UNIVERSITY HONORS PROGRAM
Honors Committee Meeting
341st Meeting
November 6, 2015
1:30-3:30 PM, CLB 110

I. Welcome and Introduction of Committee Members
   A. Staff
   B. Faculty Members
   C. Student Members

II. Approval of Agenda

III. Approval of Minutes from October 2, 2015

IV. Staff Reports
   A. Director
   B. Assistant Director of Academics and Advising
   C. Assistant Director of Programming and Communication
   D. Assistant to the Associate Vice Provost for University Honors
   E. The Luminary advisor

V. Additional Reports & Updates
   A. Program Prioritization

VI. Old Business
   A. Student Handbook
   B. Honors Faculty status
   C. Website and Communication
   D. Benchmarking: Honors Committee; Honors Fellows; Presidential Scholars
   E. Community College outreach and articulation

VII. New Business
   A. HCIR conference at NIU, 2/27/2016
   B. Walk-on items

VIII. Adjourn

The next meeting is Friday, December 4, 2015
University Honors Committee  
341st Meeting  
November 6, 2015  

(APPROVED)

Voting members present:  Tim Crowley (LAS), David Hedin (LAS), Rebecca Houze (VPA), Karen Hovde (LIB), Christine Nguyen (EET), Leila Porter (LAS), Bart Sharp (BUS), Masih Shokrani (UCC/HHS), John Evar Strid (EDU), and Honors students Jasmine Hernandez, Jesse Laseman, Sarah Moudy, and Amir Toghraee

Voting members absent:  Mary Koren (HHS) and Honors student John Stavropoulos

Ex-officio members present:  Joel Stafstrom (Honors)

Ex-officio members absent:  Ed Klonoski (Provost)

Others:  Honors House advisor Dave Ballantine, Honors staff members Joanne Ganshirt (Recording Clerk) and Jason Goode, and Luminary advisor Elizabeth Denius

I. Welcome and Introduction of Committee Members
   A. Staff
   B. Faculty Members
   C. Student Members

Due to changes in the committee membership and absences at previous meetings, introductions were performed.

II. Approval of Agenda
   Strid/Porter move to approve agenda as written. The motion passed.

III. Approval of Minutes from October 2, 2015
    Shokrani/Strid moved to approve minutes as written. The motion passed.

IV. Staff Reports
   A. Director
      Stafstrom presented the following report:
      Update Items
      1. Program Prioritization: discuss draft report
         See discussion below.
      Sub-Committees
      1. Website and publicity:
         a. Abby Dean, Marketing and Communication
         b. Holly Nicholson, webpage development
2. Student Handbook: did not meet
3. Honors Faculty status: did not meet
4. Benchmarking:
   a. Reports from Leila Porter and Rebecca Houze at 10/2/2015 HC meeting
   b. Honors Fellows: Continue benchmarking regional universities
   c. Presidential Scholars: Why did you choose NIU? Features of schools that they chose not to attend. Stafstrom elaborated by saying these students gave information on the strengths and weaknesses of other colleges they had thought about attending and the associated Honors Programs. There was similar entrance criteria for all them. The Scholars suggested ways for the Honors Program to improve including more internships and increased flexibility in completing upper division honors (UDH). NIU Honors has documented engagement activities that other universities were not able to provide. A difference noted was the requirements for completion of UDH. What NIU has may be a little restrictive. Students get sidetracked by other requirements like internships, clinicals, practicums, student teaching, etc. There is a need to look for ways to work around this. Several committee members said they knew of similar problems and would like to see it fixed. Stafstrom said students earning only Lower Division Honors has dropped in the last few years. Most are now working toward completing either UDH or University Honors. The students also want more program-wide events.

The Honors Program currently makes up eight percent of the undergrad population at NIU. The National Collegiate Honors Council average is 7-10%. Stafstrom said he would like to see growth in the program. Scholarships are another concern for our students. Merit-based scholarships are now used for automatic admission to Honors and is contributing to the enrollment increase.

