



**WEBER STATE UNIVERSITY**  
Honors Program

WEBER STATE UNIVERSITY  
HONORS PROGRAM

PROGRAM REVIEW  
2019-2020

# SELF STUDY REPORT

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## 1. HONORS PROGRAM MISSION, GOALS AND OUTCOMES

### 1.a Mission Statement and Overarching Goals

The mission of the WSU Honors Program is to provide a welcoming community for intellectually curious, academically adventurous students, faculty and staff.

- ***We nurture excellence in this community***, regardless of prior academic preparation.
- ***We build this community*** by offering small, creative, rigorous classes; leadership opportunities; and other innovative learning experiences.
- ***We open this community*** to the university as a whole by organizing events that catalyze far-reaching conversations about significant issues relevant to contemporary society.

This mission statement resulted from a comprehensive 2017 review (and subsequent revision) of the mission statement which had guided Honors for the preceding several years. The review, by the director and faculty advisory board, examined Honors mission statements for other Utah colleges and universities, and compared the then-extant mission statement with what the review team believed the WSU Honors Program should be doing. The resulting revised mission statement, shown above, is a good reflection of what the Honors Program actually does, and is well aligned with the university's mission statement core themes of Access, Learning, and Community. The mission statement is displayed prominently in the Honors Center and on the Honors Program website, in both English and Spanish.

The previous mission statement was changed because we felt it lacked cohesion, and seemed to be more of a description than a statement of mission. The old mission statement is shown below, for comparison.

*The Weber State University Honors Program offers students a comfortable and friendly learning environment. We offer a:*

- *Place for students looking for an academic community, both through classes and in the Honors Center;*
- *Number of small, challenging, and creative classes, many of which fulfill General Education requirements;*
- *Commitment to diversity, in terms of the variety of classes offered, as well as our respect for individual differences;*
- *Discussion-based approach to classes that often includes collaborative group projects or activities;*
- *Preparation for professional life and graduate school after Weber.*

While we believe the new mission statement is an improvement, there is still substantial work to be done. Specifically, the mission statement should be strengthened by placing the student experience at its core. A major process of re-examining the mission statement, building new student learning outcomes from that revised mission statement, and developing a curriculum map and assessment plans that flow from the learning outcomes, could then be undertaken, addressing multiple current challenges in the Honors Program through a single, connected process. At some point in the next year or so, this task will need to begin.

In addition to the ideas specified in the new mission statement, the Honors Program maintains five overarching or aspirational goals. The Honors Program aspires:

- to be an indispensable hub for intellectual engagement at Weber State University;

- to provide a pathway to excellence and self-actualization for all students, including those most disadvantaged by societal and personal circumstances;
- to serve as a base for innovation in teaching (both for individual faculty and for the university as a whole);
- to become a model for inclusive excellence and diversity at Weber State University; and
- to become a model for the effective functioning of Honors at an open enrollment institution.

### **1.b Brief History of the Honors Program**

The Honors Program was founded in the 1980s by anthropology professor Ron Holt, with the intention of raising the academic bar for students who felt ready for more of a challenge than they might find in their regular classes. It was also explicitly intended to help prepare students for graduate school, an ambitious goal for WSU at that time. The foundations of the Honors curriculum were introduced at this time, featuring General Honors for students working on their Associate's degree, and University Honors for those working on their Bachelor's.

Prof. Holt was succeeded as director by professor of English Mikel Vause, who initiated the donor relationship with the George S. and Dolores Doré Eccles Foundation, which provides generous funding to Honors through the Eccles Fellowships for developing new, team-taught cross-disciplinary classes. The Honors Program is obligated to reapply for these funds every five years, but the relationship continues to this day. Classicist Robert Mondri succeeded Prof. Vause, and ran the program for a brief period in the early 2000s.

Professor of English Judy Elsley took over some time around 2005, and introduced Departmental Honors, a more devolved approach to Honors on campus. In Departmental Honors, academic departments and programs take on the majority of the work of establishing requirements and managing students, with some consultation with the Honors Program. Numbers of students in Departmental Honors grew rapidly, especially as more and more departments added Honors components, and a part-time faculty Director of Departmental Honors was brought in. However, in practice, many departments built programs that were largely independent of the Honors Program, requiring little more than the occasional check-in from program staff (at last count, only 23% required an Honors class). Additionally, General and University Honors numbers were waning, to the point where the 2014 Program Review self study report foresaw a future where University Honors simply withered away, supplanted by Departmental Honors. In the absence of student demand for Honors classes, the Provost's Office instigated a requirement for students on Presidential Scholarships to take an Honors class each year. This shored up the program in the short term, but had significant consequences for the nature of the program in the long run.

Prof. Elsley retired in 2016. Prior to this, the appointment of the Honors Director had been a somewhat opaque process. The search for a new director in 2016 marked the first campus-wide call for applications, followed by a rigorous, transparent interview and selection procedure. The current director, Professor of Geography Dan Bedford, was appointed beginning in AY 2016-17.

This point in time marks a major break with the previous history of the Honors Program. Several profound changes arrived nearly simultaneously. Some had been long anticipated, notably the retirement of Marilyn Diamond, the long-serving Honors Program Advisor and custodian of program tradition and institutional history, who had been with the program for over 25 years, and the renovation of the Honors Center and Honors classroom, as a

part of a general renovation of the library. Other changes were opportunistic, resulting from the installation of a new senior administration team in the Provost's Office, surveying the campus landscape with fresh eyes seeking new efficiencies and productivity increases, and the appointment of a new Honors Program director. In short, senior administration saw an opportunity to make some major changes to the Honors Program.

These changes consisted of cuts to resources—the position of Director of Departmental Honors was eliminated at the end of AY 2016-17—and increased responsibilities. Three new tasks were added to the Honors Program's portfolio beginning in AY 2016-17, besides simply running the Honors Program. These were (and still are):

- Promote national and prestigious scholarships and fellowships for students (such as Fulbright, Marshal, and Rhodes Scholarships), and for mentoring students through the application process (a relatively small task).
- Provide a home, and administrative support, for the WSU chapter of the National Honor Society of Phi Kappa Phi, including recruitment efforts, an annual initiation banquet, and student applications for national fellowship awards to support graduate study (a medium-sized task).
- Manage the Aletheia Club for Presidential Scholarship students, and play a major role in recruitment of Presidential Scholars by organizing and running the annual Aletheia banquet (a very large task). The Aletheia Club is the entity through which three scholarship requirements are met: engaging in a book reading and discussion once per year, completing 12 hours of community service per year, and taking Honors classes. As the number of Presidential Scholars has grown (379 at last count), so has the workload involved in managing their requirements.

Coincident with these cuts to resources and increases in responsibilities, between spring 2017 and fall 2018, there was a 100% turnover in staff.

At this time, the new (and current) director shifted priorities back towards building student interest, and enrollments, in General and University Honors. Enrollments in these areas have grown substantially in the last three years. Several new initiatives were introduced. Film screenings became a regular part of the Honors events landscape, along with revitalized monthly Food for Thought lunchtime presentations and discussions, and a regular end-of-semester celebratory open house. Aletheia book clubs now sometimes include meetings with the authors, if they are visiting campus. Honors now routinely offers 13-14 different classes in the fall semester, and anywhere up to 17 or 18 different classes in spring. In short, the Honors Program as it stands today bears only a passing resemblance to the program at the time of the last review in 2014. Serious and significant challenges still exist—notably the burden of delivering the very extensive range of services now required, and the associated very real danger of burnout among all staff members—but taken as a whole, the program is thriving. However, the inexorable growth in demand for services which the Honors Program is now tasked with providing—notably for Presidential Scholarship students, but also for 'home-grown' General and University Honors students—raises a critical question: can the success of the Honors Program be sustained?

## **2. PROGRAMS & SERVICES, AND INTERFACE WITH CURRICULUM**

### **2. a Core Programs and Services**

The Honors Program offers numerous core programs and services, as follows. Each will be discussed in detail.

- General, University and Departmental Honors
- Honors classes
- Honors Center
- Honors events
- Aletheia orientations
- Aletheia book clubs
- Aletheia banquet
- Advising for Honors and Aletheia students
- Phi Kappa Phi administrative support
- Phi Kappa Phi induction banquet
- National and prestigious scholarships and fellowships support

Details on each of these core programs and services follows.

#### **General, University and Departmental Honors**

The raison d'être of Honors is our academic program, which consists of three branches:

- **General Honors** requires students to complete 12 credit hours of Honors classes before they earn their Associate's degree, and earn a 3.5 GPA at the time of graduation. There are no required courses, although HNRS HU 1110 The Construction of Knowledge is encouraged.
- **University Honors** requires a total of 24 credit hours of Honors classes before a student earns their Bachelor's degree, including at least 9 credit hours of lower division classes, at least 6 credit hours of upper division classes, and a capstone project (which may be taken in the student's major). The remaining 6 credit hours may be met with any combination of upper or lower division Honors classes. As with General Honors, there are no specific required classes, though again, HNRS HU 1110 Construction of Knowledge is encouraged, and students must earn a 3.5 cumulative GPA at the time of graduation. Honors classes taken for General Honors may count towards the total credit hours required for University Honors (indeed, it is extremely difficult, if not functionally impossible, for students to complete University Honors otherwise).
- **Departmental Honors** is largely managed by individual departments with input from the Honors Program, and is divorced to a degree from the Honors Program itself (only 23% of Departmental Honors programs require an Honors class). Requirements for graduating with Departmental Honors vary from department to department. Examples include giving presentations at professional conferences, contributing service hours or internships, earning a high GPA at the time of graduation, and/or earning an A grade in the department's capstone seminar.

#### **Honors Classes**

In order to graduate from the Honors Program, students need to take Honors classes. In order to maintain their scholarships, Presidential Scholarship students also must take Honors classes (two within the first two years, at least one in the first year). Honors classes emphasize

discussion, rigour, interactive pedagogy, and a wide range of enrichment activities such as field trips, public presentations, community engagement, undergraduate research activities, and working with social media, among others. Honors classes are open to all students with an Honors or Aletheia cohort code; other students may register with an override from Honors if they have a GPA of 3.0 or above, or with instructor's permission if their GPA is lower.

### **Honors Center**

The Honors Center (LI 324) is the heart of Honors Program community-building efforts. It is an excellent, versatile space, which can be configured variously for studying, social events, formal presentations, and film screenings. The Center is open for student use for studying, working on papers (there are four computers and a printer for student use), socializing, relaxing, and storing and preparing food in the kitchen. Bagels and cream cheese are provided every other Thursday morning, alternating with donuts.

### **Honors Events**

Honors runs two regular monthly events series: Food for Thought, and Movie Night in the Afternoon, and once-per-semester graduation banquets and open houses. Food for Thought events are presentations or panel discussions, with lunch provided (usually pizza). They are held either in the Honors Center or in the nearby Hetzel Hoellein Room in the library (LI 321). As with all events on campus, attendance can be highly variable: around 70-80 people attended Dr. Adam Johnston's fall 2017 presentation on the solar eclipse, and around 90 people attended a spring 2018 panel discussion on *Science, Activism and Activist Scientists*. Smaller crowds (20-30 people) attended panel discussions on domestic violence (fall 2019), presentations on the evolution of the television news media, and the Navajo language and culture. Food for Thought events are organized by the Honors and Aletheia Student Advisory Board, with guidance from the Honors Program Coordinator.

Film screenings have similarly variable turnouts, ranging from a nearly full Honors Center for *BlackKklansman* to a handful of students for *2001: A Space Odyssey* and *Yellow Submarine*. At present, the Honors team selects the films and invites a member of the faculty to give a 15-minute introduction. A discussion follows the film.

The Nye Honors graduation banquets are held near the end of each semester and provide an opportunity for students to celebrate their successful imminent graduation with Honors. The banquets are held on campus and are organized by the Honors Program Coordinator. They are funded through donations from the Nye Foundation.

Honors open houses are held on the last day of class in each semester. They are informal celebrations of the successful completion of the semester, intended to conclude classes with a bang, not a whimper. Open houses feature snacks, games, informal socializing, and announcements of student and faculty achievements (the successful Eccles Fellowship awardees are announced at the fall open house). All Honors events are important for community-building.

### **Aletheia Orientations**

When management of the Aletheia Club was transferred to Honors from the Provost's Office in fall 2017, the expectation that orientations would continue to be offered for newly-arriving Presidential Scholarship students came with it. Honors holds five orientations for the fall semester, three in the week before classes start, two in the first week of classes. The objective is to ensure that student questions are answered, and that a friendly welcome is provided to

students in their first semester. Orientations usually feature peer to peer mentoring, depending on student availability.

### **Aletheia Book Clubs and Author Visits**

Presidential Scholars must meet three requirements (plus nominal GPA and credit enrollment requirements) in order to maintain their scholarship. Honors classes are described above; 12 service hours per year are facilitated by WSU's Center for Community Engaged Learning; book readings and discussions are organized by the Honors team. Book groups consist of 15-18 students, with a faculty or staff discussion leader, and meet for a single one-hour discussion during the semester. Leading an Aletheia book discussion is an excellent introduction to the Honors Program for faculty. Furthermore, the discussions now provide a basis for inviting visiting authors to meet with small groups of 20-30 Honors and Aletheia students. In the last three years, students have met with nationally and internationally recognized journalists, writers, and scholars, including Cornel West, Ronan Farrow, Naomi Oreskes, Mary Robinson, Daniel Mendelsohn, and Paul Hawken, among others. These meetings represent significant learning opportunities for students. The author visits are usually scheduled as in addition to the book discussions. Students who have registered to read the book are given priority to meet the author; remaining spaces are made available to other Honors and Aletheia students first, then other potentially interested students across campus. To accommodate the growing number of Presidential Scholars, around 20 or slightly more book groups are now offered per year, typically more in the spring (AY 2018-19 is 9 in the fall, 14 in the spring). Author visits also tend to happen in the spring.

### **Aletheia Banquet**

This, too, was inherited when the Aletheia Club was moved to the Honors Program in fall 2017. The Aletheia Banquet is essentially a recruiting event, held once each year in February, with the intention of showing Weber State University at its best to students who have been offered a Presidential Scholarship (and their parents), and ideally persuading them to accept the scholarship offer. Academic deans and directors of High Impact Programs (HIPs) are invited to be on hand to answer questions, along with members of senior administration, up to and including the university's president. The Honors Program director serves as master of ceremonies; lead organizer is the Honors Program Coordinator, Megan Moulding.

### **Advising for Honors and Aletheia Students**

Advising for the Honors Program starts with recruiting students at table events, Block Party, Orientation, class visits, at Honors in-house events and word of mouth. Once a student is interested in joining the Honors Program, the advisor walks them through the three types of Honors and determines which fit is best based on how much time the student has before graduation and how able they would be in completing different Honors. If a student chooses General or University Honors (or if their Departmental Honors requires taking an Honors course), the advisor will review the course offerings in the coming semester and make suggestions based on student interests, major, or unfulfilled gen-eds (preferably all three align). Typically, with General/University Honors in particular, a plan is made for suggested future classes. Notes are made within the Honors Platform, or on the student's General Education planning worksheet.

Since the roll-out of the Honors Platform in late summer 2019, advising appointments also include instructing students on navigating the Platform, the Honors website, and updating

their requirements and graduation date. Honors advising appointments typically conclude with an overview of scholarship opportunities and deadlines, leadership opportunities, and the Honors Center and its amenities.

Advising includes referring students to other campus resources both academic and non-academic. If needed, setting up appointments with offices such as the Women's Center, Counseling & Psychological Services, Scholarship & Financial Aid, Tutoring Services, and the Writing Lab.

Advising for leadership groups include the Honors and Aletheia Student Advisory Board, the Phi Kappa Phi Student VPs, and the Student Senator. This primarily involves making sure there is clear and open communication between students, and supporting them in advertising, funding, and scheduling of events. If they have an idea for an event but do not know who to contact, the advisor can often give suggestions for faculty or staff to reach out to in order to accomplish their goals.

An important aspect of advising is sometimes simply spending time with students in the Honors Center or sending quick check-in emails to students. Having lunch in the open space with them, playing a card game or working on a puzzle, or taking a quick moment to lounge around with students in-between classes or in the afternoon has often led to introducing students to each other and starting conversations. These connections will hopefully lead to a sense of community amongst Honors students and a sense of belonging on campus.

### **Phi Kappa Phi Administrative Support**

Starting in fall 2016, responsibility for maintaining the WSU chapter of the National Honor Society of Phi Kappa Phi was returned by senior administration to the Honors Program, after some years away. The Honors Advisor (now Coordinator) is the key staff person maintaining records and interfacing with the national office. Tasks include submitting, on behalf of the chapter, student applications to the national office for fellowship awards; implementing processes for student applications for chapter awards (e.g. Google Forms); communicating with chapter membership; and working with the student vice presidents to support chapter activities, such as resumé-writing workshops or service projects. The purpose is to ensure a thriving chapter at WSU, which holds benefits for students through networking and access to fellowship awards that can help fund graduate and professional schools. Further, a thriving, high-profile chapter can potentially spur campus-wide efforts to improve academic performance, as students strive to raise their GPAs to the point where they might receive an invitation to join.

### **Phi Kappa Phi Induction Ceremony and Banquet**

Each fall, the WSU chapter identifies eligible students to receive invitations to join Phi Kappa Phi (top 10% of seniors and top 7.5% of juniors in each college, by GPA). Invitation letters must be composed and sent to the national office for mailing to invitees; information sessions must be organized, to inform invitees of potential benefits of membership; faculty, staff and community members must be identified and selected as new initiates; and an induction ceremony and banquet must be organized, held in November (this is not strictly required, but is very strongly encouraged by the national office of Phi Kappa Phi). Much of this is handled by the (currently four-person) chapter officers' board, with administrative support from the chapter secretary/Honors Program Coordinator, Megan Moulding; the banquet is organized by Megan, and presided over by the chapter president (currently Dan Bedford, also Honors Program Director), with significant input from other chapter officers. The banquet (and



associated events such as information sessions) helps to grow the membership, which can help increase access to national-level funding for graduate study.

### **Support for National and Prestigious Scholarship and Fellowship Applications**

This, too, was made an Honors Program responsibility for fall 2016 and onwards. Students interested in applying for Fulbright, Rhodes, or Marshall Scholarships, or other similar high-profile awards, do so through the Honors Program. Realistically, resources have not been available to make this a priority, although a small number of information events have been held for Fulbright programs, and one student was mentored by the Honors director in fall 2016 through the application process for Rhodes and Marshall scholarships. The student was unsuccessful in the scholarship application, but was admitted to Oxford University in the UK.

## **2.b Outreach, Campus Relations, and Collaborations**

### **Outreach**

The Honors team has engaged in a massive outreach effort, aimed at raising awareness across campus of the existence of the Honors Program. This effort consists of multiple components:

- **Rejuvenated events series**, notably Food for Thought, movie screenings, and Honors open houses. Food for Thought events and movie screenings are advertised extensively across campus (electronic announcements to Honors and Aletheia students; e-mails to current and recent Honors faculty; targeted e-mails to potentially interested other faculty; physical posters; social media). Open houses are advertised to Honors and Aletheia students, and current Honors faculty. Punch cards have been issued to students, with each event visit counting for one punched hole on the card. A completed card earns the student an Honors mug (see below).
- **Advertising of Honors classes**. In fall 2017, graphic design professor Mark Biddle kindly agreed to include designing an Honors class poster template as an assignment for students in his class. We now make wide use of this template, which provides individuality for each class, within a framework of consistency to communicate the existence of a coherent program. Faculty are encouraged, but not required, to use this template when designing their posters. The Honors website recently underwent an extensive renovation, with all sections now much clearer, but especially the Courses section (for example, students can much more easily see what general education credits each class provides). Use of the campus curriculum software Curriculog each semester now allows us to ensure that the real title of each class, rather than the generic variable title, is evident to students when they explore the upcoming semester's course offerings and when they register for classes.
- **Advertising of the Honors Program**. A new logo was designed by WSU Marketing and Communications, utilizing the tagline "Academically adventurous" (from the revised mission statement). This logo now features prominently on new Honors swag: pins, mugs, even socks, with the intention of providing a clear identity and sense of belonging for Honors students, faculty and staff.
- **Outreach to students, faculty and staff**. Honors team members are omnipresent at student events such as Block Party, Latinos in Action, Purple Carpet, etc., as well as at the new faculty retreat held each year before the start of fall semester classes. Outreach to faculty outside of departments and colleges commonly represented in Honors is a priority, for teaching Honors classes and for leading Aletheia book discussions. Eccles

Fellowships are advertised widely to faculty across campus. Recognizing the critical role played by staff, presentations have been given to college advisors to ensure they are familiar with the Honors Program and its benefits.

### **Collaboration Within the Division of Academic Affairs**

The Honors Program is a fundamentally collaborative organization. In many respects, we can only function with the goodwill of a large swath of the campus. Collaboration is most extensive within the Division of Academic Affairs, principally through recruitment of faculty to teach Honors classes and lead Aletheia book discussions. Furthermore, the Honors Program provides an invaluable flexibility to the university curriculum, allowing innovative cross-disciplinary classes to be taught. Besides the Honors Program's regular course offerings, two programs run from the Provost's Office have arisen in recent years which depend on this flexibility: WSU courses and Wildcat Scholars, described below.

- **WSU courses** are team taught and allow students taking a single three-credit hour class to earn general education credit in two different areas (such as Creative Arts and Physical Science).
- **Wildcat Scholars classes** are specialized versions of HNRS SS 1520 Perspectives in the Social Sciences, offered to students whose demographics suggest they have a high chance of not completing their first year at WSU. The Wildcat Scholars program is essentially an intervention aimed at helping these students change direction, and complete their university degree.

Although both WSU courses and Wildcat Scholars are only nominally Honors classes, the Honors Program is pleased to help these innovative efforts succeed on campus. Similarly, other programs occasionally need the flexibility afforded by the Honors curriculum, and one-credit classes have been offered when that need arises. Recent examples include a STEM education seminar for low-income students (fall 2019), as part of a grant received by Dr. Tracy Covey in the Chemistry Department, and a seminar on becoming a research assistant, for students supported with research scholar awards from the Office of Undergraduate Research (spring 2019, spring 2020).

Additionally, one-credit first or second block classes have been offered in recent years, to tie in with major campus events. For example, in fall 2018, jazz musician and music professor Dan Jonas taught a 1-credit class focused on the definitive jazz album, *Kind of Blue*, by Miles Davis, because 2018 was the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the album's release, and the College of Arts & Humanities was bringing the Sean Jones Quintet to campus to perform their own music, but also several cuts from *Kind of Blue*. The class was intended to help participants get more out of their concert experience, and similar tie-in classes could be offered in future. This idea is still in its early stages, but it has great potential for building connections across campus, and with the community.

Besides collaboration across the Division of Academic Affairs for purposes of offering academic programs, Honors also collaborates with the Financial Aid and Scholarships (FAS) Office (part of Enrollment Services, and housed within Academic Affairs). The bulk of this collaboration is related to identifying, tracking, and managing Presidential Scholarship students. FAS is responsible for making scholarship offers, tracking accepted, deferred, and declined offers, and communicating names of Presidential Scholars to the Honors Program, so those students can be invited to orientations as freshmen, and so their Aletheia Club participation can be tracked.

## **Collaboration Outside the Division of Academic Affairs**

Collaborations also exist with offices outside the Division of Academic Affairs. Other units and divisions engaged in the last three years are:

- Division of Student Affairs- Career Services Office, Counselling Center, Center for Multicultural Excellence, Student Government.
- Division of Information Technology- App Development Services.
- Division of Administrative Services- Facilities Management
- University Advancement- Alumni Relations, Development Office, Marketing and Communications Office.

Collaboration with the Division of Student Affairs has been extensive recently, most notably with the **Career Services Office**. Workshops on resume writing and job interview skills have been held as part of the Food for Thought events series, with guest facilitators invited from Career Services. In fall 2019, a class called REAL Projects: Real Experiences, Applied Learning was taught in the Honors Program for the first time, by Robert Ameling, assistant director of internships. In this class, students work on projects for local employers, gaining genuine, practical work experience. In effect, the students engage in an internship as part of the class, without having to leave campus. The class is due to be taught again in spring 2020. A Food for Thought panel discussion on imposter syndrome, held in fall 2019, included Olga Antonio from the **Center for Multicultural Excellence**, and Juancarlos Santisteban from the **Counselling Center** as panelists.

Collaboration with **Student Government** takes the form of working with the Honors/BIS student senator (currently Ingrid Oseguera). During fall 2019, Ingrid has held several town hall meetings in the Honors Center, so that she might hear student concerns and more effectively represent her constituents.

Beginning in summer 2018 and concluding at the end of summer 2019, Honors engaged in an intensive collaboration with **App Development Services** (Division of Information Technology) to build a system to replace paper forms for tracking student progress. This was initiated many years ago originally as a system to help Departmental Honors advisors know who their Departmental Honors students were, and how they were progressing through their requirements. Working with Departmental Honors advisors who had volunteered to serve as beta testers, and with Megan Moulding as overall Honors advisor, App Development Services built an excellent, user-friendly, intuitive system, accessible through the eWeber Portal. This system is now live, and has now replaced paper forms.

Honors has worked closely with **Facilities Management**, a unit within the Division of Administrative Services, to excel within FM's Green Department program. Thanks to the tireless efforts of the whole Honors team, but especially Honors Coordinator Megan Moulding, Honors was among the first departments/programs on campus to receive Green level certification (the highest in a ranking of Bronze, Silver, Gold, Green), and became so sustainable that the organizers were pushed to develop a new category, Double Green. Honors was the first unit on campus to achieve this distinction.

Honors works with several different branches of University Advancement. Through Phi Kappa Phi, Honors collaborates with **Alumni Relations**. The board of the Alumni Association has historically helped to cover the costs of the annual induction ceremony and banquet, and generously supports scholarship awards for the WSU chapter. The **Development Office** has a development officer, Taylor Knuth, dedicated to supporting the HIPs areas. Taylor has just started at WSU, but has already built strong relationships with Honors donors. In spring 2019, Honors worked with the Development Office to write a revised version of a grant proposal to the George S. and Dolores Doré Eccles Foundation, to underwrite the Eccles Fellowships.

