g. independent research, tutorials, small classes) remain common features of almost all honors programs and colleges. The NCHC's monograph series, *Honors in Practice*, and the *Journal of the National Collegiate Honors Council* are brimming with original research and unique, innovative pedagogical approaches custom-designed for collegiate honors students, but, at the same time, virtually all honors programs provide classes limited to a maximum of twenty high-achieving students in order to encourage discussion and critical thinking as opposed to memorization and replication. Similarly, most honors programs require significant independent study in the form of tutorials and/or thesis projects. But, I ask, are these approaches innovative, or is the honors community advocating and preserving tried and true pedagogical models?

As my historian colleagues like to remind me, nothing is new. The seminar discussions, tutorials, and independent research that compose most honors program and that might have seemed innovative or original to some in the 1960s and 70s are even older traditions within the academy than Aydelotte's introduction of honors in the 1920s. As a scientist, I should point out that the tutorial or guided apprenticeship, with students mentored by more senior scientists, dates back hundreds of years. Nonetheless, in our noble and laudable effort to provide schooling for everyone, our modern educational system shifted away from this individualized model, instead grouping students, usually by age, into larger and larger classrooms. Academic success tacitly entailed being able to adapt to this homogenous group environment, with

students receiving sporadic personalized instruction only if struggling to succeed. Honors programs were formed to meet the needs of the small number of students at the other end of the distribution, underwhelmed students who found the typical curriculum slow or tedious, students who longed to engage in the kind of interdisciplinary or creative scholarly work that Aydelotte articulated.

While I argue that the key features of most honors programs are not actually innovative, they are extremely valuable and effective teaching approaches that must be preserved. As the greater public hypocritically cries out for more accountability while simultaneously decreasing money available for institutions of higher learning, we must articulate and advocate for the merits of these traditional, individualized, and relatively expensive approaches. Arguably, effective individualized pedagogical techniques such as these are logically self-evident; we know what good pedagogy is and it involves the intensive one-on-one mentoring of individual students. This is why many institutions boast of their low student-to-teacher ratio. Learning tends to be inversely related to the size of the group in which it is meant to occur. Small teaching environments such as those typically found in honors provide students with the opportunity to vet their ideas in a constructively critical environment. In this sense, a class doesn't merely represent an easily assessable one-way information-transfer session but rather an open-ended exchange, evaluation, and creation of new ideas and arguments meant to hone synthetic and original thinking. While the honors community, like all scholarly fields, certainly fosters innovative teaching approaches, it more importantly preserves the opportunity for students to learn how to think innovatively using traditional discussion and mentorship.

As a scientist, I admit to some discomfort in arguing on the side of tradition; tradition in and of itself is not a good argument and can be antithetical to the empiricism and innovation of science. I constantly remind my students that just because we have always done things a certain way doesn't necessarily make them correct. The word "tradition" also can be a euphemism for privilege or worse, dogma, glossing over social ills like exclusion, bigotry, and intolerance. However, as Weiner deftly argued, honors, which is sometimes incorrectly criticized as being elitist (not to be confused with actually being elite), has historically been an antidote for elitism, democratically leveling the playing field and providing a top-notch education to students outside the hallowed halls of the oldest and/or most prestigious institutions.

While the stubborn stalwarts of tradition and convention can flummox scientists, scientists themselves use a tried and true methodology or logical framework that guides their innovations. Scientists make carefully controlled observations, attempting to eliminate the effect of extraneous variables. Thus,

as Edelstein argued, all innovation is a form of conservation, with new discoveries based on sound investigative techniques and the revision of previous ideas. Obviously, we should seek to innovate; as scholars, we seek the truth, we seek to generate new knowledge and understanding, but in the case of education we have yet to find a substitute for the power of small classes and one-on-one mentoring.

Thus, honors preserves the value of innovation by maintaining a tradition that affords our best students the opportunity to practice thinking and communicating creatively, something that is best facilitated in small, face-to-face environments. Nonetheless, despite the obvious pedagogical value of the honors approach, it continuously faces numerous challenges including charges of elitism based on disproportionate support for more talented students. This criticism lacks merit because it is not limited to honors; throughout the academy, we differentially support all students' special talents, whether they are football players or pianists. Perhaps some people are true egalitarians and would go so far as to spend identical amounts of money on every student, but this simply isn't the reality of higher education. While higher education at its best would apply the honors approach to every student, we face severe economic pressures that prohibit the discussion-based learning environments valued by honors. In this current environment, one important value of honors is to keep alive the tradition, which now seems like innovation, of small classes and one-on-one instruction. In the current culture and economy, honors is like a time capsule, keeping alive the best educational practices of the past.

Compared to the assembly-line approach or new distance-learning models heavily favored by the for-profits, the pedagogical traditions maintained by honors are relatively expensive in the short term but infinitely less expensive to society than if we abandoned them. Honors is an investment in our future and operates on the same act of faith that undergirds the whole institution of education. Ironically, though, it seems that the academy, or more to the point decision-makers outside it, have forgotten the roots of education and are galloping headlong into a limiting world of homogenous, cost-efficient learning with lowest-common-denominator accountability outcomes of questionable validity (Carnicom & Snyder). Society has become more focused on how the professoriate grades than how we teach, and a college education is viewed as a simple, transitory commodity to be traded for a high-paying vocation. As the educational community seems to be careening into a brave new world of similarity, honors programs and colleges maintain traditional approaches to education, creative and flexible approaches that provide a personalized education and foster independent thinking and discovery. Our

colleges and universities need this tradition of innovation, and we cannot be innovative if we are all expected to be the same.

Despite the value and growth of honors as an academic field (and perhaps due to its “expense”), some faculty members dedicated to honors continue to struggle to find firm footing on their campuses. Frequently, honors is either not viewed as a proper academic discipline or seen as something outside the domain of the traditional academic department and thus not relevant in determining rank or tenure. Furthermore, most assistant professors work under promotion and tenure guidelines that value external vetting of increasingly esoteric work within a traditional field over internal work (teaching and service) and the interdisciplinary or extra-disciplinary work associated with honors. While the number of honors programs has grown, faculty members are still explicitly encouraged to be independent contractors or specialists with an ever smaller research focus that generally does not include interdisciplinarity or honors. Generating discipline-specific knowledge is crucial, but it should not have to come at the expense of nurturing creativity, modeling innovation, and mentoring a new generation of scholars.

Despite pressures placed on institutions and individual faculty members, honors vigilantly and admirably preserves traditional pedagogical approaches that prepare tomorrow’s intellectual leaders. For this reason, our educational institutions need honors programs and should support and reward them as central to their mission. Many institutions do provide financial support, sometimes even generous support, because they value honors for recruiting students who raise the average entrance scores, become campus leaders, win prestigious national scholarships, and increase the institution’s national ranking. The better reason to value honors, however, is that it fosters the best educational practices of our culture’s history, maintains a tradition of critical inquiry that transcends disciplinary boundaries, promotes creativity, and prepares students to become learners, thinkers, innovators, and leaders for the rest of their lives. Honors programs and colleges should always be central rather than peripheral to the academic enterprise; the more they are fully institutionalized in their curricular development, interdisciplinary impact, and faculty status, the more the institution can embrace at its core the tradition of innovation that history tells us is essential to an excellent education and a viable society.

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Defending the Traditions by Preserving the Classics

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In the lead essay of this issue's Forum, Scott Carnicom poses a multifaceted question: Do the approaches taken by honors programs and colleges focus on innovation or preservation? The following essay takes a philosophical look at honors education within the present context of American culture and argues, similarly to the lead essay, that a traditional approach is best suited for honors students because it focuses on the education of the entire human being and is grounded in disciplines that seek perpetual innovation and flourishing. Although the essay underlines a number of Carnicom's arguments about the importance of preserving tradition in the delivery of honors education, it also examines other problematic trends such as anti-intellectualism, entitlement, and the false expectations created by many pre-professional, for-profit colleges.

ANTI-INTELLECTUALISM, EXPECTATIONS, AND PRE-PROFESSIONAL PROMISES

According to Susan Jacoby, between 1984 and 2004 "more than 40% of Americans under 44 did not read a single book—fiction or non-fiction over the course of a year . . . while the proportion of 17-year-olds who read nothing (unless required to do so for school) more than doubled" (para. 6). While this reality is a cause for concern, those of us who deal with honors students may tend to ignore it. However, ignoring this reality is a mistake.

Long heralded as the heirs of classical education, honors students today face financially incentivized, pre-professional programs that are marketed to student "consumers" who expect to learn specific skills that will help them land a job upon graduation. As Carnicom has stated, "college education is viewed as a simple, transitory commodity to be traded for a high-paying vocation" (para. 10). Although honors administrators and faculty may like to focus on the academic prowess of their students, reflecting on the belief that honors students view the learning process differently or that they are somehow more committed to their work than other college students, they must face the harsh reality that this generation of students has been defined by the

mantra that “everyone is a winner,” thereby dragging the gifted and talented to levels of equality and mediocrity unheard of in previous eras (Twenge and Campbell). Furthermore, as anti-intellectualism, cloaked in the twin guises of customer service education and grade inflation, continues its upward march, honors programs with high standards become less attractive to their student populations to the same degree as those with lower standards contribute to the problems (Rojastaczer). To simply assume that honors students are somehow different is to assume that they have grown up in another time and place.

In his *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, Edmund Burke warned that, in a world that increasingly prefers the equalizing trends of modern ideology and profit-seeking individualism to the traditional values of laws and customs, the truly exceptional would become indistinguishable from the mediocre (38). Although Burke was referring to the new French leadership and its refusal to praise any aspect of the *ancien regime*, his critique is more than applicable to the present generation of young intellectuals because it appears that society at large has committed the same indecency. Being an honors student is no longer honorable in many circles. In this spirit of anti-elitism, many colleges and universities have made students seeking the traditional honors disciplines feel as if they might not be getting their “money’s worth.” In fact “Cary Nelson, president of the American Association of University Professors, wrote in the January/February 2010 issue of *Academe* that ‘the only thing the Ph.D. now reliably confers is the potential for lifetime poverty and underemployment’” (Polak, para. 2). Nelson describes not only a crime against the humanities but also a problem for a generation of American students (and their parents) who place the practicality of supposed professional skills above the ability to think in a critical, creative, and time-tested manner.

GROUNDING IN TRADITION

Academic traditions and traditional disciplines in the humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences are significant because their foci move far beyond the limited goals of careerism promised by many of today’s pre-professional programs and for-profit universities. Carnicom is unnecessarily apologetic in defending the working relationships between faculty and honors students in individualized research (para. 7). The traditional disciplines have a lineage of success that reaches back to the working relationships between teachers and prize students in ancient times. We must not forget that Aristotle studied at Plato’s *Academy* and that Plato studied with Socrates. What separates the idea of traditional education from its contemporary counterparts is that the former focuses on the creation and development of the fully formed human being while the latter is preparation for a particular

profession, which the Bureau of Labor Statistics (2008) says that a person will change several times over the course of a lifetime. When Plato described the pursuit of truth as the pursuit of immortality, he was arguing that the goal of education was to challenge humanity in order that we may improve the human condition or, as Carnicom's essay reminds us, to use traditional methods to bring about innovation. As we flourish, we help to improve the quality of life of those around us; this is why the Greek concept of happiness, *eudemonia*, was not thought of as the immediacy of pleasure but as human flourishing in the aggregate.

Honors students should understand that learning is a life-long process and that the pursuit of truth will provide greater happiness and success in the long run than more contemporary, profit-driven models of education. A classical, honors-based education is by definition rooted in tradition; honors programs must see themselves as grounded in a larger discussion that began long ago and will continue far into the future. We must remember that this expensive tradition is the reason that so many honors programs provide honors housing and linked-learning communities or clusters, which are physical representations of the intellectual experience and serve as reminders that we flourish best when we live together.

Although some have argued that specialized residencies and learning communities promote ivory-tower elitism, I respectfully disagree. For decades, similar charges have been levied against university professors deemed guilty of promoting elitist agendas. These challenges are not terribly difficult to dismiss because they assume that the elitist arguments are somehow contrary to what "real" people believe (Berube). We should also remember that the contradictory insights and conclusions of James Madison and Alexander Hamilton as well as John Maynard Keynes and Milton Friedman emerged from a firm grounding in the classics within similar academic circles. Both Scott Carnicom in this Forum and Norm Weiner, in a previous lead Forum essay, have reminded us that, without the arguments of intellectuals in their ivory towers, we would never have had reasoned discourses over important issues like civil rights, child labor, health care, or social security.

A traditional, classical liberal arts education is not only vital to the well-functioning of the United States but to the future of democracy and its variants around the world. As honors administrators and faculty, we must impart this wisdom to our students and show them that they are both the heirs to and beneficiaries of this legacy and that hope for the future lies not in the immediate gains of the present but in the lessons of the past.

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The Helmholtz Maneuver, or *The Idea of (Honors in)* *a University*

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Whoever, in the pursuit of science, seeks after immediate practical utility may generally rest assured that he will seek in vain.

—Hermann von Helmholtz

What does honors offer the university that supports it? On the NCHC list-serv this summer, a plea for help came from a colleague whose university was considering dropping its honors program. As budgets grow tight, small, expensive honors programs become vulnerable, and their defenders need arguments that administrators can hear and understand. Most campus-wide honors programs offer a general-education-based curriculum. Unfortunately, few campus units defend the idea of general education as a whole although they may fiercely guard their particular piece of it. At many schools, campus-wide honors is one of the few academic programs to be rooted in a part of the curriculum often regarded as a necessary evil; as such, it has few allies. However, if general education is really important, then bright students need and deserve a special course of study in this area that can help them develop the habits of mind and abilities that it has long been intended to produce.

Education is like science in that it is often thought to be worth pursuing because of its practical results. The promoters of STEM education are primarily interested not in the coherence or beauty of scientific theories but in the economic importance of applied science and technology. As the great German philosopher, physicist, and psychologist Hermann von Helmholtz noted in 1862, however, there is a catch to the pursuit of economic success through science: hunting for “immediate practical utility” rarely works. The unspoken argument here is that the pursuit of science for its own sake, unfettered by commercial concerns, ultimately pays off in useful if unexpected ways. Helmholtz’s maneuver has been undertaken by champions of basic scientific research to the present day. Through his interest in physiological optics, for instance, Helmholtz invented the ophthalmoscope in 1851, and his many contributions to mathematical physics and the philosophy of science

helped to create the conditions for the revolutions in early twentieth-century physics with their practical outcome, atomic fission. Like Helmholtz, scientists like Einstein, Bohr, Rutherford, and others started out wanting only to discover how nature worked. They did not aim to change the course of the twentieth century.

The same relationship we see between pure and applied science is present in ideas about education. Naturally we hope that education is useful, but, if we educate only for “immediate practical utility,” we get a different result than what we commonly expect from university study. At most four-year colleges, about a third of a student’s coursework is still given over to general or liberal education even though the perennial debate continues between those who see education’s value in terms of its usefulness and those who defend learning for its own sake. In tight economic times, utility and the bottom line loom large in the political and popular imagination. Nonetheless, we offer a general education, especially in honors, without reference to immediate usefulness because we believe that it serves an important purpose.

Is honors frivolous? Have a glance at the titles that grace the sample syllabus page of the NCHC website: “Monsters and Marvels,” “The Seven Deadly Sins,” and “Sex, Freud and Morality” all sound interesting, but not immediately useful. While there are honors programs in professional programs such as nursing and education, for many students the norm for honors is the college-wide program with a curriculum that generally substitutes for some or all general education requirements. The courses might form a coherent core sequence, shaped by the logic of a particular approach to historical, philosophical or social themes, or they might offer a constantly changing array of idiosyncratic topics developed by a rotating pool of professors recruited to teach for honors. Regardless of the model, most students experience honors as members of small classes discussing big questions with little regard to immediate utility.

This focus on ideas rather than utility is currently a problem because the attention of politicians (and so university administrators) is focused on making higher education lead directly to success in the “real world.” The rhetorical implication is that poetry, history, and culture come from a different planet than the laws of nature and economics (philologists are from Mars?). As low-enrollment programs with a tenuous connection to the reification of “reality” are cut, champions of honors should ask themselves what, if anything, they can say to defend the usefulness of honors to the university.

A decade before Helmholtz warned against the exclusive pursuit of utility in science, John Henry Newman, newly appointed as rector of the Catholic University of Dublin, made a similar appeal in his *Idea of a University* (1852). Then as now, various advocates debated the purpose of a

higher education, and many criticized the impractical, useless model of education at Oxford. In his classic response to this attack, Newman elucidated a conception of university education that has been influential ever since. Education for a particular profession or vocation, Newman argued, is by its very nature the means to an end: the making of money or the training of a particular kind of professional, for example. Such a vocational education is servile since it serves an end other than itself (88–90). A liberal education, on the other hand, has no such ulterior purpose or use. Quoting Aristotle, Newman noted that while useful possessions “bear fruit,” liberal possessions are used only for their own sake, and when they are used “. . . nothing accrues of consequence” (89). A liberal education is the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake and for the pleasure it gives the mind. While the useful arts and sciences are to be praised for the goods they bring, Newman claims that a liberal education, although pursued for its own sake, brings about a desirable end in the kind of knowledge it grants the learner.

The knowledge Newman defends is “informed, or . . . impregnated by reason” (91); it is a habit of mind that allows its possessor to properly balance differing perspectives and that “sees more than the senses convey; . . . reasons upon what it sees . . . [and] invests it with an idea. It expresses itself, not in a mere enunciation, but by an enthymeme” (92). This vision of the power of rational knowledge makes it an active faculty rather than a substance that can be picked up and redistributed. It is, Newman insists, “an acquired illumination, . . . a habit, . . . and an inward endowment” (93). In the twenty-first century we talk about the power of life-long learning or the importance of having critical-thinking skills. These concepts seem to have evolved from Newman’s conception of a dynamic power that the liberally educated learner possesses. In honors programs we foster conversations that seek to bring out a critical power in students that they can apply to questions in any field; we seek to make students part of a community of scholars who enjoy learning for its own sake; and we aim to make honors students the kind of independent seekers of truth who apply their “acquired illumination” to research projects that bridge the gap between the theoretical and the practical.

A liberal education can, of course, make a student better able to undertake any number of other activities, including useful professions. Having a habit of mind that allows one to focus disciplined reason on any particular problem can only be an asset, particularly in a rapidly changing world like Newman’s or (*a fortiori*) our own. A liberal education is part of a formation of character and intelligence that students need, and this justification is often offered today for the existence of general education classes. As the quotation from Helmholtz implies, economically valuable discoveries in science will follow from the disinterested pursuit of pure, theoretical knowledge.

Similarly, Newman suggests, a powerful mind will be able more easily to realize all sorts of practical goals, but such a mind is the product of a course of study that seeks knowledge for its own sake.

To those who argue that a liberal education is a pleasant luxury but too expensive to pay for given current exigencies, the Helmholtz/Newman tradition provides a compelling answer. If we turn our attention to solely practical ends for education, we will, paradoxically, undermine the very habits of mind that have enabled us to turn our learning to valuable account. We can create an army of workers with particular vocational skills that may serve the needs of the moment, but, as circumstances change, those who can change with them will have to take a broad view of circumstances and understand rationally how best to adapt to them.

Newman and Helmholtz agree that, if we want meaningful economic or practical success, we must devote ourselves with true purity of intention to the pursuit of “useless” knowledge. This claim resonates strongly in the honors tradition; it is a classic argument for the kind of liberal education that many honors programs undertake to provide. A program that seeks to serve all students will typically satisfy the general education requirement, and from this necessity a broad set of honors values has arisen: that particular content matters less than the mental exercise; that critical thinking and the life of the mind are ultimate goals; and that honors education can leaven all sorts of different educational paths and careers. It is not just our mission statements and brochures that are full of exhortations to excellence, but also our hearts. As honors teachers, administrators, and scholars, we have an appreciation for the habits of mind that transcend disciplinary boundaries, and we seek to help students become the kind of independent thinkers who can not only do research but also imagine and perceive the kind of particular projects that will yield the most interesting results. We can accomplish these goals only through an education that aims at more than a skill set or job training; we offer an education that aims to encourage the growth of what Newman called “an acquired illumination.”

