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State University of New York

***COLLEGE OF ARTS AND
SCIENCES***

Proposal: Honors College
“The College within the College”

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College of Arts and Sciences*

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***College of Arts and Sciences
Honors College Proposal
“The College within the College”***

I. Introduction and Rationale

The College of Arts and Sciences came into existence a decade ago entrusted with several primary missions. Many of these have been articulated in the College’s first Strategic Plan, adopted in November of 2003, in which the College stated its intention to build on strengths, to promote faculty teaching and research, and to pursue defined initiatives. The proposed Honors College, “the College within the College”, quickly emerged as a focal point and first recommendation of the Plan, an initiative that would create an identity for the College, promote its strengths, and build its reputation—and that of the University—both on and off campus. After extensive deliberation, the members of the Honors College Task Force developed the current proposal (for membership, see Appendix A). The formation of an Honors College at the University at Albany promises to be the signature event on which we can extend and consolidate the traditional cornerstones of teaching, research, and public service.

By virtue of its involvement in many educational and research initiatives within the University, the College has succeeded well in its role as a provider of quality liberal arts and sciences education. Curricula outside of Arts and Sciences are built on the teaching our faculty perform and rely upon the high quality of that preparation. The Honors College builds upon and enhances that preparation. In their first two years, all students will be encouraged not only to think in interdisciplinary terms but also to understand the richness that only a University Center here in Albany can provide. In upper years Honors students will find receptive homes in our departments, where they will continue to be challenged to pursue their intellectual, artistic, and cultural experiences. Students who wish to major in programs outside of the College will proceed to these all the better prepared for having had a two-year experience in the Honors College.

The Honors College initiative provides a vehicle for the College of Arts and Sciences to promote its undergraduate programs in a way as yet underdeveloped. The potential has always been here in its faculty and curricula, but the College has not had the means by which to serve the University and its constituents in meeting the University’s strategic goals and objectives. Given its historic place in higher education, Arts and Sciences should be a strong draw for bright students here at Albany. It is now time to harness and to assert the quality and stature of our undergraduate education, especially in the first two years, so that we have a central purpose in the recruitment and retention of more of the students who are highly motivated. By engaging tenure-track faculty in contact with undergraduates in their first two years, the College sees unity and increasing faculty

satisfaction as parallel dividends. The potential for improving recruitment and retention of students is great.

The proposal to establish an Honors College in the College of Arts and Sciences comes at a challenging moment for the University. In the midst of a climate of fiscal constraint, the University is moving forward with plans to increase enrollment and to recruit more of the better students to its classrooms. In the competitive environment of New York State, reasonable opportunities for growth are at a premium. The situation we face requires our doing things differently, that we promote the University with an additional opportunity. Our motivation parallels Einstein's thought: "The significant problems we face today cannot be solved at the same level of thinking we were at when we created them."

The College feels confident that the time is at hand to develop this concept. The several factors above taken together speak to the University's concerns for intellectual integrity, student satisfaction, and quality of instruction. In the competitive arena in which we exist we should take advantage of the University at Albany's venerable traditions for teaching, research, and public service as we create on-campus, high-quality living and learning environments. With the faculty support witnessed to date and with the activities already in place, Honors students will be able to see their academic experiences extending from CAS classrooms to other classrooms and to life on campus and beyond.

The University needs a signature program that will appeal to students and donors alike. The "College within the College", unique among SUNY Centers in many of its aspects, is such a program. The more we can do to secure a reputation for high standards in intellectual pursuits and achievements, the better we are all served. Given the projected enrollment targets the University has set for itself, and given the projected decline of high school students graduating from New York State high schools in two years (see Appendix B), we feel that we cannot afford not to do this now.

II. Overview

While a fuller rationale can be found in Appendix C, the overview of the Honors College resonates the original recommendation made in the College's Strategic Plan of 2003. Under the aegis of an Honors College in the College of Arts and Sciences, we can offer students engaged learning with our regular faculty, provide an integrated intellectual experience within an academic unit, realize possible efficiencies due to scale and deployment of resources, promote the links between the Honors College and departmental honors programs, provide more faculty contact and a greater sense of intellectual *esprit de corps*, and solicit external support for targeted activities through fundraising and grant writing. The points discussed within the following sections speak directly to the recommendation by expanding more on what is envisioned and incorporating feedback provided from several sources including the Council of Chairs and the Faculty Council of the College of Arts and Sciences. This document also reflects the formal endorsement of the Faculty Council of the College of Arts and Sciences.

The Honors College will promote the **highest of academic standards** of excellence and academic values including, but not limited to:

- the conscientious seeking of truth
- intellectual curiosity and desire for learning
- critical thinking and analysis
- respect for differences and diversity
- creative and original thought

The Honors College will serve our best students by providing them with a **challenging educational program**. It will serve all students by helping to enhance the **reputation** of the University and raise standards across all programs. It will strengthen our effectiveness in **recruitment** and **retention**. The Honors College will further promote the College's considerable investment in delivering the University's General Education Program. In addition, the Honors College will dovetail with and accelerate other initiatives in the College, including departmental honors programs, new interdisciplinary majors, and combined degree programs, while interfacing well with other University majors and programs such as Presidential Scholars and Project Renaissance.

The "College within a College" seeks to provide students with a **strong liberal arts and sciences experience** within a major research university. Designed as a four-year program, it will engage students in a process of inquiry and intellectual discovery through a series of **interdisciplinary core courses**, co-curricular seminars and events, and the opportunity to engage in creative, original research through their **capstone project** in a departmental honors programs, where students work closely with faculty members. Students of the Honors College will also be actively involved in the outside community or in the education of their junior peers through a requirement to engage in **service learning**.