Although this proposal is due every five years and has become somewhat routine, this year's application included a request for additional funds of over \$5000 per class, to allow for curricular innovation and enrichment activities (such as field trips). Finally, **Marketing and Communications** designed a pin for Honors in summer 2017 (at the prompting of our development officer). The design was so eye-catching that we have adopted it elsewhere in Honors: on mugs, socks, and other promotional materials.

### **2.c Changes to Core Programs and Services in the Last Five Years**

As noted earlier, all programs and services related to the Aletheia Club, Phi Kappa Phi, and national and prestigious scholarships and fellowships were added by the Provost's Office between fall 2016 and fall 2017.

### **2.d Anticipated New Programs and Services**

The Honors plate is full to overflowing, and no additional tasks will be taken on for the foreseeable future. However, an existing task, national and prestigious scholarships and fellowships, will be pursued more vigorously. An Assistant Director has been hired, starting January 2020, with this task as a specific part of the job description. Thus, while no new tasks will be added, an under-resourced task could become more of a true part of the Honors list of core programs and services.

### **3. LEADERSHIP & STAFFING**

#### **3.a Organizational and Reporting Structure**

Organizationally, the Honors Program is housed within the [College of Engaged Learning, Honors, and Interdisciplinary Programs](#), with Associate Provost Brenda Kowalewski as Dean. The Honors Program Director reports directly to Associate Provost/Dean Kowalewski, and through her to the Provost and ultimately to the President.

In addition to the director, the Honors Program staff includes a Program Coordinator, an Administrative Specialist, a student hourly employee, and, starting in January 2020, an Assistant Director.

Honors also maintains three advisory boards, one staffed with students, one with faculty, and one with alumni. Because Honors also bears responsibility for the WSU chapter of Phi Kappa Phi, there is also a connection with the chapter officers/ Phi Kappa Phi advisory board.

The organizational chart below shows the reporting structure of these various positions. The faculty, alumni, and Phi Kappa Phi boards advise the Program Director (though the relationships are advisory rather than one reporting to another).

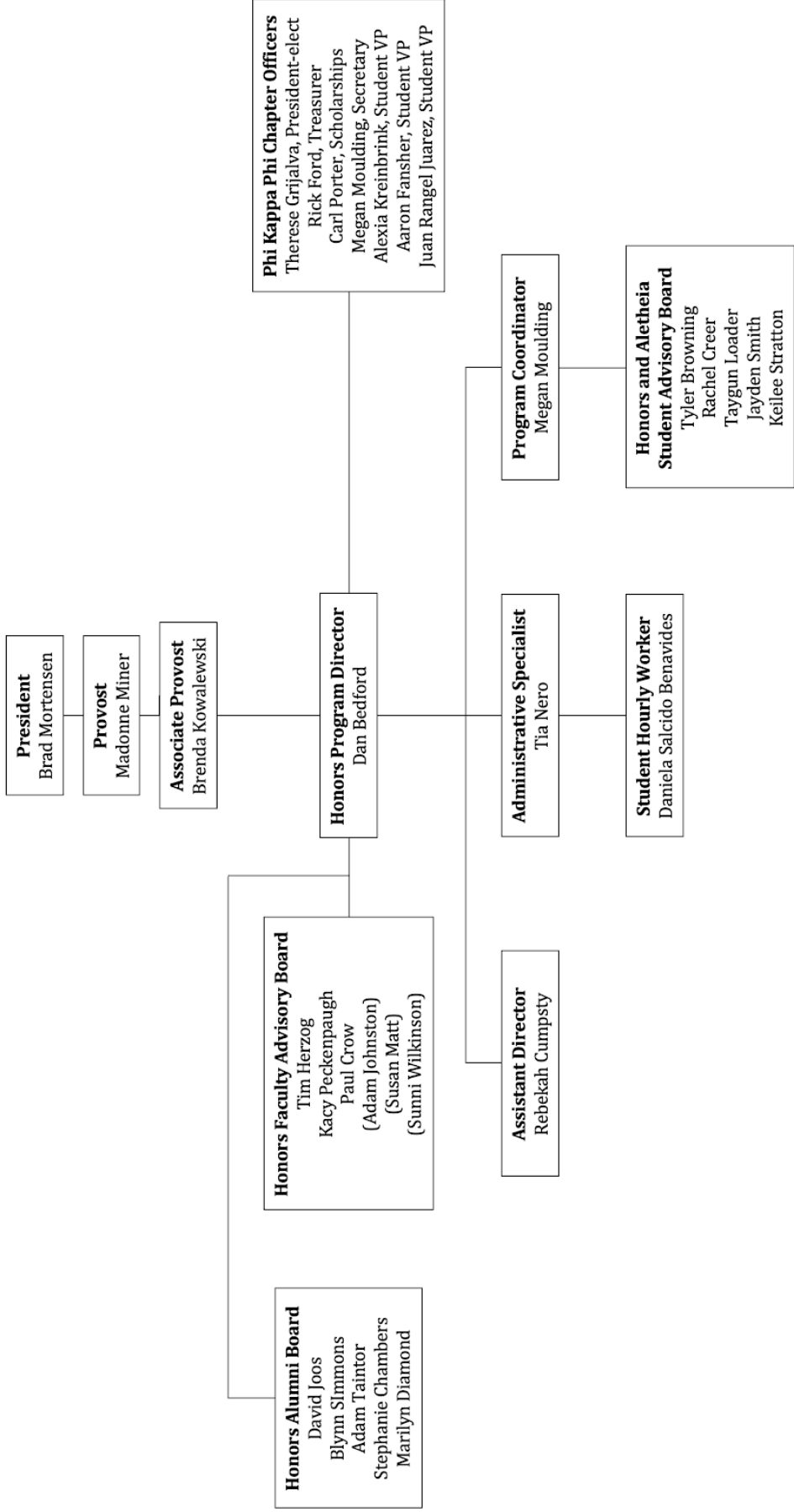
The Assistant Director, Program Coordinator, and Administrative Specialist all report directly to the Program Director.

The student hourly reports to the Administrative Specialist. The Honors and Aletheia Student Advisory Board reports to the Program Coordinator.

#### **3.b Decision Making**

Decisions at various levels and relating to various different tasks are made in meetings, as follows:

- Weekly staff meetings: The core Honors team of Program Director, Program Coordinator, Administrative Specialist, and Student Hourly meets weekly to address upcoming issues and events. Reports from other boards and meetings are shared at this time. Beginning January 2020, the Assistant Director will join these meetings.
- Budget meetings: The Program Director and Administrative Specialist meet monthly to go over the budget.
- Faculty Advisory Board meetings: the board meets 2-4 times per semester to provide advice and guidance to the Program Director, e.g. reviewing applications for Eccles Fellowships.
- Alumni Board meetings: The Alumni Board meets once or twice a year to provide advice to the Program Director, and to maintain alumni relations.
- Honors and Aletheia Student Advisory Board meetings: The student board meets weekly and reports to the Program Coordinator. At present (fall semester 2019), we are experimenting with the board all taking a 1-credit hour seminar on leadership with Dr. Bryant Thompson (Department of Business Administration). Some time each week is devoted to board business, such as planning and organizing Food for Thought events.
- Phi Kappa Phi chapter officers board meetings: The board meets 2-3 times per semester to organize the induction ceremony and banquet, decide upon faculty, staff and



community member initiates, and manage student applications for scholarships and awards, at both the chapter and national levels.

- One on one meetings: The Program Director meets biweekly with the Associate Provost/Dean, and monthly with the Program Coordinator and with the Administrative Specialist, who in turn meets regularly with the Student Hourly.

### **3.c Staff & Responsibilities**

Basic demographic information regarding the Honors team is provided in Appendix B. Recruiting of the current Honors team was handled through conventional university channels, working with the Human Resources department. The main challenge in recruiting has been the sheer pace at which it has happened, with one or two job searches being conducted each summer since 2017. For each hiring, outdated job descriptions had to be revised, or, for the position of Assistant Director, written from scratch. All job searches were conducted with the assistance of the Honors Faculty Advisory Board, except for hiring the student hourly worker. The search committee in that case consisted of the Program Director, Program Coordinator, and Administrative Specialist.

Job responsibilities and qualifications for each member of the Honors team are as follows:

- **Program Director:** recruited from the faculty to serve a 50% appointment for Honors, 50% with the home department. The Director has overall responsibility for managing the Honors Program, Aletheia Club, and student applications for national and prestigious scholarships and fellowships, and responsibility for WSU's chapter of Phi Kappa Phi shared with the other chapter officers. Specific responsibilities include recruiting faculty to teach Honors classes (and ensuring that enough high-quality classes are available to meet demand), identifying books and faculty discussion leaders for the Aletheia book discussions each semester, serving as master of ceremonies for the Aletheia and Honors banquets, and running orientations for new Presidential Scholarship students. This position is currently held by Dr. Dan Bedford, Brady Presidential Distinguished Professor of Geography.
- **Assistant Director:** Starting January 2020, the Assistant Director will manage Departmental Honors, assessment of classes, and national and prestigious scholarships and fellowships. The Assistant Director is a member of the faculty, on a 25% appointment to Honors. This position will be filled in January by Dr. Rebekah Cumpsty, Assistant Professor of English.
- **Program Coordinator:** The Program Coordinator is a full-time, exempt staff position on an 11-month contract. The position requires a Bachelor's degree and at least two years of full-time related experience, plus initiative, and strong organizational and communication skills. Main responsibilities include student recruitment, advising and mentoring, working with the Honors and Aletheia Student Advisory Board to organize events (service projects, Food for Thought), organizing and staging major events (two graduation banquets, Phi Kappa Phi induction banquet, Aletheia recruitment banquet, and Honors/Aletheia fall kickoff picnic), and providing administrative support for the WSU chapter of Phi Kappa Phi. The Honors Program Coordinator is also the official advisor to the student senator for Honors/Bachelor of Integrated Studies; they are required to meet monthly, and hold monthly town hall meetings for student constituents. This position is currently held by Megan Moulding.

- **Administrative Specialist:** The Administrative Specialist is a full-time, non-exempt staff position on a 12-month contract. The position requires an Associate's degree or equivalent, but a Bachelor's degree is preferred. Main responsibilities include budget management, scheduling Honors classes and Aletheia book discussions, website management, promoting Honors Program events and services, and assisting with staging of major events (banquets etc.). The Administrative Specialist is the direct supervisor of the student hourly worker. This position is currently held by Tia Nero.
- **Student Hourly Worker:** The student hourly may work up to 59 hours per month (29.5 hours per pay period). The position is intended for a student who already possesses significant initiative and organizational skills, but who also can grow in the role. Main responsibilities include staffing the front desk in the Honors Center, and supporting the rest of the Honors team as needed. This position is currently held by Daniela Salcido Benavides.

### **3.d Training & Professional Development**

For employees completely new to the university, a series of orientations and trainings are required in the first few months, through Human Resources. There has been a limited amount of on-the-job training for new team members from the outgoing staff. For example, Megan Moulding originally joined the Honors Program in fall 2017, as Administrative Specialist, working with Marilyn Diamond as Honors Program Advisor. When Marilyn retired in May 2018, Megan successfully applied for the position (which was renamed Honors Program Coordinator, to reflect the extensive additional responsibilities, besides advising students, that the role had evolved to take on). Thus, Megan had already worked for a year in close proximity to the position she now holds, receiving informal training and mentoring, when she stepped into the more senior role in summer 2018. Similarly, when Tia Nero took over the Administrative Specialist position that was now vacant, Megan was in a position to provide advice to Tia.

All members of the Honors team hold regular one-on-one meetings with their immediate supervisors. Daniela meets monthly with Tia; Megan and Tia meet monthly with Dan; Dan meets biweekly with Associate Provost Brenda Kowalewski. Salaried employees undergo annual PREP goal-setting and evaluations (see 3.e. Evaluation, below).

The Honors Program is intended to be a place where all individuals can thrive, including staff. Thus, Megan was able to lead a small group of students (the president and vice president of HASAB) on a visit to the National Collegiate Honors Conference in 2018; Megan and Dan both took four students to the Western Regional Honors Conference in 2019; and Megan and Tia presented at the National Society for Minorities in Honors conference in 2019, leading a roundtable discussion on identity and obstacles to pursuing Honors among minority students. For both Honors team members, this was their first formal presentation at a conference, and it was a privilege as Honors Director to support this conference participation, which came entirely at their instigation and on their initiative.

### **3.e Evaluation**

University policy requires that all salaried employees undergo the PREP evaluation process each year. In theory, each Honors team member meets with the Program Director at the end of



the summer to consider successes over the previous year in meeting last year's goals, and to set goals for the coming year. A performance evaluation is then submitted to the Provost's Office, with changes and/or improvements in job performance taking place over this annual cycle. In practice, the high level of staff turnover in recent years, and technological changes with Human Resources, have meant that the PREP cycle has been disrupted. Full PREP meetings with all Honors staff were held for the first time in 2019, though one PREP meeting was held with Megan when she was Administrative Specialist.

In addition to the formal PREP process, monthly one-on-one meetings (noted above) provide opportunities for informal job satisfaction and progress checks.

### **3.f Currently Unmet Staffing Needs**

The success of the Honors Program is currently limited by an imbalance in staff capacity relative to workload in two key areas, managing the Aletheia Club for Presidential Scholars, and building diversity and inclusive excellence in Honors. This section outlines the need for two new staff positions in these areas.

#### **Aletheia Club Coordinator**

The Honors Program consists of two different kinds of Honors, inclusive and exclusive. Inclusive Honors is the long-standing core of the program - General, University, and Departmental Honors - open enrollment to all students, regardless of GPA. The exclusive components were added by the Provost's Office in 2016-17, and consist of managing Phi Kappa Phi and the Aletheia Club, both of which are restricted on the basis of GPA, and (for Aletheia) high school ACT/SAT scores.

The work related to Phi Kappa Phi is manageable for the Honors staff due to the support of the faculty board, the number of student initiates, and of course the direction and resources from the national headquarters.

However, the work related to the Aletheia Club uses a disproportionate amount of time, energy, and resources which detracts from, and is a detriment to, the inclusive Honors Program. This substantial workload would easily provide enough work for a full-time job, and could be its own staff position as an Aletheia Club Coordinator

Currently, the job duties related to Aletheia include:

- Answering frequent student questions via emails, drop-ins, and advising appointments.
- Onboarding students by individually adding cohort codes, adding email addresses to our Google Group (10 maximum emails allowed at a time, 100 per day limitation), updating Parking Services of incoming students, corresponding with scholarship about incoming students, sending a welcome email mid-summer, and creating a tracking sheet for requirements.
- Planning orientation, including ordering food, booking the venue, and creating informational fliers, an RSVP form, an agenda, a Kahoot trivia game, requirement cards, check-in forms, a Qualtrics survey, and sending invitations to guests such as CCEL, Scholarship, and Honors faculty.
- Planning banquet, which includes booking the venue, ordering the food, designing and printing invitations, coordinating with Scholarship on the quantity of students, mailing addresses, and student information, emailing and inviting faculty, staff, administration, advisors, and HIPs to the banquet, matching seating assignments based on student's field of study and Weber State representative and guest count per table, creating table

number centerpieces, name tags, purchasing folders, creating and printing materials for the folders such as book groups and honors course listings, requesting HIPs materials for the folders, and stuffing the folders for students to pick-up as they check-in, tracking RSVPs and food restrictions, answering student and parent questions, emailing students beforehand, acquiring A-frame boards and creating directional signs to place next to campus roadways for parents to find ballroom.

- Marketing by maintaining and updating the Aletheia handbook, website, and weekly newsletter
- Predicting and projecting demand through requesting incoming student numbers from Financial Aid & Scholarship, tracking how many students have completed requirements and estimating based on total number of students how many honors courses and book groups will be needed in Fall and Spring semester. Mid-semester, estimates on demand are re-evaluated due to the unpredictable nature of student decisions. Additionally, because of the requirement for General and University Honors students to take Honors courses, it is a necessity to understand the Aletheia to Honors ratio in Honors courses. With that said, Aletheia students prioritize registering for Honors courses because it is a requirement mandated by their scholarship, where General and University Honors students are choosing to take the course. Therefore, if it is full, Honors students simply decide it is full and build the rest of their schedule.
- Managing book groups by coordinating dates and times with instructors and calendaring the clubs, creating informational material of the selections and updating the website accordingly, creating the registration form, tracking book pick-ups, tracking attendance the day of the event, reminding students via email of upcoming dates, ordering the books, scheduling and paying for the delivery of food for each book club, ordering food for author visits (a separate RSVP form and emails are required for author visits), and day-of room set-up.
- Managing service hours by notifying students of requirements, opportunities, pulling reports from CCEL, and individually tallying the number of hours students have completed, then updating the tracking spreadsheet and reporting to scholarship
- Tracking student registration in Honors courses by pulling individual course enrollments and cross-referencing with the list of Aletheia students. This gives the answer of if the student has registered in Fall or Spring semester, but it does not answer if a student is done with their required 2 courses, which is obtained by individually pulling Cattracks records.

### **Equity Coordinator**

The Honors Program maintains a goal of improving diversity and inclusive excellence, consistent with both the Honors Program's mission statement, and the university's mission theme of Access. However, we currently lack the resources to address this issue in a meaningful way. Although recruitment efforts have opened the door for more diverse students to participate, there is still a lack of diversity within the Honors Program. 2018-19 is the most diverse Honors student body in the last five years, but, as shown in the table of demographic data below, is still predominantly white, traditional students, especially in the Aletheia Club. Further, there is anecdotal evidence that some students (notably First-Generation College Students, Non-traditional, International or People of Color) lack the identity of being an Honors student. Often this can be attributed to students having a fixed mindset about their ability (or inability) to perform academically at the level they perceive to be required of an Honors student. Again, anecdotally, these issues continue once students are in the Honors

Program, and manifest themselves in the form of imposter syndrome and a feeling of being alienated.

While there has been a shift in recruiting and messaging to underrepresented students, Honors Program staff have discussed the potential and need for a new position that could go above and beyond what we are currently capable of. This idea was solidified when we attended the National Society for Minorities in Honors conference, held in October 2019 in Fullerton, CA.

Intentionally providing students with the needed resources and support has been shown, at other institutions, to increase diverse enrollment and retention within Honors. Deliberately hiring an Honors Equity Coordinator would help address the Honors Mission Statement to nurture excellence in this community, regardless of prior academic preparation, and make a clear statement about the university’s commitment to diversity and inclusive excellence. If we are serious about growing diversity and inclusive excellence in the Honors Program, we need a dedicated Honors Equity Coordinator, to engage in the following tasks:

- Develop and implement an equity plan for the Honors Program.
- Serve as an advisor and mentor for underrepresented students.
- Help the Honors Center become a space where diverse students can thrive through peer and staff connections.
- Help diverse students develop a sense of belonging in the Honors Program, and by extension at the university as a whole.
- Build and develop connections with stakeholders, private donors, etc. that could benefit the equity plan, the Honors Program, and the university as a whole.

**Demographic composition of Honors as of 2018-19**

	<b>General</b>	<b>University</b>	<b>Departmental</b>	<b>Aletheia</b>
<b>Traditional</b>	58% (69)	58% (35)	28% (33)	66% (170)
<b>Non-Traditional</b>	42% (49)	42% (25)	73% (87)	34% (88)
<b>White</b>	77% (121)	74% (50)	83% (235)	91% (333)
<b>Hispanic</b>	10% (16)	10% (7)	16% (6)	3% (10)
<b>“Other”</b>	13% (20)	16% (11)	32% (11)	6% (22)

#### 4. FINANCIAL RESOURCES/BUDGET

##### 4.a Budget Over The Past Five Years

The following discussion covers the overall funding situation for the various different components of the Honors Program's responsibilities, namely, the Honors Program itself, the Aletheia Club, and the Weber State University chapter of the National Honor Society of Phi Kappa Phi (chapter number 119).

##### **Honors Program**

The Honors Program's main revenue stream is appropriated funds from the university, although substantial gifts and grants have been acquired in recent years. The principal outlays are for direct support of Honors Program classes and activities, specifically:

- Instructional wages for faculty teaching Honors classes.
- Staff salaries.
- Faculty salary for the Program Director.

Details are shown in the table and graphs below, with a detailed discussion.

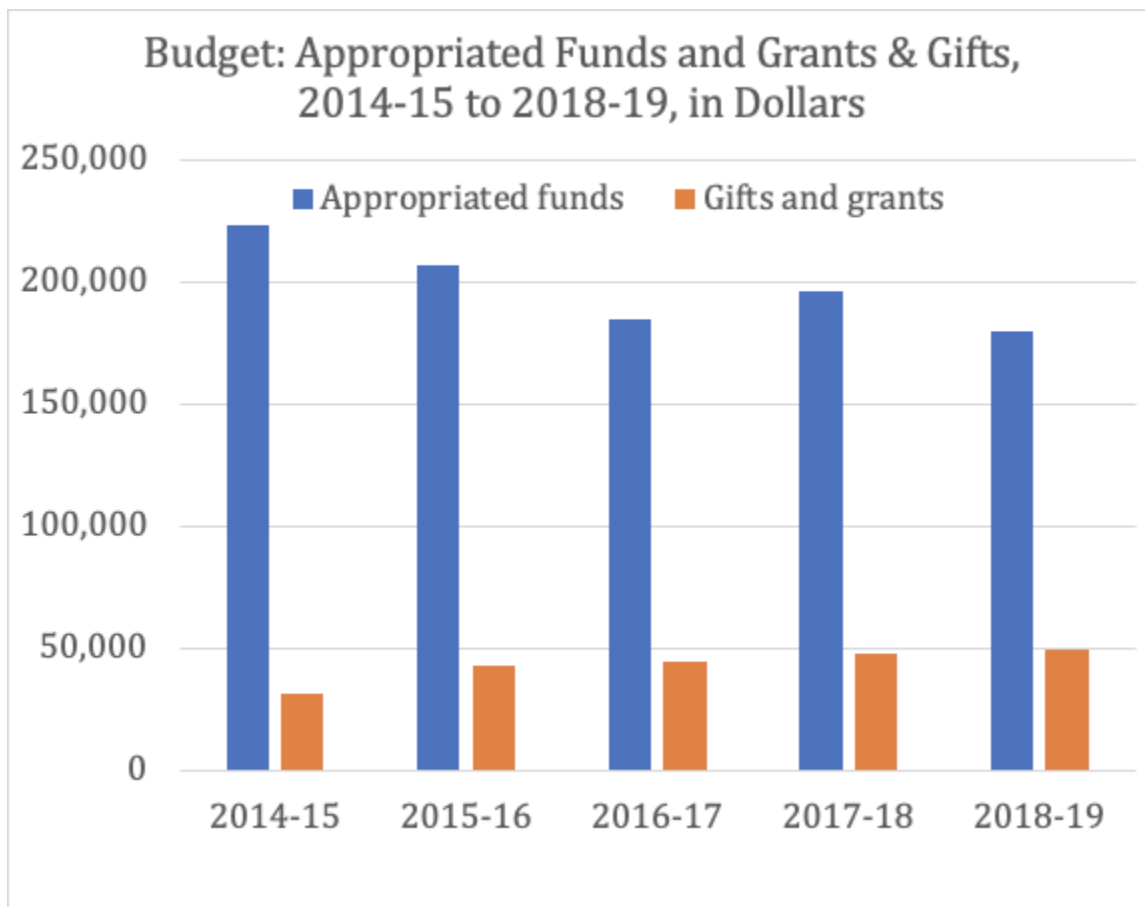
<b>Honors Program</b>					
<b>Funding</b>	<b>2014-15</b>	<b>2015-16</b>	<b>2016-17</b>	<b>2017-18</b>	<b>2018-19</b>
Appropriated Fund	222,783	206,771	184,687	196,034	179,413
Other:					
Special Legislative Appropriation	0	0	0	0	0
Grants or Contracts	31,323	43,058	44,639	47,553	49,552
Special Fees/Differential Tuition	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$254,106</b>	<b>\$249,829</b>	<b>\$229,326</b>	<b>\$243,587</b>	<b>\$228,965</b>
Total FTE	23.40	27.10	28.60	37.40	41.13
Cost per FTE, all funds	\$10,859	\$9,219	\$8,018	\$6,513	\$5,567
Cost per FTE, Appropriated Funds	\$9,521	\$7,630	\$6,458	\$5,242	\$4,362

Budget information shown above for appropriated funds and total FTE were provided by the Office of Institutional Effectiveness; data on grants or contracts (which include gifts) were identified internally within the Honors Program, and with the assistance of Taylor Knuth with the Development Office. Several very clear patterns emerge from the budget data, as follows.

- Student FTEs have increased significantly over the period of record, almost doubling from 2014-15 to 2018-19. This is principally a function of a very large, rapid increase in the number of Presidential Scholarship students admitted to the university (more details on the numbers of students served by the Honors Program are available in section 7, Assessment).
- Appropriated funds provided to the Honors Program by university administration have declined.

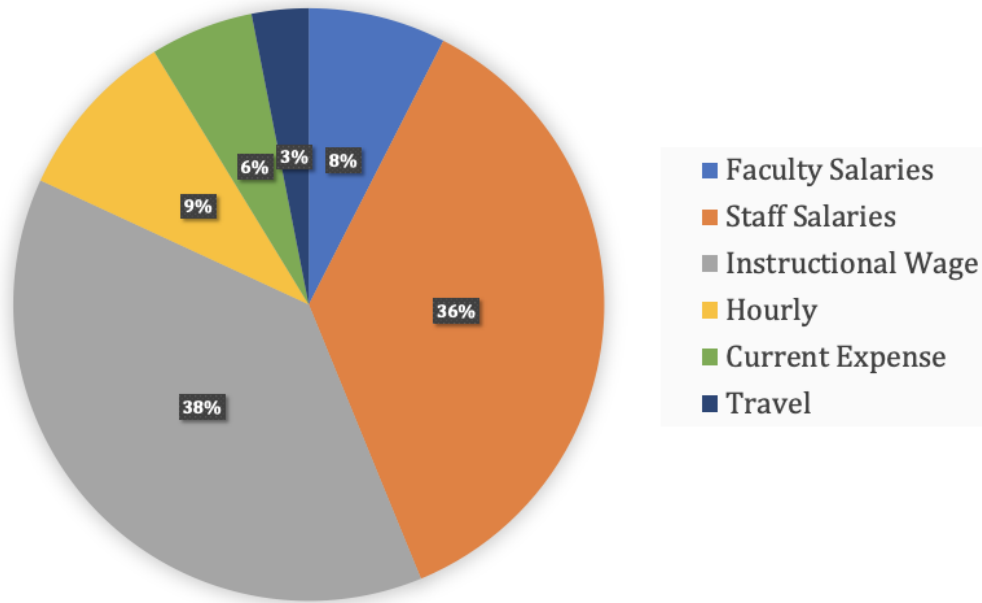
- Thus, the cost to the institution of providing Honors classes and other services has declined substantially, with 2018-19's cost per FTE less than half that of 2014-15 when only appropriated funds are considered.
- Funds from gifts and grants have increased by roughly 50% over the period of record, to the point where gifts and grants constituted over 20% of the Honors Program's budget in 2018-19. Details on gifts and grants are provided in section 4.b External Funding, below.
- Thus, when all funding sources are considered, the cost per FTE has not declined quite as much as when only the cost to the university is considered.

