University Honors Committee  
336th Meeting  
February 6, 2015  

(APPROVED)

Voting Members Present: Scott Balcerzak (LAS), Patricia Braun (HHS), Dave Changnon (LAS), Rebecca Houze (VPA), Sarah McHone-Chase (LIB), Tim Pierce (LAS), Nick Pohlman (EET), Bart Sharp (BUS), Masih Shokrani (UCC/HHS), John Evar Strid (EDU), and Honors students Ken Barnett, Katie Denius, Jeff Kamholz, Jack Sauter, and Faith Young.

Absent: None.

Ex-officio Members Present: J.D. Bowers (Honors) and Ed Klonoski (Vice Provost).

Ex-officio Members Absent: None.

Others: Honors House advisor Dave Ballantine, and Honors staff Jes Cisneros, Emily Dow, and Joanne Ganshirt (Recording Clerk).

I. Welcome  
Sharp welcomed the committee.

II. Approval of Agenda  
Denius/Braun moved to approve the agenda as written. The motion passed.

III. Approval of Minutes from December 2014  
Changnon/Kamholz moved to approve the minutes as presented. The motion passed.

IV. Staff Reports  
A. Associate Vice Provost  
Bowers presented the following report (written and oral):

1. Administrative  
   a. Preparing for budgetary and personnel needs for 15-16AY  
      Bowers said the Honors Program is getting ready for next fiscal year. The budgetary processes are getting under way. There will not be a budget as soon as he would like so he will be making estimates for some budget lines. A good case was made this year for the budget the Honors Program currently has.

   b. Working with Foundation to increase giving prospects and opportunities
Donations to the Honors Program are up in all giving categories. There were more alums than ever giving this past year, leading to more total gifts than ever. Even without John and Nancy Castle bequest, all funds are doing well. The Program has received more donations over $100 than ever before. This means there is more money to spend on students.

Paying for travel expenses is now the big challenge. With the governor’s decree, operational funds may not be used for travel. That means other funds must found. All faculty and staff must complete an Authorization of Travel form before any traveling may be done.

c. McKearn Fellows Program has become one of our major responsibilities

d. Preparing for Program Prioritization and to address objectives set by the Lipman Hearne Report (to be released soon)
   i. New publications
   ii. Change in enrollment figures

Bowers told the committee representatives from Lipman Hearne on campus doing interviews. He has an appointment in a few weeks. Lipman Hearne will be doing the “playbook” for recruiting and have ideas on how Honors fits into these ideas. This goes back to staff helping to recruit student to NIU. There is recommendation of a substantial increase in size for Honors. Sharp asked what the number increase might be. Bowers said it could be as much as double the current size.

e. Scholarships
   i. Presidential Scholars
      A wonderful Presidential Scholar Day was held on January 31. Current Presidential Scholars help organize and run this even. The prospective students were left with a great impression of NIU. All guests appreciated everything that had been done. Events included lectures by Dan Gebo and Dennis Barsion, lunch at New Hall, and a campus tour. Bowers said he was authorized to offer 19-20 of these awards. On Monday, he will make phone calls to all applicants.
   ii. Scholarship Office Awards
   iii. University Honors Scholarships and Waivers
      Jason Goode should have all rankings completed so interviews can start next week for Honors scholarships.
iv. **Hainds Award**
The Phi Beta Kappa group has asked the Honors Program to take over the awarding the Jeannie Hainds Award. This $200 award is for a College of Liberal Arts and Sciences major with a 3.9 or better GPA.

g. **New Student Handbook and forthcoming Faculty Handbook**

f. **Recruiting for HRAA Projects for 15-16AY**

2. **Curriculum**

a. **Revised procedures and policies for In-Course Honors Contracts (ICC)**

b. **Revised procedures for Capstones**

c. **New Freshman Seminars pilot for 15-16AY**

   i. **Global Issues, Global Solutions** – K. Borre (ANTH) in Fall 2015

   ii. **Literature and Legacy of the Holocaust** – K. Bartells (UIUC) and J. Bowers (UHON) in Spring 2016) [includes program in Poland and Germany and distance education]

d. **Continued efforts to secure Summer courses**

Curriculum everything is included in packet sent. Will talk later. Have been pledged long-term support from International Affairs to create freshmen seminars. Will bring online next year. This would be a requirement for all freshmen to take a faculty-led seminar with 10 students. Want these to be courses that are not the norm on the book. Should be very engaging and high impact.