The Honors College will strive to prepare students to be successful in an increasingly globalized world, one where the knowledge of a foreign language is an invaluable asset and one that greatly enhances career opportunities. Students in the Honors College will have the opportunity to further their knowledge of a foreign language through participation in its **language-enriched option** of study. Students availing themselves of this option will find that it complements some of the majors in which the College is engaged, including the one for an Interdisciplinary Major in Globalization Studies.

The integration of the curriculum and co-curricular University experiences will be an important aspect of the Honors College. By linking one of the core courses with a **theme semester**, students will participate in activities that broaden and enrich their academic studies. This experience will acquaint them with the scope of available cultural options on campus and nearby to enliven and enhance their entire four years at the University.

The Honors College will be **selective**. Thus, participation in the "College within the College" will be seen as a mark of distinction and a form of recognition for outstanding applicants to the University at Albany. Upon completion of the program, students will

receive a certificate, and a **CAS-Honors designation** will be noted on their academic records.

The Honors College will promote **morale** in the College of Arts and Sciences by allowing more faculty members to teach highly motivated students in an interdisciplinary, collegial environment. It will ensure a healthy cohort of excellent students to enrich departmental major programs and inspire participation in the University's wide array of departmental honors programs. The Honors College will help to focus searches for new College hires by creating position descriptions that speak to the College's multiple goals of rigorous undergraduate teaching, strong graduate programs, and faculty research.

Finally, the Honors College will be a "**signature program**" within the SUNY system. Unique with respect to its structure and its integration of co-curricular and curricular elements, the "College within the College" will provide further evidence of the University's commitment to enrolling more top-level students and enhancing its mission as a SUNY Center where undergraduate education and faculty dedication are mutually reinforcing.

III. Admissions Criteria and Eligibility

The College of Arts and Sciences will strive for high standards in its Honors College and accordingly will seek quality applicants. On the other hand, it recognizes that small differences in entering high school GPA or SAT scores are not always reliable predictors of ability, interest, and motivation. The SUNY-designated "Group 1" category contains students who have achieved a promising level of excellence in their high school programs and on their SAT exams (see Appendix D) but is not unduly elite. Based on experience from a pilot project on honors education undertaken by the College during the past two years (See Appendix E), which revealed that Group 1 students were as likely to perform well at the University and be well motivated independent of their status as Presidential Scholars or not, the College has decided that Group 1 students will form the base from which students will be invited to apply to the "College within the College".

Admission to the Honors College will be selective. Students whose applications to the University imply an interest in the full scope of the options and opportunities provided for Honors College students will be highly sought. Further, efforts will be made to recruit and maintain a cadre of students who are diverse along a broad continuum of student characteristics.

Other aspects of the proposed admission and eligibility criteria and process:

- The Honors College will initially target an enrollment of approximately 100 entering students. In subsequent years, enrollment may be increased if resources permit.
- The Honors College will allow qualified students to apply after the completion of their first semester or first full year of study at the University at Albany, if space

- permits, to encourage further enrollment of excellent students.
- The Honors College will welcome applications from qualified transfer students who have completed 30 or fewer credits upon entering unless they have participated in an Honors College (or equivalent) in another institution, in which case the 30-credit limit may be waived.
 - Honors students will be required to achieve and maintain an overall GPA of 3.25 or better to remain in good standing, students. A grace period of one semester will be allowed for remediation when warranted.
 - Prospective Honors students will be urged to apply early given the selective nature and limited capacity of the Honors College.
 - Once admitted, students will be invited to an orientation meeting prior to the start of the academic year to familiarize them with the various aspects of the Honors College as well as with the physical layout of the University campus.

IV. Academic Program Requirements

The academic program of the Honors College will have four basic components:

- Core Courses
- Co-curricular Experience
- Language-enriched Option
- Service Learning

We describe these more below.

Core Courses

The Honors College curriculum is designed to promote interdisciplinary thinking and active engagement in learning. A set of four common-core, 4-credit courses (CAS Honors 201, 202, 203, and 204) will be offered in order to provide a shared experience. Students will be required to complete a total of three of the four core courses, although four will be encouraged. Typically, these courses will be taken in the first 2 years of study in the Honors College. The nature of these courses is described more fully in the next section.

Co-curricular Experience

Co-curricular opportunities will be an integral part of the Honors College. Many of these are described in Section VI. However, the most prominent experience integrating the academic program of the Honors College with the co-curricular program is related to the linkage of one of the four core courses to a theme semester of the College as described in the next section. Each year a different theme semester, accompanied by a course designed for Honors College students, will be mounted. Students selecting to enroll in this course will be expected to participate in events of the theme semester.

Language-enriched Option

The language-enriched option of the Honors College will require completion of one semester of an intermediate or advanced level of a foreign language, or one full year of a new language, or one culture or literature course taught in a language other than English. Exceptions, such as those that may relate to students who are native speakers of languages other than English, will be considered.

It is clear that students benefit from a working knowledge of a language other than English and that their career prospects are greatly enhanced by this knowledge. Study at the University level of a foreign language also nicely complements some of the major curricular initiatives the College is engaged in (e.g., the proposed majors in globalization, film studies, journalism, documentary studies, as well as several existing major programs). Thus, students in the Honors College will be strongly encouraged to avail themselves of the language-enriched option. Such students will be made aware of study abroad opportunities and of the benefits of membership in the national honors society, Phi Beta Kappa, which also requires study a foreign language at an intermediate university level. The graduation certificate and CAS-Honors designation will indicate the completion of the language-enriched option.

