Honors Committee Meeting  
334th Meeting  
November 7, 2014  

(APPROVED)

Voting members present: Scott Balcerzak (LAS), Pat Braun (HHS) Dave Changnon (LAS), Rebecca Houze (VPA) Sarah McHone-Chase (LIB), Tim Pierce (LAS), Nick Pohlman (EET), Bart Sharp (BUSE), Masih Shokrani (UCC/HHS), and Honors students Ken Barnett, Jack Sauter, Faith Young

Voting members absent: John Evar Strid (EDUC) and Honors students Katie Denius and Jeff Kamholz

Ex-officio members present: None

Ex-officio members absent: J.D. Bowers (Honors) and Michael Kolb (Vice Provost)

Others: Honors House Faculty Advisor Dave Ballantine and Honors staff member Joanne Ganshirt (Recording Clerk)

I. Welcome
Sharp welcomed committee members to the meeting. Since he had not been at the October meeting and there were now new members on the committee, Sharp asked committee members to introduce themselves.

II. Approval of Agenda
Braun/Changnon moved to approve the agenda. The motion passed.

III. Approval of Minutes from October 2014
Balcerzak/Pierce moved the approve the minutes as presented. The motion passed.

IV. Staff Reports

A. Associate Vice Provost
I apologize for not being present; I am currently in Denver attending the annual National Collegiate Honors Council meetings where I am running for a seat on the board, presenting on a panel, and seeking to learn new aspects about Honors education.

Below is an update to many of the action items on our agenda (Old Business) and some preliminaries on the two New Business items as well.
1. **Honors Faculty Status**  
   a. The document has been pulled from consideration and the working group will be working on revisions (Sharp, Bowers, and Ballantine)

2. **Assessment Plan – See Handouts**  
   1. Review overall Plan and provide comments  
   2. Drafts of Assessment Mechanisms will be available in December

3. **Revised Honors Admission Criteria**  
   1. We are utilizing the same criteria for 15-16 automatic admissions, but for review admits we are advertising 27 ACT or 3.75 GPA or Top 10%.  
   2. The impact of these changes will be explored throughout this year but data provided by Greg Barker indicates that we can anticipate another 500 potential qualified first-year students.  
   3. We will cap the entering cohort between 250-275, with all automatic admits filling most of those spaces  
   4. Scholarship terms and amounts remain unchanged, at all levels, for 2015-16 from this current year

4. **Alumni of the Year Award**  
   1. The vote was tied between Bartholomew and Whitehall  
   2. Coin toss gave it to Bartholomew for this AY; Whitehall next AY  
   3. We have selected the Peer Mentor Summit in April for this award (summit is co-sponsored by Alumni Association)  
   4. Ask that Dr. Sharpe reach out to make the formal invitation in consultation with Dr. Dawson

5. **Honors Faculty Fall Workshop**  
   1. Oct. 23 and Nov. 3  
   2. Attendance was small (four faculty at each); responses were good; great conversations regarding teaching, engaging with students, and working together with assessment; positive feedback regarding Faculty Updates and building of cohort; will seek to make some adaptations as a result of feedback
   1. I think we should consider pursuing this option; bringing more students in under the wing of our intentional programming and identifying as an active part of the cohort can only be good; we will find a way to mitigate the “competitive” aspect and address other challenges.

7. **EYE Grant Proposal and Rubric Revisions** (approval needed)
   1. There were no suggested revisions or adaptations; seeking approval of these on the second reading.
   2. There are four EYE Grants to consider in December

8. **HONS Course Designation Proposal** – Still working on this

9. **Presidential Scholars Program**
   1. The cohort of University Scholars (now renamed Presidential Scholars beginning in 15-16) has met, selected three leaders, and will be meeting again to begin planning.
   2. Want to be an identifiable cohort with unique contributions.
   4. Will be developing their own unique campus activities
   5. Will be attending a reception held by President Baker
   6. We will be getting them a medallion for graduation
   7. This is another group we can tap into for engagement

10. **Honors Resume Requirement**
    1. We collected nearly 800 resumes from our 1150+ students
    2. We are currently reviewing them and returning comments and suggestions for revision
    3. Some blow-back and grumbling, but that has passed
    4. We will strive for 100% as we move ahead next year; culture change is slow

Sharp said he was surprised by the push back received on this requirement. Barnett said he was asked by a lot of students what the consequences were for not submitting a resume. He said he told these students he did not know and they should just submit the resume. Young said a lot of students did not know about the
requirement until after the deadline because they did not receive the weekly updates. Sauter said he did not understand why students would not want to do something that is for their benefit.