We see bright students flourishing and growing thanks to honors education, a phenomenon that can be hard to explain to those unfamiliar with the process. We may find that we need to translate the messages of both Newman and Helmholtz into the quantitative dialect of assessment in order to share it effectively, especially with those who have the power to shape the modern university. We can try to translate the marvelous prose of Newman into numerical terms, however imperfectly. When assessment does not offer proof to justify our faith in honors general education programs, we should question both the design of the studies that generated them and the effectiveness of our curricula. If we find that our classes are not helping students achieve a true

liberal education, we can take advantage of our NCHC connections to improve our programs. We must be confident that our aims are well served by the tools we use to achieve it if we are to remain true to these aims.

We can look back to the nineteenth century for arguments to marshal in defense of honors education in the university. We can strive to help students reach the intellectual and moral goal that different ages have named “practical wisdom,” “a liberal education,” or “critical thinking.” To do so we must communicate the value of such an education in terms that will be well understood by those we seek to persuade. Only then will we be able to defend and continue the long tradition that counts Helmholtz, Newman, and many other luminaries among its followers. Honors students should pursue knowledge for its own sake, however useless it may seem on the surface. This kind of learning creates real intellectual growth and forms the minds of the great thinkers, innovators, and citizens of every generation.

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Can the Elitism of Honors Help Students at Non-Elite Schools?

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In Scott Carnicom's insightful and informative article "Honors Education: Innovation or Conservation?" he adroitly discusses the unusual challenge of maintaining the tried and true pedagogical methods of centuries past in a rapidly changing pedagogical present. The quick succession of teaching philosophies in American higher education over the past few decades creates a certain educational myopia in which any pedagogical principle more than three decades old falls outside the realm of consideration, and its reintroduction becomes an "innovation." Among his many excellent points is the observation that while these honors innovations have received criticisms for being elitist, they have

... historically been an antidote for elitism, democratically leveling the playing field and providing a top-notch education to students outside the hallowed halls of the oldest and/or most prestigious institutions.

Much has been made of the elitist argument, and much in the honors literature goes a long way to countering arguments that attempt to equate honors education with elitism, but I would argue that the case for honors can be strengthened by building on Carnicom's observation that the innovative/traditional pedagogical methods associated with honors education can level the playing field.

In a 2011 *New York Times* article, David Leonhardt explores the persistent socio-economic disparities in the nation's leading colleges and universities. Despite claims to a meritocratic process, the students filling the classrooms of elite institutions are disproportionately affluent. While this observation is hardly shocking given the preparatory educational benefits inherent in an upper-class upbringing, some of the specific observations made by Leonhardt point to an opportunity for honors programs to implement their centuries-old "innovations" to democratize the attainment of higher education success. Only 44% of low-income students with high standardized test scores attend four-year colleges, opting instead for community colleges or no

college at all. Furthermore, of those high-testing, low-income students who do attend a four-year school right out of high school, their completion rate is significantly lower than similar-scoring students from the top earning brackets (“Top Colleges” 1).

In another article by Leonhardt, he explores the wide discrepancy in completion rates between elite colleges and open-enrollment four-year colleges and community colleges. Most striking was the frequency with which low-income students “undermatch,” i.e., choose a school less selective or elite than they would be qualified to attend. Statistically, students who undermatch are less likely to obtain a bachelor’s degree, and the likelihood of undermatching is far greater among low-income students than middle- or high-income students. In fact, about half of low-income students with high academic indicators (GPA and standardized tests) do not attend the best college for which they could have qualified (“Colleges are Failing” 2). Furthermore, students who undermatch are of particular importance for those of us whose honors programs attract students who are underserved in the general curriculum and who represent the top percentage of the institution’s undergraduate population.

Possible explanations for this discrepancy include work/school conflicts, lower levels of family support (both financial and emotional), and reduced access to support services such as paid tutors and preparatory courses. The most important difference, however, might be in the expectation of success. Even among the general population (non-honors) of elite schools such as University of Michigan, University of Colorado, or University of Texas, completion rates are high, and student expectations for success are correspondingly high. At Metropolitan State College of Denver, where I am honors director, the situation is markedly different. Metro State is essentially an open-enrollment, urban institution that has a high percentage of part-time, working, and returning students. Student expectations across the campus vary widely, and no *de facto* expectation of prompt graduation exists. Therefore, if a low-income, high-achieving student undermatches and attends Metro State instead of CU-Boulder, she will be surrounded by students with lower expectations of success than she would encounter had she attended the more prestigious institution. Because many low-income students are also first-generation students, they are especially susceptible to self-doubt and correspondingly more affected by peer groups and expectations (Striplin 2).

To counter the problem of low expectations, Paul Thayer writes that colleges must focus on facilitating positive student-to-student interactions, especially among low-income and first-generation college students (Thayer 4). Here the small class sizes, increased one-on-one interactions with instructors, and—yes—elitism of honors programs serve to democratize higher

education. Many honors programs boast of their sense of community, and it is precisely that community—that “small liberal arts feel”—that can help rectify the disadvantages low-income but high-achieving students experience. I have seen many bright but tentative students shyly enter the honors office with high grades but uncertain graduation prospects. A year or two later, after meeting their fellow honors students through classes and activities and the honors community, they evolve into confident individuals with high academic and professional expectations. In small, discussion-based colloquia, first-generation college students learn the joys of critical thinking, the power of their mind, and the acceptance and respect garnered from fulfilling their potential. In this setting, rather than the large introductory courses where half of the students might be absent from class and then from graduation, honors students are surrounded by high expectations—expectations that, through the wonders of peer pressure, can be absorbed and instilled in students at high risk for dropping out of college.

As higher education falls under increasingly frequent attacks for low retention and graduation rates among the bottom half of the income distribution, academic and political leaders alike are looking for innovative approaches to better serve these students. Ironically, the elitist approach of honors programs, with their throwback pedagogies of small class discussion, mentor-guided independent projects, and focus on critical thinking and problem solving, provides an important tool in addressing this educational need. Honors education is not just innovative or conservationist; luckily for our students, it is both.

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Academically Adept

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Scott Carnicom's essay on "Honors Education: Innovation or Conservation?" asks the question in its title in part because, as he says, "the time is ripe" to probe the impact honors programs and curricula have had and continue to have on our college campuses today. He couldn't be more right about that, and yet I am amazed at how little attention honors typically garners in the larger ongoing conversations about the quality of education today's college students receive, both high and low. In the distressing and much-deliberated *Academically Adrift: Limited Learning on College Campuses*, published this year, the index contains no entry for honors education. Nevertheless, almost every discussion in the book resonated with me in terms of what I know about honors pedagogy, honors faculty, and honors students.

Carnicom asks whether honors education preserves history or spurs innovation, both ideas in service to a larger one regarding honors' impact on the larger institutions that house them. After reading *Academically Adrift*, I wondered if one of those impacts might, in fact, be devastating. Might the on-campus sequestering of honors academic culture—particularly those honors pedagogical tools that Carnicom refers to as residing in honors' "time capsule" of the "best educational practices of the past"—discourage the university's "general population" (to borrow prison lingo) from breaking out of a consumer-based, occupationally-centered, sub-standard version of college learning? Perhaps the mere presence of an honors program suggests that its educational practice is appropriate *only* for honors students, leaving the rest of the campus in the dust. More problematically still, the maintenance of an honors curriculum might exonerate a university community from demanding an honors-level rigor from everyone else. In light of what *Academically Adrift* demonstrates, I wonder if it is really true that honors—as I so often tell myself and my faculty—is really just different and not more difficult.

When Carnicom talks about the preserved pedagogies of honors, he focuses, as a self-confessed scientist, mostly on the sciences' mentor/mentee model of education, one that fosters small class size and one-on-one instruction. This kind of intimate college classroom experience has become a signature pedagogical marker of honors, and it is clearly a benefit to student learning. But the researchers of *Academically Adrift* claim that several other

pedagogical features, features familiar to those of us in honors, are decisive in students' ability to learn to think critically. Two of these strike me as basic to the honors programs with which I have been associated as a student, teacher, and now director: first, the amount of reading and writing required in college classes and, second, the expectations faculty members have of their students' abilities. As a director and recruiter, I work hard to attract excellent students, many if not most of whom are afraid of the workload for which honors on my campus is notorious, but, as an educator and teacher, I cannot ignore the obvious educational benefit of doing a lot of academic writing and reading. Moreover, I can no longer repeat the mantra that honors is not more difficult but just different: it is both, and, as *Academically Adrift* makes clear, that is not a bad thing.

Richard Arum and Josipa Roksa, the primary authors of *Academically Adrift*, claim that higher education in the United States has begun to suffer from a range of problems, including what Ernest Boyer thirty years ago termed the shifting "priorities of the professoriate" (6). The current context of this shift is largely economic. Our increasingly ill-funded higher education system attempts to enroll more students than ever, keeping higher education an obtainable goal for the masses *and* tuition revenues rolling in. University staffers now treat students like clients, which means doing everything they can to give these clients what they want; of course, what students want, as we all know, is not necessarily what they need. The observation of one of the students cited in the study says it best:

I hate classes with a lot of reading that is tested on. Any class where a teacher is just gonna give us notes and worksheets or something like that is better. Something that I can study and just learn from in five [minutes] I'll usually do pretty good in. Whereas, if I'm expected to read, you know, a hundred-and-fifty-page book and then write a three-page essay on it, you know, on a test let's say, I'll probably do worse on the test because I'll probably wouldn't have read the book. . . . I rarely actually do reading assignments or stuff like that, which is a mistake I'm sure, but it saves me a lot of time. (4)

Undoubtedly it does.

Given the clear desires of this student/client and the over-emphasized role of the student evaluation in tenure, promotion, and merit pay reviews, it is not particularly shocking what Arum and Roksa found regarding the assignments the 2,322 college students surveyed in their study said they were given in their courses:

Fifty percent of students in our sample reported that they had not taken a single course during the prior semester that required more than twenty pages of writing, and one-third had not taken one that required even forty pages of reading per week. Combining these two indicators, we found that a quarter of the students in the sample had not taken any courses that required either of these two requirements, and that only 42 percent had experienced *both* a reading and writing requirement of this character during the prior semester. (71)

As Arum and Roksa say, in an effort to state the obvious, “if students are taking courses without significant reading and writing requirements, it is probably unreasonable to expect them to develop skills to improve on performance tasks that require critical thinking, complex reasoning, and written communication” (73). Nevertheless, as the two also note, teaching undergraduates how to “think critically” remains one of the most often cited goals of college faculty today; 99% of college faculty “say that developing students’ ability to think critically is a ‘very important’ or ‘essential’ goal of undergraduate education” (Arum and Roksa, 35).

I find it disconcerting to read these descriptions of administrators and faculty who seem to have given up the rigor ghost. We are in the middle of a curriculum revision in my current program, and I have been working hard to convince my faculty that we must revise our requirements to keep the program attractive to those excellent students who nevertheless want to make sure they have plenty of time for play, which, according to Arum and Roksa, occupies 51% of their week while just 16% is spent either in class or studying (97). I have found myself trying to convince veteran honors instructors that honors should not necessarily be more difficult, just different. Reading Arum and Roksa, though, has made me not only rethink my administrative impulses but also look more carefully at the mantra honors directors chant for prospective honors students: *we’re not harder, we’re just more interesting*.

I think this mantra is wrong. Honors is more rigorous and also more intriguing—probably the latter because of the former. The first semester they are on campus, ECU honors students take a six-credit hour Honors Rhetoric course, team-taught by philosophy and English professors. These students write, on average, ten pages of academic prose a week. Such constant production of synthesizing discourse is hard for freshmen not accustomed to that level of rigor. Of course, the workload in Rhetoric, as we call it, is legendary at ECU: we have lost a fair number of new students to their fears of it; we have held “How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love Rhetoric” support sessions in our honors residence hall; and it is the course I am most likely to hear about from alumni of the program, who spontaneously Facebook me years

later to tell me about its virtues. Whatever euphemisms I use in my recruiting junkets, Honors Rhetoric is just plain difficult—different, yes, but also difficult.

Likewise, the program in which I taught before coming to ECU had legendary nine-hour midterm and final written exams. Students in our large interdisciplinary course were expected to produce four typed academic essays that analyzed and synthesized multidisciplinary lectures, weekly films, and difficult readings. Students had to digest and combine these texts and ideas, answering both disciplinary and interdisciplinary questions on the in-class essay tests. While students hypothetically could (and did) avoid doing chunks of the reading over the course of the semester—they had choice among the essay questions they could answer—the exams were still killers. I was always thankful that I only had to grade the test and not take it.

I would like to assuage the fears of our potential ECU honors students and tell them that our courses are not more rigorous but more innovative, more original, more fun, but I would be lying or at least telling a half-truth. These courses are more difficult because of the quantity of reading and writing assigned in them and the quality of writing we expect. Because of the difficult work we assign in these courses, the students in our honors program have a much better chance of learning those clichéd but nevertheless critical thinking skills we all want them to master. I feel confident that this rigor is a shared trait in most honors curricula and that this ramping up of the typical college workload is part of what will insure that our students not only do better in college but enjoy it more.

The fact that we expect our honors students to do better work is another motif in *Academically Adrift*'s story of student failure and success. According to Arum and Roksa, those students who "reported that faculty had high expectations scored twenty-seven points higher on the CLA (Collegiate Learning Assessment test that was the primary instrument in this study) in 2007 than those who reported that professors had low expectations" (94). Faculty members naturally expect more of honors students; we see them as smarter than other students, better prepared, more likely to do the work and care about it. Whether or not these expectations are well-founded, they produce better student work. I remember working particularly hard in courses I took with our honors director in my undergraduate honors program because, although we often had no clue exactly what he was talking about, he talked to us as if we did. We had to meet him on his intellectual ground. That is powerful pedagogy and is, I think, what honors is about.

Academically Adrift has gotten tremendous attention because of the scary story it tells. There is plenty not to like about the book: the lazy, self-aggrandizing faculty members the authors blame for lack of student learning are not

typical of the faculty with whom I have worked at three universities; and the book largely ignores the connection between plummeting state-level funding for education and the consumer culture that now guides university planning and recruiting priorities. Its findings are fascinating and potentially transformative, but it has its own critical weaknesses and ungenerous assumptions. Nevertheless, its appearance has fostered both local and national conversations that are bound to lead to the resteeering of more than a few university vessels. For me, the book clarifies why what we do in honors is critical: namely, that we ask of our students what needs to be asked of them in order for them to succeed as students, as thinkers, and as future leaders and innovators in our society.

Honors has it right. But what does that mean for everyone else? I worry about faculty members who have quit demanding difficult work from their students because I know that students try to live up to the expectations of their instructors. I also worry that the existence of an honors program might contribute to the lowering of expectations across the rest of a campus. However, as Arum and Roksa say at the end of the book, “each institution can look within, as opposed to only looking across, to learn what works and what does not. High-performing students within institutions can serve as guides for thinking about and implementing meaningful change” (117). My experience has been that high-performing students have appreciated the rigor of their honors courses, and I like to think that their appreciation of hard work has an impact on their peers outside the program and throughout the university. Despite the challenge of recruiting students who are afraid of the hard work, I think it is time I herald our program’s difficulty, which is what will matter to them as they work their way through it and look back on all the ways it has moored them in their own curiosity, self-assurance, and vigor rather than sending them out to drift in caution and lost opportunity.

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Extra Breadth and Depth in Undergraduate Education: The Institutional Impact of an Interdisciplinary Honors Research Fellowship

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The Brackenridge Summer Undergraduate Research Fellowship, a program administered by the University Honors College (UHC) at the University of Pittsburgh, is one example of the combined tradition and innovation that Scott Carnicom describes in his lead essay for the Forum on “The Institutional Impact of Honors.” By locating traditional disciplinary research projects within an innovative interdisciplinary context of students from all undergraduate majors, this summer research program demonstrates that tradition and innovation are not just compatible but symbiotic. The program also demonstrates that, in providing greater breadth as well as depth in the undergraduate experience, an honors-sponsored program can have a significant impact on the success of the institution as a whole.

The UHC at Pitt is unusual in its institutional context and impact because it is not a membership organization; that is, it has no separate admission or application process by which students gain access to what it provides. While students can participate in UHC in identifiable ways (coursework, advising, intellectual community, and a bachelor of philosophy degree), the overall mission of UHC is to promote extra breadth and depth in undergraduate education and to help those inclined toward such goals find each other. For these kindred spirits, “good enough” does not suffice. They share a willingness to work harder than necessary simply because they enjoy it. The intrinsic curiosity of students sought by and drawn to UHC opportunities does not show up via quantitative measures; there is no SAT score for inquisitiveness. It takes a lot of hard work within the larger institution for us to find these students and for them to find us, but the university as a whole benefits from the mutual quest.

The Brackenridge is one way that students find us. It is a highly competitive fellowship that promotes depth in the form of disciplinary research and breadth in the form of interdisciplinary community. While the Brackenridge selection committee is concerned with the content of what applicants write, we are at least as concerned with how they write it. All Brackenridge applications include a letter of support from a faculty sponsor; thus, we rely on faculty to oversee the content of the proposal. Perhaps in contrast to other research programs, though, content mastery is not our only goal; we also stress interdisciplinary community. We select applicants for how well their proposals indicate an awareness of people who are not specialists in their academic areas. The basic expectation is that they will do work that would impress specialists in their fields, but applicants who set themselves apart show an ability and willingness to reach out to the non-specialist, reflecting the goal of intellectual breadth appropriate to undergraduate education without compromising the disciplinary depth that exhibits expertise.

Historically, forty students, or roughly one third of the typical pool of applicants, are awarded Brackenridge Fellowships each summer. Weekly meetings begin in mid-May, usually with three students presenting their research at each meeting. The presentations last around thirty to forty minutes, followed by question and answer periods usually lasting at least that long. The spirited nature of the discussions helps presenters grapple with fundamental issues in their fields and helps audience members representing many majors learn what the fundamental issues are in fields other than their own.

What distinguishes Brackenridge is that the community of researchers includes students across the disciplines. Since fellows address an audience composed of students from a wide range of majors, we tell them, "This could be the most challenging audience you will face: a room full of smart people who don't know what you're talking about!" Presenters cannot hide behind jargon; any technical terms must be articulated in a way that is comprehensible to an intelligent non-specialist. Presenters, therefore, must understand their projects at a fundamental level.

An annual four-day retreat at Pitt's Johnstown campus is a highlight of the summer. On top of research presentations, participants enjoy additional forms of fun, intellectual and otherwise, enabling them to get to know one another and benefit from one another's diverse intellectual interests. We also hold discussions based on a common reading about the role of research in undergraduate education. Students are often surprised to learn that the program administrators could take a skeptical view, raising the question of whether the prominence of research in the modern university might be detrimental to undergraduate education. Does faculty attention to research mean teaching suffers? Ideally, we have concluded, the relation between research

and teaching mutually reinforce each other such that students and faculty benefit from complementary intellectual ventures.

Considering the institutional impact of Brackenridge on the University of Pittsburgh raises interesting issues since the impact UHC has on Pitt more broadly is especially complex. Given that UHC has no separate admission, any effects Brackenridge has on UHC will necessarily impact Pitt more broadly. For example, UHC at Pitt cannot drain off the best students from the broader community since honors students here are not sequestered into their own exclusive community; therefore, UHC opportunities cannot subvert larger Pitt values. Brackenridge, in keeping with UHC's broader mission, promotes extra depth and breadth in undergraduate education.

A striking feature of the interdisciplinary community created by Brackenridge is that it enhances the disciplinary depth of those who participate in it, as we see in the great number of Brackenridge participants who go on to complete departmental theses or the bachelor of philosophy (BPhil), a degree that also promotes extra breadth and depth. For the BPhil, students must complete a broad program of study that they propose and that UHC must approve. As the capstone of the BPhil, students conduct their own research culminating in a piece of independent scholarship: an undergraduate thesis, evaluated by a committee of faculty experts, that students defend at a public event.

Roughly fifty students per year from a relevant population of about 10,000 undergraduates participate in Brackenridge, and Brackenridge students earn approximately forty percent of BPhils conferred, a degree earned by fewer than one percent of Pitt undergraduates. Further testimony to the success of Brackenridge is the number of its participants who have gone on to win prestigious national and international scholarships. Since 2003, fifty Brackenridge participants have gone on to win such awards, including twelve Fulbrights, eight NSFs, seven Goldwaters, three Humanity In Action Fellowships, two Mellons, two Udalls, a Churchill, and a Gates Cambridge.

