

*Transforming the University*

**Final Recommendations of the  
Task Force on Undergraduate Reform: Honors**

**Submitted on behalf of the Task Force by:**

**Kathryn Sikkink**

**David Tilman**

**Co-Chairs of the Task Force**

**Date: February 3, 2006**

## **Executive Summary: Honors Task Force Report**

### ***Mission:***

Create a new campus-wide undergraduate honors program to attract to the University students of high caliber who otherwise might not have given the University serious consideration and to allow these students the freedom to pursue their interests in any undergraduate college of the University.

### ***Deliverables:***

- Recommendations regarding the optimal design, structure, and organization of a campus-wide honors program.
- Recommendations as to whether a specific curriculum should be designed for the honors students, such as the Grand Challenges curriculum suggested in the Academic Task Force Report.
- Recommendations regarding whether and how the new honors program should be connected to professional fast track programs.
- Recommendations regarding the role of current college-based honors programs vis-à-vis a campus-wide program.
- Recommendations regarding how to strengthen lower division honors offerings.
- Recommendations regarding strengthening extra-curricular, co-curricular, and international programming and opportunities for honors students.
- Recommendations regarding how to increase the availability of undergraduate research opportunities for students in the honors program.
- Recommendations on how to improve the recruitment, retention, teaching, mentoring, and housing of honor students.
- Recommendations regarding how students admitted into the honors program should be recognized on campus and upon graduation.

### ***Key Recommendations***

The Honors Task Force recommends that we strengthen and expand and diversify the honors opportunities for our undergraduate students in the following ways:

- Create a University Honors Program that integrates the current collegiate-based honors programs into an exciting, unified program that offers highly challenging but flexible options that will attract a greater range of diverse and talented students to the University of Minnesota.
- Within the Honors Program, develop and implement a new option, the Regents Scholars Option, that will be attractive to those students who are seeking a small, intimate, residential college experience with all the research and career opportunities of a vibrant research university, and who want to participate in an intellectual community created through a shared set of experiences, including small, synthetic, cross-disciplinary classes focused on the grand challenges that face society and academic scholarship;

- Enhance opportunities available within the University Honors Program to provide more small classes, faculty mentoring from matriculation to graduation, required research or artistic experiences appropriate to the major, freedom to pursue a major in any college, enhanced advising, and opportunities for priority or fast-track admission to the University's professional schools such as Medicine, Law, Veterinary Medicine, and Dentistry;
- Aggressively recruit a diverse pool of the most accomplished and talented students in the country, in part by providing more extensive and creative scholarship packages that include funds for research and for study abroad;
- Develop enhanced standards and expectations for admission of honors students, and raise expectations for participation in honors;
- Strengthen honors curricular offerings by adding honors sections of global seminars, more honors sections of regular courses, and additional honors freshman seminars;
- Build curricular and extracurricular programs that consciously and explicitly engage honors students with the research mission of the University and with the Twin Cities as a resource;
- Assure that in all of our communications with prospective honors students and their parents, we highlight the unique opportunities offered by honors within the context of the University of Minnesota, with its scholarly breadth and diversity, research mission, and urban advantages.

### ***Task Force Members***

Kathryn Sikkink, *Co-chair*, Arleen Carlson Chair in Political Science, Distinguished McKnight University Professor, College of Liberal Arts; and Affiliated Faculty, Law School

G. David Tilman, *Co-chair*, Regents Professor and McKnight Presidential Chair in Ecology and Director, Cedar Creek Natural History Area, Department of Ecology, Evolution & Behavior, College of Biological Sciences

John Archer, Professor, Department of Cultural Studies and Comparative Literature; Professor, Department of Art History; Adjunct Professor, Department of American Studies, College of Liberal Arts

Eugene Borgida, Morse-Alumni Distinguished Teaching Professor of Psychology and Professor of Law, Department of Psychology, College of Liberal Arts

Mary Eliasen, Undergraduate Honors Student, Mass Communication and Political Science, College of Liberal Arts

Erika Lee, Associate Professor, Department of History and Asian American Studies Program, McKnight Presidential Fellow, and Director of Undergraduate Studies (History), College of Liberal Arts

Robert Ruckert, Associate Dean, Department of Marketing & Logistics Management, Carlson School of Management

Leslie Schiff, Morse-Alumni Distinguished Teaching Professor and Director of Undergraduate Studies, Department of Microbiology, Medical School and College of Biological Sciences

Robert Tranquillo, Distinguished McKnight University Professor and Head, Department of Biomedical Engineering and Professor, Department of Chemical Engineering and Materials Science, Institute of Technology

Megan Williams, Undergraduate Honors Student, Aerospace Engineering, Institute of Technology

## **Introduction**

The quality of a university is measured, in large part, by the quality of its students. At present, the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities is seventh in the Big Ten in percent of students from the top 10% of their high school classes. It is tenth (out of 11) in the Big Ten in its overall retention of students through the end of their first year, retaining 84% of its students versus 96% for the top-ranked Big Ten University. A significant portion of the state's most talented students attend college out of state, and the University of Minnesota does not bring into Minnesota a comparable share of the best and brightest from other states. If the University of Minnesota is to achieve its goal of becoming one of the top public research universities in the world, and if it is to both retain within the state and attract to the state an increased number of highly talented individuals, the University must create new mechanisms for attracting top students.

The University of Minnesota-Twin Cities has strong collegiate-based honors programs that already serve many excellent students. Every year for the past several years, these honors programs have recruited an increasingly talented freshman class. The success of our students and programs is reflected in part in the impressive number of national scholarships garnered by our honors students, including three Rhodes Scholarships in the past five years. The achievement of our students reflects both the excellent quality of our students and the commitment of the dedicated faculty and staff who teach and advise them.

The University also has a faculty of leading scholars, researchers and teachers in a multiplicity of fields. These faculty offer undergraduate majors in mechanical engineering, art history, architecture, molecular biology, mathematics, ecology, psychology, business administration, chemistry, English, economics, agriculture, and more than 150 other degree programs. The University provides the top students of the state and nation with a highly challenging education in almost any area they might decide to pursue, and prepares them for any goal they seek to achieve. And only a major research university can offer students access not only to a broad array of undergraduate programs, but also to priority and "fast-track" admissions programs that give our students unique access to our professional programs in areas such as medicine, pharmacy, dentistry, and law.

It is this potential that led to a call, endorsed by the Regents, to "Create a new campus-wide undergraduate honors program to attract to the University students of high caliber who might otherwise not have given the University serious consideration and to allow these students the freedom to pursue their interests in any undergraduate college of the University."

In evaluating how the University could achieve this goal, we first took stock of our current status by reviewing a set of pertinent programmatic documents from competing institutions, analyzing statistics about our student body, considering surveys of prospective students of high caliber who decided to attend or not to attend the University, and learning how high school counselors and directors of programs for talented students perceived the University. According to a report prepared for the Honors Task Force by Ron Matross, the University's admissions profile and

perceived quality is not aligned with those of the so-called “medallion schools” in the Big Ten (Michigan, Penn State, Illinois, and Wisconsin):

Minnesota aspires to be a medallion school, but it continues to be seen in a tier that includes the University of Iowa, Indiana University, and Ohio State. While it has gradually raised its academic floor, it has not been able to significantly increase its proportion of the very best and brightest students. (Matross, “The 2005 U of M Admitted Freshman Survey: Selected Findings for Honors Level Students,” full report attached as Appendix 3)

The survey of admitted honors-level students who chose not to attend the University shows that they perceived the University as less desirable because of four factors: class size, individual attention, faculty access and availability of scholarships. Such perceptions also emerged in interviews with a number of area high school counselors or directors of “gifted and talented” programs. These educators told us that there was a continuing perception of Minnesota as the University of Lake Wobegon: they said that their best students (and their parents) perceived the University as “pretty good,” and “above average.” These same individuals told us that their students who came to the University had good experiences here, and were impressed with the range of choices available to them and the support they got from their honors programs. But with the exception of IT honors, which seemed to be a known “brand” for many science-oriented students, the honors programs themselves were often not seen as reasons to choose the University.

Honors programs in top-ranked universities recruit the best students from across the nation. To enhance our ability to attract a greater share of these students, we must make serious commitments in two key areas: scholarships, and attractive programming. Generous multi-year scholarship packages (both merit- and need-based) are crucial to our ability to attract outstanding students from diverse backgrounds, consistent with the recommendations of the Diversity Task Force<sup>\*</sup> The best students are recruited nationally and are often offered outstanding scholarship packages at very good colleges. We need to be sure that our scholarship packages are creative and competitive. An example of this kind of creativity comes from CLA’s recent announcement of research funds packaged with freshman scholarship offers: “To continue to enhance the quality of the education we provide, we would like to offer 100 grants of \$1,000 each to outstanding incoming freshmen in fall 2006, in support of research or creative work they would do under the guidance of CLA faculty.”

In addition to offering generous and creative scholarships, we must build on our current successes to develop a unified, challenging, and exciting honors program that provides and highlights smaller class sizes, greater one-on-one interactions with faculty, and individual mentoring of Honors Scholars by faculty. If we do so, we believe that we will attract not only the excellent students currently served in our programs, but also the students of equal or greater potential who now do not choose the University of Minnesota.

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<sup>\*</sup> See the report of the Diversity Task Force for a comprehensive definition of diversity.

## **Creating a Campus-Wide Honors Program**

As first envisioned in the Strategic Plan, the Honors Task Force recommends creation of a campus-wide University Honors Program (UHP) that will integrate and strengthen existing college-based honors programs, building on current strengths but enhancing opportunities and strengthening ties to the research mission and the Twin Cities as a resource.

The University Honors Program, which includes the Regents Scholars Option, is designed to allow highly motivated and talented students to discover their interests and strengths and give them the freedom to pursue them within any college of the University while providing them with intellectually challenging educational, career, and service opportunities. These new offerings have the potential to attract to the University of Minnesota undergraduates of high ability who might have otherwise not attended. Our recommendation supports and endorses the broad-scale recommendation from the Deans of CLA, IT, and CBS for a unified and strengthened campus-wide honors program:

The University of Minnesota Honors Program should build upon and consolidate existing collegiate honors programs to forge a single, coordinated University-wide program. The University of Minnesota Honors Program should 1) bring together existing collegiate honors programs into a single entity and 2) greatly enhance the honors experience by building upon existing strengths to add additional courses and innovative, interdisciplinary curricular initiatives, more advising, more co-curricular activities, and other learning experiences. (“A Proposal to Create the University of Minnesota Honors Program,” Appendix 4.)

The new UHP will establish a challenging program of academic excellence that affords each student the opportunity to pursue his or her interests to their fullest potential and that provides each student with a strong sense of intellectual community both within and among colleges and disciplines. A hallmark of UHP will be its flexibility. Because not all honors students have the same needs or expectations, and because we want to attract to the University students who are now choosing to go elsewhere, we also recommend the establishment of an optional honors experience within UHP, available to all honors students regardless of their college of admission, and called the “Regents Scholars Option.” The Regents Scholars Option (RSO) is specially designed to offer a residential college community experience while providing small, synthetic, cross-disciplinary classes focused on the grand challenges that face society and academic scholarship.

Administratively, we envision a faculty member as Dean of Honors, with staff/faculty program directors affiliated with each college and with the Regents Scholars Option; faculty affiliated with honors will comprise a faculty advisory committee for the unified University Honors Program. A student advisory group will also be essential to the success of UHP. A proposed organization chart is included as Appendix 10. The honors staff ideally will be housed together in a space, the Honors Commons, dedicated to the University Honors Program and its students.

The Honors Commons will also have space for honors seminars and for a variety of extracurricular programming. The synergy achieved with common space and an administratively unified program will help to forge a stronger honors community, create a more visible identity for honors at the University, and send a clear signal to students and their families of the University's commitment to provide motivated and gifted students with novel and challenging educational experiences. UHP will be an integrated four-year program, and there will be no barriers or separate applications or admissions processes to prevent honors students in good standing from moving seamlessly from lower-division to upper-division honors (in the major).

We also envision that the UHP will serve as testing ground for educational innovations that might later be expanded to the broader student body. By testing new programmatic, curricular, or student services concepts with a more limited student community, we can innovate on a smaller scale and then scale up to the whole undergraduate population when appropriate. Within UHP, it will also be possible to use the RSO to pilot-test concepts such as the Grand Challenges curriculum to determine if they should be offered more widely.

### **Features of the University Honors Program**

The University of Minnesota has two unmatched resources that allow it to create a unique honors program. First, it is a research university that encompasses the full range of academic disciplines, including an extraordinary array of graduate programs and professional schools. The UHP will put the **University's research mission** at the center of honors, and actively include its honors students within that mission. Our honors students have an exceptional range of disciplines from which to choose, giving them the opportunity to work directly with scholars who are known nationally and internationally for their research and creative activities. They also have the opportunity to establish direct linkages with the University's professional programs (medicine, law, pharmacy, dentistry, veterinary medicine, public affairs, public health, and more) through "fast-track" programs and priority admission options designed for University honors students and other exceptional U of M undergraduates.

