

Report of the FAS Honors Task Force

Executive summary	i-iii
Proposal for a General Honors Program	1-8
Appendices	9
Appendix A: Summary of Honors Programs Other Than RU's	10-14
Appendix B: List of Faculty Resources Supporting Honors Programs in 2004-5	15

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Executive Summary of the Proposal for a General Honors Program (GHP)

In April, 2004, Dean Holly Smith convened an FAS Honors Task Force to consider ways to improve the “honors opportunities available to liberal arts undergraduates, both those in the college honors programs and those in FAS departmental honors offerings.” The committee submitted a preliminary proposal for a General Honors Program that was discussed at the December 15, 2004, meeting of the FAS; subsequent to that discussion, significant changes were made to the proposal.

Our aim throughout has been to introduce a program that will be stronger in every respect than our already excellent honors programs because we believe that having such a program is essential to fulfilling the undergraduate mission of a major research university. An honors program benefits both students and faculty by creating an interdisciplinary community of scholars, young and old, drawn together by their love of the life of the mind and sharing insights, ideas, and intellectual challenges in a variety of settings. Such programs allow large state research universities to compete with elite private colleges in attracting and keeping their region’s most talented students, and they provide those students with the opportunity for rich intellectual growth that not only nurtures their individual talents but improves the intellectual life of the university as a whole.

The creation of a single honors program would ensure that the full range of the University’s opportunities are available to all honors students and it would make easier the task of explaining to potential students and their families the extraordinary wealth of educational possibilities available at Rutgers. Equally important, it would facilitate an honors experience that provides a coherent progression of challenges and opportunities, seamlessly linking honors courses and activities in particular departments to honors courses and activities outside a student’s major or minor field of study. Because the program would help to attract and retain outstanding students and faculty, it would improve the experience of all students and it would benefit the scholarship of all faculty.

The New Brunswick community is now considering many structural issues regarding undergraduate education. The committee’s proposal is designed to create the best GHP regardless of the outcome of those comprehensive deliberations. In particular, our recommendations include two possibilities: one in which the Faculty, i.e., the FAS or some other newly created faculty body in New Brunswick, has the sole responsibility and authority for academic matters (e.g., admissions, graduation requirements and scholastic standing) for those students currently matriculated in one of the four liberal arts colleges (DC, LC, RC and UC); and one in which the four colleges maintain some significant responsibility and authority over academic matters. *In our set of proposals, provisions for improving the honors program within the second possibility are indicated in italics.*

Summary of the Proposals

The primary goals in developing these proposals are:

- a. to retain the benefits of the current programs;

- b. to communicate those benefits and the benefits of the new program transparently and effectively to prospective students;
- c. to increase the honors opportunities for students within departments and programs and to coordinate those opportunities with the GHP;
- d. to address existing discrepancies, ambiguities, and deficiencies in the current programs.

Summary of our comments, recommendations, and specific proposals:

1. There will be i) a dean or director of the GHP who reports to the Dean of the Faculty and ii) a standing Honors Program Committee (HPC) of the Faculty. *The colleges would have representatives on the HPC and they would retain the right to develop and maintain a college specific honors program within the GHP. In particular, they would retain the right to specify up to nine credits of the total number of credits required of all GHP students. (see 3 below)*
2. Upon the recommendation of the HPC, the Faculty will set common admissions criteria with both automatic and flexible components. *The colleges would retain the right to expand upon those criteria appropriate to their missions.*
3. Upon the recommendation of the HPC, the Faculty will specify the number of honors credits a student must obtain in order to graduate with general honors. They will include honors courses and sections of courses, “enhanced courses,” and a senior capstone experience. The HPC will also support the development of a variety of academic opportunities available only to honors students.
4. Co-curricular activities and small learning communities are major features of all successful honors programs. They must be retained and enhanced in the GHP. The key to building community in an honors program is the preservation and enhancement of the peer interaction. The range of these activities requires synergy between academic staff (located within the GHP administration and/or within the colleges) and their college/campus student and residential-life staff counterparts.
5. The faculty resources devoted to the new GHP in Arts and Sciences will be substantial, but to a first approximation will be similar to those currently devoted to the various existing programs.
6. The academic staff resources needed to develop and administer the co-curricular activities will be substantial. Approximately the equivalent of five (5) full academic staff lines and three (3) full secretarial lines are now devoted to the honors programs at the various colleges. These numbers must be maintained or, preferably, increased.
7. Students who satisfy the requirements of the GHP will graduate as “Honors Scholars” (or some such appellation). Students graduating with high GPA’s should be designated as “graduating cum laude,” etc.

