

2016-2017 ANNUAL REPORT OF THE FACULTY HONORS COMMITTEE AND HONORS PROGRAM (COLLEGE OF LETTERS & SCIENCE)

Overview

It is the mission of the L&S Honors Program to enhance and enrich the undergraduate experience for high-achieving and highly motivated students, to provide them with opportunities to engage in research and scholarship with faculty, to create a community within the larger College, to offer high-quality and comprehensive advising, and to promote leadership, service, and engaged citizenship through a liberal-arts education.

This report covers the 2016-2017 academic year and the summer of 2017. The Letters & Science Honors Program currently enrolls 1235 students. 356 first-year students matriculated as L&S Honors students in the fall of 2016. In AY 2015-16, 71 students graduated with Honors in the Liberal Arts (HLA), 64 students graduated with Honors in the Major (HM), and 32 completed both tracks earning Comprehensive Honors (CH) (all numbers: actual degrees conferred). The average GPA at graduation was a 3.714. Of the 166 Honors graduates, 57% identified as female and 4.2% identified primarily as a member of a targeted minority group (up from 2.4% of graduates in the previous year). Targeted minorities made up 8.7% of the total Honors population of 1235; the percentage has increased gradually since 2013.

The L&S Honors Program has an overall budget of close to half a million, detailed as follows: \$290,000 general 101 funding for salaries and supplies is supplemented by \$25,500 of gift endowment income to cover essential operational expenses and student hourly employees. Honors also receives an annual allotment of \$192,000 in Undergraduate Initiative Funds, of which up to \$150,000 support instructional costs for departments offering Honors courses and sections that maintain or strengthen our curriculum and \$42,000 are awarded as Honors Summer Senior Thesis research grants. The Honors Program supports student research, outreach, travel, and community-building events with endowment income and donor gifts in non-endowed gift accounts. In 2016-2017 Honors received approximately \$162,000 in cash and endowment donations, up from \$52,000 in donations during 2015-2016.

Staffing

Sabine Gross, Professor of German, Faculty Director, 50% position

Jacqui Guthrie, Associate Director of Academic Services, 100% position

Matt Kohlstedt, Associate Director of Administrative Services, 100% position

Erin Warner, Program Administrator, 75% position (increased from 60% on October 30, 2016)

Maria Hartwig, Academic Advisor, 100% position

Through May 2017, the Honors program had two 50% academic advisor positions (graduate student PAs). At the end of the 2016/17 school year, the Honors Program transitioned from these two part-time positions to one 100% Academic Staff advising position. After a national search, Maria Hartwig was hired to fill this role in mid-May.

The Honors Program additionally employs five student hourly undergraduates, three peer advisors and two office assistants.

Total Program FTE as of May 2017: 4.25.

Our staffing gives us one of the smallest FTE-to-student ratio of any of the Honors Programs/Colleges among our Big Ten Academic Alliance (formerly CIC) peer universities. Lean staffing is one of the main – and continuing – challenges of the Honors Program.

2016-2017 Faculty Honors Committee Members

Sabine Gross, German, Chair	2015-
Harry Brighthouse, H; Philosophy	2015-
David Danaher; H: Slavic	2014-2017
Diane Gooding; SS: Psychology	2015 -
Tony Ives, NS: Zoology	2015-
Rita Kaushanskaya, SS: Comm. Sciences and Disorders	2015-
Jim Weisshaar, NS: Chemistry	2015-2017
Qihong Lu; Student: PSYCH and MATH majors	through May 2017 graduation
Cole Randolph, MATH major	through graduation

Ex Officio:

Erin Warner, Program Administrator
Matt Kohlstedt, Associate Director of Administrative Services
Jacqui Guthrie, Associate Director of Academic Services

Admissions

Students mainly join the Honors Program in one of two ways: via initial acceptance or by pursuing Honors in the Major. It is possible to join the Program (by application) anytime, including as a transfer student.

Initial acceptance into the Honors Program is not determined by test scores or other numerical data – motivation and interest are crucial factors. An invitation goes out to all applicants who are accepted to the College of Letters & Science. The number of 808 completed applications to the Honors Program in winter/spring 2016 was an 18% increase in applications from the previous year (683). Of those applications, 598 students were admitted (vs. 523 in the previous year), an acceptance rate of 74%. Of these students, 420 decided to attend UW-Madison, an Honors-specific yield rate of 70.2%. Staffing constraints currently do not allow us to increase the number of admitted students measurably.

