University Honors Committee  
September 3, 2010  
1:30 – 3:30 p.m.  

303rd Meeting  

APPROVED  

Voting members present: Brianno Coller (EET), Nancy Castle (for Nancy Nuzzo, HHS), Sien Deng (LAS), Michael Duffy (LIB), Tim Ryan (LAS), Scot Schraufnagel (LAS) and Honors students David Hansell, Nora Lindvall, and Ken Wang.  

Voting members absent: Sinclair Bell (VPA), Greg Conderman (EDUC), Bart Sharp (BUSE), and Honors students Lydia Lindenberg and Alex Porter.  

Ex-officio members present: Dave Changnon (Acting Associate Vice Provost), Daniel Kempton (Honors)  

Others: Honors staff members Kate Braser, Jes Cisneros, and Joanne Ganshirt (Recording Clerk)  

I. Introductions  

Members of the committee introduced themselves.  

II. Approval of Agenda  

DUFFY/RYAN MOVE TO APPROVE THE AGENDA. THE MOTION PASSED.  

III. Approval of April 30 Minutes  

Two minor typographical errors were corrected. DUFFY/CASTLE MOVED TO APPROVE AS AMENDED. THE MOTION PASSED.  

IV. Committee Roles, Rules, Elections, and EYE Grants  

Kempton distributed copies of the committee bylaws. Kempton spoke regarding the roles and purpose of committee. The committee is composed of representatives of every college, with the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences having three representatives; one representative from the University Libraries; five elected students; and a member of the Undergraduate Coordinating Council (UCC). The director and vice provost (or representative) are non-voting members. Kempton stressed the importance for all voting members to attend meetings so quorums may be met. Quorums are needed for allocation of funding for student Enhance Your Education Grants. Kempton suggested naming the sixth and seventh student vote recipients to be alternate members of the committee. This
would allow for students to be fully represented at all meetings. Duffy asked if this can be done without amending the bylaws. Kempton said he is sure it can be done with no bylaw change. He said it is his interpretation of the bylaws. The Honors Committee is an advisory committee so if a suggestion is made and the committee approves that suggestion, then it can be done. Castle suggested having the alternates attend all the meetings so they would be ready to vote if needed.

As an advisory committee to the Honors Program, this committee has important work. Kempton said the Honors Program staff will involve the committee more in the future. For instance, the Honors Program now has an assessment. He wants the committee to more involved in this process.

The first order of business for the committee is the election of a chair for the current year. 

SCHRAUFNAGEL/DUFFY MOVE TO NOMINATE RYAN FOR CHAIR. THE NOMINATION IS ACCEPTED AND RYAN IS ELECTED CHAIR.

V. Program Coordinator’s Report (K. Braser)

Braser presented the following written report:

ACTIVITIES:

- The Honors Retreat took place at Lorado Taft this year. Feedback from students has been positive. The retreat followed the old format, but with a few adjustments, the most major one being a workshop schedule in the afternoon led by student staff.
- We had almost 200 students attend the Welcome Back BBQ after the first day of classes.
- We’ve contacted 82 transfer students and about 50 freshmen who did not attend Taft and have let them know they need to register for an Honors orientation makeup session. There are six dates in September that are filling fast.
- SOUPer Wednesday began this week. Our first guests are the Honors Student Association (HAS) and CAAR (recruiting honors students to volunteer/take notes).
- Dr. Castle and I met with the Honors Alumni Council and have started planning for our 40th anniversary observations.
- I was on the Huskies SEE DeKalb committee which held what will become an annual community welcome event in downtown DeKalb for the first time on August 26. Lots of Honors students attended the event.
- I’m teaching an Honors section of UNIV this Fall.
- Honors will work with admissions and the Alumni Association again this Fall on some recruiting events for high-achieving high school students.

SERVICE:

- Conexion Comunidad volunteer recruiting is underway. The program begins September 14 and will again run Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday. This year for the first time, we are offering volunteer training and orientation on two dates
prior to the start. Community Leader Lauren Sikes has taken on the major responsibilities for helping to run the program this year.

