

# Honors College

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

Goal Description:

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.

RELATED ITEMS/ELEMENTS-----

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 1

Connecting With Other Undergraduate Research Programs And Initiatives

Learning Objective Description:

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.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 2

Dedicated Coordination With Other Undergraduate Research Initiatives.

Indicator Description:

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 Description:

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

Findings Description:

The Honors College has expanded contacts and collaborates with several departments to enhance undergraduate research opportunities for students in the Honors College and also for the general student population. Working with the Undergraduate Research Center, Academic Success Initiatives, and College of Humanities and Social Sciences, support and scholarships awarded at the Undergraduate Research Symposium (URS) have increased this year. In addition, the number of students and faculty who participated in the URS has increased. The Honors College faculty provided URS informational sessions and gave presentations at CAD and other faculty events.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 3

Undergraduate Research Initiatives: Develop sustained undergraduate research agenda

Action Description:

1. Secure guaranteed funding dedicated to Undergraduate Research
2. Provide funding for student research and conference travel
3. Increase support for students writing honors theses
4. Continue to offer scholarships for students studying abroad (including for our seminar)
5. Offer competitive research scholarships
6. Work more closely with EURECA to promote scholarship opportunities

## Enhance The Honors Educational Experience Without Sacrificing Quality.

Goal Description:

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.

RELATED ITEMS/ELEMENTS-----

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 1

Strengthen And Enhance The Quality Of Honors Teaching

Learning Objective Description:

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.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 2

Honors Faculty Development Survey

Indicator Description:

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. At the end of the year, we will survey honors faculty on the effectiveness of our faculty development effort.

**Criterion Description:**

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.

**Findings Description:**

The Honors Dean presented at the New Faculty Investment. As a result, additional faculty expressed interest in teaching honors courses, developing honors seminars, and serving on the Honors Council. The faculty pay scales were revised to offer more opportunity for additional instructors. The Faculty Seminar Proposal form was approved by the Dean of Honors. No surveys have been administered yet.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 3

**Honors Faculty Development**

**Action Description:**

Honors Faculty Development plans include coordination of proposals for additional honors seminars and meetings with college deans to develop tracks in College of Education and Criminal Justice. Additionally, continue to collaborate with departments to partner with a variety of faculty to offer study abroad and research opportunities for honors students.

Also, continue to use the honors proposal form.

**Improve Contacts With, Tracking Of, And Support From Honors Graduates**

**Goal Description:**

The Honors College will begin a targeted effort to make contact with former honors students and to discover trends in post-graduate education and career paths.

RELATED ITEMS/ELEMENTS -----

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 1

**Increase Support For Honors Students’ Post-graduate Careers**

**Performance Objective Description:**

The Honors College will seek to provide increased support for Honors students’ post-graduate academic careers. We will seek to increase level of support through various means, such as conference and research stipends, opportunities for presenting undergraduate research, preparation resources, and counsel for post-graduate educational success.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 2

**Tracking Student Post-graduate Academic Outcomes**

**KPI Description:**

This initiative will be a success if this initiative results in a measureable increase in students having academic papers accepted for presentation or publication. Another indicator would be an increase in the rates of acceptance into graduate programs, plus an increase in the support offered by those programs.

**Results Description:**

Currently, the findings are collected from honors graduates by the graduation form and a exit survey will be utilized in the future. Information is also colelcted through informal contacts, and LinkedIn updates.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 3

**Support for Post-graduate careers**

**Action Description:**

A revised graduation/exit survey will be developed and required for honors graduates. Additional action plans are on hold until additional staff and resources are available.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 3

**Undergraduate Research Initiatives: Develop sustained undergraduate research agenda**

**Action Description:**

- 1. Secure guaranteed funding dedicated to Undergraduate Research
- 2. Provide funding for student research and conference travel
- 3. Increase support for students writing honors theses
- 4. Continue to offer scholarships for students studying abroad (including for our seminar)
- 5. Offer competitive research scholarships
- 6. Work more closely with EURECA to promote scholarship opportunities

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 1

**Tracking Alumni Career Paths And Enhancing Alumni Contributions**

**Performance Objective Description:**

The Honors College will perform systematic tracking of the career paths and graduate work of honors graduates with the objective of setting up giving networks and support initiatives for the Honors College, as well as to use alumni outcomes as measurements of program success in preparing graduates for further education and for careers.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 2

Improving Contact With And Response From Honors Alumni

KPI Description:

This initiative will be a success if we achieve measureable gains in honors students who establish or re-establish contact (Facebook, event attendance, etc.) with Honors and who donate to Honors.

