

The Honors College at the University at Albany

Director's Report on Our Fifth Year

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The conclusion of our fifth year marks the end of the initial developmental stage of The Honors College at the University at Albany. Our second class of entering freshmen graduated this year and all the basic elements of the honors-college experience for honors students and professors, and for the institution of UAlbany, are in place. Our challenge over the next few years will be to refine the Honors Experience at UAlbany - adding elements as their value becomes apparent, modifying elements as strategies for improvement are identified, and dropping elements that no longer assist students and professors as they strive for excellence in coursework and research. The strong foundation created over the past five years should be the platform for continuing development, not a place for rest.

Of particular benefit to our initial development has been the support of the university administration and the deans and other administrators of the UAlbany Colleges and Schools. In a time of budgetary angst, they have continued to provide the financial and personnel support that has allowed us to continue our striving for excellence. The faculty of the university has supported our efforts by teaching challenging honors courses and by mentoring honors students as they complete their honors research or creative work. Professors' ability to teach honors courses and mentor the many more students who are writing honors theses than a few years ago has been supported by their department chairs and other department administrators. The Residential Life program continues to provide the strong foundation for our honors community.

We ended the year with 381 students, including our graduates (7 more than last year). The academic performance of most of our students was very high and almost all the honors professors report that teaching an honors course is challenging and rewarding. Most of the students have formed a sense of community within their graduating class through their residence-life experience and their coursework, and feel that they are part of an important new undertaking at UAlbany. Our 50 graduates this year raise the number of our alumni to 120.

Assessment

One hallmark of The Honors College is our program of assessment. As can be seen throughout this report, we gather data on student and professor performance, and on the performance of The Honors College as an institution. We also gather data on the experiences of the honors students and honors professors, and on their appraisal of their experiences. In addition to the data that we gather through surveys, this year I held two meetings that were open to all honors students, for them to give me their feedback on their honors experiences and offer suggestions for changes to our program.

Honors Students

Goals with our students include (a) attracting top high school students to UAlbany, (b) propelling students forward in their development as scholars, and (c) creating a sense of community among the honors students and their professors. Propelling students forward has been accomplished through a set of honors courses that introduce students to a wide range of disciplines and require them to think and write intensely, involving students in research mentored by UAlbany professors, and creating a set of educational activities outside the classroom. Creating a sense of community has been accomplished through a set of educational and social activities sponsored by The Honors College and by the many interactions among honors students as they live and work together. I believe that we will continue to strive toward the goal of attracting top high school students to

UAlbany by achieving the other two goals and working with the Office of Undergraduate Admissions to inform high school students about what The Honors College and UAlbany have to offer them.

Admission of Honors Students

The goal for The Honors College is to admit about 125 incoming freshmen each year and then add 25-35 students during their first year at UAlbany. We aim to have about 150 students in each class by the end of their freshman year. The number of students admitted to The Honors College during the past six years has been:

	Class of 2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
incoming freshmen	119	177	80	131	114	130
during first year	40	25	33	31	41	
total	159	202	113	162	155	

Incoming Freshmen

For the third year, we used a two-tier process for admitting incoming freshmen to The Honors College.

--The first tier comprised students who had been admitted to UAlbany and who had (a) a 90 cumulative GPA in their core academic subjects (math, science, language arts, foreign language, social studies), (b) no grade lower than a B in any core academic subject, and (c) a 1250 or higher on the language and mathematics parts of the SAT (or a comparable score on the ACT). To become a student in The Honors College, these students were required to read the entry on my blog about striving for excellence and send a response about the areas in which they planned to strive for excellence during their first year of college.

--The second tier comprised all other students accepted to UAlbany. Any accepted student could apply to be a member of The Honors College. These students wrote an essay, and it and the students' transcripts were evaluated by the honors admissions committee.

Letters were sent by the Office of Undergraduate Admissions to all students admitted to UAlbany who met the first-tier criteria, encouraging them to become a student in The Honors College. Letters were also sent to all students admitted as Presidential Scholars and Frederick Douglass Scholars who did not meet the first-tier criteria, encouraging them to apply to The Honors College. Information on applying to The Honors College is readily available on the honors website - allowing all admitted students to apply.

This year, a total of 221 students submitted a blog response (first tier) or applied to be in The Honors College (second tier). Of those, 200 students were admitted into The Honors College: 152 were from the first tier and 48 were from the second tier. The 130 students who enrolled in The Honors College represent a yield of 65% among those who were admitted into The Honors College.

On the survey that all honors students complete at the end of each academic year, for the past two years we have asked first-year students who entered as incoming freshmen how much influence being accepted into The Honors College had on their decision to attend UAlbany. Their responses were:

	Class of 2013 (n=117)	2014 (n=98)
a great deal of influence	53%	59%
some influence	41%	24%
small amount of influence	3%	10%
no influence	3%	7%

On a companion, optional survey, the first-year students were asked, “How do you feel about your decision to attend UAlbany and The Honors College?” The responses were:

	Class of 2013 (n=91)	2014 (n=74)
I’m glad I made the decision I did	91%	85%
I should have attended UAlbany and not The Honors College	4%	6%
I should have attended another of the universities to which I was accepted	5%	9%

First-year Students

Any UAlbany freshman can apply to become a student in The Honors College at the end of his or her first or second semester. At the end of each semester, I send emails to all first-year students who achieved a 3.75 GPA that semester, encouraging them to read The Honors College website and consider applying for admission.

After the Fall 2010 semester, 51 students applied to The Honors College; 31 were accepted and 30 of them accepted our invitation to join The Honors College. After the Spring 2011 semester, 15 students applied; 12 were accepted and all of them accepted our invitation.

Discussion and Directions for the Coming Year

The admissions process we have used during the past three years has resulted in about the number of honors students we would like to enroll (an average of 125, exactly, for the three years (amazing!)). During each of these three years, we have admitted about the same number of incoming freshmen to The Honors College. However, the yield (the percentage of students we accept who attend UAlbany) has varied from year to year. The reasons for this variation are not clear.

The responses to the student survey showed that admission to The Honors College had a great deal of influence on the decisions to attend UAlbany for about 60% of this year’s incoming honors freshmen. I believe that this supports the conclusion that The Honors College is having a meaningful influence on the decisions of some of our top students to attend UAlbany. The increase in the percentage of students for whom admission to The Honors College had little or no influence on their decision to attend UAlbany appears to be related to the increasing number of students attending UAlbany for specific academic programs (e.g., the School of Business, the College of Nanoscale Science and Engineering). In the part of the survey that allowed for open-ended responses, four of these students noted that the particular academic program they were joining had the most influence on their decision to attend UAlbany and that The Honors College was a positive “extra.”

I believe that the high yield of 65% this past year is due to a variety of efforts: personalized letters of acceptance that I send students, letters and phone calls from the folks in the Office of Undergraduate Admissions, the Scholars’ Days Luncheons held by the Office of Undergraduate Admissions (which includes conversations with professors and honors students), and phone calls made to potential honors students by current honors students (coordinated by the Office of Undergraduate Admissions). Many of our current students tell me that conversations with current honors students had a significant influence on their decision to attend UAlbany.

The high level of student satisfaction with the decision to attend UAlbany and The Honors College suggests that The Honors College provides the type of program that encouraged the students to attend UAlbany. The percentage of those “glad that I made the decision I did” is about 5% lower this year than last year. In the open-ended portion of the survey, some students noted that having to take honors courses restricted their ability to take courses in their major - an issue that some students have found problematic each year. There seemed to be more

rowdiness in the honors residence halls this year than during the past two years, and this may have resulted in a few students feeling dissatisfied with their honors experiences.