3. **Global**

a. **Seven programs sponsored or coordinated for Summer 2015**

   i. We will be supporting faculty salary so that instructional costs are not passed on to students

   ii. Seeking opportunities for program assistance

b. **International Faculty-in-Residence**

   i. Dr. Paul Nixon

   ii. E-21 Program and possible development of our own similar program
c. Confirmed China Program for Summer 2015
   i. Katie Quisnell will return as Director; collaborate with ITO

4. Community Engagement
   a. Honors House
   b. Externship Program
      ii. Recruiting more company, organizations, and alumni
   c. HCIR Student Symposium – Host Site February 2016
   d. NCHC Sponsor – Chicago, November 2015
   e. Interfaith Diversity Series
   f. Genocide Awareness Week
      i. Carl Wilkens and Documentary Premier
   f. Meditation Mondays
   h. TedX

Bowers told the committee the Global Leadership and Philanthropy Camp will again take place in the summer. There may a second one offered as a request has been to host 20 Chinese high school students for this same camp.

B. **Assistant Director of Academics and Advising**

Cisneros presented the following report:

- Met with new and continuing students in the program. 65 individual meetings, not counting 16 walk-ins.

- Spent time working on planning and carrying out the Spring 2015 new student information session January 11th. 60 new students were in attendance. Subsequently met with some of the students who were not at event and continuing to reach out.

- Worked with students coming in for NIU spring orientation program.

- Finalized contracts for both sessions of Honors Taft Retreat 2015. Wednesday – Friday, August 19-21.

- Continued presenting series of informational workshops on the revised In-Course Honors Contract process and the Capstone Proposal, as well as EYE Grant opportunities (prior to the semester deadline). Sessions are
running once a week for each type all semester long. He reported that attendance at the in-course contract workshop has been slow. Attendance will increase as the time nears for registration.

- Reviewed and noted/finalized every In-Course Honors Contract for spring 2015.

- Reviewed and noted all Capstone Proposal submissions for spring 2015.

- Participated in NIU Orientation program overview session and followed-up with advising colleagues regarding how Honors will best adjust to transition from 1-day to 2-day program.

- Started work on summer 2015 orientation re-vamp for Honors. Besides moving to a 2-day format, a major difference will be that we will have pre-arranged ‘packets’ for distribution to the students on-site. Following-up with Advising Deans group from major colleges.

- Met with students regarding HSA as well as NIU Veterans Association in my capacity as faculty advisor.

- Met multiple times individually with Honors Fellows staff who advise to make certain that the information that they are providing students is helpful and consistent with program policies and procedures.

- Continuing to coordinate follow-ups and meetings with students who participated in this year’s Externship Program / ILAS 440.

- Continued work on Honors Assessment plan/update, focusing on instruments and procedures for data collection. Met with staff from Office of Assessment Services to seek input.

- Participated in ETRA search committee.

He also reported that the Honors Student Association has been putting a lot of effort into career

C. **Acting Assistant Director of Programming and Communication**

Dow presented the following written report:

**Event Programming:**

1. **Peer Mentor Summit- 27 March, 2015-** Keynote speaker #1, 2015 NIU University Honors Outstanding Alumni of the Year award winner Keith Bartholomew has confirmed. Breakout session topics have been chosen, potential session leaders have been contacted, waiting for confirmation.
BAVC is booked. Invitations are drafted, will be sent 09 Feb [Mon]. Registration opens 11 Feb [Wed]. Fundraising ongoing.

2. Genocide Awareness Week – Advertising and promoting events:
   a. Feb 19 Carl Wilkens Public Lecture 6:30-9:00pm - Sky Room is booked, along with catering and AV equipment. Carl Wilkens’ accommodations are reserved.
   b. Feb 20 Workshop “Telling Your Story with a Purpose” 9-11:00am - CLB110 Smart Classroom is reserved
   c. Feb 20 Watchers in the Sky film event 4:30-6:30pm. Cole Hall Auditorium is reserved, waiting for PO for popcorn.

