

## 2003-2004 REPORT OF THE FACULTY HONORS COMMITTEE

The 2003-2004 academic year concluded with a number of important new developments for the L & S Honors Program. Among them were two major milestones and several significant programmatic enhancements. One milestone was the first internal and external review of the Program since 1981, which was concluded, after some five years of report preparation and committee reviews. The second milestone was a major administrative reorganization, which had been sought by a number of Faculty Honors Committees and Directors over the years, and which was accomplished on July 1, 2004. Program enhancements included the development and conduct of the first honors international studies program; the offering of the first experimental “team-taught” course for the program; design and partial completion of an Honors Web Site serving both students and faculty; initiation of an alumnae program, including the mailing of the first issue of a newsletter, *The Honors Challenge*; award of the first scholarships under the Leadership Trust endowment, and completion of the projects they funded; acquisition of another annual scholarship supporting advanced undergraduate research; and Honors sponsorship of the University-wide student Forensics League. The Program also faced several important challenges which continue to the present: preeminently--insufficient appropriate space to carry out the program’s activities; lack of a stable funding source for the crucial sophomore summer apprenticeship program, our main intake and training program for honors undergraduate research; and loss of the Program receptionist during budget cutting.

### Program Review

In the many pages of report and many useful observations that characterize a major program review, a few things particularly stood out and provided some basis for other actions. First of all, the Academic Planning Council reaffirmed “the college’s commitment to providing a high quality, rigorous educational experience for our most academically gifted students.” And near the end of its report, the APC recommended “increased autonomy and delegation” for the program, specifically “significantly more autonomy in the areas of budget, hiring and so forth.”

### Administrative Restructuring

On July 1, 2004, the L&S Honors Program became an independent unit (UDDS A48-0400) within the College of Letters and Science. This administrative restructuring provides the program with newfound budget autonomy and responsibility, hiring and signature authority, and increased independence, under the supervision of the Faculty Honors Committee, in program administration and planning.

Prior to July 1, 2004, the L&S Honors Program was administratively located within L&S Student Academic Affairs (LSSAA). The staff member charged with administrative responsibility for the program (an Assistant Dean/Honors) reported not to

the Faculty Director of the Honors Program but to the Assistant Dean-Group Coordinator, Pathways to Excellence, and through him to the Associate Dean for Student Academic Affairs. The Assistant Dean/Honors consulted with the Faculty Director of the Honors Program (the Chair of the Faculty Honors Committee), and, through her, with the Faculty Honors Committee regarding issues of program governance, policy, and oversight. The program's budget was part of LSSAA's overall budget with both signature and hiring authority for the program lying within LSSAA administration.

The administrative structure outlined above was significantly altered as a result of the restructuring. These alterations include:

1. The Honors Program became an independent College-wide unit, reporting to the Faculty Director. The Faculty Director, as before, reports to the Dean of the College. Policy supervision rests with the Faculty Honors Committee.
2. An Associate Director-Administration assumed duties of the Assistant Dean-Honors in day-to-day administrative supervision of the program. He reports to the Faculty Director of the Honors Program.
3. Budgetary and hiring authority were vested in the program, under the same policies and procedures that govern all other L & S departments, programs and independent units.

These changes significantly streamlined the decision making structure within the program while also providing the program Director, the Faculty Honors Committee, and the program staff with a great deal more autonomy both to run the program's operations, and to envision and to shape its future.

The program's overall FTE remained stable, but position allocation shifted. While the program lost its receptionist, a 50% Program Assistant 1, to the prior year's budget cutting exercise, the new structure increased Project Assistant positions by .5 FTE to 1.5 FTE—two half-time academic advisors and one half-time cocurricular coordinator. In addition, the new structure provides for 1.0 Associate Director-Advising and Curriculum, which replaces the Assistant Dean-Honors. The incumbent of this position will oversee the advising function of the program and assist the Director in curriculum development and oversight. The Honors Program continues to be the advisor of record for all incoming Honors students until they have declared a major. All queries about student actions involving honors courses or requirements should be directed to the Honors Program advisors, as before, and changes in existing honors-in-the-major programs, or proposals for new programs, continue to be directed to the Faculty Honors Committee, which will forward the proposal to the Curriculum Committee after it has acted, if the substance of the proposal involves curricular issues.