Service Learning

Finally, students will be required to complete at least one semester of “internship” or “service learning” activity that takes them beyond the classroom. This activity will take one of the following forms:

- Preceptor,
- Community Service Hours,
- Supervised Internship.

Thus, Honors students will be helping other students learn, filling a societal need by assisting others in the community, or beginning to learn how to apply their academic knowledge in a real work environment. Honors College Preceptors will provide mentoring and tutorial services to students in a broad range of courses in and outside of the Honors College, thus contributing to a more positive academic atmosphere overall. Supervised internships and community service experiences may be tied to pre-existing courses.

While not required, honors students will be made aware of and encouraged to take other academically stimulating or challenging honors courses already offered by many academic departments as well as by the Presidential Scholars program.

V. The Core Courses

The Honors College curriculum will be designed to promote interdisciplinary thinking and active engagement in learning. As an undertaking of the entire College of Arts and Sciences, course proposals for the core courses will be solicited yearly from faculty. An appropriate committee of the Honors College will review and select courses before submitting them for the required governance approval. The aim will be to announce courses a minimum of one year in advance of the year they are to be given

The core courses will collectively emphasize writing, interdisciplinary perspectives, and ideas and challenges of the 21st century, while also fulfilling General Education Requirements. In fact it is hoped that most core courses will fulfill two or more General Education Requirements by virtue of their interdisciplinary nature. Team-taught proposals will be encouraged so as to complement the interdisciplinary spirit of the Honors College curriculum.

It is intended that in any given year (once the program is in its second year of operation) the core courses, as a group will reflect ideas in the four basic areas of inquiry (or disciplinary perspective as defined by General Education): humanities, fine arts, social sciences, and natural sciences. The course numbering will be identified by this fact as follows:

- CAS Honors 201 – Perspectives from Humanities,
- CAS Honors 202 – Perspectives from Fine Arts,
- CAS Honors 203 – Perspectives from Social Sciences,
- CAS Honors 204 – Perspectives from Natural Sciences.

However, it should be noted that although a focus of each of these core courses lies within the domain noted above, these courses should reflect an interdisciplinary approach that stems from at least one of these main areas of inquiry and should meet the General Education learning objectives appropriate to each rubric. Thus, sample course titles may include Art in the Modern World (FA, HU); Culture and Society in the 21st Century (FA, SS); The Human Mind (HU, NS); Racial Stereotypes and Their Impact Through Literature (SS, HU); Art and Design in Nature (FA, NS); and Scientific Discoveries that Changed the World (NS, SS), just to name a few. In addition, existing courses in the College of Arts and Sciences may be proposed as core courses if they satisfy the above attributes.

One of the four core courses will typically be associated with a theme semester (see next section). Theme semesters have been a recurring feature of the University and in particular of the College of Arts and Sciences for a number of years. They are an ideal way of integrating curricular and co-curricular activities that highlight the relation between academic learning and cultural knowledge. The Honors College is in the unique position of being able to take advantage of this existing tradition. Thus, the College of Arts and Sciences proposes to generate and promote a theme semester each year together with a course that will serve as core course for the Honors College. The content of the course will be integrally connected to the various activities of the semester, providing co-curricular content to complement the classroom experience. It is hoped that the enrichment provided by such complementary activities will be habit-forming for the

students of the Honors College and will provide a good example for all students in the University.

Core courses will be delivered in a variety of formats. Preferred course structures include (1) one or two common, larger meeting(s) (n = 50 or 100) combined with smaller, weekly discussion sections (n = 25 to 30) or (2) seminar-styled courses with 25 or fewer students. Since it is possible that the core courses will be team-taught, the number of collaborating faculty members will influence the format of the course. It is also possible that a specific faculty member will agree to teach a given honors course (e.g., CAS Honors 201) in each of two-three consecutive years, thus adding an element of continuity to the planned curriculum.

VI. Co-curricular Opportunities

Co-curricular and extra-curricular activities will be an important aspect of the Honors College. These activities will directly enhance students' academic and social experiences on our campus. We believe that students are looking for a full "University experience" when they come to the University at Albany. We hope to enrich that experience by introducing students to co-curricular activities that transcend the classroom and provide context and depth to what is being learned in class. We hope to expose them to new intellectual, cultural, and artistic experiences that will broaden their horizons and be of value to them throughout life.

These activities will take a variety of forms and will capitalize on some of the outstanding opportunities available to us at the University and in the Capital region. Two of the opportunities that are uniquely available on our campus are:

- **Theme semesters** have been offered with some frequency in the University (see Appendix F). All of them have been predominantly College-based, while also involving and welcoming campus-wide and community participation. Following a recommendation in its Strategic Plan, the College of Arts and Sciences is initiating a systematic means of soliciting proposals through the College Faculty Council for annual theme semesters in cooperation with the Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs, which traditionally helps to finance these activities. Students, especially those taking the core course associated with the theme semester, will participate in the activities of the semester.
- **The New York State Writers Institute and the Fine Arts** units are wonderful resources for co-curricular activities. The New York State Writers Institute brings writers of broad interest (e.g., playwrights, novelists, poets, journalism, science writers, film writers, etc.) to the campus. Engagement with activities of the Writers Institute, including the Friday evening film series, will be encouraged. Transportation will be provided to those activities, including the film series that is held on the downtown campus. Attendance at events sponsored by the fine arts departments, the performing Arts Center, and the University Museum will also be encouraged.