- We are working with the Alumni Association and NIU Cares Day organizers to have Honors host an experiment with a new alumni component for NIU Cares Day this year. Planning is in the early stages.

HONORS HOUSE:
- Lots of good news so far this year in Honors House…
  1. The House is full and has a waiting list. We came up with some very successful recruiting techniques over the summer which other LLC’s adopted and implemented.
  2. For the first time, all residents of Honors House were required to sign a contract acknowledging they understand they live in the Honors House and understand the eligibility requirements.
  3. All the Honors House CA’s are Honors students as well. It’s done wonders for the teamwork with House Leaders so far.
- Paintball trip is full, September 25
- Floor Wars kicks off this week.
- There is huge demand for Honors Lounge hours this Fall, so I plan to try to shift some of my office hours over there to ease the House Leaders’ schedules (some of them spent the entire weekend in the lounge last week because this group of freshmen seems to want to basically live in there).

ENRICHMENT:
- Continuing to work with Honors faculty on enrichment opportunities for their classes this fall. Three are underway already.
- Dennis Barsema started his five-week Microfinance Honors workshop series this week.
- Amy Newman is inviting a poet to her Honors Seminar. He will be on campus later this month. She is hoping to have her department pay for his hotel lodging, but if that falls through I have contacted Fine Arts House and they seem open to collaborating and offering their visiting artist apartment for the night.
- Steve Franklin’s seminar will visit the Art Institute and will meet with a guide who has agreed to focus their educational tour on European Art that he plans to discuss in his class.
- I am working with four other professors on potential projects as well as the above listed.

Braser added that 103 Honors students attended the first Honors Student Association meeting on Wednesday night, September 1. This was a mix of Honors House residents, other students from on-campus housing, off-campus residents, and non-traditional students.
VI. Assistant Director’s Report (Dr. Cisneros)

Cisneros reported the enrollment numbers for the Honors Program have increased from 698 last year to 861 including all new students admitted during orientation. He noted the Honors Program has seen a big increase in the number of members who are from the College of Health and Human Sciences. He said he does not know why this large increase has happened. Referring to new freshmen, Cisneros said there is a slight dip in the mean composite ACT and class rank from last year. There is no reason to be concerned by this. He said from year to year Honors Program staff “takes a chance” on students who may have a significantly low score on one of the requirements for admission and this can cause the mean to drop. Normally staff tries to follow the requirements closely, but does look at each application on a case-by-case basis. The grade point average for incoming transfer students has remained stable for years. If the Honors Program invited all transfer students who were eligible with a 3.2 transfer grade point average the Program would be overloaded, Cisneros said. He noted that the Honors Program staff will be working to increase the students in the under-represented groups across campus. Castle noted that she knows the new president of the Chicago Urban League. She would be willing to contact the president for help with recruiting minority students.

The Freshmen Retreat at Lorado Taft campus worked really well this year, Cisneros reported. Having the retreat off campus seemed to be a good thing.

The Honors Program has started its native student recruitment for fall. Cisneros said staff members will make follow-up phone calls to all the students who have not responded to the letter. The staff is looking for ways to improve movement of students through the Program and will try to coordinate with other units on campus that have similar interests.

Cisneros informed the committee he is teaching the Honors section of EPFE 201 this semester.