We plan to continue with the current process for admitting students to The Honors College next year. In partnership with the Office of Undergraduate Admissions, we continue to monitor the admissions process and will modify it as needed. Based on the value of student-to-student contact in attracting honors students to UAlbany, we may want to look for ways to expand it in future years.

Retaining Honors Students at UAlbany and in The Honors College

In many of my messages to the honors students, particularly during their first year, I emphasize that one of my most important tasks, and an important task of many others on campus, is to help each of them excel academically. We work to give our students the information, support, and encouragement that they need to excel through presentations by professors, advisors, advanced honors students, and the Honors Librarian; through information from our website and the many emails I send the students; and through individual meetings that others and I have with students. Many students use some or many forms of the assistance available to them; some use none of them.

Following is a description of where all the students who became honors students with each entering class stand now. Included in all groups are those who came into The Honors College as incoming freshmen and those admitted during their first year.

Entering during the academic year:	2006/07 (N = 159)	2007/08 (N = 202)	2008/09 (N = 113)	2009/10 (N = 162)	2010/11 (N = 155)
graduated from The Honors College	52 (33%)	49 (24%)	8 (7%)		
voluntarily withdrew from The Honors College	74 (47%)	88 (44%)	32 (29%)	28 (17%)	5 (3%)
dropped for low grades	20 (13%)	54 (26%)	17 (15%)	17 (11%)	11 (7%)
transferred from UAlbany	13 (8%)	10 (5%)	11 (10%)	4 (2%)	1 (1%)
remain in The Honors College		1 (1%)	43 (39%)	113 (70%)	138 (89%)

There are no published national data on the retention and graduation rates of students in honors colleges or honors programs. This past year, I was part of an external review team for the honors program at the University of New Hampshire. They reported, in their self-study, that information from the National Collegiate Honors Council (the largest national organization for honors colleges and programs) informed them that the average graduation rate for honors colleges that require a senior thesis is 22%.

Voluntary Withdrawal from The Honors College

Students withdraw voluntarily for a range of reasons. Many who withdraw during their first year note that the requirements for graduating from The Honors College impeded their education plan. For example, students who wanted to focus on a narrow range of courses found that having to take six honors courses impeded this goal. Others found that taking honors courses interfered with their plans to take required courses if they planned on a double major or a double minor. In addition, some students were frustrated because all their general education requirements could not be met through honors courses that fit into their schedule and that they wanted to take.

Most students leaving at the end of their second year or early in their third year have decided not to pursue writing a senior thesis. Once the opportunity to take honors courses has passed, they decide to withdraw from The Honors College. Those withdrawing at the end of their third year or in their fourth year may have started the process of doing the research for their honors thesis but then decide not to complete the process.

Dropping Students Through Administrative Action

During our first four years, to remain in The Honors College, honors students needed to achieve a 3.0 GPA during the first semester of their first year, and then a 3.25 each subsequent semester. The GPA requirements for students entering during this past year and beyond changed to their needing to achieve a 3.25 their first semester, a 3.3 their first year, and a 3.5 each subsequent year.

Students who do not meet the GPA requirements in any given period can remain in The Honors College if they meet with me and we develop an academic workplan for them to improve their grades. They then must meet the GPA requirements in all subsequent semesters. Students who do not meet the GPA requirements for a second time are dropped from The Honors College through administrative action. Most students who are dropped through administrative action are dropped during their first or second year.

The past year, the following numbers of students in each year were placed on probation or dropped from The Honors College for not meeting the grade requirements (note: some students were put on probation in the fall and dropped in the spring, so they are noted twice on this chart):

	put on probation	dropped
4 th year students	2	1
3 rd year students	2	3
2 nd year students	11	12
1 st year students	20	11

Students Who Transfer to Another University

Throughout our five years, there have been a variety of reasons for honors students transferring to another university. This year, only two honors students transferred to another university: one freshman and one sophomore. The freshman transferred because she wanted to attend a university further from home (she was living at home and commuting to UAlbany). I did not get any information from the sophomore who transferred.

Discussion and Directions for the Coming Year

As noted above, students withdraw voluntarily from The Honors College for several reasons - most of which relate to the requirements of The Honors College. Some students may not understand how these requirements will influence their academic and social choices until they begin taking courses and planning their future semesters.

There is a small but consistent trend for more students to remain active in The Honors College between last year and this year. At the end of the 2009/10 academic year, we had 27% of third year students, 66% of second-year students, and 87% of first-year students continuing in The Honors College. This year, the percentages are 39%, 70%, and 89%, respectively. This seems to be good news.

The number of students transferring to another university dropped from our first three entering classes (13, 10, 11) to our second two entering classes (4, 1). It is impossible to know why this drop has occurred, and, of course, we do not know if the trend will continue. It may be worth noting that we instituted our comprehensive orientation program two years ago (described in the curriculum section below), and hypothesizing that this may have had an influence on the number of students transferring.

We do not have plans to change the curriculum for students in The Honors College or the requirements that they must meet to remain in The Honors College. Although some students find that the curriculum does not fit with their education plan, several discussions in the Governing Board of The Honors College have resulted in the

decision to keep our curriculum as it is. I will continue to encourage the honors students to work hard so that they can meet the requirements to remain in The Honors College and offer support and guidance to those seeking help with their academics.

Academic Performance of Honors Students

The graduates in the Class of 2011 achieved the following grades:

	Spring 2011	Cumulative GPA
4.0	12 (22%)	2 (4%)
>= 3.8	20 (36%)	29 (42%)
>= 3.5	42 (76%)	52 (95%)

Students who will be continuing in The Honors College next year achieved the following grades (students who withdrew, transferred, or were dropped during the year are not included in this table):

	Spring 2011	Cumulative GPA
4.0	53 (18%)	20 (6%)
>= 3.8	146 (48%)	148 (47%)
>= 3.5	235 (78%)	268 (85%)

A small number of students continuing in The Honors College achieved at a level that was disappointing:

	Spring 2010	Cumulative
<= 3.25	28 (9%)	13 (4%)
<= 3.0	11 (4%)	2 (1%)

Scholarships, Awards, and Acknowledgments

Many of our students received special academic recognition this year. Sara Ganetis completed the second year of her Hollings Undergraduate Scholarship from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. She also received the Outstanding Senior Award from the Department of Atmospheric and Environmental Sciences. The Department of Atmospheric and Environmental Sciences also honored Alicia Bentley and Gabe Susca-Lopata with their Brazen Family Awards and Alicia received the Best Forecaster Award. Emily Finnegan received a Gilman International Scholarship from the US State Department for travel during the summer. Michael Ferguson and Alex Talamo received Outstanding Student awards from the Department of Chemistry, and Cristina Dubceac and Nishtha Modi (both in chemistry) received honorable mentions from the national Goldwater Scholarship Foundation. Meredith Dedopoulos received the Donald Newman Award for Outstanding Achievement in Criminal Justice and the Phi Beta Kappa Prize for Academic Excellence. Several honors students won Spellman Awards for academic achievement: Jorge Perez, Sean Whipple, Richa Birla, Ali Chaudry, Anette Or, and Reza Ebrahimi. Cyndel Carreau received the Greenwald Fellowship in Chemistry and Daksha Bhatia received the Philosophy Undergraduate Award. Glenn Caulfield was inducted into Phi Beta Kappa. A Disabilities Resource Center Award for Academic Achievement went to Aylee Nielsen. Two honors students were recognized by the School of Business: Scott Ruling received the Wan Family Foundation Award and Ryan Kennedy received the Ronald Forbes Award. In the Department of East Asian Studies, Jenna Brydges won their yearly Writing Award and Andrew Chang received the Korean Language Award. Each year, I am impressed with the breadth of talent among the students in The Honors College.