8. Upon the recommendation of the HPC, the Faculty will establish criteria for remaining in good standing in the GHP.
9. Faculty members from the professional schools offering majors to liberal arts students should be involved in all aspects of the GHP.
10. Arrangements can be made with those professional schools in which students can matriculate without also being matriculated in one of the four liberal arts colleges for accommodating their students into the GHP.
11. All students in the GHP will automatically be eligible to take all *non-college* honors courses provided that they satisfy placement and prerequisite criteria developed by departments (for example in math, some of the sciences and language departments).
12. All students in the GHP will be awarded a merit based scholarship. *Colleges could “top off” those scholarships.*
13. Department responsibilities:
 - a. All departments and programs in the Faculty will contribute to the GHP. The contributions required of departments will be appropriate to the number of faculty in the department, average teaching load in the department (number of courses and number of students), number of majors and other criteria as determined by the Dean of the Faculty. *The Dean of the Faculty would ensure that departments and programs contribute faculty as instructors and/or mentors to the college honors offerings.*
 - b. All departments and programs in the Faculty that offer majors will develop an honors option within that major. A student completing the GHP does not necessarily have to complete a department honors option, and vice versa.
 - c. The supervision of a senior honors project in the GHP is primarily a departmental/program responsibility. Interdisciplinary projects should be approved and supervised by academically appropriate faculty groups. *The colleges would continue to facilitate interdisciplinary and/or mission specific senior projects. The Faculty Dean would ensure that departments and programs contribute to these projects.*
3. Students in the GHP should have some perks, e.g., optional special housing set aside for GHP students. (See the full report for a list of perks that should be considered by the HPC.)
4. The Dean/Director of the GHP will develop co-curricular activities and a faculty mentoring program for students in the GHP. *Colleges could expand upon those programs for their students.*
5. A GHP alumni association should be established.
6. The opportunity to teach departmental and interdisciplinary honors courses can be a recruiting tool for new faculty and can become part of a faculty retention package. *Should the college model remain in place, these opportunities would extend to participation in the college honors programs.*

Proposal for a General Honors Program

I. The Background and Context in which We Make this Proposal

In April, 2004, Dean Holly Smith convened an FAS Honors Task Force to consider ways to improve the “honors opportunities available to liberal arts undergraduates, both those in the college honors programs and those in FAS departmental honors offerings.” At about the same time that the FAS Honors Task force was convened, President McCormick established a task force to examine undergraduate education in New Brunswick that will make its recommendations at the end of the Spring semester. Those proposals include some that will, if enacted, create new faculty bodies with wide ranging academic responsibilities and/or redistribute some academic responsibilities among existing faculty bodies. Thus, any discussion of the honors program in New Brunswick must take cognizance of this more general discussion and develop proposals that will improve the honors program for students regardless of the outcome of those more general deliberations. Hence, our recommendations include two possibilities: one in which the FAS or some other newly created faculty body in New Brunswick has the responsibility and authority for academic matters (e.g., admissions, graduation requirements and scholastic standing) for those students currently matriculated in one of the four liberal arts colleges (DC, LC, RC and UC); and one in which the four colleges maintain some significant responsibility and authority over academic matters. *In our set of proposals, provisions for improving the honors program within the second possibility are indicated in italics.*

The FAS Honors Task Force had one organizational meeting in May, 2004. It has been meeting regularly throughout the 2004-05 academic year. The committee submitted a preliminary proposal for a General Honors Program to the FAS which was discussed at the December 15, 2004, meeting of the FAS. Subsequently and in light of that discussion, significant revisions to the proposal have been made. What we submit now is a final set of recommendations to be submitted to the Faculty for its consideration.