Referring to the enrollment numbers, Castle said she feels bad because the enrollment was so low while she was director. Kempton noted she was director at the end of a 6-year trend of lower enrollment. Castle said she concentrated on recruiting new freshmen with an ACT score of 28 or above. Cisneros noted that during the last couple of years he has been really aggressive at removing inactive students from the Honors Program. He had been more willing to let students stay in the Program even if they were not taking classes or otherwise engaging with the Program, but now he is not allowing that to happen as much. Castle added this policy is a good way to give resources to students who really want to participate in the Honors Program. Ryan said Castle did a good job while director.
### Table 1
**Current Active Honors Enrollment by Part of Program**

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<td>Currently in Phase II</td>
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<td>1224</td>
<td>966</td>
<td>852</td>
<td>794</td>
<td>698</td>
<td>861</td>
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### Table 2
**Students in Honors by Self-ID Race/Ethnicity**

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Table 3
Students in Honors by Gender

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<td>Total</td>
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<td>852</td>
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Table 4
Current Active Honors Enrollment by College

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<td>V&amp;PA</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>31</td>
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### Table 5
ACT Scores and Class Rank for Incoming Freshman Honors Students

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<th>2001</th>
<th>2002</th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2005</th>
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<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
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<tr>
<td>Freshman Mean</td>
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<tr>
<td>Composite ACT</td>
<td>27.3</td>
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<td>27</td>
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<td>Freshman Mean</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class Rank</td>
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<td>92.4</td>
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<td>89.3</td>
<td>89.8</td>
<td>88.9</td>
<td>86.9</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>85.46</td>
<td>86.8</td>
<td>86.21</td>
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### Table 6
GPA for Incoming Transfer Honors Students

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<th></th>
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<th>2002</th>
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<td>Mean Transfer</td>
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<tr>
<td>GPA</td>
<td>3.60</td>
<td>3.57</td>
<td>3.66</td>
<td>3.56</td>
<td>3.69</td>
<td>3.69</td>
<td>3.74</td>
<td>3.64</td>
<td>3.69</td>
<td>3.69</td>
<td>3.69</td>
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VII. Director’s Report

Kempton presented the following report:

- The reports given by Braser and Cisneros are phenomenal. Castle did a remarkable job as acting director. The enrollment numbers in 2003 were inflated and now the numbers are more accurate. There has been new money to add courses and events

- Thanked Vice Provost Earl Seaver for supporting the summer grants awarded to faculty to develop Honors courses. Four grants were approved in competitive process. There were 13 proposals submitted. Sandra Dawson from Women’s Studies is developing multiple mini-sections. It is hoped they may be used as models for other mini-sections. These courses will be started in the fall. Kempton said it sounds like Dawson is doing exciting things. Rebecca Houze from the School of Art has created an Honors-only course for spring 2011. The topic is the World’s Fair. This is an on-load course so the Honors Program will not have to pay for it. Leslie Friedman from the Department of Psychology has developed a mini-section in PSYC 306 Honors Advanced Research Methods to be taught in spring 2011. James Horn and Victor Ryzhov from the Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry have developed mini-sections for CHEM 210 General Chemistry I and CHEM 211 General Chemistry II. They will start teaching CHEM 211 in spring 2011 with CHEM 210 offered in the fall. Each grant recipient must teach the courses developed at least 4 times in 8 years.

- Smart classroom technology has been installed in the Honors conference room. This is one of the best smart classrooms on campus. The technology will be used for classes and special events scheduled in the room. Kempton again thanked Seaver for financing this technology.

- He has been working with others on campus including Kitty McCarthy, Associate Vice President of Student Affairs and Enrollment Manager; Anne Hardy, Director, Office of Scholarship; and Brandon Lagana, Director of Admissions; to develop an online scholarship form. This form was activated last week. This form will allow prospective students to complete one form to apply for all scholarships and the Honors Program. For the current academic year, the Honors Program gave ten scholarships to incoming students, but they were awarded too late to affect the students’ decision making processes. The scholarships were basically given to students who had already decided to attend NIU. We need to start awarding scholarships earlier to better recruit students who may go to Illinois State University or other area universities. Hardy was able to package several scholarships in order to lure some academically-talented students to NIU this year. Changnon asked if prospects are good that scholarship offerings will be made before the students start the decision-making process. Will it be done earlier than last year? Kempton said that is the ultimate goal. Everyone involved in this process would like to be able to make scholarship offers at the same time
that University of Illinois makes offers. Changnon said he and Dan Gebo, Department of Anthropology, co-chair the Faculty Fund Scholarship. They are looking for 6-10 new students every year to whom to award the scholarship. They are looking at ways to contact better students and this could be the mechanism. Hanssell said the College of Business has a four-year scholarship that might be linked to this form.