A visual representation of the simultaneous decline in appropriated funds, and increase in gifts and grants, is shown in the graph below.



To illustrate how the Honors Program's funds are disposed, the pie chart below shows expenditures as of July 1, 2019, the end of the most recent complete fiscal year. As of the date of this analysis, instructional wages, and salaries for the Honors team (one faculty Program Director, two staff, and one hourly employee) together made up 91% of the Honors Program's outlay.

**Ratio of funds allocations for account code 204030 as of July 1, 2019**



**Aletheia Club**

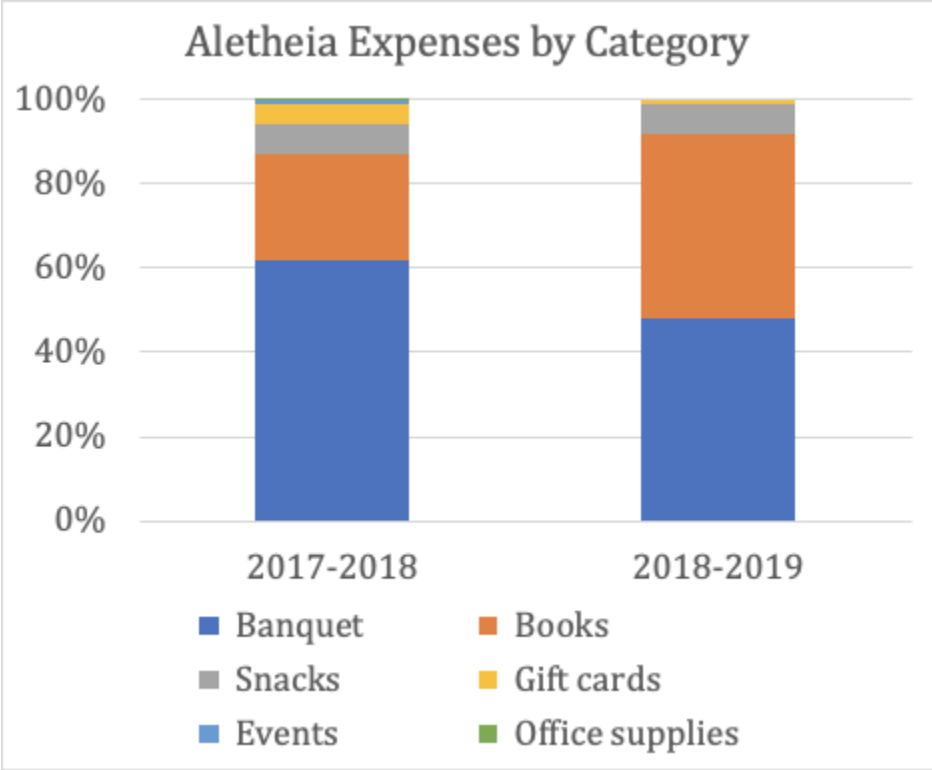
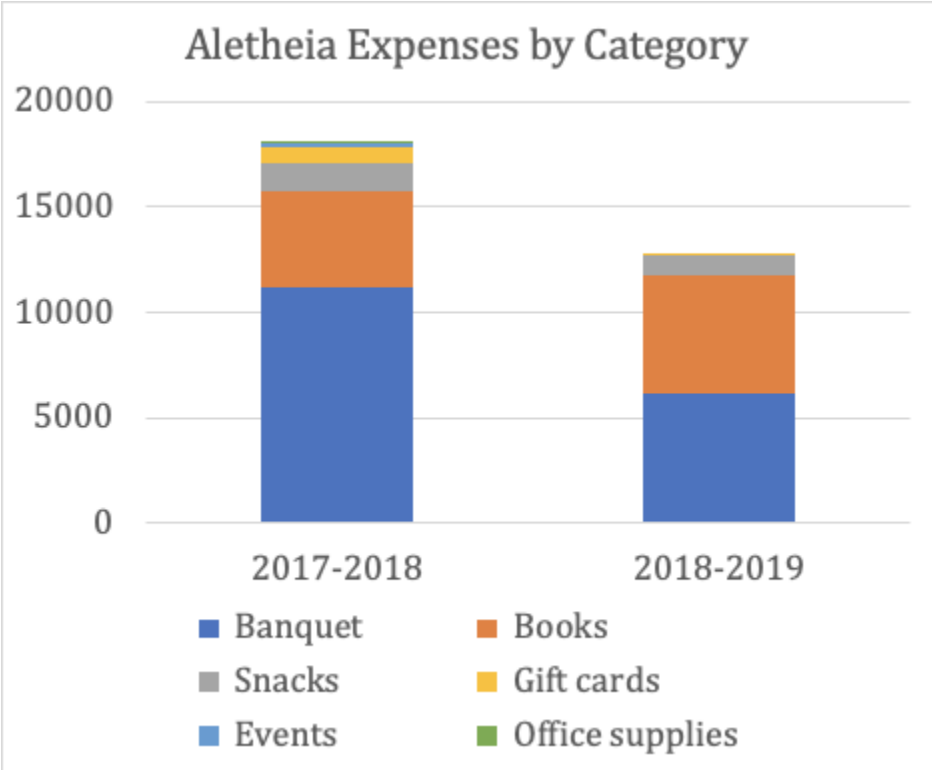
The main expenses for the Aletheia Club are as follows:

- purchasing books for the Aletheia book discussions
- providing small gratuities for book discussion leaders
- purchasing snacks for Aletheia book discussions and other social events
- running the Aletheia banquet

Note that these expenses do not include the extensive staff time devoted to organizing Aletheia Club activities and events.

The Honors Program took over full responsibility for Aletheia Club activities beginning in fall 2017, although the fall semester book discussions had been organized and paid for in the previous academic year, under the purview of the Provost’s Office. The table and graphs below show expenditures for the two complete academic years since fall 2017, for which the Honors Program had responsibility for the Aletheia Club.

<b>Aletheia Club</b>					
<b>Funding</b>	<b>2014-15</b>	<b>2015-16</b>	<b>2016-17</b>	<b>2017-18</b>	<b>2018-19</b>
Appropriated Fund				19,755.64	17,000
Other:					
Special Legislative Appropriation				0	0
Grants or Contracts				0	0
Special Fees/Differential Tuition				0	0
<b>Total</b>				<b>19,755.64</b>	<b>17,000</b>
Total students				283	365
Cost per student				\$69.81	\$46.58



As shown above, the Aletheia recruitment banquet and books for the book discussions constitute by far the largest fractions of total Aletheia Club spending. The Provost's Office has thus far been completely supportive of funding these activities, because they constitute

university-level mandates, and there is no indication that this support will wane. Banquet expenses were larger in 2017-18 because student (and guest) attendance was larger. Books constituted a greater expense in 2018-19 because large numbers of students accepted their scholarship offers, swelling the ranks of Aletheia Club participants for whom books needed to be purchased.

However, there is only limited assessment, at this point, of the return on investment to the university, or to student learning, from these activities. The Honors Program began conducting assessment of the book discussions from spring 2018, the first semester we had direct control over them, and these assessment data show a strong increase in the student-perceived utility of the book discussions since that time (see section 7, Assessment). To the best of our knowledge, the university has not conducted any formal assessment either of the effectiveness of the Aletheia banquet in recruiting students, or of the overall contribution of the Presidential Scholarship program to the university as a whole.

### **Phi Kappa Phi chapter 119**

As shown in the table below, Phi Kappa Phi maintains four main revenue streams, as follows:

- The President’s Office, which funds the purchase of graduation cords each year.
- Membership dues.
- Banquet fees for guests of new initiates.
- Donations from the Alumni Association and Wildcat Stores (the university bookstore).

The Provost’s Office also usually provides funding for various incidental expenses, most recently chapter T-shirts designed by a student vice president. Phi Kappa Phi chapter 119 does not enjoy a single dedicated budget contribution from any level of university administration. All of the above revenue streams are either requested each year, or vary depending on the numbers of students and guests choosing to join the society and/or attend the induction ceremony and banquet. Nevertheless, university administration has been generous in its support of Phi Kappa Phi over the last three years, albeit on an as-requested basis.

<b>Phi Kappa Phi chapter 119</b>					
<b>Funding</b>	<b>2014-15</b>	<b>2015-16</b>	<b>2016-17</b>	<b>2017-18</b>	<b>2018-19</b>
Appropriated Fund			1,000.00	1,207.22	3,362.50
Other:					
Carry-over from previous year			4,492.99	3,211.15	4,481.38
Revenue (member dues)			1,555.00	615.00	3,345.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>\$7047.99</b>	<b>\$5033.38</b>	<b>\$11,188.88</b>
Expenditures			\$2,281.84		\$6,629.77
Funds remaining			\$3,211.15		\$4,559.11

### **4.b External Funding**

The Honors Program receives generous donations from several donors and grant-giving foundations. These revenue streams are summarized in the table below, and described in the text which follows. Note that data are incomplete for the current academic year (2019-20) as



not all funds have been deposited yet; and that prior to 2016-17, records might be incomplete, or entries assumed based on standard practice within the Honors Program.

		2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
<b>JJ Cortez Family Lecture Fund</b>		73.35	307.81	2889.46	302.76	1302.17	
<b>George S. and Dolores Doré Eccles Foundation</b>		30000 (assumed)	30000 (assumed)	30000	30000	30000	33500
<b>Ralph Nye Charitable Foundation</b>			11500	10500	10000	10000	10500
<b>Joseph and Holly Nye Bauman</b>	Marilyn Diamond Fund				2500	2500	2500
	Judy Elsley Fund				2500	2500	2500
	Outstanding Faculty in Honors Award						2500
<b>Dr. David Joos</b>					1000	1000	
<b>SFRC*</b>	Base	1250	1250	1250	1250	1250	1650
	One-time					1000	
	SFRC total	1250	1250	1250	1250	2250	1650
<b>Grand total</b>		<b>31323.35</b>	<b>43057.81</b>	<b>44639.46</b>	<b>47552.76</b>	<b>49552.17</b>	<b>53150</b>

\*SFRC: Student Fee Reallocation Committee

Details of the revenue streams and the ways in which they are disposed are provided below.

- **JJ Cortez Family Lecture Fund:** This fund appears to have been established in 1969, and has long been a staple of the Honors budget, to be used at the discretion of the Honors Program Director. Revenue is dependent on the performance of investments, and is therefore prone to large fluctuation from year to year. In the last five years, annual contributions have varied from just over \$300 (AY 2015-16 and 2017-18) to

nearly \$2900 (AY 2016-17). Funds are typically used for printing posters promoting Honors classes and events.

- **George S. and Dolores Doré Eccles Foundation:** Every three to five years, the Honors Program works with WSU's Development Office to reapply for a grant that funds the Eccles Fellowship program. Eccles Fellows develop and teach a new cross-disciplinary 3000-level course in the Honors Program, on a topic related to their scholarly expertise and interests. Successful applicants receive a three credit-hour reduction in their regular teaching, to allow them to develop the class, and to work on related scholarship. Ideally, classes are team-taught by two or more faculty members, but Eccles Fellowships can be awarded to individual faculty members under exceptional circumstances. This grant has been a regular feature of the Honors budget since 1996. Beginning fall 2019, following the most recent grant re-application, Eccles classes will have at their disposal over \$5000 per class, to support curricular innovation and enrichment (field trips, equipment purchase, event tickets, etc.).
- **The Ralph Nye Charitable Foundation:** Annual awards from the Ralph Nye Charitable Foundation underwrite the cost of the two annual Nye Honors Graduation Banquets held each year, at the end of the fall and the spring semesters, and the Honors fall kickoff picnic held in the third week of the fall semester each year. Remaining funds are used at the discretion of the Honors Program Director, typically for a variety of enrichment activities, such as covering the cost of student and/or faculty attendance at NCHC and/or WRHC, or class-specific activities such as field trips. Annual funding from this source is between \$10,000 and \$11,500 each year.
- **Joseph and Holly Nye Bauman:** Although Mr. and Mrs. Bauman are members of the Nye family and support Honors through the donations from their foundation, they have also very generously chosen to support the Honors Program using their own funds. They made a four-year commitment of \$5000 per year starting in fall 2017, recently renewed to cover the period AY 2020-21 to 2024-25. Under the funding agreement, these donations established the Judy Elsley and Marilyn Diamond funds (\$2500 each per year), and are to be used at the discretion of the Honors Program Director. In addition, Mr. and Mrs. Bauman donate \$2500 per semester to the Joseph and Holly Nye Bauman Outstanding Faculty in Honors Award Fund, established fall 2019 for the purposes of recognizing one outstanding faculty member each semester.
- **Dr. David S. Joos:** Dr. Joos is a member of the Honors Alumni Board and has donated \$1000 in discretionary funds in each of the last two years.
- **Weber State University Student Fee Reallocation Committee (SFRC):** For the five years covered by this program review, the Honors Program has received base funding of \$1250 per year from SFRC, with occasional one-time funding boosts. Although base funding is guaranteed from year to year, requests for increases must go through a rigorous approval process. In 2018-19, the Honors Program requested and received a small increase in base funding, to \$1650, which will apply from 2019-20 (i.e. the current academic year). These funds support activities by and for the Honors and Aletheia Student Advisory Board (HASAB), including Food for Thought events (poster printing, food, small gratuities for speakers), and participation by students in regional and national Honors conferences.

#### **4.c Budget Prioritization**

Most of the Honors Program's budget is non-discretionary, and is used for faculty instructional wages for teaching Honors classes. Other significant budget items not subject to prioritization, because they simply have to be paid for, include the four big banquets each year (Honors graduation in spring and fall, Aletheia banquet in February, Phi Kappa Phi induction ceremony and banquet in November).

Where budget decisions do need to be made, the process depends on the nature of the spending. Decisions relating to Honors Center spending, supporting student activities, or other direct Honors Program activities are typically made during weekly staff meetings, with an eye always to frugality, and to the Honors Program's status as the university's first Double Green department or program on campus (i.e. ethical and environmental sustainability considerations come into play). Decisions relating to Eccles Fellowships are made on the basis of competitive applications, reviewed and ranked by members of the Honors Faculty Advisory Board. Decisions relating to the Joseph and Holly Nye Bauman Outstanding Faculty in Honors Award are made based on student nominations. A shortlist of nominees is then derived, based on number and quality of student nominations. Faculty on the shortlist are then invited to write 300 words explaining how their Honors teaching is an exemplar of the Honors mission. The Honors Faculty Advisory Board suggest a final winner based on these responses. The Honors Program Director weighs this recommendation, along with advice from the Honors and Aletheia Student Advisory Board, and the Honors Program Coordinator. Other decisions are typically made at the discretion of the Honors Program Director.

#### **4.d Recent Major, and Anticipated Future, Changes in Budget**

Significant new budget responsibilities arrived when the WSU chapter of Phi Kappa Phi and the Aletheia Club were brought into the Honors Program. Activities of the WSU chapter of Phi Kappa Phi are funded directly by new members, (to pay for the induction ceremony and banquet), by donations from the President's Office (to cover basic academic regalia), by donations from the Provost's Office (to purchase chapter T-shirts), and through donated time from faculty chapter officers and student vice presidents (to support student applications for awards, and service activities, respectively).

In the case of the Aletheia Club, funds are required to allow Presidential Scholars to meet some of their scholarship requirements (notably the book discussions). The university has an obligation to ensure that meeting scholarship requirements is possible for students, so the Provost's Office essentially covers all costs, through funds transfers to Honors. This is also true of the Aletheia Banquet, which is intended to help recruit high-performing high school students who have received offers of Presidential Scholarships.

Similarly, when the campus-wide curricular initiatives of WSU classes (two general education credits, one three-credit class) and Wildcat Scholars were introduced (see section 2.b, above), they were (and still are) nominally housed within Honors, but are really university-wide projects. Thus, funds for these classes (notably instructional wages) flow from the Provost's Office, through the Honors Program, and on to the recipient faculty. This is no different from regular Honors classes, but was a change introduced within the last five years.

Also within the last five years, donors have been extremely generous. At this point, Honors now receives over \$21,000 per year in donations or grant funds, over and above the

norm in previous years. These additional funds are described in detail in the preceding sections (see section 4.b External Funding).

Future changes to the budget are possible, in the form of additional donor contributions. The Development Office provides excellent support for Honors in the person of Taylor Knuth. This working relationship is in its early stages, and significant potential growth is therefore possible. Grants for curricular innovation are also possible, either applied for directly by the Honors team, or via collaboration with Associate Provost Eric Amsel, whose Wildcat Scholars initiative (nominally under Honors, see section 2.b) has recently attracted funding from the Department of Education.

## 5. FACILITIES, EQUIPMENT, AND TECHNOLOGY

### 5.a Facilities and Equipment

The Honors Program has excellent facilities and equipment in the form of the Honors Center (LI 324) and the Honors classroom (LI 325).

#### **Honors Center**

The Honors Center (LI 324) was renovated in 2016 as part of a library-wide upgrade; the layout was tweaked in 2018, and a large LCD monitor was installed for presentations and film screenings. The Center can be configured for studying, for small group discussions, for lunches with authors and around 20 students, for seated events for an audience of up to about 60 people, and for open house events with few seats. It includes office space for all members of the Honors team, four computers and a printer for student use, a kitchen for all to use (including students), and a copier/printer and other office equipment (the copier/printer is shared with the Teaching and Learning Forum). Underfloor wiring to provide power to the tables in the Center was installed in summer 2018. Honors maintains a subscription to National Geographic, and takes delivery of 15 copies of the *New York Times* every weekday during the semester. Honors events are held either in the Center, or in the nearby Hetzel Hoellein Room in the library (LI 321). Aletheia book discussions, and HNRS 2920 *New York Times* discussion classes, are held in the Honors Center. A smaller LCD monitor is mounted above the Honor Center front desk, and shows announcements, class posters, and photographs from recent Honors events. The Center is in close proximity to other library facilities, such as a computer-equipped instruction room next door (LI 322). Overall, the Honors Center is an outstanding space, with great versatility. It is an absolutely vital asset in allowing the Honors Program to pursue its stated mission, especially providing a welcoming community for students, building this community, and opening it to the university as a whole by hosting events. The Honors Program is committed to providing a safe environment for all users of the Center.

#### **The Honors Classroom**

As with the Honors Center, the Honors classroom (LI 325) can be configured in a number of different ways depending on faculty preference. It is not at all unusual to see the room take on multiple layouts of seating and tables over the course of a single day, although some faculty do find the rearranging of tables difficult, and others lament the lack of facilities suitable for more hands-on science activities. The classroom has a Smart Board, which was installed by a previous director, and is both a blessing and a curse. Smart Boards are not widely used on campus, and faculty therefore lack extensive familiarity with them. Although we offer basic training in the use of the classroom (especially the Smart Board) at the start of each semester, it seems unlikely that we are getting the most out of the Smart Board. Considerable investment of time and energy, and potentially money (for software upgrades) might be needed to rectify this situation, and it might be more effective simply to replace the Smart Board with a screen and projector. Again, however, the classroom is essential for the Honors Program to pursue its mission, in this case both building our community, and nurturing excellence.

## **5.b Technology**

Technology is used widely in Honors Program activities. Food for Thought presentations often make use of the LCD screen; film screenings could not happen easily without it. A smaller LCD screen over the front desk is used to run a continuous loop of Honors Program class posters and event promotion. Technology is used extensively in the design of event posters and promotional materials such as brochures (Honors maintains a subscription to the online graphic design package Canva). As noted above, the Honors classroom is equipped with a Smart Board.

Honors also makes relatively widespread use of cloud computing for a variety of functions. Staff meeting agendas are built using Google Docs (any member of the team can easily add an agenda item prior to the meeting, even as close as just a few minutes before the meeting starts). Google Sheets is used extensively for data sharing and course planning. An Honors enrollment and progress tracking app was recently developed by the information Technology division, and is now fully functional and accessed via the eWeber portal.

Current technology in the Honors Center is adequate for our needs. As noted above, a large-format LCD screen was installed recently, greatly increasing the utility of the Honors Center. All members of the Honors team have computers adequate for their needs, and they are networked to the printer in the Center. Computers for student use were recently upgraded, taking fairly new computers from the university's computer labs as the labs upgraded. Two less than ideal situations regarding technology are, first, the Smart Board in the classroom, as noted above. As yet, it is unclear how much investment of time, energy and funding it will take to resolve this situation. Second, our current laptops-- used for a range of services, but especially for registering students into the Honors Program at events such as orientations, Block Party, or Latinos in Action -- are very slow and not adequate to our needs.

Computers are replaced every 5-7 years as needed, although at present there is no clear formal system for this. We are in the process of completing a technology inventory and replacement schedule, especially for office, Center and classroom computers. The suggestion box in the Honors Center, for students to give us anonymous feedback and proposals, has led to some technology purchases, for example headphones for the Center computers.

A portable microphone and amplifier rig was recently purchased to facilitate events in the Honors Center. Some events, notably panel discussions, will benefit from this equipment. Some speakers visiting the Honors Center have been grateful for amplification which we borrowed from the Shepherd Union Building in the past. However, recent policy changes in the Union Building, preventing equipment from leaving the building, made it necessary for us to purchase our own.

A complete equipment inventory is shown in Appendix C.

## **6. ETHICAL AND LEGAL RESPONSIBILITIES**

The Honors Program is required to conform to all university regulations applicable to any other academic department or program on campus. In particular, we handle sensitive information (especially in the form of written and electronic student records), financial records and budget reconciliation procedures, computer security, and we are responsible for student safety both on and off campus. Honors classes often involve unusual learning activities, including fieldwork, and Aletheia Club members (Presidential Scholarship students) are required to engage in 12 hours of community service each year. We have an obligation to ensure that students remain safe while engaging in these activities.

To this end, when the Honors Program was given the task of managing Aletheia Club activities, we moved immediately to build a relationship with the Center for Community Engaged Learning (CCEL), which routinely places students with community partners for a wide variety of purposes on campus, be it classes with Community Engaged Learning designations, or organizations seeking an outlet for community service activities. Because CCEL has a long track record of successfully managing community engaged learning, we now require that Aletheia Club members work with CCEL staff to complete their required 12 hours of community service.

For Honors classes involving fieldwork, typically the faculty member(s) teaching the class will approach the Honors Program with the idea, usually in order to discuss funding, but also to secure the Program Director's approval for the activity. All individuals engaging in off-campus activities as part of an Honors class are required to sign activity waivers. All faculty driving students are required to complete state driver certification. However, this area of Honors activities could possibly benefit from a more robust approach. One group of students enrolled in Prof. Jean Norman's Honors class on conflict journalism in spring semester 2019 designed a risk assessment process for WSU fieldwork as their final project. This process could be utilized in future to formalize the review of Honors Program off-campus activities.

Regarding compliance with university policies, all six of the high-impact areas in the College of Engaged Learning, Honors and Interdisciplinary Programs underwent a formal audit by the university in academic year 2018-19. The Honors Program emerged from this process with only a handful of issues of minor to moderate concern. Specifically, approval of hours for non-exempt staff was patchy; budget reconciliation procedures were not fully in compliance with university standards; and some unlicensed cloud storage services were being utilized. The Honors Program responded to these findings almost immediately. Consequently, we feel confident in our compliance with our ethical and legal responsibilities. The complete audit report is available via the program review website.

Honors Program staff take their responsibilities to students especially seriously. For example, the Honors team recently recognized the security risk posed by face-to-face discussions with students, if sensitive information is displayed on an office computer screen, even when the staff member is in their office. This recognition led to the purchase and installation of security screens several months ago, which make it impossible to see what is on a computer screen unless a user is looking directly at the screen.

Physical security of the Honors Center and Honors classroom is ensured through programmable keypad locks on the main doors, as well as locks on office doors and filing cabinets. The Honors Program maintains an active shooter response plan: because external walls for Honors rooms are glass, we will move all students into the copy room under most circumstances; if moving from the classroom to the Honors Center would constitute a grave

risk, everyone will remain in place. The Honors team also routinely participates in fire drills arranged by the library.

Computer security is an ever-present concern, although the Honors Program is about as aware of the issues as can reasonably be expected. When off campus, members of the Honors team connect to the university network using a Virtual Personal Network, as required by university policy.



## **7. ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION**

Assessment overall is not a current strength of the Honors Program, although we are working to change this. The inherited system of assessing Honors classes and faculty and student experiences with the Honors Program is flawed. Thus far, the Honors team has not had the capacity to revise this system. Instead, our focus has been on building assessment and evaluation processes for the raft of new responsibilities, especially pertaining to the Aletheia Club, that were added to the Honors portfolio over the period fall 2016 to spring 2018, and which lacked any form of assessment process at the time of the handover. Thus, revising a flawed, but existing, system of assessment for Honors took a back seat to the more urgent task of establishing an assessment process for Aletheia Club activities. While this task has not yet been completed-- there is still no formal assessment of the Aletheia community service requirement, for example-- definite progress has been made. There is now a robust system for assessing student experiences with Aletheia book discussions, and a comprehensive survey was recently completed (November 2019) of Presidential Scholarship students' experiences of a change in their required GPA. In addition, through collaboration with a faculty member in the Communications Department, a focus group was conducted, with four student members of the Honors Program. Highlights from the focus group report are incorporated into this self study document, and the complete report is available via the program review website.