Thus, we see that innovative and interdisciplinary approaches to traditional research and specialization create the kind of honors experience that Carnicom advocates. The values of extra disciplinary depth and intellectual breadth, fostered by an interdisciplinary community of undergraduate researchers in Brackenridge, are alive and well at Pitt. These values enhance not only the educational experience of participating students but also the reputation and success of the whole university.

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Conservation, Experimentation, Innovation, and Model Honors Programs

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Scott Carnicom, we agree, is correct in noting that most honors programs today draw students together in an intellectual oasis that includes “individualized teaching practices (e.g. independent research, tutorials, small classes)” and that is, in fact, “conserving the liberal arts tradition that is consistent with Aydelotte’s vision.” While we agree with this description, we contend that it is incomplete, that conservation, though important, is but one component of effective honors programs. Drawing from a variety of samples across the country, we have found that the most successful ones share a common configuration, a trilateral approach: beginning with conservation; fostering an environment of experimentation for learners and mentors; and producing innovation in pedagogy, student learning, and research. The synergy created among these three emphases is essential to preserving the vision and values that pervade all high-quality honors programs.

These three key elements are equally important for the whole of higher education because they provide a structure for building rigor and relevance in the curriculum and for supporting student success. An additional role for honors programs should thus be academic leadership. The overarching commitment of honors to liberal learning is especially relevant today, given the pressure from various constituencies to focus on career preparation at the expense of traditional education. Carnicom understands this potential barrier to liberal learning: “Society,” he observes, “has become more focused on how the professoriate grades than how we teach, and a college education is viewed as a simple, transitory commodity to be traded for a high-paying vocation.”

Experienced faculty teaching in honors programs also understand this threat and often are the stakeholders who move their colleagues to develop a learning environment that is receptive to and advances new ways of considering what and how students learn. Achieving this alternative paradigm requires looking beyond inherited methods of teaching to find a laboratory where students and faculty can examine all aspects of the human condition and can make connections to construct an authentic life. “This means a life

that accepts no belief as authoritative simply because it has been handed down by tradition or become familiar through habit, a life that questions all beliefs and accepts only those that survive reason's demand for consistency and for justification" (Nussbaum 9).

In his conclusion, Scott Carnicom notes: "The better reason to value honors, however, is that it fosters the best educational practices of our culture's history, maintains a tradition of critical inquiry that transcends disciplinary boundaries, promotes creativity, and prepares students to become learners, thinkers, innovators, and leaders for the rest of their lives." If we want to assess the contributions of honors to post-secondary education, we need to pinpoint some of its precise enabling characteristics to appreciate the depth of its accomplishments. Among them should be the structures within programs that engender integrative learning, approaches to curriculum that sustain creativity, and practices that ensure genuine development among faculty who become involved with teaching in honors.

One fundamental attribute of model honors programs is a variety of experiential learning, from laboratories to service learning to student co-teaching to original research and beyond. As early as 1979, Ormond Smythe wrote about the ramifications of immersion learning and practical experiences in the context of liberal arts, and concluded:

Theoretical study and critical thought are essential as sources of form, structure, and discipline. But in the absence of real acts with real consequences, the discipline is incomplete, and the moral aspect of liberal education becomes as abstract and as remote from the practical as is metaphysics. This is where experiential learning may make its most profound contributions to the liberal arts—and this is where the liberal arts most need a healthy dose of real experience. (11–12)

His points were brought home to us in an early NCHC Faculty Institute on City as Text™ (CAT) in El Paso. As a guest facilitator, he participated throughout the program. He commented at the end that for the first time he saw Kolb's entire experiential learning wheel spin around twice in three days, and he helped us to articulate the results in both our perception of crossing borders (El Paso/Juarez) and our understanding of how our own lens sought out the images on which we reported.

As NCHC members know, the use of the CAT approach to experiential learning is increasingly common among honors programs. Consider that the larger context of any inquiry takes students outside a classroom into the world and does so in a way that locates them in the object of exploration, shifting their framework and deepening their insight. Being implicated—or, as we say

during CAT forays, being participant/observers—changes the inquiry and the inquirer. Those of us who teach in honors and direct programs need, therefore, to find a means of expanding classes to embrace this kind of open and open-ended experiential learning.

One avenue toward this kind of learning is the creation of new academic structures. Typically such innovations require the sort of flexibility and independence offered by honors programs. Honors courses that satisfy graduation requirements but are designed by honors faculty are one starting point. These courses can be sequenced to move from concrete accumulation of knowledge to comparative analysis and inventive modes of pursuing new knowledge; a full four years of honors involvement allow this sequencing. Modest adjustments in scheduling permit the inventing of whole course clusters, innately cross-disciplinary if they function as a whole, into which experiential laboratories can be inserted to promote student engagement in the process and ownership of the product.

Programs that include sufficient course credit to provide a robust interaction among students and between students and faculty (enabled by an honors center, the seminar format of courses, and all the elements mentioned by Carnicom) result in a learning community that is enriched by a variety of disciplinary expertise and thus multiple languages of discourse, each rooted in disciplinary depth but expanding into a broader context. Advanced honors electives, if they persist in their cross-disciplinary thrust, become agents of sustained, high-level intellectual conversation that is a powerful antidote to the sometimes mindless and contradictory culture flourishing around our students. In complex programs, honors students who continue their participation throughout their undergraduate study emerge with the skills to analyze their world, and to enter that world with a nuanced grasp of how to understand it.

A seldom-discussed value of honors programs is curricular collaboration. Complex programs that focus on experiential learning can have an extraordinary impact on the faculty who teach in them. In our own experience of the planning sessions required for teamwork, the going is often rough: a perpetual atavistic pull drags us all back to our ancient memory of long-gone professors. Everyone needs to set those memories aside in order to construct together the shape and content of cross-disciplinary courses. Persistence in honors among faculty often suggests, however, that despite the initial difficulty of accepting the approaches of our colleagues, the excitement of the courses and rewards of working with students in new ways is sufficient to bring us back again and again.

Even individually presented coursework, when it is vetted by honors committees that include substantial participation of students among the faculty, has a transformative effect, largely because student commentary on the

proposal stages of a course design is often surprising. Inevitably faculty making proposals express awe and admiration once they have submitted to this kind of peer review, which is powerful, persuasive, and usually unfamiliar. This process at our university led us to see engagement with honors as an opportunity for deep professional development.

One of us, Gladys Palma de Schrynemakers, teaches a social science core course and advanced honors electives in the LIU Brooklyn University Honors Program. The social science core course introduces lower-division students from various majors to disciplinary theories and practices, exploring a framework of societal issues through the lens of a multi-disciplinary approach that includes history, sociology, anthropology, psychology, and political science. The interdisciplinary and trilateral structures of the course are linked by using what Martha Nussbaum refers to as Socratic pedagogy, an approach that allows students to “learn to probe, to evaluate evidence, to write papers with well-structured arguments, and to analyze the arguments presented to them in other texts” (55) .

By the end of the semester, students are not simply participating in the discussion but are leading the dialogue as they present their own original, theory-based research in poster presentations. For example, one student applied Erving Goffman’s theory of “The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life” and applied it to social media like Facebook. The student surveyed a Facebook group to furnish her data. The research was presented in class, at an annual NCHC conference, and at the National Conference on Undergraduate Research (NCUR). The student then continued her research and presentations well beyond the semester while pursuing her pharmacy degree.

An advanced honors elective, *Somebody’s Watching Me: Reality Television and its Audiences*, is a course that examined “popular factual programming,” better known as Reality TV. The course provided students with an outline of the medium’s developmental process, including its historical roots in *Candid Camera*. Other related media included formatted game shows, “real crime” shows, talent shows, “make me over” shows, and individual postings on You Tube. This course allowed students to investigate the sociological, psychological, and philosophical reasons for the success of Reality TV and how multimedia have helped to propel the experience beyond traditional television venues to younger, computer-savvy generations. Using a multimedia approach, students looked carefully at reality programming, particularly in the context of debates it has stimulated in our social and cultural world. An open-source program called Moodle gave students the opportunity to view videos, read blogs, and post written assignments online. The content of the course, the experiential component, and the use of technology created a dynamic learning laboratory for both students and the professor. In

particular the use of academic blogs was a way to “. . . use technology within a constructivist framework[;] . . . such technologies can generate enormous conceptualization power and thus guide our thinking to a deeper and more complex understanding of our student learning, unfettered by one-dimensionality or tied to any one teaching style or method of assessment” (Palma de Schrynemakers 47) .

The multimedia course was specifically designed as a learning laboratory where students could experiment with multiple understandings and expressions of their individual and collective experiences, producing an authentic learning situation. The course created the kind of open-ended dialogue where students “. . . in mutual pursuit of a project [find] additional new perspectives open [and where] language opens possibilities of seeing, hearing, understanding. Multiple interpretations constitute multiple realities; the common itself becomes multiplex and endlessly challenging, as each person reaches out from his/her own ground toward what might be, should be, is not yet” (Greene 21) .

Technology played an important role in the course, helping students construct their own foundation of knowledge and providing this professor with opportunities to develop technology-based formative assessment and to share scholarship about this development in a book chapter. The trilateral configuration of this and similar courses—conservation, experimentation, and innovation—posed unique challenges but was a productive and valuable strategy for enriched teaching and enhanced learning.

The particular details of the ‘innovative’ in honors programs, we believe, have to do with structure, integrative curriculum, primary research, experiential learning, and the lasting impact on faculty who teach in model programs. Other dimensions, too, are important. The relationship of honors to its campus is *sui generis* and can be deeply innovative in its academic structure, in the social element of energetic programs, and in the peculiarly useful marketing these programs provide on behalf of the entire institution. On a national scale, the conceptual apparatus in honors programs that confronts and overcomes fragmentation, that aims intentionally at coherence, was an important innovation when the honors movement took hold in the 1950s and no doubt influenced, decades later, the initiation of learning communities throughout higher education.

The stress on pedagogy in the service of discovery and active learning is equally innovative and has moved us all toward modes of inquiry as an acceptable approach to original research. Above all, the replicability of all the strategies implemented in honors is a great gift to higher education. Contrary to Mark C. Taylor’s critique of education as privileging only the rich, an organically evolved honors model exhibiting all of the attributes mentioned

in this discussion is the epitome of democracy in action, and it offers an example of how to address his key complaint:

This endless fragmentation inhibits communication across departmental boundaries, the university dissolving into an assemblage of isolated silos. The curriculum lacks coherence, integration and overall purpose. The challenge of effective reform is to find ways to create a balance between in-depth study in a particular area and research on emerging problems and questions that do not readily lend themselves to a single disciplinary approach. (139–140).

Carnicom links liberal learning and honors programs. In Taylor's terms, this linkage is a bulwark against vocationalization of undergraduate education for students from fields outside arts and sciences. If programs consciously embrace their potential and willingly create courses and experiences that challenge the silos, they do more than conserve liberal learning; they liberate students and, we suggest, faculty.

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Harry Potter and the Specter of Honors Accreditation

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I solemnly swear that I am up to no good.

—George Weasley’s activation spell for the Marauder’s Map in *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*

In higher education today, faculty morale is in the basement. Salaries are stagnant, benefits are being cut, and so-called perks such as travel money are endangered (try earning tenure without traveling to conferences). Students raised in the era of No Child Pushed Ahead are losing respect for us, administrators treat us like adversaries, and the general public thinks we are brainwashing their children with socialist doctrines. Our leaders have been enthralled by business models of assessment and evaluation, commoditizing intellectual development and exhorting us to increase demand for our “product” as though we were manufacturing diplomas like widgets. Contextualizing the faculty role within the institutional impact of honors education, therefore, is difficult when institutions no longer value faculty contributions beyond generating student tuition dollars.

For those of us still committed to high-quality undergraduate education, however, honors programs are an oasis in the midst of this academic desert. Scott Carnicom ponders a seeming contradiction in the fact that the pedagogical innovation touted by honors educators is in reality the conservation of such traditional ideals as small, discussion-driven classes; I think that honors faculty rightly see such traditions as innovative in comparison to the assessment-driven methods that we are told to employ in other classes. All of this assessment, theoretically tied to improving recruitment and retention of students, may well be hindering the recruitment and retention of faculty, especially those who bring with us not only peer-reviewed publications but also national-level committee service that translates effectively to institutional leadership on faculty senates, school-wide committees, and administrative appointments. Seeds of our groundbreaking scholarship incubate in our innovative classroom practices, subject to far fewer of the invasive assessment instruments applied to our regular courses. What happens to our classes, and in turn our scholarship, when the suggested types of honors assessment

become required and regimented, as might happen if NCHC becomes the accreditation body for postsecondary honors education? Will the freedom and originality that drew us to honors be quashed?

Allow me to elaborate by sharing some of my own experiences. In fall 1992, I taught my first honors composition course. I was working toward my master's degree in Teaching Writing at the same university where I had earned my bachelor's degree and had graduated from the honors program. For the syllabus design project in my fall 1991 Composition Pedagogy seminar, I constructed an honors section of English 101 that focused on issues in gifted education. During the same semester, I received a letter from the honors director in which he was surveying honors alumni for opportunities in professional networking, mentoring, and guest lectures. After speaking with my seminar professor, who also served as the writing program administrator and acting department chair, I arranged for us to meet with the honors director to discuss offering the special honors English 101 section.

To me, a novice teaching assistant, the implementation of the course would simply involve enrolling the twenty incoming honors freshmen in the designated honors section. The reality, however, was that I worked through a series of meetings with various administrators: the admissions officer wondered whether other high-achieving freshmen should be identified and included; the registrar had not previously created a course limited to honors students; the assistant department chair doing the scheduling was concerned that I was stealing all the good students from the other 101 sections. Navigating these concerns was an excellent introduction to a career in honors, and, in the end, everyone approved my initial proposal. Seventeen of the twenty incoming honors freshmen could fit my course into their schedules, and the class worked so well that all parties agreed to revive a long-moribund English 102H for the following term with me and all the students returning.

Many people benefitted because my writing program administrator and honors director were willing to take a risk. After I graduated, the revived honors composition course was taught by senior faculty. The honors program saw a dramatic increase in participation at the end-of-year honors retreat because the freshmen had bonded and felt comfortable with taking an out-of-town trip together. I started down a professionally and personally rewarding path in honors education.

Flash forward to the present day. For the past decade, I have asked my honors composition students to write a website analysis, book analysis, journal analysis, annotated bibliography, and research paper on a topic related to their majors. Over the past few years, however, I have been fighting an uphill battle against AP, dual enrollment, and the elimination of honors composition as a requirement for our honors program. In 2008, the honors director raised

the enrollment cap for honors courses from fifteen to eighteen to accommodate a larger incoming class, but by 2010 only eight students enrolled in my section. Recently, I wrote an impassioned plea in *JNCHC* for honors students and administrators to reconsider the importance of first-year composition, acknowledging that I needed to meet the students halfway by providing them with exciting, creative material that they had not already covered in high school. In spring 2009, I had taught an upper-level honors seminar on “The Hero’s Journey,” the main draw of which was reading the first *Harry Potter* book at the end of the semester, so I decided to import the core of that seminar into my honors composition course, paring down the reading list to key texts such as Joseph Campbell’s *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, retaining *Harry Potter* and redesigning the five-assignment sequence to focus on researching an individual hero/heroine in primary texts, online sources, and scholarly books and articles.

As I had done in my first honors composition course twenty years earlier, I reviewed my proposed changes with my writing program administrator to confirm that the new assignments would still meet the requirements for a freshman composition course. The honors director and assistant director, however, expressed concerns about what impact the changes would have on the honors program and the English department. I showed them in-progress drafts of the syllabus, daily reading and writing schedules, and assignment sheets for the semester, and I argued that I would use the new material to promote the five core writing assignments and other in-class writing exercises, not turn the honors composition course into a literature class as some faculty tend to do. I had also brought a copy of my vita in case I needed to support my decision with my qualifications: I have been teaching and researching honors composition for twenty years; I literally wrote the book on honors composition; I serve on the editorial boards for *Honors in Practice*, an NCHC-based publication, and *First-Year Honors Composition*, a journal situated in composition studies; and I have made multiple presentations on honors composition at both NCHC and the Conference on College Composition and Communication. I did not have to play that card, though, because the writing program administrator had hinted to me what a key issue might be.

SACS is coming this year.

Yes, I had forgotten that the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools will be conducting our university’s accreditation review this year; thus, I had chosen an inopportune time to overhaul my course. Fortunately, I was able to assure the directors, with the writing program administrator’s support, that the course would be fine for SACS.

That same week, I received the latest issue of *JNCHC*, and I started by reading Christopher Snyder and Scott Carnicom’s article “Assessment,

Accountability, and Honors Education.” Their comments on the position of faculty in honors assessment resonated with me:

Honors programs, for the most part, rely on faculty volunteers who are looking to try something new, creative, and challenging with undergraduate students. Nothing can dampen the enthusiasm of such faculty quicker than to explain that their courses must go through additional committee review and include an assessment plan. . . . Extra work to prove that you are competent in your job is hardly satisfying motivation. (123)

As a lifelong participant in gifted and honors programs, starting in my elementary school years and continuing through my current professional pursuits, I have enjoyed the intellectual freedom and the opportunity to take risks that honors education encourages. I am troubled, therefore, by the growing susurrus in the halls at the national conference about whether NCHC should flex some organizational muscle and become an accrediting body for post-secondary honors education.

I understand how the accreditation process would appeal to directors and upper administrators who have to fight for their schools’ honors programs; one need only review our recent publications and conference programs to see a growing emphasis on administration and assessment, as in the Best Honors Administrative Practices (BHAP) conference thread. Having served on the NCHC Board of Directors, I also acknowledge that beleaguered honors directors need all of the administrative tools we can provide. However, aside from the fundamental problems of how to standardize requirements for diverse honors programs at multiple types of institutions, I fear for the future of the pedagogical originality and risk-taking that honors has afforded to faculty. Faculty participation in honors education has an impact that extends beyond honors to the larger institution: honors programs strengthen working relationships among faculty from different departments and units, leading to increased participation in shared governance opportunities such as institution-wide committees or the faculty senate; working with intellectually curious students reinvigorates faculty members’ approaches to undergraduate education in their disciplines; and honors classes frequently serve as laboratories in which faculty can try something new that they would like to expand into their other classes. Honors accreditation would thus, through standardization, restrict this pedagogical freedom and creativity in ways that would reduce benefits not just to honors but to the larger institution.

When Carnicom invokes Frank Aydelotte in his lead essay, he does so in the spirit of advocating the liberation of honors pedagogy, not the regulation of it. Like many of my honors students, I do not simply think outside the box;

I live outside the box, and sometimes I kick the box a few times for good measure. Surely honors accreditation would curtail my experimentation. I can imagine having to dump *Harry Potter* and return to reading a dozen research papers on stem cells. Before his honors tenure at Swarthmore, Aydelotte was himself a composition scholar at Harvard, Indiana, and MIT, and I like to think that he was partly inspired to title his book *Breaking the Academic Lockstep* because he was tired of reading the same essays over and over, too. Twenty years ago, without the willingness of my professor and my honors director to take a risk in allowing a graduate student to teach a special topics honors composition class, I probably wouldn't have pursued honors education as a vocation, and I certainly would not have had the confidence to tell my current directors, "Trust me, I know what I am doing, and I would not do anything to hurt the students or the program."

Honors programs have not escaped higher education's ever-intensifying focus on career preparation in the face of diminishing budgets and rising tuition costs, and I anticipate a concurrent erosion of what used to be a strong liberal arts foundation in honors. Faculty in the humanities face a special challenge in justifying the teaching of what might be considered unorthodox material that scandalizes other faculty, administrators, students, and the general public: "They're reading *Harry Potter* in a college class? In an *honors* class?!?" No, reading popular works such as *Harry Potter* does not relate directly to pre-professional preparation for medical school or law school or professional engineering licensure, but it does encourage bright, motivated students from all majors to sharpen their critical-thinking skills, to make metaconnections among disciplines, and to engage passionately in their own intellectual development, which is what honors education is supposed to about.

Do we really need to standardize that?

Mischief managed.

—George Weasley's deactivation spell for the
Marauder's Map in *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*

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HARRY POTTER AND THE SPECTER OF HONORS ACCREDITATION

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Emerging from the Honors Oasis

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Eden is that old-fashioned house we drive in every day
Without suspecting our abode until we drive away.

—Emily Dickinson

For many of us, honors is our academic and cultural oasis—a refuge from surrounding institutional strife. Honors is not always an idyllic paradise, of course, but the ongoing intellectual stimulation coupled with the sheer joy derived from working closely with the best and brightest of students has often led me to wonder if this could all be just a mirage. Looking out from the safe haven of honors, however, I have observed a potential danger: the segregation of honors culture from the changing climate of higher education.