The Committee began its deliberations by examining the honors programs at the four liberal arts colleges in New Brunswick as well as the honors programs at the University of Michigan, the University of North Carolina, the University of Maryland, Penn State, and Michigan State. (See Appendix A.) The variation within the programs in New Brunswick matched the variation among the programs at the five other universities in virtually all respects. For example, some, but only some, had automatic admissions criteria; some, but only some, had sets of requirements beyond a GPA for remaining in good standing in the program and graduating with general honors, and some, but only some, were “opportunities” programs in which students in the honors programs were eligible to participate in courses or extra-curricular activities but they were not required to participate.

In every honors program at other universities that we examined there was a clearly formulated set of admissions criteria for all students, a clearly formulated set of programmatic requirements or opportunities for all students, a clearly formulated set of criteria for remaining in good standing in the program and graduating with general honors for all students, a clearly formulated set of

co-curricular activities for all students in the honors program, and a clearly formulated and extensive faculty mentoring program for all students in the honors program. All of those features of the honors programs were transparently displayed in brochures and websites for potential students (and their parents) and for students who had already matriculated who wished to join the honors programs. In every case, there was a dean or director of the general honors program and a faculty body that had overall responsibility and authority for all aspects of the general honors program. The programs were organized and presented so as to be attractive to the most academically accomplished students.

Many of the ingredients for developing an outstanding honors program for undergraduate liberal arts students are already in place in New Brunswick. The liberal arts colleges have dedicated significant resources to the honors programs and some have good mentoring programs and/or well-established connections with some departments which regularly provide instructors for the honors programs. The four colleges and the FAS regularly teach about eighty-five (85) honors courses/sections per year. Some faculty members have contributed regularly to the college honors programs, and some faculty/college fellows have been committed to the college-based honors programs. In this connection, it must be noted that some faculty members of the professional schools (most notably from SCILS, GSE and MGSA) have participated extensively in some of the college honors programs. Without their participation, it is possible that those college programs would not have survived.

Nevertheless, in contrast to those programs at other universities, the array of honors programs in New Brunswick is haphazard and confusing, and, consequently, we are putting ourselves at a competitive disadvantage because it is impossible for prospective honors students to discern the advantages of enrolling in our honors programs. Rutgers College has an “opportunities” program with no required courses; Livingston College requires forty-one (41) honors credits; Douglass and University College require three seminar courses and a senior thesis or other senior project. The application and admissions process varies from college to college. There is no clear relationship between the college honors programs, the honors courses and programs offered by FAS departments or programs, and the college-based senior theses programs (e.g, the Henry Rutgers thesis at Rutgers College). In addition, some students enroll in a college-based thesis project and a departmental-based thesis project and receive up to twelve (12) credits while others do comparable work through one program and receive only six (6) credits. Finally, colleges find it increasingly difficult to staff honors courses for their students because of the lack of teaching resources available to them.

II. Rationale for a General Honors Program at Rutgers University

A university honors program benefits both students and faculty. For faculty, it offers the chance to teach small classes of the brightest and most motivated students, to experiment with new and interdisciplinary material, to mentor talented young minds interested in the faculty member’s field of specialization, and to discuss current scholarship and engage students in ongoing research projects. For honors students, honors courses provide the opportunity for intensive interaction with faculty, the opportunity to investigate challenging course material, the opportunity to explore and/or take part in cutting edge research, and the opportunity to work with other honors students. Capstone experiences, such as honors theses, advanced laboratory research, and internships give honors

students an opportunity to design and carry out a research project of their own or provide exposure to graduate-level training or professional experience, drawing on and pulling together four years of honors education and creating a bridge to post-college life. In addition to a more extensive and intensive curriculum, an honors program provides continuous mentoring from faculty advisors, workshops offering guidance on applications for fellowships and grants, and enriched extracurricular opportunities – ranging from informal get-togethers to special lectures, lunches with visiting luminaries, visits to labs, and trips to concerts, art exhibits, rare films, and other cultural events.