The Honors Program now has a wide and diverse list of tasks to manage. This section will examine assessment of the following:

- Basic student and faculty information
- Honors Program activities
  - Student learning outcomes
  - Curriculum and course offerings
  - Contributions to general education
  - Course evaluations
  - Student and faculty experiences within the Honors Program
  - Number of, and attendance at, Honors Program events
- Aletheia Club and Presidential Scholarship activities
  - Aletheia banquet and new student orientations
  - Aletheia book discussion requirement
  - Aletheia community service requirement
  - Effects of changing the Presidential Scholarship GPA requirement
- Phi Kappa Phi activities
  - Annual induction ceremony and banquet
  - Other chapter activities
  - Student applications for national awards
  - Chapter officers' participation in national meetings and conventions

### **7.a Basic Student and Faculty Information**

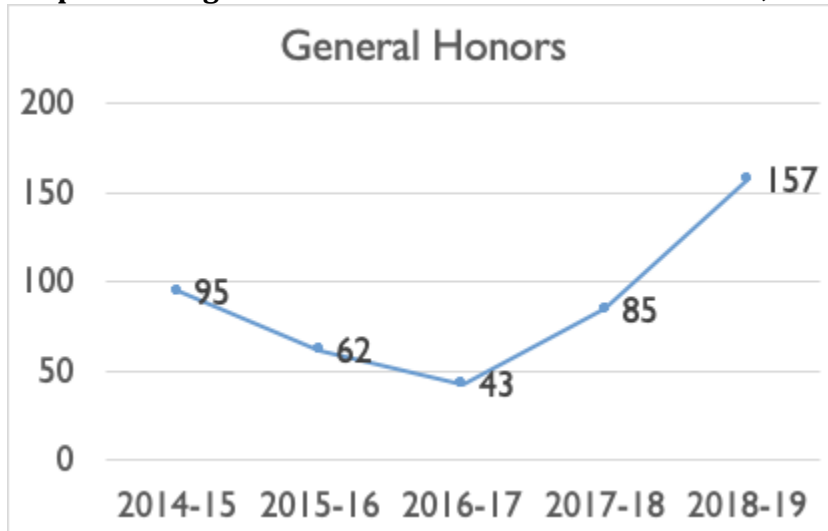
Appendix A shows statistics on students and faculty within the Honors Program. Some nuances require explanation, however, and this section provides the broad context for the data in Appendix A, as well as graphical depictions of those data.

### Students enrolled in, or affiliated with, the Honors Program

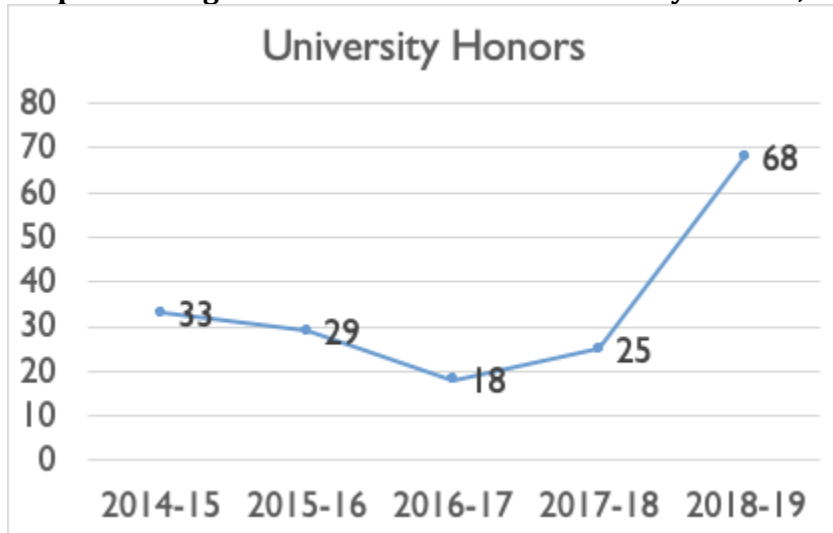
Students taking Honors classes are generally doing so either because they want to complete General or University Honors, or because they need to complete their Aletheia Club/Presidential Scholarship requirement (currently at least one Honors class per year until two are completed). A small number of students take Honors classes to fulfill a Departmental Honors requirement (only 23% of Departmental Honors programs maintain such a requirement). Finally, some students, especially lifelong learners, take Honors classes for the sheer joy of learning. Honors Program members and Presidential Scholarship students/Aletheia Club members have priority registration for Honors classes. Students may take Honors classes if they are not part of the Honors Program if there is room (there usually isn't), and they have either a GPA of 3.0 or above, or the instructor's consent. There are no prerequisites for joining the Honors Program, other than a reasonable expectation of completing the requirements by graduation. Weber State University is an open enrollment institution, and the Honors Program follows that model.

As shown in the graphs below, student enrollments in General and University Honors were following an alarming trend prior to fall 2017. Numbers were declining rapidly, calling into question the health and immediate viability of the program. By developing a much stronger presence on campus, these declines have been halted and reversed, as shown below. Departmental Honors has never been an area of concern, because it is largely outsourced to individual departments and has only limited connection to the Honors Program itself, at present (this might change in the future).

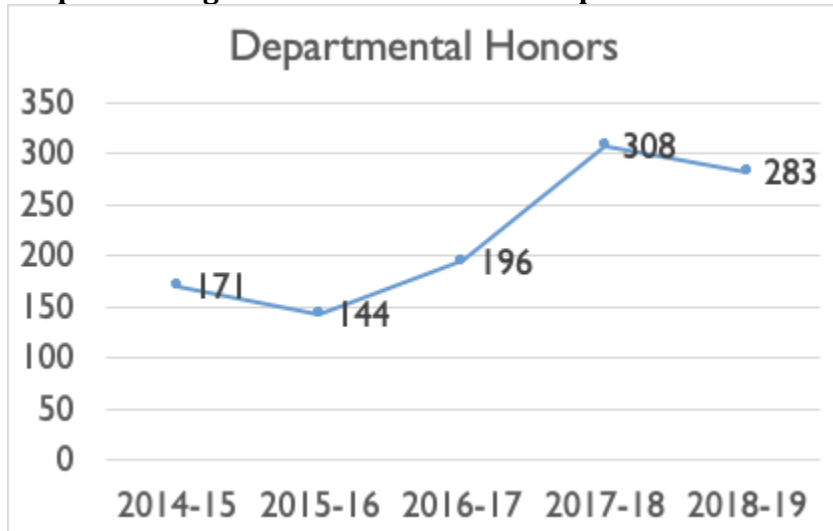
**Graph showing student enrollment in General Honors, AY 2014-15 to 2018-19.**



**Graph showing student enrollment in University Honors, AY 2014-15 to 2018-19.**

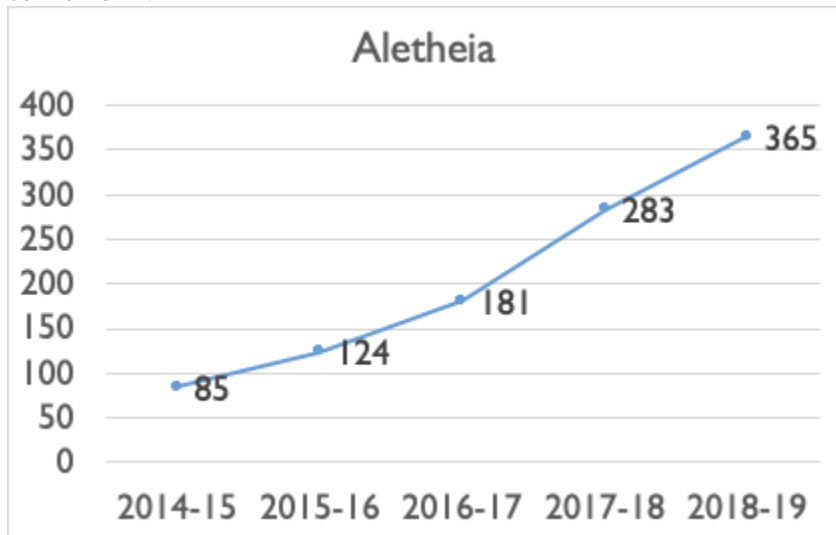


**Graph showing student enrollment in Departmental Honors, AY 2014-15 to 2018-19.**



Aletheia Presidential Scholars are recruited by the Financial Aid and Scholarship Office, and are admitted based on their score on an index combining high school GPA and ACT/SAT scores. The Honors Program has no control over either the recruitment process or the number of students receiving scholarship offers. The number of Aletheia Presidential Scholars has grown consistently from year to year, presenting major challenges to the Honors Program in terms of being able to provide sufficient required Honors classes and book discussions. At the same time, this growth represents a great opportunity to recruit more students into the Honors Program. Only 7 Aletheia students were also enrolled in General Honors in fall 2016; by fall 2019, this number had grown to 38. For University Honors, these numbers are 3 and 17, respectively.

**Graph showing total number of Aletheia Presidential Scholarship students, AY 2014-15 to 2018-19.**



However, while the growth in numbers of Aletheia students opting to join the Honors Program is encouraging, they still constitute only around 15% of the total number of Presidential Scholarship students/Aletheia Club members. This is not because these high-performing students are joining the university already far along in their educations due to concurrent enrollment or AP classes. Data from the Office of Institutional Effectiveness shows that 80-90% of new incoming Aletheia students in any given year are freshmen in terms of credit hours earned. Evidently, many Aletheia students do not yet perceive value in enrolling in the Honors Program. This represents a potential growth opportunity.

As of fall 2019, General Honors students are 65% female, 77% white, and 42% non-traditional. University Honors students are 72% female, 74% white, and 42% non-traditional. Aletheia Presidential Scholars are 55% female, 91% white, and 34% non-traditional.

However, despite the growth in Honors students enrolled, completion rates remain extremely low, averaging only around 4 students per year for each area, General and University Honors. Increasing completion rates is now the focus of considerable effort within the Honors Program. Much more proactive advising has just begun, with an open orientation held on October 31, 2019, aimed especially at General Honors students and focusing on class offerings for spring semester 2020, highlighting general education classes. WSU's IT department has recently completed a year-long development process, building an advising platform/app within the eWeber portal. This should make tracking of individual student progress, and careful advising specific to each student's needs, much easier. General Honors completion rates are just starting to show an increase, although it remains to be seen whether this is a trend or a blip. General Honors tends to feed into University Honors, so University Honors completion numbers have not yet shown much change, and remain disturbingly low. If the increase in General Honors really is a trend, then University Honors completion rates might be expected to grow in tandem with General Honors completion rates, with a lag of a few years.

### **Honors student publications and recognitions**

WSU Honors students have published on multiple occasions over the last few years in *The Palouse Review*, published by the Washington State University Honors College, and soliciting

submissions from across the Western Regional Honors Council. The WSU Honors Program made promotion of this publishing opportunity a serious priority beginning in spring semester 2017, and since that time, eleven students have had work accepted for publication, as shown below. It is possible that students published in this journal prior to spring 2017, but we have no records to indicate this.

Success seems to beget success. Once the mystique of publishing has been broken by a few students, word of mouth can change the culture such that others find submission of their work less intimidating. This may be what is happening with the *Palouse Review*. Publishing in *Scribendi*, from the University of New Mexico, would be the next logical challenge to undertake, as it is another major outlet for submissions across the Western Regional Honors Council.

**Table showing student publications in *The Palouse Review*, fall 2017 to present.**

<i>Semester</i>	<i>Student</i>
Fall 2019	Blakely Page, non-fiction
	HallieKate Briggs, poetry
Spring 2019	Maude Beckman, non-fiction
Fall 2018	Kaleigh Stock, photography
Spring 2018	Zachary Smith, fiction
	Katherine Hughes, photography
	Alexis Johnson, Music
Fall 2017	Katherine Hughes, photography
	Jeff Peterson, photography
	Jamie Gormley, photography
	Rachel Badali, digital multimedia

In addition to publishing in the *Palouse Review*, WSU Honors students have received numerous recognitions and awards at the university level and nationally, as shown in the table below. These include several awards from The National Honor Society of Phi Kappa Phi, two students

receiving a university award for student sustainability research for work completed in an Honors course, and one student receiving national recognition for costume design.

**Table showing Honors student successes over the last five years.**

<i>Name</i>	<i>Semester</i>	<i>Success</i>
Chandler McDonald	Spring 2019	Phi Kappa Phi Fellowship Winner
Rachel Creer	Spring 2019	Student Sustainability Research Award
Cooper Taylor	Spring 2019	Student Sustainability Research Award
Toria Snow	Spring 2019	Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival grand prize for costume design
Tanner Telford	Spring 2018	Phi Kappa Phi Fellowship Winner
Shaylee Avery	Spring 2017	Phi Kappa Phi Love of Learning Winner
Jake Checketts	Spring 2017	Phi Kappa Phi Love of Learning Winner
Jason Davis	Spring 2014	Phi Kappa Phi Fellowship Winner

### **Faculty in the Honors Program**

**Faculty numbers and composition:** As noted below in the discussion of course offerings, in the past it was common for the Honors Program to offer around 12 classes per semester, with slightly more than that many faculty teaching, as a small number of classes were team-taught. The significant growth in the number of Presidential Scholarship students successfully recruited to the university, however, has necessitated an equally significant growth in the number of Honors classes offered, and therefore the number of faculty teaching classes for the Honors Program. In addition, as the Honors Program has gained visibility, more faculty have expressed interest both in teaching for Honors, and in utilizing Honors for their own curricular innovation efforts. Total numbers of faculty engaged in the Honors Program, not counting faculty teaching WSU courses or Wildcat Scholars classes, are shown in the table and graphs below. Some key features are:

- **Gender balance:** Honors faculty are slightly more female than male, thus gender equity (at least as it applies to binary gender) is maintained.
- **Faculty new to the Honors Program:** Significant efforts are made to ensure that faculty new to the Honors Program are recruited to teach Honors classes, and that

Honors does not rely on the same group of ‘usual suspects’ faculty, which could induce stagnation. Over 40% of faculty teaching for Honors in any given semester are doing so for the first or second time, from spring 2017 onwards.

- **Honors faculty by rank:** Junior faculty are recruited to teach for Honors, through annual visits to the new faculty retreat. However, as a practical necessity, most junior faculty are not in a position to teach for Honors in their first or second years, and they need to establish a track record of teaching excellence and innovation before they can teach for Honors anyway. Thus, Honors classes tend to be taught more by senior faculty than by junior faculty.
- **Faculty disciplinary diversity:** Honors courses are taught by faculty from a wide range of disciplines and from all colleges across campus. Engagement of faculty from previously under- or unrepresented colleges, such as Business and Economics or Health Professions, has increased over the last five years. However, viewed another way, nearly 60% of Honors faculty in the last two academic years came from just two colleges: Social and Behavioral Sciences, and Arts and Humanities. Thus, although considerable progress has been made in drawing in faculty from all across campus, there is more work to be done in this area.
- **Faculty ethnic diversity:** Faculty teaching in the Honors Program are almost entirely white. This is an area of concern, and, while the ethnic diversity of WSU faculty as a whole is low, the Honors Program aspires to be a model for inclusive excellence and diversity. We can and should lead the way in this area, and clearly there is much work to be done.

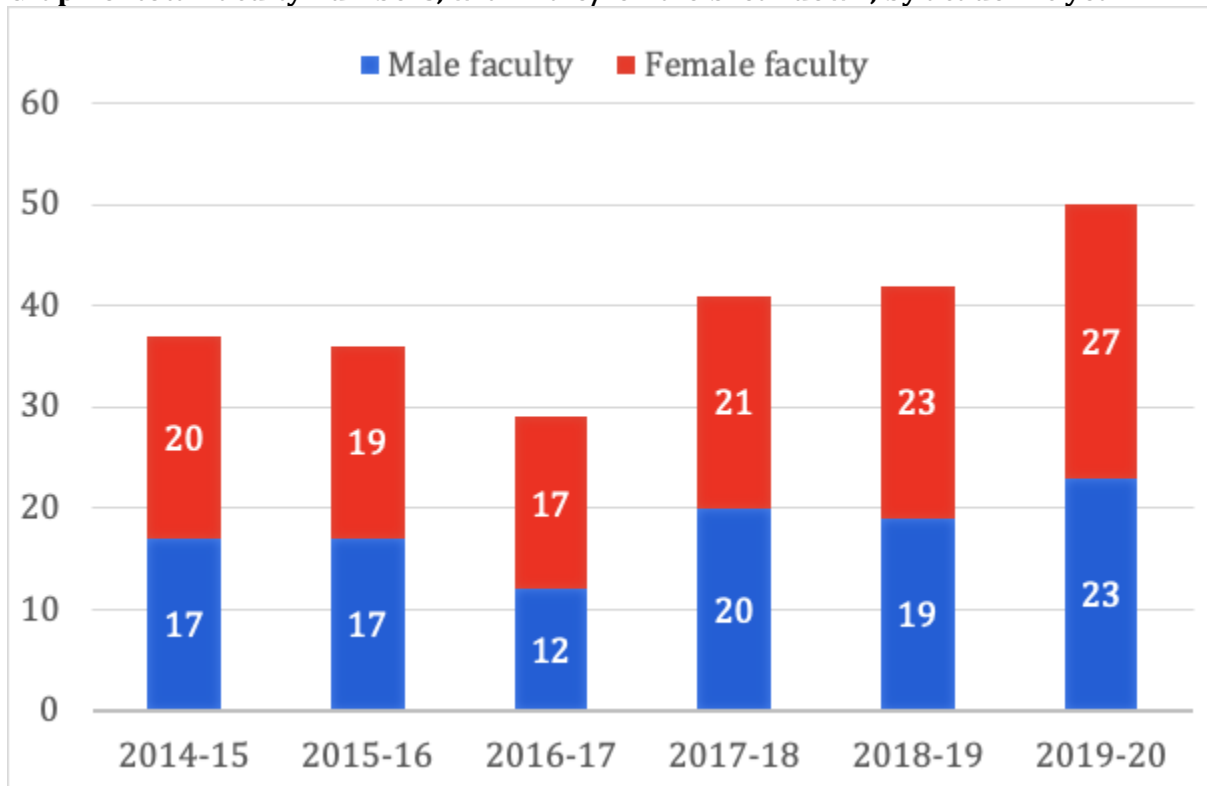
The graphs and tables below illustrate these main points.

**Male, female and total faculty numbers teaching Honors classes, by academic year.**

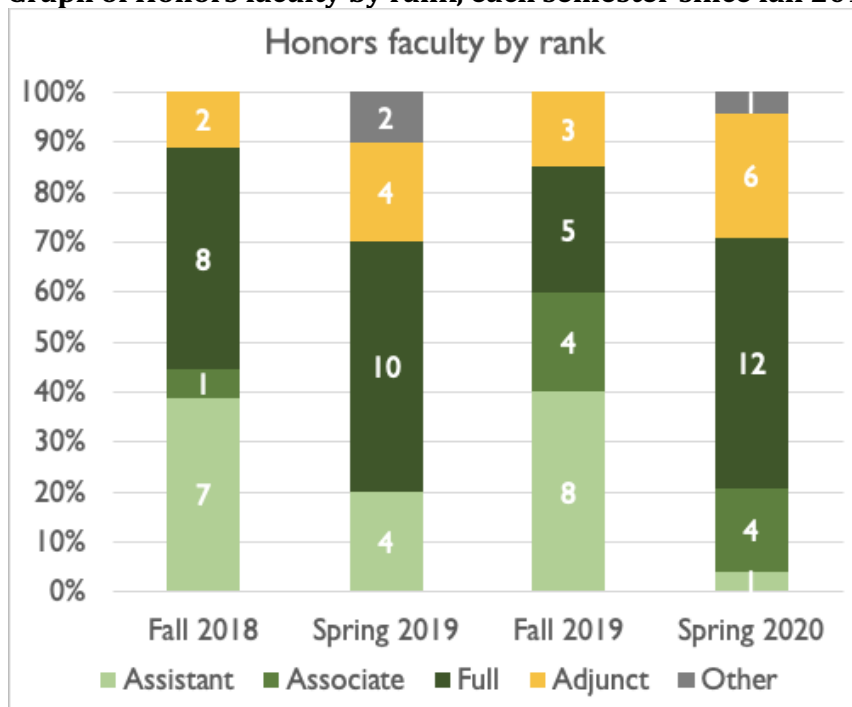
Numbers exclude faculty teaching WSU or Wildcat Scholars classes.

	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
Male faculty	17	17	12	20	19	23
Female faculty	20	19	17	21	23	27
Total	37	36	29	41	42	50

**Graph of total faculty numbers, with male/female breakdown, by academic year.**

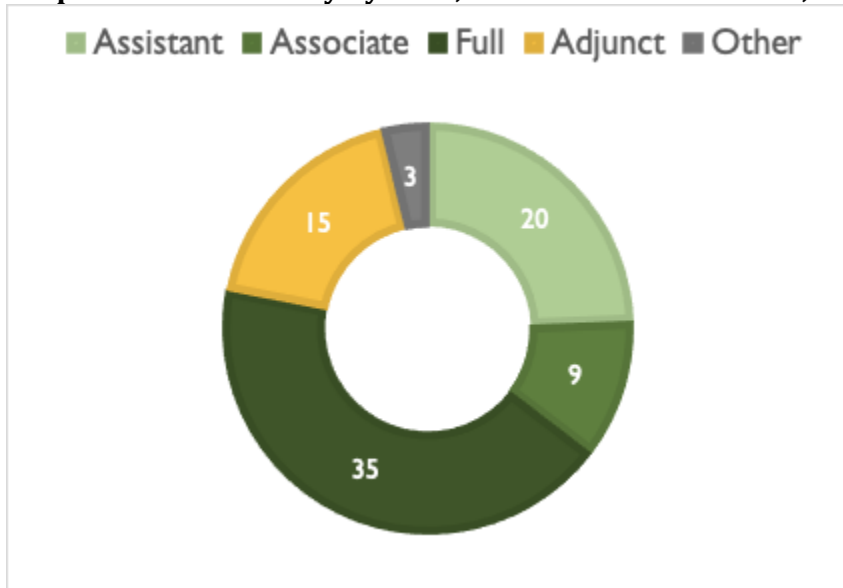


**Graph of Honors faculty by rank, each semester since fall 2018.**

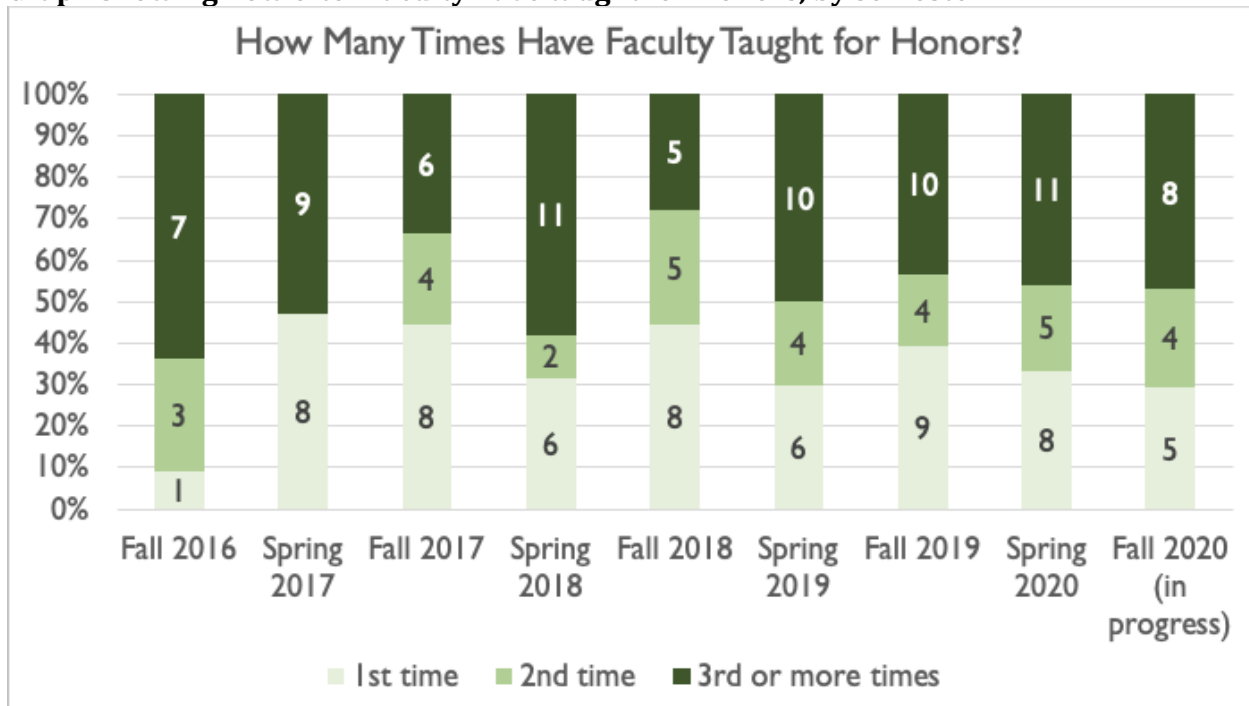




**Graph of Honors faculty by rank, summed since fall 2018, absolute numbers.**

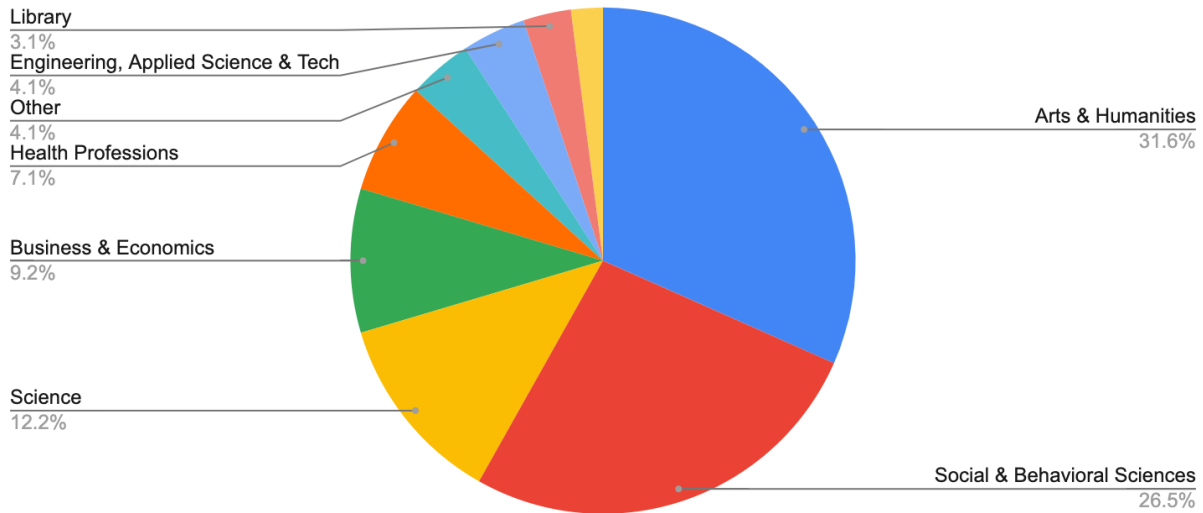


**Graph showing how often faculty have taught for Honors, by semester.**



**Faculty Home Colleges, Academic Years 2018-19 and 2019-20.** Includes faculty teaching or co-teaching any class for the Honors Program, not counting WSU or Wildcat Scholars classes, but including 1-credit classes.