Second, both curricular and co-curricular programming in the UHP will draw on the **Twin Cities as a resource**. We will consciously and aggressively link our students to organizations in the Twin Cities, ranging from government agencies at all levels (federal, state, municipal), to arts organizations, science and technology enterprises, businesses, health care organizations, non-governmental organizations, and social service agencies. Civic engagement and service learning will be encouraged as strategies to link students to the larger community. With its diverse communities, the Twin Cities offer a unique opportunity to build a distinctive honors program that cannot be duplicated by smaller schools or by large schools in smaller towns and cities. (See the Diversity Task Force for more information about the changing demographics in the state.)

Beyond these two resources, the University Honors Program will be distinguished by the following eight essential features:



- **Mentored Research or Creative Work:** The academic diversity and high quality of the faculty of the University provide all Honors Scholars with numerous opportunities to participate in cutting-edge research, scholarship and artistry. This engagement with the research mission will begin in the freshman year and will culminate with a scholarly project in the senior year. These projects range from a research or scholarly paper, to a composition, recital, work of art or some other demonstration of their creativity and achievement in their chosen area of specialty. Increased UROP funding will be essential to support this requirement for honors students. UHP or colleges will facilitate opportunities for honors students to give presentations about their work. Each college and major will determine the guidelines for the senior projects of its Honors Scholars, although there will be common expectations of rigor across all colleges, especially for students completing a summa thesis.
- **Academic Choice:** We envision that every Honors Scholar will have the freedom to choose to be a member of any college and to major in any program within the entire University. UHP students will be affiliated with their college of admission but will be encouraged to explore the full diversity of options that the University has to offer and to find the major of their choice from among these options. Since each student admitted to honors is chosen because of his or her unique combinations of skills, interests and experiences, we assume that, as a group, honors students will have widely divergent goals, and also that many will have interests that cannot be accommodated within the boundaries of a single college. UHP advisers will work to support these students' explorations, and active mentoring and advising by faculty and professional staff will help students evaluate potential majors and facilitate transfers among colleges.
- **Small Honors Classes:** All University Honors Scholars will begin their university studies by participating in a Freshman Honors Seminar (enrollment of 12-15) of their choice. All Honors classes, including special Honors recitation and laboratory sections, will be open to all Honors Scholars who have met the appropriate prerequisites, regardless of the student's college of enrollment. The small size of other honors classes, most with enrollments of 20 or fewer students, will allow Scholars to form close working relationships with one another and to get to know the faculty members who teach the classes. Small classes also provide opportunities to respond to the Writing Task Force's call for more courses where "writing is assigned, responded to, and evaluated by faculty." Under the UHP, lower-division honors offerings will be significantly strengthened in two areas. First, the number of freshman honors seminars will be increased. Second, we will expand the offerings of honors sections in standard introductory courses such as biology, psychology, economics and selected other areas. Honors sections for non-IT students will be established or expanded in mathematics, chemistry and physics. As we expand honors opportunities, we should also increase expectations of participation by honors students, i.e. students in honors should be expected to complete a larger number of honors opportunities than is currently the expectation in most colleges. Honors students will be given **priority registration** times to enable them to schedule their time to maximize their research opportunities and their opportunities for co-

curricular commitments, double majors, service learning, and off-campus activities related to their studies.

- **Faculty Mentors:** From their first day in class and until they enter a major, each honors student will have a Faculty Mentor to guide, encourage and advise them. The initial Faculty Mentor for a Scholar will be the faculty member teaching their Honors Freshman Seminar. Once a Scholar chooses an academic major, their Faculty Mentor will be from their major department. This individual attention to the needs of each Scholar will be a hallmark of the University Honors Program. In addition, we endorse the suggestion in the Deans' report of the creation of a cadre of "Honors Faculty Fellows," with appropriate compensation, to assure that the faculty who advise and mentor honors students are closely involved with curricular and co-curricular programming. Matross's research on honors-level students who did not choose to come to the University shows that they perceived the University as a place with little access to faculty and little individual attention. While arguments can be made to the contrary, these *perceptions* are quite real and demonstrably implicated in student decision making about their higher education choices. Having an active program of faculty mentoring will address these concerns and will connect our best students more closely to the University's research mission.
- **Priority or Fast-Track Admission to Professional Schools:** In keeping with the focus on unique opportunities available to students at a research university, the UHP will partner with our professional schools to offer priority or "fast track" admission to U of M professional programs. Fast-track programs can help enhance the diversity of professional school programs by creating clear pathways for students, and by making college more affordable by decreasing the total years required to complete the baccalaureate and professional degrees. All honors students who maintain an appropriate GPA, take required classes and meet other requirements as set by the professional schools will be given priority for admission to professional programs including Medicine, Dentistry, Law, Veterinary Medicine, and the Humphrey School. The UHP will partner with existing priority admission and fast-track programs (such as Pre-Med Scholars and VetFast) to help advertise and recruit students for these programs. The UHP will also work with professional schools to formalize existing plans for fast-track programs and to develop new options for UHP students. Models may differ depending on the professional schools' needs and expectations, and the UHP will need to work collaboratively with each of them and with the AHC to create appropriate pathways. See Appendix 5 for more details. One important expectation is that mechanisms will be developed to assure that students admitted into fast-track programs also are awarded the baccalaureate degree after completion of some portion of their professional programs.
- **Intensive Advising:** All Honors students will receive their academic and career advising from the faculty and professional advising staff of the University Honors Program. Honors advisors who specialize in advising lower-division students in a particular college or cluster of colleges ideally will be housed in the Honors Commons and may work with a student during his or her full four years at the University. The UHP will also have a full-time adviser with responsibility for national scholarships (Rhodes, Marshall, Mitchell, Fulbright,

Goldwater, Truman, etc.). This adviser will engage in expanded outreach to students, more systematic identification and tracking of potential applicants, the development of greater awareness and involvement on the part of faculty in identifying and preparing potential applicants, and increased time working individually with student applicants. In addition, because of the state's changing demographics, the UHP will have a full-time advisor dedicated to multicultural outreach, recruitment, and advising. This individual will publicize the UHP to diverse communities around the state of Minnesota and work with University admissions to identify a diverse pool of high ability and recruit them to the UHP. He or she may also continue to work with these students after their matriculation in UHP.

- **International Experiences and Study Abroad:** All honors students are expected to study abroad for at least a short period of time (such as the three-week May term), and for up to one year. Study abroad provides students—some of whom may never have left the Midwest—with important global perspectives that will open them to new experiences and broader contexts for their learning. The UHP will cooperate with the Learning Abroad Center to develop a set of honors-oriented study abroad opportunities, starting with Honors Global Seminars (three-week study abroad programs scheduled during the University's May Term). The UHP will partner with honors programs at other CIC schools both to expand the offering of Study Abroad opportunities for our honors students and to encourage participation from other schools in our honors-oriented Global Seminars. To support participation in Study Abroad, the University should offer scholarships for Study Abroad, perhaps packaging these as part of admissions merit scholarship offers to honors students.
- **Honors Housing:** A vibrant honors housing program is key to the success of a unified and enhanced University Honors Program. Middlebrook Hall has already been designated as a location for honors housing, but we encourage the exploration of opportunities to expand honors housing, both in number of spaces available and in programming scheduled there. Ideally, this would entail a new facility dedicated entirely to honors housing. Programming should include activities such as weekly dinners with faculty and informal evening “career talks” with alumni employed in various professions. We specifically recommend that the University work to make housing more readily available for upper-division honors students, so as to create more intensive academic environments in which juniors and seniors can act as role models and guides for younger students.

### **Regents Scholars Option**

Honors Scholars from any college who want a more integrative and community-based “residential college” experience may choose to participate in the Regents Scholars Option. This option offers all of the features of the University Honors Program, but has a more specifically focused set of expectations and opportunities:

- **Grand Challenges Curriculum:** Regents Scholars will explore the great questions and grand challenges facing society and academia as they fulfill their liberal education theme

requirements via a specialized core honors curriculum. Courses will challenge students to push themselves intellectually, and will expressly appeal to students who value intellect, diversity, and individuality. This curriculum will initially include four courses, each of which will at minimum meet one or two of the CLE themes as well as the University's writing intensive requirements. Some may also address CLE diversified core requirements. Regents Scholars will be expected to complete three of these courses; courses will be available to other UHP students on a space-available basis. As the Grand Challenges Curriculum is further developed and courses added, students will be able to meet all of their liberal education requirements through this set of courses. After the development of the initial core courses, and with broad consultation with honors faculty, the Grand Challenges curriculum may be expanded to an optional minor for RSO students (by the addition of a small set of upper-division courses), and eventually to a "second major" option that RSO students could take in conjunction with a regular disciplinary-based major.

- **Academic Community:** All Regents Scholars are expected to live, during their freshman year, in the Regents Scholars House, a residence hall site reserved for this program, and have the option of living in Regents Scholars House throughout their four years at the University. With its small, synthetic, cross-disciplinary Grand Challenges classes and shared housing, this "residential college" program will offer a strong sense of community while providing a comprehensive introduction to the full breadth and diversity of the University and the multitude of social, economic, ethical, environmental, cultural and scientific challenges of the modern world. Regents Scholars will participate in weekly structured activities that take advantage of the artistic, cultural and aesthetic opportunities and diversity of the Twin Cities area and of the environmental resources of the state. Because the nature of the intellectual exchange among Regents Scholars will depend on their spending a significant amount of time together, participation in these events will be a critical component of participation in the Regents Scholars Option.
- **Orientation:** In order to begin immediately to create community among these students and to give them an introduction to what it means to participate in the University's research mission, Regents Scholars will participate in a three-day summer orientation to honors and research. This program will be in addition to the normal orientation and registration process, and will be focused on contact with faculty, introductions to the diversity of programs available at the University, and orientation to research, covering a range of disciplines and methodologies. It will be academic and integrative in nature, will carry one credit, and will be followed by a reflective writing assignment that will be completed during the first fall semester.
- **Sophomore Practicum.** In the sophomore year all Regents Scholars will register for an additional one credit course, which through weekly meetings will engage Scholars with practical dimensions of the intellectual, social, artistic, and scientific challenges and opportunities that face our society at large. The practicum will consist of a series of presentations, symposia, site visits, and other practical activities that afford students direct experience of the interface between academic learning and society. Examples include

structured visits to laboratories, manufacturing sites, medical facilities, political proceedings, design charrettes, social service agencies, farms, performances, exhibitions, schools, corporate campuses, courtrooms, and so forth.

- **Research and Community Engagement:** All Regents Scholars are expected to complete at least one research project before their senior project. To facilitate this scholarly or creative work, a UROP award will be reserved for each Regents Scholar and will be granted upon submission of a satisfactory research proposal. Regents Scholars also will be expected to be able to apply their knowledge in practical ways in the real world. All Regents Scholars will participate in a project that allows them to share their expertise and skills with society, either through direct service or through research focusing on specific problems or issues or concern to society, or creative activity benefiting the community

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Appendix 12 indicates how all of these features might be integrated into a four-year program.

### **Recruitment and admission**

The University Honors Program will serve students who have demonstrated outstanding academic potential and outstanding leadership, community service and civic engagement. It will be dedicated to preparing, nurturing and challenging the future leaders, in all walks of life, of the state and nation. To attract the high diversity of talented scholars who will be needed to fill these roles and to meet all the challenges of a global society, the admissions process will consider test scores and class ranks in combination with other evidence such as the rigor of the high school curriculum; evidence of creativity, imagination, inventiveness; excellence in areas of leadership, service, and civic engagement; or other evidence of special gifts or talents. Unified honors admission decisions will be made on the basis of the regular University application, although students interested in honors may be asked to complete an additional component of the application at the time they apply to the University. Students will be admitted to UHP and also to the college of their choice.

Honors students currently represent the upper 5% to 10% of their high school classes and achieve comparable scores on standardized tests. We expect that as we attract more of the best students, most of the Honors Scholars will come from the top 5% of classes, although there should always be room for students with exceptional profiles who fall outside this measure. UHP will admit about the same number of students currently admitted to all collegiate honors programs each year (about 750), of whom about one-third will be admitted to the Regents Scholars Option once it is fully operational. It is also important to allow opportunities for transfer and other students to join UHP after the freshman year, since we want to attract talented students to the University at various stages in their academic careers..

The students recruited into UHP will represent the broad diversity of the State and the nation. Honors and diversity are mutually reinforcing concepts—to the extent that honors opportunities are a privilege that we make available in order to enhance the educational opportunities for our

most talented students, we want to assure that we work closely with Admissions to recruit the best and the brightest high school students from diverse communities, welcome them to the University, and give them the advising and support they need to succeed..

