INTRODUCED BY: Undergraduate Academic Council

DATE: November 20, 2003

FORMAL ELIMINATION OF

THE GENERAL EDUCATION HONORS PROGRAM

IT IS HEREBY PROPOSED THAT THE FOLLOWING BE ADOPTED:

1. That the General Education Honors Program, which has been defunct for several years but never formally voted out of existence, be eliminated.

2. That this change become effective immediately.

3. That the bill be referred to the President for approval.

RATIONALE:

The General Education Honors Program was approved by the University Senate in Spring 1988. From Fall 1988 until the last Honors Tutorial (T Jst 275, 6 students) was offered in Fall 2001, a total of 830 students enrolled in the program. At its peak, in the late 80's and early 90's, around 20-30 students a year graduated with "Honors in General Education" and another 10 or so students completed that program and honors in the major, graduating as "University Honors Scholars."

Initially, a full array of many "popular" courses, including courses required for many of the most commonly selected majors, were offered with the accompanying three-credit tutorials, mostly from Arts and Sciences but also from Political Science and, on occasion, the School of Education. A principal feature of the program was to lead freshman and sophomore students doing 3.5 or better work at the University to consider honors
programs in their majors.

In the mid-90's, departments were less and less forthcoming with courses for the program, offering students fewer choices, including several the average honors student might consider a bit "obscure." Only Political Science, Psychology, English and Africana Studies fairly consistently participated in the program, though History and Judaic Studies also remained common contributors.

Shortly thereafter, the U Uni "Great Ideas" courses were created, open only to Presidential Scholars. Although Presidential Scholars were never a majority of those who began or those who completed General Education Honors, "Great Ideas" siphoned off a significant enough number of additional students.

It became clear a "critical mass" of honors students (as defined by their work at the University) was no longer present to support the program, and it was agreed in Undergraduate Studies that references to the program should be dropped from the Undergraduate Bulletin.

The last full cohort of students who had the opportunity to complete the program graduated in Spring 2000; 28 students from that class had taken at least one tutorial, but only 7 completed the program, plus an additional three students who graduated in Summer 2000. Through the generosity of faculty willing to work one or two students in "individual tutorials" a few additional students who had already finished at least one of the tutorials the program were able to complete the program. The last student to complete "Honors in General Education" should have graduated in Spring 2002 (and did graduate in Fall 2002, after resolving an incomplete grade.)

The program being de facto defunct and there being no student left on campus with the program in progress, the Undergraduate Academic Council recommends that it be formally terminated. The Office of Undergraduate Studies will work to accommodate any subsequently readmitted student with the requisite average who withdrew from the University after having completed one or more of the tutorials.