In addition, special lectures and/or presentations will be organized with the interests of the current Honors College students in mind. There will be involvement with the Fellows of the College, a group that is now being formed also as proposed in the Strategic Plan. Attendance at events sponsored by the Athletics Department will be encouraged and invitations to special events will be offered whenever possible. Individual departments within the College of Arts and Sciences will invite honors students to colloquia and seminars, especially as these students enter their majors. Announcements regarding other speakers and events sponsored by units across the University will also be disseminated to all Honors College students. Honors students may travel to scholarly conferences to present their research and engage nationally with other honors students.

Students will also be invited to participate in fieldtrips. Possible venues may include: art institutes; observatories; museums; State Senate viewings; and architectural and natural history sites. Fieldwork may be part of a student's creative and research experience within a given departmental honors program, as well. Opportunities for study abroad will be available and promoted (especially for students in the language enriched option) in concert with the University's Office for International Education and our language departments, and discussed with all students thereby strengthening both the programs of international study and the Honors College offerings.

The Honors College will provide leadership opportunities through the creation of an Honors College Student Advisory Board or Advisory Council. Other activities may include creating and maintaining an Honors College website, producing an Honors College newsletter or scholarly student journal, and creating and maintaining an Honors College radio program or "web radio" production. Sessions related to career opportunities and advanced study will be organized. Additionally, the Honors College will serve as a vehicle to assist students seeking nationally competitive scholarships and awards such as Rhodes, Marshall, Mellon, and Goldwater Scholarships.

VII. Additional Student Benefits

Through participation in the Honors College, students will be part of a cohort of motivated and talented students, emulating the "small liberal arts and sciences college experience" and providing a sense of community with each other. Students will be offered proximal housing, an honors lounge or study center, community work areas, and special computer facilities including printers, scanners, and the like. Students will enjoy priority registration privileges and library-borrowing privileges such as those extended to graduate students.

Students in the Honors College will take a combination of special courses (e.g., core courses CAS Honors 201-204) and regular courses. As described earlier the format of the core courses may vary, but the courses will provide the opportunity for dialogue among students and professors through the restricted size of their lectures or through discussion groups. Students will also have faculty mentors assigned in consideration with existing mentoring programs both early in their tenure and later as they enter a desired major.

These mentors should provide both academic advice as well as career orientation information to advance a student's personal and professional development. These are but two ways that the Honors College will promote faculty-student interaction. We also hope it will be a vehicle to increase such interaction in a social as well as academic setting. We expect that faculty members who engage in teaching courses within the Honors College will interact with students outside of the classroom at various venues sponsored by the Honors College.

It is likely that students who are admitted to the Honors College will have qualified for funding via one of the various scholarship programs already in existence at the University at Albany. Funding will also be sought to assist others within the Honors College in defraying the costs of tuition whenever possible. The College of Arts and Sciences' Dean's Advisory Board and the University's Bold.Vision campaign have identified the Honors College as a significant priority for fund-raising, highlighting a naming opportunity in addition to student-centered scholarship awards.

Financial resources will be made available to students on a competitive basis to participate in research or capstone opportunities, coinciding with our success in the area of fundraising for the Honors College. Our efforts to underwrite activities of the Honors College will focus on two different areas. Recognition opportunities are being sought to provide undergraduates with tuition scholarships and to augment funding for instructional activities and research. Efforts are already underway to underwrite the advancement of the Honors College through private support, and we believe that there are friends of the University and College who wish to promote student success. To attract more of the students who will benefit from this experience, the College will use the interest from the endowed scholarships to offset students' tuition charges.

VIII. Relation of Honors College to Other Programs

The Honors College will reinforce, enhance, and complement existing programs of quality in which students can already participate. It will aspire to raise the level of the educational experience for all students and to serve as a conduit for outstanding students who choose to complete their degrees in any one of the schools and colleges on our campus.

Students engaged in the Presidential Scholars Program, College Scholars Program, and Project Renaissance, three well-established programs within the University, are also welcome to participate in the Honors College. The programmatic component of the Presidential Scholars Program and Project Renaissance engages students only in their freshman years and is not mutually exclusive of the Honors College program. In fact the Honors College program will provide enrichment for students to participate in both if they are interested and qualified.

We would expect the Honors College core courses to be allowed by Project Renaissance to count as a "linked course". If space permits, the Honors College will open its core courses to Presidential Scholars who are not members of the "College within the

College” and its co-curricular activities to any students in the Presidential Scholars Program, College Scholars Program, and Project Renaissance. In fact whenever possible, activities organized as part of the College of Arts and Sciences Honors College will be made open to the entire University community.

Although most entering students are undecided about their major, students who plan to major in programs outside of the College of Arts and Sciences will be welcome to apply to the Honors College for their first two years if they are interested in the program it provides. They will receive a certificate of completion after fulfilling the core courses of the Honors College and completing their second year of study. If they also fulfill the enriched- language option, they will have that designation added to their certificate of completion.

The Honors College will be fully invested in facilitating the transition from its first and second year program into the programs outside of the College of Arts and Sciences and will invite representatives of such programs to speak about their offerings to students during their second year.

IX. Honors College Administration, Budget, and Assessment

The Honors College will bring together a set of dedicated and enthusiastic faculty, students, and staff members with the goal of operating a productive and efficient set of courses and co-curricular offerings and providing advisement and mentoring. Staff members who will be dedicated to administering this program may include an Associate Dean/Director, a Staff Assistant, and Faculty Advisors and Committee Members from among the faculty members within the College of Arts and Sciences.