Faculty by college, AY 2018-19 and 2019-20.



Note: the thin yellow sliver at the top of the chart indicates 2.2% of faculty from the College of Education.

**Faculty recruitment and qualifications:** Unlike regular departments, and unlike Honors Programs at some universities and colleges, Weber State's Honors Program has no permanent faculty instructors or faculty affiliates. Instructors are recruited semester by semester from across the university, either by outreach from the Honors Program Director, or when faculty propose courses. In the latter case, this may be done either informally, or formally through the Eccles Fellowship selection process. For Eccles Fellowships, a campus-wide call for proposals is issued early each fall semester, and the Honors Faculty Advisory Board then scrutinizes the submissions, selecting two for the following year. Eccles classes are new, 3000-level, cross-disciplinary classes generally taught by two faculty (one from each discipline). The current call for proposals is available on both the Honors Program's and the program review websites. Recent examples have included:

- *Selling Emotion, Buying Feeling*, an examination of how, and to what end, corporations manipulate the emotions of their customers and potential customers, co-taught by a sociologist and a historian with a focus on the history of emotions. This class included a spring break field trip to Disneyland, though enjoying the rides was secondary to the purpose of stripping bare the manipulative techniques of the Disney Corporation.
- *Curse, Cure, Culture*, an examination of the literature and economics of post-colonial, natural resources-rich countries co-taught by faculty in English and in Economics.
- *Narratives and Numbers*, an examination of current social issues, such as mass incarceration, through the twin lenses of non-fiction narrative accounts and statistics, co-taught by an English professor and a statistician.
- *Diagnosing Disease*, an examination of how the medical profession has understood the nature of illness, from humours and leeches to the present day, co-taught by an MD faculty in Medical Laboratory Sciences and a historian.

In the great majority of cases, faculty teaching in Honors are full-time, tenure-track faculty who have been hired by their home departments. These faculty are therefore credentialed through their home departments. As can be seen in the graph above showing rank of faculty teaching in Honors, tenured or tenure-track faculty have constituted between 70% and 90% of the faculty teaching for Honors since fall 2018. A small number of instructors fit into the category of Other, including the university president, and occasionally faculty on appointment as Visiting International Professors. Tenured or tenure track faculty may teach their Honors classes either in load or as overload, although Honors has a strong preference for the in-load option whenever possible.

The remaining faculty are adjunct instructors, almost entirely drawn from the adjunct instructors who regularly teach for other departments. Honors regularly utilizes the skills of adjunct faculty in the departments of English, Philosophy and History. These are appropriately qualified individuals who have been shown reliably time and again to be effective instructors. Other adjunct faculty are drawn from full time employees at Weber State University. The rule of thumb for adjunct appointment qualifications is that individuals should hold at least a Master's degree, and this is routinely the case for Honors adjunct faculty. However, for individuals teaching less than half time, adjunct faculty may be appointed with lesser qualifications, so long as their specialized expertise is considered sufficient. WSU's Policies and Procedures Manual, section 3-2.II.D.1 defines adjunct faculty as follows:

*Adjunct Faculty - an individual having professional or specialized training, employed on a temporary or part-time basis, to provide instruction or instructional related services for one or more credit bearing courses. An adjunct faculty must be appointed by an academic dean for a specific period of time and may be given a title containing an academic rank provided the additional title of "adjunct" precedes the designation of rank. Such appointment has no significance for the achieving or holding of tenure.*

One adjunct faculty in fall 2019 co-teaching HNRS CA 1530 ArtsBridge: Murals was appointed without a Master's degree, but with relevant professional or specialized training, and with the dean's approval.

**Scholarship:** Honors faculty are often prolific scholars within their home disciplines. However, the focus here is on Honors-specific scholarship. In the last three years, faculty and staff have presented work at the Western Regional Honors Conference, National Collegiate Honors Conference, and National Society for Minorities in Honors Conference, sometimes with students. Two faculty recipients of the Eccles Fellowship in 2016, for a class called Chemistry of Art taught in fall 2017, are close to completing a manuscript for the NCHC journal *Honors in Practice*, with the goal of meeting the submission deadline for January 2020. However, more Honors-specific scholarship could be produced by the WSU Honors Program. This is a potential growth area for the future.

Faculty, staff and student participation in Honors conferences is shown in the table below.

**Table showing faculty, staff and student Honors conference participation since fall 2016.**

<i>Event</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Participants</i>	<i>Presented/Attended</i>	<i>Students</i>	<i>Faculty/Staff</i>
NCHC	New Orleans, LA	2019	Dan Bedford	Attended		1
NSMIH	Fullerton, CA	2019	Tia Nero Megan Moulding	Presented		2
WRHC	Bozeman, MT	2019	Zach Smith Tyler Browning Rachel Creer Keilee Stratton Dan Bedford Megan Moulding	Attended	4	2
NCHC	Boston, MA	2018	Zach Smith Lauralee Solimeno Megan Moulding	Attended	2	1
WRHC	Orange, CA	2018	Brandon Burnett Dianna Huxhold Alexia Kreinbrink Creelyssa Belnap	Presented	2	2
NCHC	Atlanta, GA	2017	Dan Bedford Christy Call Heather Chapman	Bedford attended; Call and Chapman presented		3
WRHC	Ashland, OR	2017	Tanner Telford	Presented	1	
NCHC	Seattle, WA	2016	Dan Bedford	Attended		1

NCHC = National Collegiate Honors Conference

WRHC = Western Regional Honors Conference

NSMIH = National Society for Minorities in Honors Conference

**Ongoing review of Honors faculty, and faculty professional development:** Review of Honors faculty is based strongly on student evaluations of Honors classes. These are completed at the end of each semester. Teaching for the Honors Program is a privilege, and whether or not faculty continue to teach in the Honors Program depends strongly on student feedback regarding the quality of the classes taught. However, student evaluations of classes currently suffer from two problems.

First, when the university as a whole switched from paper evaluations completed in class to online evaluations, Honors followed suit. Student participation in the evaluation

process dropped as a result, and this significantly reduces the utility of the evaluations. In classes where instructors really emphasize the value and importance of completing evaluations, response rates are good, but across the Honors Program as a whole, response rates are low. We will soon move to in-class completion of online evaluations, possibly starting spring 2020.

Second, the evaluation instrument is itself flawed. The instrument asks only for student self-assessment of the extent to which each of the four Honors learning outcomes were covered in the class, along with a request for comments about the class. The current evaluation instrument seems to have been designed more with the goal of eliciting information pertinent to learning outcomes assessment than with the goal of gathering information from students about the quality of the class. A copy of the original paper version of the evaluation form is available via the program review website, and the electronic version is identical except for formatting. We are currently looking to redesign the Honors class evaluation form, although this is a challenging task which we must get right first time (or as near as possible). Constant revisions to the evaluation tool is in nobody's interest and must be avoided. This is another formidable task which must be taken on at some point in the near future. Class evaluations are a challenge campus wide, and a group within the WSU Appointment, Promotion, Academic Freedom and Tenure (APAFT) Committee is currently investigating a possible major revision of policies in this area. Any redesign of Honors evaluations must therefore wait until this group makes further progress.

Other elements of Honors faculty review include evaluation of class syllabi by the Honors Program Director to ensure compliance with university policies (for example, listing of learning outcomes). All faculty are invited to a meeting prior to the semester in which they teach, at which the basic points of teaching for Honors are reinforced: discussion-based pedagogy, requirements to comply with general education protocols, opportunities for classroom innovation funded by the Honors Program, and an expectation of attending Honors events. Starting fall 2019, faculty teaching general education classes met one on one with the Honors Director prior to the start of the semester, to go over the expectations and possible approaches for evaluating general education learning outcomes. These meetings may (and probably should) become regular features of the pre-semester "gearing up" process, although the start of spring semester classes often falls very soon after New Year's Day, and this may make it difficult to manage.

Overall, there is less connection at present between the Honors Program and Honors faculty than is desirable. Again, capacity limitations make it impossible to do as much as would be ideal, in this and in other areas of the program. However, one possibility is to develop an Honors Community of Practice (CoP), in collaboration with WSU's Teaching and Learning Forum. This would provide a venue for Honors faculty to connect with each other, share ideas, and build pedagogical strengths, for example in leading or steering classroom discussions. An Honors CoP might also brainstorm ideas for a new class evaluation instrument. If a suitable faculty member can be found to lead and organize the Honors CoP, this could address several of the difficulties noted above.

**Evidence of effective instruction:** All student evaluations are conducted on the Chi Tester platform, used campus wide, and evaluations are available to faculty as soon as grades for the semester are posted. Although quantitative assessment of student evaluations is difficult, in part due to the nature of the evaluation instrument, qualitative assessment is possible. Each semester, the Honors Program Director examines the class evaluations for information pertinent to inviting that faculty member back to teach again for Honors. In practice, it is rare for an Honors faculty member not to be invited to return. More substantive

discussion of class evaluations is provided in later sections, but a short sampling of typical comments from fall 2019 are shown below. These give a sense of the typical responses to faculty instruction.

*I loved the free range discussion and creativity that I experienced in this course. The teacher was absolutely phenomenal and was very knowledgeable with the material.*

*The freedom [Prof. X] gives us to explore what we are learning in our own way and how [Prof. X] rather acted more as a guide to learning rather than strictly "by the book". We explored many different perspectives and always questioned what the books said rather than just taking it for what it is (i.e. learning critical/free thinking).*

*I think the way it was structured was really unique and made for an excellent course by allowing everyone to always give their opinions and listen to others constructing big ideas through class collaboration through discussion.*

*I heavily enjoyed the discussion base of this class.*

*Thought provoking ideas are brought up and discussed.*

*The atmosphere of the class was very friendly and open, promoting discussion and the sharing of ideas.*

*The professors - very knowledgeable on the topics presented in class, went above & beyond in answering questions if someone had them. Friendly personalities, helped to provoke further thinking with a low anxiety/stress atmosphere.*

*The open forum that allowed all the view of the students and professors to mingle and be discussed.*

*[Prof. Y] is an amazing teacher that gets students to think and make connections rather than pointing them out. [Prof. Y] is amazing at leading the students to breakthroughs through thought provoking conversation and I am positive that this environment creates a level of understanding that few other professors are able to achieve.*

*Let it be taught again. Don't change the class size, larger will diminish the voice of the students who struggle in large groups.*

## **7.b Honors Program Activities (Including Specific Educational Goals)**

This section examines core activities specific to the Honors Program. Although there is overlap with other Honors responsibilities-- for example, Aletheia Presidential Scholars are required to take two Honors classes-- these core activities would remain even without the overlapping areas. Activities specific to Aletheia, and to Phi Kappa Phi, are examined in later sections. This section examines assessment data for Honors educational goals and activities, specifically:

- Student learning outcomes.
- Curriculum map and course offerings

- Contributions to general education.
- Student and faculty assessment of Honors classes and the Honors Program.
- Number of, and attendance at, Honors Program events.

**Student Learning Outcomes (LOs)**

The Honors Program maintains four student learning outcomes. At the end of their time at WSU, Honors students will have developed:

1. Practice clear and compelling written and/or creative expression;
2. Engage in critical thinking that is open-minded, objective, and as free as possible from prejudice and presupposition;
3. Undertake the comprehension of abstract arguments and the ability to move between the general and the particular;
4. Encounter a variety of human experience, exploring both its universality and its diversity.

These student learning outcomes are perfectly adequate. However, they are not clearly connected to the Honors mission statement (this is true for both the original and revised mission statements provided in section 1). Further, at the time of the last program review in 2014, there were six learning outcomes listed in the Honors Program self study report. If documentation of the change from six to four learning outcomes exists, we have yet to find it. Thus, there are good reasons for considering a review of the Honors Program student learning outcomes. Ideally, this should be part of a comprehensive review of the mission statement, learning outcomes, and assessment processes. At some point, when the ground has stopped shifting beneath our feet, we hope to undertake such a comprehensive review. However, for now, we have the four learning outcomes listed above.

**Curriculum Map**

To accomplish these four learning outcomes, Honors offers a wide variety of classes, as well as informal educational and leadership opportunities. Many classes are variable title within a general framework, and almost all classes, as listed in the WSU catalog, are defined by extraordinarily general course descriptions. This provides the Honors Program with a very high degree of flexibility with regard to course offerings, which is a vitally important character trait, contributing greatly to Honors’s ability to serve as an innovation hub for the WSU community as a whole. The complete set of Honors classes as listed in the catalog is shown in the curriculum map below.

<b>Complete List of Courses in the Honors Program</b>							
Course prefix for all Honors classes: HNRS						Department/Program Learning Outcomes	
<i>Number</i>	<i>Gen Ed</i>	<i>Title listed in catalog (credit hours)</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	

1110	HU	Introduction to Honors: The Construction of Knowledge (3)	1	1	1	1
1500	PS	Perspectives in the Physical Sciences (3)	1	1	1	1
1510	LS	Perspectives in the Life Sciences (3)	1	1	1	1
1520	LS	Perspectives in the Social Sciences (3)	1	1	1	1
1530	CA	Perspectives in the Creative Arts (3)	1	1	1	1
1540	HU	Perspectives in the Humanities (3)	1	1	1	1
2010	HU	Exploring Key Concepts in the Disciplines: Humanities (3)	2	2	2	2
2020	CA	Exploring Key Concepts in the Disciplines: Creative Arts (3-6)	2	2	2	2
2030	PS	Exploring Key Concepts in the Disciplines: Physical Sciences (3)	2	2	2	2
2040	LS	Exploring Key Concepts in the Disciplines: Life Sciences (3)	2	2	2	2
2110	HU/SS	Intellectual Traditions: Great Ideas of the West in the Classical and Medieval Eras (3)	2	2	2	2
2120	HU/SS	Intellectual Traditions: Great Ideas of the West in the Modern Era (3)	2	2	2	2



2130	HU/SS/DV	Intellectual Traditions: Great Ideas of the East (3)	2	2	2	2
2830		Directed Readings, Projects, and Research (1-3)	2	2	2	2
2900		Honors Colloquium (1-3)	2	2	2	2
2920		Short Courses, Workshops, and Special Programs (1-3)	2	2	2	2
3110		Great Books (3)	3	3	3	3
3900		Honors Colloquium (1-3)	3	3	3	3
4830		Directed Readings: Senior Project Research (1-3)	4	4	4	4
4900		Honors Colloquium (2-4)	4	4	4	4
4920		Short Courses, Workshops, and Special Programs (1-3)	4	4	4	4
4900		Honors Senior Project (3)	4	4	4	4

1 through 4 represent the levels each outcome addresses per course:

1 = Introductory

2 = Developing mastery

3 = Competence at mastery

4 = Mastery

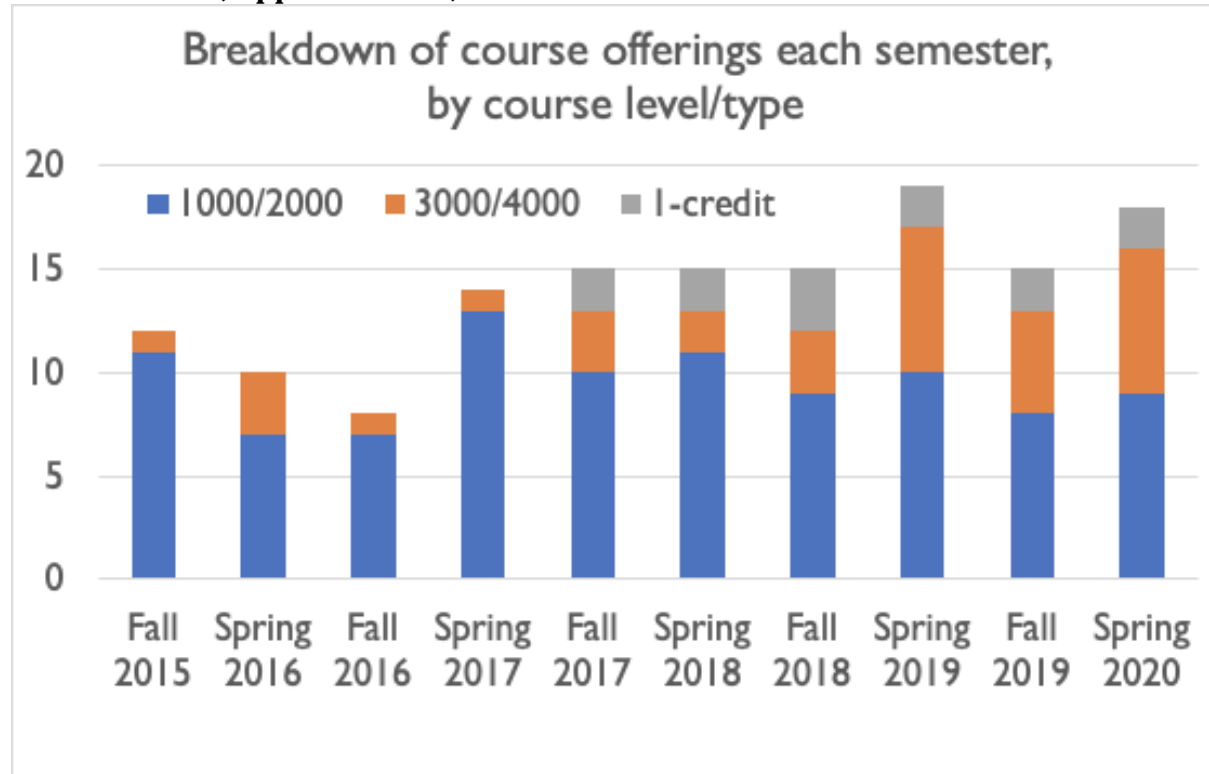
The number of Honors courses offered in each semester has grown substantially from spring 2017 onwards, as shown in the table below, and accompanying graph. This

growth was necessary to accommodate the large increase in the number of Presidential Scholarship students accepting their scholarship offers. The requirement for these students to take Honors classes has been ratcheted down substantially in order to bring the demand down to manageable levels (from four to three to, now, two, at least one per year in the first two years). Thus, the number of Honors classes being offered in future might ratchet down somewhat as well, although if the number of Presidential Scholarship students continues to increase (we have received no information to suggest otherwise), and as the number of students enrolled in General and University Honors has increased, this reduction in course numbers may not be all that large.

**Table showing Honors course offerings (total, lower division, upper division and 1-credit) by semester, fall 2015 to spring 2020.**

<b>Semester</b>	<b>Total number of classes</b> Does not count 1-credit classes	<b>1000/2000 level</b>	<b>3000/4000 level</b>	<b>1-credit</b>
Fall 2015	12	11	1	
Spring 2016	10	7	3	
Fall 2016	8	7	1	
Spring 2017	14	13	1	
Fall 2017	15	10	3	2
Spring 2018	15	11	2	2
Fall 2018	15	9	3	3
Spring 2019	19	10	7	2
Fall 2019	13	8	5	2
Spring 2020	16	9	7	2

**Graph of total Honors course offerings by semester since fall 2015, broken down by lower division, upper division, and 1-credit.**



Two other aspects of the course offerings data are worth mentioning. First, the number of upper division classes has increased in recent years. This is a deliberate strategy, in that the minimal number of upper division classes being offered prior to fall 2017 could have constituted a bottleneck for students trying to complete University Honors requirements. These students need 6 credits of upper division classes, and with only one such class being offered per semester, it was potentially difficult for them to meet that requirement. This difficulty has now been addressed.

Second, the number of 1-credit classes has increased from zero prior to fall 2017. The Honors curriculum includes several options for offering 1-credit classes, and they provide a flexible way for faculty and students to work within the Honors Program. One ongoing example is HNRS 2920 Making Sense of the News: Reading and Discussing the New York Times. In this class, students and faculty meet for 75 minutes once each week. They take the first 20-30 minutes simply to read the newspaper, then they discuss what they've read. Honors subscribes to 15 copies of the print edition of the *New York Times* every day during the semester, and this is an engaging way for students to utilize them, while earning college credit. The class is offered pass/fail, and students must attend every class session in order to pass. Beyond that, there is no additional work required. This makes the class attractive both to students and to faculty, who love teaching it.

Other 1-credit classes are intended to capitalize on significant campus events. For example, Prof. Dan Jonas (Performing Arts/Music) taught a class on Miles Davis's seminal jazz album *Kind of Blue* in fall semester 2018. This marked the 60th anniversary of the album's release, and the appearance on campus of the Sean Jones Quintet, a highly regarded jazz ensemble, engaged to perform not only their own compositions, but also

some of the tracks from *Kind of Blue*. The class was therefore an opportunity for students to learn more about the music before attending the live performance, thereby enhancing their experience. The Honors Program purchased tickets for each student in the class to attend the concert.

### **Contributions to General Education**

General education at Weber State University consists of four core requirements and six breadth areas. **The Honors Program regularly offers classes that contribute to General Education requirements in all of these areas, except American Institutions and Quantitative Literacy**, as shown below.

- Core requirements:
  - American Institutions (not offered by Honors Program)
  - Quantitative Literacy (not offered by Honors Program)
  - Composition (H ENGL 1010 and 2010)
  - Information Literacy (H LIBS 1704)
  - Diversity (HNRS HU DV 2130A and HNRS SS DV 2130B)
- Breadth areas:
  - Physical Sciences (HNRS PS 1500 and 2030)
  - Life Sciences (HNRS LS 1510 and 2040)
  - Social Sciences (HNRS SS 1520 and 2050; HNRS SS 2110B, 2120B and 2130B)
  - Creative Arts (HNRS CA 1530 and 2020)
  - Humanities (HNRS HU 1110, 1540 and 2010; HNRS HU 2110A, 2120A and 2130A)

The Honors Program meets GE breadth area requirements typically by offering two classes for each breadth area, one at the 1000 level and one at the 2000-level (often referred to as Perspectives classes and Exploring Key Concepts classes, respectively). The goal in compiling the Honors class roster for each semester is to ensure that there is at least one class that addresses each GE breadth area each semester, at either the 1000 or 2000 level. This goal is not always met (spring 2020 does not have a Physical Sciences class, for example), but the offerings each semester usually come close.

Although the bulk of the Honors curriculum's contribution to general education is these 1000- and 2000-level classes, there are exceptions and special circumstances. These are described below.

- **GE Core- Composition:** Honors offers a section of ENGL 1010 each fall semester, and ENGL 2010 each spring semester, through the generosity of the faculty and chair of the Department of English Language and Literature.
- **GE Core- Information Literacy:** Starting in spring 2019, Honors participated in a collaborative experiment between the Library and the English Department, in which a section of LIBS 1704 is paired with a section of ENGL 2010. Several sections of these classes were tied together (students registered for both, and the instructors coordinated to ensure course content overlapped). The regular Honors section of ENGL 2010 was one of the sections involved. The experiment seems to have been successful, and is continuing in spring 2020.
- **GE Breadth- HNRS HU 1110 The Construction of Knowledge:** This class is offered every fall semester, and is sometimes referred to as Introduction to Honors. It is co-taught by a faculty member with a humanities background, typically from the

Department of English Language and Literature, and a faculty member from the physical or life sciences. For the last five years, the class has been co-taught by Profs. Christy Call (English) and Sue Harley (Botany). As with many Honors classes, this class would be a good candidate for allowing students to receive both HU and PS or LS credit, as is now the case with Weber State's WSU classes, described earlier. However, the process for gaining approval is challenging and time consuming, and the fluidity and flexibility of the Honors curriculum tends to be viewed with skepticism in some quarters of the university, as it pertains to WSU classes.

- **GE Breadth- HNRS 2110, 2120 and 2130:** These course numbers constitute the Intellectual Traditions classes, namely Great Ideas of the West in the Classical and Medieval Eras, Great Ideas of the West in the Modern Era, and Great Ideas of the East. Each of these classes may be offered for either Social Sciences or Humanities GE Breadth credit, at the discretion of the instructors and the Honors Program Director, based on the draft syllabus. In previous years, the student was given the option of selecting which breadth area the course addressed; more recently, that decision has been made ahead of time, and the class is offered as either HNRS 2110 A (Humanities) or 2110 B (Social Sciences) (and the same for the other course numbers).
- **GE Core- Diversity:** In addition to being offered for either SS or HU GE Breadth credit, HNRS 2130 Great Ideas of the East also meets the Diversity requirement.

**Assessment of General Education classes:** Each GE Breadth and Core area carries specific content-related learning outcomes (these may be found at WSU's General Education web page, <https://www.weber.edu/GenEd/default.html>). Instructors of all GE courses must collect evidence that these learning outcomes are being addressed. In the Honors Program, this is handled via Canvas pages, to which faculty may upload their course assessment materials. At present, at the end of each semester, faculty are prompted to upload the following items to Canvas:

- Evidence of learning grid, detailing specific methods of assessment of both GE and Honors learning outcomes (these grids are standardized and provided campus wide by the Office of Institutional Effectiveness).
- Rubric, explaining the grading criteria.
- Signature Assignment, as provided to students (Signature Assignments are part of WSU's efforts to revitalize and reform general education, and are explained below).

