UNIVERSITY HONORS PROGRAM  
Honors Committee Meeting  
31st Meeting  
27 April 2012  
1:30-3:30 PM, CL 110  

APPROVED  

Voting Members Present: Dave Ballantine (LAS), Sinclair Bell (VPA), Nancy Castle (HHS for Nancy Nuzzo), Brianno Coller (CEET), Michael Duffy (LIB), Tim Ryan (LAS), Scott Schraunfagel (LAS), Bart Sharp (BUS), and Honors students Jacob Ferguson, Juliana Leprich, and Nora Lindvall  

Voting Members Absent: Greg Conderman (EDUC), William Goldenberg (UCC/VPA), and Honors students Ben Clark and Patrick Galvin  

Ex-officio Members Present: Christopher Jones (Honors)  

Ex-officio Members Absent: Anne Birberick (Vice Provost)  

Others: Honors Staff Jes Cisneros and Joanne Ganshirt (Recording Clerk)  

I. Approval of Agenda  
Ballantine/Lindvall moved to approve the agenda. The motion passed.  

II. Approval of Minutes from 6 March 2012  
Ballantine/Coller moved to approve the minutes from March 6 as presented. The motion passed.  

III. Announcement  
Jones reminded committee members of the two events being held on Saturday, April 28. The first is the “Farewell to Douglas Hall.” Honors alumni have been invited to return to the site of the Honors House to reminisce and see their old rooms before the Honors House is moved to the New Residence Complex for fall 2012.  

Following that event, everyone has been invited to the Sky Room in the Holmes Student Center for the presentation of the first Joanne Ganshirt Award for Outstanding Service to University Honors. At this point, 88 people have registered to attend what should be a nice event.  

Jones thanked everyone for the hard work this year.  

IV. University Honors Outstanding Alumni Award  
Sharp reported the Alumni Subcommittee had decided to make an award to an Honors alumnus who graduated in the 1970s. Information was gathered on as many of these
alumni as possible. From that list, 10 were selected as finalists. The finalists were sent letters informing them of their selection and requesting more information. A list of three finalists was named from those who responded.

The three finalists—Michael Maibach, Colleen McLaughlin, and Yvette Gellis—were discussed. Following lengthy discussion, Schraufnagel/Ballantine moved to name Maibach the 2012 recipient of the University Honors Outstanding Alumni Award. The motion passed with seven yeas, one nay, and one abstention.

Duffy asked for clarification of the process and when the pool would be expanded to include other alumni. Sharp said the initial intention was to draw long-term graduates back into the Honors Program. Based on part of the selection discussion, Sharp asked if committee members were comfortable making a selection for 2013 or just expanding the search for next year. Ballantine said if the process is changed for next year, these finalists may not reapply. He said he does not want to miss someone with such a strong package.

Schraufnagel/Ballantine moved to name Colleen McLaughlin the 2013 recipient of the Outstanding Honors Alumni Award. Schraufnagel accepted a friendly amend to include the short list nominees automatically in the next round of consideration. The motion passed.

V. **Enhance Your Education (EYE) Grant Applications**
Committee members discussed the four EYE grant proposals received. Three of the four proposals were considered acceptable. Committee members had concerns about the fourth, including the lack of a literature review, the amount of money requested for the work being done, and how that money is being spent.

Lindvall/Ballantine moved to fund three of the four proposals. The motion passed.

Schraufnagel/Duffy moved to give Jones the discretion to approve the fourth proposal if improvements are made. The motion passed.

VI. **University Honors Summer Scholars**
Five applications were received for the new University Honors Summer Scholars Awards. Three were declared ineligible because the students’ grade point averages were below those required for the award. Following discussion, Schraufnagel/Ballantine moved to award Anastasia Kocher and Wayne Duerkes the first University Honors Summer Scholars Awards. The motion passed.
Ryan commented on the high quality of the applications and said he wished there was more money for awards. Jones said he is hoping to find someone to endow the program in the future.

VII. **Associate Vice Provost for University Honors Report**

Jones presented the following report:

Last time, Jones reported good news about University Honors strategic planning initiatives and funding. He reported the following important actions have been taken.

1. The Honors Study Abroad Travel Grant program was launched. There were 15 applicants for five $2,000 awards (or a total of $10,000). The Study Abroad Office will finalize selection of the recipients next week.

2. University Honors-sponsored Global Leadership & Philanthropy Camp for high-ability high school students has been launched. Applications are currently being accepted. The first student to sign up was a straight-A student and the president of his high school class.

3. The University Honors Summer Scholars Program was launched. There were five applicants.

4. The expanded set of University Honors courses for fall 2012 was finalized. Students are registering, albeit not as quickly as I would like. There are some courses doing well and others that I give me concern at the present time. The University Honors Program is working hard to promote these offerings. Four advertisements were run in the *Northern Star*; each student who has not registered has received an e-mail from me; Jones visited a handful of Honors courses to speak with students; colorful posters have been created for each course; there are weekly group e-mail reminders; and the advising staff is well briefed. A course preview night was held on March 28.