11. McKearn Fellows
   1. Day-to-day management of the Program has been placed into University Honors, with continued overall oversight jointly shared by Provost, Vice Provost, University Honors, and OSEEL
   2. We have 21 applications for the 2014-2018 cohort and will be rating them, interviewing about 2/3 of the applicants and selecting the final ten by the end of fall semester

12. Externship Program
   1. Will be offered again in December; still seeking placements; hoping for up to twenty sites
   2. Full, one-week job shadowing and accompanying spring seminar (1 credit) on various facets of career readiness

13. University Honors Committee Restructuring
   1. At the request of Dr. Birberick and Dr. Pitney (Faculty Senate/University Council) we have been asked to examine the role, responsibilities, and reporting structure of the committee
   2. They believe that it might be best for UHC to report directly to Faculty Senate and have several (specific number not decided) of their members also sit on the committee
   3. Want the UHC to have specific and specified approval of courses, Honors curriculum, scholarships and grants, assessment monitoring and feedback, and other “action items” as well as less “reporting out”
   4. Going directly to FS would match proposal for PLUS Curriculum and a few others who have that direct line
   5. Thoughts and reactions? Items for committee responsibility? Should report directly to Faculty Senate? If so, on what items? Does this take day-to-day responsibility away from staff? How develop complimentary roles without allowing intrusion?
B. **Assistant Director of Academics and Advising**
   In his absence, Cisneros submitted the following written report:
   - There has been an increase in new and continuing student advising appointments took place during the month of October.
   - Conducted four Capstone Proposal and EYE-Grant Workshops this month
   - Conducted six In-Course Honors Contract Information Sessions this month
   - Participated in a meeting on enrollment management with Advising Deans group
   - Participated in Transfer Orientation
   - Participated in Course Preview Night
   - Attended search committee meetings
   - Participated in University Honors Program homecoming activities
   - Participated in HSA, and other organizations for which I am faculty advisor
   - Staffed and made a presentations to prospective students and their families at Columbus Day NIU Open House
   - Processed University Honors Capstone proposals
   - Edited and gave feedback on student resumes
   - Continued to teach UNIV 101H and EPFE 201H
   - Continued work on program assessment materials (list of events to assess, etc.)

C. **Acting Assistant Director of Programming and Communication**
   In her absence, Dawson submitted the following written report:
   - Second Annual Social Justice Conference, October 25, 2014: Attendance 80+ session leaders/speakers; all costs for the conference covered by donations across campus; excellent evaluations that suggest this was a significant event that should be repeated in 2015.
   - Hot Food/Hot Topics: Average attendance 29-54. Alumni Association has agreed to cover the costs of three Hot Food/Hot Topics next semester; dates for Hot Food/Hot Topics are January 21; February 4, 11, and 18; and March 4 and 25.
   - Halloween Party at Hope Haven: 22 children received gifts and enjoyed a party hosted by the Honors Program on October 29.
   - Fund Raiser at Culver’s Sycamore: The fund-raising event at Culver’s, Sycamore, took place on Monday, November 3. Unknown amount raised.
$220. Next funder-raiser event scheduled for Monday, November 19 all day at Jersey Mike’s in DeKalb. Tickets needed for contribution to be counted.

- Lincoln Laureate First lecture: Held on November 3 with 46 students in attendance.
- Holocaust Lecture: Held November 6, 29 Honors students attended with faculty and staff from across campus.
- Juried Art Competition: November 6, 39 Honors students attended and many more from across campus. 60+ in attendance.
- Peer Mentor Summit: Date set for Friday, March 27, 2015; the Alumni Association has waived fees for using the Barsema Alumni and Visitor Center for the event. First keynote speaker for the conference will be Alumni of the year, second keynote speaker TBD.

D. Assistant to the Associate Vice Provost
In his absence, Goode submitted the following written report:

1. McKearn
   a. Applications closed October 31st at 12:00 p.m.
   b. Twenty-one applications received by the deadline

2. Rhodes
   a. Karissa Kessen, History Major with a minor in Anthropology, submitted an application for the Rhodes Scholarship, but was not selected to advance for an interview.

3. Marshall
   a. Michael Kaczmarek, History Major seeking a teaching cert, submitted an application for the Marshall Scholarship and is still waiting to hear back regarding the application

4. NSF Graduate Research Fellowship Program
   a. Luke Martin, Mechanical Engineering major and Honors Scholar, submitted an NSF application with the help and guidance of his mentor Dr. Nick Pohlman.
5. **Honors Scholarship info sessions**
   a. Hosted two workshops on October 22nd and October 30th. Attendance was thirty students in total.

