UNIVERSITY HONORS PROGRAM
Honors Committee Meeting
313th Meeting
3 February 2012
1:30-3:30 PM, CL 110

I. Welcome and Introduction of New Committee Member

II. Approval of Agenda

III. Approval of Minutes from 2 December 2011

IV. Associate Vice Provost for University Honors Report (Jones)

V. Assistant Director’s Report (Cisneros)

VI. Program Coordinator’s Report (Handout to be distributed)

VII. Alumni & Development Report (Castle)

VIII. Honors House Faculty Advisors’ Update (Castle & Changnon)

IX. University Scholarship Committee Report (Jones)

X. New Business
   - Possible Academic Enrichment Fee (Jones)
   - Outstanding Alumni Award (Sharp)
   - Agenda for University Honors Steering Committee with possible discussion of an Honors course evaluation form and Honors faculty status (Jones)

XI. Adjourn

The next meeting is Friday, March 2, 2012.
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APPROVED

Voting Members Present: Sinclair Bell (VPA), Nancy Castle (for Nancy Nuzzo/HHS), Greg Conderman (EDUC), Tim Ryan (LAS), Scot Schraufnagel (LAS), Bart Sharp (BUSE), and Honors student Juliana Leprich.

Voting Members Absent: Brianno Coller (EET), William Goldenberg (VPA), and Honors students Pat Galvin, and Nora Lindvall.

Ex-officio Present: Anne Birberick (Vice Provost) and Chris Jones (Honors)

Others: Honors staff: David Changnon, Jes Cisneros, Joanne Ganshirt (Recording Clerk) and Jacquelyn Norris.

XII. Welcome and Introduction of New Committee Member
Sharp welcomed the committee back for a new semester. Jones introduced Changnon, professor of geography, as the new faculty advisor for the Honors House.

XIII. Approval of Agenda
Jones asked for the discussion of the academic enrichment fee be the first item discussed. He will include the University Scholarship Committee Report in his report. CONDERMAN/Ryan MOVED TO APPROVE THE AGENDA AS AMENDED. THE MOTION PASSED.

XIV. Approval of Minutes from 2 December 2011
BELL/DUFFY MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES. THE MOTION PASSED.

XV. Possible Academic Enrichment Fee
Jones introduced Alexander Gelman, director of the School of Theatre and Dance, who wanted to address the committee about a proposed academic enrichment fee to be used to bring cultural activities to campus that NIU would not be able to afford otherwise. This fee would likely address the basic quality of life notion in that NIU ought to be a cultural magnet as well a center for research and education and dispel the notion that universities have been marketing themselves as higher-end trade schools. Gelman said the fee would provide funding to bring not only big name, but also lesser known, artists and speakers to campus. As a result this would be a way to expand the minds of all students and give graduates the ability and opportunity to develop a taste for the richer things.

Gelman continued to explain the fee would be assessed similarly to other fees, such as the Athletics fee, although at a much lower rate. This fee would allow all students to take attend any of the events held as a result. The rate would be approximately 10-1. As an example, Gelman said if a student were to pay $7.00 for a theatre ticket, this new fee would actually put
the price of the ticket at 70 cents. The exact rate would be determined by the number of students.

This money would enhance the offerings on campus, Gelman said. There are probably students on campus who have not attended the theatre, or jazz or other concerts and cultural events. The program would allow students to experience such events and give them enjoyment which could extend throughout their lives. This will allow for more well-rounded students and individuals.

The types of offerings have not yet been thought through on purpose. This conversation was broached by President John Peters when he recently visited the College of Visual and Performing Arts. The University Honors Program was mentioned early on by Peters. Rich Holly, dean of the College of Visual and Performing Arts, and Gelman decided the Honors Program was a good place to start because Honors students would be most like to be interested, broad minded, and are leaders.

Jones said he met with Holly and Gelman to discuss this issue. Jones said this would a value-added experience. The Honors Program is not just about the curriculum and the Honors House. The potential events associated with this fee could be another benefit and enrich Honors programming beyond the classroom. He asked for comments from committee members.

Committee members first asked about the fee—how it would be administered and what other fees were already assessed. Gelman said the fee would be based on the number credit hours for which each student registered across disciplines. Other fees assessed include an Athletic Fee and technology fee. Birberick said this is a great idea to facilitate students’ engagement with the art. It will encourage new students to visit the art museums and the large of number of arts/humanities events that are currently held. However, this fee would have to pass through administrative channels and provide a direct return to students. She asked if this would be a duplicate of the current student activity fee. If so, this could be proposed to be a part of the General Education requirement rather than another financial cost to students. A notation could then be added to the transcript stating the student had been engaged in a certain number of activities.