Results Description:

The Honors College continues to work with the SHS Alumni records office to maintain honors alumni contact information. An Honors alumni page was added to the Honors College website. Plans are being developed for emails and social media communications with honors alumni.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 3

Support for Post-graduate careers

Action Description:

A revised graduation/exit survey will be developed and required for honors graduates. Additional action plans are on hold until additional staff and resources are available.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 3

Tracking Alumni

Action Description:

Continue to collaborate with the SHSU Alumni Relations department for sharing information and programs to connect to our honors alumni. Social media presence and a monthly e-newsletter will be developed.

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

Goal Description:

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

RELATED ITEMS/ELEMENTS -----

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 1

Objectively Examine Perceptions And Realities About The Honors College On The SHSU Campus

Performance Objective Description:

After a period of significant growth and enhanced visibility, it is time to examine perceptions about the Honors College on campus and how these perceptions match the reality. We will seek to discover through comprehensive assessments how various honors demographics compare with the general student body and measure the comparative results. We will also look for ways to measure current perceptions about Honors among faculty, staff, and students and then consider whether we need to take action to enhance or correct those perceptions.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 2

Comparison Of Honors Versus Non-honors Demographics

KPI Description:

In order to reach a fuller understanding of our role and perception on campus, we will examine relative statistics of Honors versus general student body in the following areas: percentage of first-generation college goers, minority population (especially African-American and Hispanic), graduation rates, grade point average, percentage of international students, percentage of students from states other than Texas. Attachmnet 1 shows the relative percentages (honors to total student body) of first generation students and minority students, at the beginning of the Fall 2013 semester.

Results Description:

The Honors College continues to receive reports from Institutional Effectiveness comparing honors and non-honors students. The reports illustrate that the Honors College student population mirrors the SHSU student population. The one exception is that 97% of new honors freshmen earned a high school class rank of top 10% or better, and the average ACT is 27 and the average SAT is 1238, much higher than the SHSU average of 750.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 3

Support for Post-graduate careers

Action Description:

A revised graduation/exit survey will be developed and required for honors graduates. Additional action plans are on hold until additional staff and resources are available.

Update to Previous Cycle's Plan for Continuous Improvement

Previous Cycle's Plan For Continuous Improvement (Do Not Modify):

- Initiative 1: Increase support for honors staff and students
- 1. Add full-time staff member (Administrative Associate II or III)
  - 2. Find additional honors-dedicated space on campus (seminar and study rooms)

Initiative 2: Address and resolve the ongoing, systematic shortage of the Bowers Endowment

Initiative 3: Develop a Sustained Undergraduate Research Agenda

1. Secure guaranteed funding dedicated to Undergraduate Research
2. Provide funding for student research and conference travel
3. Increase support for students writing honors theses
4. Continue to offer scholarships for students studying abroad (including for our seminar)
5. Offer competitive research scholarships
6. Work more closely with EURECA to promote scholarship opportunities

Initiative 4: Improve communication between the Honors College and students and faculty

1. Convert all documents to pdf forms that can be completed and sent electronically
2. Create faculty information webpage
3. Create and revise FAQ sheets for contracts and theses
4. Develop our FYE Living and Learning community
5. Integrate the Terry Scholars (who may or may not be members of the Honors College) into the life and culture of the Honors College

**Update of Progress to the Previous Cycle's PCI:**

Initiative 1: Increase support for honors staff and students

1. Add full-time staff member (Administrative Associate II or III)
2. Find additional honors-dedicated space on campus (seminar and study rooms)

Progress: This initiative was not successfully completed. No staff or facilities were added in 2016-17 due to Academic Affairs budget constraints.

Initiative 2: Address and resolve the ongoing, systematic shortage of the Bowers Endowment funds.