WSU's University Curriculum Committee assesses evidence for all GE Breadth classes, plus GE Core- Diversity, on a seven-year cycle. Classes that have at least two semesters of satisfactory data are approved for another seven years. Classes that are found wanting are placed on probation, although they can still be taught and students can still earn GE credit for taking them.

This assessment cycle was implemented for the first time in fall 2016, and several Honors classes did not have two semesters of data, either because they had not been taught twice, or because the instructors had failed to collect them. The Honors Program Director has moved to address this, and two classes have been taken off probation as a result. However, with 21 different classes meeting GE requirements in some way, across all breadth and some core areas, and with different faculty teaching the classes, on different topics and in different ways, significant progress remains to be made. Several Honors classes remain on probation for insufficient GE evidence of learning. These are:

- HNRS SS 2050 Exploring Key Concepts in the Disciplines: Social Sciences.

- HNRS HU 2110A Intellectual Traditions: Great Ideas of the West in the Classical and Medieval Eras (had never been taught for HU credit at the time of assessment review).
- HNRS SS 2110B Intellectual Traditions: Great Ideas of the West in the Classical and Medieval Eras.
- HNRS HU 2120B Intellectual Traditions: Great Ideas of the West in the Modern Era (had never been taught for HU credit at the time of assessment review).
- HNRS DV 2130A or B Intellectual traditions: Great Ideas of the East (missing Diversity assessment).
- HNRS LS 2040 Exploring Key Concepts in the Disciplines: Life Sciences (had only been taught once at the time of assessment review).

With the exception of the two Social Sciences classes (HNRS SS 2050 and 2110B), all of the HNRS classes currently on probation lacked two semesters of assessment data because they had not been taught twice at the time of the assessment review. The Diversity class (HNRS DV 2130A/B) had been taught twice, but only once since Diversity learning outcomes had been specified. As time passes and Honors classes are taught more often, many of the classes listed above will come off probation (for example, HNRS LS 2040 and HNRS SS 2050 are both now ready to be submitted for review by the University Curriculum Committee).

**General Education Revitalization:** General Education at Weber State University has recently undergone (indeed, is still undergoing) a substantial evolution. All GE courses are now required to include a Big Question at the heart of the class, and a Signature Assignment. Student responses to the Signature Assignment are to be uploaded to the class's page in Canvas, the course management software utilized by WSU. Although the assignments are assessed for a grade by the instructor(s), they may also then be sampled, through Canvas, by WSU's General Education Improvement and Assessment Committee to assess the extent to which students are meeting four General Education Learning Outcomes (GELOs, available <https://www.weber.edu/GenEd/gelo.html>). This provides program-level assessment data for the university.

The Honors Program participates fully in the use of Signature Assignments in GE courses. Sample assignments are available via the program review website, but a handful of edited highlights are provided below:

- **HNRS CA 2020 Theatre for Young Audiences and Puppetry:** In small groups, students read and responded to sections of a class text on the history of theatre for children in the US (40-75 pages each), with responses posted to a Canvas discussion forum. Each group then contributed to the development of a class timeline showing major events in the development of theatre for young audiences.
- **HNRS CA 2020 Why Creativity Matters:** Students keep a running "swipe file" of creative ideas throughout the semester, either electronically to enable pulling material from social media or other online sources, or physically in the form of a notebook. Students then curate and present their collected materials to the class.
- **HNRS LS 1510 Your Microbial You:** Students were assigned to create an information packet on a commercially available probiotic product. Students were tasked with identifying a (real life) product, identifying the claims made as to its health benefits, and assessing their veracity based on the available evidence in the peer reviewed literature, all written for a student audience.
- **HNRS HU 1110 The Construction of Knowledge:** Students write a 4-6 page paper, and prepare a 5-minute presentation using just one PowerPoint slide, incorporating reflection on the semester's learning, and answering one of the following questions:

- How can we claim to know truth?
- What does it mean to honor one's knowledge in ways of living?
- What are the distinctions between knowledge, belief, and truth?
- What knowledge is most needed today?

In many respects, Honors classes epitomize the ideals of general education, in that students are required to think outside disciplinary boundaries, address deep and significant questions, work in small groups, and reflect on their learning experiences. The WSU assessment process recognizes this unique contribution of Honors classes to general education by calling specifically for information on Honors classes taught by department faculty in the annual strategic planning report template, and the template for program reviews.

First, as a general rule, faculty only teach GE Breadth courses if their home department offers courses in those areas.

### **Student and Faculty Assessment of Honors Classes and the Honors Program**

End-of-semester assessment, as inherited from previous years, is an unwieldy beast. In addition to faculty uploading assessment materials to Canvas as described above, students complete a class evaluation via the campus-wide platform Chi Tester, and faculty and students both complete an evaluation of their experience with the Honors Program as a whole, although some students tend to conflate this with an assessment of the class they have just taken. This assessment is conducted via Qualtrics, which means faculty and students evaluate their Honors experiences in a variety of ways across three different platforms. This is not conducive to meaningful assessment. Further, as noted earlier, the student class evaluation instrument is not effective at gathering information about the quality of classes. The low response rate (discussed earlier) and the emphasis on narrative responses combine to produce evaluations of classes that are largely anecdotal in nature. The Assistant Director of Honors (starting January 2020) has been hired for the express purpose of developing a more meaningful assessment process as one part of their job.

With these significant caveats in mind, students and faculty seem to find great value in their Honors classes. A sampling of comments from fall semester 2019 student evaluations follows:

*Very diverse subjects, freedom to speak opinions, critical thinking practice.*

*I enjoyed the readings that were provided. [Prof. X] did a great job of leading discussions that promoted thinking and analysis.*

*Fantastic dialogue between the students and instructors; really felt that each voice could direct or redirect conversation in new ways that I never could have thought of before.*

*Getting many viewpoints of a subject, exploring the meanings of many different terms, letting people speak their opinions, and having the instructors being open to the students' ideas.*

*Very great discussions. You can tell the teachers care about students and what we have to say.*

*Having two professors who both knew a lot about their different areas of knowledge was very helpful.*

*The interaction between the professors was great; they both provided knowledge from their fields of expertise which helped me understand the material a lot more fully.*

*This course really makes you think of both chemistry and visual arts from a different perspective. These subjects are usually considered opposites, however, they are tied quite extensively. This course made me think of things in a different way and consider things I had never really thought about before. Seeing this change come over the other students in class was a sight to behold and all of us being able to discuss our thoughts and feelings about it definitely made the experience even better. This class was wonderful and the instructors were amazing.*

*[This class] is unique in that it brings two very different disciplines together.*

*I think combining such vastly different classes, yet with many similarities, for people from different backgrounds in the sciences and arts is really cool for discussions and learning new things. I love hearing about things from the chemistry majors about art as well as the art majors' opinions on chemistry.*

*Very engaging and interactive. Debate was openly encouraged and explored between students and professors every class!*

*Having two professors from opposite sides of the subjects we discussed was very interesting and helped us to understand [the subject matter] more fully.*

*The vast knowledge of the two professors coming together. It was pretty amazing how almost any question that ever came up one of the two of them had an answer to. It was a good, small environment where there was a lot of participation! It was such an interesting subject to be learning more about as well.*

*The community learning was really great to see what's around us here in Ogden.*

*One of the strengths of this course was its hands-on aspect. We learned about different styles of art and then practiced them ourselves. This class proved that the power of art to bring a community together is real and that art can be used to advocate for worthy causes.*

*The hands on experience of this course is a major strength. We were provided with multiple hands on experiences along with lessons beyond the classroom which were both enjoyable and effective. The class truly provided an effective outlet of creative expression and left me with a greater understanding of art.*

*The expectations and grading for assignments was not very clear; otherwise, this was a great class.*

*Sometimes our discussions would get a little off-track due to student comments and stories.*



Not all the comments are positive. Recurring themes in student evaluations include:

- a desire for greater clarity on expectations for particular assignments;
- different scheduling, and/or greater flexibility in scheduling;
- discussions not always staying on track
- requests for more/fewer hands-on activities

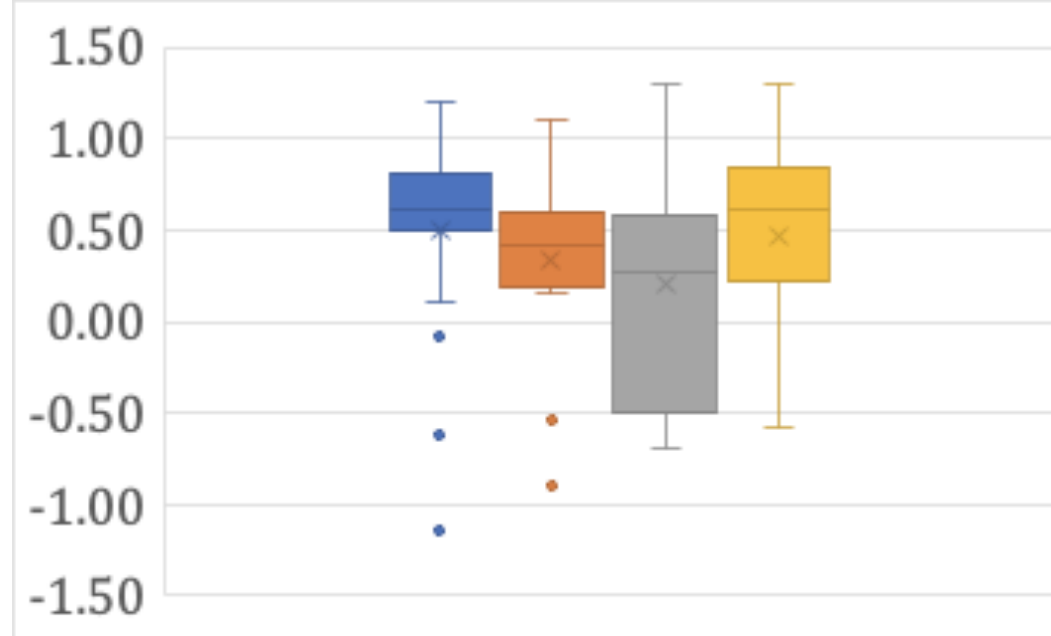
These concerns are valid, but are difficult to respond to in an environment which emphasizes student participation and discussion, and in which only a small number of classes are repeated regularly enough to iron out wrinkles. To some degree, these concerns from students are inevitable in the Honors Program as it is currently configured, and for the most part it would seem that the positive aspects significantly outweigh the negative ones.

One intriguing quantitative assessment of Honors classes lies in a comparison between student and faculty estimates of how far each Honors learning outcome was addressed. Students assess the four Honors learning outcomes on a scale of 1-5 in their Chi Tester evaluations; faculty do the same in their Qualtrics evaluations. Identifying classes for which faculty have completed this evaluation, and for which at least 10 students have done the same, lead to a meaningful comparison. Although only 23 classes over the last five years meet these criteria, this is sufficient to draw some conclusions. The data are shown, organized by Honors learning outcome, in the graphs below. In general, faculty tend to overestimate slightly how far each learning outcome is addressed, compared with student assessment (on average, there is about a 0.5 point difference, though there is substantial variation from class to class). A program-level response to this finding is not obvious, other than, perhaps, to draw faculty attention to it in the pre-semester Honors faculty meeting.

**Graphs showing faculty vs. student self- assessment of the extent to which Honors learning outcomes were addressed in Honors classes.** Scores are shown as faculty score minus average student score; thus, positive numbers indicate faculty overestimates relative to student self-assessments, and negative numbers indicate faculty underestimates relative to student self-assessments. Faculty and students score each learning outcome on a scale of 1-5. Each bar indicates results for one class, 23 classes in total are shown.



**Box-and-whisker plot summarizing faculty minus student scores for each Honors learning outcome.** Each box-and-whisker set summarizes data from 23 classes for one learning outcome. Learning outcomes shown are, from left to right and paraphrased, clear and compelling written/creative expression (blue); critical thinking (orange); moving from the general to the particular (grey); and explored a variety of human experience (gold).



Faculty and students also provide written feedback on their experiences with the Honors Program at the end of each semester. Faculty comments have emphasized the following areas:

- Challenges in getting students to participate in discussions.
- Lack of clarity on what faculty can expect of students in terms of workload.
- Logistics associated with hands-on activities.
- Faculty greatly appreciate the support provided by the Honors Program.

Of these areas, the last is by far the most dominant. Of the others, the lack of a meaningful Honors community of faculty is probably the underlying cause. As noted earlier, an Honors Community of Practice could help alleviate this.

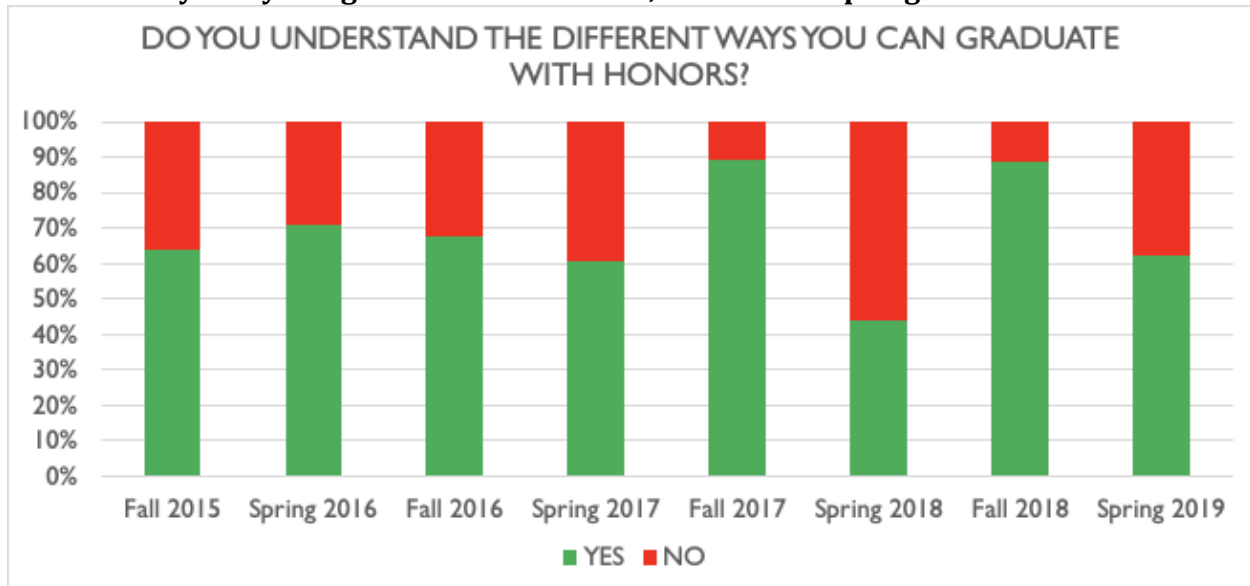
Student comments from the end-of-semester assessments, as well as those from the focus group conducted with four Honors students in fall 2019, also tend to emphasize several areas. Positive aspects identified by students include:

- Smaller class sizes
- Fellow students who are there to learn
- The Honors staff and Honors Center
- Range of different schedules for classes

Negative aspects tend to reflect a confusion on the part of the students about the distinction between the Honors Program and the requirements for the Aletheia Club. Some students use the end-of-semester assessment to vent their frustration at having to take Honors classes (other Aletheia students comment that this is a positive aspect), or at having to participate in book discussions. In general, around 30-40% of students who complete the end-of-semester

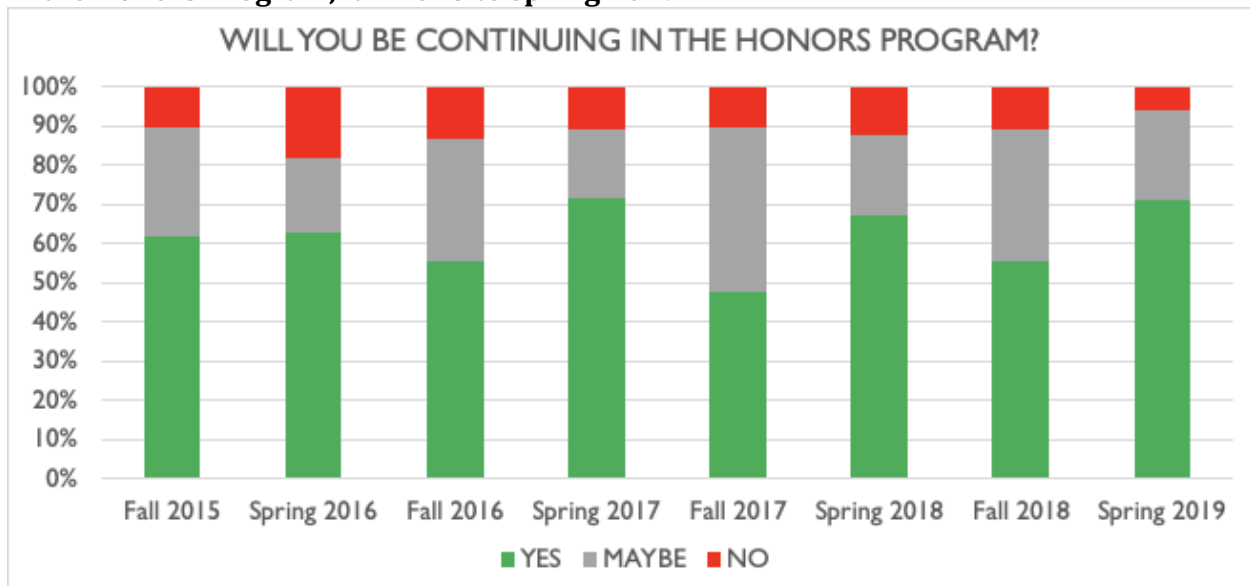
survey state that they do not understand the different ways that they can graduate with Honors, as shown in the graph below.

**Graph showing breakdown of students stating that they do/do not understand the different ways they can graduate with Honors, fall 2015 to spring 2019.**



Most students state that they will be continuing with the Honors Program after the class they have just completed, as shown in the graph below.

**Graph showing breakdown of students responding that they will/will not be continuing in the Honors Program, fall 2015 to spring 2019.**



These numbers are superficially encouraging. However, the great majority of students in Honors classes are taking the classes only to meet the requirement of their Presidential Scholarship. Between about 60% and 75% of the students taking Honors classes in any given

semester are Aletheia Presidential Scholars, and have not enrolled in the Honors Program (they do not have an Honors cohort code indicating General, University or Departmental Honors). Thus, students who say they will continue in the Honors Program most likely mean that they will take another Honors class in order to meet their requirements, and not that they will continue as Honors students. The rate at which Presidential Scholars become Honors students is low, as discussed above (currently only around 15% of Aletheia students are also Honors students). Anecdotally, these students are focused on completing a specific field of study (pre-med, computer programming, nursing or similar fields appealing to highly motivated people). They do not have room in their schedule to take more Honors classes, and/or lack the motivation to find it, which suggests that Honors has not effectively communicated the value of graduating from the Honors Program.

The Honors Program is therefore in a difficult bind. The number of Presidential Scholarship students admitted to the university has grown very considerably over the last five years (from 85 to nearly 400). Because of their scholarship requirements, this has meant that Honors classes are more or less filled with students who do not have a great interest in completing the program. They might enjoy the classes they take, but not enough to take more, when they do not see a clear and compelling reason to do so, beyond the joy of learning. Furthermore, Honors classes fill up very quickly, overwhelmingly with Presidential Scholarship students anxious to make sure that they meet their scholarship requirements by getting into an Honors class. This leaves little room for students who are not Presidential Scholars, and who might like to take Honors classes because they enjoy them, value the small-class learning environment, and do, in fact, want to complete the Honors requirements. The difficulty of getting into Honors classes is much remarked upon in the end-of-semester assessments, and was a key conclusion of the student focus group held in fall 2019.

There would seem to be two possible solutions to this bind. First, the requirement to take Honors classes can be reduced for Presidential Scholars. This has been done, but the extraordinary growth in Presidential Scholars admitted to the university has simply overwhelmed this effort. The requirement has been cut in half since the Honors Program was given responsibility for the Aletheia Club, but Aletheians still make up 60-75% of the students enrolled in Honors classes in any given semester. Presidential Scholars are now required to take two Honors classes in total, at least one in the first year. This could perhaps be cut further, to one class in the first year.

The second option is to increase the rate at which Presidential Scholars opt to become Honors students. Although requirements for the different types of Honors are explained in detail during the Aletheia orientations held at the start of each fall semester, there is still evident confusion about what exactly is required, as discussed above. Further, the number of Aletheia students becoming Honors students remains small, although it has increased somewhat since Honors was given responsibility for the Aletheia Club. One possibility might be a wholesale remaking of the Honors curriculum to align Honors classes more closely with degree requirements. However, this option does nothing to open space in Honors classes for non-Aletheia students, and does not help the program advance its goals of inclusive excellence.

### **Number of, and participation in, Honors Events**

To address the urgent need to get the Honors Program more visible across campus, the number of events organized and hosted by the Honors Program has increased significantly

in recent years. Audience sizes have also increased. The Honors Program now organizes events in six different categories, as follows:

- **Honors Program Kickoff Picnic.** To start the year, a picnic is held on the third Thursday of the fall semester. Initially, these were held on campus, but for the last two years we have experimented with holding the picnics at a local city park, with great success. A food truck is engaged to provide the food, and it is possible to play music and games, which would not be easy on campus.
- **Food for Thought events.** These are the flagship “intellectual engagement” activities offered by the Honors Program, in which an individual or group give a presentation or engage in a panel discussion of a compelling issue. Food for Thoughts have traditionally been organized by the Honors Student Advisory Board. However, at the time the current Honors Director entered the role, fall 2016, Food for Thoughts had ceased to engage with current issues, and instead tended to offer student advising and general information (e.g. what is Study Abroad?). Starting in spring 2017, with access to the newly-renovated Honors Center, the director took over Food for Thought, and refocused on critical current issues. Once the direction of Food for Thought had been reset, responsibility for organizing the events series was handed back to the student advisory board, starting with fall semester 2018.
- **Film screenings and discussions.** Once the large-screen LCD monitor was installed in the Honors Center, our capacity to hold events in the center increased dramatically. We began holding film screenings and discussions in the Honors Center in fall 2017, with a member of the faculty invited to discuss key aspects of the film prior to the screening, and discussions with the audience being held afterwards on some occasions.
- **Author visits.** In spring 2017, handover of the Aletheia Club was imminent, along with its attendant requirement to organize book discussions. The opportunity was taken to align the book selection with authors who were known to be visiting campus. In many cases, it has been possible to arrange for the author to meet in small group settings with students. These opportunities are extended first to Aletheia students who have opted to read the author’s book; surprisingly, relatively few of these students take advantage of the opportunity, and the group is then opened more broadly to Honors students, and then to other potentially interested students. Faculty and staff are occasionally invited, but only ever in an observer capacity. The author visits are usually held in the Honors Center, and typically involve audiences of around 20-25 students. Also in this category of events, Honors invites faculty with a new book publication to speak, when possible.
- **Honors Open Houses.** In the interests of ending the semester with a bang rather than a whimper, and building community, Honors now hosts an open house on the Honors Center on the last Friday of classes in each semester. Games, snacks, and hot drinks are provided. Announcements of student and faculty accomplishments, welcoming of new students to the Honors Program, and upcoming highlights for next semester, also occur at the open house.
- **Nye Honors Graduation Banquets.** Students completing general, university and/or departmental Honors are invited to celebrate their accomplishments, along with family and friends, and receive their Honors graduation regalia, at the graduation banquets held towards the end of each semester. One student graduating

in each area is invited to speak in the fall, and awards for outstanding students are given in the spring, along with the award for outstanding Departmental Honors advisor. Starting in fall 2019, the Joseph and Holly Nye Bauman Outstanding Faculty in Honors Award is also given each semester at the banquet.

- ***Out of the Darkness campus walks.*** The Honors and Aletheia Student Advisory Board has organized a campus event, in partnership with the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, in each of the last four spring semesters. Participation has exceeded 100 people, and fundraising has exceeded \$6000 in each of the last two events. All funds are donations to the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention.

All these events make for a very busy Honors Center. However, each set of events serves an important purpose to the Honors Program, and all of them serve to elevate the profile of the program campus-wide. Details on events and their attendance are shown below.