6. **Lincoln Laureate Lecture**
   b. Helped her plan the lecture and design the flier. We will be working out the details of her community service event.

7. **Fulbright Committee**
   a. Decided to support two of the three applicants

8. **Website**
   a. Updated Honors in-course contracts documents
   b. Create a capstone workshops page
   c. Loaded the new course book
   d. Changed *Honorable Mentions* to *The Luminary*
   e. Added an upcoming events page and designed a button
   f. Updated all of the links and buttons associated with the Social Justice Conference. Created an Eventbrite account to manage RSVP’s and distribute tickets.
   g. Updated Birthday Boxes Page

9. **Campus Visits**
   a. Somya Munjal visited our UNIV 101 class to talk about her company Youthful Savings. The entire team made sure she got the parking pass and was situated before Hot Lunch Hot Topics.
   b. Jenee Carlson visited Honors for a specialized visit to help decide if she would like to attend NIU. She sat through a business class with Jeff Kamholz, visited the Study Abroad Office, spoke with Katy Voight (House Leader), received an Honors Overview with Jason, Went to dinner in New Hall with J.D. and her father Tim, and then attended course preview night.

10. **Youth Engaged in Philanthropy Grant**
    a. Met with Anne Petty, Mark Pietrowski, J.D. to discuss writing a grant for the Global Leadership and Philanthropy camp.
11. **Class Absence Tracking Project**  
   a. Labeled a new initiative by enrollment management, which required us to contact any Honors students that missed classes or seemed to be in danger of not doing well in courses. Took place earlier in the year, but we were invited to a reception to learn more about the program.

12. **Guest Speaker**  
   a. Spoke about Honors in UNIV 101 for Tracy Wescott and Ashleigh Sorenson  
   b. Spoke about hazing in Black Greek Letter Organizations in Dr. Laverne Gyant’s Black Greek 101 class.

13. **Mortar Board co-advisor**  
   a. Spoke with them about membership recruitment and graduation flower sales.

14. **UNIV 101H** (team taught by J.D., Jes, and I)

V. **Additional Reports & Updates**

A. **Student Representatives**  
   Sauter commended Dawson on organizing the Social Justice Conference. He attended and said it was a great experience. Young said a lot of students are stressing about all the deadlines approaching at the same time. Barnett said all students have the same stress and they just need to “suck it up.”

VI. **Old Business**

A. **Honors Faculty Status**  
   As noted in Bowers’ report, this document has been pulled for consideration until revisions are done. Sharp said it is being rewritten because the University Coordinating Council (UCC) did not like the proposal as presented. It will be worked on next semester. Shokrani said there was a lot of discussion and many questions by UCC members. There was a lot of interest shown at the meeting and he’s sure the changes will go through. He asked Sharp when the working group will get the revision completed. Sharp said there is not time line but an
attempt will made to get the proposal done in time for the February 2015 UCC meeting.

B. Assessment Plan
   1. Review overall Plan and provide comments
   2. Drafts of Assessment Mechanisms will be available in December
      Sharp said the idea that Honors is going to assess the career success while they are at NIU seems silly. Ballantine said these are assessment tools. It doesn’t say how they tools will be used. Changnon said it appears there will be a lot of data collected. This will be burdensome. He is worried there will not be enough staff and resources to collect all the data.

C. Revised Honors Admission Criteria
   1. We are utilizing the same criteria for 15-16 automatic admissions, but for review admits we are advertising 27 ACT or 3.75 GPA or Top 10%.
   2. The impact of these changes will be explored throughout this year but data provided by Greg Barker indicates that we can anticipate another 500 potential qualified first-year students.
   3. We will cap the entering cohort between 250-275, with all automatic admits filling most of those spaces
   4. Scholarship terms and amounts remain unchanged, at all levels, for 2015-16 from this current year
      Ballantine said this discussion was held at the last meeting. The criteria from the University would increase the eligibility but would lower the standards. Sharp said 500 additional students would be more than Honors can handle. Changnon said this would be hard to do if no more funding is available to accommodate the increase. He agrees with capping the number. He asked how the Honors Program would determine who gets in of the cap is exceeded. Changnon asked student members of the committee how they think students in the program will feel when they learn the Honors Program is lowering the bar? Will they feel we are watering it down? Young said it is different for her because she is a transfer. She doesn’t think it would impact her the same way it would continuing students. Barnett said it is hard to know what the transition for students is coming from high school. Sauter said he doesn’t think it would matter to the students in the Honors Program but may those who could not get into the program but would now be eligible under the new criteria. Sharp said the big
question is how to determine who gets admitted. Barnett asked if scholarship winners would be required to stay in Honors?