In her classic 1934 work *Patterns of Culture*, Ruth Benedict discusses the role of custom and tradition in an individual's cultural experience and belief system. In her study of diverse cultures, Benedict documents the rituals, traditions, and ceremonies that give meaning to our lives. The academy has long recognized the importance of tradition, with the donning of academic regalia at commencement representing one of the many examples of long-standing cultural rituals that add meaning to students' higher education experiences. Encapsulated within the modern academy, honors education is a culture in its own right (see Slavin). We can identify a set of common customs and traditions that shape and are shaped by our experience and belief systems about honors education, including active-learning strategies like City as Text™ and Partners in the Park as well as classical pedagogical approaches such as seminar discussions and one-on-one mentoring. Though we may not have a universal honors culture, we have a shared identity. Indeed, for many of us, the culture of honors gives meaning to our role as educators; we identify strongly with the honors communities on our campuses. Honors also provides opportunities to share our cultural experiences at regional and national honors conferences, where we celebrate our honors culture.

While something to be celebrated and cherished, our strong identification with the culture of honors must also be maintained with caution; just as our Western cultural belief system may cast shadows on our view of other

cultures, so our beliefs about education are filtered through the cultural lens of honors. What we consider to be the best pedagogical approaches stem from our own educational experiences as students and teachers in the honors community. As with any culture, our participation in the customs, traditions, and rituals of honors culture reinforce our convictions about the inherent value of the honors approach. However, we must also ask ourselves: Do we assume that our beloved honors culture is better than the larger institutional culture? Do we consider the honors model to be superior to other educational models? If so, then the preservation of the honors culture may come at the expense of integration with the radically changing institutional landscape.

From the vantage of our oasis, the foundations of honors education seem to be eroding beneath our feet. Recent trends in higher education—such as the push toward career training, the three-year bachelor's degree, and online learning—are incompatible with traditional honors curricula, which are often heavily embedded in the liberal arts. Many honors programs are thus struggling more than ever to attract and retain students from professional schools such as engineering, architecture, education, and business (Hulsey; Noble & Dowling). Honors programs also often exclude non-traditional adult learners, who require more flexible schedules and course offerings, including online courses (Kolowich). Honors could accommodate these students (see Hulsey and Jones & Watson for models), but we too often choose not to because we believe the traditional honors approach is better.

Embracing the assumption that “honors is better” dismisses other educational approaches and affirms the accusation of elitism that, as Carnicom describes, has been cast upon the honors community. In so doing, we create distinctions between our own approaches to education and others within our institution that may alienate us and our students from resources and opportunities. Moreover, by segregating honors education we run the risk of limiting our capacity for innovation, closing ourselves off from pedagogical approaches such as hybrid courses and distance education that diverge from classical educational models. We should instead consider that these approaches might be appropriate or even ideal for some honors learners.

The situation of honors educators today seems similar to that of clinical psychologists fifty years ago when they questioned whether psychotherapy was effective. While the inquiry was legitimate, practitioners in the field soon recognized that this generic question failed to acknowledge individual differences in response to treatment. A better question, as refined by Paul and later Kazdin and others, was: “Which type of therapy is most effective for which groups of people with which sets of problems?” Likewise, rather than assuming that our pedagogies are tried and true for all students, we can instead inquire, “Are classical pedagogies better for preparing our best and brightest

students than other pedagogical approaches?” and, more specifically, “Which pedagogical approaches are most effective for which groups of students with which types of learning styles?” This idiographic approach to honors education prevents us from viewing honors students as a homogeneous group, when evidence suggests that learning styles vary among students of all abilities, including those who are high-achieving (Sternberg, Grigorenko, & Zhang). Honors assessment, while still a dirty word in some circles, provides the tools for answering these questions and thereby justifying our tenets about the value of classical pedagogies. Once we have demonstrated the efficacy of honors education, we have moved beyond assumptions based on ethnocentrism and can debunk accusations of elitism.

Like an oasis, an honors culture is fragile and must be carefully managed if it is to be preserved; it is frequently threatened by dramatic shifts in climate and the surrounding geography. In fact, honors, which is often viewed as a “supplemental program,” is arguably far more vulnerable to institutional and economic changes than other university departments and colleges (Lanier). Yet Benedict reminds us that all cultures are subject to change and that, when faced with cultural shifts, we must consider the rationale used to uphold our cultural rituals and traditions. Rather than assuming that a culture cannot function without its customs, we should instead evaluate the arguments used to uphold its institutions. Each of us must be willing to admit to our cultural biases and be prepared to examine the legitimacy of our claims that honors is better. Only once we have done so can we distinguish our cultural traditions from the essential features of an honors education.

A culture cannot survive without innovation. Fortunately, as Carnicom reminds us, such innovation is a hallmark of honors. Let us not then blindly fight change and reform within higher education. Let us be cognizant of the ways that honors traditions shape our beliefs while remaining open to a diversity of cultures. To be successful, honors educators and administrators must emerge from the oasis to become active and willing participants in institutional change. We may also need to sacrifice rituals and traditions that prove to be too costly to our survival. Otherwise, we may find that honors has become a primitive culture in the larger context of our institution and of higher education.

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The Benefits of Honors Education for All College Students

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As we learn from Scott Carnicom's informative and thoughtful essay "Honors Education: Innovation or Conservation," the lead essay for this Forum, honors education, the brain child of Frank Aydelotte, was designed to "create a more individualized educational experience for gifted students that focused on the creation of knowledge more than its mere reproduction." From the beginning, honors programs and later colleges have drawn and continue to draw students we often identify as "the best and the brightest," and traditional measures bear out such a designation (for a general overview of honors students across and within colleges and universities, see Achterberg and Kaczvinsky; cf. Freyman for a prescriptive view of honors students). While we may agree that honors colleges and programs bring in gifted students, do these students alone deserve an education focused on the creation of knowledge rather than its reproduction? Shouldn't we aspire to this goal for all university and college students? If so, what role might honors colleges and programs have in furthering this lofty aim? Bell argues in general terms for the intervention of honors in undergraduate education, especially at large research institutions (cf. Braid [2009], who takes this idea further and offers suggestions about how honors education could be employed in K-12). In this essay, I would like to point out ways that honors already benefits all students and how it might expand its outreach to the rest of campus.

HONORS STUDENTS

Even when an honors curriculum fulfills all the general education requirements of an institution, as it does at the University of Oregon, honors students still take most of their courses outside of honors. One of the "Basic Characteristics of a Fully Developed Honors Program" is that "program requirements themselves should include a substantial portion of the participants' undergraduate work, usually in the vicinity of 20% to 25% of their total course work and certainly no less than 15%" (Spurrier 193), implying that

honors students typically take at least 75% of their coursework outside of honors. The influence of honors education beyond the perimeters of a particular program is thus substantial as these bright students interact with their peers and teachers outside of honors.

One of the defining features of honors education resides not so much in the stellar array of designer courses we offer as in the students themselves and the kinds of questions they pose. Smart, incisive, quirky, challenging questions coming from students with interests and expertise from across campus do not reproduce knowledge. Rather, they often critique and expose gaps in the basis of that knowledge and have the potential to lead us to new insights and directions of inquiry (for a useful study of the differences between honors and non-honors students, particularly in the area of “deep processing,” see Carnicom and Clump). These talented young men and women bring their engaged and sometimes aggressive curiosity to non-honors classes within and outside of their departments, raising the intellectual stakes for all students; they ask questions that transform lectures and discussions into moments of uncertainty, ambiguity or wonder; and they have the potential to inspire or provoke other students to search for answers on their own. Honors students also meet with faculty to discuss social and political issues outside of class with greater frequency than non-honors students, as noted by Shushok, and thus model greater intellectual engagement as well as acumen.

A critical impact of honors colleges and programs on home universities, then, resides in the students themselves who populate many non-honors courses and commit to departmental majors with all other undergraduates. Although this impact may be obvious to us, we often need to remind our colleagues, administrative and academic, of the fact that many of our most successful and dynamic students, those who often take leadership roles in class and on campus, choose our respective institutions because of honors. In a recent survey at the University of Washington, for instance, 243 of 484 honors students reported that they chose to come here because of the honors program, and 224 of the same stated that they would have gone elsewhere if they were not accepted.

HONORS CURRICULA

The second and equally significant impact that honors colleges and programs can exert on their home institutions lies in their ability to model curricula that hold students responsible for synthesizing their education, a feature made possible because of their small size and target audience. For example, many—perhaps most—non-honors students “box-check” their way through distribution requirements. This approach to general education should not elicit surprise because many students, especially in large universities, are

often forced to select classes that have available space or are offered at a convenient time. Upon completion of their distribution requirements, such students are neither required nor given the tools to reflect on their general education. No one asks students to connect what they have learned in these diverse non-major courses in order to achieve the metacognitive experience that comes from pondering integrative questions and developing one's own core inquiries. Many honors colleges and programs, on the other hand, either have clearly defined general education curricula with specific academic outcomes (e.g., curricula based on the "Great Books," as at University of West Florida) or provide opportunities for reflection through capstone courses (e.g., American University) and/or learning portfolios (e.g., Miami University). Students who complete such programs have the opportunity to integrate what they learn during their time in college.

These days, college and university administrators, particularly in large state institutions, struggle to provide the requisite number of general educational courses with a dwindling faculty and often think about the delivery of such courses in new and efficient ways; these can include mega-classes with clickers or on-line courses with e-texts and e-tests, virtual education for the twenty-first-century student who has grown up wired to the Internet and much of whose social life takes place on *Facebook* and other social media (the Forum on "Honors in the Digital Age" in *JNCHC* 10.2 [2009] is particularly helpful in its discussion of the new technologies in honors education). E-portfolios such as those used by a number of honors colleges and programs could be more widely employed for the integration of non-major course material than is presently the case given that they naturally accommodate the ways in which the modern student communicates and allow for a conscious appreciation of diverse academic and methodological approaches so that all, not just honors, students can approach work in their majors armed with the variety of intellectual strategies presented in their general education courses. An initial investment of time and money is required for large-scale implementation of e-portfolios, but the results, as the widespread success of honors education can show, will more than justify both expenditures. What is more, e-portfolios that cover non-major courses provide colleges and universities with outstanding information for assessing the effectiveness of general education (an outstanding study by Zubziaretta is one example of the extensive literature on e-portfolios; on the use of portfolios in program assessment, see as an example Davies and Le Mahieu).

Another common feature of honors colleges and programs is the opportunity, in some cases requirement, for students to engage in experiential learning—that is, learning outside of the traditional classroom. Braid (2008) offers a compelling essay on the importance of experiential learning in

general, the topic of two NCHC monographs: one edited by Machonis and the other by Braid and Long. Foreign study, community service, student internships, work in faculty labs, leadership roles, and research in support of honors theses serve to underscore the fact that education can exist beyond the formal setting of classes and departments, can teach students that they own their own education, and can set the stage for a life of continuous learning and engagement beyond college. Here, too, honors provides a valuable and useful model for the rest of the college or university.

For potential contributions such as e-portfolios and experiential learning to move beyond modeling and into practice outside of honors, we need to engage our colleagues actively. Some small-scale activities that started in honors at UW have been adopted by the general campus. Entering honors students have long been assigned peer mentors. Three years ago, thanks to the inspiration of an honors student who was president of the Associated Students of the University of Washington, a peer mentoring program was offered to non-honors students. Technologies first used in our foreign study programs (blogs, wikis, vlogs) have been adopted by our Office of International Program and Exchanges. The honors program in Sierra Leone has become the model for other Africa programs run by our university. Some of the community scholars whom we brought to honors now teach elsewhere on campus. This past year we launched the UW Honors Librarian Mentor program with the hope that it will in time expand to include all students. We are currently developing a creativity seminar that will reside in honors but, once established, become available to all students. Having made these contributions to the campus at large, we are starting to be seen as an asset to the whole university and are now regularly consulted regarding a number of pedagogical and programmatic issues.

CONCLUSION

In the past, administrators, faculty, staff, and students across many campuses have often viewed honors education as insular, dedicated exclusively to serving an elite subset of the student population. This view has waned in recent years, presumably due to the increased need universities feel to compete for talented students and to the positive role honors programs tend to play in such competition, as noted by Bell (56–57). Volume 10.1 (2009) of *JNCHC* includes several papers on the topic of honors and elitism that explore the issue from several vantage points. That said, we need to confront what remains of this erroneous opinion about elitism and honors on campus by stressing the fact that honors students contribute their talents and their freely inquisitive natures to all the non-honors classes they take and to the departments in which they major. Secondly, honors directors and deans might

well take the lead in promoting educational models that, with some creative adjustments for larger numbers, can benefit the general student population. As quixotic a goal as it may seem, honors education can exert a significant impact on our colleges and universities if we reimagine our mission as serving all students by bringing in the kind of student colleagues who question traditional academic points of view. We can also export innovative pedagogy developed within our smaller groups that, in the words of Katherine Bruce, “stretch our boundaries . . . challenge us to learn in unexpected places, to learn in unexpected ways” (Bruce 20). The goal of active participation in the creation of knowledge needs to be available to and reachable by every student, and honors has the experience and wherewithal to assist in creating such opportunities across campus.

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Moving Mountains: Honors as Leverage for Institutional Change

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President Gary A. Ransdell has a vision; he wants WKU to be “A Leading American University with International Reach.” Hired back to his alma mater in 1997, the Board of Regents tasked him to undertake a fundamental transformation of the campus. Changing the culture of an academic institution can be compared to moving mountains, but he undertook the challenge. He invested the first years of his presidency on infrastructure, bricks and mortar, curb appeal, student population, and improving the overall financial health of the institution. In 2005, satisfied that the institution was on a solid financial footing and moving in the right direction, he turned his energy to dramatically changing the academic reputation of the institution. The (then) honors program was selected as the vehicle to enact this change, so honors became a top university priority. The president’s strategy was and still is to use investments in honors as institutional leverage as part of the overall transformation of WKU into a leading American university with international reach.

WKU is not the first, or the only, institution to invest in honors education in order to effect institutional change. This strategy goes back to Frank Aydelotte and the creation of the country’s first honors program at Swarthmore in 1922 (Rinn 70) and is seen in the growth of honors education at all levels of higher education. Ransdell’s experience in alumni relations and development at two institutions with robust honors colleges and programs allowed him to see first-hand the role honors can play on a university campus. He understood that a well-designed honors experience can be an institutional transformative investment, not simply a marquee program for the recruitment and care of small number of academically gifted and high-achieving students.

Building a robust honors college or program is not an inexpensive proposition. The per-student cost of an honors scholar in an appropriately funded honors college can rival the cost per student of varsity athletes. Leaders of every academic unit will argue that the funding provided to honors is best

invested in their unit. If an institution chooses to invest \$1,000,000 of reoccurring funds in a single academic discipline, that unit will undoubtedly improve dramatically, but the investment might do little if anything to improve the academic reputation of other departments on campus or the educational experience of students in other units. Less self-interested faculty might argue that the university's finite resources should be invested across a range of academic units, not concentrated in honors. This "let's give everyone something" mentality is undoubtedly equitable, but equally distributed investments are typically so small as to result in no noticeable improvement to any units or the institution as a whole. Ironically, an investment in a university-wide honors structure can have the effect of helping multiple units. Put another way, the concentration of resources in a university honors college can have the effect of diffusing the benefits to more academic units. The key point is that strategically investing resources in a properly constructed honors experience produces opportunities for students and faculty across the university, creating the possibility of enhancing the reputation of the entire university, not just a select department or two.

Appropriate investments in honors education can facilitate one of the fastest enhancements of an institution's undergraduate reputation for academic excellence: success with nationally competitive and prestigious scholarships such as the Fulbright, Goldwater, and Truman. The past several years have seen NAFA, NAFSA, and NCHC job boards and listservs full of advertisements for well-paying new positions related to helping identify and cultivate students for success securing national scholarships. These positions create the kinds of success stories that help justify strategic investments in academic excellence and provide support for agendas of institutional transformation (Brownstein). It only takes a few minutes on any search engine to find a plethora of university websites, press releases, and promotional literature touting favorable comparisons between the home institution and this or that nationally ranked institution in numbers of successfully awarded prestigious scholarships and fellowships, which are a factor in determining university rankings. The annual *Forbes Magazine* ranking of colleges and university, for instance, designates 7.5% of the overall institutional score to success in selected national competition (*Forbes* 12). Universities, seeing the role that honors and national scholarships can play in changing an institution's academic reputation and rankings, are making financial investments based on these trends.

Like many institutions, WKU made the strategic decision to invest in a scholarship office in 2007. Following the standard model, the scholarship office has a university-wide mandate but is housed in and reports to the honors college. The return on investment has been that that WKU can and does

regularly compare itself (favorably) to Ivy League and other top institutions in the nation on select prestigious scholarships. For example, WKU is able to point to recognition by *The Chronicle of Higher Education* as a leading producer of Fulbright Grants for several years running. Student success begets more success, and the investment is changing the way students, faculty, administrators, alumni and donors view the institution. While early success stories in national scholarships were almost exclusively honors scholars, increasingly the applications and successes are from non-honors students. As a result, WKU, like so many other institutions making similar investments, is seeing a transformation. What started as a campus culture of “our students do not apply for those scholarships” has evolved through “those are only for honors scholars” to a burgeoning culture of “any talented, motivated students can and should apply.” In short, universities can use the investment in honors as leverage to transform the institution-wide culture.

A well-developed honors experience also provides major assistance in recruiting both gifted, high-achieving students and, of equal importance, students just below the threshold of honors eligibility. Honors professionals hear regularly from students, “Were it not for the honors college (or program), I would not have applied to your university.” This anecdotal evidence is supported by data published by the Oklahoma State University (OSU) Honors College, which demonstrated that 94.9% of their new honors students in fall 2010 stated that the honors college was “Very Important” or “Somewhat Important” (56.7% and 38.2% respectively) in their selecting OSU as their university. In addition to highly sought-after students, honors may help recruit other students to the institution, students who are not eligible immediately for participation in honors programs or colleges, because honors creates a reputation for excellence that can be marketed and used in recruitment literature. The excitement created by the success of a small percentage of students produces a “halo effect” for the entire university and helps attract other students who may not be as academically gifted but are often just as serious about their university experience. These “solidly average students” are the heart and soul of any university’s student body, and a strong honors program can assist in attracting them to an institution.

At WKU, the period of time corresponding with an emphasis on honors and the creation of an honors college has seen a significant growth in the number of students with a minimum 25 ACT or 1130 SAT—the top 20% of all scores in the nation—electing to matriculate at the institution. Between 2001 and 2005 the percentage of such students at the WKU Bowling Green campus grew by less than one percent (18.2% to 19.1%), but from 2005 to 2009 the percentage grew from 19.1% to over 24% (*Honors College*). This significant growth in students scoring in the top 20% of the country on the

ACT/SAT corresponded with dramatic growth of nearly 33% in the institution overall. Over the past five years, faculty members at WKU have reported a noticeable difference in the number of gifted/high achieving students in their classes. Both quantitative and qualitative data thus demonstrate that investments in honors education can increase the percentage of very good honors and also non-honors students on a campus, thus potentially altering the overall intellectual demographic of an institution.

Anecdotal, experiential, and empirical evidence thus provides support for the proposition that strategic investment in honors education on a campus can be used as leverage to transform an institution. The history of our profession and the discipline of honors education are based on the belief that honors can be and has been used to effect positive change on campus. Progressive presidents seeking an academic transformation on their campus understand that a well-conceived and implemented honors college or program can help move mountains and change the culture of a campus.

