# Online Assessment Tracking Database

Sam Houston State University (SHSU) 2014 - 2015

**Honors College** 

#### Goal

# Rexamine, Refine, And Redefine The Honors Role On The SHSU Campus P

After a significant growth trajectory, it is time to step back and reconsider the role of the Honors College on the SHSU campus.

### Objective (P)

## Expand Honors Outreach And Service P

One means of changing perception of Honors College students and the Honors College itself is to become more visible in our service role. Our objective is to add significantly to the current honors service role, even though that role is already substantial.

#### KPI Performance Indicator

## Expanding Honors Service And Outreach P

This will be a success if the honors college adds at least two significant service or outreach projects or initiatives.

#### Result

# New Honors Service/Outreach In 2014-15 # P

The most significant new Honors College service project for the 2014-15 academic year was "Project Intrepid," in which 16 honors students, under the supervision of Dr. Pamela Zelbst and Mr. David Yebra, worked with the Center for the Intrepid at Brooke Army Medical Center. The students assisted veteran amputees and burn victims in the physical and psychological aspects of adjustment. Honors students on the Zimbabwe seminar (in May 2015) worked with a clinic for pregnat HIV victims and coordinated with Mr. Mark Butcher to assist in bringing medical clinic assistance to the tribal areas of Zimbabwe. In addition, during the 2014-15 academic year, honors designated four honors seminars as ACE (community engagement) courses.

#### Action

## Continuing And Expanding Honors Service Outreach 🎤

We believe that the most important by-product of these outreach/service initiatives was the benefit to the students and to those they served. However, the acclaim we received, both in public media and from our campus community, makes it more than worth our while to continue these initiatives. We hope to continue the Project Intrepid, and we will help honors students maintain contact with the public health initiatives in Zimbabwe. We will continue the ACE seminars (with the addition of a Sustainability Seminar in the fall of 2016). Honors is committed to expanding our service outreach. Besides the obvious benefits to our students and the recipients of their service, we believe that these projects have helped improve the image of the Honors College and our students on campus. We will continue and expand these outreach/service initiatives.

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#### Goal

# Enhance The Honors Educational Experience Without Sacrificing Quality. $\nearrow$

The Honors College will continue to mine NCHC literature and conferences, as well as ideas from other honors programs inside and

outside our region, for ways to enhance the honors educational experience without sacrificing quality.

## Objective (P)

# Develop An Ongoing And Robust Honors Study Abroad Program ${\Bbb P}$

For the past few years, we have actively sought information on various honors study abroad ad National Collegiate Honors Council member institutions. Based on our findings, we are ready to pursue the formation of an annual study abroad program in the SHSU Honors College

## KPI Performance Indicator

## Launch An Ongoing Honors Study Abroad Program P

This will be a success if in the 2014-15 academic year, the Honors College at least puts into place definitive plans for a future study abroad. Even better would be to actually conduct an honors study abroad in the spring of 2015.

#### Result

## 2015 Honors Seminar In Zimbabwe # P

During the Spring 2015 mini-semester (specifically, May 10 through 30), the Honors College conducted its first study abroad seminar--an honors seminar in Zimbabwe.

#### Action

## The Future Of Honors Study Abroad 🎤

Given the great success of the 2015 Honors Zimbabwe Seminar, we plan to go forward definitively with our honors study abroad program. In the spring of 2016, Dr. Kimberly Bell, the incoming honors dean, will lead an honors study abroad to London. In a later year, she will lead a study abroad to Greece. We will return to Zimbabwe in some future year. In fact, two of the honors students who took part in the Zimbabwe study abroad will travel to the 2015 National Collegiate Honors Council meeting in Chicago to present their experience. In June 2015, Dr. Young travelled with other SHSU faculty and staff to Costa Rica, where he scouted possibilities for a future honors study abroad there. Study abroad will become a staple element of the honors experience.

## Objective (L)

#### Strengthen And Enhance The Quality Of Honors Teaching

The Honors College will undertake a focused effort to increase and strengthen faculty involvement in honors classes by providing faculty development and support. This initiative will take shape in the form of written documents circulated to faculty and workshops/idea sessions on honors teaching effectiveness.