What emerges is an interdisciplinary community of scholars, old and young, drawn together by their love of the life of the mind and sharing insights, ideas, and intellectual challenges in a variety of settings. Such programs allow large state research universities to compete with elite private colleges in attracting and keeping their region's most talented students, and they provide those students with the opportunity for rich intellectual growth that not only nurtures their individual talents but improves the intellectual life of the university as a whole.

The creation of a single honors program at Rutgers would ensure that the full range of the University's opportunities are available to all honors students and it would make easier the task of explaining to potential students and their families the extraordinary wealth of educational possibilities available at Rutgers. Equally important, it would facilitate an honors experience that provides a coherent progression of challenges and opportunities, seamlessly linking honors courses and activities in particular departments to honors courses and activities outside a student's major or minor field of study. Because the students and faculty involved in the honors program would be fully integrated into the larger university community, the vitality and excitement generated by the program and the extraordinary students and faculty that the program helps to attract and retain would improve the experience of all students and would benefit the scholarship of all faculty, whether or not they participate directly in the honors program.

III. The Proposals

The specific proposals that follow are designed to provide for a general honors program (GHP) for all students who matriculate in either the current liberal arts colleges or whatever liberal arts and pre-professional college structure replaces the current one. By "the Faculty" we refer either to the FAS faculty or to a new faculty body that might result from recommendations of the President's task force that would be composed of the FAS faculty plus faculty members from the professional colleges/schools that offer majors for undergraduate students currently matriculated in the liberal arts colleges. *By "college model" we refer to an academic governance structure in which the four liberal arts colleges (DC, LC, RC and UC) retain significant authority and responsibility (within general University rules and policies) for academic matters concerning students matriculated in their colleges.*

The committee's primary goals in developing these proposals are:

- a. to recognize and retain the benefits that students gain from current honors offerings, including an intellectually challenging environment, vital and regular peer group

interaction, intensive faculty-student interaction, and the opportunity for independent scholarly and creative activity;

- b. to communicate those benefits transparently and effectively to prospective students so that the Honors Program more effectively attracts the most promising students to the University;
- c. to increase the honors opportunities for students within departments and programs, and to coordinate those opportunities with the GHP;
- d. to address existing discrepancies, ambiguities, and deficiencies through recommendations that will provide greater clarity regarding the substance of the Honors Program, greater consistency regarding admissions criteria, requirements, benefits, etc., and greater availability of Honors opportunities to all eligible students through more coordinated oversight and the appropriate level of resources.

The committee makes the following specific proposals *in which provisions for improving the honors program within the college model are indicated in italics*:

1. There will be one, common undergraduate general honors program with a dean or director who will i) report to the Faculty Dean and 2) administer the GHP under guidelines established by Faculty. There will be a standing Honors Program Committee (HPC) of the Faculty that will work with the General Honors Program Dean/Director to implement the guidelines established by the Faculty. *Should the college model remain in place, each of the colleges would retain the right to develop and maintain a college specific honors program within the GHP as described subsequently. In addition, the HPC would include faculty representatives from the colleges and each college would retain the right to designate up to nine credits required of all general honors students for mission specific honors work.*

2. Upon the recommendation of the HPC, the Faculty will set common admissions criteria to the single GHP, and students will be admitted into the GHP. Those criteria will have two components: an automatic admit component and one that is designed to promote diversity by recognizing talent in ways that might not be revealed by the automatic admit criteria. The Faculty will set the general guidelines for each component, and the HPC and the Dean/Director of the GHP will oversee the implementation of those guidelines. *Should the college model remain in place, in addition to those students admitted through the common admissions criteria, the colleges would retain the right to develop and implement admissions criteria appropriate to their missions. Periodic reviews of those criteria will be conducted by the HPC and the results will be discussed with the colleges.*

- a. First year students will be admitted according to both the automatic admission criteria and the diversity criteria described above.
- b. Students beginning their college career in one of the liberal arts colleges or whatever college structure replaces the current one who did not join the GHP upon matriculation

will be eligible to join the GHP after completion of a specified number of credits at Rutgers-NB generally after the first year. These students will be evaluated according to criteria established by the HPC *or the Colleges as the case may be*.