3. Paul Nixon Visit (University of the Hague) 09-12 February – Advertising and promoting events:
   a. Public lecture 10 Feb 6:15-8:00pm HSC Heritage Room.
   b. Classroom lectures (Sandra Dawson) open to students from all disciplines 10 Feb and 12 Feb 12:30-1:45pm. Topic: Technology and Human Trafficking
   c. Faculty Meeting to discuss E-21 (student research opportunity) 11 Feb 9-10am
   d. Hot Food/Hot Topics (lunchtime lecture) CLB 110 Smart Classroom 11 Feb 11-1pm

4. Service Projects – coordinating projects and volunteer recruitment with Honors Fellows
   a. Feed ‘em Soup – 8 Honors students volunteered at dinner on 04 Feb.
   b. Huskie Food Pantry -- 19 March
   c. Feed My Starving Children – 28 March

5. Fundraisers- difficulty coordinating with Culver’s (historically a helpful fundraising partner). Discussing alternatives with Honors Fellows; very interested in doing bake sale in April.

6. Semester Trip – Honors House and University Honors students. Transportation is reserved. Promotional materials are being circulated. Registration is open for:
   a. 21 Feb – Battle House Laser Tag – Lake Barrington, IL
   b. 22 Feb – “Second City’s Incomplete Guide to Everything” – Chicago, IL

7. Hot Food/Hot Topics –3 successful events already this semester. Planning for 5 more throughout the semester – 11 Feb (Paul Wilkens), 18 Feb (Alumni Association is contacting potential speakers), 4 March (Study Abroad in Honors), 25 March (Women’s History Month TBD), 15 April (TBD)

8. The Luminary Open Mic Night- 12 Feb 6-8pm in HSC (College Grind) – coordinating with Honors Fellow Juliana Leprich.

Communications:
1. NIU Today – “Honors students sip coffee with state lawmaker Bob Pritchard” published 28 January
2. In progress on article about E-21 (Paul Nixon) engaged research opportunity
3. Anticipating a follow-up article about Carl Wilkens’ workshop.

Fall Newsletter:
1. Soliciting news from faculty and students about Honors Program student achievements, highlights, and alumni activities.

D. Assistant to the Associate Vice Provost
In the absence of Goode, the following written report was presented:

- McKearn
  - Attended some of the candidate interviews, but due to becoming ill I just compiled and tabulated the rankings of candidates
  - Planned the McKearn orientation session with J.D. and Stephanie Zobac from OSEEL.
  - Plan, host, and coordinate weekly McKearn Fellow meetings at 7:00 a.m.
- Presidential Scholars Interviews
  - Interviewed and ranked potential NIU presidential scholars candidates with Cliff Mirman and Lexie Williams
  - Attended the Presidential Scholars Reception to network with the prospective students as well as their families
- Director of Programming interviews for the UHP
  - Read applications, ranked candidates, and gave recommendations on the best fit from the committee to Dr. Bowers.
- UNIV 101 (team taught by J.D., Jes, and I)
  - Entered in final scores with J.D. as we calculated and submitted the final grades for students
  - FSYE celebration for UNIV 101 teachers (attended on behalf of the UHP)
- Udall Webinar
  - Attended a webinar that was designed to help recruit students for this opportunity. Various universities shared their failures and successes.
- Honors Scholarship Recipient audit
  - Verified that all tuition waiver recipients participated in the required Honors events during the fall. Those who failed to participate were not given their award until they signed a new agreement reaffirming their commitment to meeting their obligations; however, this agreement also stipulates that failure to
meet requirements of the waiver will result in them being ineligible for any form of funding from Honors.

- **New Student Orientation Spring 2015**
  - Scholarship presentation that highlights opportunities available through Honors and through NIU as a whole.

- **Website**
  - Took down the scholarship application when it closed on Dec. 1st
  - Updated various content on the website

- **Mortar Board co-advisor**
  - Attended executive board meetings supported them in resolving some critical membership and treasury matters

- **UHP holiday party at Nat’s on Maple**
  - Attended with my wife and enjoyed the evening. It is a great place for a holiday party!

V. **Additional Reports & Updates**

A. **Student Representatives**

Young said she had received complaints from fellow Honors students regarding the new in-course contract requirements. She said they do not want to attend the workshops and do not know that they are mandatory to complete the contract. She added the students don’t read the weekly updates sent by the Honors Program. Bowers said the Honors Program staff and committee needs to make notes on the various problems. He added that some of these changes are being driven by the registrar and department chairs. The chairs need to know what is needed for staffing purposes. Honors could get pounded if payment requests to start paying for the extra work of ICCs and Capstones are made. It could put the Program in an untenable position. McHone-Chase asked about the consequences related to the new policies. Bowers said contracts are being denied if the procedure is not followed. Students are not reading the communications and that is on them. We can prove the update is being sent.

