UNIVERSITY HONORS PROGRAM
Honors Committee Meeting
311th Meeting

7 October 2011
1:30-3:30 PM, CL 110

APPROVED

Voting members present: Sinclair Bell (VPA), Jana Brubaker (LIB for Mike Duffy), Brianno Coller (EET), Greg Conderman (EDUC), Sien Deng (LAS), Gary Glenn (LAS for Scot Schraufnagle), William Goldenberg (UCC/EET), Tim Ryan (LAS), Bart Sharp (BUSE), Nancy Nuzzo (HHS), and Honors students Patrick Galvin, Juliana Leprich, Nora Lindvall, and David Parlberg.

Voting members absent: Honors student Tatianne Butler.

Ex-officio members present: Anne Birberick (Vice Provost) and Christopher Jones (Honors).

Ex-officio member absent: None.

Others: Honors staff Jes Cisneros, Emily Del Monaco and Joanne Ganshirt (Recording Clerk).

I. Introductions of New Members and Substitutes
Committee members introduced themselves for the benefit of the new student members.

Following the introductions, Jones announced that Lindvall has been named the Student Laureate to the Lincoln Academy for NIU.

II. Approval of Agenda
Following two minor corrections, LINDVALL/CONDERMAN MOVED TO APPROVE THE AGENDA AS PRESENTED. THE MOTION PASSED.

III. Approval of Minutes from September 2
NUZZO/CONDERMAN MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE SEPTEMBER 2 MEETING. THE MOTION PASSED.

IV. Associate Vice Provost for University Honors Report
Jones made the following report:
A. Honors House Move Announcement
Jones met with Brian Hemphill, Vice President for Student Affairs and Enrollment Management, regarding the Honors House and a possible move to a different building. The Honors House will be moving to the new residential life facility for fall 2012. This is very exciting. Jones said he thinks this is a necessary move considering what peer institutions and other Illinois universities offer for housing options. Jones showed committee members artist’s renderings of the accommodations.

Honors students will be living in the east building to “put the best first.” Each student will have a single room, share the bathroom with one other student, and share a washer and dryer with 11 other students. The complex will be wireless, have a gaming station, a fireplace lounge, a resident-only fitness center and a dining area. Jones informed the committee that Brad Hoey, Director of Communications and Marketing for NIU, said he is being told that prospective students and parents are expecting this type of residential experience.

Sharp asked if the Honors Program offices would stay in the current location. Jones said they would. If the Honors House had been moved to Neptune, the office may have moved there, as well.

Jones said the Honors Program will be announcing this at various events and through news outlets. The cost of living in this facility will be a little higher than expected and higher than what students are currently paying. This will not affect incoming students but may affect the current students. Honors Program staff have been having discussions on how to solve this problem.

B. Other Key Developments, Updates and Information
1. The Office of Housing and Dining is being very supportive and is now paying for SOUPer Wednesday. Jones said he would love to have faculty come to this event. It is very low key and a good socializing opportunity. There is a guest speaker every week to give information on topics concerning volunteer opportunities, study abroad, scholarships and other NIU services. They usually speak for only 10 minutes. This event is about community building and the Honors Committee is part of that community. Previously the program coordinator and faculty advisor had paid for the food with their dining dollars. Jones asked for Hemphill’s help with solving the problem of not having enough dining dollars to pay for all the food needed. This was the result, and now the Program needs to use all the resources.

2. Jones showed the new Honors Program video to committee members. The video has been put on the Honors website and will be used to help recruit new students. He thanked Kitty McCarthy, Associate Vice President for Student Affairs and Enrollment Management, for facilitating and paying for
the production of this video. He noted that Kevin Meyers, the videographer, is a former Honors student.

Glenn noted the video is centered on prospective freshmen. He said transfer students may think the Honors Program is not for them. Is the video sending a message the Program does not want to send?

3. The Honors Program is still trying to hire a receptionist. An offer was made but that offer was declined. Staff members will not conduct second interviews with the next two candidates.