Gelman said the current problem is that there is no money for cultural events. Some artists or performances could require $20,000-30,000. A staff would also be needed to run this program. If a fee of $2.00 was charged, that could bring in $1.2 million which could be used for infrastructure development to operate the program. Jones said there would be good campus-wide interest in such a program. It would be good for recruiting students and faculty. Castle said that while this was being developed, demand such a program needs to be shown. Gelman said not having demand is the best reason for having this program. If there is no demand for an event, then students would be willing to pay for it as they do for rock concerts. The discussion ended. Jones thanked Gelman for attending.

XVI. Associate Vice Provost for University Honors Report
Jones presented the following report:

Follow up on items from last meeting
Jones met with the students who submitted EYE grant proposals regarding the revisions the Committee requested. Two of the three revisions have been received. The call for Great Professor Award nominations has been circulated. The call for Summer 2012 University Honors Improvement Grants has been circulated. Honors course development is also a part of the Division of International Program’s call for Lillian Cobb travel grant proposals. Jones showed committee members the links to the Great Professor Award and summer grant calls on the University Honors Program website. He showed additional improvements to the website made in early January. Four Honors students were named Forward Together Forward Scholars. A photo of the four is on the website. Ganshirt, Jones, and Birberick attended the Forward Together Forward ceremony and luncheon on Sunday, January 29. It was a great event.

Strategic Planning
In December, Jones noted the submission of a five-dimensional Strategic Planning proposal, *Strengthening the University Honors Experience*, encompassing funding for Honors courses at the 100-200 levels, a new academic adviser/national scholarship coordinator, funding for enhanced learning grants to support study abroad and engaged learning, a Summer Scholars Program, and recruitment. Word was received from Deputy Provost Earl “Gip” Seaver that the proposal was selected for funding. Specific details have not been received the Provost’s Office. Provost Ray Alden and Birberick are working particularly hard on securing course funding. At Birberick’s request, Jones presented a list of courses that Honors would like to see funded. The request for fall course offerings has been delayed as a result of the work being done on funding models.

In December, an Honors Vision 2020 proposal was submitted by Jones. Because of the one-time funding model associated with the call for proposals, Jones had to go in some different directions. The four dimensional proposal encompassed (1) funding for new course development and course transformation, (2) a recruitment budget, (3) funding to produce and circulate Honors advising handbook for faculty, staff, and students, and (4) some needed upgrades to the University Honors Center. Word has not been received on this proposal. There will be a meeting on February 14 to determine which proposals will be funded.

Program Coordinator
Emily Del Monaco officially left the Honors Program as program coordinator in early January. With the support of Birberick, paperwork has been submitted to search for a replacement. However, Human Resource Services (HRS) will not allow the program coordinator title to be tied to a Supportive Professional Staff (SPS) position. It’s now exclusively a Civil Service category. That’s a problem given the responsibilities, educational requirements, and irregular hours associated with the position.

Now, again with Birberick’s support, paperwork has been submitted for an assistant director of programming and alumni relations. An approval from HRS for this request to has not yet been received.
As the staff copes with Del Monaco’s departure, each staff member has taken on at least one area of her responsibilities. Jones is overseeing the community leaders and the website; Cisneros is working with Housing & Dining as it relates to the Honors House and planning for next year; Ganshirt is collecting and circulating programming information to students; Anne Quinlan, program advisor, is overseeing SOUPer Wednesday; and Jessica Perez, office support associate, is filling in a number of gaps.

Jones introduced Jacque Norris, a graduate student intern, who is coordinating activities in the Honors House and overseeing the House leaders. She was assigned this position at the suggestion of Del Monaco. Jones meets with Norris every Thursday morning, and she attends the weekly staff meetings on Mondays at 10:00 a.m.

The weekly staff meetings continue to be a helpful means for ensuring staff members work as a team and stay on the same page given how busy the program and their jobs are. Jones complimented the staff for pulling together to do the program coordinator work.

Birberick informed the committee members that the reclassification of the program coordinator position is a university-wide and state-wide initiative. These positions are only reviewed when vacated after the classification has been tagged for audit.