Young asked if there was a way to give workshops in the first week of the semester to accommodate students who don’t set their schedule until then. Pohlman said he thinks it would a disservice to students and faculty to try to plan an in-course contract in five days. Young said she thought that maybe it could be done because so many faculty members have done contracts and they could just recycle old ideas. Cisneros said they may be a little wiggle room if there are extenuating circumstances. He acknowledged that some departments don’t list faculty in time to do part one of the contract so he is willing to try to work with the students.

Bowers said it would be reasonable that we have a workshop in the first week. The policy change is that we have to report these before the start of the semester. Last semester several students decided not complete the contract two weeks before the end of the semester. The registrar said that this is not right and violates every policy of add/drop. Denius said if a student has an in-course contract already, that student is doing the faculty member a disservice by dropping out of the class. Bowers said it is
very detailed work to solve this. Students need to show intention, which then gets them into an Honors course before semester. Students are then required to handle the class as they would any other for add/drop or withdraw. For faculty, they may no longer pass the student in the class but not the Honors component. It should be integrated into the grading scale. A student can’t pass one and not the other unless it works out mathematically. There is one faculty member who had two students not pass the contract portion and now she will no longer be doing in-course contracts.

Ballantine said this would require a separate syllabus for anyone completing an in-course contract. Bowers said the contract could be treated as an addendum with an additional grading scale included. Shokrani asked if a student is enrolled in a mini-section would student be considered passed in Honors section without completing the Honors work if the total points warrant it. Bowers said any student could try that, but must take into consideration that a C grade gets them Honors credit and is then figured into the Honors GPA. Shokrani asked if a student gets 230 of 300 points, which is a C, but doesn’t do the Honors work, how is the grading assigned? Balcerzak said if the course is an Honors section and all students are doing the same work it would still be a C. Changnon asked how credit should be assigned for a contract. Should it be 10% or 20%? Graduate students must do more in his courses, but this is different. If one faculty members gives 10% credit while another gives 20% there could be problems. Bowers said it doesn’t have to be a separate project. The contract could simply replace one project with a deeper project or course presentation. He gives the Honors portion 40% of the course grade. Kamholz said he took MGMT 217 as an Honors mini-section. He said all students were graded on three tests and then the Honors students had to do a paper. How could this be made different? Houze said a different course is needed like the combined graduate/undergraduate courses. Bowers said this in effect being done with in-course contracts.

Ballantine said the Honors Program could be offering disincentives to students taking in-course contracts. If a student gets under pressure at the end of the semester and can’t finish the contract they would fail the class. Bowers said we are not saying that. The score would be built into the course. We had an instance this past semester where two student flaked out on the project and then the faculty member was upset because they had not completed the contract after she had spent most of the semester working with them. Ballantine said everything should be outlined in the syllabus. A student should not be failed in a course just because they did not complete the Honors portion. Sharp disagreed. He said they should fail because it would be an Honors section. In his mini-sections Honors students have a different way to earn 250 of the 1000 points available. Balcerzak said the percentage of credit should be in the contracts. Denius said if a student signs a contract for a course that includes the points needed for Honors credit they will know what they need to do.

Bowers said he needs to draft a statement to put in the course syllabi for an addendum for in-course contract language. The distinctive things that make it Honors need to be passed at a certain percentage to earn the appropriate grade. He is also trying to get
other departments and colleges to create a model similar to the College of Engineering to try limit the number of contracts and make it easier to earn the Honors credit.

Continuing with other student input, Barnett said he has been told by graduating seniors they would like the colors of the University Honors and Upper Division Honors stoles switched. This will not be able to be done for at least two years because that amount has already been purchased.

Denius said she and Sauter are working with Honors Fellow Ben Donovan on creating a new Taft Orientation template. Sauter asked if the Honors Program was still looking at alternate means of communicating with students. Staff members informed the committee that the Honors Program is now part of the Huskie Link, a program run by the Office of Student Involvement and Leadership Development to post events online.