4. Jones met with President John Peters. Peters had good ideas for the Program including thanking faculty who teach Honors courses.

5. Jones met with Deb Pierce, Associate Provost for International Programs. He would like the Honors Program to co-sponsor the international camp Pierce would like to conduct this summer. He noted that Honors had co-sponsored the HELP camp during the past summer. The international camp is something which Jones thinks the Honors Program should lead.

6. Jones also met with Andrew Krmenec, chair of the Department of Geography and David Buller, chair of the Department of Philosophy, about getting academic resources to serve the students. These meetings were held to get some insight into difficulties departments have offering Honors courses. A meeting among Jones, Provost Ray Alden and Vice Provost Birberick was held. Alden suggested Jones do a gaps analysis to find out what departments are involved in the Honors Program and how that matches to the majors in the Program. The Honors Program appears to be running with mini-sections and in-courses. Most of the courses offered are not Honors-only seminars. The consensus was the Honors Program is spending too much time and resources on mini-section courses and in-course contracts. Alden and Birberick are both supportive of the Honors Program but need to be able to see where resources are needed. There will be a call for strategic planning proposals and the Honors Program should submit one. Birberick said this call will be done soon but details are being worked out. Jones added the Honors Program needs to know why departments do or do not participate in the Honors Program. Krmenec and Buller are two of the longest serving chairs and therefore are the best to give insight into this.

7. There has been major activity on scholarships at NIU. Anne Hardy, director of the Scholarship Office, coordinates most of the offerings made to prospective students. As the chair of the Scholarships Committee, Jones received faculty approval to auto award scholarships. There is set criteria for the GPA and ACT score that will trigger an automatic offer of scholarships
rather than taking all applications to committee members for evaluation. Upon application to NIU, students meeting the criteria would get scholarship offers.

8. Jones met with Julia Spears, Coordinator of Engaged Learning, to discuss collaboration efforts between the two programs.

9. Honors Program staff has been working to diversify the Program. It is currently heavily Caucasian and female. There is a need to reach out to minority groups. To that end, Jones and Cisneros have met with representatives of the Center for Black Studies, the Latino Resource Center and coaches in the Athletic Department. He will reach out to Scott Peska, Director of the Office of Support and Advocacy, to help make contact with veterans.

10. Departmental assessment reports have been completed and submitted to the Provost’s Office. Jones acknowledged and thanked Anne Quinlan, Honors Program database manager, for all this information.

11. Jones attended a workshop on student success, Alumni Association events in Chicago, and spoke to members of UNIV 101 courses and sophomore honors society Lambda Sigma.

12. Jones thanked Cisneros for attending various events and said he was happy to have Del Monaco on staff noting that she is working hard on upcoming events.

C. Rachowicz Challenge Information
Earl, an Honors alum, and Cindy Rachowicz have wanted to make a contribution to the Honors Program. They only wanted to make this contribution if the Honors Program was valued by the University. Because the Honors Program is a prominent part of Vision 2020, the Rachowiczes have decided to make a $50,000 matching gift to the Honors Program. This is a challenge for other alumni to make new donations to the Honors Program that will then be matched by the Rachowiczes up to $10,000 per year for five years.

Jones said this is exciting. The money will be put into the Honors Program general foundation account. Potential uses for the money will be to support students attending conferences, EYE Grants, awards, and support faculty. If this gets to more than $10,000 per year the committee will need to come up with ideas for using the money. Word needs to reach alumni, so that the full amount is received each year.
On October 12 an alumni/prospective student event will be held. It was originally to be an alumni-only event as a follow up to the April event. Members of the Foundation told Jones and the staff of the Office of Admissions that alumni wanted to interact with prospective students. As a result, the event will include prospective students and their families. Currently there are 25-30 alumni and 49 prospective students registered to attend. Committee members should have been invited. The Rachowicz Challenge will be rolled out at the event. This will be a big night for connecting with alumni, recruiting new students, and thanking the Rachowiczes.