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Research Essays

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

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INTRODUCTION

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

METHOD

MEASURES

Global Program Ratings

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

Positive and Negative Aspects of Role

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

Importance and Performance Ratings on Dimensions of Role

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

Who Performs Activities of Each Role

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

Open-Ended Questions

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

Demographic Data

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

ADMINISTRATION OF THE SURVEY

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

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

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

PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS

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

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

RESULTS

STRUCTURE OF THE POSITION OVERALL AND BY INSTITUTION TYPE

Workload

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

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

Course Reduction

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

Monetary Compensation

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

Others with Honors-Related Duties

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

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

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Grouping of Items Composing Roles

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

Importance of the Roles and Items

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

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

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

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

Differences Between Importance and Performance Ratings

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

Open-Ended Questions

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

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

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

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

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

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

DIFFERENCES BY INSTITUTION TYPE

Importance

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

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

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

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

Importance/Performance Discrepancies

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

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

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

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

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

DISCUSSION

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

CONCLUSION

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

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

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

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

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

NOTES

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

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APPENDIX A

Table 1. Workload and Compensation by Institution Type

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

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

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

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

Table 2. Others Helping to Administer Honors by Institution Type

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

**p<.01 in χ^2 tests

*p<.05 in χ^2 tests

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

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

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

Table 3. Continued

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

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

Table 3. Continued

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

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

Table 3. Continued

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

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

Table 3. Continued

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

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

APPENDIX B

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

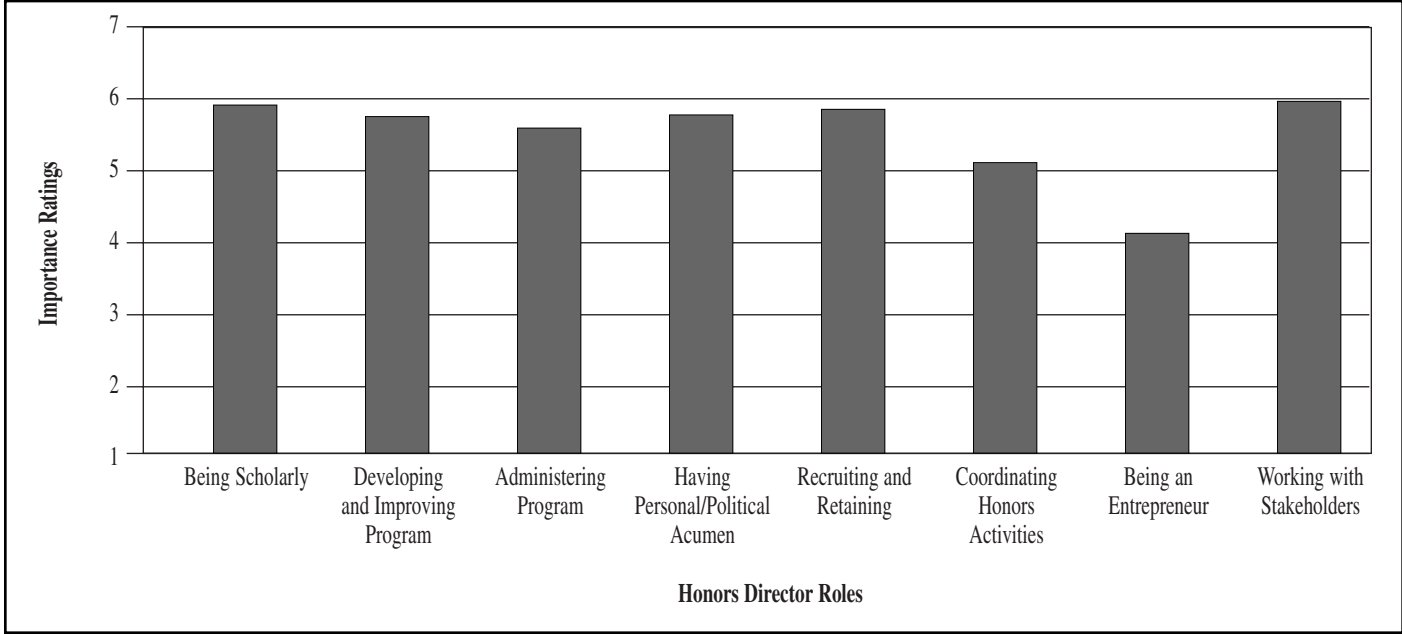
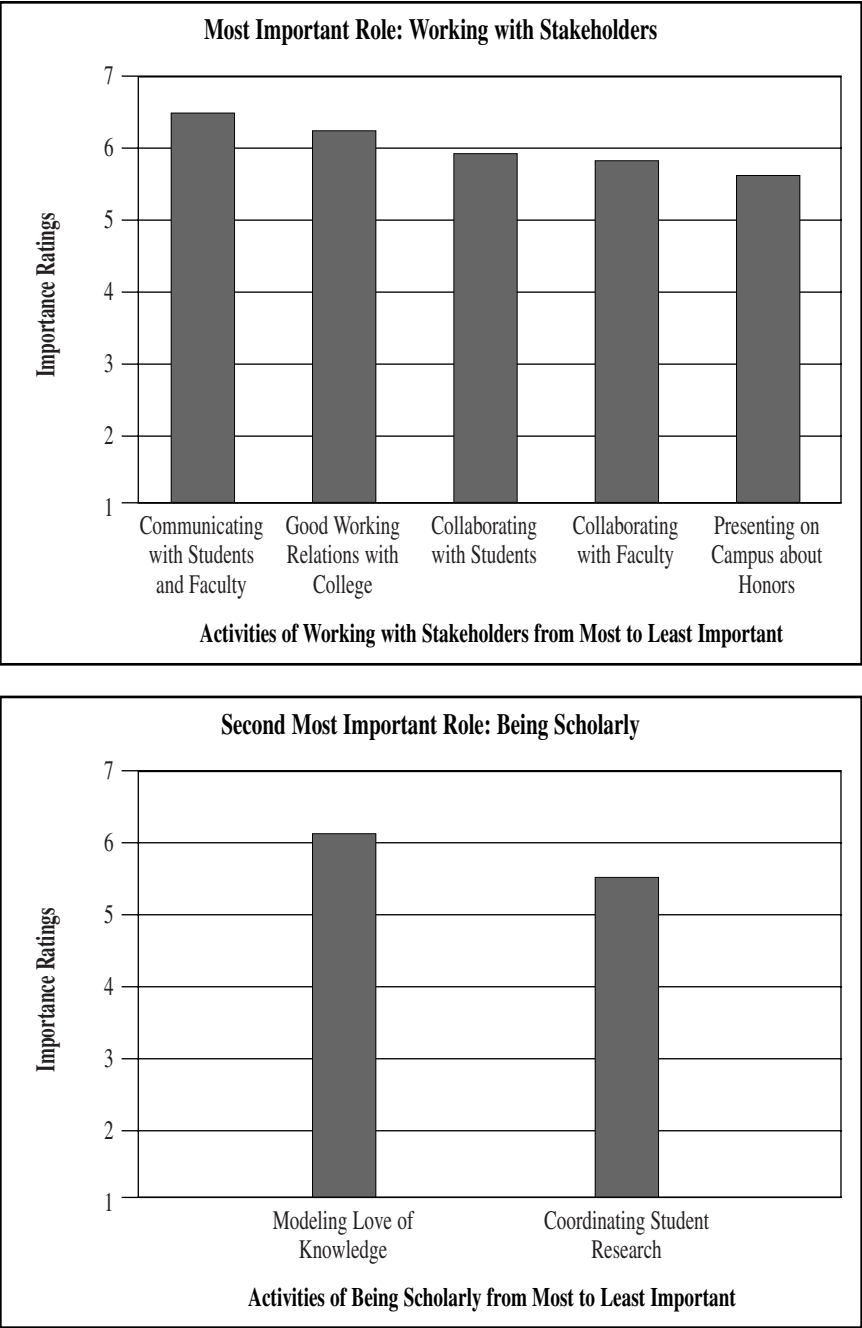


Figure 2. Importance Ratings of Activities of the Three Most Important Roles: “Working with Stakeholders,” “Being Scholarly,” and “Recruiting and Retaining.”



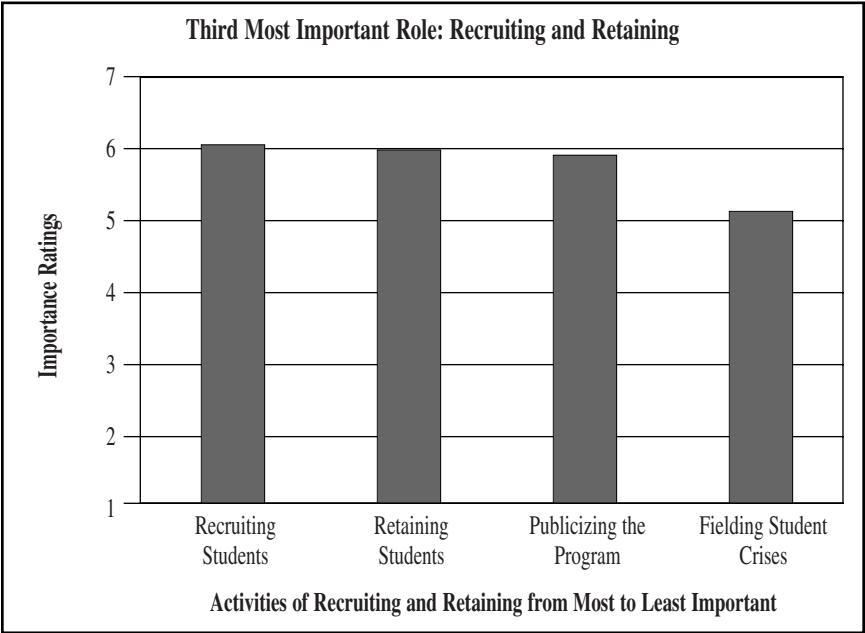
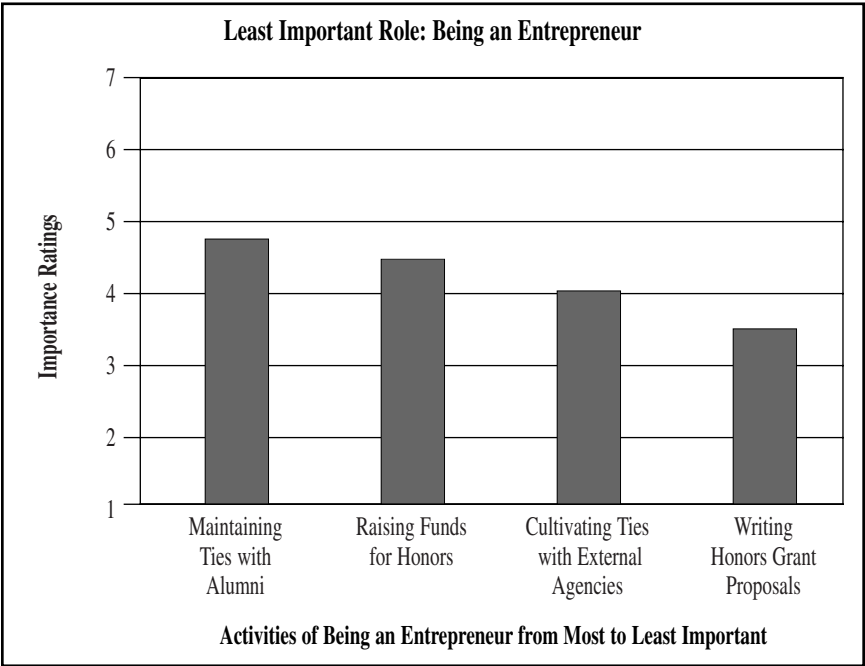


Figure 3. Importance Ratings of Activities of the Two Least Important Roles: “Being an Entrepreneur” and “Coordinating Honors Activities”



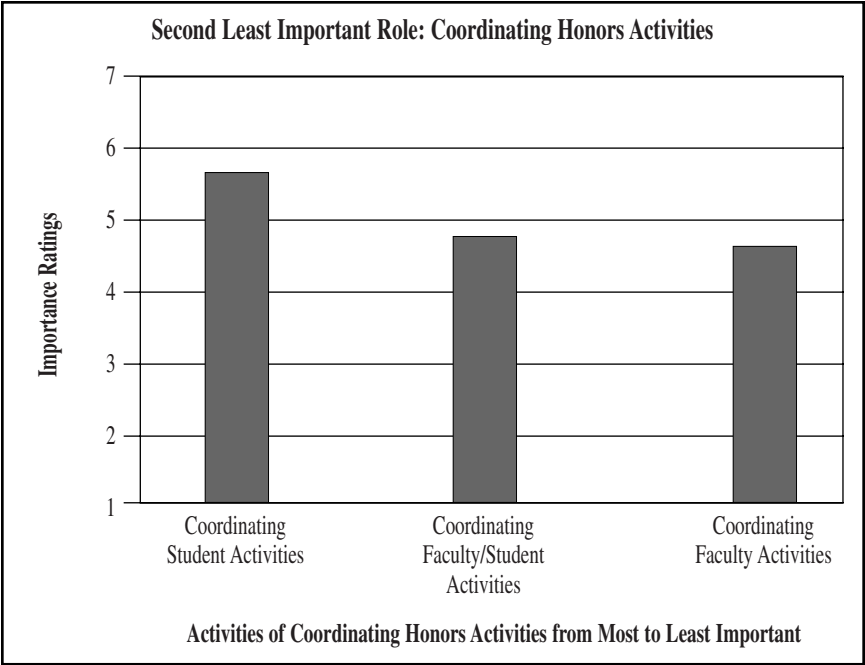
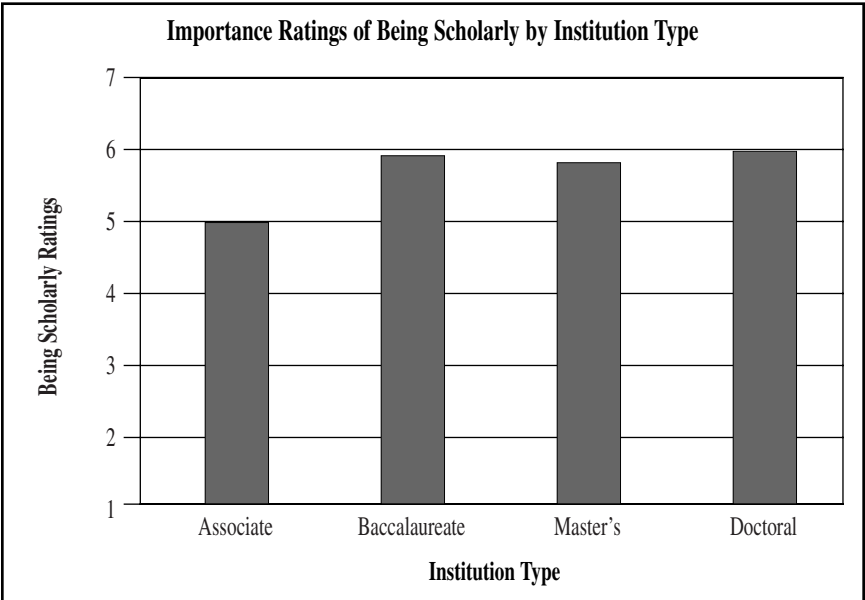


Figure 4. Institutional Differences in Importance Ratings for “Being Scholarly” Role and Coordinating Honors Student Research Item Associated with That Role



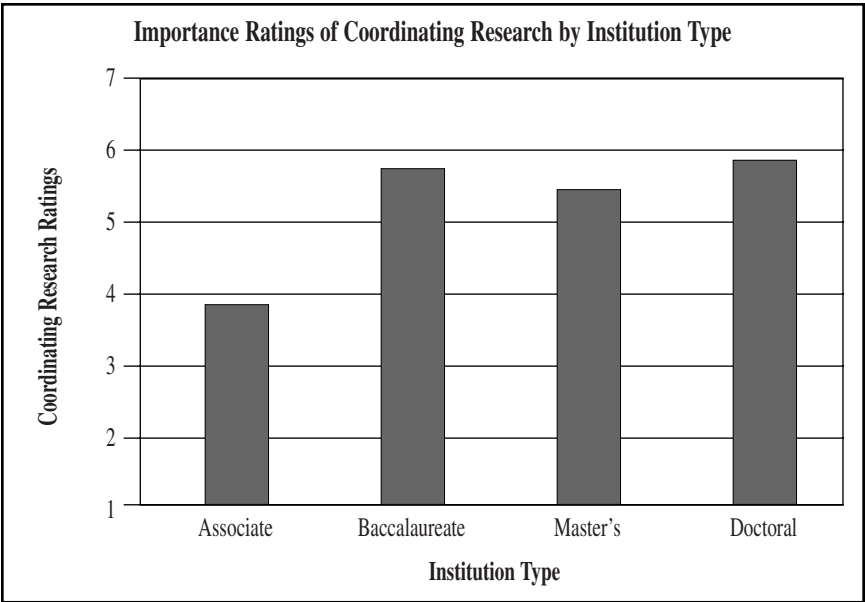
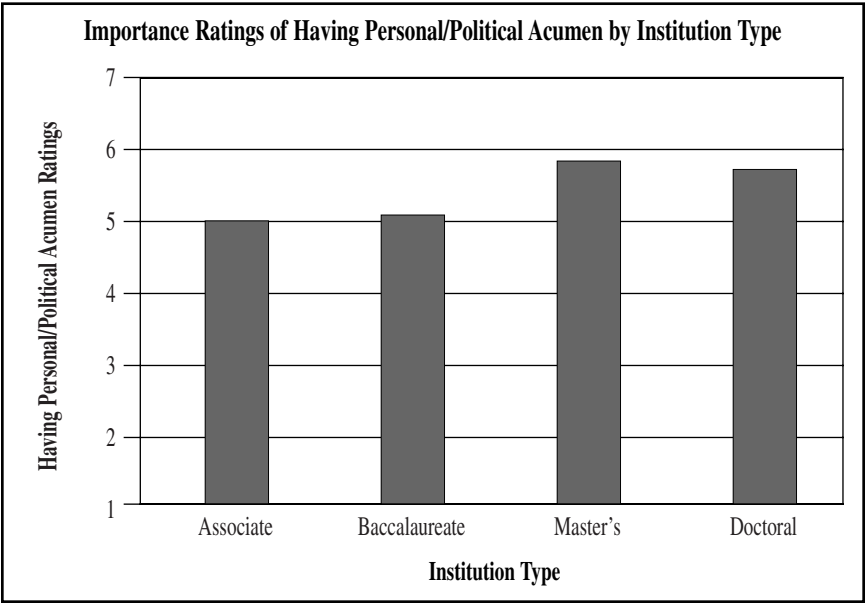


Figure 5. Institutional Differences in Importance Ratings for “Having Personal/Political Acumen” Role and Being Politically Savvy Item Associated with That Role



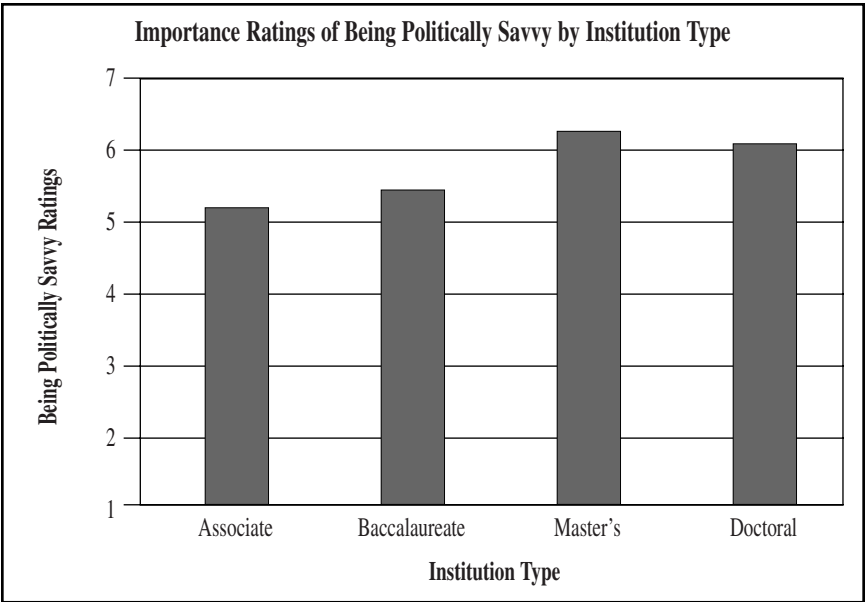
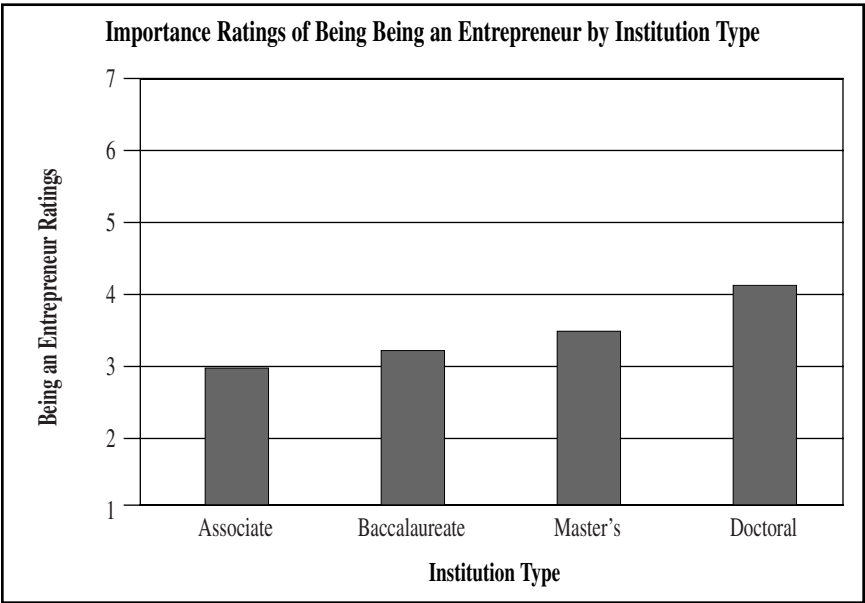


