

Program Review Evaluation of the Honors Program Weber State University

I. Introduction

On Thursday, October 1, 2020, the Program Review Team evaluated the Honors Program at Weber State University. Meetings were held virtually (due to COVID) from 8:30 am – 5:00 pm. The full schedule appears in Appendix A. The review team consisted of the following individuals:

- Dr. Richard Badenhausen (chair), Dean of the Honors College at Westminster College and Immediate Past President of NCHC
- Dr. Hal Crimmel, Chair of the Dept. of English Language & Literature, WSU
- Dr. Andrea Easter-Pilcher, Dean of the College of Science, WSU
- Dr. Kate McPherson, Director of the Honors Program at Utah Valley University
- Dr. Marjukka Ollilainen, Chair of the Dept. of Sociology & Anthropology, WSU

In advance of the visit, the team received a comprehensive, thoughtful, 89-page self-study from the honors program, which provided excellent context for the visit. The program review chair also engaged in a series of advance conversations with Dr. Dan Bedford, Director of the Honors Program, and the entire team benefitted from outstanding planning efforts by Dr. Bedford and the honors staff, Megan Moulding and Mar Muster.

In its self-study (prepared for a spring 2020 visit that was delayed by COVID), the honors program identified the following areas of focus (which are quoted from the Executive Summary):

- **Honors completion rates.** Although the number of students enrolling in Honors is growing, the number completing Honors requirements is not (yet). How can this be changed?
- **Honors curriculum structure.** One possible reason why completion rates are low is that students are unable to make the current requirements work with their schedules. Indeed, Honors may now have a 1990s-era curriculum structure for a 2020s-era student body. Objectively, if a student does not begin taking Honors

classes in their freshman year, it is very difficult for them to complete the requirements. What alternative curricular models exist that might be considered for WSU's Honors Program?

- **Assessment.** The current system for assessing the quality of Honors classes, and the amount of student learning taking place in them, is weak. However, assessing complex, multi-faceted Honors classes is not straightforward. What approaches might be implemented to improve assessment of Honors classes?
- **The Aletheia Club.** This is an umbrella organization that exists to organize and manage a set of requirements for students on Presidential Scholarships. The Honors Program was made responsible for the Aletheia Club in fall 2016, taking over completely in fall 2017. This group of students has grown very significantly, quadrupling over the last five years from 85 to 392 students. This growth threatens to overwhelm the Honors Program. Indeed, because Presidential Scholars are required to take Honors classes, there is little room for anyone else, which might be contributing to the low completion rates noted above. What, if anything, can be done to manage this situation? [NOTE: the 392 figure is from 2019-20, a number that has grown to 490 in fall 2020.]
- **Staffing levels.** Honors was given significant new responsibilities starting in fall 2016. By almost any measure, Honors is far more active today than it was four years ago. Are current staffing levels appropriate to the number, range, and depth of tasks required of the Honors Program by the university? Given that requests for new staff are commonplace, what alternative models might be proposed?

The program review team agrees these are excellent questions that raise issues requiring attention. This review folds these concerns into a series of themes to help the program and administration guide its work going forward.

The review team compliments the honors program leadership for the incredible progress it has made over the past five years. The team repeatedly heard praise from campus stakeholders for the creativity, hard work, and success of Dr. Bedford and his staff. But there is also a sense that the honors program is at a crucial inflection point due to massive growth over the past five years, resources that have not kept up, some confusion about what the actual goal

of honors is and who gets to answer that question, and most importantly concern about whether the honors leadership and staff can really be expected to sustain the current level and pace of work given the many demands on their time and energy. This report seeks to lay out some opportunities and recommendations around these concerns. Fortunately, WSU's provost and other leaders in Academic Affairs seem quite receptive to working with honors to ensure the program's sustainability, take advantage of opportunities to innovate, and reimagine honors through the lens of diversity, equity, and inclusion.