V. Assistant Director’s Report
Cisneros reported that he and Julia Spears, director of Engaged and Experiential Learning, collaborated on a proposal to be submitted to the Higher Learning Commission.

He has been working on signing in-course Honors contracts and approving Capstone proposals.

Cisneros presented the enrollment numbers for the month. Enrollment in the Honors Program is now 1,040 students. He said this is nice jump from the same time last year. The total number of students in the program is a lot more solid than it used to be as the staff has been making a strong push to keep active students only. He said the staff is catching inactive students earlier than in the past.

He noted an increase in the Native American population. There are also seven students double majoring in two different colleges. The Honors Program is trying to increase enrollment of underrepresented groups. The male-female breakdown has been about the same for the last 10 years.

Bell asked why there is a difference for 200 people from year to year. Cisneros said that is a good question. Part of reason could be the economy or it could be staff efforts during orientation. Bell said this was not criticism, but he was wondering if the number will drop next year.

Sharp said there have been previous course offerings, and he wondered whether the Honors Program will be able to accommodate the extra students. Jones said that is the information Alden and Birberick are asking for. This is a much different posture from the past. The Honors Program has been a “tin-cup” program going from department to department asking for courses. He said a program cannot be built that way. The Honors Program needs to find out where the courses are needed and then try to get the money for these courses. The good news is the funding from the strategic planning money is continuing through this academic year. The Honors Program has $30,000 for each semester this academic year with enrollment stipulations. Money is also coming
from the Honors Program budget for courses. Birbireck agreed it’s important the Honors Program needs to grow, but it cannot be done if the resources are not available. Students will be excited about the program, but if they can’t take courses, the students will leave the program. Student word of mouth about the program will be better than any video or print materials produced. Press about the Honors Program needs to be good. There is a growing feeling that an important part of the Honors Program for students is taking courses with Honors students only. The Program needs to try to move away from contracts and mini-sections. Growth is good, but it needs to be a managed growth.

Sharp said he only asked about course offerings because a few years ago there was a conversation about the optimal number of students the Honors Program could accommodate. Jones said he wants to look at the value of the Honors Program and to get quality. He wants to find out what is being offered as mini-sections and in-course contracts. The integrity of Honors Program needs to be protected. Birberick said the Honors Program should be about quality, not quantity. Students should come away from the Honors Program feeling they had quality experiences.
October 2011 Monthly Report Tables

Table 1
Current Active Honors Enrollment by Phase of Program

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Table 2
Students in Honors by Gender

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<td>1006</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>725</td>
<td>929</td>
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<td>100%</td>
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*Some students in more than 1 college*
Table 4

Students in Honors by Self-Reported Group

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<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
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<td>63</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>53</td>
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<td>929</td>
<td>1040</td>
<td>100%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Minority</td>
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<td>198</td>
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<td>193</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>178</td>
<td>17%</td>
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*Data not collected for October 08 or 09 reports
VI. Program Coordinator’s Report

Del Monaco presented the following report:

- The first two Barsema Microfinance workshops have passed with 30 students in attendance the first night and 25 in attendance the second night.
- Four Honors House Floor Wars events have been held—the Mr. C-Wing Pageant, Amateur Film Competition, Penny Wars, and Trivia Challenge. Two more Floor Wars events are scheduled for October (Basketball Tournament) and November (Roomiewed Game). There will be more added at a later date.
- She promoted the tagline contest to current students and alumni and successfully collected 28 entries.
- Attendance for SOUPer Wednesdays grew from an average of 27 students in weeks 2-5 to 54 students in weeks 6 and 7.
- She met with Judy Santacaterina to discuss her interest in facilitating her own Honors workshop series on aspects of communication in the spring. She and Dr. Jones plan to follow up with Santacaterina about this soon. The seminar will be similar to the Dennis Barsema microfinance series.
- Community Leader Lauren Sikes coordinated the Birthday Boxes Community Kick-Off event at Hy-Vee on Saturday, October 1. It brought in $300 worth of donations. They also received a donation of $100 via mail from the Genoa Women’s Club.
- Community Leader Jacquie Beck is throwing the first Birthday Boxes birthday party for seven in-need children at the Hope Haven homeless shelter in DeKalb this Friday.
- She has started promoting the new Honors House location via the Honors email list, Facebook, and the Honors website. So far 20 current NIU students and 1 prospective student have requested additional information. She also submitted to Jones a tentative press release for NIU Today, and she has been corresponding with the Assistant Director of Marketing & Public Relations in Housing to acquire promotional materials for the fall open houses and Cantigny event. She plans to be present at the meeting scheduled with key members of Housing to further discuss the transition next week. She just scheduled an information meeting with current Honors House residents to give information—rate, etc.
- She was involved in the filming of the new Honors promo video.
- With Nancy Castle’s assistance, she collaborated with Lieutenant Colonel David Dosier, Chair of the Department of Military Science, to add an educational component to the regular Honors House paintball trip. This year we’re offering a two-part program that begins with a Military Tactics Training being run by ROTC staff on Friday, followed by a full-day trip to Fox Paintball in Millington on Saturday. Lieutenant Colonel Dosier and Del Monaco are also in the process of
writing a press release on the program to be submitted to NIU Today early the following week.

- She continues to work with our IT staff in the Vice Provost office to keep sections of the Honors program web pages up-to-date. At Dr. Jones’ suggestion the Honors Update emails were recently added to the website. She is currently working to create a Google calendar for all events.
- She will be assisting with the October 10 Open House, the Cantigny Alumni & Prospective Student Reception, and the Alumni “Get Involved” tent on the day of Homecoming.
- The Community Leaders have scheduled an Honors Faculty vs. Students soccer game for Thursday, October 13 in the Field House (5:30-7:30PM) as well as a fund-raising night at Potbelly in DeKalb for Monday, October 17 to collect additional funds for the Birthday Boxes service project (5:00-8:00PM).
- She has started advertising and collecting RSVPs from students for the Spring Honors Course Preview & Pizza Dinner set for Monday, October 24 in the Honors office (6:00-7:30PM). She will be contacting all faculty teaching Honors courses in the spring to invite them to the event.
- As a reminder, she will be joining Jones in traveling to Phoenix for the NCHC Conference later this month.
- House Leader Faith Stauersboll is planning a Scholarship Info Night to take place in Douglas Hall on Thursday, November 3.
- Two Honors students (and Honors House residents), Chris Lloyd and Faith Stauersboll, were nominated for Homecoming King & Queen.
- She is also working on planning the finals week event Don’t Stress the Test, helping students with the Honors electronic ‘zine, teaching UNIV 101, and serving as Mortar Board advisor and student mentor.

VII. Old Business

A. CEET-University Honors Proposal

College of Engineering and Engineering Technology department chairs and deans have signed off on the proposal presented at the last meeting. The proposal will now go through the curricular process.

VIII. New Business

A. Program “Tagline” Discussion and Possible Selection

Jones told committee members that 28 submissions for a new Honors tagline had been received. Staff members narrowed those 28 submissions to nine. The new tagline needs to be one with which everyone is comfortable. Some of the submissions are ideas but don’t necessarily work as a tagline. The new tagline will be used on the web page, in publications, on T-shirts, and in the video.
Kathy Buettner, vice president for University Relations, says the tagline will be used for 3-4 years; then change will be made.

Committee members discussed the taglines presented. The top five were selected, and a vote will be taken via e-mail. Each committee member will vote for the top two choices.

B. Summer Grants and a New Proposal
Jones reported the allocation of $12,000 for summer grants. If the grants are awarded the same way as in previous years, there will be two grants.