Marketing and identity will be critical to the success of this program. As the deans note in their report, we need to, “substantially enhance the marketing, development, and the recruitment of students. Honors opportunities must be much more visible to prospective high school counselors, prospective students and their parents, and to the public at large. The Program should be vigorously promoted to the most gifted and talented students in Minnesota and the world.” To help achieve this goal, the UHP needs at least one full-time recruiter working closely with the Office of Admissions, and we need to seek the advice and support of the University’s best professionals in areas such as admissions, marketing, and communications.

### **Extracurricular and co-curricular programming and opportunities for honors students**

The UHP will offer vibrant and robust co-curricular, cross-college honors programming. Students in the UHP should be both informed and encouraged to explore the rich set of opportunities the University of Minnesota and the Twin Cities can provide. Examples include the very large number of prominent guest speakers, artistic performances, lively debates and other intellectually interesting activities held on campus each year. To the extent possible, UHP students should be allowed access to intellectual leaders in settings that allow them to actively engage some of the leading artists, scientists, commentators, and activists in the community, state, nation and the world.

We must develop stronger co-curricular programming that is advertised broadly to honors students. For example, one might envision an Honors Round Table that meets weekly, biweekly or monthly for informal discussions on a range of topics. Presenters would draw from University faculty, community leaders and distinguished visitors to campus.

We should try to establish a structure where honors students take as much responsibility as possible for co-curricular and extracurricular programming, but also offer staff help as needed. An effective all-campus honors organization would likely want to plan social events and should be encouraged to do so. In addition, many honors students have high motivation with regard to civic engagement and community service. We should not create a separate set of service learning courses for honors students but with some staff help, honors students might organize cross college community service opportunities each year

Parents of gifted/talented students are often strong advocates for their children. We expect that within the existing Parent Program (housed in Student Affairs), there will an opportunity to tap into this enthusiasm by creating an honors parent organization that could be a resource for co-curricular opportunities and community/internship connections, and that could also advocate for scholarships and external funding.

### **Recommendations for prioritizing deliverables**

The creation of an all-campus University Honors Program requires a number of steps. We endorse the deans' guidelines for implementation and timing:

Implement necessary program changes under the leadership of the Vice-Provost for Undergraduate Education who will lead the implementation team. Membership on the implementation team should include several Associate Deans for Undergraduate Education, several directors of collegiate honors programs, and several members of the Strategic Positioning Honors Task Force. The work of the implementation team should begin in February 2006 with the Honors Director, Executive Committee [Faculty Advisory Committee], marketing and recruiting materials, and web site in place by July 1, 2006 in time for the beginning of the Fall 2007 recruitment cycle. New courses, new learning opportunities, and co-curricular activities should be developed between July 1, 2006 and June 30, 2007 for full implementation in Fall 2007.

The implementation team should also include key professionals from Admissions, Housing, and Student Life. It is important to begin immediately by appointing the implementation team and developing a search strategy for the Dean of UHP. It may facilitate progress to appoint a high-level administrative staff member whose sole responsibility for six months will be to convene the implementation team and to carry out the necessary administrative arrangements, since the initial six months will entail very extensive and intensive planning that will be beyond the capacity of a committee to manage. A great deal of work will also need to be done to develop and implement the priority admissions/fast-track options in partnership with the professional schools.

Creation of the UHP will require administrative support, space, and new funding for scholarships, study abroad, and research opportunities. Funding for adequate professional advising staff, as well as for support staff (for event planning and organizing co-curricular opportunities) will also be crucial to the success of the program. We support and endorse the call of the Student Support Services Task Force for strengthened academic and career support services across campus, and we see honors advising as an important component of their integrated campus-wide student support systems.

It is essential that we move forward to implement all of the programmatic features articulated above, features that will help to make the University Honors Program distinctive in the minds of prospective students and their parents. The best students often have the opportunity to go anywhere—we want to give them every reason to come to the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities.

### **Appendices:**

Appendix 1. Charge letter

Appendix 2: Summary of process, consultations and communications

Appendix 3: Matross report

- Appendix 4: Deans' report
- Appendix 5: Discussion of Fast-Track and Priority Admission
- Appendix 6: Summary of Town Hall comments
- Appendix 7: Summary of notes from meetings with honors students
- Appendix 8: Summary of comments from HS counselors/IB coordinators
- Appendix 9: List of URLs of programs reviewed (Texas, Penn State, Virginia, etc.)
- Appendix 10: Proposed Organization Chart
- Appendix 11: Visual representation of proposed implementation timeline
- Appendix 12: RSO Student Timeline



## Appendix 1: Charge Letter to Task Force

September 15, 2005

TO: *Provost's Academic Task Force on Undergraduate Reform: Honors*

Kathryn Sikkink, *Co-chair*, Professor, Department of Political Science, CLA

G. David Tilman, *Co-chair*, Regents Professor and McKnight Presidential Chair, Department of Ecology, Evolution & Behavior, CBS

John Archer, Professor, Department of Cultural Studies and Comparative Literature, CLA

Eugene Borgida, Professor, Department of Psychology, CLA

Erika Lee, Associate Professor, Department of History, CLA

Robert Ruckert, Associate Dean, Department of Marketing & Logistics Management, CSOM

Leslie Schiff, Professor, Department of Microbiology, Medical School

Robert Tranquillo, Professor, Department of Biomedical Engineering, IT

Megan Williams, Undergraduate Student, Aerospace Engineering, IT

TBD, Undergraduate Student

FROM: E. Thomas Sullivan, Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost

RE: Provost's Charge to Task Force on Undergraduate Reform: Honors

Thank you for agreeing to serve on the academic strategic positioning Task Force on Undergraduate Reform: Honors, under the leadership of co-chairs, Kathryn Sikkink and David Tilman. The efforts of this task force will be critical to the overall success of the University's transformative strategic positioning effort.

Attached are documents that, taken together, comprise the charge to your task force.

- Attachment A contains an articulation of the University's overall goal and assigns to the task force the responsibility of retaining an "eye on the prize." Each of the issues identified in Attachment A, which is part of the charge of every task force, must be addressed.
- Attachment B contains criteria to be addressed by each task force. These criteria are drawn from the action strategies identified in the strategic positioning report *Advancing the Public Good: Securing the University's Leadership Position in the 21st Century* (February 2005). It is critical that each task force consider how its work can further each of the five broad action strategies.
- Attachment C contains the mission and deliverables specific to your task force, along with the date on which your task force report and recommendations are due.
- Attachment D contains the criteria for decision making, taken directly from the February strategic positioning report. Each task force should use these criteria as a framework for decision making.
- Attachment E contains a diagram of the process to be used by each task force. Note in particular the periods of required consultation with stakeholders.

There are a number of resources available to you as you pursue your charge. These include the professional staff member assigned specifically to assist your task force, the Resource Alignment Team, a toolkit of documents and templates, and the professional staff of University Relations appointed to facilitate internal and external communication of progress through the strategic positioning process. The Resource Alignment Team is a consulting group charged with providing support to all task forces in the areas of cross-functional alignment, change management, and subject matter expertise as needed. Support also is available from the Steering Committee for your strategic area. Finally, Leanne Wirkkula has been appointed to serve as a liaison between the academic task forces and me. Leanne will be able to help task force co-chairs access needed support and assistance. Leanne may be reached at (612) 625-0563, [wirkkula@umn.edu](mailto:wirkkula@umn.edu).

The success of your task force will depend upon creative, forward-looking thought that maintains constant focus on the broad goals for the institution as a whole rather than the self interest of particular individuals or groups. Your effort will require consultation with all potentially affected stakeholders, from deans to students and everyone in between. It will require dedication and persistence. And together with the work of the other task forces, it will help guide the University on our journey to become one of the top three public research universities in the world. Thank you for accepting this important challenge. I look forward to meeting with you at the kick-off work session hosted by President Bruininks this Friday, September 16.

Attachments: 5

c: Craig Swan, Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education  
Linda Ellinger, Staff to the Task Force on Undergraduate Reform: Honors  
Sharon Reich Paulsen, Assistant Vice President and Chief of Staff  
Leanne Wirkkula, Assistant to the Provost

## **Appendix 2: Summary of Process and Consultations**

The Task Force held 9 two-hour meetings as a whole group, plus numerous subcommittee meetings.

In addition, there were many consultation sessions, some of which were during meetings but most of which were outside the normal meeting times. Consultations were as follows:

- Three open forums/town hall meetings in cooperation with the other Undergraduate Reform task forces
- A meeting with the UMAA advisory board (also in cooperation with the other Undergraduate Reform groups)
- Discussions with the Council of Undergraduate Deans
- Discussion with the College Student Affairs Administrators group
- Consultation with Wayne Sigler, Director of Admissions, and Keri Zweig, who works with scholarships and honors admissions
- Five meetings with groups of honors students in various colleges
- Meetings and phone conversations with five high school counselors and/or IB coordinators, who also polled their students on specific issues
- An early meeting with CLA Dean Steven Rosenstone, and a later meeting with Dean Rosentstone and CBS Dean Robert Elde
- A meeting with the associate deans of CLA, CBS, IT, and CSOM, as well as the honors directors and honors staff of those colleges
- Meetings about fast-track or priority admission to professional schools: (1) with Judy Beniak (Health Sciences Career Center) and faculty and admissions personnel from AHC colleges, (2) with Prof. Edward Goetz, Associate Dean, HHH, and (3) with Prof. Joan Howland, Roger Noreen Professor of Law and Chair of Admissions Committee, Law School.

### Appendix 3: Matross report

## The 2005 U of M Admitted Freshman Survey: Selected Findings for Honors Level Students

Ronald Matross

Office of the Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost

### Background

In June of 2005, 13,981 admitted freshman applicants to the Twin Cities Campus were surveyed on their college choice and perceptions of the U of M versus their chosen or second choice school. The survey was conducted via the Web, using an initial e-mail invitation and three follow-up e-mails, and a drawing for an IPOD Shuffle MP3 player as an incentive. Responses were received from 3,687, a response rate of 29.5% (when adjusted for bad addresses).

The proportion saying that they planned to attend the U of M (shows) was 58% while 42% said they would go elsewhere (no-shows). Since we expect only about 37% of admitted applicants to actually enroll, a much larger proportion of the shows than no-shows responded to the survey. The low overall response rate and higher proportion of shows are typical of admitted applicant surveys.

This report focuses only on the 1,132 respondents in the potential honors range, defined as having an AAR Index of 145 or higher. Among these students, 527 said they planned to attend the University of Minnesota (47%) and 605 said they planned to go elsewhere (53%). (AAR = High school rank percentile + 2 x ACT composite score). In the data displays to follow, we report the results of the shows and no-shows separately and do not combine them.

### Competition

No-shows were asked what school they planned to attend, and shows were asked what school they would have attended if they hadn't chosen the U of M (See Figure 1). For both groups, a majority named out-of-state schools as their preferred alternative to the U of M (76% of shows, and 83% of no-shows). The University of Wisconsin Madison was the top single competitor as a second choice for shows and a destination for no-shows.