An Associate Dean is expected to direct the Honors College. This Director or his or her designee will be an *ex-officio* member of the Academic Programs Committee of the Faculty Council and will report to the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences. It is anticipated that this will be a 12-month appointment within the College of Arts and Sciences. Additional staff support should include a full-time Assistant to the Director or an Administrative Assistant of the Honors College. Faculty will be involved in academic advising in concert with other advisement areas within the University. In addition, the Honors College will include such faculty/administrative committees as needed to select core courses, select and admit students, grant awards, advise and mentor students, and plan events and activities.

An estimate of the annual cost of maintaining the Honors College ranges between \$140,000 and \$250,000 (see Appendix G) with the realistic average cost of about \$200,000. Some of these costs obviously involve the teaching needs of the Honors College. With the planned increase in undergraduate enrollment, the University envisions additional faculty hires will be made, which will facilitate the staffing of the honors courses. Recruitment of some of these new faculty members will reflect teaching needs in the Honors College as well as those in other programs. Since the College is currently under-staffed by comparison with peer institutions and by faculty-student ratios,

an investment in faculty lines in the College of Arts and Sciences will be a wise one and an avowed goal of senior administrators. The remainder of the expenses will serve to provide quality programming for students and ensure that their experiences will lead to positive evaluations not only of their Honors College experience, but also of their time spent at the University at Albany as a whole. In addition, there will be modest start-up costs to the University associated with the provision of lounge or study space and facilities for Honors students envisioned in Section VII.

A periodic review and assessment of the Honors College shall be undertaken as part of an on-going review of the programs and offerings within the College of Arts and Sciences. This review will encompass both the academic guidelines as well as the administrative and fiscal management of this program and a report on these components shall be presented on a regular basis to the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences and to appropriate governance bodies. This effort at assessment shall be undertaken in an attempt to evaluate the effectiveness of the program in terms of the curricular offerings, co-curricular opportunities and events, and overall student and faculty satisfaction. Assessments of this nature help to promote improvement and re-calibration of our programs to address current needs and interests of all those involved thereby ensuring the vitality and the success of our program and our students. An assessment plan that constitutes a continuous process of evaluation (self and external) is intended to maintain and improve the delivery of the program as a well-integrated whole. It is expected that the Office of Institutional Research will also evaluate the effectiveness of the Honors College in improving “the three R’s”: recruitment, retention, and reputation.

X. Final Comments

The creation of the Honors College at the University at Albany will serve to strengthen and consolidate the progress the relatively new College of Arts and Sciences has made. Joining other initiatives on campus, this program will provide a key identity for the undergraduate program, especially for the first two years. In recruiting students to the University, the Honors College will offer bright and enthusiastic students those components that lead to student success and pride. Unique among the SUNY schools, this College will focus on the first two years of interdisciplinary study and expand outward through the last two years of the undergraduate experience and offer students integrated academic, co-curricular, service, and research components that comprise excellence for both students and faculty. In a competitive environment where all schools are appealing to highly motivated students, the Honors College provides opportunities for an academically based approach to building cohorts of students who can develop, learn, and grow together. By carefully structuring the curriculum around tenure-track faculty, the College will serve as a catalyst for the very kind of student experience that improves recruitment, retention, and reputation.

In planning to date Arts and Sciences has looked carefully at the several separate existing units and programs to see where synergy is desirable, possible, and productive. The Honors College will include and be enriched by other features that characterize the undergraduate experience at the University. We intend to continue to partner with our

existing departmental honors programs, the Presidential and College Scholar programs, Project Renaissance, the Office for International Education, foreign language departments, theme semesters, fine arts and athletics departments, and residential life, among others. Given our attentiveness to the resource environment, we wish to be as inclusive as possible and to enrich, as well as to be enriched by, the work of our colleagues in each of these other areas. Since faculty will also have the opportunity to engage an ever-increasing group of aspiring students, their teaching experiences will be enhanced at the same time that the students' learning experiences are. The whole will be greater than the sum of its parts.

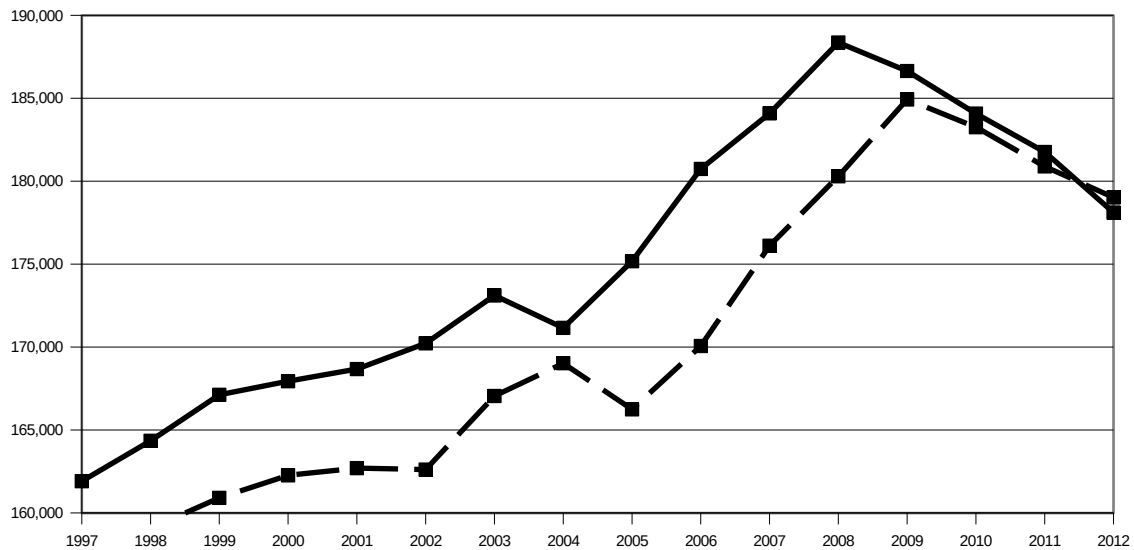
There have always been constructive energies and initiatives for building the undergraduate program at the University. It is time now to join and expand them. There will continue to be challenges for achieving greater stature among universities in New York and beyond. While the fiscal realities confronting the University suggest a careful analysis of costs and benefits, the Honors College reflects a plan that supplies attractive access points for recruitment, academic and co-curricular coherence for retention, and further dividends for reputation. With integrity in purpose, as it accomplishes its many objectives, such an Honors College captures what serves the greater University as much as what serves the College of Arts and Sciences.