- Kempton credited the rise in enrollment numbers on the good summer orientation program.

- He made a strategic error when scheduling courses for the fall semester. He said he thought the strategic planning money given for new courses could also be used for engaged learning, but found out it could not. As a result, all the monies available were not spent this semester. Kempton is trying to get a better picture of what courses are to be offered for the spring semester. He is trying to get more courses created and figure out what money will be needed to pay for these courses. Great strides have been made with Registration and Records to be able to look at Honors courses in MyNIU. He concluded that too few fall courses were offered, but that will change for the spring.

- The catalog changes made last year for cooperation between departmental honors and the Honors Program were not fully approved in time to make the current catalog. The changes should appear in the next catalog. Castle asked if an announcement will be sent to all departments regarding the catalog changes. She said this would help advisors working with students to plan future course work. The announcement should be sent to chairs and undergraduate coordinators.

- Peters gave a good “shout out” to the Honors Program in the state of the university address.

VIII. Old Business

Kempton incorporated this into his report above.

IX. EYE Grant Proposals

Committee members discussed the Enhance Your Education (EYE) Grant proposal from Emily Sorenson. This proposal had been submitted at the end of the spring semester and prompted questions about the supplies requested. Committee members wanted clarification on why the supplies needed were not part of the regular laboratory stock. The majority of the equipment needed is only good for one use and, therefore, is not part of the regular stock. Castle wondered what assurance the committee had that the experiment would be stored properly. She said she would like to have that before funding is given. Ryan said there seem to be continuing problems with questions for faculty who appear to not be giving enough information. Duffy asked if a check list
could be given to the student and faculty member so they will know what information is needed. Kempton said the EYE Grant proposal form needs to be redone to eliminate all the questions and problems encountered in the last two years. **DUFFY/COLLER MOVED TO APPROVE THE GRANT PENDING CLARIFICATION OF STORAGE. THE MOTION PASSED.**

X. **New Business**

Kempton told committee members that the Office of the Vice Provost started a new initiative called Learning Communities. This is a recreation of the Focused Interest Groups from previous years and is a group of specially linked courses for freshmen. The Honors Program did not get involved with this early enough to take part this fall. Duffy is working on a learning community for fall 2011 to include POLS 285—Introduction to International Relations, UNIV 101—University Experience, and a music class with an international flair taught by Duffy. The full details are not completely worked out. Kempton said he is looking for other ideas from faculty. Schraufnagel asked if the learning community must be a three-course sequence. Kempton said it should include three courses, but there was trouble this year trying to get three courses linked. These are all taken at the same time in the first semester of attendance at NIU. Schraufnagel asked if they had to be general education courses. Kempton said it is best if they are gen education courses and should all have a common theme. Schraufnagel asked when students are recruited to register for the courses. Kempton replied that it is done at orientation which starts in June.

Lindvall asked if the learning communities were only for freshmen or if transfers who need to complete general education requirements could they take the courses. Kempton said they are initially for freshmen but that is an open question. Lindvall said she thinks the learning communities would be interesting. If she had seen learning communities as a transfer student needing the courses included, she would have jumped at the opportunity to enroll in them. She added it would be a good way to get student bonding throughout the Program. Kempton asked Lindvall if the learning communities should be for freshmen only or a mix of students. Lindvall thinks a mix of students would be good for everyone involved in a learning community. Hansell said offering only two courses should be considered. If there is a time conflict with one of the three courses, a student is then shut out of the other two. Changnon said there is a lot of flexibility right now in the learning communities. He said the idea of sophomores in learning communities is intriguing. The idea of having that kind of interaction could help freshmen be more successful. Castle asked if it is possible to get a breakdown of general education course enrollments to see which courses are being taken by sophomores. This would allow for the creation of learning communities that would be appropriate for sophomores.