Several honors students received special recognition for their research this year. Presidential Research Awards were presented to Cyndel Carreau (*Diet-induced hyperhomocysteinemia in a Rat Model of Type 2 Diabetes Mellitus*), and Hillary Closs (*Adults with Developmental Disabilities as a Health Disparity in the Community*). Provost Awards were given to Jill Caramanna (*Backwards Making of a Heroine: Mary Cowden Clarke's Girlhoods and Their Importance in the Shakespearean Conversation*), Jennifer Pollard (*Famine and the Black Death: The Long-term Health Effects of a Medieval Agrarian Crisis*), Daniel Sellers (*Further Studies on DNA Coordination with Hafnium Oxide*), Meredith Dedopoulos (*Incomplete Sentences: Predictors of Failure to Complete Court-Mandated Domestic Violence Counseling*), Alicia Bentley (*A Preliminary Climatology of Tropical Moisture Exports in the Southern Hemisphere*), Christopher Eirkson (*Evolving Socioeconomic Views toward Merchants During the Chinese Ming Dynasty*), Andrew Orayfig (*Cultivation of Mindfulness and Acceptance Processes in ACT and CBT*), and Ali Chaudry (*Robust and Economical Autonomous Navigation via Advanced Bayesian Methods*). Maureen Whitcomb's research was recognized by the Department of Women's Studies (*Bodies of Flesh, Bodies of Knowledge: Western Representation of Female Genital Cutting and Vaginal Plastic Surgeries*).

Five of our students received an Irving Harold Losee Scholarship this year. The Losee Scholarship provides funding for honors students involved in educational activities outside the classroom. The students are: Wai Ping Kan for study in Hong Kong during the spring semester, Joseph Fanti to provide a dental-education program that he developed at several schools near his home, John Teevan for study in France over the summer, Nishtha Modi who is leading a group to build an orphanage in Uganda over the summer, and Emma Bigley to attend the International Youth Festival in Beijing this summer.

I was pleased to see so many honors students recognized for their leadership this year. Each year the SUNY Chancellor recognizes students for their excellence. This year, seven of the eleven UAlbany students recognized were from The Honors College: Hillary Closs, Carolyn Franz, Sara Ganetis, Cynthia Mellen, Ruky Tijani, Justin Wax-Jacobs, and Melinda White.

In addition, each year the President of UAlbany recognizes students for their leadership. As in the past, many leaders were from The Honors College this year. The Great Dane Award is given to students who have demonstrated leadership in several activities. Honors recipients were Sarah Barry, Taylor Bulman, Nicole Gillette, Neema Moghadam, Nikoleta Papa, Shani Phillip, Jennifer Pollard, Rostislav Rar, and Arianna Wedin. The Outstanding Senior Award recognizes seniors who have contributed greatly to the University during the course of their undergraduate careers, and was given to Katelyn Bennett, Cherie Brown, Hillary Closs, Meredith Dedopoulos, Ruky Tijani, Cameron Waldman, Justin Wax Jacobs, and Maureen Whitcomb. The UAlbany Spirit Award recognizes students who participate in initiatives to spread school spirit. Tatiana Choong won the award this year. The UAlbany Fund Award recognizes a student for helping to obtain the private support that UAlbany needs, and was given to Geoff Corey. The Community Service Leadership Award recognizes one student who evidences a service ethic through unselfish involvement in the community, and was presented to Sam Frumkin. The Academic Leadership Award recognizes one student who exhibits academic excellence and assists others to excel in their academics, and was given to Nicholas Scala. The Rod Hart Memorial Award is given to one undergraduate for leadership in a campus organization that serves the University community. Simeon Kawakami received the award this year. The Ada Craig Walker Award is given to a graduating senior woman who "in judgment of the faculty best typifies the ideals of the University," and was given to Hillary Closs. The Distinguished Scholar-Leader Award honors one senior who exemplifies the scholar-leader-service ideal through academic excellence, effective leadership in the University community, and a commitment to serving others. Sara Ganetis received this award.

This year, I continued my practice of inviting all honors students with a 4.0 GPA the previous semester to my apartment for dinner. I held nineteen 4.0 dinners this year (about five students attend each dinner).

Each January and May, I send personalized congratulatory emails to all honors students receiving a GPA of 3.9 or higher (a Blue Star Award for all those between 3.9 and 4.0 and a Gold Star Award for those with a 4.0 (with an Oak Leaf Cluster for each semester the student has received a 4.0)).

Discussion and Directions for the Coming Year

The academic performance of our students, as indicated by their grades, continues to be very strong. I believe that concentrating our students in honors courses and honors housing contributes to their achievement by surrounding them with fellow students who are high achievers.

Although the number of honors students achieving academically at a disappointing level (below 3.25) remained low this year, there was a meaningful jump in the percentage of these students in the spring semester (e.g., from 1% to 4% below a 3.0 from last year to this year). My examination of the students' grades shows that about a dozen first-year students received grades during the second semester that were significantly below those they received in the first semester. I wrote to all these students over the summer, expressing my concern. Since then, I have met with most of these students and, except for a few who struggled with specific personal issues during the spring, most noted that their positive performance during the first semester led them to believe that they could continue that performance during the spring semester without working so hard.

I was pleased to see so many of our students receive awards from the University and SUNY. While most of our students earn high grades, the awards our students received required activities outside the classroom as well as high grades, such as showing leadership through community or university activities, seeking learning activities outside the classroom, and engaging in high levels of research and other forms of scholarship. The number of awards received by honors students points to the value that they bring to the UAlbany community.

I will continue working with the first-year students on the need to work hard to achieve the types of grades that most of them want to earn. Based on our experience this year, I will enhance my exhorting during the spring semester - letting this year's first-year students know about the dangers of forgetting that their high achievement is due, in large part, to the intensity of their work.

Honors Students' Engagement

On the end-of-the-year survey, honors students were asked about activities indicating engagement with the UAlbany and Albany communities and about the extent to which they feel connected to these communities. (Complete table on the following page.)

How much do you feel that you are part of a community?

	First-year students			Second-year students			Third-year students		
	HH (50)	NH (15)	OC (2)	HH (33)	NH (21)	OC (12)	HH (4)	NH (12)	OC (10)
Within Your Suite									
very much	66%	42%	N/A	60%	43%	N/A	50%	50%	14%
some	22%	21%	N/A	31%	33%	N/A	25%	33%	86%
a little bit	8%	36%	N/A	3%	14%	N/A	25%	8%	0
none at all	4%	0	N/A	6%	10%	N/A	0	8%	0
Within The Honors College									
very much	48%	13%	0	40%	24%	0	25%	25%	20%
some	32%	27%	50%	44%	19%	35%	25%	25%	20%
a little bit	12%	40%	50%	13%	43%	42%	50%	33%	50%
none at all	8%	20%	33%	3%	14%	25%	0	17%	10%
Within UAlbany									
very much	46%	47%	0	44%	19%	8%	50%	33%	20%
some	30%	47%	50%	47%	71%	50%	25%	25%	60%
a little bit	18%	0	50%	9%	10%	42%	25%	17%	20%
none at all	6%	7%	0	0	0	0	0	25%	0

*HH = students living in honors housing; NH = students on campus and not in honors housing; OC = off campus; N/A = not applicable, students only living at home; in third year, some living with friends in apartments

*The numbers in parentheses are the total number of students included in that column.