**Director Activities**

1. Barsema Social Entrepreneurship presentation #1 (10/7)
2. Radio interview about athletes in Honors with Andy Garcia and Sean Fraser (10/8)
3. Met John McKearn (10/9)
4. Social Justice Conference (10/10)
5. CIUE (10/12)
6. Customer Service workshop (10/13)
7. President’s dinner for Presidential Scholars (10/13)
8. Two Program Prioritization author workshops (Academic Programs, Administrative Programs; 10/15)
9. Status of Women conference (10/16)
10. Presentation to OSEEL about Honors (10/19)
11. Presentation about Honors at DeKalb High School
12. Advising Deans Retention Workshop (10/21)
13. Enrollment Operations Committee (10/21)
14. McKearn Fellows ethics training workshop (10/23)
15. Met Joe Matty (Assoc. VP for Advancement) re. McKearn Program funding (10/27)
16. Presentation on Omprakash Global Internships opportunities (10/28)
17. Met Sim Chin (VP for International Affairs) re. direct admission of international students to Honors (10/28)
18. Met with two First Year Links mentees/protégées (10/29)
19. Met with Sandra Yandle (director, Northern Fund) re. Honors alumni outreach (10/29)
20. Attended DeKalb County Economic Development Corporation meeting and dinner, keynote by Gov. Rauner (10/29)
21. Met Abby Dean (Director, University Marketing) re. Honors marketing (10/30)
22. Phone conversation with Art Pesavento re. Honors Alumni Council (11/3)
23. Honors House “Tacos Tonight” (11/3)
24. Keith Peterson presentation (NIU alum, career in Foreign Service; 11/4)

B. Assistant Director of Academics and Advising
   No report as assistant director is out of the office.

C. Assistant Director of Programming and Communication
   Uhren presented the following written report:
   Event programming & Communications
   1. Social Justice Conference 10/10/2015
      a. Attendance:
         i. 130 students
         ii. 15 volunteers for help throughout the day
         iii. 12 total speakers
         iv. 157 in attendance
      b. Out of 93 total votes, the top two favorites:
         i. Dr. William C. McCoy: Ethics-Common Sense or Elusive Philosophy? With 48 votes.
         ii. Dr. Greg Long: Advocating for Accessibility-Levels of Intervention. With 33 votes
c. Final Budget (see end of report). Stafstrom told the committee President Baker opened the event. Greg Long, NIU professor of rehabilitation services, was the keynote speaker. There many other presentations. It was a good event, according to Stafstrom.

2. STEM-Fest 10/17/2015
   a. 4 students volunteered for the Honors Table.
   b. This is the first year we had a table at STEM-fest. The feedback was very positive from both the volunteers and the guests.
   c. The volunteers expressed a high level of satisfaction by being able to present basic science to children typically between the ages of 5-12.


4. Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week 11/14/2015
   a. Honors sleep-out in MLK Commons

5. Don’t Stress The Test (DSTT)
   a. This is held on a day during finals week, which encourages students to relax.
   b. Tentative Ideas/Events:
      i. Puzzles
      ii. Coloring Books
      iii. Coffee/Tea/Fruit Punch/Water
      iv. Yoga
      v. Mindfulness Session
      vi. Chess/Cards Against Humanity

D. Assistant to the Associate Vice Provost for University Honors Goode presented the following written report:

1. McKearn Program
   a. First meeting of the semester with the fellows to provide their requirements for the year
   b. Merged the McKearn administrative four-year plan with the McKearn handbook
   c. Setup the McKearn Network/advisory board
      i. Zach Howard, Linnea Scherer, Rachel Lapidus, Jeffrey Kamholz, Lexie Williams, and Ken Barnett
   d. Informed the admin team of a problematic mentor and mentee relationship, then helped to resolve the situation
   e. Evaluated “McKearn Away” proposal at weekly admin team meetings along with other programmatic decisions
   f. McKearn one-on-one meetings with fellows
   g. Updated the website with the most current fellows pictures and put up staff bios for newer admin team members
h. Supervise Brittany Warner as she developed documents for Bb and consulted with her regarding various policies concerning the fellows McKearn Menu—civic events, social events, etc. that they can do on their own.

Applications for next cohort will be opening soon. Stafstrom said this is an important pilot for the Honors Program and NIU. There have been two summer-program cohorts. The current cohort is the first four-year one. They are an experiment. They Fellows do get frustrated because it is not always known what they are expected to do and if funding is available. The money for the newest cohort was just recently received. The curriculum is still being revised.

There could be 40 McKearn Fellows on campus at one time if all four-year cohorts are active at once. Stafstrom said what these students are doing can be translated as a good model for Honors and also the university. Shokrani asked if there was a mechanism when selecting students to find the best candidate even if they might change majors and/or mentors. Stafstrom said one priority of the program is to make it available to all types of students and strive for that level diversity. Students are recruited for strong academics, leadership skills and those that are the best in the university. This is what the McKearns want to do to help maintain the university.

2. Honors Focus Group
a. Partnered with Alexandra Montgomery from Admissions to host some focus groups on the perception of NIU to aid with recruiting efforts
   i. Five students participated in the first event, but they cancelled the second event for fear of a low turnout

3. National Scholarships and Fellowships
a. Elena Paloma and Jim Feeney applied for the Rhodes
b. Priscilla Leonard and Jim Feeney applied for the Gates
   i. Raymond Jenkins decided that the degree at Cambridge, while competitive, was more research oriented than teaching oriented. He decided this was not the best route for him to reach his teaching career.