- c. Transfer students should be admitted to the program for the first available Fall semester after the completion of 15 credits in RU-NB as long as they have at least 45 credits still required to be completed for graduation. Admission criteria for transfer students shall be established by the HPC *or the Colleges as appropriate*.

3. Upon the recommendation of the HPC, the Faculty will specify the number of honors credits a student must obtain in order to graduate with general honors. (In other words, the committee recommends a “requirements” model rather than an “opportunities” model.) Those requirements will include some form of a capstone project in the senior year. The capstone experience will be a six (6) credit thesis or other significant, independent scholarly and/or creative accomplishment. For example, suppose that the total number of required credits is eighteen (18). The remaining twelve (12) credits could be obtained in a variety of ways: by taking honors courses developed by departments/programs and approved by the HPC under guidelines adopted by the Faculty; *by taking honors courses developed by the colleges*; by taking designated advanced courses approved by the department, HPC and/or the Dean/Director of the GHP; by taking a course that has not been designed as an honors course but in which the instructor has agreed to award “honors credit” to the student upon the successful completion of additional work for the course. Arrangements for “enhancing” a non-honors course require approval of the department, HPC and/or the Dean/Director of the GHP. The HPC will also support the development of, and seek approval from the Faculty for, other academic opportunities that will be available only to general honors students. For instance, honors minors (such as one in intellectual history) could be developed for GHP students who complete an interdisciplinary set of honors courses in addition to those required to graduate with general honors. *Should the college model remain in place and should an FAS college require a minor for graduation (in addition to a major), an honors minor would satisfy that requirement.*

4. Co-curricular activities and small learning communities are major features of all successful honors programs, and current Rutgers-New Brunswick college honors students consider them to be of the utmost importance in their overall honors experience. It is critical, whether or not the college honors programs continue to exist in their present form, that (a) the kind and variety of co-curricular experiences and opportunities presently available be maintained and enhanced, and (b) the personnel overseeing those co-curricular activities be academic staff, who report to an academic officer of the university -- the Dean of the GHP *or, in the alternative college model, the Deans or Associate Academic Deans of the Colleges*.

It is imperative, in honors learning communities, that academic and co-curricular activities remain inseparable. Again, whether or not the present college honors model is retained, the community-building that presently occurs within the college honors programs and which is vitally tied to the academic content of honors coursework and research must be preserved and enhanced. The key to building community in an honors program is the preservation and enhancement of the peer interaction that provides the bulk of a student's day-to-day college experience.

Co-curricular activities and opportunities that have been highly valued by honors students and need to be maintained include: special honors student housing; field trips to museums, plays and operas; film screenings; visits to labs; outdoor gatherings (picnics, etc.); honors thesis and research colloquia, and the receptions and dinners tied to them; informal meals (pizza parties, etc.); social get-togethers located within honors student residence halls; information sessions on scholarships and other opportunities; Deans' receptions for new and/or continuing honors students; special summer orientations devoted to honors students; summer reading programs; special receptions, dinners, or chats introducing honors students to invited university speakers; faculty mentors (who are not necessarily a given student's thesis director); and peer mentors. Indeed, the range of these activities requires vital synergy between academic staff (located within the GHP administration and/or within the colleges) and their college/campus student and residential-life staff counterparts.