Appendix A
College of Arts and Sciences
Honors College Task Force Members

Name	Title/Department
Jeanette Altarriba	Associate Dean, CAS/Professor Psychology
Seth Chaiken	Associate Professor/Faculty Council Chair Computer Science
Rachel Cohon	Associate Professor Philosophy
John Delano	Distinguished Teaching Professor Earth & Atmospheric Sciences
Cynthia Fox	Associate Professor Languages, Literatures, and Cultures - French
Reed Hoyt	Associate Professor/Department Chair Music
Ron Jacobs	Associate Professor Sociology
Eric Keenaghan	Assistant Professor English
Amy Murrell	Assistant Professor History
John Pipkin	Distinguished Service Professor/Department Chair Geography & Planning
Robert Rosellini	Distinguished Teaching Professor/Task Force Chair Psychology
Joan Wick-Pelletier	Dean/ <i>ex officio</i> member Task Force College of Arts and Sciences

Appendix B

NYS High School Graduate Projections
(NYS Education Department has revised their actual figures
and revised their projection accordingly)



Appendix C Expanded Rationale

The following 10 points are provided in support of the development of an Honors College at the University at Albany.

The University's experience with cohort programs, programs that group students together for living and learning opportunities, demonstrates that there are higher retention rates for participating students. Outcome measures for Project Renaissance, Presidential Scholars, and EOP/MRP all suggest that our students find attractive as recruitment incentives such opportunities for more intimate learning communities within the larger University. This Honors College Proposal speaks specifically to those elements that have led and continue to lead to success at the University. The intent is to complement what is already available for such smaller liberal arts environments.

- The Honors College will build on parallel University initiatives that promote more intimate learning communities.

The Honors Program will continue to build on the College's major contributions to the General Education Program. Fully 85% of students take their General Education courses in Arts and Sciences. Efforts continue in concert with the UAC to assess and improve the nature and number of offerings General Education provides our students. Whether students continue in College of Arts and Sciences majors or not, the Honors College offers courses in rubrics not available in other units.

- The Honors College will further promote the College's considerable investment in delivering the University's General Education Program.

The Honors College initiative relates to the University's interests in improving academic advisement by involving more faculty members in the advisement process. Studies have confirmed that the earlier and more frequent the contact with faculty, the more likely students feel connected to the institution and the more likely the institution is to retain their students.

- The Honors College will improve retention by affording more faculty-student contact.

New areas of interdisciplinary study continue to open up among the liberal arts departments, including globalization, film studies, and documentary studies. The success of Presidential Honors courses has established that team-taught courses with highly qualified faculty members comprise an attractive format of that curriculum and a feature worth emulating.

- The Honors College will continue to open up opportunities for interdisciplinary study through team-taught courses.

Our efforts on meeting the goals in Mission Review II can be advanced by offering an additional anchor to our undergraduate experience. The University is expected to enroll more Group 1 students. To do so the University must proceed from where it is to a different level of effort. The CAS Honors College will compete well with Honors programs at other SUNY units given its focus and selectivity, its dedication to interdisciplinary study, and the quality of its faculty. Such an initiative can also work in concert with the College's University in the High School Program, currently with 11,000 enrollments from New York high school students. Moreover, it will provide further proof to Middle States that undergraduate education is getting more of the attention it deserves.

- The Honors College will add further evidence to Mission Review II and Middle States of the University's commitment to enrolling more Group 1 students.

The competition for Group 1 students will intensify, as all SUNY units will be looking to increase its share of the State's high school graduates who fit the Group 1 profile. While we look to our Admissions colleagues to recruit beyond the State, it is clear that most of our students come from New York. From the most recent survey of the numbers of students graduating from high schools in New York, we see that the number will peak in about two years, after which the slope descends steadily (see Appendix B). The next two years will be an optimum time to develop and inaugurate the Honors College in order to get visibility for what is already a competitive arena and for what promises to be more so in the years to come. In addition, this will help the University's enrollment management plan to increase the size of the undergraduate population over the next five years, an expansion whose success will be measured by maintaining if not improving quality indicators.

- The Honors College will help the University compete for New York State Group 1 students as that population peaks in two years and then declines.

The College has taken its dedication to undergraduate education very seriously and continues, through various task forces, councils, and committees on campus to work on providing coherence and integrity to the undergraduate program. Within this framework the Honors College will accelerate initiatives already begun and will dovetail neatly with existing upper-division Honors in its majors. Moreover, given the size and scope of its faculty, the envisioned involvement of its representative disciplines and faculty will afford students more opportunities for continuing study, research, internships, study abroad, and related programs (including combined professional programs with Albany Law, Albany Medical College, and others).