Figure 6. Institutional Differences in Importance Ratings for “Being an Entrepreneur” Role and Raising Funds for Honors and Maintaining Ties with Alumni Items Associated with That Role



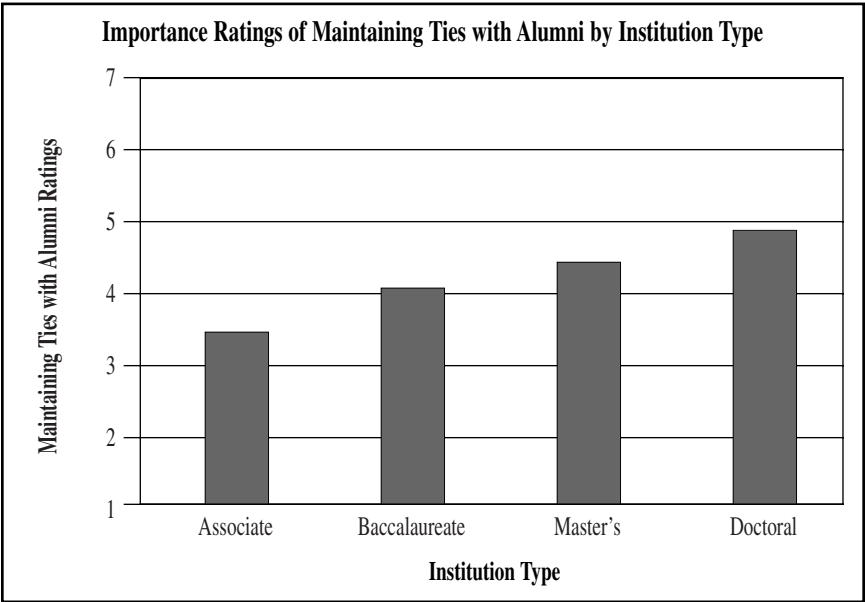
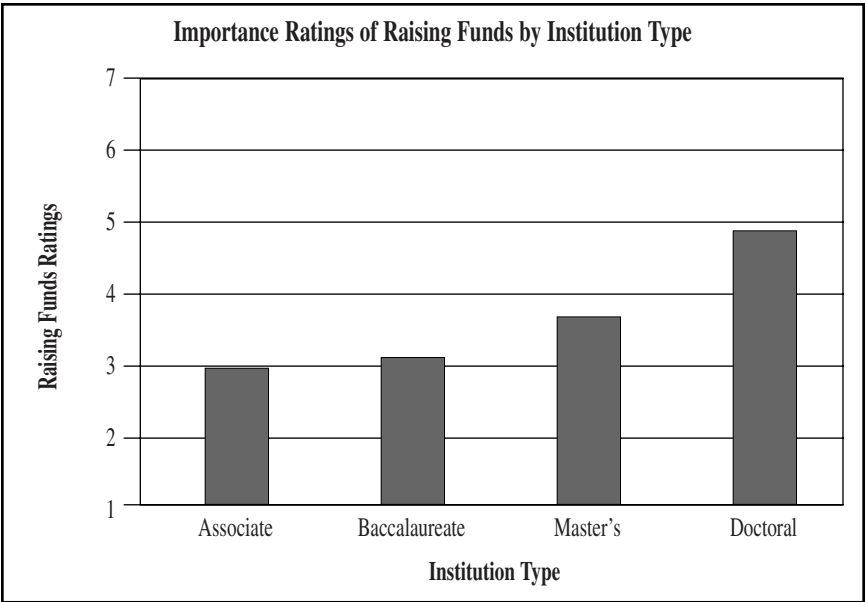
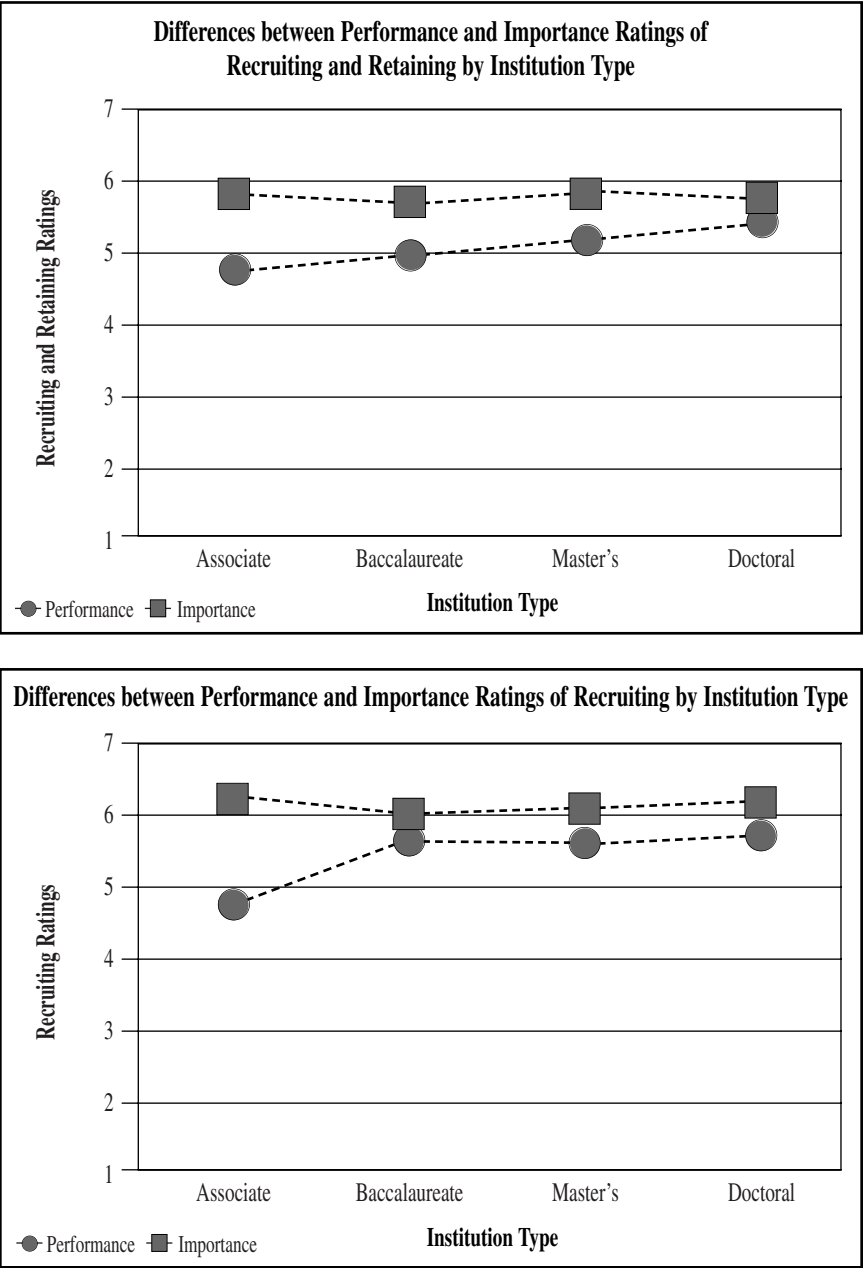


Figure 7. Differences Between Performance and Importance Ratings for “Recruiting and Retaining” Role and Recruiting Students to Honors and Retaining Students in Honors Items Associated with That Role by Institution Type



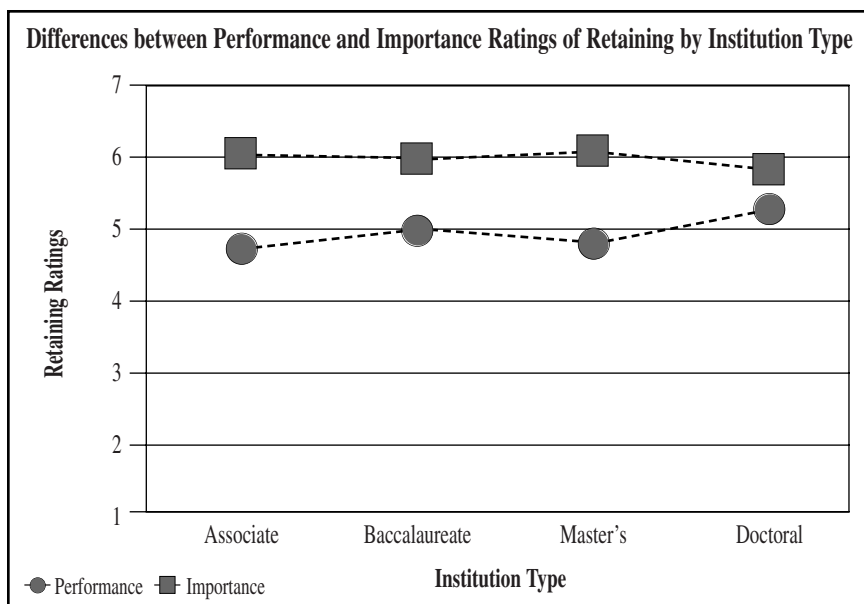
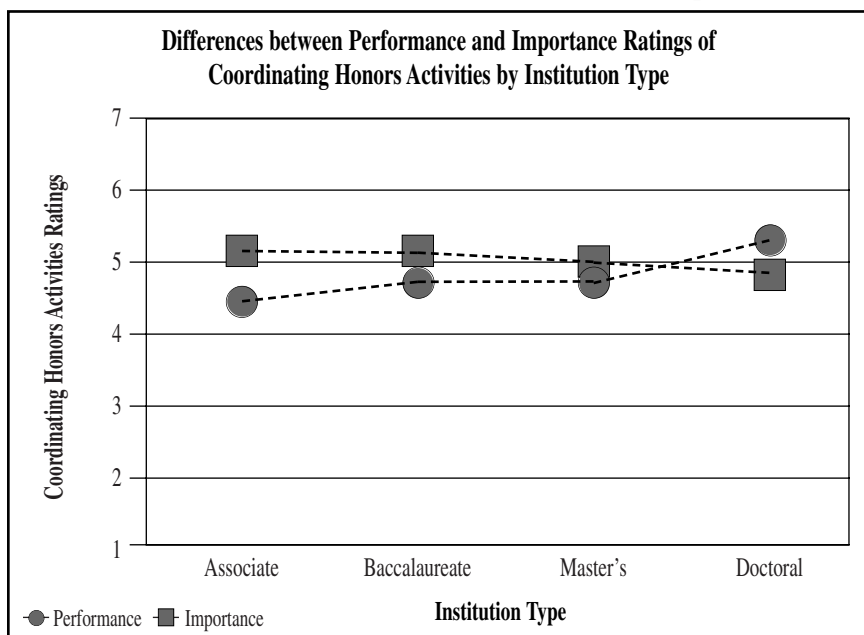
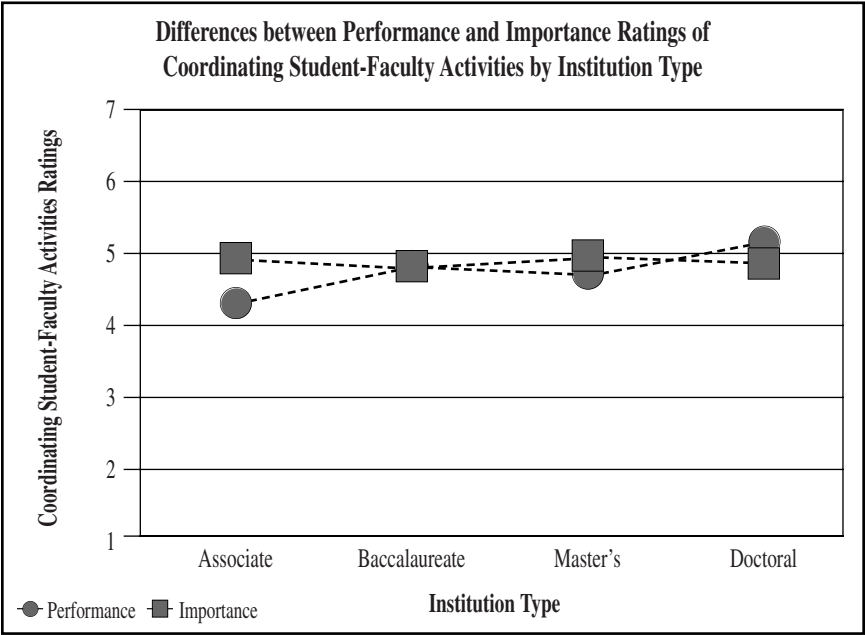
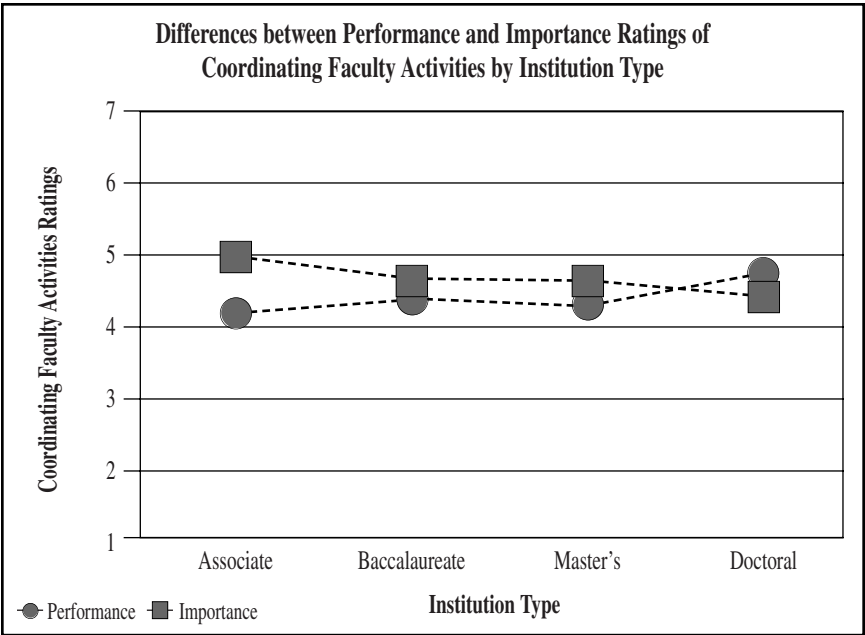


Figure 8. Differences Between Performance and Importance Ratings for “Coordinating Honors Activities” Role and Coordinating Honors Faculty Activities and Coordinating Honors-Student Faculty Activities Associated with That Role by Institution Type





Honors Thesis Rubrics: A Step toward More Consistent and Valid Assessment in Honors

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UNIVERSITY OF MAINE

Several recent issues of the *Journal of the National Collegiate Honors Council* have devoted considerable space to questions of grading and assessing honors student work: the 2006 Forum on “Outcomes Assessment, Accountability, and Honors” (Frost et al.), the 2007 Forum on “Grades, Scores, and Honors” (Andrews et al.), and Greg Lanier’s expansive piece in 2008, “Towards Reliable Honors Assessment.” One target of assessment is the honors thesis, which is either a required or optional component of many honors programs and colleges and which poses a myriad of assessment challenges. What follows is a description and analysis of the attempt at the University of Maine Honors College to improve communication and assessment throughout the thesis process and to support both honors thesis students and the faculty members who work with them. As is often the case in honors, this initiative had an informal beginning: a chat between a professor of educational psychology, who was advising his first honors thesis student, and the dean of the honors college.

THESES AND THE HONORS COLLEGE

The first four UMaine honors theses were written in 1937. The honors program began as a small endeavor among liberal arts faculty members but became a university-wide initiative in 1962 and then an honors college in 2002. Even in the late 1990s and early 2000s, the number of honors theses was typically on the order of twenty or so, but numbers have steadily increased over the past decade; now at least seventy, and in some years more than eighty, students write theses annually. This dramatic growth has meant an expansion in the variety of theses, the breadth of disciplines in which theses are written, and the number of individuals involved as advisors or committee members.

These increases have prompted the honors college community to consider questions of expectations and performance from a global perspective. Each student has a thesis advisor who chairs a committee of five, selected by the student in consultation with the advisor. Nearly all advisors and most committee members are UMaine faculty members; other committee members (who, for convenience, will all be referred to as faculty members) include scientific staff, faculty members at other institutions or laboratories, local professionals in private or governmental positions, and doctoral students. Following a two-hour oral defense, the committee determines the degree of honors awarded to the student: no honors, honors, high honors, or highest honors. This decision is based on the written thesis, the student's oral presentation of the thesis, the discussion between the student and the committee about the thesis, an annotated reading list of twelve to fifteen texts significant to the student's academic career, and discussion of the reading list.

Providing consistency in assessment within and across thesis committees has always proved challenging and is increasingly difficult to address with hundreds of individuals involved on thesis committees. One way the honors college has tried to provide consistency has been to require that each committee include a faculty member currently teaching in the honors college's core Civilizations sequence. Additionally, the honors council, the policy advisory body for the honors college, has encouraged the dean to construct guidelines to inform advisors and members of thesis committees about the "community standards" for their deliberations. Beginning with the 2004–2005 academic year, these "Instructions to the Jury" have been distributed to all thesis advisors and printed in the sixty-page *Honors College Thesis Handbook*.

Having a member of the core honors faculty on each committee has provided some consistency, yet the approximately twenty-five faculty members involved in that sequence have varying experience and expectations. Likewise, while the "Instructions to the Jury" have helped to educate individuals involved in the thesis process and described some best practices, they do not directly address the multi-faceted evaluation process that informs the committee's levels of honors deliberations. In addition, neither of these initiatives has provided sufficient detail regarding thesis expectations to all committee members or to students engaged in the process. We needed improved tools to guide committee members and students. Rubrics seemed to be the obvious answer, for reasons to which we now turn.

WHY RUBRICS?

A rubric is a scoring guide for evaluating written products (e.g., essay, term paper, honors thesis), performances (e.g., conducting a lab experiment, playing a musical instrument, defending one's thesis), or any other

demonstration of accomplishment that calls for a qualitative judgment by the appraiser. Rubrics vary in complexity (see, for instance, Nitko & Brookhart 269–76): a holistic rubric yields a single rating, for example, whereas an analytic rubric results in a separate rating for each of several dimensions of proficiency. Rubrics also can vary in generality: a generic rubric has language sufficiently robust that it can be applied to nonidentical tasks, unlike a task-specific rubric that, as its name implies, is limited to the particular task at hand. Analytic and task-specific rubrics were developed for the present project, which we describe below.

Regardless of its complexity or generality, a well-constructed rubric that is used with fidelity has many known benefits (e.g., Arter & McTighe; Suskie 139). First, a rubric enhances the consistency, or reliability, of judgments; this is evident in both “intra-scorer” consistency, the consistency of a person in evaluating several honors theses, and “inter-scorer” consistency, the consistency among persons judging the same honors thesis. Guided by a rubric—an explicit statement of scoring criteria—a student’s rating or letter grade or assigned honors level is much less dependent on the idiosyncrasies of the appraiser than would be true in a rubric-free case. Second, because a well-constructed rubric points the appraiser in a meaningful direction when evaluating student work, the resulting judgments are more likely to be meaningful as well. That is, a student’s rating or letter grade or assigned honors level will have greater validity—as a representation of student accomplishment in the targeted domain—than would be true in a rubric-free case. In short, a well-constructed rubric fosters both reliability and validity in the assessment process.