Sharp said last year the grant proposals were used to get underrepresented groups with the Honors Program. Jones said he received a memo from Deb Pearce, Associate Provost for International Programs and Study Abroad, regarding the Cobb Fund. Because Honors, Study Abroad and Engaged Learning are an important part of Vision 2020 Jones said it would good to get one grant awarded for international course development. Ryan asked if this would be specific funding for proposing an overseas course. Jones said the funding would for a faculty member to go overseas to gather information that could be used in an international course.

Sharp asked what the timeline would be for the grants. Jones said last year the call for proposals was made in February. Sharp said a general call for proposals was made the first year. Last year the focus was more toward business and engineering courses. He asked if the request this year should be narrow or more broad minded. Ryan said he likes the idea of linking in with International Programs and would like to see one grant awarded specifically for an international course. Sharp asked if there would be any funding from International Programs. Jones said there is a limited amount of money available from International Programs. Jones said there is a limited amount of money available from International Programs. There may be an additional $1,500 available.

Lindvall asked for clarification that only two grants would be available. Jones said yes, but the last two years there was enough to award more. Bell said two grants would be limiting. Would it be possible to get a third? Sharp said three could be awarded but asked if they would all be able to be international based. Birberick said $5,500 could be given for an international grant. That would cover travel and a hotel room. Colleges have not yet been approached about contributing funds to this grant. A grant could be awarded $4,000 from the Honors Program, $1,500 from the Cobb Fund, and then the grant recipient’s college would be asked for support.

Sharp asked committee members if there were any objections to rewriting the grant announcement to include the international component. Birbirech said the committee could have three grants—one could be for international and the
other two would be traditional grants. Sharp asked if $4,000 would be enough to get good applications. Birberick said that amount should be significant. Other grants pay far less for equal requirements. Advertising the grants is more of a problem than the amount funded.

Sharp said another consideration for the grants is the future faculty support. He said his department chair has told him he could not be given up to teach an Honors course. That is the other side of these grants. The committee may need to deal with department concerns of personnel. Jones said that is something that is being dealt with generally.

Galvin asked if more money could be given for the international course grant. Jones said the Honors Program will get funding from other sources to cover additional expenses. Leprich asked what would happen if there is more than one really good proposal for an international course. Sharp said one would get the additional funding from the Cobb Fund and the other would get the regular grant funding. Birberick suggested having a check box for grants that should be considered for both the international funding and regular funding. Sharp said he was afraid everyone would check that box.

Jones asked if the proposal forms or the process needed to be changed in any way. Sharp said he thought the process went very smoothly last year.

C. Vetting Two Ideas
Jones brought forth two ideas to the committee. He said he would present more information on each if committee members wanted it.

- Engaged Learning Requirement
  Jones said he thinks the Honors Program should be at the cutting edge of engaged learning. If there is not a requirement for engaged learning, it does not speak well for the university. He said he would like to have all Honors students do an engaged learning experience before graduating. This would also be another opportunity for students to earn credit for Honors without adding an extra burden. Study abroad could be completed through an independent study.

  Birberick asked what the student members of the committee thought of this idea. Cisneros explained engaged learning; then stated that this would replace three hours of Honors course work. This would allow students to choose between engaged learning and Honors course work rather than missing out on a major experience of Honors. Nuzzo said her only concern would be the need of faculty guidance. She said if the Program grows, it will add pressure onto faculty. Cisneros said the
engaged learning experience would already be something done within the course.

Sharp said there is a difference between adding this requirement for all students and recognizing what students are already doing. Engaged learning is easy to do in some majors but not so easy in others. Jones said there is a difference between required and encouraged. Sharp said there are three things to consider—requiring, encouraging, and recognizing what is already being done. Cisneros said the Honors Program staff could help each department. Parlberg noted the Department of Biological Sciences already has engaged learning opportunities for majors.

Birberick said Spears is creating a database for engaged learning. Spears is checking the course catalog to find what opportunities for engaged learning are already available on campus. She added that a lot of faculty members have already put engaged learning into the courses.