Do you believe that there are people on campus who have helped or are helping to guide you through your college experience?

	First-year (N = 64)	Second-year (N = 65)	Third-year (N = 26)
Yes	81%	79%	85%

We asked those who had someone guiding them to identify that person. About 75% of the students named more than one person and I made a separate entry for each person. Interestingly, many more of the third-year students had four or more individuals listed (11/19, 58%) than did the first- (1/39, 3%) or second-year students (2/37, 5%).

Advisors were Kim Kerker, honors advisor for first- and second-year students, and department/major/school advisors. Residential Life people included professional staff and student Resident Assistants.

	First-year	Second-year	Third-year	Fourth-year
Professor	26	33	44	25
Advisor	14	12	4	2
Jeff Haugaard	14	13	4	8
Residential Life	13	10	1	2
Other Administrative/Staff	2	6	4	5
Students	3	1	0	1

Outside-the-UAlbany-classroom Education Activities

Students were asked if they had participated in a Study Abroad program, either during a semester or during a summer or winter session.

Second-year	Third-year
3%	7%

Students were asked if they were involved in an internship, either during a semester or during the summer.

Second-year		Third-year	
semester	summer	semester	summer
11%	22%	14%	26%

Extracurricular Activities

Most honors students are involved in one or more extracurricular activities, either on or off campus. Several questions on the end-of-the-year surveys asked honors students to describe their extracurricular activities.

Were you involved in community service (e.g., high school tutoring) or charitable fundraising (e.g., Relay for Life) this year - either in the Albany community or on campus?

	First-year (N = 129)	Second-year (N = 116)	Third-year (N = 50)
Community Service	25%	23%	34%
Charitable Fundraising	7%	9%	8%
Both	26%	38%	24%
Neither	42%	30%	34%

Did you participate in campus clubs, sports teams (intercollegiate, club, or intramural), or other organizations?

	First-year (N = 129)	Second-year (N = 116)	Third-year (N = 50)
None	24%	23%	12%
1	26%	21%	22%
2-3	37%	46%	52%
4-6	11%	10%	14%
>6	2%	0	0

Did you work for pay this academic year, either while in school or during breaks/holidays (include work-study jobs)?

	First-year (N = 129)	Second-year (N = 116)	Third-year (N = 50)
During classes only	16%	21%	24%
During breaks only	23%	12%	12%
Both during classes and breaks	9%	22%	30%

Discussion and Directions for the Coming Year

I was pleased to see the high percentage of first- and second-year honors students living in honors housing who felt that they were “very much” or “some” a part of the community within The Honors College. Comparing their percentages with the percentages of those not living in honors housing suggests the importance that living together in honors housing can have in fostering a sense of community among the honors students.

Similarly, first-year honors students living in honors housing are more likely than honors students not in honors housing to feel “very much” connected to the community in their suite (66% to 42%) or “very much” and “some” (88% to 63%), which may also suggest that the honors residence halls are successful in fostering a sense of community at several levels for the honors students. A similar pattern can be seen among the second-year honors students. I was also pleased to see that a substantial percentage of honors students feel “very much” or “some” a part of the overall UAlbany community (89% of first-year, 86% of second-year, and 70% of third-year students).

About 40% of the third-year students report that they are “some” or “very much” a part of the honors community, which is a lower percentage than the first- and second-year students. This may be understandable because of the normal developmental trajectory of honors students in their third and fourth years: they have stopped taking honors courses, are living on the other side of campus from State Quad, and have an increased focus on their majors and senior research. I work individually with third-year students to help them make the transition to the honors programs in their majors - and so have some ongoing contact with them. We had a few social activities for juniors this year (e.g., a presentation on graduate school, the dinner/dance(lessons), but few juniors attended (a pattern similar to that seen in previous years).

A large percentage of honors students believe that they have one or more persons on campus to whom they can turn for advice. The trend of relying increasingly on professors as time goes on is reasonable given the students’ increased involvement in their departments as they begin their research. This year, far more first-year students than in the past included a professor as a person to whom they can turn for advice - suggesting a closer connection between these students and their professors, possibly through the professors in their honors courses. As noted above, almost 60% of the third-year students named at least four people on campus to whom they could turn for advice - most of whom were professors. This suggests that, by the time they enter their fourth year of college, most of our students have developed important mentoring relationships with several professors.

I remain surprised at the small percentage of honors students who take a semester to study abroad. It may be that most students believe that their academic demands make studying abroad difficult (e.g., double majoring, becoming involved in research). (One student listed Washington, D.C. as the country in which he studied abroad this year - perhaps revealing more about the state of our capital than he had intended.)

Most honors students are involved in a variety of activities across campus and in the community. The percentage of students involved in at least one activity, and those involved in multiple activities, increases over the years, suggesting that our students are becoming more actively involved as they continue through college. Fewer first-year students were involved in community-service or fundraising activities than in past years, or than other honors students this year. The reasons for this are unclear.

A sizeable percentage of the honors students work for pay while they are taking classes: 25% of first-year students, 43% of second-year students, and 54% of third-year students. Many of our students must balance their coursework and other activities with the needs of their jobs.

During the coming year, we will continue the many events designed to encourage a sense of community in The Honors College and involve honors students in activities outside the classroom. I would like the honors students to know that studying abroad is an option for each of them and that we will work to make studying abroad possible for all who want to go. Perhaps we will have a special presentation from the Study Abroad Office this

year. Finally, we will continue to expand our efforts to provide honors students with information about the variety of campus and community activities open to them. We have held a “Get Involved!” program once each year for the past two years (honors students in various campus and community organizations describe them to first- and second-year honors students) and I plan to have this program once each semester this year.

Students’ Assessments of Their Experiences

In order to understand the honors students’ overall experiences, on the end-of-the-year survey they were asked to provide a global assessment of their experiences over their time at UAlbany.

	very positive	positive	bit positive	bit negative	negative	very negative
4th-year students						
Experiences in The Honors College	34%	41%	13%	12%	0	0
Overall experience at UAlbany	41%	44%	16%	0	0	0
3rd-year students						
Experiences in The Honors College	31%	39%	19%	12%	0	0
Overall experience at UAlbany	31%	61%	4%	0	4%	0
2nd-year students						
Experiences in The Honors College	29%	47%	18%	3%	1%	1%
Overall experience at UAlbany	30%	47%	20%	2%	0	1%
1st-year students						
Experiences in The Honors College	42%	39%	12%	3%	3%	1%
Overall experience at UAlbany	41%	42%	12%	2%	2%	1%

To gather information in a different format about the students’ overall experiences, I held two evening honors events during the spring semester focused on students giving me feedback about their experiences and asking questions about The Honors College. About 40 students attended each of these evenings. I was both pleased and surprised not to hear any complaints from those who attended. Toward the end of each meeting, I mentioned this and specifically asked for students to tell me about aspects of their honors experience with which they were not pleased. No one responded. I then said, “So, overall, everyone is happy” and there was general nodding of heads.