**Table 1: Destinations for No-Shows and Second Choices for Shows from Minnesota**

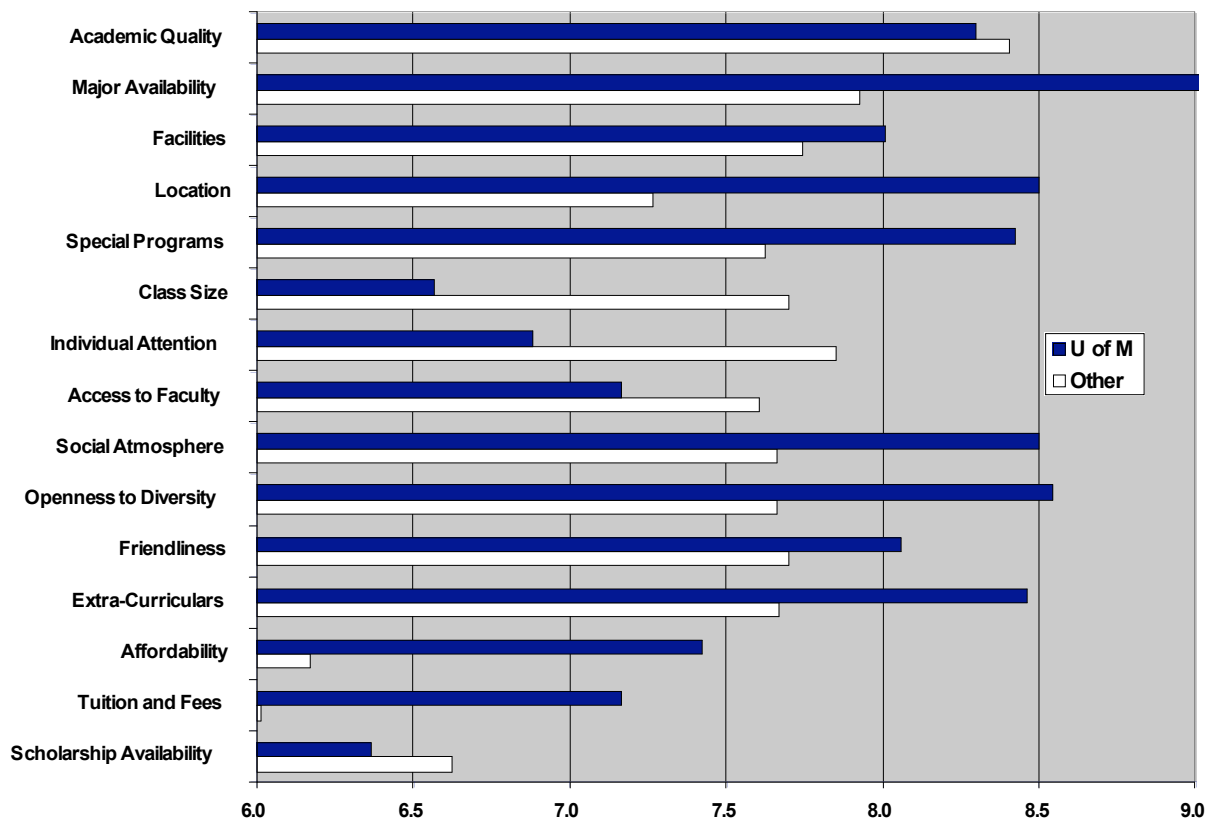
	Shows	No Shows
Private, not in MN,WI	24%	39%
MN Private	23%	25%
UW Madison	21%	21%
Public, not in MN,WI	19%	9%
Other UW	2%	2%
UM Coordinate	6%	2%
MN State U's	5%	1%
MN Com Col	1%	0%

### Shows' Ratings of the U of M versus Competitors

Respondents were asked to rate the U of M and their chosen or top alternative school on a number of attributes, using a 1 to 10 scale, where 1 = the worst college in the country and 10 = the best. Comparing the ratings of the two schools by the two groups conveys a sense of the reasons for the students' decisions.

In comparison with other respondents, the honors respondents, both shows and no-shows had more pronounced opinions. Shows were stronger in their ratings of the U of M and no-shows were stronger in their ratings of their chosen school. The University's key strengths, in the responses of the honors students coming here, are the availability of majors, location, and student life, as seen in the high ratings for social atmosphere, extra-curriculars, and openness to diversity (Figure 2). These students are attending in spite of rating their second choice school as better in terms of academic quality, and the size factors of class size, individual attention, and access to faculty. Importantly, they rate the U of M as better than their second choice on the cost of tuition and fees and affordability. These ratings are noteworthy given that the shows also rated the U of M as worse in the availability of scholarships than the school they turned down.

**Figure 1: Shows' Ratings of the U of the M and their Second Choice School**

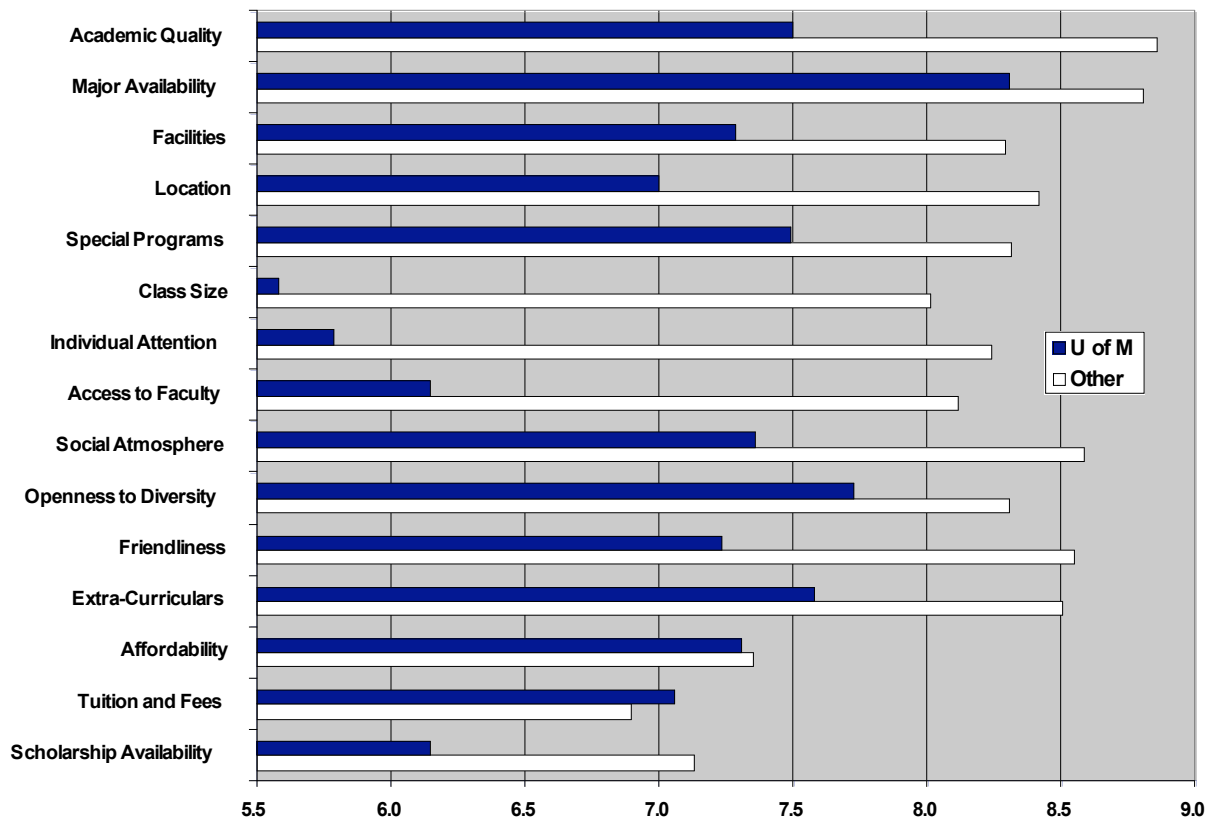


### No-Show's Ratings of the U of M and Their Chosen School

The same size factors that shows down-rated for the University were also down-rated by the no-shows, only more so (Figure 4). No-shows gave low marks to class size, individual attention, and access to faculty were given low marks. They also saw their chosen schools as better than the U of M in nearly every other aspect.

The one area where no-shows rated the U of M as better than their chosen school was the cost of tuition and fees (further confirming that our frequently raised tuition is not out of line with the marketplace). No-shows did rate their school as somewhat more affordable—in line with a distinctly higher rating for the availability of scholarships.

**Figure 2: No- Shows' Ratings of the U of the M and their Chosen School**



### Reported Number and Amount of Scholarships

Respondents were asked whether or not the U of M and their other school had offered them a merit-based scholarship, and if so, what the amount was for their first year. Among shows, the U of M outdistanced the other school in the number of awards, awarding 52% a merit award compared to 47% from the other schools. However, among no-shows, the other schools considerably outstripped the University 50% to 33%. And among no-shows, the size of the average annual award from the other school was \$4,000 higher than from the U of M.

**Table 2: Merit Scholarship Offers from the U of M and Chosen/Second Choice School**

	<b>From U of M</b>	<b>From Other</b>	<b>UM - Other</b>
<b>Shows</b>			
% Offered Scholarship	52.3%	47.2%	5.1%
Mean Scholarship Amount	\$5,063	\$7,436	-\$2,373
<b>No-Shows</b>			
% Offered Scholarship	32.7%	49.8%	-17.1%
Mean Scholarship Amount	\$5,943	\$9,965	-\$4,022

### Discussion

The results of this year's admitted student survey for honors students contain a number of positive findings for the University of Minnesota. Despite several years of tuition increases, the students coming here rate the U of M as more affordable than their second choice schools, and even no-shows rated our tuition and fees as lower. Shows see the U of M as a friendly campus, with a positive social atmosphere, and an openness to diversity. They also appreciate the "big school" characteristics of the availability of many majors and special programs, and their ratings of the "small school" characteristics of small class size, individual attention, and access to faculty are higher than they were two years ago.

But the results also make clear that the University still has some distance to go to be perceived by the market as one of the top public universities in the country. Even shows rated the academic quality of the U of M as lower than the schools they turned down, and no-shows rated their schools as considerably better academically than the University.

The ratings indicate that Minnesota continues to have the qualities of a "good buy" school in a taxonomy of educational markets developed by Zemsky, Wegner, and Massey (2005). Good buy schools are seen as having medium quality but high affordability. They compete primarily with schools in their own region, and win by offering good value. To attract good students, they must keep their tuition comparatively low, or else offer substantial scholarships and discounts. We have increased the academic profile of our student body more with the former strategy than the latter.

In contrast, "medallion" schools compete nationally because they are perceived as having very high quality. They win because students see them as being the best. Perceived quality is driven by several factors, but foremost among these is having a five-year graduation rate of 65% or better. Because of their higher perceived quality, medallion schools can charge higher tuition rates and offer fewer merit scholarships. In the Big 10, the Universities of Michigan, Illinois, and Wisconsin meet this criterion, as does Penn State.

Minnesota aspires to be a medallion school, but it continues to be seen in a tier that includes the University of Iowa, Indiana University, and Ohio State. While it has gradually raised its academic floor, it has not been able to significantly increase its proportion of the very best and

brightest students. (The U of M remains in 7<sup>th</sup> place in the Big 10 in the proportion of students in the top 10% of their high school classes).

School images are difficult to change. The University of Minnesota has made good progress in changing its old image as a big, impersonal place where a student is just a number. But it has had less success in changing its image a medium-quality school that isn't in the same class as Michigan or Wisconsin. Substantial change in that image is likely only when its student outcomes match those of the medallion schools.

**Reference**

Zemsky, R., Wegner, G.R., and Massy, W.F. *Remaking the American university: Market-smart and mission-centered*. New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 2005.



## Appendix 4: Deans' Report

### *A Proposal to Create The University of Minnesota Honors Program*

Steven L. Crouch, Dean, Institute of Technology  
Robert Elde, Dean, College of Biological Sciences  
Steven J. Rosenstone, Dean, College of Liberal Arts

October 28, 2005

#### I. Goals of The University of Minnesota Honors Program

- Enhance the breadth and quality of the educational experiences that the University of Minnesota provides gifted and talented students.
- Make honors opportunities more visible to prospective students.
- Attract more high ability students to the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities campus.
- Provide opportunities for honors students to become creative leaders within the University and community.

#### II. Features of The University of Minnesota Honors Program

##### A. The Model

The University of Minnesota Honors Program should build upon and consolidate existing collegiate honors programs to forge a single, coordinated University-wide program. The University of Minnesota Honors Program should 1) bring together existing collegiate honors programs into a single entity and 2) greatly enhance the honors experience by building upon existing strengths to add additional courses and innovative, interdisciplinary curricular initiatives, more advising, more co-curricular activities, and other learning experiences. Under this model, there would no longer formally be separate, collegiate-level honors programs, but rather a University-wide program that would fully integrate the college programs into a new entity. Under this model, incoming high school students would apply to one of the freshman admitting colleges and to The University of Minnesota Honors Program. Students would be admitted to the Honors Program in addition to their admission into a college.

##### B. General Features of The University of Minnesota Honors Program

The University of Minnesota Honors Program should provide an honors experience that combines both shared experiences, co-curricular activities and courses that reach across fields and colleges as well as courses, learning and research experiences that occur at the collegiate or departmental level (e.g. honors seminars, honors sections of large courses, departmental honors seminars, UROPs, etc.). Thus, the University of Minnesota Honors

Program should provide multidisciplinary honors courses and experiences that reflect issues and approaches that cut across the University's resources, cultures, and expertise. Similarly, colleges should provide honors courses that are more specific to a student's fields of interest. The balance within the mix of University-level honors courses and collegiate- and departmental-level honors experiences will vary depending on the student's needs, major, and interests.

C. Disciplinary Connections and Resources

The University of Minnesota Honors Program must be strongly and intimately connected to the colleges. The major components of the University-wide program would be courses and opportunities available at the collegiate and department levels as well as new courses created at the University level. The University of Minnesota Honors Program should be efficient and effective in its use of new and existing resources and should avoid duplication of courses, personnel and administrative structures. The Program should build upon the considerable strengths that already exist in the collegiate honors programs.

D. Course Offerings

Expand the course offerings to include new courses that focus on broad bodies of knowledge and themes that intersect and cut across the disciplines. These additional course offerings and learning experiences should complement existing course offerings. The offerings would include options such as the math-science-intensive curriculum that makes up the current lower-division program in IT Honors, which would be open to any honors student with the necessary background. Other options would include innovative, interdisciplinary initiatives such as the "Grand Challenges" curriculum.