#### Indicator

#### Honors Faculty Development Survey

During 2014-15, the Honors College will undertake specific faculty development initiatives, particularly with the objective of increasing faculty understanding of honors educational practices and objectives.

### Criterion

### National Collegiate Honors Council Criterion P

In seeking to enhance our connections and communications with honors faculty, we will follow criteria for honors teaching and faculty standards set

by the National Collegiate Honors Council. We will produce our own teaching document to communicate these standards and criteria to our honors teaching faculty, both those who teach in seminars and those who teach in honors-only sections of regular courses.

### Finding

# Need For Further Improvement Of Faculty Development P

The Honors College did a certain amount of faculty development and outreach, but it was not as systematic as the objective had outlined. We did not produce the written guidelines we envisioned, and while we did perform some faculty development outreach, we did not hold the series of workshops we had anticipated.

### Action

# Need For Improvement Of Honors Faculty Development ₽

While the Honors College did provide some enhanced guidelines for honors faculty (including meetings in which we articulated guidelines and objectives for conducting honors seminars), we still have much work to do in this area. We will plan more structured outreach for the coming year, including more careful communication with the instructors of honors sections in the disciplines and honors contracts.

#### Goal

# Comprehensive Evaluation Of The Honors Admission Process

As a result of preliminary discussions in spring 2014, Honors College leaders determined the need to reexamine our admissions process. During the fall of 2014, the Honors College will undergo a thorough evaluation of our processes, procedures, and policies governing the Honors College. The objective will be to identify strengths and weaknesses in our current system and consider the possibility of revisions to honors admissions.

## Objective (P)

## Re-examine The Standards For Honors Admission P

Preliminary discussions, ongoing for the past few years, have raised the question of whether the current honors admissions process relies too heavily on certain criteria. We will use discussions with honors staff and honors admissions committee members, informed by recent national literature on assessment of student potential, to take a hard look at whether our current admissions practices overlook certain students with high honors potential.

KPI Performance Indicator

# Positive Recruitment Outcomes # P

The first indicator of the effect of this objective will be an analysis of the demographic of the Fall 2015 class. If we determine to make changes in the admissions process, the effect of the changes should be observable in the demographic of that class. This might mean an increase in the number of acceptances or increase in certain types of applicants, including minority applicants.

#### Result

## Preliminary Fall 2015 Admission Numbers # P



Indications are that the honors class of 2015-16 will substantial growth overall. **Preliminary** examination suggests growth in certain demographics (for example Hispanic students whose first language is not English, who did not score high on verbal tests, but who show excellent potential as honors citizens) the gains are substantial. Followup studies will need to be done to confirm this, and, of course, the proof in this podding won't be known for at least two years.

#### Action

## Evaluate The Fall 2015 Honors Class P

Actually, this objective cannot be fully evaluated for at least one year, when we begin to get a full picture of how active, engaged, and successful thie Fall 2015 class of new honors students proves to be. Preliminary outcomes are promising, but through this year, we will actively follow up these new students in terms of their academic success, participation in honors activties, and other such measures. We will pay particular attention to those new honors students who might not have been admitted under previous admission practices.

#### Goal

#### Continue To Enhance The Honors College Impact On Undergraduate Research P

Through the dramatic success of the Undergraduate Research Symposium, the Honors College has established itself as a major player in undergraduate research. Now it is time to connect our success with other, new initiatives on and off campus.

#### Objective (L)

#### Connecting With Other Undergraduate Research Programs And Initiatives P

The Honors College will continue to enhance its own role in undergraduate research, especially through our Undergraduate Research Symposium, but we will also seek to work with other campus programs to share our experience and expertise in undergraduate research. We will also seek to connect with, learn from, and contribute to regional and national undergraduate research initiatives.

#### Indicator

### **Dedicated Coordination With Other Undergraduate** Research Initiatives. P

The indication of success in this area will be records of contact and exchange with campus departments and programs, as well as outreach and coordination with external agencies and organizations, especially regional and national efforts in both honors education and undergraduate research. We will also continue to measure progress in our own URS.

## Criterion

## NCHC Assessment Guidelines # P

The general criteria for assessment which cover this objective are the National Collegiate Honors Council statements and guidelines concerning undergraduate research.