Discussion and Directions for the Coming Year

A strong majority of honors students of all years find their experiences in The Honors College and at UAlbany to be positive or very positive. Only a small percentage describe their experiences as any degree of negative. When the positive and very positive ratings are combined, there is a small but consistent difference between students’ assessment of their experiences in The Honors College and their overall experiences at UAlbany. Students were given the opportunity to provide specific information about their experiences in addition to their global ratings. From these comments, I have gleaned some reasons for this difference. First, many of the students’ experiences are in The Honors College. As a result, issues such as difficulties with roommates in honors housing, conflicts with a professor in an honors course, and struggles in a research lab are caught up in the “honors-college” assessment. In addition, some honors requirements are seen as problematic (e.g., taking honors courses interferes with ones’ freedom to take other courses; completing the thesis can be a very stressful experience) and these are also reflected in the honors-college assessment.

I will continue to impress on the honors students that there are many on campus who can provide guidance or support to them and encourage them to contact one or more of us when we could be helpful. Although some of our requirements are seen as problematic by some students, we have discussed these requirements in several meetings of the Governing Board (which includes student members) and have decided that changing these requirements is not appropriate. I will continue to search for ways for the honors students to provide feedback about their honors experiences and to address those issues that will enhance the students' experiences.

Honors Professors and Their Departments/Schools

Our goal has been to attract some of the best teaching scholars at UAlbany as professors in The Honors College and to facilitate their teaching intense, interesting honors courses. Each September, we distribute a call for proposals for honors courses for the next academic year. All tenured or tenure-track professors are eligible to submit proposals. The curriculum committee of The Honors College selects which proposals to accept.

For the second year, I have recruited a group of about a dozen students to meet with professors whom honors students have recommended for teaching honors courses in the future. The students met with 12 professors and reported that they were interested in learning about The Honors College and that several of them said they would submit a proposal in the fall to teach an honors course. At a followup meeting with the students, several suggested that it might be useful for them to make a short presentation on teaching honors courses at departmental meetings.

Professors' Affiliations and Experiences

During the 2010/11 academic year, 30 professors taught honors courses (a list of the honors courses is in Appendix 1). Honors professors came from the College of Arts & Sciences, College of Nanoscale Science and Engineering, Rockefeller College of Public Affairs & Policy, School of Business, School of Education, School of Public Health, and the School of Social Welfare. For a description of these courses, see: http://www.albany.edu/honorscollege/2010-2011_Honors_Courses.shtml.

The professors who have spoken to me about their honors courses have generally been very positive about their experiences. Some stated that teaching an honors course was a qualitatively different experience from their other undergraduate teaching experiences at UAlbany. I continued to hear concerns from some honors professors that they had difficulty initiating discussions during their class sessions. Several professors have suggested that many students are reluctant to make comments in class that might not be "correct." With prodding, students in most courses participate more frequently as the semester goes on.

For the first time this year, honors professors were asked to complete a brief on-line survey of their experiences. Twenty-three professors completed the survey. Among them, eight had just taught their first honors courses, six had taught two honors courses, two had taught three honors courses, and one had taught five honors courses. (Table is on following page.)

They were asked to make several comparisons with their nonhonors courses:

	very much more	much more	more	about the same	less	much less	very much less
How intellectually stimulating for you was teaching this honors course?	9%	35%	35%	17%	4%	0	0
Once the course started (excluding preparation), how much time did you spend on this honors course?	13%	22%	35%	30%	0	0	0
How much did you enjoy the students and your interactions with them?	17%	52%	13%	13%	4%	0	0

They were also asked to compare the students in their honors course with other students they have taught:

	very much higher	much higher	higher	about the same	lower	much lower	very much lower
Percentage of students in this honors course who earned a course grade of A or A-.	18%	46%	27%	5%	5%	0	0
The degree to which students in this honors course were prepared for class sessions.	17%	26%	48%	9%	0	0	0
The degree to which students in this honors course participated in classroom discussions.	17%	35%	30%	13%	4%	0	0
The degree to which students in this honors course were enthusiastic about learning.	17%	44%	22%	9%	4%	0	0

Professors were asked to contrast with their nonhonors courses over the past few years:

	very many more	many more	more	about the same	fewer	many fewer	very many fewer
The benefits that you derived from teaching this honors course:	5%	36%	32%	23%	0	0	0
The problems that you experienced while teaching this honors course:	0	0	4%	44%	30%	9%	13%

The professors were also asked if the assistance they received from The Honors College while preparing for and teaching their course was sufficient. Twenty-one answered “yes” and one answered “no.”

Discussion and Directions for the Coming Year

I am pleased that honors professors came from so many departments/schools this year—a pattern that continues

from last year. This suggests a continuing broad-based support for The Honors College across units at UAlbany and a broad-based interest by professors in participating in The Honors College.

We received a sufficient number of proposals to teach honors courses this year - although just enough. I continue to remain concerned that budget cutbacks have resulted in professors having to cover courses that might have been taught by a lecturer in the past, making them unavailable to teach an honors course. As noted above, we completed our second year of having small groups of honors students visit selected professors and encourage them to submit proposals in the fall. Three of the professors we visited last year submitted proposals to teach an honors course (all were accepted). I hope that the same pattern will continue this year.

Responses on the professors' survey indicate that, for almost all of them, their experience teaching an honors course was rewarding. The results of the survey show that most honors professors found their honors experience to be rewarding, that their honors students were actively involved in their education, and that the professors enjoyed their interactions with their honors students. Some more work was involved teaching the courses, and this may reflect the increased use of papers or oral presentations - rather than exams - in the evaluation of the students. The one professor who noted that she had not received as much assistance from The Honors College as she would have liked wrote that we could have helped her understand more clearly the students' preparation for writing research papers in her discipline.

One goal I have for the coming year is to start the process of composing a faculty handbook of sorts, that can help honors professors understand more clearly the abilities of first- and second-year honors students. The handbook could also include information on promoting classroom discussions. I will consult with the folks in ITLAL about this project.

We will continue to distribute the pamphlet, *An Invitation to Consider Teaching in The Honors College*, to all professors and I will reconvene the group of students who will meet with potential honors professors during the spring semester. I have hope that these efforts will continue to result in our having sufficient proposals for honors courses in the future.

The Honors Curriculum

Breadth of Course Offerings

As can be seen in Appendix 1, honors courses taught this year came from a wide range of disciplines. Honors courses were taught in 21 majors this year, from professors with appointments in seven Colleges and Schools from across UAlbany.

General education. I conceptualize honors courses as taught in an overlapping two-year cycle (e.g., one cycle is 2006/07-2007/08, the next cycle is 2007/08-2008/09). The reason for this is that students who join The Honors College as incoming freshmen are expected to take 18 credits of honors courses during their first two years. Consequently, each two year cycle represents the honors courses available to a particular entering class of honors students.

Most students in The Honors College use their honors courses to meet general-education requirements. To facilitate this, my goal is to have several courses that meet each general-education requirement offered during each two-year cycle. As seen in Appendix 2, we achieved this goal during the past two-year cycle. The smallest number of courses offered in any general-education category other than Information Literacy was four - meaning that at least four honors courses in all general-education categories were available to students just finishing their second year at UAlbany. The course I teach to the first-year honors students meets the Information Literacy requirement, so every first-year student has the opportunity to meet that requirement.