**Outreach to Colleges**

**College of Engineering and Engineering Technology (CEET):** Last semester the Honors Committee endorsed the proposal for a new CEET-University Honors Program. That proposal is now within the curricular review process. CEET is very excited about this initiative. Recently, Jones represented University Honors at an information session with Nick Pohlman (CEET honors director) and Omar Ghrayeb (associate dean). Twenty-five Honors-eligible students attended and another 10 students were interested but could not attend. This is great news for the Vision 2020 goal of increasing the number of Honors graduates at NIU. These are 35 bright students who otherwise wouldn’t graduate with honors.

**College of Education (COE):** Cisneros and Jones met recently with Connie Fox, associate dean, and Margee Myles, director of advising services, to discuss a number of issues, but a customized College of Education-University Honors Program was a major focus. The CEET proposal was shared and as were ideas for such a program for COE students. Fox and Myles were invited to contact the Honors Program in the near future with a draft proposal that could be discussed. They seemed very interested.

**Visual and Performing Arts (VPA):** At their request, Jones met today with Dean Holly and Gelman, director of the School of Theatre, about the idea of an academic enrichment fee. Other areas of collaboration were discussed, and they are very enthusiastic about customized honors education for VPA students.

**Other outreach has included:**

1. Cisneros and Jones met with Michelle Bringas of the Asian-American Student Center in December.
2. Jones met with a prospective donor in Chicago in December.
3. He met with Carl Armato, assistant athletics director.
4. He followed up with Laverne Gyant, director of the Center for Black Studies.
5. He is working with Julia Spears, coordinator of Engaged Learning, on Undergraduate Research Day, Grad Prep Day, and Themed Learning Communities (TLCs).

6. He hosted Spears and eight prospective Honors TLC instructors at an information and planning session in the Capstone Library.

7. Cisneros, Ganshirt, and Jones met with Brandi Hephner LaBanc, Kelley Wesner, and Mike Stang from Student Affairs to discuss their new ImPACT retreat.

8. Jones attended the Sophomore Summit coordinated by the Division of Student Affairs & Enrollment Management.

9. He also agreed to sit on Sophomore Experience working group.

10. He will also be serving on one of the subcommittees associated with NIU’s Higher Learning Commission Self-Study.

**Outreach to Honors Students**

On February 1, Jones spoke at the SOUPer Wednesday event. He gave students some background on himself, discussed his vision for Honors, and briefed them on some of the things the staff is doing or hope to do to strengthen the University Honors Program. He also solicited feedback.

Next week he will speak to the Honors Student Association (HAS) on Wednesday, February 8 and then on Sunday, February 12, he will have four consecutive sessions with the students on each floor of the Honors House. He will essentially do the same presentation that he gave at SOUPer Wednesday.

**Alumni Affinity Group**

Jones met with the officers of our emerging Alumni Affinity Group in December and in January at NIU-Naperville. Steve Vesta is the President; he will speak at Honors Day in April and invite our new graduates to join the Honors Alumni Council.

An on-campus alumni event is being planned for April. It will have two components: “Farewell to Douglas Hall” and a reception. Originally, the event was planned for Saturday, April 22. However, all good venues were booked. So, now the ongoing discussion is focused on Saturday, April 28. It would be scheduled for the late afternoon and early afternoon. More details will be given as soon as they are available.

**Support of NIU Admissions & New Student Recruitment**

Honors will have a presence at the following campus-wide recruitment events:

2 – Admitted Student Days
2 – Transfer Student TGIF events
1 – Junior Preview Day
1 – Diversity day

A proof of the University Honors Program brochure is complete. It’s a very nice document. And the committee members should be pleased. It features seven student profiles, which represent some our best and brightest and highlights the breadth of the program’s academic and demographic diversity. Copies will be available at the March meeting.

Jones will meet with Brad Hoey from University Relations to discuss marketing, branding, and a broader rollout of our new Honors tagline.
Professional Meetings scheduled:
1. Jones will attend the Honors Council of the Illinois Region on February 25.
2. Jones is trying to remain professionally active in his discipline. He will deliver a paper at the International Studies Association convention during the first week of April and deliver a lecture at a local college. This commitment does conflict with the April 6 meeting of the Honors Committee. However, he thinks Bart and Jes can run the show and make decisions on the Great Professor Award and the summer improvement grants.
3. A week later or so, he will attend the annual meeting of the Upper Midwest Honors Council. He will represent Illinois on the Governing Council and hopefully take some of our students to the conference to present their work.