5. The staff is holding on recruiting the new advisor/national scholarship coordinator until the search is completed for the assistant director for programming and communication. There were nearly 30 applications, 18 from internal NIU candidates. The search committee hopes to have a short list by Monday, April 30.

Other completed action items include the following:

1. Launch of Peer Mentor Program. Applications are now being accepted from continuing University Honors students to serve as mentors.

2. Launch of the Latino Resource Center’s Adela de la Torre Honor Society with support from University Honors. I attended and spoke at the induction ceremony on Sunday, April 15. Thirty-two students were inducted.
3. Successful visit of Dr. George A. Lopez of the University of Notre Dame to deliver a University Honors co-sponsored lecture on the situations in Libya and Syria.

4. Community Advisor interviews for the Honors House have been completed.

5. Following a scholarship information event, there was a launch of an application call for University Honors tuition waivers, scholarships, and staff positions for continuing students. The Honors House leaders have been selected and we hope to choose the Honors Fellows next week. The scholarship and tuition waiver committee is in the midst of its work. Final decisions will be made late next week or early the week of final exams.

6. The two alumni events, which are scheduled for April 28, have been successfully planned. We are expecting a turnout of about 90 people.

7. Many documents have been drafted, including the University Honors Program section of a student opportunities handbook for the new students, a detailed overview of the Honors Program for the Higher Learning Commission self-study report, recruitment materials for the Admissions and Scholarship offices, and a letter to aid the next round of solicitations tied to the Rachowicz Giving Challenge.

8. Dr. Rebecca Houze of the School of Art was selected as the 2012 recipient of the University Honors Great Professor Award. Thanks to Sinclair Bell for the nomination.

9. The staff delivered the Honors Day Recognition Ceremony on Sunday, April 22. Jones thanked Ganshirt for all the hard work in organizing the event.

10. Each academic department or school on campus has received a list of its University Honors students to help those units better identify and support their University Honors students.

11. Each faculty member, staff member, or administrator who contributed to the University Honors Program and honors education received a signed thank you letter from me and an invitation to President Peters’ University Honors Thank You Reception. I received positive feedback about both efforts.

12. Cisneros, Ganshirt, and Jones toured the construction site of the New Residential Complex.
13. Jones held productive meetings on collaborative ties among the University Honors Program and Environmental Studies (with Reed Scherer) and the College of Health and Human Sciences with Dean Mary Pritchard.

14. Jones delivered a presentation on the University Honors Capstone Experience at a NIU Board of Trustees meeting.

15. Jones delivered a presentation to the steering group of the Phi Beta Kappa Association of Northern Illinois.

16. Jones held a productive session with the University Honors Steering Group on March 21.

17. With the support of the vice provost, Deb Pierce of International Programs and Jones have submitted a Vision 2020 proposal to support a short-term study abroad program to Montreal, Canada for freshmen University Honors students with an emphasis on the students enrolled in two University Honors Themed Learning Communities slated for Fall 2012.

18. The vice provost and Jones have had an initial discussion on the need to develop a plan this summer regarding how best to use about $38,000 in Vision 2020 funds targeted for University Honors course transformation.

I have positive data to share.

1. One-third of the students who participated in this week’s Undergraduate Research & Artistry Day were University Honors students. (University Honors gave considerable support to the Office of Student Engagement & Experiential Learning for this event, including opportunities to meet with students, publicizing the event to our students, co-sponsorship funding, staffing an information table at the event, and so forth.)

2. There are 171 active University Honors students who hold 4.0 cumulative grade point averages.

3. This is a record year for University Honors Program graduates with 166 graduates. There were 104 graduates in spring 2011 and 113 graduates in spring 2010.

4. The entering University Honors freshmen class stands at 212 students in April 2012. The entering class in August 2011 was 165.
5. Of the 165 students who entered in fall 2011, 98 were provisional admits. Honors Program staff anticipate very small number of such admits this fall. Thus the composition of the program is changing and improving.

6. As of April 10, 168 high-ability students had accepted NIU scholarship offers. These students all have ACT scores of 27 and above and fall within the top 5% of their high school classes or maintain 3.75 GPAs or above.

7. Thirty of the 168 students have ACT scores of 32 or above.

8. The average scores for 212 incoming freshmen are: 3.79 GPA, 29 ACT score, and 88.75% high school rank.

9. There are about 125 Honors students signed up for the Honors House.

Note: Jones expects numbers four through nine will continue to change during the next four months.

Overall, while there is much work that lies ahead, the University Honors Program has had a very busy and productive year, and the program is on the right course in a number of respects.

Schraufnagel asked what caused the increase in quality students. Jones said it was a combination of a multidimensional recruitment strategy by University Honors, more merit scholarship dollars, a new auto-awarding process for scholarship offer, the New Residence complex, the perception the Honors Program is stronger with more academic resources, and new student interest in NIU’s academic programs and engaged learning opportunities. Jones noted this is all good, but it needs to be maintained in the future.