Assessing Honors Courses

Honors courses are assessed in four ways. First, to get a general understanding of their global experiences in honors courses, first- and second-year students are asked to compare their experiences in their honors courses and their other courses in the end-of-the-year survey. In addition, each individual course is assessed in two ways: (a) students complete the Student Instructional Rating Form (SIRF) used to assess university courses and (b) students complete an additional assessment used for honors courses (see Appendix 3). Finally, I visit some courses each semester through the Faculty Collaboration Program (described below).

Comparing honors and other courses. First-year and second-year students were asked about their honors courses on the end-of-the-year assessment.

How intense/challenging were your honors courses, compared with your other courses (on average)?

	much more	more	about the same	less	much less
First-year (N = 67)	13%	57%	23%	5%	2%
Second-year (N = 67)	13%	61%	21%	2%	3%

How much time did you spend on your honors courses compared with your other courses (on average)?

	much more	more	about the same	less	much less
First-year	19%	52%	21%	3%	5%
Second-year	15%	51%	27%	6%	1%

Compared with my other professors, the amount of interaction with my honors professors in class (e.g., discussion, asking questions) was:

	much more	more	about the same	less	much less
First-year	33%	33%	28%	3%	3%
Second-year	34%	48%	12%	6%	0

Compared with my other professors, the amount of interaction with my honors professors outside of class (e.g., office hours, appointments) was:

	much more	more	about the same	less	much less
First-year	10%	35%	49%	3%	3%
Second-year	15%	30%	43%	9%	3%

Compared to the grades in your other courses, your honors grades were (on average):

	lower	about the same	higher
First-year	13%	72%	15%
Second-year	14%	76%	10%

SIRF reports. The Office of Institutional Research, Planning, & Effectiveness has provided data comparing the SIRF reports for all courses taught in the College of Arts & Sciences and the honors courses taught through the College of Arts & Sciences. (At least three courses in a college/school must be taught for a comparison to be made. Since we did not offer at least three courses in any of the colleges/schools other than the College of Arts & Sciences in any given semester, only the courses in the College and Arts & Sciences could be used in this comparison.) All ratings are on a 5-point scale (5=almost always; 1=almost never). Means are followed by standard deviations in parentheses; the n's are the number of students completing SIRF reports.

	Fall 2010		Spring 2011	
	honors (n=162)	other (n=8803)	honors (n=116)	other (n=7331)
Was well-prepared for class	4.73 (0.56)	4.59 (0.82)	4.73 (0.65)	4.63 (0.78)
Communicated course content in ways you understood	4.22 (1.12)	4.10 (1.18)	4.16 (1.04)	4.20 (1.13)
Stimulated your interest in the course material	4.07 (1.22)	3.80 (1.31)	3.97 (1.12)	3.90 (1.29)
Challenged you intellectually	4.41 (0.95)	4.11 (1.11)	4.46 (0.76)	4.13 (1.10)
Was receptive to students' ideas and viewpoints	4.58 (0.96)	4.25 (1.11)	4.37 (0.99)	4.30 (1.08)
Was available outside class to discuss course matters	4.62 (0.78)	4.32 (1.00)	4.25 (1.05)	4.36 (0.99)
Held you to high standards of performance	4.70 (0.62)	4.31 (0.99)	4.63 (0.67)	4.35 (0.99)
Overall instructor rating	4.35 (1.05)	3.99 (1.19)	4.12 (1.10)	4.05 (1.18)
Overall course rating	4.06 (1.09)	3.78 (1.15)	3.99 (1.08)	3.85 (1.13)

Honors college assessment. Students in all honors courses are asked to complete an anonymous survey at the end of the course (see Appendix 3). As can be seen, this assessment provides students the opportunity to identify specific strengths of a course and specific issues in the course that they found problematic. I review all these surveys, make summary notes, and send them to the instructors once their course grades have been submitted. I believe that these reports allow me to get a reasonably good picture of the students' experiences in each course. I do not share the results of the surveys with anyone other than the course instructor, but I do keep my summary notes and refer to them if a professor proposes to teach an honors course in subsequent years.

Faculty consultation and assessment. To ensure a continually improving curriculum for the honors students, I initiated the Faculty Consultation Program three years ago. In the current version of this program, I attend a class session suggested by the professor, about half way through the semester. About 15 minutes before the end of the class session, the professor leaves the room and I talk with the students about their experiences in the course. I ask questions about the course material and the style of the professor's teaching, and ask students to supply any other information that they believe would be helpful for the professor to know. I then meet with the professor several days later, and we discuss my observations and the students' comments. The goal of the program is to provide more feedback to the professor than is typically provided by written student evaluations, and to provide this feedback in the middle of the semester so that the professor can adjust the course if deemed appropriate.

I do not observe every course every year. I work to observe every honors course the first time that it is taught and then occasionally if it is taught several times and has been reviewed positively by the students. This year, I observed six courses during the fall semester and eight courses during the spring semester. All professors were interested in hearing about my observations and conversations with their students, and my sense is that several of them made some adjustments mid-way through their course based on the feedback from their students.

Comprehensive Honors Orientation

Two years ago, we introduced a significant addition to the honors curriculum: a year-long, comprehensive honors orientation. Each component of the orientation is designed to help propel honors students in helpful directions through their first year. We have made some modifications to the orientation program over the past two years, based on feedback from the students. This past year we added a final piece: a one-credit course for sophomores during the fall semester.

Summer planning conferences. Honors programs are held during four of the eight summer planning conferences. I meet with parents at the end of the first day of the conference to describe my vision of The Honors College and answer their questions. I meet with the parents and the students at the end of the second day and give a short lecture and demonstration about systems theory and how it can be used to understand changes in families as children go to college and the formation of social systems in the honors residence halls.

August orientation. With the support of the Residential Life program, University Auxiliary Services, and Chartwells, the honors student move into the honors residence halls two days before most other first-year students arrive on campus. We have programs for the parents and students the day they arrive on campus and then programming for the students during the next two days. Students are divided into groups and each group is led by a Person of Extraordinary Talent (a POET) - a rising third-year honors student. Groups participate in a series of activities the second day designed to familiarize the students with the campus and get them to know each other better. The third day involves a series of campus tours to help students find the specific rooms where their classes meet and a series of bus tours of Albany. Commuting honors students are encouraged to join all the orientation events.

Using schedules. During the first two weeks of the semester, I meet with each floor of first-year students in honors housing and talk with them about using weekly schedules and flashcards to guarantee academic success. The goal of these talks is to encourage the students to understand how much time they need to spend studying each week and how to use their time efficiently.

Honors Education: Theory, Research, and Practice (TCPY 110). This one-credit course is offered to all first-year honors students during the fall semester. Each class session involves a short presentation (e.g., the Honors Librarian talked about library research, I talked about academic integrity issues) and most involve group presentations from students. The topics of the group presentations focus on issues academic freedom, the tenure system, and working effectively in small groups. The goals of the course include helping the students understand the history and current practices of the university, and providing them an opportunity each week to ask questions and raise issues that are of concern to them during the first half of their first semester.

Introduction to Honors Research (TCPY 111). This one-credit course is offered to all first-year students during the spring semester. The goals are to encourage the first-year students to begin thinking about their involvement in research and to demystify the process of writing a senior honors thesis. Each class session includes three honors seniors presenting their senior thesis. The presentations are included to help the first-year students understand the types of research that honors students complete, and to give our seniors an opportunity to create and present a research presentation.