Events and Programs

The Honors Program hosts a total of about 20 events each year, with attendance ranging from 15 to 300-plus guests, in addition to a number of student workshops.

Fall Kickoff Picnic

The Honors Fall Kickoff outside Washburn Observatory is the first in a series of Honors community-building events for incoming students. On September 2, 2016, we welcomed more than 260 new Honors students.

First-Year Dinner

The dinner offers Honors freshmen the opportunity to meet faculty and staff, talk to them informally, learn about their career path and personal choices, and ask questions about campus resources, research, disciplinary and career interests, study abroad, and service learning

opportunities. 207 first-year students registered – with actual attendance somewhat lower – joined by 30 faculty members and academic staff.

Go Big Read Luncheon

Fall 2016 marked the fourth year in which the Honors Program collaborated with UW-Housing to co-host a luncheon with the Go Big Read author for Honors students and several First-Year Interest Groups (FIGs), which allows our students to engage with the author in a more intimate setting. The 2016-17 Go Big Read book was *Evicted*, by Matthew Desmond. We had about 150 students, staff, and faculty participate at this event.

Senior Honors Thesis Symposium

The fifth annual Senior Honors Thesis Symposium, funded by an Honors supporter, was held in April 2017 and featured 37 seniors who shared their research in a professional-style conference.

Welton Summer Sophomore Apprenticeship Program

This program offers an early research experience for which students apply as freshmen or sophomores, funded by a donor, the Welton Family Foundation, and through grants from the Brittingham Fund and the Kemper Knapp Bequest Fund. For the summer of 2017, the Faculty Honors Committee reviewed 37 applications and selected 31 apprentices, who had faculty and academic staff mentors in 24 different academic departments across five colleges (L&S, Engineering, CALS, SOHE, and the School of Medicine and Public Health). The Apprenticeship Program includes a dinner with brief presentations for all participants (students and mentors) in May and a workshop to help students prepare for the retreat in July (see below).

Welton Sophomore Apprentice Retreat

In late July, the Program sponsors an annual day-long retreat at Hilltop Farm outside Spring Green for Welton Apprentices and for their faculty and staff mentors, providing a conference-like, yet informal setting for the apprentices to present their projects. Working groups and conversation during meals allow continuing discussion and broader exchange.

Grants and Awards Workshops, Symposium/Retreat Workshops

For all major grant categories – Welton, Trewartha, Summer Research, Leadership Trust – we offer one or several workshops to assist students in putting together a strong application. For the Senior Thesis Symposium and Welton Retreat, workshops focus on public speaking skills and effective strategies for giving an academic presentation.

Curriculum

The Honors Program has no designated faculty; our curriculum, while meeting most Honors students' needs, is entirely dependent on the willingness of L&S Departments to offer Honors (and Honors-optional) courses and Honors sections for large lecture courses. Given a series of budget cuts and an emphasis on teaching larger-enrolment courses, it has become increasingly difficult for departments to collaborate with us in offering such courses. While we can provide lecturer replacement funds for some courses (see below, UIF funding, under Grants/Curriculum), many departments cannot afford to have their faculty diverted from their regular teaching needs to teach Honors courses. Some faculty members teach overloads in order to be able to teach an Honors class. The Honors Program welcomes the decision by the College to record departmental high-impact activities including Honors.

The Honors in the Major in Neurobiology curriculum was created and approved through governance in the 2016/17 school year. The Italian Honors in the Major requirements were also revised with the approval of appropriate curriculum committees.

Honors Program staff have continued to work with departments that have historically listed Honors courses in unique or one-off ways to bring them into alignment with standard methods of listing Honors courses. This cuts down on student confusion as well as extra administrative work such as coding DARS and granting course permissions.

Final curricular approval of the removal of catalog-level Honors Optional course listings was received in summer 2017; the removal will be effective spring 2018 and should eliminate student confusion from courses incorrectly labeled as Honors Optional in the Schedule of Classes.

The Honors Program continued its practice of offering two fall Honors-only FIGs (First-Year Interest Groups). *The Artist as Scientist* and *The 20th Century Gene: From Eugenics to Epigenetics* were the fall 2016 offerings.