D. Alumni of the Year Award
See comments in the above assistant vice provost report.

E. Honors Faculty Fall Workshop
Referring to the assistant vice provost report, Sharp said he thought the workshops were interesting, but was disappointed in the low turnout. Pohlman noted there was a lot of faculty in attendance last year so that may have impacted the attendance. Sharp said the workshop is tied to the faculty status proposal so when it is adopted attendance should increase.

F. Honors House: Honors House Annex(es)?
Bowers wrote that he thinks “we should consider pursuing this option; bringing more students in under the wing of our intentional programming and identifying as an active part of the cohort can only be good; we will find a way to mitigate the ‘competitive’ aspect and address other challenges.” Changnon said there have been a lot of activities in the Honors House already and more are planned. He said at the last meeting there was a discussion that some students would like to be in the Honors House but have a subset section in Gilbert Hall. Barnett said no one is sure if this would be allowed since there is a specific requirement for Gilbert Hall residents. Ballantine said Gilbert has College of Visual and Performing Arts (VPA) students and this may be a way to increase enrollment in Honors for that college. Sharp said part of the House is the critical mass. If there is another space and only a few take part in the annex would they have the same experience. McHone-Chase said she is concerned that there could be privileged housing and less privileged housing. Balcerzak said he thinks this is a cultural thing with students now trying to figure out how to save money. A search of the Housing and Dining website shows the difference in price of a single room in each residence is only $300 per semester, while a double room in Gilbert Hall is $1500 per semester less than the single room in New Hall. Further discussion followed on the merits of this. Ballantine said he thinks there should be a feasibility study. Barnett said he thinks Gilbert Hall would be good for VPA, engineering, business and health majors since their classes meet near Gilbert. Sharp asked how many juniors and seniors are living in the residence hall. Changnon asked if this would be an opportunity to survey house residents or all
students about what the preference would be (Hall and double/single room). Barnett said perhaps incoming students could be queried at open houses as well.

G. **EYE Grant Proposal and Rubric Revisions** (approval needed)
Bowers wrote:
1. There were no suggested revisions or adaptations; seeking approval of these on the second reading.
2. There are four EYE Grants to consider in December.
Pohlman/Balcerzak moved to approve the rubric. The motion passed.

H. **HONS Course Designation Proposal**
This is still being worked on and was therefore tabled to a future meeting.

VII. **New Business**

A. **MAP Works: Honors and NIU Results Sep 2014 Reports**
Ballantine and Changnon said this was discussed at a House event. Ballantine said Honors Program students score higher than the average student, but that diversity is less. Sharp said the diversity issue has been a continuing trend, but is getting better. The committee could always reconvene a subcommittee to work on it.

He asked if there were any suggestions made on what changes could be done. Changnon said there were no specifics to the Honors Program just general questions. There are a lot of wellness questions on the MAP Works survey. Committee members asked student members if they completed the survey. Young said she got the impression the survey was a way to find out how to get involved but by the time she got it she was already involved at the university. Barnett said he could not remember if he completed the survey when he was a freshman but said he usually completes any survey from the university.

B. **Restructuring University Honors Committee**
Referring to the reference in Bowers’ report, Changnon asked what kind of input would be wanted. McHone-Chase who sits on the Faculty Senate said this may be an effort to streamline the process. Ballantine said with the HONS course designation proposal, the Honors Committee could be more like a college curriculum committee. Sharp said more clarity is needed before the committee
gets into the nuts and bolts of the change. This was tabled until further information is received.

VIII. Adjournment
Pohlman/Barnett moved to adjourn the meeting at 3 p.m. The motion passed. The next meeting will be Friday, December 5 at 1:30 p.m. in Campus Life 110.
University Honors Program Assessment Plan

Updated 03-Oct-2014

Mission and Goals (Domains):

MISSION STATEMENT:

According to its Mission Statement NIU’s University Honors Program “promotes and supports excellence in undergraduate education by providing honors students from all disciplines with enhanced learning opportunities.” (2008 Strategic Plan, Approved 12/7/07) The following list of goals (domains) and objectives are taken directly from the Strategic Plan. While some objectives have been combined and modified to reduce redundancy, this list is intended to otherwise reflect the “goals,” “support goals” and “strategic objectives” listed in the Strategic Plan. As such, the University Honors Program will...