II. Theme: Honors Staffing, Resources, & Budget

Let's not beat around the bush: the university must address an honors staff that is stretched to the breaking point due to the incredible growth of the honors population. The Aletheia Club student population alone has grown in the past five years from 85 students to about 490, an almost 500% increase that shows no sign of abating, as an additional 100 students were added for the fall 2020 term. During this same period, the honors program annual budget has dropped 19%, though the increase in instructional costs due to a greater number of required classes has apparently been funded out of Academic Affairs. While the university is to be commended for staffing honors with a program coordinator and administrative specialist, it is clear to the review team that the staff is living on the edge. As one senior administrator explained by email: "one of our major assets in the Honors program is our director, Dan. He is amazing and has breathed life back into a program that was collapsing. My concern is burning Dan out. He is truly dedicated to the program, his staff, the students and the faculty. He is carrying a heavy load and needs more resources to carry on. I just want the team to note how critical Dan is to the success of the Honors program and the process for reimagining it." The review team shares this concern for not only the director but the administrative staff, who have been asked to support and advise a massive population of students. Dr. Bedford reiterated his concerns about staff burnout due to these unsustainable conditions: the advising burden alone on staff in a program that has grown almost 500% in five years is almost impossible to imagine. The review team makes the following recommendations to alleviate these pressures while highlighting that the current director will be moving into the final year of his current term in AS '21-'22:

- **Hire an Aletheia Club/Phi Kappa Phi coordinator** to manage the many demands of these two programs, including staging the collateral Aletheia programming like book discussions and banquets and the PKP chapter administrative oversight activities. This work is falling inequitably upon the current staff and they need help or the director feels he may lose them. Both the institutional scholarship program and the national honor society chapter were thrust upon honors by the provost office over the past four years and so the institution should step up to support their administration properly so that the staff can return to focusing on their other long list of program-related responsibilities. (See pages 17-18 of the Self-Study report for a partial list of responsibilities this position would cover.)
- **Fund one or two new faculty lines in Honors**, perhaps as shared lines in partnership with other fast growing programs that have an interdisciplinary orientation, a precedent already established in the College of Science and College of Social and Behavioral Science. Ideally, one of those hires would have (in addition to their teaching obligations in honors) responsibility for diversity, equity, inclusion programming and curriculum, using the model currently in place where the new Assistant Director of Honors is a faculty member who also has administrative responsibilities in the area of assessment coordination. The director would like to position honors as a leader in diversity work on campus and had started to make good progress before Tia Nero's departure, but he needs help in the form of an equity coordinator (see pages 18-19 of the Self-Study report for a partial list of responsibilities this position would cover). With 17 *different* courses in the general education program (according to the director of general education) and Honors still working on getting onto a regular reporting cycle with the Office of Institutional Effectiveness, it's gratifying that the institution responded to that need by assigning responsibility to the new assistant director. Indeed, the fall 2019 self-study—written right before the appointment of the assistant director—notes assessment is “not a strength” (p. 33). Establishing some full or shared faculty lines in honors will provide many benefits, including: spreading out the workload and giving the program some institutional memory beyond that of the director, a key necessity for ensuring sustainability; providing some stability and consistency in the honors

teaching schedule; creating some collaboration between programs that might share a line, esp. those programs with interdisciplinary orientation; providing other perspectives on crucial issues facing honors; allowing students to connect with honors faculty for advising/mentoring; and increasing connections between the honors program and honors faculty while also establishing the foundation for an Honors Community of Practice around teaching and learning, goals identified on page 45 of the Self-Study. Additionally, if a new faculty line had responsibilities as an equity coordinator, there is the greater likelihood of attracting faculty from communities historically underrepresented in higher education, a desire expressed by students and a concern raised in the Self-Study: “faculty teaching in the Honors Program are almost entirely white. This is an area of concern...” (page 38). Such shared faculty models (if the institution chooses to go that route) have been successful in honors programs as diverse as the University of Maine and Westminster College.