#### **Finding**

A Successful 2015 Undergraduate Research Symposium P

The 2015 Undergraduate Research Symposium broke all previous records for presenters, audience, and faculty involvement. We added substantial numbers and types of student poster presentations, and improved the faculty mentoring role. This year's URS further cemented the honors leadership in undergraduate research.

Action

## Continuing The Success Of The URS P

The 2015 Undergraduate Research Symposium was another exceptional success. While we continue to troubleshoot and refine, we will continue the basic model that has continued to make the Honors College a centerpiece of undergraduate research at SHSU.

## Previous Cycle's "Plan for Continuous Improvement"

Actions Remaining from the 2013-14 Strategic Plan

Goal I, Objective A. Tracking Alumni Career Paths and Enhancing Alumni Contributions

Action Statement. In order to take full advantage of the outcomes we envisioned for this objective, in 2014-15, we will strengthen our efforts to make better, longer lasting contact with our honors alumni. We will step up our practice of tracking recent grads and continue working with the Alumni Association to track the career paths of honors grads--both recent and not so recent. The Let's Talk event has proved promising in tracking highly successful alumni from our earlier history and engaging them in honors support. We will continue with that effort, as well as the others launched but unfulfilled during the 2013-14 academic year. We need to do better, and we will.

#### Plan for Continuous Improvement.

- Begin more robust tracking of the careers of honors graduates, beginning with the most recent and working back in time.
- Reinstitute and formalize social events, such as the Honors Alumni reception during Homecoming Week.
- Actively develop and institute a plan for reengaging honors alumni and their levels of contribution, particularly through personal appeals and connection with the Let's Talk event

Goal I, Objective B. Increase Support for Honors Students Post-Graduate Careers

<u>Action Statement</u>. While the Honors College has had demonstrable success in supporting students in their research efforts, especially through the URS and separate funding for graduate research and conference travel, we have been less successful in establishing specific outreach for students interested in graduate programs. In the coming year, we plan to conduct specific initiatives to help students prepare for graduate careers and for continued research and publication experiences.

### Plan for Continuous Improvement.

- Improve systematic contact with honors alumni who have gone on to graduate or professional schools.
- Work with the graduate office and the McNair Program to establish workshop and training designed to enhance the applications and improve the graduate experiences of honors students seeking post-graduate education

 Work with faculty (especially URS advisors, honors contract supervisors, and honors classroom faculty) to enhance honors student awareness of research and professional publications processes and opportunities.

Goal II. Objective A. Strengthen and Enhance the Quality of Honors Teaching

<u>Action Statement.</u> During the 2014-15 academic year, the Honors College will publish and distribute honors teaching standards, guidelines, and expectations. We will also conduct at least one honors teaching workshop for current and prospective honors faculty. Dr. Lewis will continue coordinating honors seminars, both planning new seminars and overseeing the conduct of current seminars. We will also propose the addition of two new seminars for the 2014-15 SHSU curriculum cycle.

#### Plan for Continuous Improvement.

- Follow through on the plan to conduct workshops for honors faculty, both the teachers of honors seminars and standalone honors courses.
- Propose two new seminars for the coming undergraduate curriculum cycle.

Goal III, Objective A. Objectively Examine Perceptions about Honors on the SHSU Campus

<u>Action Statement.</u> Now that we have launched new data-gathering projects (and continued others), it is time for us to begin to measure and consider what the data mean. We also need to come to a fuller understanding (measurement?) of how honors is perceived by other entities on campus, including non-honors students, as well as the academic and support organizations. The data collection is ongoing; now we will begin an attempt to understand and act on the data.

#### Plan for Continuous Improvement.

- Continue gathering honors demographic data but begin a phase of measuring and analyzing the implications of those data
- Begin the promised effort to formally assess how the Honors College and honors students are perceived on campus (among faculty and staff, as well as in the student body)
- · Determine whether any changes are necessary as a result of the above surveys

Please detail the elements of your previous "Plan for Continuous Improvement" that were implemented. If elements were not implemented please explain why, along with any contextual challenges you may have faced that prevented their implementation.

Update on Previous "Plan for Continuous Improvement."

Goal I, Objective A. Tracking Alumni Career Paths and Enhancing Alumni Contributions

Update: We have worked with the Alumni Association to more robustly track the careers of our graduates. We have decided not to reinstitute the alumni reception, and our efforts to enhance contributions through Let's Talk is still a work in progress.