As a third benefit, the use of a well-constructed rubric can improve instruction. Consider an analytic rubric for evaluating writing that an instructor plans to use for grading an end-of-term paper. The rubric specifies, with accompanying scoring criteria, the writing dimensions *organization*, *development*, *mechanics*, *voice*, *clarity*, and *persuasiveness*. Insofar as the instructor regards these dimensions of writing as essential and the students will be evaluated according to their demonstrated proficiency on each, the rubric provides a helpful framework for shaping instruction and providing formative feedback to students. Within the context of the honors thesis, for example, an appropriately specific rubric can inform the thesis-related advice and guidance students receive as well as the feedback provided to them regarding work to date.

Fourth, students benefit when a rubric is shared with them in advance. Instructor expectations are made explicit to students, who are thus able to monitor their own progress. Considering the last two benefits simultaneously, one sees that the thoughtful use of rubrics creates a synchronized conversation between instructor and student toward a common goal: student proficiency in the targeted domain.

DEVELOPING THESIS RUBRICS

During the spring semester of 2008, the dean invited the three additional authors to join him as an ad hoc committee to develop a set of rubrics for the honors college thesis process. Haggerty, Killinger, and Slavin had extensive experience serving on thesis committees, and Coladarci brought expertise in academic measurement and assessment.

The committee met on a weekly basis from mid-January through mid-April. Early on, the group determined that thorough evaluation of an honors college thesis required three distinct rubrics: one for the written thesis, another for assessment of the students' reading list and oral defense, and a third for the thesis advisor's assessment (see Appendices A, B, and C).

An initial concern was constructing rubrics that would prove relevant to all disciplines. Honors students at the University of Maine complete a common core curriculum, but they major and write their theses in a multiplicity of disciplines. While we felt we could construct suitable, comprehensive rubrics for the evaluation of projects that followed fairly traditional research models, we felt less certain that these same rubrics would adequately evaluate less traditional thesis projects such as creative writing and visual and performing arts compositions.

We consulted with an art professor who offered a list of the art department's goals from which, in turn, we lifted language to integrate into rubrics in an effort to make them more inclusive. The committee also contacted a poet in the English department who was skeptical regarding the prospect of a common rubric, contending that we would be more successful developing a separate rubric for creative works such as poetry or fiction. Indeed, we realize that producing a universally applicable set of rubrics is an ongoing challenge to which we will have to return in the near future.

Ultimately, our most useful strategy for building a versatile rubric became researching existing honors college thesis rubrics from other universities. After reviewing several examples, the committee agreed that our preferred model was that of the Washington State University Honors College, for both its format and its content. With permission from WSU to use their rubrics as a guide, we spent much of the spring customizing, wordsmithing, prioritizing, and refining. We determined that we would use a numerical rating from 1 to 6, coupled with the semantic labels *unacceptable* (1), *marginal* (3), *satisfactory* (4), and *outstanding* (6). We concurred that the numbers and descriptions were intended not as a literal rating or measurement but rather as a guide for communication of subjective impressions informed by criteria listed for each area of evaluation.

The rubrics we developed were analytic rather than holistic and were intended for students as well as committee members. They were both specific

to the thesis process of the University of Maine Honors College and also generic; we hoped they would be applicable across disciplines. We constructed the “Rubric for the Written Thesis” so that it prioritized four areas of assessment: the research question and creative challenge; the development and implementation of a methodology or approach; the conclusions, implications, and consequences; and the writing. For the “Rubric for the Thesis and Reading List Oral Defense,” we prioritized the student’s presentation and ensuing discussion with the committee as well as content of the reading list and annotations. Finally, for the “Rubric for the Thesis Advisor’s Assessment,” we focused on the working relationship between the advisor and student as well as the student’s engagement with the overall project.

By April 2008, we decided that the rubrics were ready for presentation to our honors council and, with their stamp of approval, for informal distribution to current thesis writers and for presentation in Honors 391: Introduction to Thesis Research. We provided the rubrics to all our thesis advisors and students for the 2008–09 academic year, and we encouraged them to incorporate these rubrics into the thesis process. In subsequent years, all thesis advisors have been provided with copies of the rubrics (along with our *Thesis Handbook*) as soon as they agree to be mentors. In addition, we require, or at least request, our thesis students to distribute copies of the written thesis and oral defense rubrics to their committee members at the same time they distribute their pre-defense versions of their theses. The use of the rubrics, however, has not been a requirement.

The committee wished to determine the extent to which the rubrics were being used as well as the perceptions of advisors, other committee members, and students regarding the effectiveness and potential of each rubric in both content and process. In the summers of 2009 and 2010, thesis students and faculty members were invited to complete a brief online survey: 212 faculty members and 75 thesis students in 2009, 235 faculty members and 73 students in 2010. (These numbers include only students who had completed their defense, and faculty members often serve on multiple committees.) The survey included selected-response items and also allowed for written responses. While the surveys were designed to provide an early assessment of the rubric initiative, we hoped the surveying process itself would help generate awareness of the rubrics and foster their use as well.

SURVEY RESULTS

FACULTY

Ninety-two faculty members (43%) participated in the summer 2009 survey. In the 2008–09 academic year, 58% of the faculty respondents had

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served on more than one thesis committee. Twenty faculty members provided comments on the Rubric for the Written Thesis for the 2009 survey. These comments fell into three general categories: (a) the rubric positively contributed to the written thesis evaluation process (9 respondents, 45% of the subset who provided comments), (b) faculty members were unaware of the existence of the rubric (8 respondents, 40%), and (c) faculty felt no need to use the rubrics (3 respondents, 15%). Fifty-five percent of the faculty did not use the rubric during the evaluation process. In contrast, results from the selected-response items clearly suggest a positive role for the rubric from the perspective of these respondents: between 62 and 65 faculty members responded to the four questions regarding the usefulness of the three rubrics, and 76% of these respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that the rubric was useful for the evaluation of the written thesis.

How does one reconcile the mixed sentiments from the written responses with the more positive sentiments from the selected-response items? The former reflect the use of the rubrics during the 2008–09 academic year whereas the latter reflect both use and views regarding their possible effectiveness. Six of the eight respondents who, in their written comments, indicated they did not use the rubrics nonetheless indicated in the selected-response items that they felt the rubrics were effective for future evaluation purposes.

Our analysis also examined various factors that could influence a respondent's view of the use and impact of the rubrics. Advisors and committee members play different roles in the thesis process and thus might use the rubrics differently. Furthermore, faculty members had expressed concerns regarding the applicability of one set of rubrics for creative theses (e.g., art, music, and poetry) as well as more traditional research projects. However, with respect to the perceived value of the written thesis rubric as an evaluation tool, these factors had no impact throughout the analysis except in one case noted below. (All chi-square *p* values are greater than .10.)

The survey results associated with the oral defense rubric were largely positive. Sixteen faculty respondents contributed written comments. Seven of these respondents were positive about the rubric, seven were unaware the rubric existed, and two perceived no reason to use them. Of those respondents who were aware of this rubric, over 75% saw a positive role for it. As for the selected-response items, 75% of the faculty members either agreed or strongly agreed that the oral defense rubric “was useful for the evaluation of the thesis defense.”

The Rubric for the Thesis Advisor's Assessment was apparently used the least of the three rubrics, and the responding faculty members (advisors and committee members alike) perceived it to be the least useful, so it was not included in the 2010 follow-up survey. Of the thirteen committee members

providing comments, nine were unaware of this rubric and three felt it could be helpful if used in the future. These comments were consistent with the selected-response results: only 51% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that this rubric was useful in evaluating the thesis defense. Chi-square analyses showed there were no significant differences ($p > .10$) in results depending on whether respondents were committee chairs or committee members, the thesis was a “creative” thesis or traditional research thesis, or the respondent was serving on one thesis committee or more than one committee.

Survey results suggest that faculty members felt the group of rubrics provide a fair assessment of the thesis and its defense. Sixty-nine percent of the respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that using the rubrics generated a fair assessment, thus contributing to the validity of the assessment process.

A follow-up survey was conducted in summer 2010 after the spring thesis defenses; 96 faculty members (41%) participated. We expected greater awareness and use of the rubrics as the students were required to include them when they delivered their theses to committee members. In Table 1, we present the survey results for the question, “Which statement best describes your level of use of the Written Thesis Rubric this past academic year?” In general, the responses to this question indicate that, in the rubric’s second year of implementation, 91% of faculty members were using the rubric at least in an informal way. (Four of the eight faculty members who did not use the rubric acknowledged they did not know it existed.) There appears to be a difference in the use between advisors and committee members, with a chi-square p -value = .07. All advisors used the rubric compared with 87% of committee members, and 42% of advisors used the rubric formally to rate the student while only 28% of committee members did.

Faculty members used the written thesis rubric both to evaluate students and to provide them with instruction regarding the thesis process (see Table 2). The vast majority of faculty respondents—80%—found the written thesis rubric useful for understanding the various components of a thesis. Curiously, however, only 33% felt this rubric facilitated the communication of expectations, and still fewer (26%) believed it was useful for providing feedback to students. As an evaluative device, 40% of faculty respondents found this rubric effective in judging the quality of the thesis, and 54% found it useful during committee deliberations and for determining the level of honors.

Levels of use of the oral defense rubric are presented in Table 3. This rubric was employed in patterns similar to that of the written thesis rubric, and there was no statistically significant difference between how advisors and committee members used the rubric (the chi-square p -value $> .10$). The majority of faculty members (86%) at least referred to the oral defense rubric during the thesis process, with 33% using it in a formal manner.

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Patterns of use of the oral defense rubric are displayed in Table 4. This rubric was to be used during the thesis presentation, discussion of the thesis, and discussion of the reading list. Faculty members expressed minimum use for the rubric as an instructional device except in preparing students for the reading list discussion. Only 25% to 30% felt the oral defense rubric was useful for providing feedback to students. Twenty-nine percent and 36%, respectively, indicated this rubric was useful for communicating expectations about thesis presentation and thesis discussion. However, 63% of respondents indicated the rubric was useful for communicating expectations to students regarding the reading list discussion. This result is not surprising, given the uniqueness of the reading list component of the UMaine oral defense although it is surprising that only 26% of faculty members nevertheless found this rubric useful for providing feedback to students. This rubric was seen to be more valuable in determining the quality of the oral performances than the Written Thesis Rubric was in determining the quality of the written thesis. Faculty members also perceived the rubric to be more useful in determining

Table 1. Level of Use of the Rubric for the Written Thesis (faculty, 2010)

	Responses	%
I did not refer to this rubric at all	8	9
I did refer to this rubric, but I didn't formally rate the student	52	58
I did refer to this rubric, and I did formally rate the student	30	33
Total	90	100

Table 2. Usefulness of the Rubric for the Written Thesis (faculty, 2010)

	Responses	%
I did not find this rubric useful at all	2	2
Useful for understanding the various components of the thesis	65	80
Useful for communicating expectations to the student	27	33
Useful for providing feedback to the student	21	26
Useful for judging the quality of the thesis	32	40
Useful for determining the level of Honors	44	54
Useful during the committee's deliberation about the thesis	44	54
Other	6	7
Total Number of Committee Members Responding: 81		

the quality of the performance (63% to 67%) than it was in determining the level of honors (44% to 55%).

STUDENTS

Now we turn to the rubrics from the students' perspective. Thirty-eight students (51%) participated in the summer 2009 survey. Fifty percent of these students felt the written thesis rubric was useful during preparation of the thesis. However, 44% disclosed that they did not consult the rubric at all for this purpose. Similarly, over half (58%) of responding students felt the oral defense rubric was useful whereas roughly a third (36%) did not consult this rubric at all. Perhaps not surprisingly, the thirteen students who did not use the oral defense rubric also did not use the written thesis rubric. As for students' perceptions of the ability of the two rubrics to generate a fair assessment of the thesis and its defense, 61% of these students agreed that the rubrics did result in a fair evaluation, with an additional 8% strongly

Table 3. Level of Use of the Rubric for the Oral Defense (faculty, 2010)

	Responses	%
I did not refer to this rubric at all	12	14
I did refer to this rubric, but I didn't formally rate the student	47	53
I did refer to this rubric, and I did formally rate the student	29	33
Total	88	100

Table 4. Usefulness of the Rubric for the Oral Defense (faculty, 2010)

	Thesis Presentation	Thesis Discussion	Reading List Discussion
I did not find this rubric useful at all	6 (8%)	4 (5%)	12 (16%)
Useful for communicating expectations to the student	21 (29%)	26 (36%)	46 (63%)
Useful for providing feedback to the student	18 (25%)	22 (30%)	19 (26%)
Useful for judging the quality of the student performance	48 (66%)	49 (67%)	46 (63%)
Useful for determining the level of honors	36 (49%)	40 (55%)	32 (44%)
Total Number of Committee Members Responding: 73			

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agreeing. There was overwhelming correspondence between the students who felt the rubrics were useful and those who believed they generated a fair assessment. Nine students who believed their committees did not use the rubrics during the defense did not use the rubrics themselves during the preparation of the thesis or its defense, so perhaps student perception of faculty validation of the rubrics is an important impetus for their use.

Thirty-eight (52%) students participated in the summer 2010 survey. This follow-up survey found an increase in rubric use, with 94% of students consulting the written thesis and oral defense rubrics at least once or twice during the thesis process; this was a significant change from the 44% who did not consult the former rubric or the 36% who did not consult the latter rubric during the previous academic year.

Although rubric use increased, students' perceptions of the usefulness of these rubrics were mixed. As an instructional device, the written thesis rubric appears to be effective in helping students understand the thesis process and what is expected of them (see Table 5): 75% of students indicated this rubric was useful for understanding the components of the thesis, and 72% felt it was useful for understanding the associated expectations. However, only 28% of respondents indicated it was useful as an evaluative device for determining the quality of the thesis, and 22% felt it was useful in understanding why they received the level of honors they did.

As Table 6 shows, the oral defense rubric provided a largely helpful framework for students to understand expectations and to prepare for the defense, both of which point to this rubric's instructional value. For example, from 62% to 78% of students found the rubric useful for understanding the expectations associated with the thesis presentation, thesis discussion, and reading list discussion. Somewhat lower percentages, but still representing a

Table 5. Usefulness of the Rubric for the Written Thesis (students, 2010)

	Responses	%
I did not find this rubric useful at all	3	9
Useful for understanding the various components of the thesis	24	75
Useful for understanding what was expected of me	23	72
Useful for communicating with my advisor	11	34
Useful for judging the quality of my work	9	28
Useful for understanding why I received the level of honors I did	7	22
Total Number of Students Responding: 32		

majority of respondents, were obtained regarding rubric usefulness for preparation. In contrast, students found little evaluative benefit in this rubric, with percentages ranging from 16% to 28%. This latter finding is not unlike the students' perceptions with respect to the Rubric for the Written Thesis.

DISCUSSION

The survey results confirmed our perceptions of the need for a rubric to provide inter- and intra-scorer consistency. This confirmation is exemplified by a committee member who stated: "Most of us are fairly idiosyncratic in the way we evaluate writing. However, it was useful to have some central ideas of where we needed to go." On a similar note, another committee member reflected: "Excellent guidelines. I wish these had been available in previous years where I served on more committees and felt the same standards were not applied equally to all students." Such comments suggest a perception of increased reliability and validity in assessment when guided by a thoughtfully constructed rubric. As one respondent acknowledged, these rubrics "give the committee members a structure for discussing the candidate's work in a logical way." So while our rubrics have not wholly satisfied all intended goals, faculty members seem to recognize the need for them and their potential usefulness.

Faculty members were able to use the Rubric for the Written Thesis to identify and understand the components of the written thesis even though this understanding did not directly translate into an ability to communicate expectations or provide sufficient feedback to the student. Thus, while this rubric was personally useful to many faculty members, it fell short as a teaching tool. That said, the extent to which the typical committee member provides feedback to the student prior to the thesis defense is unclear, so the perceived limits of the rubric in this respect may reflect the limited level of interaction

Table 6. Usefulness of the Rubric for the Oral Defense (students, 2010)

	Thesis Presentation	Thesis Discussion	Reading List Discussion
I did not find this rubric useful at all	5 (16%)	6 (19%)	6 (19%)
Useful for understanding what was expected of me	25 (78%)	20 (62%)	21 (66%)
Useful for preparation	20 (62%)	18 (56%)	17 (53%)
Useful for understanding why I received the level of honors I did	5 (16%)	9 (28%)	6 (19%)
Total Number of Students Responding: 32			

between the student and committee member. The Rubric for the Written Thesis was more successful in helping committee members to arrive at an appropriate level of honors than it was at facilitating the determination of thesis quality; perhaps this reflects faculty members' comfort with relying on previous knowledge and experience in evaluating written work to determine thesis quality while, in contrast, feeling a need for the rubric to translate this perception of quality into the less familiar notion of honors level.

Faculty members perceived the Rubric for the Oral Defense to be fairly successful in judging the quality of the oral defenses. However, whereas roughly two-thirds of respondents felt it is useful in this regard, less than half found this rubric useful for assessing the level of honors. The Rubric for the Oral Defense seemed more successful at judging quality than the Rubric for the Written Thesis yet less successful at determining the level of honors. Faculty members were only partially successful at translating the ability to judge quality of the presentation into an ability to determine the level of honors.

Respondents were the most mixed about the usefulness of the rubric in relation to the reading list discussion. On the one hand, almost two thirds of the faculty felt this rubric was helpful for communicating expectations about the reading list discussion (63%) and judging the quality of student performance (63%), yet only one quarter saw the rubric as useful for providing feedback to students, a discrepancy akin to what we observed above with respect to the Rubric for the Written Thesis. A related but more generalized discrepancy is that, while roughly two thirds of faculty respondents found the oral defense rubric useful for judging the quality of student performance across the three targeted areas of thesis presentation, thesis discussion, and reading list discussion, these percentages were much lower when faculty were rating the usefulness of this rubric for providing feedback to students across these three areas.

Unlike the within-rubric discrepancies, a curious between-rubric discrepancy was observed. In the follow-up survey (2010), more faculty members found the Rubric for the Written Thesis useful for determining the level of honors (54%) than found it useful for judging the quality of the thesis (40%). Conversely, more found the Rubric for the Oral Defense to be useful for judging the quality of the student's performance (63%–67%) than for determining the level of honors (44%–55%). Thus, while faculty members appear comfortable with the rubrics as a guide to the quality of the oral presentation and reading list more than to the written thesis itself, the rubric's assessment of the written thesis is more closely related to the level of honors than is the assessment of the other components; we infer that these results are closely related to a sense among faculty members that the written component of the thesis should be weighted more heavily than other parts of the process.

At the very least, such discrepancies suggest the need for continued discussion about the intended role of rubrics. For example, if the oral defense rubric helps an instructor judge the quality of student performance in that context, which our data suggest is the case, then this same rubric should be seen as a useful framework for providing students with feedback about that performance, which our data suggest is not the case. Similarly, if the written thesis rubric helps instructors understand the various components of the thesis, which our data again suggest is the case, then this same rubric should be seen as a useful framework for, say, communicating expectations and feedback to students, which our data suggest is not the case. Only by engaging faculty in such discussions can we hope to uncover the reasons behind the discrepancies we observed in our results.

Students increasingly used the rubrics with apparently mixed results. They acknowledged that the rubrics helped them understand what they had to do and what the expectations for them were with respect to the thesis process, yet comparatively few students felt the rubrics were useful for communicating with their advisor, assessing the quality of their work, or ultimately understanding their level of honors. Here, too, probing these students about their rubric-related views should help clarify the meaning, and possible implications, of these discrepancies.

Having developed and employed our set of thesis rubrics for several years now, we need to build on this assessment and other discussions about the rubrics to determine our future plans. The rubrics have certainly proved useful for some faculty members, for some students, and for some parts of the thesis process. However, they are still new and not integrated into the thesis process—from beginning to end—as much as we would like them to be. With hundreds of faculty members on campus who for years have advised theses, sat on thesis committees, and determined levels of honors without the rubrics, we cannot expect immediate buy-in from everyone. However, we are convinced that the rubrics have merit and, particularly for the student, provide important guidance through the thesis process. We will continue to encourage our advisors, committee members, and students to make use of the evolving rubrics in an effort both to improve the quality in all facets of the thesis experience and to move closer to the consistency and validity we seek in the ongoing assessment of honors student work.

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APPENDIX A

RUBRIC FOR THE WRITTEN THESIS

(adapted, with permission, from the rubric of the
Washington State University Honors College)

Providing brief comments will give additional feedback to the student as well as inform the post-defense deliberation among committee members.