- **Create more transparency around instructional costs** by folding those actual expenses in the honors budget. There seemed to be no clear answer as to how the increase in number of honors classes (due to the incredible growth of the honors student population) was being funded, which makes it hard for honors to plan and instead makes it beholden to the whims of administrators, who often come and go at institutions. When it asked about funding for instructional costs, the review team was instructed “that’s a Betty K. question.” This situation violates one of the National Collegiate Honors Council’s (NCHC) “[Basic Characteristics of a Fully Developed Honors Program](#),” which encourages institutions to make sure that resources “are allocated to honors so that the program avoids dependence on the good will and energy of particular faculty members or administrators for survival.” (See Appendix B for full “Basic Characteristics.”)
- **Fund a summer stipend for the Assistant Director of Honors** to compensate her appropriately for administrative work conducted while off contract and so the honors leadership and staff don’t feel guilty asking her to do necessary work during this period.

III. Theme: Recruitment, Admissions, Scholarships

Weber State's honors program is in the curious position of having little say over the majority of students that occupies its classroom seats, a most unusual circumstance when measured against standard enrollment practices in honors programs across the country, since the 500+ Presidential Aletheia Scholarship students are required to complete two honors courses. In that respect, the institution is violating at least the spirit of the NCHC's first "Basic Characteristic of a Fully Developed Honors Program," that a "clearly articulated set of admission criteria...identifies the targeted student population served by the honors program." In other words, if a program's curriculum is designed around leadership, the metrics used to evaluate suitability for admissions to honors should focus on past experience and future potential in leadership. But the current situation at Weber State gives honors no role in this process, for the scholarship students are selected with no input from the program, which is then expected to take care of some academic needs of this cohort. While the review team can understand why the institution decided (4-5 years ago) to grow the Presidential Scholarship program (a very successful effort, by the way), having previously decided to beef up enrollment in a struggling honors program by requiring such students to enroll in a fixed number of honors courses, this situation results in a number of unintentional and unfortunate consequences:

- Because participation in honors is a requirement of the scholarship yet students did not apply to honors, program completion rates are *extremely* low – in some cases they can be counted on one hand! As the self-study notes, "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" (p. 60).
- Ironically, this low completion rate occurs at a time when the program has significantly reduced the required number of honors classes for Presidential Scholars, now down to two, because the program's curriculum can't keep up with the massive growth in that student population. There's little room to reduce the curricular requirement for these scholarship students.

- Because scholarship students register for honors classes first, they are increasingly crowding out non-honors students from required classes, especially given the explosive growth in Aletheia students. As one honors staff member observed, non-scholarship “students will join honors but then they can’t get into a class because so many (scholarship) students” have enrolled before them, a situation that is naturally breeding resentment.
- Because race/ethnicity is not part of the scholarship decision and the metrics that *are* used for selection (standardized test scores) disproportionately disfavor students of color, first-generation students, and other students historically under-represented in higher education, tying Aletheia to honors has contributed to a “whitening” of the honors student population, as approximately 90% of those scholarship recipients are white. These circumstances will only be exacerbated by the COVID crisis, which itself disproportionately affects BIPOC students.

During a discussion about the relationship between the honors program and the Aletheia program, one senior administrator noted that “Aletheia is not allowing us to develop the honors program because they have to serve the scholarship program.” The review team agrees.

The review team makes the following recommendations to address what is a basic structural issue at the root of many of the challenges honors currently faces:

- **Reduce the course enrollment pressures of the Presidential Scholarship program by either 1) decoupling the scholarship program and honors entirely or 2) reducing and targeting the honors course requirement for Presidential Scholarship students to a single first-year seminar experience (FYS) of the sort described below in Theme VI: Curriculum.** If the institution chooses path one, it would need to beef up communication with scholarship students about the opportunity to apply to honors, which could be framed in attractive ways like a “priority pathway” or some such language and should be made easy via an electronic portal tied directly to the scholarship award. In other words, scholarship students could be invited to honors but they would need to put some skin in the game by answering a few short questions about why they are suitable for honors. Those questions should tie-in to traits the program hopes to see in potential honors students. The Honors Advisory