5. The faculty resources devoted to the new GHP in Arts and Sciences will be substantial, but to a first approximation will be similar to those currently devoted to the various existing programs. (See Appendix C.) The primary costs in these academic areas are for honors courses, for the types of independent study or honors add-on arrangements to existing courses that are described elsewhere in this document, and for the supervision of honors theses or research projects. The four colleges and FAS together are currently offering approximately 85 general honors courses or seminars per year. Although section sizes typically vary between roughly 15 and 25, if we take 20 as a typical size, then we are providing 1700 seats in such honors sections annually. If the typical honors student were to take 12 credits of course work in such courses as a part of the program, for instance distributed as two courses per year over the first and second years, then the current number of seats would accommodate 425 first year students and 425 second year students each registering in two courses. These numbers represent about 8% of the Arts and Sciences student body, an appropriate percentage for the honors program that the committee envisions. We will need to provide a greater variety of courses as well as honors add-ons to regular courses, but the additional costs compared to the current ones should be affordable (given that there are no drastic cuts to the University budget). In the current academic year there are 185 seniors engaged in writing honors theses or participating in honors research projects. We would expect that number to increase as the honors program is strengthened, but the variety of such capstone requirements that are envisioned should, along with a modest increase in faculty involvement in these honors projects, be sufficient to provide the level of support to seniors that we require.

6. The academic staff resources needed to develop and administer the co-curricular activities will be substantial. Approximately the equivalent of five (5) full academic staff lines and three (3) full secretarial lines are now devoted to the honors programs at the various colleges. Given the estimated size of the General Honors Program these numbers must be maintained or, preferably, increased.

7. At present, students graduating with a sufficiently high GPA receive their degrees with the designation placed on their diplomas "with honors," "with high honors," or "with highest honors." This creates unnecessary confusion with regard to the Honors Programs. To avoid this confusion, students graduating with the appropriate GPA should instead receive the distinctions "cum laude,"

“magna cum laude,” or “summa cum laude,” while students successfully completing the general honors program will receive the designation “Honors Scholar” (or some other suitable designation).

8. Upon the recommendation of the HPC, the Faculty will set the guidelines for a student remaining in good standing in the GHP. These guidelines may require a suitable distribution of GHP credits throughout a student’s academic career.

9. Faculty members from the professional schools offering majors to liberal arts students should be involved in all aspects of the GHP. In particular they should be voting members of the HPC and voting members of the Faculty on matters related to the GHP.

10. If the professional colleges/schools in which students can currently matriculate without also being matriculated in one of the four colleges (i.e., Mason Gross, Pharmacy, Engineering and Cook) propose that their students be eligible to take courses in the GHP, the HPC will review those proposals and forward their recommendations to the Faculty. The Dean/Director for the GHP will make suitable financial arrangements with the professional colleges/schools.

11. All students in the GHP will automatically be eligible to take all *non-college* honors courses, provided that the students satisfy placement and prerequisite criteria developed by departments (for example in math, some of the sciences and language departments).

12. All students in the GHP will be awarded a merit based scholarship. In addition, all GHP students, plus other students doing senior honors theses, should have access to a general fund administered by the Dean/Director of the GHP that provides support for research expenses. *Should the college model remain in place, colleges would retain the right to provide additional scholarships to their students. While certain funds may be restricted to students matriculated in a given college, all GHP students should have access to scholarships under guidelines established by the HPC.*

13. With regard to department/program responsibilities to the GHP:

- a. All departments in the Faculty will contribute to the GHP either by developing honors courses or honors sections of courses or agreeing to enhance courses for honors credits. In addition, departments in the Faculty will contribute faculty to interdisciplinary courses approved by the HPC. Finally, all departments will contribute faculty mentors to the GHP. The contributions required of departments will be appropriate to the number of faculty in the department, average teaching load in the department (number of courses and number of students), number of majors and other criteria as determined by the Dean of the Faculty. *Should the college model remain in place, the Dean of the Faculty would ensure that departments and programs contribute faculty as instructors and/or mentors to the college honors offerings.*
- b. All departments and programs in the Faculty that offer majors will develop an honors option within that major that includes courses, or enhanced courses, or independent studies, or designated advanced undergraduate courses or graduate courses, or capstone

courses or other senior projects, or other honors offerings appropriate to the discipline. Those options will be approved by the Faculty upon the recommendation of the HPC. A student completing the GHP does not necessarily have to complete a departmental honors option, and vice versa.