**Honors Food for Thought events since fall 2016, with audience sizes.**

<i>Semester</i>	<i>Food for Thought Topic</i>	<i>Attendance</i>
Fall 2016	Study Abroad	20
Fall 2016	Spring Class Preview	4
Spring 2017	Interview Skills	42
Spring 2017	Panel: Education in a Post-Fact World	52
Spring 2017	Where Empathy, Literature, and Medicine Meet	16
Fall 2017	Solar Eclipse	49
Fall 2017	How to Survive Thanksgiving	17
Fall 2017	Acing That Interview	9
Spring 2018	Science Activism	88
Spring 2018	Navajo Journey of Becoming a Teacher	15
Fall 2018	Domestic Violence Awareness	15

Fall 2018	The Evolution of TV News Media	25
Fall 2018	Knowledge Into Action	40
Spring 2019	Rwanda Genocide: 25 Years Later	22
Spring 2019	Yoga Day with Dr. Brad Carroll	7
Fall 2019	Imposter Syndrome	49
Fall 2019	Alfred Hitchcock: The Man WHO Changed the Movies	24
Fall 2019	Britain & Russia	25

**Table showing films screened by the Honors Program, with audience sizes.**

<i>Semester</i>	<i>Film title</i>	<i>Attendance</i>
Spring 2017	Merchants of Doubt (screened in Wildcat Theater)	150
Fall 2017	Dr. Strangelove	4
Fall 2017	Black Panther	19
Fall 2017	2001: A Space Odyssey	8
Spring 2018	BlackKklansman	22
Spring 2018	Love, Simon	10
Spring 2018	Hidden Figures	6
Spring 2018	Yellow Submarine	7
Fall 2018	The Big Short	16
Fall 2018	Psycho	13
Fall 2018	Spider-Man: Into the Spiderverse	9

**Table showing author visit events and attendance**

<i>Semester</i>	<i>Author</i>	<i>Attendance</i>
Spring 2017	Mary Robinson ( <i>Everybody Matters</i> )	25
Spring 2018	Luis Alvarez ( <i>The Power of the Zoot</i> )	11
	Naomi Oreskes ( <i>Merchants of Doubt</i> )	20
	Daniel Mendelsohn ( <i>The Lost</i> )	20
	Chris Bonington ( <i>Ascent</i> )	17
Fall 2018	Poetry Reading and Writing Workshop: Nancy Takacs	14
Spring 2018	Ronan Farrow ( <i>The War on Peace</i> )	15
	Safiya Noble ( <i>Algorithms of Oppression</i> )	15
	Paul Hawken ( <i>Drawdown</i> )	25
	Poetry Reading: A Home to Strange Animals, by Dr. Mikel Vause	7

**Table showing attendance at Honors Open Houses and Fall Kickoff Picnics.**

<i>Semester</i>	<i>Event type</i>	<i>Attendance</i>
Spring 2017	Open House	60
Fall 2017	Open House	80
Spring 2018	Open House	80
Fall 2018	Open House	94
Spring 2019	Open House	52



Fall 2019	Open House	124
Fall 2016	Fall Kickoff Picnic	85
Fall 2017	Fall Kickoff Picnic	74
Fall 2018	Fall Kickoff Picnic	115
Fall 2019	Fall Kickoff Picnic	57

**7.c Assessment of Aletheia Club Activities**

Aletheia Club members (synonymous with Presidential Scholarship recipients) must participate in a single one-hour book discussion per year, complete 12 hours of community service per year, and take at least one Honors class per year until they have completed two. Student perspectives on Honors classes are captured in student evaluations of individual Honors classes, and the Honors Program as a whole. Of the remaining Aletheia-specific requirements, no assessment or evaluation of Aletheia Club activities had ever been conducted until after Honors took over the Aletheia Club in fall 2017. This section presents formal and informal assessment results of the following Aletheia and Presidential Scholar activities and program characteristics:

- Book discussions.
- Community service (still not formally assessed as yet, though an informal assessment is included below).
- Effects of changing the Presidential Scholarship GPA requirement from 3.75 to 2.5.

**Aletheia Book Discussion Requirement**

The book discussion requirement has been formally assessed since mid-spring semester 2018, with refinements in the assessment process continuing until the present (we believe we now have a fairly robust assessment process). The changes in the assessment process to date have been fairly minor tweaks, and do not preclude comparison of some results over time. Students are asked to complete a very brief assessment compiled in Qualtrics (average completion time is less than one minute) on their phones, immediately at the conclusion of their discussion. Discussions are held in the Honors Center, and Honors staff are therefore on hand to ensure that students complete the survey.

Book discussion assessment data are shown in the graphs and tables below. To summarize:

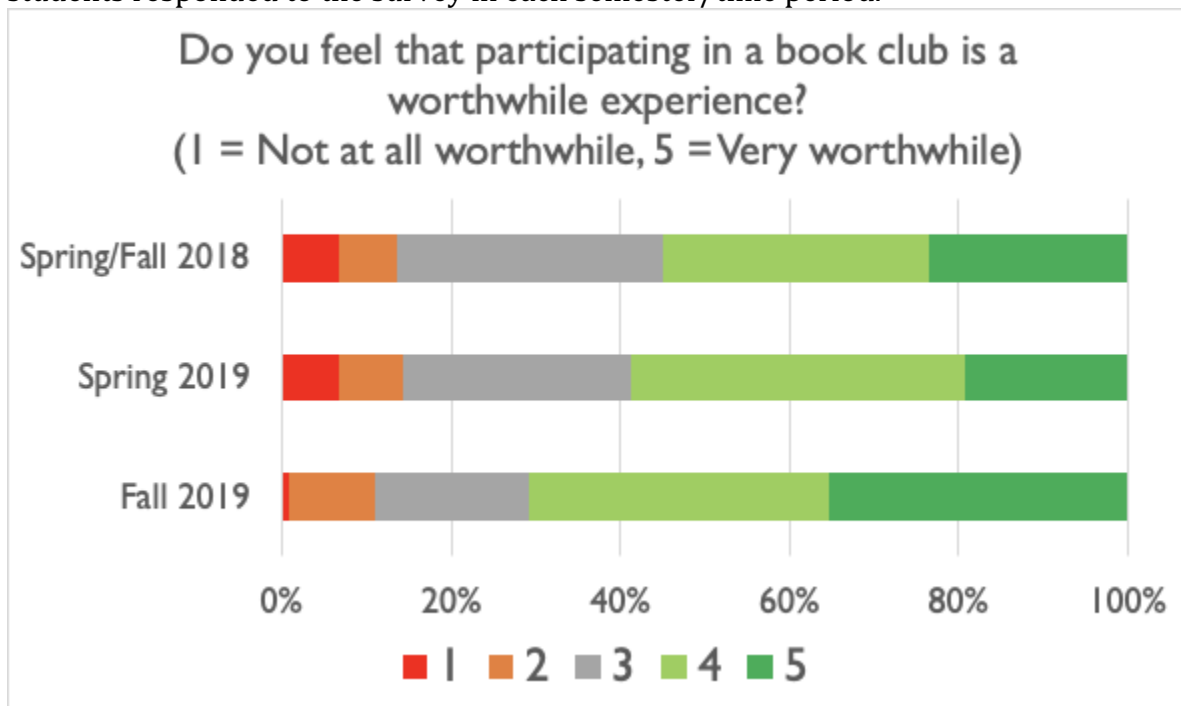
- **Group size has shrunk.** After taking full control of the book groups, they have been kept smaller than 20 students each, to facilitate participation. Previously, book groups were typically much larger (fall 2017, the last semester organized by the Provost’s Office, saw five groups of 25 students each).

- **The number of book options has increased substantially.** In order to keep each book group smaller than 20 students, more book groups have had to be offered, especially as the number of Presidential Scholars has grown. Thus, students have had more options to choose from, and seem to have become more excited about the choices as time has gone on. Rating their excitement about the semester's choices on a scale of 1-5 (5 = Very excited), the percentage of students answering 4 or 5 went from 24% to 36% to 49% from spring/fall 2018 to spring 2019 to fall 2019 respectively. Although excitement is still not especially high, it is trending in the right direction.
- **Students increasingly perceive the book discussions as worthwhile.** Since assessment began in 2018, students have reported a steady and substantial increase in how worthwhile they perceive the book discussions to be. One survey question asks, "Do you feel that participating in a book club is a worthwhile experience?" rated on a scale of 1-5 (1 = Not at all worthwhile, 5 = Very worthwhile). The percentage of students answering 4 or 5 went from 55% to 59% to 71% from spring/fall 2018 to spring 2019 to fall 2019 respectively.
- **Students generally find their discussions to be engaging.** Although students are generally not very excited about the book options for any given semester (see above), they generally find the discussions to be engaging. Rating how engaging they found their book discussion on a scale of 1-5 (5 = Very engaging), the percentage of students answering 4 or 5 was 82%, 72%, and 89% in spring/fall 2018, spring 2019, and fall 2019 respectively.
- **The book discussions appear to be genuinely valuable.** The large discrepancy between the fairly low levels of excitement the students report about the book choices, and the highly engaging discussions they mostly report experiencing, suggests that students are getting more out of the book discussions than they expected. Speculatively, students might be reporting low excitement about the book choices because they are unfamiliar with the books. However, when students read and discuss the books, they report an engaging and worthwhile experience.
- **The student culture seems to be shifting to embrace the book discussions.** Anecdotally, based on observation and participation as a discussion leader in the past, Aletheia book discussions had not been especially engaging experiences. Getting students to speak up could be hard work. However, this seems to be changing. Based on informal observation of discussions held in the Honors Center, the discussions now seem to be qualitatively different. The assessment data reported above, albeit for only three semesters, seem to bear this out. As a further data point, students are asked in the survey how much of their book they had read. The percentage of students responding "All of it" or "Most of it" went from 78% to 83% to 96%, from spring/fall 2018 to spring 2019 to fall 2019. Tentatively, then, it would appear that engagement with the books is becoming more of a social norm within the Aletheia Club.
- **Absenteeism remains a problem.** The observations above apply, of course, only to those students who actually attended their book discussions. Troublingly high numbers of students fail to attend the discussion they have registered for, sometimes for clearly valid reasons, sometimes less so. In spring 2019, for example,

of 182 students registered for a book discussion, 32 (18%) did not attend. What to do in these instances remains a challenge.

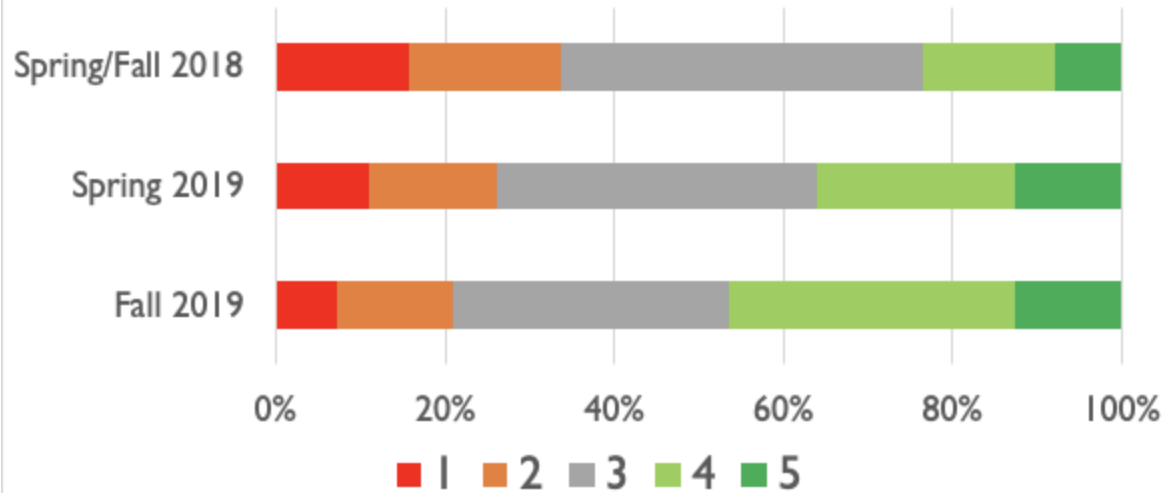
- **Interest in participation is growing among non-Presidential Scholars.** Even as some Presidential Scholarship students might perceive book discussions as a burdensome irritant, the growing number of discussions, and their greater visibility through being held in the Honors Center, is now attracting interest outside of this group of students. Additional book groups have been planned for spring 2019 (a total of 15 groups, with 14 different books), to make a limited number of spaces available to students who genuinely want to participate, as distinct from being required to participate. Books for non-Presidential Scholarship students will be purchased using Honors Program and other funds. If the pilot is successful, we will have to devote serious thought to scaling up the available spaces for these other students.
- **What we are doing with the book discussion requirement seems to be working.** Smaller and more numerous book discussions, with a wide diversity of faculty and administrator discussion leaders, and challenging, relevant books, combined with the opportunity in several cases to meet the authors, seem to be bringing about a positive shift in attitude among students regarding the value of the book discussions.

**Graphs showing student responses to four survey questions regarding Aletheia book discussions.** Simply put, red and orange are negative responses (undesirable), light green and green are positive responses (desirable). Over time, the proportion of positive responses increases, and the proportion of negative responses decreases. Over 100 students responded to the survey in each semester/time period.

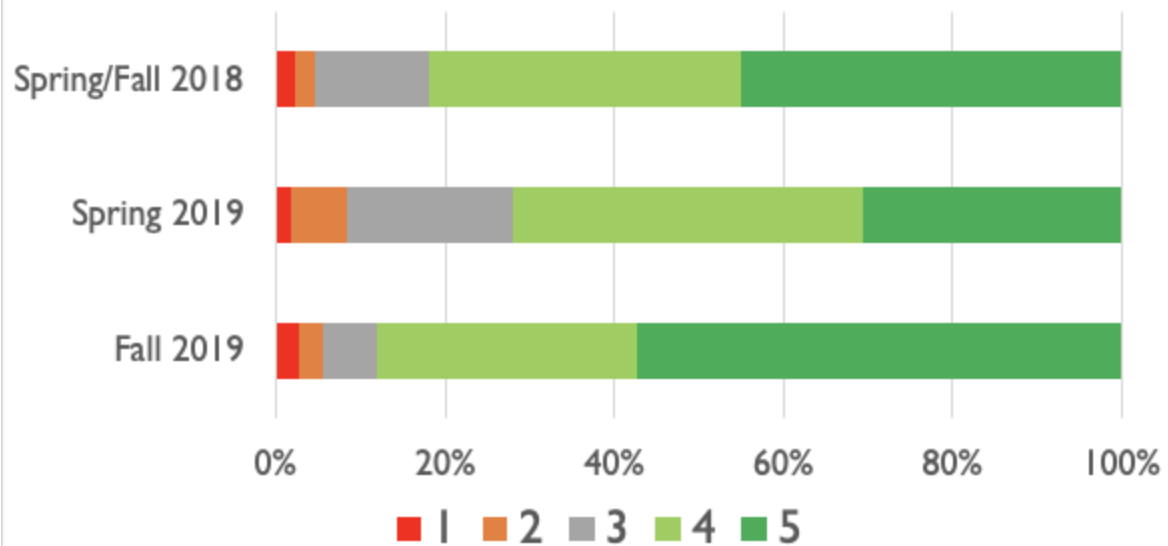


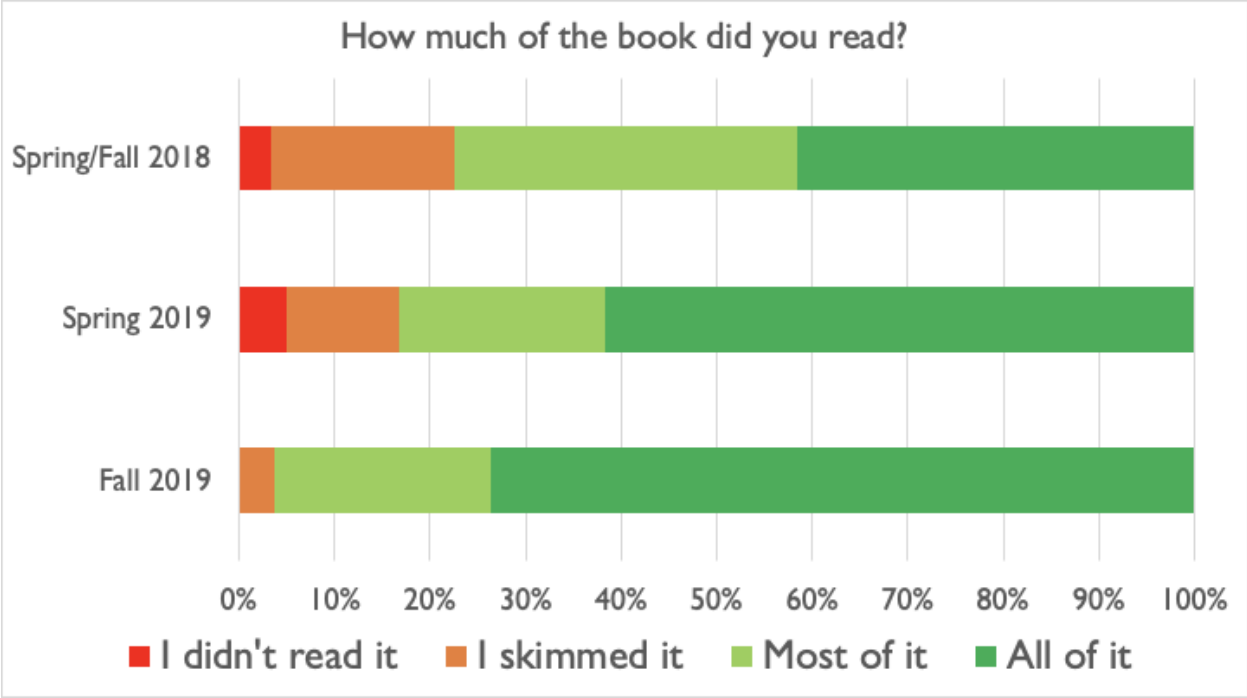
How excited were you about the overall choices for this semester?

(1= Not at all excited, 5= Very excited)



How engaging did you find today's discussion?  
(1= Not at all engaging, 5 = Very engaging)





**Table showing basic data on Aletheia book discussions, from fall 2017**

	Total number of book discussions	Total number of students	Average number of students per discussion	Average engagement score	Total number of author visits
FALL 2017	5	110	22		0
SPRING 2018	9	135	15		4
FALL 2018	8	107	13.4	4.2	0
SPRING 2019	12	182	15.2	3.9	4
FALL 2019	9	99	11	4.4	0
SPRING 2020	15				6 (planned)

**Aletheia Community Service Requirement**

The community service requirement has not been formally assessed. However, Weber State University holds a Carnegie Community Engagement classification, and there is considerable expertise among faculty, especially current and former leadership of the Center for Community Engaged Learning. Discussions with these faculty indicate that there is considerable room for improving the educational impact of the Aletheia community

service requirement. For example, students are currently required to complete 12 hours of service over a year, while best practice suggests a minimum of 15-18 hours. At present, there is no reflection framework, while best practice suggests both a reflection after the service component, and a “pre-reflection” beforehand. There is considerable scope for accomplishing significant, meaningful work using the Aletheia service requirement-- at present there are nearly 400 Presidential Scholars, making for a combined total of nearly 5000 hours of service. Harnessing these hours in pursuit of a common goal could have significant educational benefits for students, and significant benefits for community partners. Exactly how this could be done remains to be seen. Revising the Aletheia community service requirement therefore remains a work in progress.

### **Effects of Changing the Presidential Scholarship GPA Requirement**

In summer 2017, following a recommendation from educational consultants Ruffalo Noel Levitz, the Scholarship Office decided to change the minimum GPA needed for Presidential Scholarship holders to retain their scholarship, from 3.75 to 2.5. This change was expected to help with student retention and student success, and was more in line with national norms. Specific intended advantages of the reduced GPA requirement for students were:

- Improved student mental health and well being (less stress)
- Greater freedom to explore the curriculum more widely, taking the occasional risk on a class with the knowledge that a slight mis-step no longer meant the possible loss of a \$24,000 scholarship.
- Likely little/no lowering of student performance, because we anticipate that Presidential Scholars are sufficiently motivated to maintain high GPAs by other factors, such as identity as an academically successful student, or the need to maintain a high GPA for life after graduation (including graduate and professional school or job applications).

The Honors Program was tasked with assessing the effects of the GPA change, to determine if it was in fact having the desired effects. The Honors Faculty Advisory Board worked to identify a number of measures that would be useful, which were narrowed down to a manageable number for survey purposes. Dr. Heather Chapman, Director of Academic Analytics, oversaw the wording and compilation of the survey, and in October 2019 the Honors team sent it to all students affected by the change in GPA requirement. Analysis of the survey results are still ongoing, but some immediate highlights include the following:

- **Response rate:** 90 students out of 167 Presidential Scholars who experienced the GPA change (i.e. juniors and seniors) completed the survey, for a response rate of 54%.
- **Concern about current GPA:** Just over half (51.1%) of respondents reported being very concerned about their current GPA (percentage answering “A great deal” or “A lot”). 40% were much less concerned (percentage answering “A little” or “Not at all”).
- **Freedom to explore the curriculum:** Regarding students’ freedom to take more, different, or more challenging classes, 58% of respondents stated that the GPA change had not affected their choice of classes at all. 42% had been freed up to expand their choice of classes to some degree (percentage answering “A little”, “A moderate amount”, “A lot”, or “A great deal”).

- However, the students affected by the GPA change are juniors and seniors (freshmen and sophomores came in with the 2.5 GPA requirement). Thus, many respondents were not free to take different classes, not because of the high required GPA, but because their majors and/or post-graduate educational goals require a specific set of classes, with little or no leeway to explore the curriculum at this stage in their academic careers. This group constitutes 27 students (30% of the total).
- Removing these students from the calculations changes the outlook. Of the remaining 62 students, 60% indicated some greater freedom in class selection due to the GPA requirement change (percentage answering “A little”, “A moderate amount”, “A lot”, or “A great deal”).
- **Mental health:** 18% of qualitative responses indicated reduced stress or increased confidence due to the changed GPA requirement.
- **Loss of elite esprit de corps:** A small number of students felt that the GPA was now too low. They reported taking pride in belonging to an elite group, and the now much lower required GPA has taken this away.
- **Effect on student GPA:** It is not yet possible to assess whether the lowered GPA requirement has allowed students to “slack off” and perform less well academically. More time must pass before there are enough years after the change to assess the effects pre- versus post. However, several students reported that they strive for high GPAs anyway, either because they want to, or because they need to for their post-graduation plans.

In sum, an initial assessment of the survey results suggest that lowering the required GPA from 3.75 to 2.5 has had many, if not most, of the intended effects. Affected students generally see the change as a positive development, although a small number are disappointed that the required GPA is now so low.

#### **7.d Assessment of Phi Kappa Phi Activities**

The Weber State University chapter of The National Honors Society of Phi Kappa Phi (chapter 119) holds an annual induction ceremony and banquet each November, a call for participation in the national fellowship awards competition each spring semester, and various other activities during the year as student vice presidents have the capacity to organize them. The number of initiates has varied considerably over the last five years, as shown in the table below. However, regardless of the year, the numbers represent a very large increase over the previous years, when the chapter was effectively moribund, and no induction ceremonies were held. The chapter’s performance in recruiting new initiates has been sufficiently impressive that the national office has awarded chapter 119 the Circle of Excellence award at the Platinum level (the highest). This award is given based on growth in membership.

**Table showing number of people inducted into Phi Kappa Phi each year, 2015-2019.**

<i>Induction Year</i>	<i>Number of Initiates</i>
2015	59
2016	110
2017	77
2018	94
2019	44

Furthermore, chapter 119 has been increasingly successful in nominating student members for national fellowship awards. Since each chapter may only nominate one student for consideration at the national level, the process involves a preliminary chapter-level screening and selection. Chapter officers then work with the selected student to hone and polish their application, for the greatest chance of success. The Honors Program's oversight of chapter 119 began in fall 2016. In spring 2017, one student expressed interest in applying, but was unsuccessful. In spring 2018, one student expressed interest in applying, and was successful, earning a \$5000 award to pursue a Master's degree at Oxford University in the UK. In spring 2019, our chapter-level promotion and screening process was finally operational: four students applied at the chapter level, one was selected, and was successful, earning a \$5000 award to pursue a Master's degree at the University of Utah.

### **7.e Assessment of Activities Pertaining to National and Prestigious Scholarships and Fellowships**

There is some overlap here with Phi Kappa Phi activities: our recent success with students earning Phi Kappa Phi fellowships for graduate study surely count as national and prestigious fellowships. However, there are many other possible awards in this area, including Fulbright, Marshall, and Rhodes Scholarships. Realistically, the resources allocated to the Honors Program have been insufficient to pursue these in anything other than the most rudimentary fashion. However, some activities have taken place. In fall 2016, one student applied for both Marshall and Rhodes scholarships, to pursue graduate study at Oxford University in the UK. The current Honors Program Director worked extensively with the student, and, although the scholarship applications were unsuccessful, the student was admitted to Oxford, and completed a Master's degree.

The current Honors Program Director serves as the campus program advisor for students for Marshall, Rhodes, and Fulbright Programs, having been tasked by the Provost's Office with doing so. In 2018, he was selected (in a competitive process) to participate in the Fulbright Program Advisor Professional Development Initiative, an intensive 4-5 day training held in Washington DC and New York City. Two Fulbright promotional events have been held in the Honors Center, in spring 2017 and fall 2018,



attracting 4 and 6 students respectively. None of the students ended up submitting an application.

At present, Honors simply lacks the resources to do everything it has been tasked with. Serious pursuit of national and prestigious scholarships and fellowships has not been a priority for the Provost's Office, and therefore has not been a priority for the Honors Program. Based on insights gained from the Fulbright Program Advisor Professional Development Initiative, Weber State students could very easily be competitive for Fulbright awards. The arrival of the new Honors Program Assistant Director in January 2020 should allow the more serious pursuit of this area of Honors responsibility.

## **8. RELATIONSHIPS WITH EXTERNAL COMMUNITIES**

The Honors Program and/or Honors or Aletheia students do interact with external communities. However, with a few exceptions, the relationships are generally not formalized or structured. This section identifies the more limited, but more structured, relationships first, then the more extensive, less structured relationships.

### **8.a. Off-Campus Authors**

As noted earlier, the Honors Program has developed relationships with various entities on campus who bring high-profile authors or public intellectuals to the university (for example, SPARC, the College of Arts & Humanities, the National Undergraduate Literature Conference). We have been extremely fortunate to engage these campus visitors in small-group conversations and Q & A sessions with Honors and Aletheia students. Details are provided earlier, in the discussion of Honors events.

### **8.b Honors Alumni Board**

Starting in 2017, Honors developed relationships with four alumni, who were willing to serve on an embryonic Honors Alumni Board. We have met generally once a year for updates on the health of the program, and for brainstorming sessions. However, due to serious time constraints on the part of the Honors Director, this group has remained underutilized. At present, we simply lack the capacity for serious follow-through with the Alumni Board, and this is an area of concern.

### **8. c Aletheia Service Requirements**

As noted earlier, students on Presidential Scholarships are required to complete 12 hours of community service each year. This represents a significant opportunity for engagement with external communities. However, again due to capacity limitations, but also due to the structure of the program as it was inherited, this remains an unrealized opportunity. With close to 400 students, 12 hours per student represents nearly 5000 hours of work that could go into a coherent community project (or set of projects). At present, Aletheia Club participants engage with a wide variety of community partners in order to complete their service requirements. Examples include the Ogden Nature Center, Catholic Community Services, Youth Impact, Habitat for Humanity, Boys and Girls Clubs, and local schools. Data on which organizations students have completed their service hours with is available through the program review website.

In future, if capacity allows, it would be desirable to work with the Center for Community Engaged Learning to identify a small number of community partners, and focus student efforts there. This could serve as the foundation for a more meaningful engagement of students with their service requirement, as noted earlier in section 7, Assessment. Furthermore, students would have greater clarity on what counts as valid service.