Bell asked how the rescission will affect the money given to the Honors Program this year. Jones said the 3% will be taken from the base budget of the general revenue fund. The strategic planning money and scholarship money should not be affected by the rescission. However, he added that it is an uneasy situation right now as the vice provost’s business manager is retiring, and she has been extremely supportive and protective of the Honors Program for many years.

VIII. Assistant Director’s Report

Cisneros presented the following report:
- He attended the University Diversity Day, Junior Preview Day and the Center for Black Studies John Henry Clark honor Society induction.
- He conducted a Capstone preview night to explain the process of the Capstone and preparation needed for starting that process. This was well received, and he will hold more sessions in the fall.
- He attended Honors Day and took part in the Honors Ceremony.
- He has been playing soccer with Jones and Honors students on Wednesday nights.
- He is finishing work on a search committee for the College of Engineering and Engineering Technology.
- He served on the Diversity and Curriculum Committees.
- He is working with Brian Pillsbury of Career Services to get data collected on where the Honors graduates are going to work or graduate school. Career Services has the infrastructure and wants to track what Honors graduates do.

Referring to Honors enrollment, Cisneros noted there was not much change from the last meeting, but there had been a good increase overall from past years. Ethnic diversity is up across the board. Outreach to the Latino Resource Center and the Center for Black Studies has paid off. Racial or ethnic minority makes up about 20% of the Honors Program. Cisneros said this could be an all-time high. There is also an increase in enrollment amongst students from the College of Engineering and Engineering Technology. This can be attributed to the collaboration between the college and the Honors Program. Cisneros noted the work of Dr. Nicholas Pohlman, Department of Mechanical Engineering.

Jones noted that he and Cisneros met with representatives of the College of Education and will meet other with other NIU colleges regarding customized honors education in the summer and fall.

Before moving to the next report, Jones asked the committee members for thoughts on letting students move from an Honors mini-section to the regular section late in the semester. There have been several requests to do this in the last few weeks. There is currently a policy that students must switch by the end of the eighth week, but it is not widely known nor enforced. Committee members think the end of the semester is too late and the policy should be enforced.

IX. Program Coordinator’s Report
The following written report distributed to committee members:

Events/Programs for March and April
- March: March Madness Challenge
March and April SOUPer Wednesdays:
  o March 7: Jane Mall and Sheila Kloster, “The ELC. What is it and how to apply”
  o March 21: “Financial Cents: Budgeting, Credit Cards and Investments”
  o March 28: Dr. Matt Streb, “Becoming Politically Savvy and Civically Engaged”
  o April 4: Dr. Anne Birberick, “Meet the Vice Provost”
  o April 11: Kate Braser and Amy Alfredson, “Student Alumni Association and Honors Alumni Council: Why and How to Join”
  o April 18: Deb Miller, “Fighting Test Anxiety”
  o April 25: ‘Zine awards

• March 5, 19 & 26: Yoga
• March 6: Honors House CA Interviews
• March 7: Scholarship Night
• March 28: Course Preview Night
• March 29: HSA Comedy Show
• April 1: All Honors Trip
  o We went to *Fela* the musical and to the Mythbusters exhibit at the Museum of Science and Industry.
• April 11 & 25: Soccer with Dr. Jones and Dr. Cisneros
• April 13: Ollie’s Frozen Custard Fundraiser for Birthday Boxes
• April 15: Honors House Picture Day and House Wars Event – Basketball Tournament
• April 19: Honors House Survivor Training and Bonfire
• April 22: Honors Day Ceremony and Reception
• Birthday party at Hope Haven

Upcoming Events
• April 28: Honors Farewell to Douglas Hall Alumni Event
• April 28: Presentation of the Joanne Ganshirt Award
• May 3: Don’t Stress the Test

Honors House
• House Leader Daihee Cho and other residents are decorating bulletin boards for the “Farewell to Douglas” event.
• House Leader Faith Stauersboll is organizing the Don’t Stress the Test Event.

X. University Honors Summer Improvement Grants
Bell and Ballantine were excused from the discussion because each submitted grant proposals. Three proposals were submitted. Jones informed the committee that all
proposals could be funded. He asked if there were any objections. No objections were presented, although Duffy noted one proposal did not have a curriculum vita. Sharp noted the grants are meant to give money for development of a course, and some do not have specific enough information improvements to the current course.

Duffy commented that he was surprised at how few grant proposals were received. He noted in past years more had been received and some had been denied approval. Jones said he had a number of people say they were going to apply, but they never followed up. Jones noted that, similarly, there were not many nominations for the University Honors Great Professor Award. Duffy suggested informing new faculty to NIU about the opportunity for summer grants. If continuing faculty are not willing to apply, the Honors Committee should try to get new faculty members. Ryan suggested Jones try to get time to speak about the Honors Program at the new faculty orientation. This would allow all new faculty to learn about the Honors Program.

The committee decided to look at the process again during the next academic year. The discussion will focus on the application and awarding process, the budget, and who is eligible to apply.

Schraufnagel/Duffy moved to fund all three grants. The motion passed.

XI. Adjournment
The meeting adjourned at 3:10 p.m. This is the last meeting of the 2011-2012 academic year.