Progress: This initiative was not successfully completed. The shortage of funding for the Bowers Endowment was not resolved. Scholarships were awarded from other funds.

Initiative 3: Develop a Sustained Undergraduate Research Agenda

1. Secure guaranteed funding dedicated to Undergraduate Research
2. Provide funding for student research and conference travel
3. Increase support for students writing honors theses
4. Continue to offer scholarships for students studying abroad (including for our seminar)
5. Offer competitive research scholarships
6. Work more closely with EURECA to promote scholarship opportunities

Progress: This initiative was partially improved. No guaranteed funding was dedicated to the URS. The funding for student research, study abroad, and thesis remained the same. Only Number 6 initiative was improved. EURECA provided additional scholarships for the URS.

Initiative 4: Improve communication between the Honors College and students and faculty

1. Convert all documents to pdf forms that can be completed and sent electronically
2. Create faculty information webpage
3. Create and revise FAQ sheets for contracts and theses
4. Develop our FYE Living and Learning community
5. Integrate the Terry Scholars (who may or may not be members of the Honors College) into the life and culture of the Honors College.

Progress: This initiative was partially completed to satisfaction. New documents and revised FAQs (1 & 2) were developed. The Honors FYE LLC (4) continued to offer two sections, although enrollment was decreased by a registration process that disrupted the honors block on the courses. The Terry Scholars (5) were integrated into Honors through the Terry Scholars UNIV 1301 course and additional invitations to apply for acceptance into the Honors College. Also, a Terry Scholars Blackboard was created in the Honors College office to improve communication. A faculty webpage has not been created.

## **PCI**

**Closing Summary:**

Initiative 1: Increase Resources for Honors Staff and Students. a. Add full-time staff member (Admin Assoc. II or III). b. Find additional honors-dedicated spaces on campus (seminar rooms, class rooms, and study spaces). Our budget has remained the same for the past several years and did not change this year (FY18); therefore, we were unable to hire another staff member. We will continue to request funding for this much-needed position in next year's Strategic Action Plan. We have not been successful in finding additional honors-dedicated spaces. We repurposed our Honors Lounge so that it now serves as a study space. We continue to look for other available spaces as per the National Collegiate Honors Council's (NCHC) Best Practices recommendation that an Honors College of our size be allotted dedicated space for seminars, honors courses, and meeting spaces that advance the program mission.

Initiative 2: Address and resolve the ongoing, systematic shortage of the Bowers Endowment. We continue to work with Academic Affairs to find additional funds (such as Emerging Scholars). As per NCHC's recommendation, an Honors College should have an annual budget that adequately supports the Honors College's mission. The Bowers Scholarship is clearly part of that budget. We hope that a permanent solution may be found.

Initiative 3: Develop a Sustained Undergraduate Research (UR) Agenda. a. Secure guaranteed funding dedicated to UR. b. Provide funding for student research and travel to conferences. c. Increase support for students writing theses, d. Continue to offer scholarships for students studying abroad (including our study abroad seminar). 5. Offer competitive UR scholarships. 6. Work more closely with EURECA to promote scholarship opportunities. We have developed a clear agenda for UR and have made some progress in this area: namely, we have continued to offer some funds for a and b, and we have increased thesis support by offering regular thesis information sessions, updating and streamlining our thesis proposal and submission processes. We have also worked with EURECA to create a \$500 award for the best presentation at the URS by those students who were awarded EURECA FAST grants. Additionally, EURECA will sponsor next spring's Poster Session at the URS, further reinforcing the close relationship between EURECA and Honors. We have worked with the History department to offer a small scholarship to those honors students who participate in History's summer study abroad to Mexico. We need dedicated funding for UR to be able to offer competitive research scholarships (beyond the 4 honors awards at the URS each year).

Initiative 4: Improve Communication Between the Honors College and students and faculty. a. Convert all documents to fillable pdf forms. b. Create faculty information website. c. Create and revise FAQ sheets for contracts and theses. Done for contracts, IP for theses. d. Develop our FYE Living and Learning community (Maria). e. Integrate the Terry Scholars (who may or may not be members of the Honors College). Here we have made great strides and have successfully advanced our goals in all areas of this initiative except for the faculty webpage, which is in progress.