Honors College, UNC Charlotte
Redesign of Honors Education Vision 2013
Curriculum and Programming

The Task Force for the Redesign of Honors Education at UNC Charlotte (2012-13)\(^1\) reviewed:

- the recommendations of the Honors College Self Study (2011-12)
- honors education at our peer institutions and UNC system/regional competitors
- best practices for honors colleges statement by the National Collegiate Honors Council
- current honors program structure, curriculum, mission, and programming on campus.

The Task Force solicited feedback on early and midpoint drafts of redesign documents from the University Honors Council, Deans and Associate Deans of the colleges, Department Chairs, Program Directors of current honors programs, and the CLAS Faculty Council. Further faculty feedback will be sought as Deans determine appropriate.

The Task Force produced three vision documents to guide redesign of honors education at UNC Charlotte: one, a mission and objectives statement; two, these guidelines for new programs and revision of existing programs; and three, a recommendation regarding resources to support redesign. These documents are intended as internal university documents to undergird honors redesign; public statements of mission, objectives, curriculum and programming, while emanating from these vision documents, should be crafted with a public audience in mind.

Curriculum and Programming

Core principles:

- Because the mission is tied to the University's research mission, all full-time research/creative faculty should be invited and have the option to be available to propose teaching honors courses. Additionally, to do the work of supporting the Honors College and provide appropriate faculty governance of the curriculum, there should be an Honors Faculty comprised of faculty across the university who demonstrate teaching excellence and scholarly/creative engagement. Honors Faculty will have taught and/or served in the Honors College over a period of time. After the application and approval process is completed, they may teach Honors courses regularly and serve on Honors College committees, the University Honors Council, student senior honors projects, etc. This body of faculty is charged with working with the Executive Director to enact the vision of honors education at UNC Charlotte. A subcommittee of the University Honors Council is completing documents for this in the spring of 2013.

\(^1\) Members of the task force: Nan Fey-Yensan, James Frakes, Dan Jones, Pat Moyer, Malin Pereira (ch), John Smail, Heather Smith, John Szmer, Connie Rothwell, Diane Zablotsky.
• **Consolidation of honors program administration needs to occur at the level of the colleges, because there is, at present, too much duplication of effort and significant inefficiency** (for example, 26 different programs across the university, each with its own director; more than half, 14 programs, reside in one college, CLAS). **Administration must be based upon a partnership between the Honors College and the disciplinary/professional colleges.** The Honors College should provide core administrative oversight and, with Honors Faculty, take the lead in faculty development, curriculum development, and offering university-wide Honors programming; the disciplinary and professional colleges should provide centralized administrative support for department/college curriculum development, coordinating Honors projects and theses with research faculty in departments, and may choose to offer college Honors programs with their own curriculum and programming. At the departmental level, honors coordinators who work with the associate dean of the college charged with providing administrative support for honors would provide a more efficient and consolidated administrative structure than the lateral, distributed model at present. The college-level model allows growth to 5-8% of the undergraduate population (approximately 1,000 to 1,500 students) from our current population comprising slightly more than 2% (under 500 students). Without consolidation of administrative structures and support from within each college, growth of honors would be unmanageable and create undue burdens at the department level. Faculty governance of the honors curriculum remains under the University Honors Council; governance of honors courses at the departmental level remains within departments, subject to approval of University Honors Council.

• **Access to Honors programs must be available, when feasible, for all qualified and highly-motivated students, regardless of major or entry point** (first year freshman to first-semester junior year transfer student). Every student in every major should have at the very least the option of completing a final Honors project, as defined by the department or college and approved by the Honors Council. Those projects must include the involvement of research/creative faculty. This model creates the opportunity for growth to 5-8% of the undergraduate population (approximately 1,000 to 1,500 students) from our current population comprising slightly more than 2% (under 500 students). Unless we create an exit, we cannot provide access to honors to the more than 2,000 undergraduates each semester who make the chancellor’s list (3.8+ gpa).