Just as the current honors programs have historically been, The University of Minnesota Honors Program should be a laboratory for creating new kinds of learning experiences and for generating new ideas and models for courses that often will eventually serve the entire student body.

E. Experiential Learning, Research, and Scholarship Opportunities

The University of Minnesota Honors Program should provide enhanced educational experiences to its students. The program should provide special cultural and scholarly events aimed at honors students. Honors students should have access to special internships and other experiential or service learning opportunities. They should study abroad or at other institutions. In addition, every honors student should be guaranteed a collaborative research or creative experience with a member of the faculty. Graduation with honors should require an honors thesis or other appropriate scholarly work that is based on their work with faculty.

F. Student Support

The University of Minnesota Honors Program should provide a framework for increased types and levels of interaction between faculty and students, as well as specialized advising from professional academic advisors. The University of Minnesota Honors Program should provide resources needed to prepare students to successfully compete for such national scholarships as the Rhodes, Marshall, Goldwater, and Truman.

*III. Administration and Implementation of The University of Minnesota Honors Program*

A. Identity

Create a single website, a single honors catalogue, and a single set of promotional materials for The University of Minnesota Honors Program that will articulate the range of courses, research, scholarly, learning, and co-curricular opportunities available to honors students.

B. Marketing

Substantially enhance the marketing, development, and the recruitment of students. Honors opportunities must be much more visible to prospective high school counselors, prospective students and their parents, and to the public at large. The Program should be vigorously promoted to the most gifted and talented students in Minnesota and the world.

C. Admission

Admit students to The University of Minnesota Honors Program through a single, uniform application that is part of the regular application to the University. (Completion of this application would not be required by students who are not applying to Honors.) Students not admitted as freshmen but whose University work is at the appropriate level can be admitted as juniors and go on to graduate with honors; thus transfer students, non-traditional students and others who may not have done well in high school can have access to honors courses and experiences if they demonstrate appropriate academic achievement..

D. Enrollment

Enroll students simultaneously in The University of Minnesota Honors Program and one of the existing freshman admitting colleges. To ensure fluidity across the core arts and science disciplines, students admitted to Honors will be guaranteed that they may switch to any undergraduate degree-granting college on the Twin Cities campus. "Undecided" students will make a tentative choice and should be reassured that when they declare their majors, they may do so in any Twin Cities college. Honors advisors in the colleges will make special efforts to assist these students in these choices. Faculty-led seminars and

workshops should be developed to help undecided students explore their talents, aptitudes, and potential careers.

E. Director

Appoint a Director of Honors who leads the University's Honors Program and who reports to the Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education. The Director will be responsible for overseeing the honors curriculum, the student experience, leading the marketing and recruitment efforts, and assessing the effectiveness of the Program components.

F. Honors Faculty Fellows

Identify a broad range of "Honors Faculty Fellows" drawn from across the University who are responsible for overseeing and delivering the curriculum. Each Fellow will teach at least one course a year in Honors, and the course may be delivered at the University, collegiate, or departmental level. The Honors Faculty Fellows will also help mentor honors students and participate in co-curricular activities, governance and student recruitment. Appointments would be for 4 years. Colleges would need to be provided with "release funds" for Honors Faculty Fellows who either take on additional teaching responsibilities or who teach their honors course(s) in lieu of their departmental assignments.

G. Executive Committee

Appoint an Executive Committee that will serve as the governing board for Honors on matters of policy, curriculum, and the like. The Executive Committee will be advisory to the Director and will draw its membership from the Honors Faculty Fellows, and Associate Deans for Undergraduate Education (or his/her designee).

H. Curriculum

Develop an honors curriculum that includes existing honors classes at the collegiate and departmental levels as well as additional, new courses and learning experiences described below. All students enrolled in Honors have the right to enroll in any honors course on the Twin Cities Campus, consistent with the usual course prerequisites.

I. Requirements

Create University-wide honors requirements. Honors must continue to be a four-year experience leading to graduation with honors. Students not admitted as freshmen, as noted above, will have the opportunity to be admitted as juniors and to graduate with honors. Faculty within colleges must continue to decide which specific set of honors experiences within the University requirements are needed for a student in their college to graduate with honors.

J. Implementation Team and Timeline

*Implement necessary program changes under the leadership of the Vice-Provost for Undergraduate Education who will lead the implementation team. Membership on the implementation team should include several Associate Deans for Undergraduate Education, several directors of collegiate honors programs, and several members of the Strategic Positioning Honors Task Force. The work of the implementation team should begin in February 2006 with the Honors Director, Executive Committee, marketing and recruiting materials, and web site in place by July 1, 2006 in time for the beginning of the Fall 2007 recruitment cycle. New courses, new learning opportunities, and co-curricular activities should be developed between July 1, 2006 and June 30, 2007 for full implementation in Fall 2007.*

#### **IV. Articulation of Responsibilities**

##### **A. Academic Advising**

To provide continuity in academic advisors over the four years of a student's academic career, to provide more field-specific expertise needed to properly serve students, and to integrate honors students into their majors, advising of honors students will be delivered at the collegiate level. Collegiate academic advisors serving honors students will become a community that meets regularly to share best-practices. A goal of any honors program is to have its students graduate in four years (or less) with honors from a degree-granting college. The four-year graduation goal will be put at risk if advising does not occur at the collegiate level.

##### **B. Recruitment and Marketing**

The Director will work with the Office of Admissions to design and implement a marketing program to recruit students in coordination with the colleges. Recruitment of high-ability students must be a shared, coordinated, University-wide effort that engages the Director, the Honors Faculty Fellows, collegiate deans, academic advisors, honors students, alumni, and the Office of Admissions. Additional scholarships and guarantees of research opportunities are crucial to these efforts.

##### **C. Curriculum and Other Learning Experiences**

The Director will facilitate the development and scheduling of courses and other honors learning experiences. In addition, the Director will oversee the entire honors curriculum, including the college-level courses and experiences as well as the courses and learning experiences that are "broader" and reside at the University-level.

##### **D. Co-curricular Activities**

The Director will oversee and coordinate these University-wide activities.

##### **E. Assessment and Educational Scholarship**

The Director will develop and report annually an assessment of the University of Minnesota Honors Program, based on clearly defined outcomes. As a result of this assessment, program changes will routinely occur to ensure the program meets its goals.

#### **V. *Additional Resources Needed***

##### **A. Personnel**

1. Director and sufficient staff to accomplish the curricular, co-curricular, and recruitment activities outlined above that the Director will oversee.
2. Release funds for Honors Faculty Fellows.
3. Funds for additional academic advisors.

B. Academic

1. Additional scholarships.
2. Course development funds.
3. Additional UROPs and funds to support other learning experiences.
4. Resources to cover the costs of additional honors courses and sections.

C. Facilities

1. Space the Director and support staff.

D. Other

1. Additional promotional and recruitment expenses to enable enhanced printed materials, enhanced direct mail, enhanced web materials, more visits to key high schools, and increased on-campus experiences.
2. Funds for co-curricular activities.
3. Resources to enhance the mentoring and preparation for competition for national scholarships.

VI. Advantages of this Proposal over Creating a Separate Honors College

We do not support a model that would create a University Honors Program that is separate from and/or in addition to the collegiate-level honors programs. A separate honors program would not be an effective use of resources; it would add additional administrative infrastructure and staff; it would produce administrative redundancies and inefficiencies; it would reduce rather than strengthen synergies among the colleges; it would not leverage existing resources. A separate program would lead colleges to compete against the University's program for the most gifted and talented students. The University-level program would compete with the colleges for scarce resources and for faculty rather than build synergies with the colleges in the use of these scarce resources. Most importantly, a separate program would confuse, rather than attract the very students we seek. Creating yet another honors program, working along side the existing collegiate programs, will not be seen as a thoughtful, strategic investment of our scarce resources.

The new model for honors should not put at risk the effectiveness, success, and visibility of the existing collegiate honors programs. Instead, the University should adopt a model that builds upon those successes.

## **Appendix 5: Fast-Track or Priority Admission Programs at the University of Minnesota:**

### **I. Existing Programs: Pre-Medical Scholars Program**

The University of Minnesota Pre-Medical Scholars Program is a cooperative arrangement between the University of Minnesota - Twin Cities, the University of Minnesota Medical School, and highly qualified undergraduates. Its goal is to attract top students to the University of Minnesota Twin Cities Campus by providing them with special opportunities that will enhance their ability to enter into and succeed in medical school and in a medical career. Pre-Medical Scholar Students are matched with mentors from the Medical School's Academy of Educators. Mentors help them complete their final two years of undergraduate work in a manner that prepares them for the rigorous requirements of medical school. Pre-Medical scholars have opportunities to participate in specially designed Medical School workshops, seminars, research and shadowing programs. Participants also receive [conditional acceptance](#) to the University of Minnesota Medical School - Twin-Cities at the time of their acceptance into the Pre-Medical Scholars Program. For more information see:  
<https://www.meded.umn.edu/admissions/premedscholars.cfm>

The new University Honors Program will serve as a partner to help advertise and recruit students to apply for the Pre-Medical Scholars Program. Currently few high school students are aware of the Pre-Medical Scholars and thus they do not yet apply to the University of Minnesota in order to participate in it. The Pre-Medical Scholars program could also serve as a model for an expanded priority admission program at the Medical School and for priority admission programs at other University professional schools.

### **Vet-FAST: Early Decision Program for Students interested in a career in Food-Animal Veterinary Medicine**

The University of Minnesota has introduced the Veterinary Food Animal Scholars Program, or VetFAST to address the national shortage of veterinarians for food animals. VetFAST allows students to get an "admissions decision" by the University of Minnesota College of Veterinary Medicine at the end of the freshman year in college instead of during your junior or senior year. Students complete both their bachelor of science (B.S.) and doctor of veterinary medicine (D.V.M.) degrees in seven years instead of eight. Students in the program do not have to take the GRE as part of the admission process for the D.V.M. program. They benefit from mentorships with veterinary faculty and other D.V.M. students, pursue summer veterinary and industry work opportunities, and get scholarships and financial support through summer internships.

The VetFast program could serve as a model for expanded fast track programs with the Veterinary School and with other professional schools. For more information see:  
<http://www.cvm.umn.edu/cvm/education/prospective/VetFAST/home.html>



## **The University of Minnesota Medical School Duluth Early Admission Rural Scholars Program**

The University of Minnesota Medical School Duluth **Early Admission Rural Scholars Program** is a new program whose goal is to educate excellent primary care physicians who will establish practices in rural/small town settings of Minnesota. This novel program is designed for undergraduate students who have been accepted to the University of Minnesota Duluth (UMD) and who demonstrate superior scholastic ability and personal development during their first three academic years of college. Only students who are enrolled at UMD in the College of Science and Engineering (CSE) will be eligible for this program. Five students per year may be accepted into this program beginning with the Entering Class of 2005.

This program leads to the baccalaureate degree awarded by UMD and to the M.D. degree granted by the University of Minnesota Medical School. The curriculum for both degrees takes seven years to complete, three years of undergraduate and four years of medical school. After two years of a basic science curriculum in medical school, the students at the Medical School Duluth automatically transfer to the Medical School Twin Cities for their third and fourth years. The students in the early admission program would also transfer to Minneapolis under the same requirements. For more information see:  
[http://penguin.d.umn.edu/Admissions/early\\_admission.htm](http://penguin.d.umn.edu/Admissions/early_admission.htm)

### **II. Other possible fast track or priority admission programs:**

Other professional schools that have expressed interest in exploring the feasibility and development of fast-track or priority admission programs in partnership with the new University Honors Program (UHP) include the School of Dentistry, the Hubert H. Humphrey School of Public Affairs, and the Law School. Such fast-track programs would allow both the UHP and the professional schools to recruit outstanding students, including students of color. Fast track and priority admission programs would permit professional schools to enhance the diversity of their student bodies and to compete with their peer institutions that already offer such programs. Fast track programs are attractive to students because they facilitate access and reduce uncertainty and costs. For example, The HHH School of Public Affairs is interested in exploring fast track options with the University Honors Program that could include a “three-plus-two” program that would lead to a baccalaureate degree and to a M.A. in Public Affairs. The curriculum for both degrees would take five years to complete, three years of undergraduate and two years of graduate school, instead of the normal six years.

Specific professional schools and the State of Minnesota also have particular goals that fast track or priority admission programs may help them meet (as is the case with the VetFast Program and the Rural Scholars Programs discussed above). For example, the Medical School is concerned about current and future shortages of physicians in the state. A priority admission program of outstanding undergraduate from the state could help address such shortages because students from Minnesota are more likely to stay in the state upon completion of their medical degree. Law School faculty note that the Twin Cities has increasingly important black, Hispanic, and other communities of color. A presumptive admission program could help the Law School to

successfully recruit talented students from those communities. Models may differ depending on the professional schools' needs and expectations, and the UHP will need to work collaboratively with each of them and with the AHC to create appropriate pathways.