We continue to work closely with departments as they develop their Honors course offerings, on such aspects as Honors course designations and promoting courses. A new section of our redesigned website is faculty and staff-facing: it provides guidance around all things curricular to aid departments as they consider their Honors offerings.

A major project – also in terms of staff time and resources – this year was Guide implementation, making sure that Honors in the Major requirements in the new version of the university’s catalog match those listed in DARS and making sure that Honors in the Major requirements in Guide are formatted to maximize student understanding. The staff will continue to work regularly with Academic Information Management, L&S Administration and colleagues in the Registrar’s Office on Guide editor training, documentation development, and consult on revisions as curricula are developed in the college.

Advising

By the Numbers

During the 2015-2016 school year, the Honors Program Advising Team held 805 individual 30-minute advising appointments, 488 drop-in appointments and responded to 1976 advising-related email inquiries from students. (SOAR contacts are tracked separately and can be found just below).

SOAR Advising

The Honors Program covers summer SOAR advising with our own personnel and by hiring additional staff. In summer 2017 we were able to partner with CFYE, sharing costs for hiring 1.5 graduate-level advising intern, which worked well.

The L&S Honors Program continues to advise at every first-year student SOAR session. During the 2017 summer, we served 344 incoming first-year Honors students over 30 two-day SOAR sessions. 85% of L&S Honors SOAR attendee respondents to a survey about their SOAR

experience agreed or strongly agreed with the statement “I am satisfied with the academic advising experience at SOAR”.

Advising for First-Year Students

The L&S Honors Program Advising staff provides mandatory small-group advising (Honors 181 and Honors 182) for all first-year students in the fall semester. In addition to group advising, first-year students are encouraged to avail themselves of advisors via drop-ins, email, and individual appointments to assure a successful transition to college.

Advising for Graduating Seniors

L&S Honors Program Advisors audit the records of students who intend to graduate in the next two terms and proactively contact students with graduation deficiencies. Additionally, we offer drop-in advising specifically for graduation checks, a service much appreciated by students and parents alike.

Grants and Awards

Curriculum

An annual call in fall semester invites applications from departments seeking funds for lecturer replacement or S&E to enable faculty to teach Honors courses or Honors-only discussion sections. For the 2016-2017 academic year, the Faculty Honors Committee and L&S Honors Program awarded \$150,000 to departments in support of 36 Honors-only courses (22 small-enrollment stand-alone Honors courses and 14 faculty-taught sections of larger courses).

Student Research and Leadership Opportunities

The Faculty Honors Committee recommended funding for grants and awards totaling over \$160,000 to 68 students in several categories:

- 31 Welton Sophomore Summer Research Awards totaling \$77,500
- 15 Trewartha Undergraduate Honors Research Grants totaling \$25,000
- 1 Barry Popkin Senior Thesis Award totaling \$3,000
- 15 Honors Senior Thesis Summer Research Grants totaling \$42,000
- 1 Mark Mensink Honors Research Grant totaling \$9,400
- 6 Study abroad and conference travel grants totaling \$6,000

National and International Awards

Honors students continued to be successful as candidates for prestigious national and international awards. In 2016-2017, student awardees and nominees included Joanna Lawrence (Gates), Cory Cotter and Lucas Oxtoby (Goldwater), and Brian Drout (Schwarzman).

Recruitment and Diversity Efforts

Honors Programs at large research universities are one of the best bargains in Higher Education. For many of our students, admission to the Honors Program is a significant component of their decision to attend the UW-Madison. The yield rate of students admitted to Honors is significantly higher than the campus rate. (In fall 2017, 70.2% of students admitted to the L&S Honors Program chose to attend UW-Madison, compared with 37% of students overall.)

In cooperation with the Office of Admissions, the Honors Program hosts approximately 45 prospective student information sessions for students and their parents each year, which are led

by Matt Kohlstedt. Over 450 student participants register, and combined with their families the sessions attract more than 1000 registrants annually. Matt Kohlstedt also attended the Office of Admissions prospective student recruitment fair in Milwaukee, held sessions during the fall “Experience Wisconsin” days, and was a panelist and information session participant for the four spring Your UW Days. We regularly send representatives to other campus recruiting events such as those for Chicago Scholars. We have also increased our outreach efforts to other campus partners such as the Chancellor’s Scholars Program, the Powers-Knapp Program, and the Center for Academic Excellence, seeking to build connections that will encourage high-achieving students to seek out Honors.