These staff described above are 101 funded. The Program must turn to gift funds, however, for student hourly positions and about half of its S & E budget. With the new structure, the Program now consists of a total of 5.0 staff FTE on 101 funds, and 1.25 FTE on gift funds (four student hourly workers, of whom three are "peer advisors," and a .25 FTE Associate Instructional Specialist who serves as the Forensics Team Coach).

## **Program Enhancements:**

### **Highlights**

*International Education:* In collaboration with the UW International Studies Program and the Honors Program of the University of Michigan, the L & S Honors Program initiated its first academic program offering students honors programming in international education. Sixteen students from the UW and fourteen students from the University of Michigan undertook an intensive reading program on campus in the spring semester of 2004, followed by four weeks in residence at the Villa in Florence operated by Michigan. The spring reading program carried two credits and assured that enough time was provided for the intensive reading and preparation for research intrinsic to honors education. The residence weeks carried four credits, for a total of six honors credits. Instruction was provided by History of Science Professor Michael Shank of the UW and English Professor Enoch Brater of Michigan. Professor Shank's class focused on Galileo and Florentine scientific advances, while Professor Brater focused on "The Idea of the Renaissance" both past and present. Both courses made extensive use of the museums, historic locations, and art available in Florence and its environs. Review of the program jointly in September by both universities found it a signal success, and it will be continued.

*Team-Taught Courses:* The Honors Program has invited faculty to propose innovative cross-disciplinary courses which will meet some of the breadth requirements for honors students, will involve two different faculty members lecturing half the time, and each taking two small discussion sections for the third hour of the week. Such a structure provides both for all-honors lecture instruction and small group discussion in which students and faculty become well acquainted in a seminar environment. It also offers special opportunities to address fundamental issues in the liberal arts, from the perspective of two different disciplines. The Honors Program provides courses selected for this opportunity lecturer replacement funding for one of the two staff members, so that team teaching is possible within current L & S load requirements. Professors Susan Bernstein of the Department of English and Lynn Nyhart of the History of Science Department were selected in fall, 2003, to offer the first such course, and are delivering it this fall. The class is English/History of Science 175, Literature and the Other Disciplines: "Victorian Literature, Science & Culture."

### **Physical Space Needs**

The Program lost one office (412 South Hall, the office assigned to the Associate Director-Administration) in early June, shortly before changes in its administrative structure took effect. The Program was already severely short on space, and this loss—coupled with the loss of a receptionist to intercept visitors and the increase by .5 FTE of an advisor requiring confidential space—meant that the current space housing the Honors Program has become severely inadequate to meet the operational needs of the program. Among those needs are sufficient "public" and operational space to respond to students and the public and to support the activities of individual staff members (many

requiring confidential meeting space due to their advising roles or staff supervisory roles). This includes such things as reception, access to shared files, access to supervisory personnel, and conference/meeting space.

The Program currently occupies 842 square feet in 420 South Hall, a suite of three offices surrounding a reception area. They are situated on the fourth floor of a building without an elevator, and the program must make special arrangements whenever it needs to serve handicapped persons. A request has been presented to Assistant Dean Christopher Bruhn for the program to obtain sufficient contiguous, central-campus space that a college-wide program serving 1,400 students needs to operate.

A long-term address to the space needs of the program will require private support and would entail developing facilities somewhat similar to those occupied by the similar sized Honors Program at the University of Michigan, which enjoys about 13,000 square feet of newly remodeled space in a central campus building, or by the University of North Carolina Honors Program, which, along with several cognate scholarship programs, is situated in 15,000 square feet in a remodeled building which once served as a student union.

## **Conclusions**

The year 2003-04 represented a milestone year in the evolution of the L & S Honors Program, with the accomplishment of a revised administrative structure called for twenty-three years before in the report of a *previous* program review committee. Many challenges and opportunities remain, however, and some of the further progress of the Honors Program undoubtedly will be dependent upon the generosity of alumni and friends who wish to support programming that meets the needs of our most academically gifted students.

Respectfully submitted,

The 2003-2004 College of Letters and Science Faculty Honors Committee

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