- The Honors College will dovetail with and accelerate other initiatives in the College, including departmental majors, new interdisciplinary majors, and combined degree programs.

The Honors Program looks to design courses that are foundational to all areas of study at the University. Since the four Honors courses will be designed to provide approaches to

collegiate study and General Education, the courses will serve not only those students who go on in Arts and Sciences, but also those students who decide to major in an area outside of Arts and Sciences. In fact, students will be encouraged to think broadly about majors available to them by the Honors faculty and will be advised to seek out specific areas of interest.

- The Honors College will provide four courses focused on the liberal arts and interdisciplinary areas that will serve well all students irrespective of major.

Appreciating the fiscal constraints facing the University for the foreseeable future and the high premium placed on a unit's capacity to receive new faculty hires, the College has studied carefully how it can best recruit faculty to maintain its graduate strengths and its commitment to undergraduate education. Taking a note from the IT-hires and the cluster-hires in Life Sciences, the College will continue to work with its Chairs to create position descriptions that speak to its multiple goals: strong graduate programs and rigorous undergraduate teaching. The Honors College will provide an opportunity to increase faculty ranks with the intention of serving multiple educational missions.

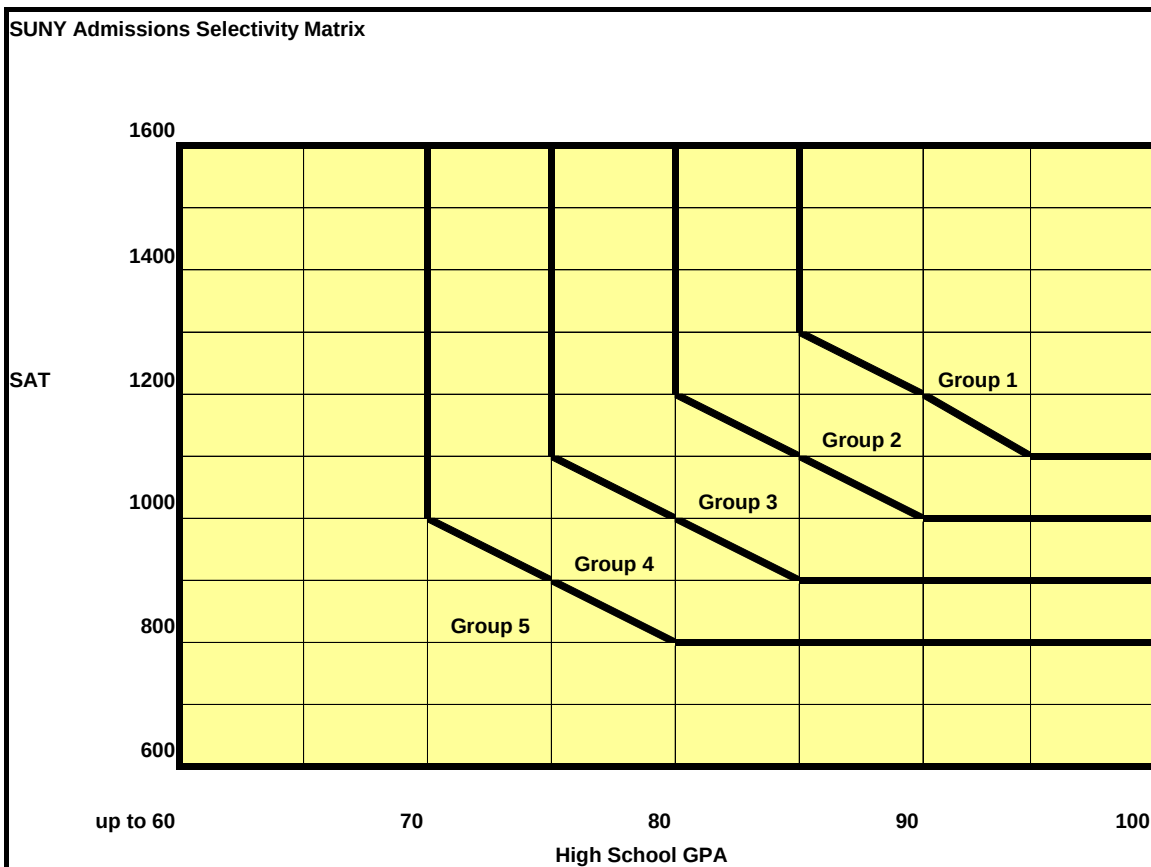
- The Honors College will help to focus searches for new hires by creating position descriptions that speak to the College's multiple goals of rigorous undergraduate teaching and strong graduate programs.

The excitement and stimulation that a new initiative like the Honors College elicits will help faculty morale at a time when optimism is in short supply. The chance for full-time faculty to teach highly motivated students in an interdisciplinary, collegial environment is refreshing and duplicates the experience of those faculty who enjoy teaching the Presidential Scholars courses. With the advantages and flexibilities that a large unit has, the College can work with its Chairs and faculty to provide opportunities for faculty from almost every discipline to step out of the traditional setting and to partake of a different kind of challenge. As such, the Honors College presents a form of faculty development that yields dividends both in the Honors classes and beyond. Recruitment of faculty for such an assignment will be less cumbersome.

- The Honors College will promote morale by allowing more faculty to teach highly motivated students in an interdisciplinary, collegial environment.