In February 2017, based on a successful joint application to the Cronon Pathways Fund, the Honors Program partnered with the Center for Academic Excellence for a dinner that introduced targeted-minority students to faculty and provided information on the Honors Program. Honors and CAE are looking forward to continued sustained collaboration.

The Honors Director, Associate Director and team members are always available to meet with families individually and answer questions. Honors has an active presence at other events across and beyond campus such as the Major’s Fair and Summer Collegiate Experience.

Parents’ Day and Family Day

The Honors Program participated in both events by hosting a Saturday-morning breakfast for the families of Honors students, attended by 33 on September 17, 2016, and 54 on October 22, 2016. The Honors Director provided an overview of the Honors Program, followed by Q&A for parents (and students) and conversation with the Director and members of the Honors Program team.

Community Building, Outreach, and Communication on Campus and Beyond

The Honors On-Line Blog

The Honors Program makes weekly blog posts about opportunities of interest to Honors students such as grant opportunities, study abroad information sessions, Honors course offerings and more. The Honors Online (HOL) weekly emailed newsletter points students to these blog entries. During the 2016-2017 school year, we tracked approximately 2,300 individual page views of blog entries each month, confirming student interest.

New Honors Website

Over the past two years, the Honors website was redesigned and rebuilt from the ground up, a major endeavor that required considerable technical expertise, carried out by and under the supervision of Associate Director for Administrative Services Matt Kohlstedt. In August 2017, the new website went live. It is more user-friendly throughout, with improved structure, comprehensive updates, and more detailed information.

Honors Student Organization (HSO)

The Honors Program provides some staff assistance to HSO, a student-led organization that works to build a sense of community among Honors students. In 2016-17, the HSO continued

with their monthly Wednesdays@Washburn series hosted in Washburn Observatory. Students select and invite UW-Madison faculty to have a conversation with Honors students in an informal setting over supper provided by the Honors Program.

Alumni Newsletter “The Honors Challenge”

The annual full-color newsletter of the Honors Program was sent to approximately 6,300 alumni and other interested parties as well as faculty engaged in Honors and campus administrators. The November 2016 newsletter featured stories around the theme of “Forging Connections”.

Open Doors Madison Event

The Honors Program participated in the “Open Doors” community outreach event on Sunday, April 23, 2016, offering snacks, beverages, and information about Washburn to all interested community members. Honors partners with the Astronomy Department – with whom we are happy to share Washburn Observatory – for events such as this throughout the year.

Additional Engagement across Campus

Staff in the L&S Honors Program participated in a number of different campus committees and activities.

- Sabine Gross: University Honors Committee; Faculty Honors Committee (Chair); University Library Committee; L&S Dean’s Prize Committee (spring 2016); various committees in the Department of German, including Personnel Review committees (chair) and Library.
- Jacqui Guthrie: Ex-officio member of the L&S Curriculum Committee, Member of Council on Academic Advising (CAA) and the sub-committee on Advisor Titling and Compensation, Orientation Advising Team (OAT), Cete (committee on the biosciences), Campus Pre-Health Committee, ASEC-appointed Student Misconduct Hearing Panel Committee, FIG Selection Committee.
- Matt Kohlstedt: University Honors Committee, Beinecke Campus Nominating Committee, Chancellor’s Scholars and Powers-Knapp Application Review, L&S Career Initiative Retreat, Scholarship Stewardship Committee, L&S Scholarships Evaluation, Equity & Justice Institute 2016.

The L&S Honors Annual Report is sent to key College and Campus administrators.

Speech Team of UW-Madison

The L&S Honors Program assumed sponsorship of the UW Forensics Team – now named “WI Speech and Debate Team” – in 2003. Defunct since 1992, Forensics had been resurrected by a core of active students in 2001. The Honors Program assists with grantwriting and fundraising for coaching and team travel and covers a portion of the salary of the part-time team coach, Ben Jedd. In 2016-17, team members competed successfully in nine regional and national competitions and held several events on campus.

Serving as a de facto umbrella administrative unit for several Honors-related organizations (HSO, Speech and Debate, Journal of Undergraduate International Studies) is an extension of our mission that we embrace, but constitutes a strain on our understaffed unit.