VI. Old Business
A. Honors Faculty Status
   Shart said he is still working on this.

B. Assessment
   Changnon and Cisneros said they need to have more meetings to finish this.

VII. New Business
A. Fall 2015 Course Request Review
   Bowers said the course schedule for fall is in flux. The good news is that he does not see a budgetary crunch. He needs to decide if each of the courses fits what the Honors Program wants to do. He also presented the proposed courses for summer 2015. There were no changes requested by the committee. All faculty costs for the study abroad Honors courses are being paid for by the Honors Program and College of Liberal Arts and Sciences.

B. In-course contract credit (course grade and calculation in Honors GPA)
   Previously, if a student did not receive a grade of at least a B in a course in which an in-course contract was attempted, the course did not receive Honors credit and was not figured into the Honors GPA. The committee was asked if this should continue. By consensus, the committee said in-course contract courses in which a C is earned, Honors credit will be granted and the grade figured into the Honors GPA. Capstone courses will continue to need an A or B grade to receive credit.

C. Program Future
   a. Program Prioritization
      Under Program Prioritization, all programs are being looked at. During the process, Bowers said, the programs must show their worth. He does not know yet what the process will be.
b. **Lipman Hearne Recommendations for Growth**
According to information available so far, the recommendation is that the Honors Program should represent 10% of undergraduate population. The current representation is at 6%. The National Collegiate Honors Council (NCHC) average is 5%.

Referring to both the program prioritization and Lipman Hearne recommendations, Bowers said it would be helpful to have people who know about the Honors Program and its operations do a reach out to any people involved in this process. The Honors Program will look bad because it is a costly program. Houze said she has been told there will a website for comments. This would be a good way to get that done. Bowers said this is not a cry that the Program may cease to exist. That would be foolish. But he added as the NCHC starts its evaluation process, the Program may be hurt for a variety of reasons, including missing syllabi. There will be a number of different people looking at the Program and making recommendations so the staff and committee will need to be very proactive.

Changnon said what is critically important will be the ability to translate that data into a way that is meaningful to a broader committee doing the ranking. Articulation is key. One are is recruitment pulling one way and the priority group is pulling in the opposite. The Program will need to find a way to balance this. Bowers said he hopes this is a rating process and not a ranking process. He will need to find how the uniqueness of the Program is relevant. The first round of this process is being held in an environment of financial uncertainty. Changnon said there will be many groups with diverse interests being evaluated. He said he does not know if academic programs would be asked to cut programs, but asked what the Honors Program would cut?

Ballantine said this should not be looked at as a competition. The Program Prioritization Committee will be looking for program that do not produce a lot—have few students but require large amounts of resources. Instead, this process is an opportunity to bring forth what Honors does best—recruiting, community participation, student organizations and a raised profile. Changnon suggested developing a subcommittee to work on looking at positive aspects of the Program and helping with the outcomes.

D. **Student Handbook Review**
A copy of the new student handbook was given to each committee member. Bowers asked everyone to look it over and if anything needs to be corrected to let him know. This is a work in progress and comments are welcome at any time. An updated version will be done once every year.
A faculty handbook is still being completed.

E. Capstones to Huskies Commons Project
   a. Concerns and Possibilities
      Bowers will invite Barrie Bode, chair of the Department of Biological Sciences, the discuss concerns about this project at the next meeting. The Honors Program is asking that all Capstones be put on Huskie Commons by uploading them upon completion. There is a problem with intellectual property if a student is working on a faculty member’s research in a laboratory. The Program needs to be sure that nothing is published that could ruin other people’s work. The current plan is for all Capstone projects completed in fall 2015 and forward will go into Huskie Commons. Old capstones are being scanned into the system and will be locked for searches. The new capstones will be totally searchable. Pohlman said they had a similar situation with an engineering project. Company information was in an appendix and that appendix was removed from the upload. This would be considered a redacted version.

F. Honors Day April 19
   a. Student Speaker Selection—nominations being sought. Will be brought to Bowers said nominations are being sought for the student speaker. Names will be brought forth at the next meeting.

   b. Great Professor Award
      Bowers will send a call to all departments and colleges for nominations.

   c. Student Awards
      Nominations for these awards are also being sought.

   d. Capstone Awards
      Bowers and Cisneros will evaluate completed Capstones for these awards.

      Honors scholarships will be awarded at the ceremony as well. There will be many changes made to the event this year.

VIII. Adjourn
      McHone-Chase/Shokrani moved to adjourn the meeting at 3:25 p.m. The motion passed. The next meeting will be March 6 at 1:30 p.m. in Campus Life 110.