The University Honors Program only recommends fast track program that first result in the conferring of a baccalaureate degree, since only this type of fast-track program will contribute to improving graduation rates at the University. This dovetails with a recent position taken by faculty in the College of Pharmacy. The College of Pharmacy currently admits about 5% of its entering class in a fast track program that requires them to complete two years of pre-pharmacy work and all prerequisites before entering the College. But faculty members have recently stated a "degree preferred" stance for entry into the Pharmacy program. In general, the UHP recommends that all University fast-track and priority admissions programs allow for the prompt conferring of the baccalaureate degree.

A statement from the Health Careers Center is appended below.

### ***Mission of the Health Careers Center***

To contribute to building the next generation of diverse health professionals by proactively creating programs, providing services and influencing policies that encourage and engage pre-health learners in exploring health careers, making informed choices and becoming qualified candidates.

### ***Current health career exploration programs, courses and enrichment experiences available to prospective Honors students:***

#### **AHS 1601-1602: Courses for Pre-Medical Students:**

University of Minnesota freshman who have achieved ACT scores of 30 or above and who have expressed an interest in pursuing careers as physicians can be considered for a year-long course series. The courses include *AHS 1601 - The Future Physician*, offered during the Fall semester, and *AHS 1602 - Experiences in Health*, offered during the Spring semester. Both one-credit courses are customized to support students as they navigate their paths towards applying to medical school.

- **AHS 1601 - The Future Physician** covers the following topics: characteristics of successful medical students, trends in health care, workforce issues, an orientation toward the medical school application process, the benefits of inter-professional education, and the integration of technology into medical practice. This course gives pre-medical students direct access to Academic Health Center physician leaders including Dean Powell of the University of Minnesota's Medical School.
  
- **AHS 1602 - Experiences in Health** focuses on the importance and purpose of experiential learning in health professions. Students in this course participate in a 35-hour immersion experience in a clinical or research environment. They also receive specialized coaching on topics such as career exploration and self-assessment, resume-writing, creating and utilizing an electronic Portfolio ([www.portfolio.umn.edu](http://www.portfolio.umn.edu)) to document their academic/career experiences, and other skill-building activities to prepare themselves for careers in medicine. Further, the class includes in-depth discussions on cultural and professional competencies necessary for medical practice.

#### **Pre-Med Information Sessions**

The Health Careers Center offers on-going workshops for pre-medical students. Pre-Med I: *Thinking about a Career in Medicine* is designed for students who are exploring medicine. Pre-Med I includes a discussion of the roles of physicians, changes in medicine, the characteristics of successful physicians, and an overview of medical school and the training process. The follow-up session, Pre-Med II: *Getting on Track for Applying*, provides information on the application process including the roles of the MCAT and AMCAS, the kinds of candidates sought by medical schools, and tips on preparing to be a strong applicant. The sessions are co-facilitated by Health Careers Center staff, Dr. Marilyn Becker, Director of Admissions, Medical School, and a Health Careers Ambassador who is a current medical student.

#### **Alpha Epsilon Delta (AED) Pre-Medical Honorary Society**

The Health Careers Center provides faculty advisement to this student organization. AED is a student honorary society that provides a variety of programs and other resources to help students prepare for medical school. Student leaders convene evening meetings twice a month to address topics of interest for pre-medical students. These student leaders are an important and vital dimension of the "pre-med community" at the University of Minnesota.

### **Pre-Dental Information Sessions**

The School of Dentistry works collaboratively with the Health Careers Center to offer information sessions on *Applying to Dental School*. This session is well attended each year by prospective students. Prospective students learn the criteria for admission to the University of Minnesota School of Dentistry along with strategies to prepare for application. Students are also connected to the Pre-Dental Club which is advised through the School of Dentistry. A new dimension to this program has been the integration of a currently enrolled dental student who serves as a Health Career Ambassador.

### **Pre-Pharmacy Information Sessions and Resources**

Recruiters from the College of Pharmacy host prospective Pre-PharmD students for informational meetings in the Health Careers Center twice weekly. Starting in 2006, a PharmD will join the Health Careers Center staff as a career consultant in a shared position between the College of Pharmacy and the Health Careers Center. This pharmacy colleague will take an active role in pipeline work, especially with communities of color, to coach high ability students in high school to consider professional doctorate work in Pharmacy.

### **Additional Resources**

The Health Careers Center sponsors ongoing informational sessions and workshops during the Fall and Spring semesters on all health professional curricula offered at the University of Minnesota. Detailed information about these program options can be found at [www.healthcareers.umn.edu](http://www.healthcareers.umn.edu).

### **Fast Track Explorations**

The Health Careers Center will work to convene faculty leaders from the Academic Health Center to consider fast track options into professional health doctorates. The School of Dentistry and the Medical School have expressed interest in exploration of these curricular options for high ability students. Prospective students in the University of Minnesota Honors College would be excellent candidates for new fast track curricular options.

## **Appendix 6: Comments on Honors Programs from Town Hall Meetings—October 14, 17, 25, 26, and November 1**

[Faculty, staff, and students who provide student support were the target participants for this series of meetings, although they were open to all. The goal was to gather feedback for several committees working on aspects of Undergraduate Reform.]

### **Recruiting**

- Honors programs should not be focused on recruiting students, but providing an academic experience
- We need to aggressively recruit the best and brightest, build relationship with students
- Students not understanding why honors programs are something to consider
- Who is our competition for the best students? Is it large publics or small privates?
- CLA has a high yield rate for its honors programs, it demonstrates that they are getting the best and brightest
- We should try to attract students from other states rather than just focusing on the state's best students
- Important to look at other factors besides test scores and GPA for admission to honors programs
- There is concern about the demographics of honors program as it relates to diversity and access; while it be reflective of the University's diversity goals
- Word of mouth from other students will impact the desire for students to come to the University; we are not challenging our students enough which may encourage them to suggest their friends go elsewhere

### **Scholarships/Financial Support**

- Scholarship money is an issue, we are not competitive
- We need to provide additional scholarship support for students
- There should be guaranteed funding for high ability students

### **Classes/Content**

- Key selling point for honors programs is class size; need smaller classes during first-year
- The three colleges with strong honors programs (CSOM, IT, CBS) do not have writing as a mandate

### **Faculty**

- Honors students in liberal arts need to work with full faculty in their first-year
- Faculty are more interested in high achieving juniors and seniors, we should look at other opportunities for first and second year students
- Students come in with a lot of credits, we need to connect them with faculty early on

### **Student Support/Advising**

- Need to deal with mental health needs of honor and high achieving students
- There is a lack of sense of community among people in honors programs between students, faculty, advisors

- What happens if they can't continue to see their honors advisors after the first year or two; there needs to be consistency in advising for students if they move from an honors college to the college or department where their major is
- Critical for honors students to know about internships and other student engagement opportunities since they are coming in with numbers of credits
- Students don't have time to do discovery, due to large numbers of credits that many come in with; these students need assistance in determining career options and opportunities
- High achieving students don't necessarily know what they want to do, exploration is important
- There is a need to help students who are in honors programs make informed choices regarding graduate and professional fields of study
- There is disconnect among the various colleges with honors programs-students face challenges moving from one honors programs to another, including loss of scholarship

### **Research Opportunities**

- Research assistantships should be tied into recruitment package for high ability students in selected fields-look at what other schools do to develop program

### **Public Engagement**

- Programs should help to create co-curricular opportunities and help students become more engaged in the community
- Needs to work public engagement into honors programs

### **“Fast-tracking” to professional programs**

- Provide advantages for students who are in honors programs, ex. Easier admission into graduate programs
- Pre-professional tracks can be an incentive, but we have to pay attention to number of slots available
- Vet-fast program has high retention and high expectations
- Students are coming to the U in part due to graduate and professional programs in some areas, they believe that being an undergrad at the U may enhance their ability to be accepted

### **College-specific vs. Proposed Interdisciplinary Honors**

- Advantage to getting honors students into the colleges sooner
- Interdisciplinary honors offerings may be a demand that needs to be met
- Challenges faced in IT programs for students who may want to participate in honors programs
- There must be consistency across the campus regarding what requirements for entry into honors programs and classes
- There should be resources provided to help strengthen existing programs in addition to providing unique experiences within the new program
- Once a student gets into the program they should be able to access anything (programs, classes, etc) they would like to at the University (easy movement between colleges, for example)
- We need to attend to the interdisciplinary needs of honors students
- There is a fear about what the role of current honors programs will be in the future once the new program is implemented

- There is concern about making new honors program too complicated for students and advisors to understand
- Do we have the resources to serve students in existing honors programs, in addition to new honors option?
- If we are trying to make the honors experience more meaningful it would imply that its spread across the University in various departments, rather than a small centralized program
- How do you work with students who may not get into the U-wide honors programs when they may look at college level honors programs as a second-class option?
- The transition between honors program and their “home” college is important
- Collegiate programs can respond to some of the questions and issues highlighted in the proposed new program
- There is not an option for IT students to really explore other fields due to its restrictive curriculum
- Changing the name of the proposed program to something other than “honors” makes sense so there is less confusion
- There should be an explicit statement that existing programs would not compete with other honors programs

#### **External Effects of Honors on University**

- If we have an honors program, those who are not accepted may perceive that they will get second-class treatment at the University
- Concern about 2<sup>nd</sup> class status for people who did not get into honors programs
- If you cherry-pick the best faculty for the honors program you will have a two-tiered system of instruction
- We need to be mindful of the gap between student services available to honors students and those that are available to other groups of students

#### **Misc.**

- Where is demand for honors programs?
- Task force should discuss honors program in the context of being a land-grant institution
- Honors programs needs to be simple to understand for students
- There should be a living-learning community for high ability students that is separate from the residence hall (an actual house)
- Program should carry benefits for four years

**Additional comments from Task Force meetings:**

There was some concern from one member of the Task Force about what “academic choice” (page 5) might actually mean in practice. Here is his alternative wording suggested for this section of the report:

When students apply to the UHP and identify an intended college affiliation, the UHP admissions committee will evaluate the abilities and interests of each student to determine which college programs the student could potentially affiliate with. A student would not only be offered admission to the intended college, but to all the potential colleges for which the student was qualified. Students with outstanding qualifications across all disciplines would thereby be offered admission to all colleges and have the prerogative to change their affiliation to any college post-matriculation, assuming good standing in the UHP is maintained. UHP students whose academic record and experiences during their initial year at the University of Minnesota merit affiliation with a college not offered at the time of admission may so petition the UHP admissions committee. UHP students will therefore have academic choice in accord with their qualifications and the capacities of the college programs in a manner not currently available to University of Minnesota honors students.



## **Appendix 7: Student Consultation, Honors Task Force**

### **I. Meeting with Honors CLA Student Board**

**October 19, 2005**

Summary done by Margot Iverson, Administrative Fellow

Mary Eliassen and I met with the HCLASB at the regular monthly meeting. Rick McCormick, the head of CLA Honors, first described the Strategic Positioning Process and the recommendation to develop a new Honors program, and then he and the other Honors staff left the room. There were eight student members in attendance, representing all years of college.

Mary then posed some questions to the group:

#### **1. Why did you choose to attend Minnesota?**

Location—thought it might not be sufficiently “college-y” in atmosphere (compared to Madison), but then found liked the urban environment

Cost—Affordable option compared to a private college

Cost—offered scholarship

Cost—Parents would pay for law school if attended U for undergrad.

#### **1b. Did the honors program influence your decision to attend?**

Not to apply---just “checked” the box on the application, but then when learned about it was favorably influenced to attend.

Yes—once learned about it (after applying)

Yes—liked that there would be smaller classes and more attention in the honors program

No (didn’t know about it)

No

#### **2. If you have friends who were admitted to the Honors program but did not matriculate here, why not?**

UMN not far enough away from home

Too large

Big campus, big city

Not enough diversity

Offered scholarship elsewhere

#### **4. What aspects of the honors program are most valuable to you?**

Advising—like the one-on-one advising and peer honors advisors. Have heard that it is much more difficult to get individual attention in CLA if not an Honors student

Courses-in-common—like the small classes and chance to get to know other honors students

Small classes

#### **4b. How valuable do you/would you find the following parts of the Honors program?**

##### **--Honors Courses**

Liked small class size

Liked departmental classes with “honors contract”—chance for extra interactions with professor

Liked group projects

Criticism from some students:

- Don't like some of the class topic options

- Too much “busy work”—short questions of readings, etc

- Too much work for credit hours

- Not hard enough

- Professor not a “full” professor—only assistant

- Honors classes don't fulfill enough other distribution requirements

- Didn't like so many group projects

##### **--Academic Enhancement opportunities like internships, research, and study-abroad**

Do not currently go through honors for these opportunities—use other University offices.