A student who attains *honors* will typically receive a rating of at least *satisfactory* (4) on each of the dimensions below and on the rubrics connected with other facets of the thesis and defense. This is not an inviolable rule. The post-defense discussion should carefully consider the range and pattern of ratings, the rationale behind each committee member's ratings, and the relative importance of each dimension. Likewise, the ratings of a student who receives *highest honors* are almost always all *outstanding* (6).

1. Research question or creative challenge

Unacceptable		Marginal	Satisfactory		Outstanding
1	2	3	4	5	6
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unique research question/issue/creative challenge identified • Goals/objectives/hypotheses are explicit • Historical and contemporary contexts, assumptions/biases, or ethical considerations are identified • Thesis presented is within an academic framework 					
Comments:					

HONORS THESIS RUBRICS

2. Methodology/approach: development

Unacceptable		Marginal	Satisfactory		Outstanding
1	2	3	4	5	6
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Methodology/approach is appropriate to disciplinary/interdisciplinary focus Topic is contextualized among sources and materials cited Multiple perspectives are considered Demonstrates understanding of the content, tools, and structures in the field 					
Comments:					

3. Methodology/approach: implementation

Unacceptable		Marginal	Satisfactory		Outstanding
1	2	3	4	5	6
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quantitative and/or symbolic tools are utilized effectively Evidence is sufficient to address the research question and is well utilized Accuracy and relevance of evidence are appropriately questioned; possible biases are identified Evaluates, analyzes, and synthesizes information Demonstrates understanding of professional standards 					
Comments:					

4. Conclusions, implications, and consequences

Unacceptable		Marginal	Satisfactory		Outstanding
1	2	3	4	5	6
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conclusions, qualifications, and consequences, including value of thesis, are presented • Significance of what was discovered, learned, or created is demonstrated • Assertions are qualified and well supported • Demonstrates independent and critical thought 					
Comments:					

5. Writing

Unacceptable		Marginal	Satisfactory		Outstanding
1	2	3	4	5	6
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Language clearly and effectively communicates ideas • Any errors in grammar, spelling, mechanics, and/or punctuation are minimal • Organization is clear and effective • Sources and citations are used correctly 					
Comments:					

APPENDIX B

**RUBRIC FOR THE
THESIS AND READING LIST ORAL DEFENSE**

(adapted, with permission, from the rubric of the
Washington State University Honors College)

Providing brief comments will give additional feedback to the student as well as inform the post-defense deliberation among committee members.

A student who attains *honors* will typically receive a rating of at least *satisfactory* (4) on each of the dimensions below and on the rubrics connected with other facets of the thesis and defense. This is not an inviolable rule. The post-defense discussion should carefully consider the range and pattern of ratings, the rationale behind each committee member's ratings, and the relative importance of each dimension. Likewise, the ratings of a student who receives *highest honors* are almost always all *outstanding* (6).

THESIS**1. Presentation**

Unacceptable		Marginal	Satisfactory		Outstanding
1	2	3	4	5	6
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Introduction is interesting and engaging• Speech is clear and articulate• Presentation is well-organized and easy to follow• Media and format are appropriate for content• Presentation appropriately represents the thesis project					
Comments:					

2. Discussion with Committee

Unacceptable		Marginal	Satisfactory		Outstanding
1	2	3	4	5	6
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Questions are answered well and with reference to thesis student's own work • Demonstrates knowledge of the subject • Comfortably engages committee • Demonstrates understanding of and facility with the content of the thesis • Demonstrates understanding of and facility with the disciplinary context and implications of the thesis • Findings central to the thesis are extended to questions external to the discipline 					
Comments:					

READING LIST**1. List and Annotations**

Unacceptable		Marginal	Satisfactory		Outstanding
1	2	3	4	5	6
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Works demonstrate a breadth of interests and education as well as intellectual depth • Reading list primarily reflects undergraduate experience • Annotations provide insight into the works and the student • Annotations open doors for engaging conversation 					
Comments:					

HONORS THESIS RUBRICS

2. Conversation with Committee

Unacceptable		Marginal	Satisfactory		Outstanding
1	2	3	4	5	6
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student recognizes connections among works • Student expands upon annotations in a thoughtful and meaningful way • Student is comfortable responding to questions from committee • Student is able to explore threads tangential to the works • Texts are clearly demonstrated to have played a significant role in the student's academic development 					
Comments:					

APPENDIX C

RUBRIC FOR THE THESIS ADVISOR'S ASSESSMENT

(adapted, with permission, from the rubric of the
Washington State University Honors College)

Providing brief comments will give additional feedback to the student as well as inform the post-defense deliberation among committee members.

A student who attains *honors* will typically receive a rating of at least *satisfactory* (4) on each of the dimensions below and on the rubrics connected with other facets of the thesis and defense. This is not an inviolable rule. The post-defense discussion should carefully consider the range and pattern of ratings, the rationale behind each committee member's ratings, and the relative importance of each dimension. Likewise, the ratings of a student who receives *highest honors* are almost always all *outstanding* (6).

1. Relationship with the advisor

Unacceptable		Marginal	Satisfactory		Outstanding
1	2	3	4	5	6
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assesses own knowledge, skills, and abilities accurately Perseveres toward attaining mutually agreed upon goals Displays high standards of attendance and punctuality Responds thoughtfully to feedback Sets, reflects upon and adjusts priorities in order to balance professionalism 					
Comments:					

HONORS THESIS RUBRICS

2. Relationship with the project

Unacceptable		Marginal	Satisfactory		Outstanding
1	2	3	4	5	6
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clearly understands the big picture while attending to the details of the specific project Works independently; is a consistent “self-starter” Reliably recognizes the existence of a problem, identifies potential causes, and implements possible solutions Seeks and evaluates information using multiple criteria for topics/issues under consideration 					
Comments:					

3. Assessment of the thesis project

- **Originality of thesis**
 - Was the thesis idea developed by the student?
 - Does the work done for the thesis represent an original perspective?
- **Contribution of thesis to disciplinary or interdisciplinary scholarship**
 - Does the thesis introduce new knowledge or analysis?
 - Will the thesis serve to stimulate other research or scholarship?
- **Publishability of thesis**
 - Is the thesis likely to result in a peer-reviewed journal article?
 - Is the thesis likely to result in a presentation at a professional meeting?
 - Is the thesis suitable for publication in a student journal or presentation at a student session?
- **Comparison of thesis work to master’s level work in field**
 - Does the thesis work compare favorably to masters thesis work in the field?
 - Does the thesis work compare favorably to first-year master’s student work in the field?

A Role for Honors in Conservation and Biodiversity Education

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INTRODUCTION

The earth's biota is in the middle of its most severe rate of decline since the end of the Cretaceous, the period that encompassed the extinction of the dinosaurs roughly sixty-five million years ago (Glavine). Numerous anthropogenic practices have contributed significantly to these losses in biodiversity (Eldredge; Novacek and Cleland). For instance, habitat reductions as a result of expanding human land use (Franklin; Sala et al.; Harte; Falcucci et al.), environmental degradation due to pollution (Barker and Tingey; McNeely), introduction and establishment of non-native species (Wilcove et al.; Sala et al.), and climate change (Lovejoy and Hannah) are among the factors known to have contributed to declines in biodiversity. Alarming, results of at least one survey have revealed that the American public does not rank this biodiversity crisis highly (Novacek) despite the many negative consequences associated with significant reductions in biodiversity (Chapin et al.; Worm et al.).

Several methodologies have been proposed to mitigate, halt, or even reverse losses in biodiversity (Johns; Novacek). Of these, education that conveys the importance of biodiversity to human subsistence is one particularly effective approach (Caro et al.; Braus; Bonine et al.; Brewer; Jacobson et al.). At the post-secondary level, biodiversity education is primarily the responsibility of a few closely-related scientific departments such as biology, natural resources, ecology, and environmental sciences. This restricted focus is not unexpected since biodiversity is a discipline that falls squarely under the purview of the natural sciences (see Takacs, 1996). However, in addition to its deep biological roots, biodiversity routinely traverses legal (Keiter; Glowka), political (Thomas; Boardman), economic (Chopra; Swanson; Johnson et al.), ethical (Tilman; Clark), and social (Takacs; Peine) arenas. Thus, comprehensive studies in biodiversity and its conservation require at least a cursory understanding of several highly varied academic disciplines

(Van Dyke). Such a holistic presentation of diverse academic disciplines may present a significant challenge to individual instructors, many of whom have spent their careers acquiring expertise in a single, narrowly focused field of study.

The multifaceted nature of biodiversity and conservation lends itself nicely to honors programs. Among other goals, honors seeks to provide for its students a multidisciplinary educational experience that furthers the core mission of a program. For example, at Northern Kentucky University, our honors program emphasizes four central domains: 1) active learning 2) global citizenship, 3) civic engagement, and 4) undergraduate research. We will demonstrate the ease with which biodiversity and conservation education can align with these four domains and with the multidisciplinary and values-based mission of honors. While we use the NKU Honors Program as an example, we hope that readers readily and easily extend this example to their own honors programs, departments, or colleges. We attempt to highlight how the myriad of academic expertise typically housed within honors programs readily promotes and addresses biodiversity and conservation education.

FOUR DOMAINS OF HONORS SCHOLARSHIP

DOMAIN 1: ACTIVE LEARNING

Partly due to the appeal of understanding biodiversity through diverse lines of study, it has been our experience that students readily participate in lively classroom debates and discussions concerning the many disciplines spanned by issues of biodiversity and conservation. Specifically, students engage their fellow classmates and instructor when asked to contextualize and couch conservation and biodiversity within their own major field of study, fueling active learning and promoting student interest. For example, finance majors may explore the economic values underlying the preservation of biodiversity while a political science student may investigate the policies that underlie effective management of imperiled species whose distributions span multiple boundaries between, for instance, states and nations. A criminal justice student may research and critique the various local, state, or federal laws that govern the illegal trade of endangered species. A psychology major, armed with knowledge of behavioral principles, may devise strategies to promote conservationist behaviors such as recycling and use of environment-friendly products. Collectively, these examples highlight the ease with which issues of biodiversity extend into major concentrations of study. Moreover, asking students to share their unique perspectives during class meetings not only conveys but also teaches the multidisciplinary of biodiversity to the entire class. In short, the wide variety of topics and disciplines

abutted by conservation and biodiversity offers the opportunity to engage a highly varied student population by spanning their diverse interests, thus spurring active learning.

DOMAIN 2: GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP

The current biodiversity crisis is a global problem (Goudie). Indeed, hotspots of biodiversity have been identified on every continent (Reid; Myers et al.), save Antarctica (Myers et al.; Brooks et al.). Therefore, students of biodiversity must place themselves within the setting of any given society in order to fully understand and appreciate the complexity of its systems. For example, when asked to formulate effective biological recovery strategies for individual species or to design and strategically place wildlife reserves, students must understand and account for the political, economic, social, geographic, and theological structures of the region in question.

International travel, a hallmark of numerous honors programs, is an excellent mechanism by which students pursue global citizenry. Students are well served by travelling to the numerous imperiled ecosystems of the world to investigate first-hand the current state of the biodiversity crisis in a region of personal interest. Once on site, students are free to immerse themselves in the ongoing mitigation and remediation efforts specific to these locales. Such a proactive, *in situ* approach to the study of conservation and biodiversity offers honors students a rich educational experience while driving measurable actions dedicated to the preservation of species. One such trip undertaken by our honors faculty involves collaboration with the biology department at Northern Kentucky University. This trip exposes students to highly diverse montane and rainforest biotas, the various threats each faces, and on-going recovery efforts specific to each environ. Further, the trip is not restricted to students majoring in the natural sciences but is available to all honors students interested in global biodiversity and conservation. Students majoring in political science, anthropology, biology, Spanish, nursing, English, chemistry, and philosophy are registered for this year's trip, and each will be encouraged to observe and study the interaction between biodiversity and his or her respective field of study.

DOMAIN 3: CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Students in honors biodiversity classes typically have several mechanisms at their disposal to serve the public good. Opportunities abound to assist in, or even initiate, efforts dedicated to the preservation of biodiversity at local, regional, national, and international levels. Such opportunities are especially accessible to university students, for whom numerous internship programs have been established that provide hands-on experiences dedicated

to the preservation of biodiversity. Similarly, student involvement in conservation policy can be accomplished via a variety of mechanisms, one of which is particularly adaptable to an entire class.

The following model illustrates how civic engagement can be incorporated into an honors class. In a section of Honors 101: Endangered Species and Conservation, students were asked to query a political representative of their choice about their views on biodiversity and conservation. Importantly, no constraints were placed on the pool of politicians from which the students could choose; contact of any representative at the local, state, or federal levels was permitted. Students could communicate with targeted representatives by postal mail, electronic mail, phone, or personal interview. The array of responses the students received was often eye-opening, ranging from complete ignorance about biodiversity to cogent, well-constructed opinions that were relevant to governmental intervention in management of imperiled species. An argument could be made that students gleaned the most information from those representatives who chose not to respond at all. Most importantly, whether or not a student obtained a response and regardless of the answer, the exercise proved educational by alerting students to the extreme variation in elected officials' viewpoints on biodiversity. The exercise culminated with critical readings of each response in class, followed by group discussion. Finally, students received a strong reminder that the responses they obtained came from the people entrusted with governance of the nation's biodiversity.

DOMAIN 4: UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH

The culmination of many honors programs is an in-depth research experience that often takes the form of a thesis or capstone project. Studies in biodiversity and conservation lend themselves particularly well to this culminating experience. Biodiversity research is also well-suited to academic collaboration as research projects typically span multiple disciplines. In addition, most research projects achieve one or more of the three goals discussed above, thus streamlining an honors student's education; for example, students who choose to call on the expertise of a natural resource agency (either domestic or foreign) for their thesis or capstone fulfill both research and civic engagement components simultaneously. Further, biodiversity research and conservation efforts vary widely in scope so that projects are available that can be easily defined by the student researcher. Finally, patterns and trends in biodiversity are easily accessible topics that undergraduate student can study at the campus, local, regional, national, and international scales. Thus, students have the freedom to design projects independently within multiple constraints such as time, budget, and program-specific educational requirements.

Our experience is that students respond most positively when asked to research an aspect of biodiversity and conservation that is relevant to their particular scholarly interests. One student at Northern Kentucky University, for instance, is undertaking a capstone research project on the current status and conservation genetics of an extremely rare and regionally endangered freshwater fish. The student has aggressively pursued this project, partnering with multiple state-level conservation agencies. These partnerships have not only effectively leveraged state wildlife agency resources (ones that may not be available at the university) but will also entail free dissemination of study results to the fishery scientists and governmental officials charged with species oversight and management. This student is an elementary education major, and a third component of the capstone project involves formulation of scientific lesson plans aimed at teaching biodiversity to schoolchildren in the primary grades.

SUMMARY

Since honors faculty typically represent varied academic disciplines, collaboration among faculty within an honors program can be both complementary and synergistic, providing comprehensive conservation and biodiversity education to a cross-section of the total student population. The need for such education is urgent as the future will undoubtedly bring increased challenges for the preservation of biodiversity. Human demand for natural resources is expected to increase concomitantly with forecasted upward trends in human population growth, and these future pressures on natural resources will likely, in turn, exacerbate extinction levels (Jenkins). All university students, not just those majoring in the natural sciences, should be educated on the numerous values inherent in the preservation of biodiversity. Honors programs are aptly suited to reach segments of the student population majoring outside the natural sciences who might otherwise never gain exposure to this critically important topic.

Finally, we are not advocating that honors programs assume primary responsibilities for educating university students in issues of biodiversity, nor are we suggesting that honors programs take on the responsibility for formal training of future conservation biologists and natural resource managers. To be sure, these duties are best left to the expertise of the highly trained faculty within the natural sciences. Honors programs are, however, charged with producing highly educated and socially responsible citizens, especially with regard to issues that present pressing and immediate concerns for the health and sustainability of human populations. By their very nature, honors programs are well-positioned to deliver this message to the large portion of the student population that otherwise might never gain exposure to science-based

topics. The current rate of biodiversity loss necessitates action now, and by providing students with a broad education that offers courses in biodiversity and conservation, honors programs can increase students' awareness and understanding of the scope and immediacy of the current crisis while meeting multiple goals of the honors mission.

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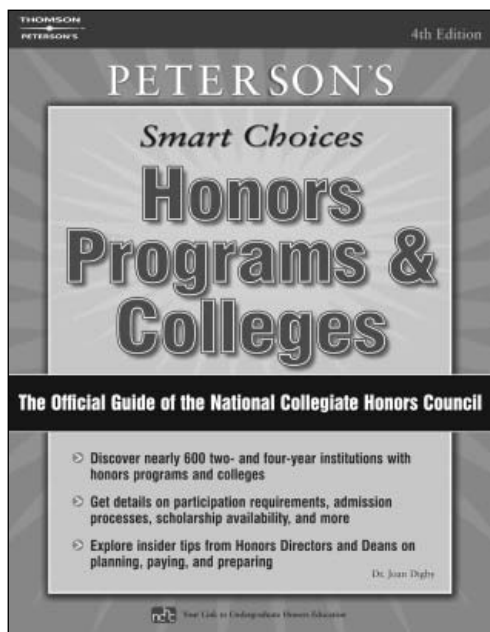
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Assessing and Evaluating Honors Programs and Honors Colleges: A Practical Handbook by Rosalie Otero and Robert Spurrier (2005, 98pp). This monograph includes an overview of assessment and evaluation practices and strategies. It explores the process for conducting self-studies and discusses the differences between using consultants and external reviewers. It provides a guide to conducting external reviews along with information about how to become an NCHC-Recommended Site Visitor. A dozen appendices provide examples of "best practices."

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

Fundraising for Honor\$: A Handbook by Larry R. Andrews (2009, 160pp). Offers information and advice on raising money for honors, beginning with easy first steps and progressing to more sophisticated and ambitious fundraising activities.

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

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

The Honors College Phenomenon edited by Peter C. Sederberg (2008, 172pp). This monograph examines the growth of honors colleges since 1990: historical and descriptive characterizations of the trend, alternative models that include determining whether becoming a college is appropriate, and stories of creation and recreation. Leaders whose institutions are contemplating or taking this step as well as those directing established colleges should find these essays valuable.

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

Honors Programs at Smaller Colleges by Samuel Schuman (Third Edition, 2011, 80pp). Practical and comprehensive advice on creating and managing honors programs with particular emphasis on colleges with fewer than 4000 students.

Inspiring Exemplary Teaching and Learning: Perspectives on Teaching Academically Talented College Students edited by Larry Clark and John Zubizarreta (2008, 216pp). This rich collection of essays offers valuable insights into innovative teaching and significant learning in the context of academically challenging classrooms and programs. The volume provides theoretical, descriptive, and practical resources, including models of effective instructional practices, examples of successful courses designed for enhanced learning, and a list of online links to teaching and learning centers and educational databases worldwide.

Partners in the Parks: Field Guide to an Experiential Program in the National Parks by Joan Digby with reflective essays on theory and practice by student and faculty participants and National Park Service personnel (2010, 272pp). This monograph explores an experiential-learning program that fosters immersion in and stewardship of the national parks. The topics include program designs, group dynamics, philosophical and political issues, photography, wilderness exploration, and assessment.

Place as Text: Approaches to Active Learning edited by Bernice Braid and Ada Long (Second Edition, 2010, 128pp). Updated theory, information, and advice on experiential pedagogies developed within NCHC during the past 35 years, including Honors Semesters and City as Text™, along with suggested adaptations to multiple educational contexts.

Setting the Table for Diversity edited by Lisa L. Coleman and Jonathan D. Kotinek (2010, 288pp). This collection of essays provides definitions of diversity in honors, explores the challenges and opportunities diversity brings to honors education, and depicts the transformative nature of diversity when coupled with equity and inclusion. These essays discuss African American, Latina/o, international, and first-generation students as well as students with disabilities. Other issues include experiential and service learning, the politics of diversity, and the psychological resistance to it. Appendices relating to NCHC member institutions contain diversity statements and a structural diversity survey.

Shatter the Glassy Stare: Implementing Experiential Learning in Higher Education edited by Peter A. Machonis (2008, 160pp). A companion piece to *Place as Text*, focusing on recent, innovative applications of City as Text™ teaching strategies. Chapters on campus as text, local neighborhoods, study abroad, science courses, writing exercises, and philosophical considerations, with practical materials for instituting this pedagogy.

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

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

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

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