## 9. RESULTS OF PREVIOUS PROGRAM REVIEWS

The Honors Program was last reviewed in fall 2014, by a three-person team that included the current Honors Program Director, Dan Bedford. The team made a number of trenchant recommendations, some of which have been implemented since 2016-17. (As far as is possible to tell, none of the recommendations were implemented until this time.) However, several factors have conspired to limit the extent to which recommendations from the 2014 review could be implemented, specifically:

- Large shift in the balance between workload and resources starting in 2016-17, limiting the capacity of the Honors Program to implement changes on our own initiative.
- Significant new responsibilities that required new processes and systems in order to manage.
- A realization that the substantial decline in University Honors students, and to some extent General Honors students, represented a looming existential threat requiring urgent attention.
- Renovation of the Honors Center and classroom, altering the configuration of both spaces.

In many respects, the Honors Program today is a significantly different institution from the one that was reviewed in 2014. Some recommendations remain pertinent, but some do not; of those recommendations that remain pertinent, many cannot be pursued due to lack of resources. Each recommendation from the 2014 review, and the action taken, if any, is described and explained below.

### 1. Advising

#### a. **Include Departmental Honors advisors on the list of advisors made available to students.**

**Action taken:** Information about the list referred to in this recommendation was lost with the rapid staff turnover. However, we worked closely with the IT Division to build a new online app (accessed through the eWeber portal) that now contains most or all of the functions of lists of advisors.

#### b. **Institutionalize high-impact advising practices:** The long-serving Honors Advisor, Marilyn Diamond, was recognized as a key team member, and critical to the success of students in the Honors Program. Her imminent retirement was seen as potentially challenging for the Program, and this recommendation was aimed at ensuring that the practices did not leave when Marilyn did.

**Action taken:** Marilyn worked closely with the person who now holds her position, Megan Moulding, for a year prior to Marilyn's departure. Although much of what Marilyn did was impossible to distill and replicate, the overlap was helpful—and Megan brings her own style, expertise and strengths to the role.

### 2. Aletheia

#### a. **Fine-tune the GPA requirements for Presidential Scholarship students:** The review team was struck by the eye-wateringly high GPA (3.75) required for students to maintain their scholarships. Because these students were, at the time, required to take on Honors class per year, the Honors Program bore some responsibility for their success. This recommendation advocated tracking the

performance and path to completion of Presidential Scholars, to see if adjusting the GPA requirements was necessary and/or desirable.

**Action taken:** The Aletheia Club—which manages three requirements that Presidential Scholars must meet to maintain their scholarship—was made the responsibility of the Honors Program in fall 2017. Thus, the oversight of these students became far more tangibly the role of the Honors Program. However, following a recommendation to senior administration by consultants Ruffalo Noel Levitz, the GPA requirement was lowered to 2.5, essentially alleviating the issue, a move which the Honors Program has welcomed.

**b. Identify and minimize any adverse impacts of Aletheia Presidential**

**Scholarship students:** The original concern here was with student risk aversion due to the very high GPA requirement, but other potential adverse impacts were not ruled out.

**Action taken:** None until 2016-17. Large increases in students accepting Presidential Scholarship offers became apparent, coincident with the Honors Program taking over the Aletheia Club. This meant that Honors had much greater responsibility for these students' success, especially an obligation to ensure that sufficient Honors classes were being offered for them to meet their scholarship requirement to take one Honors class per year. The urgency of this situation has led to a rapid scaling down of the Honors class requirement. Originally one Honors class per year, this was changed in fall 2018 to at least one Honors class per year until three are completed, then changed again for fall 2019 to at least one Honors class per year until two are completed. The intended impacts of this change are to make the number of Honors classes that need to be offered in any given semester manageable (and not a crisis), and to free up room in Honors classes for students who are choosing to be there (rather than required to be there). The actual impacts of this scaling-down of the Honors class requirement remain to be seen.

**3. Funding**

**a. Establish a formal budget, with regular increases:** A feature of a well-developed Honors program is an annual budget, as opposed to ad hoc funding from administration. The suggestion of regular budget increases was based on the idea that there had been an increase of over 200% in the number of students over a four-year period.

**Action taken:** There is now a formal budget-setting process followed each year. However, the idea of regular increases in the budget is unrealistic. The growth numbers relied upon for this argument did not take into account that the growth was almost entirely in Departmental Honors, which was (and remains) largely divorced from the Honors Program. General and University Honors, which university administration rightly sees as more indicative of the health of the program, were very low and/or shrinking at the time of the review and for a few years thereafter, and were the justification for cutting resources and increasing workload.

**b. Strengthen ties with the Development Office,** by working more closely with the dedicated Development Officer, and/or placing Honors students as interns within the Development Office.

- Action taken:** Honors has been fortunate to have had two excellent Development Officers over the last three years. Colby Peterson was himself a WSU Honors alum, and had good, close knowledge of what Honors classes were like. Taylor Knuth as taken over very recently, and provides similarly excellent support for Honors fundraising. Taylor has attended Honors events in order to strengthen his familiarity with the program as it is currently configured.
- c. **Create a prioritized needs list for donor support**, with a range of dollar amounts and a number of itemized uses for those funds, up to and including multi-million dollar donations (e.g. to support Honors Study Abroad).  
**Action taken:** None. Again, this is a good idea, but turnover in Development Officers, and workload for the Honors team, has made this impossible to date.
  - d. **Invite all donors to the Nye Banquet**, and recognize their generosity at this event.  
**Action taken:** None as yet, but this is a good idea.

#### 4. Honors Center

- a. **Keep the Honors Center open late:** To allow students access to a valuable study space, it was recommended to keep the Honors Center open after faculty and staff have gone home.  
**Action taken:** This recommendation was followed until the Center was renovated. With the arrival of the new program director at the same time, this practice was lost. With current resource constraints, it will be difficult to reinstate. However, it will be interesting to find out from the current review if the demand from students is still there.
- b. **Begin holding movie screenings and discussions:** “The Prof Picks the Flick” was suggested as an example of how this could work.  
**Action taken:** After the large-format screen was installed in the Honors Center in summer 2018, we began holding monthly “Movie Night in the Afternoon” events along the lines suggested.

#### 5. Marketing

- a. **Cultivate a relationship with the *Standard-Examiner***, specifically the education editor.  
**Action taken:** None. This is a good idea, and would be great to pursue, but time, energy and bandwidth are limited resources, especially considering the turnover of reporters at the *Standard* in recent years. However, we have built a relationship with the campus newspaper, The Signpost, through advertising, promoting events for coverage, and through working with the Signpost’s faculty advisor, Jean Norman, who has taught an Honors class and led an Aletheia book discussion, among other connections.
- b. **Make greater use of social media:** The review specifically encouraged Honors to establish a presence on Facebook, though use of other social media was encouraged by implication.  
**Action taken:** With the complete turnover of Honors staff and the hiring of a team of young, social media-savvy individuals, the increased use of social media has

occurred organically. Although Honors has a Facebook page, we probably make greater use of Instagram. All team members (with the exception of the more curmudgeonly Director) make excellent contributions to social media; Daniela Salcido Benavides's dedication to the Honors Instagram feed is especially noteworthy. In truth, we struggle philosophically to some degree with using social media in general, and Facebook in particular, as growing evidence indicates that social media use is bad for individuals' mental health, as well as for the effective functioning of democracy. However, at present, there seems to be little practical alternative to embracing it.

- c. **Establish a permanent presence in the Union Building or other high-traffic area:** For example, a dedicated TV monitor in the Union building could continuously show videos that advertise the Honors Program's upcoming activities and events. **Action taken:** It is not feasible for Honors to take over a dedicated monitor in the Union Building. However, events have been advertised in the last three years using this pathway. We will be careful to include this as standard practice for promoting events.

## 6. Outreach

- a. **Expand Departmental Honors and strengthen the connection with the Honors Program:** More departments could and should offer Departmental Honors options for students, especially within the School of Business and Economics. Departmental Honors should require that at least some general education courses be met via Honors classes. **Action taken:** None. The loss of an Honors team member dedicated to oversight of Departmental Honors has made pursuit of this recommendation impossible. Managing Departmental Honors will be a specific task of the newly-appointed Assistant Director of Honors.
- b. **Collaboration between the Honors Student Advisory Council and other student groups:** The Honors Student Advisory Council should look into collaborating with other student groups across campus. **Action taken:** Again, this is a good idea. However, considerable effort has had to go into simply getting the student board back on its feet. The group is now active and dynamic, and by establishing this as the norm, the group should remain this way in the future. There is no reason why Honors students should not pursue collaborations across campus. Indeed, one consequence of moving the Aletheia Club into the Honors Program has been the need to merge Honors and Aletheia Student Advisory Boards into a single one, known as HASAB (Honors and Aletheia Student Advisory Board).

## 7. Program Structure

- a. **Continue refining assessment tools and strategies,** and possibly convene more frequent meetings with Honors faculty to discuss assessment and its use in improving classes. **Action taken:** Assessment includes student evaluations of classes, faculty self-evaluations/reflections, and faculty assessment of learning outcomes, especially general education learning outcomes. The existing system for student evaluations provides little meaningful information either to faculty or to the director, and

since switching to an online evaluation system, student response numbers have been very low. A substantial overhaul is needed; however, this needs to be done correctly, and again, there has not been sufficient time or resources to investigate assessment approaches with any depth. General education learning outcomes have not been assessed with any real rigour until quite recently. Starting in fall 2019, the director began meeting individually with each faculty member teaching an Honors general education class, to discuss possible approaches to assessing learning outcomes for the class, and to ensure that faculty understand what is needed and how to submit results. The intention is to make these meetings a regular part of faculty preparation for the semester, and thereby improve the quality and regularity of assessment of general education learning outcomes in Honors classes. Additional meetings during the semester are not possible given the level of activity currently maintained by the Honors Program. Adding another meeting is unrealistic. However, Honors now holds an open house on the last Friday of classes each semester, and this provides an informal opportunity for discussion of what worked/did not work for faculty in their classes.

- b. Departmental versus University Honors:** The reviewers were struck by language in the 2014 self-study report indicating that it was foreseeable that University Honors would eventually wither away, to be replaced by Departmental Honors, and that this outcome was perfectly acceptable (and inevitable). The reviewers' recommendation was to not allow that to happen, seeing the two forms of Honors as complementary.

**Action taken:** Essentially no action was taken until 2016-17, at which point the new director pursued recruitment to General and University Honors as if the life of the program depended on it (several indicators suggested that it did). The numbers of students enrolled in General and University Honors have increased dramatically. The focus now can shift to ensuring those students actually complete their Honors requirements and graduate from the program.

## **10. SUMMARY**

### **10.a Major Changes in the Honors Program Over the Last Five Years**

Very substantial changes have been brought to the Honors Program over the last five years, in the form of greatly expanded responsibilities contemporaneous with cuts to resources and a 100% turnover in staff. At the same time, the Honors Program has moved into a recently renovated, excellent space in the library, the Honors Center. In sum, the last five years-- most especially the last three years-- has seen significant new challenges, and new opportunities, mainly, though not exclusively, associated with substantial new tasks and responsibilities.

These are as follows:

- **Taking over management of the WSU chapter of Phi Kappa Phi.**
- **Serving as point of contact for students seeking national/prestigious scholarships and fellowships.**
- **Taking over responsibility for the Aletheia Club and Presidential Scholars.**

The latter task has been by far the most significant. Very few Weber State students apply for national and prestigious scholarships, and in the absence of a serious effort to build a culture of applying (and receiving) these awards, this will continue to be the case. Running Phi Kappa Phi is time consuming but manageable. Managing the Aletheia Club, by contrast, is a very large task indeed.

Presidential Scholars must maintain a GPA of 2.5 (changed from 3.75 in fall 2018), and must complete three other requirements: participate in a book reading and discussion once per year; complete 12 hours of community service each year; and take at least one Honors class per year until two have been completed. The Aletheia Club is the framework through which the latter requirements are organized and met. Presidential Scholars now number 379 at last count. Trying to balance this large infusion of students—who are required to take Honors classes whether they want to or not—with the Honors ethos of maintaining small class sizes has necessitated a rapid scaling up of the number of classes offered. Meeting demand for Honors classes for 392 students would require 27 Honors sections per year, if the class size was capped at 15 (the historical norm for Honors classes), and not accounting for demand from other, non-Presidential Scholarship students. Factoring in demand from General and University Honors students raises the number of classes required to meet demand to unrealistic and/or unsustainable levels.

From these events stem the major challenges and opportunities for the Honors Program as it now stands. The rapid growth in Presidential Scholarship students threatens to overwhelm the Honors Program. In the last two years, the Honors class requirement has been cut twice, from one class per year, to at least one class per year until three were completed, to at least one class per year until two are completed. The transition in management from the Provost's Office to the Honors Program is now complete, and Honors now has autonomy in making decisions such as these. Presidential Scholars are almost uniformly excellent students, and enliven any class. They are an asset to the Honors Program. However, their sheer numbers have tended to make it difficult for other students to find room in Honors classes, and because many (indeed most) such students are not taking Honors classes out of a desire to pursue General or University Honors, but in order to meet a scholarship requirement, the numbers of students completing General and University Honors has remained low.

On the opportunity side, Presidential Scholars are highly motivated academically, and are generally eager to learn. The fact that the Aletheia Club is now managed by Honors has



improved communication about the nature of the Honors Program and the types of Honors available. Increasing numbers of Presidential Scholars are electing to become Honors students as well, although this has mainly been due to the increase in total numbers of Presidential Scholars, rather than an increase in the proportion of these students joining Honors.

The enlistment of a completely new team of Honors staff has also brought challenges and opportunities. On the one hand, an enormous amount of institutional memory was lost when Marilyn Diamond retired, after over 25 years with the Honors Program. On the other hand, an entirely new team brings fresh perspectives and abilities. In this case, social media skills have been a notable strength.

However, the very substantial challenges faced by the Honors Program are bringing this team close to the failure point. The need to grow authentic demand for Honors has necessitated a much higher campus profile than was the case in previous years, making for many more events. This raising of the Honors profile has had to occur while simultaneously managing a large and growing group of Presidential Scholarship students (nearly 400 at last count). The demands on the Honors staff are real and substantial, and it is far from certain that the current situation can be sustained.

### **10.b Major Accomplishments and Strengths**

The Honors Program has seen major successes and improvements in almost every area of responsibility. The number of General and University Honors students over the last five years follows a “hockey stick” curve, of gradual decline followed by rapid increase, the increases beginning around 2017. Honors students are increasingly diverse. Ever-more faculty, at all career levels and from every college at the university, are teaching Honors classes. Significant new donations to the Honors Program have been secured. Aletheia book discussions are measurably more effective. Phi Kappa Phi inductions have increased, to the point where the WSU chapter has been awarded the Circle of Excellence- Platinum level (the highest), for chapter growth, by the national office, in each of the last two years (fall 2018 and fall 2019). One student in each of the last two years has successfully applied for significant funding from Phi Kappa Phi for graduate study. Major strengths include the excellent Honors Program staff, facilities-- the Honors Center is an excellent, versatile, and increasingly well-used space-- and a rotating cast of engaged, committed, creative faculty.

In this sense, the Honors Program is surely a success story. However, it is far from clear how these achievements can be sustained. As noted earlier, the effort involved in bringing these successes to Weber State students and faculty has been enormous. The roughly quadrupling of the numbers of Presidential Scholarship students over the last five years, from 85 to 392, has been especially challenging to manage, and the strain on Honors staff is becoming increasingly obvious. In the absence of additional staff, it is likely that we will have to scale back on effort in coming years, or see staff retention develop into a problem.

## 10.c Areas for Improvement

The self study report identifies several areas for improvement. These are:

- **Honors assessment.** The current assessment process for Honors classes is deeply flawed. The student evaluation instrument is inadequate, and assessment overall is unwieldy, requiring faculty and students to respond across three different platforms at the end of each semester (one of these is common to both faculty and students, so each group utilizes two platforms). The Evidence of Learning grid, for faculty reporting of student accomplishment of learning outcomes, is standardized across the university and not well suited to reporting from Honors classes. In short, a wholesale redesign of most, if not all, aspects of assessment of Honors classes is needed. (Other areas of assessment, for example assessment of Aletheia book discussions, are effective.) However, this must wait until a university-level discussion of student assessment of classes is completed; furthermore, a redesign of the assessment process should follow a redesign of Honors curriculum, which may also be needed, as noted below.
- **Honors curriculum.** The Honors curriculum was designed in the late 1980s or early-mid 1990s. It may have been effective then, but times (and students) have changed. We currently have a 1990s-era curriculum for a 2020s-era student body. While our commitment to face-to-face classes remains absolute, there may be other ways to update the Honors curriculum. In particular, students who come to the Honors Program even as early as their sophomore year are often coming to the program too late. Completing University Honors realistically requires completing General Honors, and students who begin General Honors later than their freshman year are unlikely to complete it. A more flexible set of requirements might be needed in order to allow students access to the full range of benefits of taking Honors classes. A revised curriculum might also help with another challenge, that of low completion rates (see below). However, curriculum revision should follow a possible revision of the mission statement to place the student experience as the focus of Honors. Once the student qualities that can be developed by Honors have been identified, and codified in a new mission statement, the curriculum needed to bring out these qualities can be established, and an assessment plan devised that will tell us whether we are, in fact, accomplishing what we set out to accomplish.
- **Completion rates.** Although the number of students enrolled in General and University Honors has followed a pleasing “hockey stick” curve, the number of students actually completing the requirements for either of these Honors areas remains stubbornly low. There are several possible reasons for this, but one is the curriculum challenges noted above; another is the difficulty for students of finding Honors classes that work with their schedules. This difficulty is caused or exacerbated by the explosion in the number of Presidential Scholarship students who need Honors classes to meet their scholarship requirements.
- **Diversity and inclusive excellence.** Although the current Honors student body is the most diverse of the last five years, it remains overwhelmingly white and traditional. Progress has been made in this area, but not enough.
- **National and prestigious scholarships and fellowships.** The Honors Director was given responsibility for these in fall 2016. No serious effort has been made to build a campus culture of applying for Fulbright, Marshall, Rhodes, or other scholarships, and such a culture is essential if this is to become an area of campus life.

Key to strengthen these areas is additional staffing. Cases were made in section 3.f for two new Honors staff positions: a full time Aletheia Club coordinator, and a full time Equity Coordinator. If either one of these were funded, it would make an enormous difference to the capacity of the Honors Program to continue serving as a foundation for student success. A new Assistant Director quarter-time faculty position starts in January, which will help with assessment and building a campus culture of applying for scholarships and fellowships. However, this position is really only allowing Honors to address the tasks assigned to the program (there were so many of these added after fall 2016 that several simply dropped by the wayside). The new position does not allow for expansion of capacity into new areas, such as growing diversity and inclusive excellence.

### **10.d Areas of Focus for the Review Team**

Specific areas for the review team to consider are as follows:

- **Staffing.** Our sense is that current staffing levels are not adequate for the range and intensity of the tasks assigned to the Honors Program. An objective, outside perspective on this would be welcome.
- **Curriculum.** How can the Honors curriculum be revised to improve flexibility, and make it easier for students to complete General and/or University Honors?
- **Completion.** Are there other obstacles, besides curriculum, to student completion of General and/or University Honors? If so, how can they be resolved?
- **Assessment.** Assessment of Honors classes is a significant area of weakness. How can this be improved?
- **Aletheia Presidential Scholars.** How can the Aletheia Club/Presidential Scholarship students be more effectively integrated into the Honors Program? For example, perhaps Honors students could be allowed into the Aletheia book discussions? If so, this raises the prospect of allowing Honors students to complete service hour requirements as well, potentially opening up the Aletheia Club to students who are not on Presidential Scholarships. It could be that Presidential Scholars are *required* to complete Aletheia, while Honors students have the *option* of doing so. This is one possibility. What other approaches might be effective?

**APPENDIX A**

**Student and Faculty Statistical Summary**

Data provided by WSU Office of Institutional Effectiveness.

	<b>2014-15</b>	<b>2015-16</b>	<b>2016-17</b>	<b>2017-18</b>	<b>2018-19*</b>
<b>Student Credit Hours Total<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>702</b>	<b>813</b>	<b>858</b>	<b>1,122</b>	<b>1,234</b>
<b>Student FTE Total<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>23.40</b>	<b>27.10</b>	<b>28.60</b>	<b>37.40</b>	<b>41.13</b>
<b>Enrollments<sup>3</sup></b>					
General Honors	95	62	43	85	157
University Honors	33	29	18	25	68
Departmental Honors	171	144	196	308	283
<b>Program Graduates<sup>4</sup></b>					
General Honors	6	1	4	2	7
University Honors	2	7	4	2	4
Departmental Honors	90	107	103	129	102
<b>Student Demographic Profile<sup>5</sup></b>					
General Honors					
Female	65%	64%	69%	55%	61%
Male	35%	36%	31%	45%	39%
University Honors					
Female	71%	68%	64%	67%	74%
Male	29%	32%	36%	33%	26%
Departmental Honors					
Female	62%	67%	59%	67%	68%
Male	38%	33%	41%	33%	32%
<b>Faculty FTE Total<sup>6</sup></b>	<b>0.79</b>	<b>1.29</b>	<b>1.21</b>	<b>1.12</b>	n/a
Adjunct FTE	0.79	1.01	1.13	<b>1.07</b>	n/a
Contract FTE	0	0.28	0.08	0.05	n/a
<b>Student/Faculty Ratio<sup>7</sup></b>	<b>29.62</b>	<b>21.01</b>	<b>23.64</b>	<b>33.39</b>	n/a

\*Data for 2018-19 are preliminary findings and subject to change.

•**Student Credit Hours Total** represents the total department-related credit hours for all students per academic year. Includes only students reported in Banner system as registered for credit at the time of data downloads.

•**Student FTE Total** is the Student Credit Hours Total divided by 30.

•**Enrollment** is the number of students currently enrolled in each area of Honors.

•**Program Graduates** is the number of students who complete Honors requirements for each Honors area per academic year.

•**Student Demographic Profile** shows the number of male/female students enrolled in each area of Honors.

•**Faculty FTE** is the aggregate of contract and adjunct instructors during the fiscal year. Contract FTE includes instructional-related services done by "salaried" employees as part of their contractual commitments. Adjunct FTE includes instructional-related wages that are considered temporary or part-time basis. Adjunct wages include services provided at the Davis campus, along with on-line and Continuing Education courses.

•**Student/Faculty Ratio** is the Student FTE Total divided by the Faculty FTE Total. Because the Student FTE total includes departmental Honors students, the Faculty/Staff Ratio is misleadingly high. Most Honors classes have maximum enrollments of 15-16 students; rarely, they may be as large as 20 students, but never larger. Some of these classes are taught by two faculty.

**APPENDIX B  
Faculty & Staff Profile**

<b>FACULTY &amp; STAFF PROFILE</b>					
	Professional	Support	Student	Faculty	
<b>Female</b>	1	1	1		
<b>Male</b>				1	
<b>Degrees:</b>					
PhD, EdD				1	
MD, JD, MSW					
MA, MS, M.Ed.					
BA, BS	1	1			
AA, AAS, Certificate, etc.					
Some college			1		
<b>Years Experience in the Field:</b>				<b>Academic</b>	<b>Unit Specific</b>
None					
Less than 5	X	X	X		X
5-10					
11-15					
16-20					
More than 20				X	
<b>Full-time in Unit:</b>					
9/10 months	1				
12 months		1			
<b>Part-time in Unit:</b>					
9/10 months				1	
12 months					

## APPENDIX C

### Inventory of Current Equipment

<i>Asset</i>	<i>Manufacturer</i>	<i>Acq Date</i>	<i>Main user</i>
Streaming Media Processor	Extron	1/16/15	HNRS Center
Keyboard	Apple		HNRS Center
Camera	Sony		HNRS Center
Computer Speakers	Amazon	9/3/19	HNRS Center
Computer Desktop	Asus		Daniela Salcido Benavides
Computer	Apple		Daniela Salcido Benavides
LCD monitor	NEC		HNRS Center
Computer			HNRS Center
Printer	Brother		HNRS Center
Computer Tower	Starwest		HNRS Center
Computer Desktop	Asus		HNRS Center
Computer Desktop	Asus		HNRS Center
Computer Desktop	Asus		HNRS Center
Computer Desktop	Asus		HNRS Center
Computer Tower	Starwest		HNRS Center
Computer Tower	Starwest		HNRS Center

Computer Tower	Starwest		HNRS Center
Large-format LCD monitor	LC	7/12/18	HNRS Center
Soundbar		7/21/18	HNRS Center
Subwoofer		7/21/18	HNRS Center
Shredder	Fellows		HNRS Center
Networked printer	Sharp		HNRS Center
Wireless PA System with Microphone	Amazon	11/12/19	HNRS Center
Microwave			HNRS Kitchen
Refrigerator	LG	7/19/18	HNRS Kitchen
Portable Dishwasher	Amazon	10/18/18	HNRS Kitchen
Smartboard			HNRS Classroom
Computer Desktop	Asus		HNRS Classroom
Computer Tower	Starwest		HNRS Classroom
Projector			HNRS Classroom
DVD Player	Amazon	6/10/19	HNRS Classroom
Computer Desktop	ACER		Daniel Bedford
Computer Tower	Starwest		Daniel Bedford
Computer Speakers	LogiTech		Daniel Bedford



Computer Desktop			Megan Moulding
Computer Tower			Megan Moulding
Computer Speakers	LogiTech		Megan Moulding
Laptop	Asus		Megan Moulding
Laptop	Dell		Megan Moulding
Printer	Brother		Megan Moulding
Computer	Apple	8/23/18	Tia Nero
Computer Speakers	LogiTech		Tia Nero
Printer	Brother		Tia Nero
Computer Desktop	Asus	8/23/19	Tia Nero
Shredder	Amazon		Tia Nero

Shading indicates location of equipment within the Honors area.

Light shading: Main Honors Center area, LI 324.

Darker shading: Honors workroom, LI 324 E.

Darkest shading: Honors classroom, LI 325.

No shading: Honors kitchen LI 324 G, or individual offices.