Lindvall said she would like to have a way to recognize completed engaged learning projects on the student transcripts. She noted that not all engaged learning is done as part of a credit course. If the Honors Program was involved in this initiative, this could be discussed. Birberick agreed noting the Undergraduate Research Apprenticeship Program (URAP), USOAR, and Research Rookies do not appear on transcripts. Jones added the Department of Political Science has internships and other projects that do not appear on the transcript, so this is nothing new.

The discussion was tabled until the next meeting.

- Summer Honors Scholars Program
  The second idea is to have a Summer Honors Scholars Program. This may or may not include an EYE Grant. Jones would like to include Spears and other units in this initiative. The Scholars Program would provide money for students to do research during the summer. This would give participants a solid academic foundation for Capstone projects. Many students in the Honors Program are completing all requirements of the Program but the Capstone. The Scholars Program would give these students a better opportunity to complete the Capstone. Participants in the Scholars Program would blog about their experiences. This would be a great way for prospective students to learn what is happening in the Honors Program and the opportunities that are available.
Lindvall asked if this program would be too similar to USOAR. Jones said he wasn’t sure. He would need to look at that program more closely and seek other funding.

Birberick said if there is data available that the Capstone is a stumbling block to graduating with Honors and design a program that would be a step toward helping these students, it would probably get a sympathetic ear from those who have funds. Jones added this would send a message that Honors Program thinks the Capstone is an important project.

Referring to Lindvall’s questions, Ryan asked if students who received the USOAR would also be eligible for the Scholars Program. Sharp said the Honors Program and Honors Committee need to find out if students who are not completing the Capstone would have been helped by such a program. Would this really help or would the high achieving students receiving the Scholars Program stipend complete the Capstone anyway? Galvin said such a program would have helped him with his research and study abroad. Jones noted that William and Mary University has $6,000 for the student and $1,000 for the faculty advisor.

Committee members decided to keep the discussion going and table that discussion to the next meeting.

D. Working Groups Membership, Agenda, and Scheduling

Jones read off the members of each of three working groups. They are:

- **Group 1: Diversity**
  Members of the Diversity Working Group are Deng, Duffy, Goldenberg, Leprich, and Lindvall.

- **Group 2: Faculty Handbook & Outreach**
  Members of the Faculty Handbook and Outreach Working Group are Coller, Conderman, Parlberg, Ryan, and Schraunagel.

- **Group 3: Alumni Outreach (including Outstanding Alumni Award)**
  Members of the Alumni Outreach Working Group are Bell, Galvin, Nuzzo and Sharp.

The November meeting has been rescheduled to the last Friday of October. Jones suggested using the meeting time for the working groups to meet. The working groups could meet during the first hours and then convene as a full group for the second hour.

IX. Announcements
Jones made the following announcements:

- The Alumni and Prospective Student Event will be held at 6 p.m. October 12 at Cantigny Park in Wheaton.
- SOUPer Wednesdays are held every Wednesday from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. in the Honors Offices. All committee members are invited and encouraged to attend.
- The Spring 2012 Course Preview Night will be held on October 24 from 6-7:30 p.m. in the Honors Offices.

Jones said he and Birberick have been discussing ways to increase the visibility of the Honors Program. To that end, the Honors Program will host the spring 2014 Honors Council—Illinois Region annual conference.

Provost Alden has suggested Jones create a steering committee comprised of department chairs from each college. He said the Honors Program needs this steering committee to talk to chairs “on the ground who have to deal with all the issues” the Honors Program encounters. This is not meant to marginalize the Honors Committee. Jones will e-mail the college’s deans to request a chair for the steering committee.

X. Adjournment and Reminder about the Date Change for Next Meeting

CONDERMAN/RYAN MOVED TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 3:18 P.M. THE MOTION PASSED. The next meeting will be held at 1:30 p.m. on October 28 in Campus Life 110.