• **Honors Courses and Senior Projects:**
  a. Models for Honors courses and Honors senior projects can vary (see below) as fits the needs of the departments and colleges, but all will fulfill the core mission of the Honors College and appropriate objectives. The Executive Director and Honors Redesign Team will work with faculty and units to develop courses and final projects.
  b. **Philosophy of Honors Pedagogy:** Honors courses are not graduate courses re-labeled, nor are they simply more work. Core elements of Honors courses should include writing to learn, student-driven inquiry/discovery, collaboration with research faculty, student
oral and written presentation of results, leadership and teamwork, innovative themes, a
developmental/mentoring approach to students. Team teaching, especially across
disciplinary areas, must be a supported option. In HONR seminars offered by the Honors
College, interdisciplinarity and non-discipline specific themes are key features. College
honors programs may wish to develop transdisciplinary or multidisciplinary courses.

c. **Models available for Honors courses in departments/colleges**
   1. Honors stand-alone sections of core courses or electives
   2. Honors sections embedded in larger courses meeting separately once every week or
two for enrichment, discussion, presentations outside of class
   3. Honors sections of in-depth study, lab, research, project courses
   4. Honors applied to any course for individual student, by contract (not as desirable, or
efficient)

d. **Models available for projects** [REQUIRED elements of all: written product, public oral
and visual presentation, research/inquiry based including research faculty as
advisor/readers]
   1. Ideally, should have prep (work/course of 3cr) prior semester, especially for thesis
   2. Individual project
   3. Thesis
   4. Group project
   5. Lab research leading to publication
   6. Capstone research seminar
   7. Capstone portfolios

• Programming core:
  a. **Ideal model for service should be community engagement/service learning, service that is
     integrated with the academic curriculum and thus mutually reinforcing.** Service tied to
curriculum will occur in the Honors College and possibly other honors programs across
campus, as appropriate. Community engagement within the context of the region’s
premiere urban research university implies a commitment to civic involvement and the
conduct of work that “profoundly and systematically affects the relationship between UNC
Charlotte and the larger community in a positive and meaningful way.” Honors service –
especially that required in 4-year programs – flows from research and/or teaching initiatives
which themselves have been conducted in partnership with the community. Working at
local, regional and/or global scales honors students and faculty are centrally involved in
efforts to develop, sustain and expand campus/community partnerships and engage in
collaborative and mutually reinforcing initiatives across the research, teaching and service
spectrum. Whether in campus classrooms, the urban laboratory of Charlotte or far flung
global locales, honors students will explore, generate and apply knowledge in ways that
flows from and to those communities for the benefit a wider public good. For example: an
honors student who is working in soup kitchen can take the additional step of partnering
with the staff and clients to improve distribution systems of food and/or developing
research that informs that goal of change for the good; a student running a fashion show
could focus on the international dress in the community and involve research about and then raise awareness of the growing multi-cultural communities of Charlotte.

b. **The Honors College should offer advising for pre-law and prestigious awards/fellowships, in addition to its current advising for pre-health professions.** These services need to be in Honors because the students cross the disciplines. Additionally, centralizing services will decrease inefficiencies of having, for example, three faculty on campus offering pre-law advising, and multiple faculty on campus advising students about prestigious awards and fellowships in an *ad hoc* fashion. Centralizing these services also increases access and prepares honors for growth. These services should be available for all qualified students, not only those enrolled in specific honors programs. All of these will promote honors and add to the prestige of the university.
**OPTIONS FOR NEW HONORS PROGRAMS** (these are some possible options; others might be designed)