Council could review these applications if its members are interested in sharing in that workload. Other schools like Appalachian State, which invites all students to participate in honors, involve campus partners in the selection process as a way of managing the workload and diversifying the honors population. This self-selection process will 1) immediately reduce the number of honors students currently stressing the system and 2) immediately bump up completion rates because students are not coming to honors passively. The process will also give honors some control over its curriculum pipeline by having a say in the admissions decision and will allow it to right-size the imbalance between Presidential Scholars and non-scholars. If the institution chooses path two, it would need to have a very compelling FYS experience for all scholarship students that features the very best of honors pedagogy and curricular approaches (perhaps five sections in fall and two in spring), which then would incentivize more scholarship students to continue on in honors because they would feel a greater sense of community with other students at the start of their career in the FYS. Focusing the scholarship course requirement at the start of the student's career would also take enrollment pressure off some of the other honors seminars and allow the honors program more time to explain the benefits of honors and how honors works over the course of the FYS instead of just in the orientation program, for as explained in the Self-Study: "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" (page 60). Staging in this requirement over four years of scholarship classes would ensure that the course enrollment drop-off was not abrupt, as long as some of the other steps below were adopted. It's also possible to envision a combination of these two pathways.

- **To balance out the reduction of Presidential Scholarship students in honors classes that would inevitably occur with the decoupling approach or reduction of course requirements**, increase outreach and application pathways to honors to a wider range of students at Weber both in the first-year application process (a simple check-box demonstrating an expression of interest in honors

on the first-year application for *all* students can initiate communications flow to such students) and for current students at Weber who might have missed the honors opportunity when applying initially. This slight addition to the Weber State application would signal a true inclusive approach, that honors is not restricted to any one class of students and is available to all who want to stretch themselves academically. A brief set of application questions for both Presidential Scholarship applicants and non-scholarship applicants should emphasize the traits that Weber would like to see in honors students: curiosity, motivation, risk-taking, creativity, and a spirit of community were characteristics (among others) mentioned during the review.

- **Rethink the relationship between the Aletheia Club and the Presidential Scholarship.** Is a separate club necessary, especially one with a confusing, elitist-sounding name which is perhaps not well-aligned with an open enrollment institution? Why not simply offer Presidential Scholars programming, which ties the programming directly to the scholarship? Many members of the Weber Community with whom the review team spoke expressed confusion around this program and its relationship to honors.
- **Increase outreach and recruitment of students historically under-represented in higher education into the honors program through some of the strategies outlined in the [recent NCHC position paper](#) “Honors Enrollment Management: Toward a Theory and Practice of Inclusion.”** There was significant support on campus for better aligning honors with the open-enrollment mission of Weber State, perhaps even using honors as a model of inclusive excellence on campus. As the NCHC position paper points out, this opportunity is being taken up by many institutions across the country. Weber’s honors leadership and staff seem well-positioned to facilitate this shift and collaborating with many campus partners enthusiastic about this possibility, for example partnering with the Wildcat Scholars program.

All of these steps would enable the honors program to better live up to the first pillar of its mission statement, which promises to “nurture excellence in this community, *regardless of prior academic preparation*” (our emphasis), and more realistically approach one of its

aspirational goals “to become a model for inclusive excellence and diversity at Weber State University” (Self-Study, p. 3).

IV. Theme: Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Honors leadership and staff are committed to DEI work and see honors as a space that can engage and even lead in this work. Part of that commitment can be exercised through adapting enrollment management practices, as mentioned above, since while honors aspires to be a space of inclusion the scholarship practices imposed upon it institutionally reinforce privilege. Reducing the influence of the Presidential Scholars on honors will also make the honors space less white and more open to international students, students of color, first-generation students, and other students historically under-represented in higher education. The review team makes the following recommendations:

- **Conduct a diversity climate survey of honors students** to better understand the challenges and opportunities that currently exist for students from diverse backgrounds who are trying to navigate honors.
- **Build a diversity strategic plan** that charts out a five-year plan for re-envisioning honors—its practices, curriculum, and values—through the lens of diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- **Engage in this work with campus partners eager to help.** The review team was gratified to spend time with Weber staff and faculty ready to collaborate with honors on DEI work and was especially impressed with the energy and vision of staff in the Multicultural Center, Development Office, and DreamWeber program who had creative ideas about partnering with honors.
- **As mentioned above, the honors program requires additional staffing to support this work,** as the current personnel already have a full list of responsibilities.