These factors have helped to refine and shape the original recommendation from 2003. In addition to these elements, the SUNY System itself is turning its attention to the development and provision of more honors experiences throughout the system. It is our studied conclusion that the timing of the current proposal could not be more advantageous.

Appendix D Distribution of Student Groups



Cutoffs		
Group 1	85/1300	95/1100
Group 2	80/1200	90/1000
Group 3	75/1100	85/900
Group 4	70/1000	80/800

Appendix E

CAS Honors College Pilot Project: Description

Objective

In the summer of 2003, a select group of 50 incoming freshman students (25 males and 25 females designated as Group 1 students) were invited to participate in a Pilot Project of the College of Arts and Sciences designed to explore the ways in which an Honors College might be designed and implemented at the University at Albany campus. The objective was to pose several course and co-curricular options for students and to assess the degree to which these activities provided a level of student satisfaction for students on our campus. In addition, these students were surveyed throughout their participation in this Pilot Project with regards to their experiences and perceptions as students within our University. These 50 students were invited to participate in a number of activities throughout their first 2 years of their undergraduate experience.

Activities

During the Fall 2003 semester, students were provided with reserved seating in a set of courses. These courses included CAS 125 Diverse Voices in Literature and Art, CAS 131 Diversity and Equity in America, and CLC 110L Classical Roots: Great Ideas of Greece and Rome. The idea was that students would be able to take these courses together thus forming a closely-knit cohort. In addition, to these **registration privileges**, students participated in a **Welcome Reception** where they met members of the College of Arts and Sciences administration and faculty and became acquainted with each other. Students were introduced to the idea of an Honors College, and it was announced that they would be invited to participate in a number of events throughout the academic year. In turn, they would be asked to contribute their ideas, thoughts, and suggestions regarding the formation of an Honors College. The Associate Dean for Academic Affairs in the College of Arts and Sciences, Dr. Jeanette Altarriba, also communicated with them on a regular basis informing them of events occurring within CAS and the University as a whole.

Students also participated in **Movie Night** during which time the film “A Beautiful Mind” was shown followed by commentary by one of our faculty members in the area of Clinical Psychology, Dr. Drew Anderson. Also, various **Open Houses** were conducted to introduce these students to the different departmental honors programs housed within the College of Arts and Sciences. Faculty members and departmental representatives were on hand to discuss the eligibility requirements of their respective programs and the merits of participating in them. Activities such as these can serve as an impetus for students to remain at the University at Albany and aspire to graduate with an honors designation within one of our academic majors. Towards the end of the semester, students received complimentary passes to view “Noises Off”—an on-campus **theater production** at the University at Albany, Performing Arts Center.

Throughout the Spring 2004 and Fall 2005 semesters, students were also provided with registration privileges for courses such as AAS 286 African Civilizations, ARH 170L Survey of Art in the Western World I, ABIO 212 Introductory Genetics, and AENG 354

Comparative Study of Authors. In addition, students were invited to view other live performances and to participate in various **focus group discussions** with members of the Dean's Office, College of Arts and Sciences. A few select students were later profiled within the College of Arts and Sciences newsletter, "CAS Today."

Outcomes

Clearly, students who engaged in this CAS Honors Pilot Project were pleased to be part of the process of building a future Honors College and felt that their opinions and ideas were acknowledged and highly valued. Many saw this experience as a positive one and continue to interact with each other as a result of their interactions within this project.

The following conclusions were drawn as a function of observing student participation in the events noted above and engaging students in focus groups discussions:

- Discrete, quiet housing was seen as desirable.
- Courses that promote cohesion were preferred—more honors courses, the desire for additional common courses, and effective Teaching Assistants were all noted as strong preferences.
- Registration privileges were greatly appreciated.
- Although these students viewed smaller class sizes as positive, the quality of the instructor was seen as the single most important factor contributing to a positive classroom/learning experience.
- Students were interested in having more courses that “make you think in different ways,” and courses that seemed to make connections across various disciplines and topics.
- Students were not pleased with the seemingly large number of general education requirements that exist at the University at Albany.
- Students recommended that any additional foreign language requirements in the proposed Honors College and should be posed as optional rather than as-mandatory due to the many requirements needed for their major and minor concentrations.
- All students viewed Service and co-curricular activities as important.
- Students stressed the importance of advisors and mentors in choosing courses and preparing for future careers.

Appendix F
Previous Theme Semesters

<u>Title</u>	<u>Semester</u>
Shakespeare	Spring 1998
Irish	Spring 1999
Albany Heritage	Fall 2002
Humanitech	Spring 2003
Writing Semester	Spring 2004

**Appendix G
Honors College Budget**

<u>Item</u>	<u>Estimate</u>
<i>PSR(12 month positions)</i>	
Associate Dean(Director)	\$25,000-80,000*
Staff Assistant	\$35,000-50,000*
Subtotal	\$60,000-130,000
<i>TS/OTPS</i>	
Recruitment	\$15,000
Supplies	\$5,000
Courses	\$40,000-70,000**
Program Support	\$20,000-30,000
Subtotal	\$80,000-120,000
Total	140,000-250,000

*Cost of each position depends on model of staffing used.

**Cost depends on models of courses given, availability of full-time faculty, and necessity for replacement instruction. Estimate does not include hiring of new faculty, which we assume will be on-going and accelerated during the next five years. As net faculty hires increase, costs of delivering courses will decrease.

Note: The above budget does not reflect start-up costs associated with the provision of lounge or study space and facilities for Honors students envisioned in Section VII.