Like idea of guaranteed internship opportunity, or special help with placement. CLA internship website too overwhelming. [General agreement--Most of the students found this idea very appealing]

Research opportunities—there are some, more might be better.

##### **--Special Advising/Mentoring**

Peer advising is helpful, but might also like a more formal mentorship program with a faculty member or community member in area of interest

**--Other?**

Honors housing: Several students had lived in Middlebrook—quieter than other on-campus options. Few other comments about housing.

Volunteer opportunities: Carlson honors students have organized volunteering opportunities. Would be interested in this, either as a requirement or organized opportunity.

**We concluded by telling students about plans to also meet with CLA Honors Student Association and to hold some open-invitation meetings for all honors students. Also encouraged them to email us if they think of any other comments.**

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**II. Meeting with CNR Honors Students**  
**November 7, 2005**  
**Margot Iverson, Administrative Fellow**

Mary Eliassen and I met with a group of CNR honors students over pizza directly after their Monday afternoon honors seminar. Bill Ganzlin, the Director of Student Services for CNR and the teacher of their honors seminar, was present. There were approximately ten students present, almost all of whom were first semester freshman.

Through a combination of informal discussion and written comments collected on note-cards (and in one case for a student who was unable to attend, via email), the following comments were made:

**1. Why did you choose to attend Minnesota?**

--Because of a whole college made for natural resources.

--Close to family.

-Was considering program at Stephen's Point (Wisconsin) but saw a flier for this program and visited. Was impressed by the caliber of research being done here.

--Started out in a PSEO class and loved it. Learned about honors from meeting with the CNR honors advisor.

--Scholarships and the choices of majors and different opportunities.

--The research opportunity available at an undergraduate level. It focused more on research compared to other programs. Friendly people and nice St. Paul and Minneapolis campus.

--What brought me here: scholarship funds.

--I came to the UofM because I had lived in Minnesota for 5 years while my Dad was recruiting for the Army and I loved it. I've always wanted to be a veterinarian but I did not want to go to college where my family is currently living (Texas). I was also very interested in a wildlife-related, pre-vet major. Overall the UofM was the perfect combination of everything I loved. This was my first choice in where to go to college, but I would never have been able to come without scholarships.

--I applied for the U of M because it had the kind of schooling I wanted [in Natural Resources].

--It was close to home and made financial sense to attend a state school.

--I know that the U had one of the widest programs with fisheries and wildlife. I wanted to get into this field and have a very wide base on which to spring off in my career. The choices for this wide base were very important for me. I can take classes in herpetology and economics and still have it go towards a career that I can shape myself.

--I was accepted elsewhere, but when I was offered a scholarship here I came here.

--My choice to enroll in the CNR at the UofM was strongly influenced by the out-of-state scholarship offered to help defray costs, as well as the reputation this institution has as a strong research-oriented university.

**1b. Did the honors program influence your decision to attend?**

--No. I was automatically put in honors.

--No. I was just admitted into it for the CNR and so I took it.

--I was not expecting to be in the honors program at all.

--The honors program was not a factor in my choice. I did not apply anywhere else.

--I wanted to be in the honors program because in high school I was in honors and I wanted to continue it in college. It was just an added bonus.

--Already was considering the program, but a letter from the honors program made me more interested.

**2. If you have friends who were admitted to the Honors program but did not matriculate here, why not?**

--College/campus too big.

--Did not know enough about it—not enough advertising, especially in smaller communities.

--Didn't want to be an undergraduate at a research institution.

--Too far, too cold.

--Scholarship offers at other schools.

#### **4. What aspects of the honors program are most valuable to you?**

--Teachers expect more but also give more freedom to pursue your own interests in class

--Smaller class size, and more challenging.

--As an honors student I enjoy interaction with my peers that are high achievers and are interested in Natural Resources. Also the interaction with other CNR honors students.

--I don't really know the different between being in honors and not being in honors.

--The better teaching and the "Honors" on my resume.

--Not much seems different yet but I will really like graduating with honors. Important in applying to law school.

--The thing I appreciate most about the honors program is the potential for "honors" distinction being on record, and serving as an asset for future employment potential.

--I have benefited from and enjoyed immensely the more in-depth conversations/debates I can engage myself in within the honors discussions.

--I am still in honors because I like the recognition of being an honors student. I believe that it will look good on my application for jobs and graduate school. Additionally, I receive higher respect from teachers and my classes are better and more interactive.

--I believe that as an honors student, things are much more difficult, however it also means that I have a real challenge for the first time in my school career and that I appreciate.

--Primarily research opportunities and relationships with faculty. Additionally, the program allows me to be very involved with the college. My experience differs in the fact that I have had a diverse undergraduate education. Not only have I taken classes, but I've done lots of research and become involved with a multitude of other student groups. It also looks good on a resume and makes me stick out from other students in CNR because there are so few of us in the honors program.

--I especially enjoy the smaller classes with familiar people with similar areas of interest and the more one-on-one time with faculty, teachers, and staff. Plus, classes are actually challenging, which I also enjoy.

--Honors classes are different. Students expect each other to do the reading, and the discussion is much better.

**5. What improvements or changes to your Honors program would make it even better? Would a university-wide Honors program be attractive to you?**

--Given the challenging classes, I worry about GPA and keeping scholarships and staying in honors.

--Would like more flexibility in planning course programs for major. Not a lot of trust in students. Some required classes are not needed, like CNR orientation.

--Would like more flexibility to individualize programs, but only with lots of advising. For example, the program at the University of Rochester has a core curriculum for all students than the rest of the course plans are determined at the level of the individual.

--Would like to be exempted from certain courses as an honors student.

--More options in honors classes.

--Don't see much of a difference between honors and non-honors classes.

--Do not find honors classes more challenging than regular classes.

--Could use more advising on making the transition to college life.

--Priority registration for honors students would be very useful.

--Like being in a college-specific program rather than an interdisciplinary honors program.

--There is a problem with the upper-level/lower-level split of the program—it assumes you enter with no credit.

--Not enough classes in honors available. Not enough options in NR majors, and many of the honors classes in other colleges are hard to get into for CNR honors students because of scheduling issues and because these other classes have many spaces reserved for their own honors students.

--Lessen the amount of research required or make it possible to count directed research previously done, applicable to the honors program. I don't know if a thesis is appropriate for an undergrad honors program... it seems too extensive. A university-wide program would not make the honors

track any more attractive, if anything it would probably detract from the program because they would make requirements that wouldn't necessarily apply to everyone involved in the program.

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**III. Student Consultation, Honors Task Force  
Meeting with CSOM Honors Students  
November 11, 2005**

Margot Iverson, Administrative Fellow

Megan Williams and I met with the Carlson Honors Student Board during their usual Friday meeting (members of the Board are elected). There were approximately eight students present, representing all years of college study.

A combination of informal discussion and focused discussion questions produced the following comments, grouped according to theme:

[Background information: Carlson Honors began six years ago, and currently includes about 15% of each Carlson class. In the lower-division portion of program, students are required to take 4 honors classes and participate in the Emerging Leadership Program, which requires over 70 hours of volunteer work and leadership skill-building exercises. In the upper-division portion of honors, 5 honors classes are required. See <http://www.tc.umn.edu/~cha/index.html> for more information.]

**1. Why did you choose to attend Minnesota?**

- Interested in Carlson, but only if admitted to the Honors program.
- Sense that Carlson offered more “bang for your buck” than other colleges looked at (Duke used as an example).
- Knew about and wanted to go to Carlson.
- Had always imagined attending UMN and wanted to study accounting. Found out about honors afterwards.

**1b. Did the honors program influence your decision to attend?**

- Yes, determining factor.
- Yes, I first applied to IT honors, and was not accepted, so I switched my application to Carlson, which would admit me as an honors student.
- No.
- No, knew about Carlson and wanted specifically to enter Carlson college. Did not know about honors.
- No, didn't know about it.
- Yes, in conjunction with scholarship. If not admitted to honors would not have matriculated.

**2. If you have friends who were admitted to the Honors program but did not matriculate here, why not?**

- Didn't get into honors. Honors seen as being as very different experience from non-honors, and some students wouldn't consider UMN if not accepted into honors.
- Reputation [of UMN] for being "too big"
- "U" seen as not exciting, the default choice

### **3. What aspects of the honors program are most valuable to you?**

- Emerging Leadership Program (almost all the students agreed about this):
  - ELP was for me the defining factor in the Carlson honors experience
  - Liked the social-responsibility aspect of ELP, goes against perception of business school as being cold and hard-hearted
  - Vital to personal development, developing leadership ability
- Like how the Carlson honors program is run with student guidance and co-operation with faculty, very adaptive to student concerns (student agitation led to the creation of the program six years ago)
- Rigorous nature of program
- Way to differentiate oneself from other Carlson students and Carlson graduates when applying for jobs
- Special relationships with alums, other advantages in career development
- Chance to do more exiting work in classes—for example, in some courses honors sections get to work on real-life business problems for local businesses and then meet with the corporations, rather than being assigned standard case-study scenarios out of a book.
- Honors students care more about classes, and professors respond to that energy and care more too in their honors classes.

### **4. What improvements or changes to your Honors program would make it even better? Would a university-wide Honors program be attractive to you?**

The students unanimously expressed concern about the creation of a University-wide honors program, mostly with regards to how such a program might negatively affect their own program:

- If a student from a new, different honors program were to be allowed to enter into the Carlson program as an upper division student, this would not be fair to Carlson students who were not accepted. Currently, entry into the Carlson honors program has become so competitive that it is almost impossible to enter the program as an upper-division student if not already a member of the lower-division honors program.
- If a student from an interdisciplinary honors program wanted to be admitted as an upper-division Carlson honors student, they should have to go through same application process as everyone else.
- Don't see integration between Carlson honors and interdisciplinary honors as feasible. Feeling that to allow non-Carlson honors students into their upper-division program would "dilute" their program.
- Concern that any attempt to link different honors programs would hurt the Carlson program, which is small and uniquely geared towards the interests and needs of Carlson students.
- Am happy with current situation. If there were to be changes to the structure of honors at the University, will Carlson honors students loose the power they have to steer their own honors program? At Carlson, the initiative for the honors program comes from the students.



- Might limit personality of individual honors programs, which have a unique flavor based on their college and the student needs. In Carlson, experiential quality of honors program is most important—developing leadership skills, working on real-life problems, making contacts.
- Do not see any benefit to Carlson in a new honors program.
- Concerned about new program in light of limited resources. Why not spend the money instead on scholarships to attract more top students to the current honors programs?
  - Would like chance to meet honors students from other colleges
- Like idea of Grand Challenges courses

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#### **IV. CBS Honors Students, Nov. 17, 2005**

Notes prepared by Mary Eliassen, Mary Eliassen and Megan Williams attended

#### **Why did you choose to attend the University of Minnesota? Did the Honors Program play a role in your decision?**

- Financial reasons; close to home, as a Twin Cities resident, already have “networks” within the Twin Cities.
- Established prestige of CBS at U of M – but had no knowledge of the Honors Program in particular.
- Close to home, established program.
- Was going to go to Northwestern (IL), but that school did not have Honors. I was used to being in advanced learning classes with smarter kids, wanted to maintain the accelerated path. Also interested in smaller classes, but have found that the classes are not really any smaller – still too big.
- I knew nothing about Honors when I applied, not a factor in decision.
- Large class size and lack of interaction with teachers is turning students away from the University.
- Turned down Madison to come here, even though Madison is more prestigious, because the University has less “attitude” than Madison; made me feel more important, like they actually wanted me here. Came because of the research opportunities.

#### **What do you like best about Honors? What would you include in the “ultimate” Honors Program?**

- It’s a lot easier to make friends, especially living in Honors housing.
- Would like discounted housing/ “better” housing opportunities.
- Smaller community in a larger university.
- Like being more “clumped together” with the same students in all classes.
- Classmates are very important to challenge me and help me to understand; wouldn’t get that out of regular classes.
- Should avoid isolated environment in which all classes are with the same students; need more exposure to other opportunities in the University, meeting other students in other colleges and classes outside CBS.
- Don’t want classes with all the same students; no diversity.