Goal I, Objective B. Increase Support for Honors Students Post-Graduate Careers

Update: We have markedly improved out connection with alumni who have gone on to graduate school, but we have not gone forward with developing the workshops with the

graduate program and McNair Program.

<u>Goal II, Objective A.</u> Strengthen and Enhance the Quality of Honors Teaching

Update: We have improved out communication with honors faculty, but we have not yet developed the workshops we envisioned. We did succeed in establishing the two new seminars.

Goal III, Objective A. Objectively Examine Perceptions about Honors on the SHSU Campus

We have succeeded in implementing a demographic data tracking system. We have discovered a measure to formally analyze how faculty perceive honors students.

Plan for Continuous Improvement - Please detail your plan for improvement that you have developed based on what you learned from your 2014 - 2015 Cycle Findings.

Honors College Plan for Continuous Improvement

Actions Remaining from the 2014-15 Strategic Plan

Goal I. Re-examine, Refine, and Redefine the Honors Role On The SHSU Campus

Objective A. Expand Honors Outreach and Service

Action Statement. The Honors College "Project Intrepid" was a success, and now we will build on it—continuing it and expanding our involvement. The Zimbabwe experien#e opened other, far-flung out2each pos3ibilities. We expect to continue and expand our

#### Plan for Continuous Improvement.

- Continue the Project Intrepid into a second year and expand the number of students participating.
- Facilitate Honors student contact with the Zimbabwe health clinics.
- Continue and expand the number of Honors ACE seminars.

<u>Goal II.</u> Enhance The Honors Educational Experience Without Sacrificing Quality. <u>Goal II. Objective A</u>: Develop An Ongoing And Robust Honors Study Abroad Program

#### Action Statement.

The 2015 Honors Seminar In Zimbabwe was successful to the degree that the Honors College is now fully committed to conducting one (and possibly two) study abroad classes each year.

#### Plan for Continuous Improvement.

- · Continue to establish connections with study abroad agencies.
- Begin final planning for the 2016 London seminar.
- Begin long-term planning for study abroad programs in Zimbabwe, Greece, and Costa Rica.
- Include studies abroad opportunities in honors recruitment literature.

Goal II, Objective B: Strengthen And Enhance The Quality Of Honors Teaching

#### Action Statement.

While the Honors College did provide some enhanced guidelines for honors faculty (including

meetings in which we articulated guidelines and objectives for conducting honors seminars), we still have much work to do in this area. We will plan more structured outreach for the coming year, including more careful communication with the instructors of honors sections in the disciplines and honors contracts.

## Plan for Continuous Improvement.

- 1. Improve communications with instructors of honors courses in the departments and honors contract instructors.
- 2. Plan teaching workshops for honors seminar faculty.
- 3. Develop guideline statements for honors seminars

Goal III. Comprehensive Evaluation Of The Honors Admission Process

Goal III, Objective A. Re-examine the Standards for Honors Admission

<u>Action Statement</u>. We will this semester begin evaluating the Fall 2015 incoming class, particularly with demographic measures. However, it will be a year at least before we begin to get a full picture of how active, engaged, and successful this Fall 2015 class of new honors students proves to be. Preliminary outcomes are promising, but through this year, we will actively follow up these new students in terms of their academic success, participation in honors activities, and other such measures. We will pay particular attention to those new honors students who might not have been admitted under previous admission practices.

#### Plan for Continuous Improvement.

- Begin immediate evaluation of the incoming class from demographic measures.
- Begin immediate evaluation of the incoming class in terms of their overall engagement in honors relative to previous classes.
- Plan for a one-year post analysis in the fall of 2016 and in subsequent years.
- Use these data to make further changes in the honors admission process.

Goal IV. Continue To Enhance The Honors College Impact On Undergraduate Research

Goal IV, Objective A. Continuing The Success Of The URS

<u>Action Statement</u>. The 2015 Undergraduate Research Symposium was another great success, but we did identify certain areas for revision and improvement. We will continue with this model while continuing to refine and improve.

- Improve the student-faculty mentor process.
- Seek additional funding from the colleges.
- Look for ways to improve participation in certain under-represented disciplines (and colleges).