Special Student Support
1. The Honors Program should be able to support a few students’ travel to the conference out of the Foundation account or perhaps an area of the operating budget. This type of activity is something the Program needs to do more of now and in the future.
2. John and Nancy Castle’s generosity has once again touched the program. They have kindly offered to contribute $1,500 to help first-time Honors study abroad students pay for their U.S. passports and an additional $1,000 in Honors student international travel support. University Relations will provide the photos for the passports free of charge. Some of the procedural details still need to be worked out. However, Jones thanked the Castles very much for their wonderful support of Honors students.
3. A report from Anne Hardy, director of the Scholarship Office, was distributed showing a large increase of scholarship offers and acceptances. Many of these students were given automatic admission to the Honors Program.
4. Jones’s concern, however, is supporting the continuing students effectively, especially those of high academic merit with financial challenges. After consulting with Anne Hardy and the Honors Program staff, here is what can be done.
   a. There is $35,000 to award out of the Kovacevich Distinguished Scholarship fund.
   b. There is $10,000 to award out of the Dick Noreen Honors Scholarship fund. Another donation may yet be coming into this fund.
   c. Because new students are being so well-supported, Jones will propose to the vice provost, provost, and Brian Hemphill, vice president for Student Affairs, that Honors’ 8 to 9 new student waivers be converted to waivers for continuing students. This change would have an $80,000-plus impact on our student population.
   d. The Honors staff has a long discussion about how to most effectively use our finite resources for our student staff – peer advisors, house leaders, and community leaders. A consensus was reached that the following approach works best:
      - Create a new Honors Fellows Program (encompass our current peer advisors and community advisors). The students competitively selected for these positions would receive $5,000 tuition waivers (as they do now), but they would not be paid an additional stipend. They would be asked to work less than they do now, but on more specialized tasks, such as some peer advising, new mentor program, SOUPer Wednesday, new student events, community service projects.
With the money recouped from not paying student stipends to the Honors Fellows, a $4,000 stipend would be created for four House leaders, who will be working and living in the new Honors House. They will also receive a titanium meal plan. This package will allow staff members to recruit four strong House Leaders, which is important in this year of transition.

XVII. Assistant Director’s Report
Cisneros reported he:

- Met with 70 students for advising, continuing and new students since the last Honors Committee meeting.
- Attended the Honors Alumni Council meeting at NIU Naperville.
- Attended a meeting at the College of Education to help plan on how to better recruit and serve students in University Honors.
- Requested contact information for spring native student recruiting. Letters will soon be sent out.
- Attended a meeting to better coordinate the University Honors Lorado Taft Freshman Retreat with move-in day and the ImPACT/New Student Welcome Days activities.
- Attended a New Student Welcome Days steering committee meeting.
- Attended a faculty advisor training session.
- Met with Honors staff and spent time working out the re-configuration of the Honors Peer Advisor and Community Leaders positions.
- Attended a webinar titled “Protecting Minors on Campus: Obligations, Policies, Procedures and Best Practices.”
- Met with Scott Peska to discuss collaboration between NIU Military Student Services and University Honors.
- Attended Military Student Services lunch.
- Continued in role as faculty advisor to Honors Student Association (attending Wednesday night meetings).
- Continued working with NIU Housing and Dining as liaison to Honors House (in absence of our program coordinator).

XVIII. Program Coordinator’s Report
The following written report was presented:

ALUMNI
- December 5 was a meeting of the Alumni Affinity Group

EVENTS/PROGRAM
- December 4 was Don’t Stress the Test for Honors House residents
- Karaoke Night
- Pizza with Dr. Jones will be on February 12 from 6-9 p.m

HONORS HOUSE
• House Leader Daihee Cho is recruiting students for Floor Wars and is contacting faculty members about a faculty talent show.
• House Leader Faith Staupersboll is getting quotes for Self Defense Classes.
• House Leader Jack Baker is getting quotes for the House trip to Comedy Shrine and is planning the Farewell to Douglas event.
• House Leader Marshall Happ is advertising the March Madness Competition, hosting Honors House Advising Event and contacting NIU Media Services for Honors House Picture Day.
• House Leader Rachel Bardell is advertising Honors House’s Super Bowl Party which is this Sunday, and she is confirming Yoga sessions.

XIX. Alumni & Development Report
Jones reported the Foundation is trying to get the Honors Program to participate in the annual Red and Black Dinner. Castles have graciously donated tickets to Jones and his wife. The Foundation would like the Honors Program to buy a full table, but that will not be done unless the Honors Program can reap a benefit.