1. Promote critical thinking and interdisciplinary learning through small courses taught by outstanding faculty committed to undergraduate education.
2. Provide co-curricular and extra-curricular civic engagement and leadership opportunities.
3. Promote global awareness and perspectives through knowledge and experiences.
4. Provide opportunities for students to engage in mentor-led and independent research and/or artistry.
5. Provide capstone opportunities to promote critical and analytical argumentation as well as creative writing and demonstrate intellectual outcomes.
6. Promote the importance of service through social and philanthropic activities.
7. Promote and facilitate student graduate education and/or career success.

Collectively these program goals (and the activities that promote them) create an environment in which students are challenged to develop their talents and abilities to the maximum potential. THIS NEEDS PUNCHED UP
Methods

The University Honors Program will use a multitude of appropriate mechanisms to assess the applicability and the level of performance of every element of the Program, and match the assessment data to each domain. The description of the focus of each (or multiple) instrument(s) can be seen in the Table below.

Table 1

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<th>Method</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Goals</th>
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<tr>
<td>Course evaluations</td>
<td>An evaluation of the critical thinking, engaged learning, global learning, and interdisciplinary opportunities presented in each class offered by University Honors.</td>
<td>Semester</td>
<td>1,3,4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Review of Honors curricular offerings</td>
<td>A review by the University Honors Committee of the 1) number of courses offered; 2) types of courses; 3) faculty; 4) alignment to domains of mission and values.</td>
<td>Annually</td>
<td>1,3,4,5,7</td>
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<td>Survey on co-curricular and extra-curricular offerings</td>
<td>Through various survey instruments or student focus groups, we will seek students’ assessment of the alignment of our opportunities to their 1) interests; 2) needs and personal goals; and 3) educational goals.</td>
<td>Semester</td>
<td>1,2,3,4,6,7</td>
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<td>Review of Co-curricular and Extra-curricular activities</td>
<td>A review by the University Honors Committee of the 1) number of opportunities offered; 2) participation and/or attendance (as presented through our Honors Engaged database); 3) alignment of opportunities and programs to domains of University Honors mission and values.</td>
<td>Annually</td>
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<td>Study Abroad Program Evaluations</td>
<td>An evaluation of the critical thinking, engaged learning, global learning, and interdisciplinary opportunities presented in each study abroad program offered or co-sponsored by University Honors (currently: The Hague, Montreal, China, Mendoza, Ghana, and Tanzania).</td>
<td>Annually</td>
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<td>Capstone evaluations</td>
<td>A faculty-mentor assessment of the student and the Capstone process and design.</td>
<td>Semester</td>
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<td>Alumni Survey</td>
<td>A survey sent to University Honors alumni (with the frequency determined by University Assessment) that asks them to rate the impact of University Honors participation on their graduate school and/or career success.</td>
<td>Annually</td>
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**Goals by Method**

The goals that will be evaluated and reached through each method can be correlated as follows, to ensure that each of our domains or goals is assessed through multiple means, and assessed by students, faculty, and administrative staff. Additional items may be added to provide further insight and qualitative (as well as quantitative) measurements. An example of this might include the University Honors Committee review and evaluation of an EYE Grant Final Report, as measured against our stated goals for the EYE Grant awards.

**Table 2**

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Assessed (Planned) Activities, 2014-2015

1. The University Honors Program will provide academic/curricular opportunities:
   - Courses (Cornerstone, GenEds, Seminars, Mini-sections, ICCs)
   - Microfinance Series
   - Ethics & Leadership Series
   - Study Abroad Programs

2. The University Honors Program will provide co-curricular and extra-curricular civic engagement and leadership opportunities:
   - Annual Social Justice Conference
   - Annual Peer Mentorship Summit
   - Birthday Boxes
   - Microfinance Series
   - Ethics & Leadership Series
   - Hot Food / Hot Topics
   - Honors House events and activities

3. The University Honors Program will promote global awareness:
   - Annual Social Justice Conference
   - Microfinance Series
   - Ethics & Leadership Series
   - Hot Food / Hot Topics
   - Honors House events and activities
   - Study Abroad Programs

4. The University Honors Program will provide opportunities for students to engage in research and/or artistry:
   - Annual Juried Art Competition
   - Annual Research and Artistry Day
   - Honors Research and Artistry Assistants
   - Honors Scholars
   - McKearn Fellows
   - EYE Grants

6. The University Honors Program will promote the importance of service through social and philanthropic activities:
• Fundraising events
• Birthday Boxes
• Huskie Food Pantry
• Participation in National Hunger and Homelessness week

7. The University Honors Program will promote and facilitate student graduate education and/or career success.

• Capstone Workshops
• In-Course Contract Workshops
• Scholarships Workshops
• Scholarship Support