- Need to actually deliver on the claim of “smaller class sizes”; has found that classes are not in fact smaller.
- Student contact with the professor is very important; some opportunities for that currently, but not enough.
- More access to and interaction with faculty.
- I don’t even feel like an Honors student; there are not enough requirements to make me feel like I am taking something extra rigorous.
- Lots of things Honors offers are also available without being in Honors (such as research); it would be nice if Honors offered something above and beyond the regular opportunities.
- Honors is only a “sticker” on your diploma – not really worth it.
- Requirements are not very stringent for students with AP or post-secondary credits. (Observation – over half the students raised their hands when asked if they came in as freshmen with very few liberal education requirements left to take.)
- Need more scholarships, specifically for Honors. (mentioned multiple times.)
- Would like priority registration.
- Would like more opportunities and fewer obligations. Especially opportunities that allow students to gain “real world” experience. (This was reiterated by many students.) Not interested in extra requirements that are not associated with major.
- Would like more career exploration, like lab tours, special co-curricular activities, mentoring, job-shadowing. (mentioned multiple times.)
- Mentors for all Honors students; perhaps have past Honors graduates come to classes and discuss what they are doing now.
- Would like more “hands-on” experiences.
- Give students more realistic opportunities, yet don’t punish them for taking Honors courses with extra-hard grading. More research opportunities.
- Would like Honors to prepare students for graduate school and/or research.
- Classes should be more in-depth and actually explore the subject; more extensive seminars.
- Need more opportunities for freshmen/sophomores, not just juniors/seniors.
- Honors parking; valet parking; free food.
- Would like more options for required courses; more flexibility in course work.
- Study abroad honors program would rock!

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## **V. Meeting with IT Honors Group**

**November 22, 2005**

Margot Iverson, Administrative Fellow

Megan Williams and I met with representatives from the IT Honors Group over pizza in Middlebrook Hall. There were nine student members in attendance, most of whom were freshman and sophomores.

### **1. Why did you choose to attend Minnesota?**

--Cheaper than other options, and because of the Chemical Engineering program.

- Offered a scholarship, and because of the Biomedical Engineering program.
- Cheaper and because of ChemE.
- Scholarship.
- ChemE. Program.
- Visited the program and liked it, although thinking about transferring.
- Brother went here, liked it.
- Everyone in my family went here.
- Offered a scholarship.

**2. What aspects of the honors program are most valuable to you?**

- Honors classes are better taught than non-honors classes, although not necessarily smaller.
- Challenging classes.
- Great teaching. Especially liked when professors led discussion sections.
- Like the small honors community. Honors housing a plus.
- Group projects when you don't have to worry about other students being slackers.
- Honors Physics Lab—we get a chance to think critically.
- Small class size.
- Top professors.
- Honors tutors.
- Fellow students—everyone is driven and smart.
- Excellent advising, backbone of the IT honors program.
- Small size.
- Prestige.

**3. What improvements or changes to your Honors program would make it even better?**

- Difficult to travel abroad.
- Would like more upper-division honors classes
- Suggested merging similar classes in different departments so that more honors classes could be offered.
- Three semesters of Physics too many, two is sufficient for some IT honors students.
- Lower division honors is the focus of the IT honors program, room for strengthening upper-division.

**Would a university-wide Honors program be attractive to you?**

[It was hard for IT honors students to see any advantages for them to a new honors program, given their lengthy, highly structured requirements, and their already highly competitive reputation]

**We concluded by encouraging students to email us if they think of any other comments.**

## **Appendix 8 Comments from High School Guidance Counselors, IB and Gifted Coordinators**

The people interviewed were:

David Breeden, Counselor, Edina High School

Lidia Kabaka-Travis, Counselor, Hopkins High School

Frank Sachs, Director of Counseling, Blake School

Jean Sherwood, Counselor, Southwest High School

Leslie Warner Tonyan, Gifted Programs Coordinator, St. Paul Central High School

The following comments are an amalgamation of feedback from these colleagues, in no specific order of comments and with identifying information by high school deleted. Each point represents one person's comments on a specific issue. Not everyone commented on everything.

### **1. Where do your best students go to college? What are they looking for in a college experience?**

\*Ivy, prestige, name-recognition, getting away from home, quality as perceived in rankings; parents are very influential

\*For our students, going out of state is a big draw. Thus, the challenge for any U Honors program would be to develop a program with such a reputation that will keep some of these kids home. For our group, that is a large task.

\*Everyone is looking for something a little different—our students go to schools that are going to offer them exciting educational opportunities—participate in research—best are going to Ivies, Stanford, Duke. Our students are looking for where they feel comfortable and can pursue the best; also sometimes looking for intimate atmosphere, stimulating conversations with peers

### **2. What factors currently deter some gifted students from applying to or accepting an offer to attend the University of Minnesota?**

\*Feedback is that U of M is safety school for best students

\*School is increasingly competitive and viewed less as safety school, now considered as a first choice and not safety

\*U of M is a backup school for our best students; some are worried about location, size. They perceive the U as too big and not enough support. Some see the U as a continuation of high school. U of M does not come across to some as having a distinct “flavor.”

\*Our students in top 10% look at IT, CBS, Carlson, not necessarily other colleges

\* The ones who go to MN have tended to like it a lot, mostly in IT, Carlson, and Liberal Arts.

What deters: prophet is never respected in his own land. Students want to go away, do something more glamorous. Not seen to be as much fun as a Madison, eg. Football games, jump around---need a stadium on campus. Lacks an identity, needs to embrace urban setting. U is as good as Wisconsin or Michigan but students don't see it—USE THE CITY and all of its opportunities; marketing the U as an intellectual institution.

**3. Do you believe that a university-wide Honors Program would be attractive to the students you work with?**

\*Honors is seen as fragmented, students don't know about honors options especially in CLA; they don't know what distinctive features there might be

\*need to build something in to make the familiar new/different/special. Emphasize advising and faculty mentors.

\*Would help greatly with marketing.

\* Would help—not the sole issue. U of M's honors program is stronger than Wisconsin's, but people aren't that aware of CLA program and others.

**4. Which of the following features of a possible honors program would be most attractive to students?**

a. *A shared freshman curriculum, focused on the "Grand Challenges" facing society and being addressed by disciplines spanning those at the University*

\*Would interest a certain percent, probably not all or even most

b. *a small seminar class each semester, with about 10 to 12 students and a professor addressing current research topics;*

\*yes—this is critical—they are used to getting one-on-one attention and interacting, getting feedback

c. *on-campus honors housing;*

\*Not clear whether this makes a difference

\*Not critical

d. *an honors summer research internship;*

\*yes, excellent

\*yes

e. *one-on-one mentorship as each honors student pursued a research project and wrote an honors thesis;*

\*Very important to have intensive, small group connections to faculty

\*Working closely with professors is important.

f. *guaranteed admission to the University Medical School, Dental School, or Law School for any graduating University Honors Program Scholar who met GPA requirements, and had taken required classes.*

\*Brilliant idea—natural flow and reduces stress on students.

\*One of the biggest enticements would be to connect them with professional schools. I believe that a good number of students go to competitive schools outside of the state but then come back to the U.

\* Critical—this is a great idea and would make a big difference.

*g. substantial scholarships*

\*Yes, scholarships make a difference in choice

\*Essential element in some students' choice

## 5. What else would a strong Honors Program need to offer?

\*GET THE WORD OUT—there is an honors program, easy to apply, great features.

\*Aggressive recruitment. Over the years, I have had several excellent students visit the University and come back to tell me how impressed they were with what they saw. Now, most of these students didn't go, but it still points to something that I believe is so important. That is, once you have a program in place, and a student applies, then you have to recruit them—do I dare say like an athlete—yes. From your accepted applicants look for honors candidates and then get them to the U to show off your programs.

Let them know about the research that says if you got accepted to one of the top schools in the country and also your flagship state u, you are going to do just as well in the long run by going to flagship U. I am sure that your group knows the research. And more than that—the student may save herself a lot of money that can be used for professional/grad school.

The second part of the recruitment is the plan for once a student is accepted. As I am sure that you know, the top schools in the country recruit their accepted candidates very heavily once they send out their accepts because many are seeking the same people. Here the you could probably be much more diplomatically aggressive. Perhaps this is already being done. It is crucial.

\*Curriculum programming could be even more innovative. The U has a vast faculty. Why not challenge the best liberal arts colleges in the country such as William by providing a tutorial experience for every student in the last two years? That's distinctive.

## **Appendix 9: URLs of Public Research University Honors Programs Reviewed**

University of Virginia, especially the Echols Scholars Program:

<http://artsandsciences.virginia.edu/echols/>

Penn State's Schreyer Honors College

<http://www.scholars.psu.edu/>

University of Maryland Gemstone Program

<http://www.gemstone.umd.edu/>

University of Texas, especially "Plan II"

[http://www.utexas.edu/cola/plan2/general\\_info/](http://www.utexas.edu/cola/plan2/general_info/)

University of Illinois

<http://www.honors.uiuc.edu/information/about.html>

University of Michigan (LS&A):

<http://www.lsa.umich.edu/honors/about/index.htm>

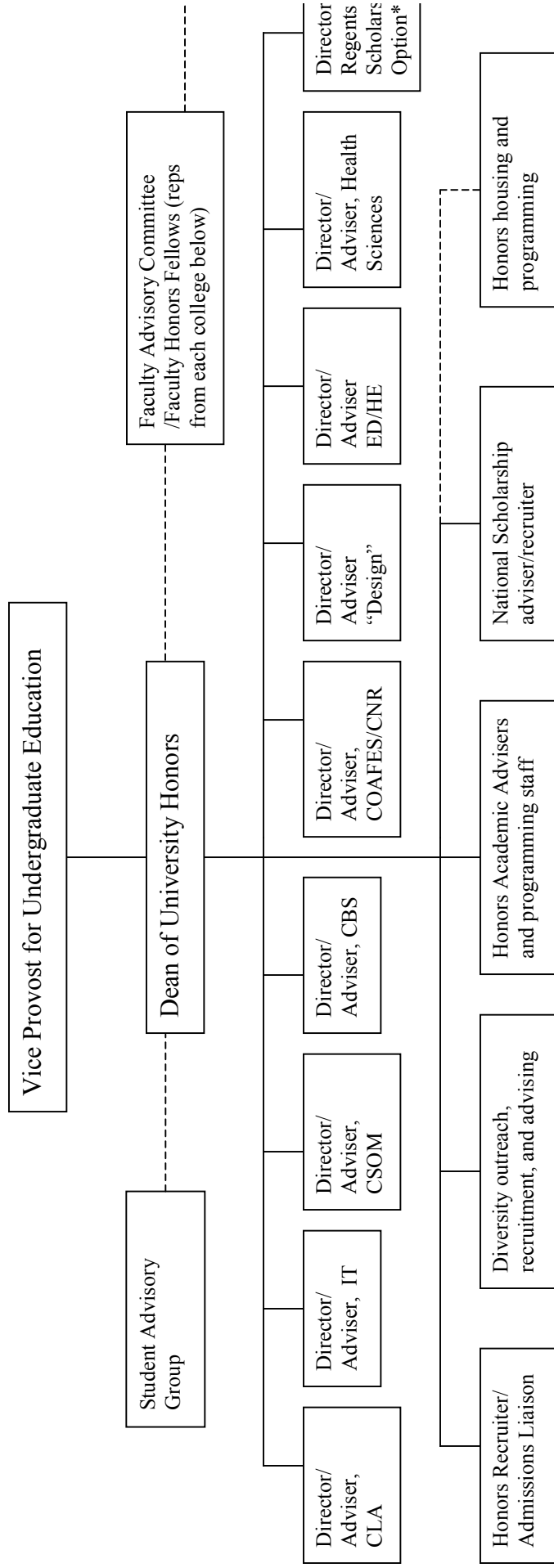
Honors Strategic Plans from the following institutions:

Ohio State: [http://oaa.osu.edu/reports/honors\\_scholars\\_04.html](http://oaa.osu.edu/reports/honors_scholars_04.html)

Penn State: <http://www.scholars.psu.edu/about/2005strategicplan.pdf>

University of Kentucky: <http://www.uky.edu/Provost/documents/HonorsReport.pdf>

**Appendix 10. Proposed Organization Chart of UHP and RSO**



\*The RSO Program Director will be a faculty member who will administer RSO and teach in the Grand Challenges Curriculum. Other directors may either be faculty w part-time administrative responsibility and part-time teaching responsibility, or P&A staff with full-time administrative and advising responsibility. Other responsibilities for directors and advisers may include community liaison and programming. Faculty input and oversight will be assured through the Faculty Advisory Committee.





**Appendix 12: Regents Scholars Option Four-Year Overview**

	Freshman		Sophomore	Junior	Senior
RSO-specific honors curriculum	3-day RSO-specific orientation (1 credit)	Honors freshman seminars  Grand Challenges UROP grant-supported undergraduate research experience	Sophomore practicum (1 credit)	Mentored scholarly work; Development and execution of a senior honors project	
Service Project	RSO students would participate in one or more community engagement projects during this period				
Study Abroad	RSO students would participate in a global experience during this period				
Honors Housing	Housing in Regents Scholars House	Optional Honors Housing			
Extracurricular Activities	Regents scholars would participate in weekly extracurricular activities throughout their University experience				