Anthony D’Andrea, Foundation Senior Gift and Estate Planning Officer, is working to get a full report on the Rachowicz Giving Challenge. Jones said he believes real progress is being made with over half the goal already met.

XX. Honors House Faculty Advisors’ Update
Changnon said he is grateful to be asked to participate in the Honors Program after having worked with students in the Program for a long time. He now wants to give back to the students in ways he has not before. Jones has put some good ideas on the table. Changnon wants to look at ways to shift the culture of what the Honors experience can be as not just what is in the classroom but also extra-curricular experiences they will treasure. He is working on an assessment plan for the Honors Program. He would like to involve faculty members in the Honors House in ways that are interesting and unique. To that end he has been looking at websites of other Honors Programs. Many haveHonors faculty fellows. This sets faculty apart and salutes them for being involved with the honors. He said it takes time and courage for faculty to step outside the box and do what does not get credit points. The bigger picture needs to be considered.

Castle reported the Honors House staff has planned many activities. The big activity for the semester will be a trip to a comedy club. Jack Baker, House Leader, has a successful career at the comedy club and is organizing the event. There will be multiple chaperones at the March 2 event. Judy Santacaterina and Matt Swan, instructors in the Department of Communication, will present a talk on humor including what makes people laugh and why.

Jones said even though there is not a program coordinator, there has still been a good deal of activities being done in the Honors House. Jones added that he and Bell hope to launch an art contest for Honors students with the goal of displaying work permanently in the Capstone library.

XXI. University Scholarship Committee Report
This was moved to the end of Jones’ report above.
XXII. New Business

A. Outstanding Alumni Award
Sharp reported the alumni working group is talking about possible recipients. He noted there are many very accomplished alumni. The group has narrowed the candidates, all Honors graduates from the 1970s, to 10 possible recipients. The working group is trying to decide how to proceed. One possibility is to contact each of the 10 and ask for more information. From there, the working group members could make their decision based on that information. Anyone who does not respond would be eliminated from consideration. It is hoped that by contacting each person that person, will become more involved with the Honors Program.

B. Agenda for University Honors Steering Committee with possible discussion of an Honors course evaluation form and Honors faculty status
Jones reminded committee members that Provost Alden had asked him to establish a steering committee. Changes in the in-course contract and capstone forms will be presented to the steering committee in order to be sure these changes will be accepted by faculty members. Standards for delivering value-added experiences to the Honors courses, especially mini-sections, will also be discussed with the steering committee. Jones has contacted each college dean and has representatives from all but one college.

All changes discussed with the steering committee are meant to lead to the creation of a new faculty handbook, which should be available in the fall.

Jones would also like to use the steering committee to start to work on creating an Honors faculty status. However the Honors Committee will likely need to create a feasible proposal first.

Jones asked committee members if there should be an evaluation for faculty teaching Honors courses. Alden and Lavonne Neal, dean of the College of Education, asked how the Honors Program knows which faculty members are doing a good job teaching. Jones asked if Honors Committee members think it is a good idea to evaluate faculty for Honors. He said he realized there will be problems with this. Birberick said the committee may want to think about trying to build the evaluation into the ability of the faculty member to continue teaching Honors courses. If a faculty member wants to continue there may be training, including what is needed to teach an Honors course; student feedback may be requested; and an agreement reached to teach a minimum number of courses. Changnon asked about a reflective statement addressing three or four questions about the experiences of teaching an Honors course. This strategy would be particularly good for Capstone/in-course contract faculty because a close relationship with the student develops. Schraufnagel said faculty members should be required to work on Capstone projects if they want to become Honors faculty. As far as evaluations, he said he does not have a problem with it, but there are already a number of evaluations being done at the same time. Castle asked if the evaluations could be done online. A couple of questions could be asked such as should this teacher be asked to teach again. The Honors Program needs to know if the faculty member knows the subject, but also the value added to the course. Sharp said there might be a problem with evaluations, because of the small sample size. Some mini-sections and all
Capstones and in-course contracts would involve only one student, and comments could be linked to that student.

XXIII. Adjourn
SCHRAUFNAGEL/CONDEMAN MOVED TO ADJOURN. THE MOTION PASSED. The meeting adjourned at 3:12 p.m. The next meeting is Friday, March 2 at 1:30 p.m. in Campus Life 110.