Exploration of Pathways: Careers and Families (TCPY 112). This course is offered to second-year honors students during the fall semester and was offered for the first time last year. I, and then five pairs of speakers, talk about our life experiences - family and career. The goal is to help students understand the wide range of issues that influence lives and choices around careers and families. Last year, we had pairs of speakers who are employed in the areas of politics, medicine, business, social welfare, and religion and will have speakers in similar areas this year.

In the end-of-the-year survey, first-year students were asked to rate the value of each component of the comprehensive orientation program (N = 63).

	very good use of my time	good use of my time	reasonable use of my time	just barely a good use of my time	not a good use of time
Summer planning conference	15%	39%	14%	20%	12%
August orientation	27%	27%	30%	5%	11%
Fall semester course	9%	20%	27%	20%	24%
Spring semester course	17%	28%	30%	6%	19%

Research

I have continued to encourage our students to become involved in research or faculty-directed creative work by the beginning of their junior year. Information about this process is on our website (http://www.albany.edu/honorscollege/research_opportunities.shtml and http://www.albany.edu/honorscollege/college_four_year_plan.shtml). In addition, I invite all honors juniors to schedule an individual meeting with me early in the fall semester to review their coursework and discuss their research plans.

I continued my practice of sending the honors program director in each major a list of the juniors and seniors in his or her department/major, and a list of all the declared and intended majors who are sophomores or freshmen. I encourage the honors program directors to contact me if there were ways that I can facilitate effective interactions with their honors students.

In some majors - primarily in the humanities, most students find a research advisor during the first month or two of their fourth year. In other majors, most students become involved in a research lab during their third year. In the end-of-year survey, I asked all juniors about their experience finding a research advisor. The responses were:

Have not started looking for an advisor yet:	7 students
Found a research advisor easily:	17 students
Had some problems, but have a research advisor now:	1 student
Had significant problems, but have a research advisor now:	0 students
Have searched diligently, but still do not have an advisor:	1 student

Discussion and Directions for the Coming Year

I believe that the honors curriculum continues in good shape. We offer a wide range of courses and students have a choice of several courses to meet most of their general education requirements. With a few exceptions, there is overall satisfaction with the honors courses.

Most students find their honors courses more intense than their other courses and work more in them - but not to a degree that seems excessive overall. In conversations with honors students about their courses, I have learned that some who find their honors courses less challenging than their other courses are in other courses that, by their nature, are intense. For example, second-year pre-med honors students who are taking organic chemistry and physics may find that their introduction to psychology honors course is less intense than their pre-med courses.

Most students have more interactions with their professors in their honors courses than their other courses and report that these increased interactions carry over to outside the classroom (although to a lesser extent). The inclusion of a professor from one of their honors courses on the list of people on campus to whom the students feel comfortable turning for advice reinforces the idea that students are making important connections with their honors professors.

Based on the data shown above, I believe that the year-long, comprehensive honors orientation for our incoming freshmen was a significant enhancement to our curriculum. In addition to the information conveyed in each activity, the August orientation and the two one-credit courses brought most of the honors students together regularly as a group - something that did not happen during our first three years. In addition, all the events gave me more of an opportunity to interact with the students than I have had before. There was a more negative reaction to the first-semester course than to the other components of the orientation program. Part of this may be due to the struggles that some students had interacting with other members of their small groups on their assignments. Despite the negative reaction of a significant number of the students, I continue to believe that the course imparts important information (e.g., the discussions of academic integrity) and that working in small groups, although stressful for some students, will be useful to them if they need to do this again in future courses.

I was pleased to see that almost all of the juniors who have looked for a research advisor have found one easily. I will continue my practice of sending notes to the students at the end of their sophomore year, and then repeating these during their junior year, offering my help in locating a research advisor if they need it.

I continue to hope that the positive experiences of professors teaching honors courses will lead them to teach honors courses in the future and recommend to their colleagues that they consider teaching an honors course. As noted in the earlier section, I will continue efforts from past years to encourage professors to teach honors courses. I will look at the data from the first-year students at the end of this year to assess whether to modify the various components of the comprehensive orientation program. We will continue to assess honors courses the way that we did last year - I do not see a pressing need to change any of the assessment procedures and believe that they give us a good picture of the honors courses. As I do each year, I will continue to press those teaching honors courses to submit the needed paperwork to have their courses meet as many general education requirements as they can.

Honors Events Outside the Classroom

First-year and second-year honors students who want to be eligible for honors housing during future years are required to attend seven honors events each semester. This is based on the belief that if honors students want to be part of the honors residential community, they must be actively involved in the community. This year, we offered 37 honors events during the fall semester and 38 during the spring; an average of about 30 students attended each honors event. A complete list of all the honors events is available on our website: <http://www.albany.edu/honorscollege/9972.shtml>. Most honors events are held in Steinmetz Hall, one of the honors residence halls. This provides an appropriately informal environment for the events and makes it easy for many honors students to attend them.

Most of the honors events have an academic focus. For example, we had 21 honors lectures from UAlbany professors over the year, a lecture by the Head Coach of the UAlbany volleyball team, two events with the New York State Writers' Institute, tours of four exhibits at the University Museum, and six presentations of honors theses by graduating honors seniors.

We continued with several student-initiated events this year, including four open-mic nights (Florescent Expressions) where students performed music, poetry, and prose for each other, honors-student participation in the Heart Walk and the Relay for Life (two community fund-raising events) and our third annual Dinner/Dance(lessons) in April (a dinner followed by ballroom dancing lessons). At the encouragement of students last year, I added several "card nights" to our honors events this year. On several Fridays over the year, about 20 honors students gathered to play cards (gin, gin rummy, and canasta this year). The Honors Strings formed last year - six honors students playing the violin, viola, or cello. They performed for the honors students in March.

I continue particularly to enjoy interactions with students in my Steinmetz Hall apartment. As I have done in the past, this year I had a series of dessert receptions for the first-year students early in the fall, so that I could begin the process of getting to know them. As noted earlier, each semester I have a series of “4.0 dinners” in my apartment for students who achieved a 4.0 the previous semester (four or five students at each dinner).

As we did last year, we gave an honors-college T-shirt to all the students in the first-year class. The shirts include “The Honors College” or its nearest possible equivalent in a variety of languages on the back, including Mayan, American Sign Language, binary, Morse code and one of the aboriginal languages from Australia.

Discussion and Directions for the Coming Year

Based on the information provided above, I believe that our honors events were very successful this year. We had a wide range of events, including some that were purely social. Most weeks, there were three or four events for the students to attend. The events gave students opportunities to learn, socialize with each other, and feel a part of the honors community.

I plan to continue a similar lineup of events for the students this year. I will look for other opportunities to include student presentations to The Honors College (perhaps increasing the performances by The Honors Strings and looking for ways to form other musical groups with the honors students). This year, we are going to learn cribbage during the card nights.

Residential Life

Administrators and staff members in the Residential Life Program have been very supportive of The Honors College during our first five years. Their support has enhanced the honors experience for our students each year.

Honors housing was in four locations this year. Freshmen and sophomores had the option of living in two adjoining buildings on State Quad: Melville Hall and Steinmetz Hall (I live in a faculty apartment in Steinmetz Hall). Juniors and seniors were eligible to live on Empire Commons, in buildings reserved for honors students, or on a particular floor of one of the residence halls on Dutch Quad.