V. Theme: Communication and Misconception around “Honors”

As on many campuses, there are some misconceptions that surround the honors program at Weber State, partly a result of the word “honors” (and the elitist baggage it carries), partly a result of a scholarship program that reinforces the idea that honors is only for a certain type of student, and partly a result of confusion around how honors actually works. Because “honors” is well-understood in the marketplace by students and families, it would be hard to dispense with the word itself, a suggestion made in passing during the review. Instead, structural changes around admission and the scholarship program as well as internal messaging will go a long way to clearing up some of these misconceptions. There is unusually widespread good will directed toward honors from many corners of campus, a testament to the outstanding work of the honors staff and leadership and the respect they engender by colleagues. It would be worth taking advantage of this good will as honors transforms itself.

The review team makes the following recommendations to address some of these misconceptions:

- **Enact some of the structural changes around scholarships and admissions** mentioned above that will fundamentally change who has access to honors, which will help clear up some of the confusion.
- **Conduct an internal communications campaign after those structural changes are enacted**, so that current Weber students realize that honors is a possibility for them. Make sure to draw departmental faculty, advisors, and especially staff engaged in DEI work into this partnership. As departmental honors advisors pointed out, “many of the students are scared of the word ‘honors’” and other students often don’t know that honors is available to them. Other misconceptions students hold include the sense that honors means “more work,” that there are additional expenses attached to participation in honors, and that there are restrictive GPA requirements. Such misconceptions should be taken on directly in places like a FAQ page on the website (a site that is already quite good) and also extended toward faculty and staff who don’t understand honors.

- **Work with the Registrar, IT, Institutional Research, and Alumni Affairs to clear up any coding challenges** around who is actually in honors and who has graduated from honors. There was continual confusion among most of the individuals involved in the review about numbers of students in honors and also identities of students graduating with honors—particularly departmental honors students—which makes it hard for honors staff to track students and difficult for the Development office to reach honors alums.

VI. Theme: Curriculum

Beyond serving the honors student population, the honors curriculum plays an important role as an incubator for interdisciplinary courses on campus and a place where faculty can stretch themselves by teaching courses they otherwise would not be able to offer. As one faculty member observed, teaching in honors “was one of the most fun teaching experiences I’ve had...[it was] the most exciting course because the students were so engaged. No place on earth we could have done this but in honors.” Thus, any conversations around curriculum reform should make sure to maintain these strengths.

The program and administration need to decide whether they would like a full-scale overhaul of the curriculum or a more targeted revision of key areas while maintaining the strengths mentioned above. Given some of the other structural areas that require immediate attention and the fact that Weber’s current general education program seems to be working well, it might make sense to restrict the scope of curriculum reform at the moment, though that decision is not ours to make. Having said that, the review team would like to identify the following potential opportunities tied to departmental honors and the general education offerings as possible first steps:

- **Given that honors offers 17 different courses within the general education curriculum (according to the director of the general education program) while many programs offer just 1-2 courses, consider narrowing the breadth of different offerings**, so as to lessen pressures around staffing, tracking, and assessment, among others. The program could reduce the *number* of different classes while increasing

sections of like classes, which also might reduce student difficulty in getting into classes and offer honors an opportunity to better shape its identity around a common pedagogy and curricular approach. This reduced number of classes (and increased number of sections across different times) might also help improve program completion rates.

- **Another option would be to offer all first-year honors students a common First-Year Seminar experience**, which would provide many of the advantages mentioned above, as well as presenting opportunities for community building and retention work, work that might eventually have an effect on the very low program completion rates. One approach would be to create interdisciplinary “shell” courses that could be taught by faculty from many different disciplines. For example, a single class on “The Climate Crisis” could be offered (or team taught) by biologists, chemists, human geographers, data scientists, communication faculty, political scientists, etc. which gives the institution flexibility in staffing while still offering students a common experience. Such a FYS would also offer nice tie-ins to co-curricular programming like the scholarship book discussions, which seem to have become more robust over the past number of years. This “shell” model could also be applied across the entire honors curriculum. Because the program does not currently have any required courses, honors may want to consider making the FYS class required, as well as adding a parallel experience for transfer students, associate degree students, or those who join honors midstream.
- **Consider steps that might bring more consistency and clarity to the departmental honors program** by allowing honors more involvement in coordinating this curriculum and aligning the classes around a common pedagogy, curricular approach, outcomes, or some other feature. The current highly distributed nature of departmental honors leads to confusion (even among departmental chairs who oversee these programs) and uneven experiences: as noted in the Executive Summary, most departmental honors requirements do not require taking any honors courses. Because the

population of students taking departmental honors is greater than that of the university honors and general honors populations combined, it is worth trying to unify these learning experiences a bit more and establish a clearer relationship with the honors program.