Schraufnagel suggested the learning communities could be more aggressive and offer a four-course set over two semesters. This would create a great cohort effect and really allow students to bond. Cisneros said offering learning communities at the sophomore level would allow departments to promote departmental honors and use them as recruiting tools. Braser related that last year’s Honors learning community students
bonded so well they are still meeting regularly for lunch. In fact, they all tried to register for the same schedule of courses for spring 2010. They were interested in learning communities as sophomores. Changnon said bonding is a key to retention. Cisneros added that sophomores in the Honors Program see great seminars offered at the junior/senior level, but they sort of fall off the map with not many courses offered. Kempton said developing a sophomore-level learning community would be a good idea for a summer grant proposal. Cisneros said there was a larger demographic of sophomore transfer students this summer.

Kempton would like to create working groups for the coming year. Last year’s groups all met two or three times and produced outcomes. The suggested working groups are: 40th anniversary celebration and fundraising (May will be the 40th anniversary of the first graduating Honors class), EYE Grant proposal rewrite, development of a faculty handbook, underrepresented groups, and campus coordination with excellence. Cisneros and Kempton have done some work on underrepresented groups. Last year they met with members of the Black Male Initiative. This year the Honors Program has a peer advisor who could help with this. The campus coordination with excellence would continue to do the work that has been started with other units on campus that have similar interests to the Honors Program. The Program is currently working the College of Business learning center. Work needs to be done with communication not with “creating the wheel,” Kempton told the committee. These five working groups are needed.

Ryan said he thinks five working groups are too many. Four would be enough to work on this year. Schraufnagel said he thinks campus coordination with excellence needs to continue. He was confused by opportunities available at NIU. It needs to be clarified to faculty. He would volunteer for that working group.

Lindvall asked if non-traditional students are part of the underrepresented group. Cisneros said that the traditional/non-traditional status of a student is not known. Castle asked if “non-traditional” is an age. Lindvall said it was not necessarily a certain age, but based on life experience not found in the 18-22-year-old traditional college student. Kempton asked if underserved would be a better term than underrepresented. Duffy noted it would be interesting to see what the non-traditional numbers are campus wide and in the Honors Program.

Changnon asked if the Honors Program web site is focused toward students or faculty. Kempton said he thinks the Program website is an exemplar for student-based sites. It probably short changes faculty. Braser said faculty information could easily be added. Currently there are tabs for current students and prospective students. A tab for faculty could be added with no problem. The tab has not been added yet because the staff was waiting for the creation of the faculty handbook. The tab could be added and information sent in e-mails to students could be added to the faculty tab.

Committee members decided to combine the EYE Grant and faculty handbook working groups into one, with the EYE Grant rewrite first to be completed. The working group on coordination of campus excellence will be delayed for now. Honors Program staff will
continue their efforts in that matter. Kempton will serve on all working groups.
Committee members present volunteered for the working groups as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>40th anniversary-alumni development</th>
<th>EYE Grant/Faculty Handbook</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Castle</td>
<td>Duffy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hansell</td>
<td>Schraunagel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Braser</td>
<td>Coller</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Underrepresented groups
Cisneros                             | Wang                        |
Lindvall                             | Ryan                        |
Changnon                             |

XI. Announcements

The Honors Program will have a table in Alumni Affinity group tent at Homecoming on October 16. Tailgating will be held from 11 a.m. until the game starts. Castle said a poster will be made to announce upcoming alumni activities. There will be a big event in spring for anyone who wants to attend. A smaller event will be held in the fall to celebrate outstanding alumni. These events should be good ways to contact and stay in contact with alumna. The poster will also include a list of all donors through True North campaign.

XII. Adjourn

WANG/COLLER MOVED TO ADJOURN. THE MOTION PASSED. The meeting adjourned at 3:25 p.m. The next meeting will be October 1 at 1:30 p.m. in Campus Life 110.