### MINIMUM

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th>Total Credit Hours</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Honors Project in... (name of department)</td>
<td>3-6 cr</td>
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<tr>
<td>Honors Thesis in ... (name of department)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Honors Capstone research seminar in .... (name of department)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Honors Group project in ... (name of department or college)</td>
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<tr>
<td>(prep course optional but highly recommended, especially for thesis)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Departmental Honors in... (name of department)</td>
<td>9-15 cr</td>
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<tr>
<td>(may not be available in every college, if college program developed)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>6-9 cr Honors in department (H versions of labs, courses, independent study, etc) or other honors courses university-wide</td>
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<tr>
<td>3-6 cr. project/thesis (prep course recommended)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Provost's Honors (in Honors College with hand-off to dept/college)</td>
<td>15-18 cr</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Appealing to transfers or late bloomers. Only if needed (may not be necessary if honors programs in colleges fully develop)</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>12-15 cr honors courses selected from HONR interdisciplinary seminars, departmental H sections, and honors courses university-wide</td>
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<td>3-6 cr project/thesis (prep course recommended)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Honors housing available</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participation component</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>College Honors in... (name of college)</td>
<td>18-24 cr</td>
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<tr>
<td>4-year programs to fully meet core mission and objectives of Honors College and Host College</td>
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<tr>
<td>15 cr honors courses selected from general education H sections and college/departmental courses</td>
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<tr>
<td>3-6 cr project/thesis (prep course recommended)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Honors housing available</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participation component</td>
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<tr>
<td>Community engagement component if appropriate</td>
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<td>Priority registration (due to engagement &amp; participation)</td>
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<tr>
<td>(must include a side entrance for transfers in 2nd or early 3rd year, with fewer cr req)</td>
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### MAXIMUM
Timeline for Redesign:

Year One (2013-14) –

- Honors Faculty appointed.
- Honors Council restructured.
- Honors College expands call for faculty proposals to teach in honors.
- Honors College offers workshop series, “Honors Is.”
- Honors College establishes administrative partnerships with other colleges’ associate deans.
- Honors College, working with Levine Scholars Program and International Programs, expands advising for prestigious scholarships/awards.
- College of Health and Human Services, working with Honors Redesign Team, begins design of new program. Intends to submit curriculum proposals.
- College of Liberal Arts & Sciences, working with the Honors Redesign Team, considers design of new college program. May submit curriculum revisions/proposal.
- College of Engineering investigates honors in senior design projects. May submit curriculum proposal.
- Business Honors Program and University Honors Program, working with Honors Redesign Team, review their programs and determine appropriate revisions. May submit curriculum proposals.

Year Two (2014-15) –

- Honors College administrative partnerships with other colleges further defined as new curricula established.
- Honors College offers pre-law advising.
- College of Health and Human Services opens new honors program.
- College of Computing and Infomatics, working with Honors Redesign Team, begins redesign of program. May submit curriculum proposal.
- College of Liberal Arts & Sciences, working with the Honors Redesign Team, may continue with design of new college program. May submit curriculum revisions/proposal.
- College of Engineering investigates additional honors options beyond senior design project. May submit curriculum proposal.
- Business Honors Program and University Honors Program, working with Honors Redesign Team, finalize any revisions to their programs and submit any final curriculum revisions.
- College of Education, working with the Honors Redesign Team, considers new college program as Teaching Fellows begins phase out. May submit curriculum revisions/proposal.
- College of Arts + Architecture, working with Honors Redesign Team, reviews their college and departmental program and determines appropriate revisions. May submit curriculum proposals.
Year Three (2015-16) — College of Computing and Infomatics may open revised honors program, or submit proposal for opening 2016.

New and revised honors curricula from Years One and Two in place or finalized.

Review of University Honors Council representation in light of new programs.

Honors College reviews access to honors education and consider whether new Program, “Provost’s Honors,” housed in Honors College, is needed.

**Assessment:** The objectives from the Mission and Objectives vision document will be used, in relation to the specific objectives of each program, to define assessment measures, which may include: growth of honors programs and number of students served; increase in number of students winning prestigious awards and fellowships; qualitative measures of improvement revealed in student self-reporting; increase in the numbers of full-time research/creative faculty, especially tenure-line, involved in teaching, research and service in honors.