VII. Conclusion

In conclusion, the honors program has taken significant steps in the past five years to become more fully developed, offer more robust and extensive programming, and become a true home for high-achieving students at Weber State. Faculty praise the presence of honors students in their non-honors classes: “Honors students in my class rub off positively to my major students,” said one professor; honors staff and leadership are almost universally admired across campus: “Dan has an amazing vision for honors,” according to one administrator; and students feel a deep connection to and appreciation of honors. Many highlight their important connection to the honors community, while another noted: “I had to wrack my brain to find a flaw...I like honors classes [even] more than my major classes.” Yet the program is at a crucial turning point in its history that requires some decisions at the institutional level – honors has done all it can to manage the current situation. The program has grown way too rapidly at a time when resources and staffing have not kept up; honors is, in effect, not in control of the students who join its community, a frustrating situation because the program would like to become a home for a more diverse student body; and as a result the university risks losing the dedicated faculty and staff who make honors go. It’s up to senior leadership to decide what happens next, in concert with the talented and experienced team currently leading the honors program.



Dr. Richard Badenhousen, chair (Westminster College)



Dr. Kate McPherson (Utah Valley University)



Dr. Hal Crimmel, Chair, Dept. of English Language and Literature



Dr. Andrea Easter-Pilcher, Dean, College of Science



Dr. Marjukka Ollilainen, Chair, Dept. of Sociology & Anthropology

APPENDIX A
FIVE-YEAR REVIEW SCHEDULE

Person or Group	Start	End
Dan Bedford, Director of Honors	8:30 AM	8:50 AM
Rebekah Cumpsty, Assistant Director of Honors	8:50 AM	9:10 AM
Megan Moulding, Program Coordinator & Mar Muster, Administrative Specialist	9:10 AM	9:40 AM
Taylor Knuth, Development Director for Academic Affairs	9:50 AM	10:10 AM
Honors Faculty Advisory Board Members: Gavin Roberts, Christy Call, Heather Chapman, Rebekah Cumpsty, Mark Stevenson, Tim Herzog	10:10 AM	10:30 AM
Tia Nero, former Honors Admin & current Program Coordinator for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion [President's Office]	10:40 AM	11:00 AM
Staff from Center for Multicultural Excellence: Michiko Nakashima-Lizarazo, Lulu Faumui-Latu-Peters, Monica Rodriguez, Tashina Barber, Kenneth Johnson	11:00 AM	11:20 AM
Ravi Krovi, Provost & Brenda Kowalewski, Associate Provost of High Impact Programs		
Bruce Bowen, Associate Provost of Enrollment Services & Jed Spencer, Director of Financial Aid & Scholarships	11:30 AM	12:30 PM
Eric Amsel, Associate Provost for Academic Programs & Assessment		
Gail Niklason & Heather Chapman, Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Leigh Shaw, Director of General Education	1:30 PM	2:15 PM
Phi Kappa Phi Faculty Board: Therese Grijalva, Carl Porter, Rick Ford	2:15 PM	2:35 PM
Departmental Honors Advisors: Isabel Asensio, Brandon Koford, Janelle Gardner, Lindsay Garr, London Draper Lowe, Matthew Smith, Paige Young, Shirley Dawson, Thom Kuehls, Brian Rague, John Schwiebert, Matthew Nicholaou	2:45 PM	3:05 PM
General, University, Departmental Honors & Aletheia Students: Erica Lande, Joshua Kamp, William Ward, Liz Homez, Isabel Hernandez Martinez, et al.	3:05 PM	4:00 PM

APPENDIX B

NCHC BASIC CHARACTERISTICS OF A FULLY DEVELOPED HONORS PROGRAM

Although no single or definitive honors program model can or should be superimposed on all types of institutions, the National Collegiate Honors Council has identified a number of best practices that are common to successful and fully developed honors programs.