About 90% of the first-year students admitted as incoming students lived in honors housing this year. About 10 lived at home and commuted and a few opted to live on campus but not in honors housing. Most second-year honors students chose to live in Melville Hall this year - a much higher percentage than the second-year students the year before (the dining room on State Quad was closed for renovations that year). I was particularly pleased to see that almost all the rooms in Melville and Steinmetz Halls were filled with honors students this year - it is the first time in five years that this has happened.

Discussion and Directions for the Coming Year

Honors housing continues to be an important component of the honors experience for our students. Anecdotally, several honors sophomores who choose to live on Dutch or Colonial Quads report each year that the atmosphere in their residence halls is not nearly as “academic” as the atmosphere they experienced as a freshman in honors housing.

I continue to live in a faculty apartment in Steinmetz Hall, where our first-year students live. I enjoy being near the students and many of them come by my apartment to talk about various issues during the year. My living in Steinmetz Hall also facilitates our many evening events, as I can easily be there to host them.

Students who opt to live in honors housing during their first two years are more actively involved in the honors community and those who choose not to live in honors housing during their first year are likely to withdraw from The Honors College during or after their first year. These trends also point to the benefit of honors housing for building and maintaining the honors community. I believe that the increased percentage of sophomores who choose to remain in honors housing in Melville Hall indicates that more of our honors freshmen see the benefits of living in honors housing and are eager to stay with their other friends in The Honors College.

We will stay with the current honors housing plan this year and plan to continue it next year. One addition is that I will work with the Residential Life folks to identify ways of assigning honors students that are chosen to be Residence Assistants to the honors residence halls, as I believe that they will be particularly helpful to the incoming honors students each year.

Summary

Our fifth year marks the end of our initial development as an honors college. With the help of many, The Honors College has a stable curriculum that meets the varied needs of our students and a extensive series of educational and social events outside the classroom that create a strong sense of community among the honors students and professors. Our admissions procedures have produced a stable flow of incoming honors students and, even in our first two years, the percentage of our students who graduate from The Honors College exceeds the national average by a considerable amount. The honors students achieve at very high levels in the classroom and contribute their energy and leadership skills to many student groups - thereby enhancing the academic, service, and social atmospheres on the UAlbany campus for all students. Some of our graduates have gone on to top graduate and professional schools across the country - taking the UAlbany name with them. It has been a great five years.

Appendix 1: Honors Courses Taught in 2010/11

Fall 2010

Art of the Enlightenment in France and England	Art	Professor Cohen
Advanced General Chemistry	Chemistry	Professor Sugathapala
Comedy as a Dramatic Genre	English	Professor Brown
Women in Medieval France	French	Professor Winn
Public Policy in Modern America	History	Professor Bon Tempo
Getting to Know Albany	History	Professor Roberts
Honors Calculus II	Math	Professor Goldfarb
Deception and Self-Deception	Philosophy	Professor D'Cruz
Honors Physics I	Physics	Professor Lanford
Advanced Introduction to Psychology	Psychology	Professor Rosellini
Contemporary Immigration and the 2nd Generation	Sociology	Professor Chung
Community Change in a Globalizing World	Social Welfare	Professor Pyles
The Audacity of Hope and Education	Education	Professor Rogers
Understanding Design for the Performing Arts	Theatre	Professor Lyons

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Human Rights and Wrongs	Anthropology	Professor Burrell
Experiments in Visual Thinking	Art	Professor Robinson
Advanced General Chemistry II	Chemistry	Professor Sugathapala
Reading Shakespeare	English	Professor Rozette
India: Development Debates	Geog & Planning	Professor Bromley
Trials in US History	History	Professor Hamm
Strategic Sustainable Systems	Business	Professor Rich
Honors Calculus I	Math	Professor Plotnick
Honors Calculus III	Math	Professor Goldfarb
World Views: Utopias and Dystopias	Philosophy	Professor Powers
Introduction to Ethical Theory	Philosophy	Professor Cohon
Honors Physics II	Physics	Professor Ernst
Identities, Boundaries and Mobilization	Political Science	Professor Weiss
Violent Political Conflict	Political Science	Professor Asal
Emotional and Social Development	Psychology	Professor Halpern
Between Object and Image	CNSE	Professor Lifshin
The Road to Reform	Public Health	Professor Dewar

Appendix 2: Distribution of Honors Courses and General Education Requirements

Gen Ed Requirement	Fall 2007	Spring 2008	Fall 2008	Spring 2009	Fall 2009	Spring 2010	Fall 2010	Spring 2011
Arts (3 credits)	JRL 220 LLC 275 MUS 214	MUS 105	JRL 220 MUS 223		LLC 265 THR 235	MUS 214	ARH 252Z THR 120	ART 210 NSE 239
Humanities (3 credits)		ANT 197 CLA 250 ENG 144	FRE 210 PHI 210	ENG 226 HIS 226 PHI 238 PHI 212	ENG 226 LLC 265 LLC 275 PHI 116	ENG 226	ENG 226 FRE 201W	ENG 144 PHI 116 PHI 212 NSE 239
Natural Sciences (6 credits)	ENV 175 PHY 141	CHM 131 PHY 160 SPH 105	BIO 175 CHM 130 PHY 141	CHM 131 PHY 151	BIO 176 CHM 130 PHY 141	CHM 131 PHY 151	CHM 130 PHY 140	CHM 131 PHY 151
Social Sciences (6 credits)	GOG 230 PSY 102 PUB 140	ANT 197 SPH 105 CRJ 201	ANT 141 CRJ 201 POS 102 PSY 102	GOG 230 SOC 215	PSY 102 SSW 95	GLO 266 SOC 274	PSY 102 SOC 240Z SSW 295	ANT 141 POS 248Y NSE 239 SPH 250
US Historical (3 credits)				HIS 199 HIS 292 JRL 230	HIS 261	HIS 277 JRL 230	HIS 220Y	HIS 292
Europe (3 credits)	HIS 131 LLC 275	CLA 250	FRE 210	SOC 215	LLC 265 LLC 275	HIS 298	FRE 201W	
Regions Beyond Europe (3 credits)	GOG 230	JST 299		GOG 230 HIS 287		GLO 266 AAS 287		GLO 266Y POS 248Y
Global & Cross-cultural (3 credits)		SPH 105	HIS 158 POS 102		JST 265	GLO 266 SOC 274	SOC 240	ANT 141 GLO 266Y
US Diversity (3 credits)	ENG 240	SPE 260		HIS 199	SSW 295	FRE 281 SPE 260	SOC 240 SSW 295	
Information Literacy (1 course)	WSS 281 ACC 200 POS 250	WSS 260 CSI 116	EPS 220	PHI 238	CPY 110		CPY 110	
Oral Discourse (1 course)	POS 250 PUB 140	ENG 144			ENG 226 LLC275	DOC 294 GLO 266	FRE 201W HIS 220Y	BIO 222 GLO 266Y POS 248Y PSY 223
Lower-division Writing (1 course)	HIS 131 ACC 200 POS 230 PUB 140	ANT 197 ENG 202 PHY 160 WSS 260	COM 250 HIS 215	ANT 125 JRL 230	ENG 226 HIS 261 LLC 275 THR 121	ENG 226 HIS 298 JRL 230 POS 266 SOC 274	ARH 252Z FRE 201W HIS 226Z SOC 240Z	PSY 223
Mathematics & Statistics (1 semester)	MAT 118	CSI 116	MAT 118 MAT 214 PHI 210			MAT 118 MAT 214	MAT 118 MAT 218	