4. College Scholarship Board Meeting
a. Endowed funds may not have as much money available because the market only performed at 0.9% ROR
b. FY15 left $1 million in unspent Foundation funds, so all departments need to try to spend all funds available
c. Merit scholarships new award structure
d. NIU is still waiting to acquire Academic Works to streamline the NIU scholarship process

5. We talked about participation in the Scholarship Fair on Wednesday, November 4, 1:00-3:00 pm in HSC Ballroom

6. HCIR Community College Members Outreach project
   a. Joel wants me to take over this project that Jes Cisneros and J.D. Bowers started
   b. Met with Jes and Joel in order for Joel and I to find out what work had already been done
   c. Gathered information regarding this effort from the common drive
   d. Began to update the community college contact list so Joel and I can work on getting articulation agreements with community colleges

7. Honors Scholars
   a. Contacted prior Honors scholars to get information about life after NIU for Program prioritization

8. Program Prioritization
   a. Wrote a narrative with information and talking points on the majority of items that Program prioritization requires
   b. Contributed above and beyond this list at two staff meetings dedicated to helping evaluators gain a more robust understanding of the value of the program
   c. Sent copies of the annual scholarship reports that show our tuition waiver numbers

9. Honors Scholarship tuition waiver/scholarship recipient service announcement
   a. Updated categories and shuffled some people around to help in other areas

10. Honors Website Sub-Committee
    a. Met and discussed a lot of changes that should have been made prior to the launch of the website
    b. Updated the scholarship page to get it ready for the annual scholarship application
    c. Updated contact information and bios on the website for both staff and Honors fellows

11. UNIV 101
    a. Visited Beverly McCall’s UNIV 101 class as a guest speaker on healthy relationships
12. Mortar Board co-advisor  
   a. Sent updated bank statements to the treasurer (Nick Gaston) and the other staff advisors (Denise Rode and Kelly Smith)  
13. NPHC (National PanHellenic Council)  
   a. Co-advisor with Don Bramlet and Dr. LaVerne Gyant  
      i. Attended weekly group and exec meetings at 9:00 p.m. on Tuesday evenings  
14. Honors marketing video  
   a. Connected Kevin Meyers with Honors House Leaders Charles Moore and Rachel Shapland to get footage and interviews of honors house residents  

E. *The Luminary* advisor  
   Denius reported she will meet with students to upload first blog later today. The link will be sent to the committee members as soon as it is live. She said she would like to have a news block on the webpage that would not only have news articles, but also a link to *The Luminary*.  

V. Additional Reports & Updates  
A. Program Prioritization  
   Stafstrom gave a presentation of the report as submitted. It is not yet complete.  

VI. Old Business  
A. Student Handbook  
   There was no report.  
B. Honors Faculty status  
   There was no report. Shokrani said there has been discussion at University Coordinating Council (UCC) meetings. The UCC needs to approve this measure and he said he would ask the Honors Committee about the progress. This has been ongoing for about three years. Stafstrom asked if the UCC was eager to discuss this or was just curious about the progress. Shokrani replied that several different angles came up. Stafstrom said this will be addressed no later than early next year and should go to UCC soon.  
C. Website and Communication  
   See above remarks in director’s report and *The Luminary* report.  
D. Benchmarking: Honors Committee; Honors Fellows; Presidential Scholars  
   Porter said the table she has created for peer institutions to see if it is useful for the program prioritization report since information given is clearly indicated to source.
E. Community College outreach and articulation
Stafstrom talked with Goode about outreach to community colleges. Websites are being used to get everything clearly articulated. He has discovered that many community colleges have actual Honors Programs with courses. Those courses can be used by transfer students to earn University Honors.

VII. New Business
A. HCIR conference at NIU, 2/27/2016
Stafstrom reported the Honors Program will host this day-long event in February 2016. Community colleges and 4-year universities in the Illinois region will participate in this symposium. Students will make oral presentations and/or poster presentation. This will be a great way to reach out to transfer students to attend NIU and also to inform other directors of our program criteria.

B. Walk-on items
Sharp told the students that in previous years there has been a student report. He asked if they heard anything. There were no comments. Stafstrom asked if students talk about the Honors engaged requirement. Moudy said most students she knows have completed or done at least one.

Houze said she noticed the honors programs she has been researching engaged events were on their web page. This might help with our students being informed of what is happening.

VIII. Adjournment
Strid/Houze moved to adjourn at 3:15 p.m. The motion passed. The next meeting will be Friday, December 4 at 1:30 p.m. in Campus Life 110.