1. The honors program offers carefully designed educational experiences that meet the needs and abilities of the undergraduate students it serves. A clearly articulated set of admission criteria (e.g., GPA, SAT score, a written essay, satisfactory progress, etc.) identifies the targeted student population served by the honors program. The program clearly specifies the requirements needed for retention and satisfactory completion.
2. The program has a clear mandate from the institution's administration in the form of a mission statement or charter document that includes the objectives and responsibilities of honors and defines the place of honors in the administrative and academic structure of the institution. The statement ensures the permanence and stability of honors by guaranteeing that adequate infrastructure resources, including an appropriate budget as well as appropriate faculty, staff, and administrative support when necessary, are allocated to honors so that the program avoids dependence on the good will and energy of particular faculty members or administrators for survival. In other words, the program is fully institutionalized (like comparable units on campus) so that it can build a lasting tradition of excellence.
3. The honors director reports to the chief academic officer of the institution.
4. The honors curriculum, established in harmony with the mission statement, meets the needs of the students in the program and features special courses, seminars, colloquia, experiential learning opportunities, undergraduate research opportunities, or other independent-study options.
5. The program requirements constitute a substantial portion of the participants' undergraduate work, typically 20% to 25% of the total course work and certainly no less than 15%.
6. The curriculum of the program is designed so that honors requirements can, when appropriate, also satisfy general education requirements, major or disciplinary requirements, and preprofessional or professional training requirements.
7. The program provides a locus of visible and highly reputed standards and models of excellence for students and faculty across the campus.
8. The criteria for selection of honors faculty include exceptional teaching skills, the ability to provide intellectual leadership and mentoring for able students, and support for the mission of honors education.
9. The program is located in suitable, preferably prominent, quarters on campus that provide both

access for the students and a focal point for honors activity. Those accommodations include space for honors administrative, faculty, and support staff functions as appropriate. They may include space for an honors lounge, library, reading rooms, and computer facilities. If the honors program has a significant residential component, the honors housing and residential life functions are designed to meet the academic and social needs of honors students.

10. The program has a standing committee or council of faculty members that works with the director or other administrative officer and is involved in honors curriculum, governance, policy, development, and evaluation deliberations. The composition of that group represents the colleges and/or departments served by the program and also elicits support for the program from across the campus.
11. Honors students are assured a voice in the governance and direction of the honors program. This can be achieved through a student committee that conducts its business with as much autonomy as possible but works in collaboration with the administration and faculty to maintain excellence in the program. Honors students are included in governance, serving on the advisory/policy committee as well as constituting the group that governs the student association.
12. Honors students receive honors-related academic advising from qualified faculty and/or staff.
13. The program serves as a laboratory within which faculty feel welcome to experiment with new subjects, approaches, and pedagogies. When proven successful, such efforts in curriculum and pedagogical development can serve as prototypes for initiatives that can become institutionalized across the campus.
14. The program regularly assesses and evaluates program goals and learning outcomes as articulated in the National Collegiate Honors Council's [definition of honors education](#) and modes of honors learning, and as appropriate to the institution's culture and mission.
15. The program emphasizes active learning and participatory education by offering opportunities for students to participate in regional and national conferences, Honors Semesters, international programs, community service, internships, undergraduate research, and other types of experiential education.
16. When appropriate, two-year and four-year programs have articulation agreements by which honors graduates from two-year programs who meet previously agreed-upon requirements are accepted into four-year honors programs.
17. The program provides priority enrollment for active honors students in recognition of scheduling difficulties caused by the need to satisfy both honors and major program(s) requirements.

Approved by the NCHC Executive Committee on March 4, 1994; amended by the NCHC Board of Directors on November 23, 2007; further amended by the NCHC Board of Directors on February 19, 2010; further amended by the NCHC Board of Directors on June 19, 2014.