- c. The supervision of a senior honors project in the GHP is primarily a departmental/program responsibility. Interdisciplinary projects should be approved and supervised by academically appropriate faculty groups. *Should the college model remain in place, the liberal arts colleges would continue to facilitate interdisciplinary and/or mission specific senior projects. The Faculty Dean would ensure that departments and programs contribute to these projects.*

14. Students enrolled in the GHP should have additional opportunities. Those offered by peer institutions are: i) eligibility for enrolling in honors courses and programs developed by departments upon satisfaction of departmental prerequisites; ii) optional special housing set aside for honors students; iii) study rooms on each campus; iv) faculty mentoring beginning with a summer program and continuing throughout the student's undergraduate career; v) automatic admission to special academic programs such as the study abroad program or various internship programs on the condition that the student satisfies the departmental/program or college prerequisites; vi) automatic acceptance into schools or colleges that have a separate admissions process for students already matriculated in the liberal arts colleges provided that the minimum requirements for admission have been satisfied. (This last "perk" will have to be negotiated with the professional faculties.) *Should the college model remain in place, the colleges would retain the right to initiate and maintain special programs and opportunities for their students.*

15. The Dean/Director of the GHP will develop co-curricular activities and faculty mentoring programs for all students in the GHP including programs that help all students obtain graduate fellowships such as the Rhodes, Fulbright and Truman fellowships. *Should the college model remain in place, the colleges would retain the right to augment those co-curricular and faculty mentoring programs for the students matriculated in their colleges.*

16. A GHP alumni association should be established.

17. The opportunity to teach departmental and interdisciplinary honors courses can be a recruiting tool for new faculty and can become part of a faculty retention package. *Should the college model remain in place, these opportunities would extend to participation in the college honors programs.*

Appendices

Appendix A: Summaries of Honors Programs Other Than RU's

Michigan State University

College? Yes. Founded in 1956; did not admit first year students until 1970.

Rel. to dept. courses: Virtually all departments have honors courses at 100-200 level and most have honors track with senior thesis.

Criteria for 1st year admissions: Top 5% of class, SAT's of 1360, plus some flexibility (screening by faculty/staff of applicants who come close to the automatic admit parameters).

Admissions beyond 1st year: First year admits: GPA of 3.5, < 30 credits. For transfers: 3.5, after one semester (not clear how many credits to be taken at MSU, but see requirement 3 below).

Requirements:

1. Establish a cumulative grade point average of at least 3.2 during the freshman year and maintain a GPA of at least 3.2 until graduation;
2. Submit a properly approved Academic Progress Plan annually;
3. Pursue an enriched program of study including at least 8 honors-caliber courses;
4. Some departmental honors programs require a thesis – but this is not a requirement of the honors program, per se.

Perks: First year research experiences, Special housing options, flexibility in satisfying Gen. Ed. requirements, easier access to grad. courses; and “Honors College members are allowed to enroll for classes on the first day of each enrollment period, before most other students. This privilege allows Honors students easy access to all courses, even those which are in high demand and normally fill up quickly,”

of staff: 16 mostly for advising and co-curricular activities.

Comments: Very good webpage with co-curricular events for the year. Intensive advising with some emphasis on post baccalaureate scholarships. Alumnae/i Association with newsletter, “College” used somewhat loosely -- it is a ‘distributed’ college. VERY clear information on the web for prospective students; many scholarships including automatic ones if admitted to the “college.” Examples: “The Honors College National Scholarship (HCNS) is a four-year scholarship of \$5000 per year awarded to non-resident students” and “Each year approximately 100 incoming freshmen are awarded Professorial Assistantships (PAs), allowing them to begin to work immediately with a faculty member on research or other scholarly activities. . . Assistants whose first-year performance is satisfactory are reappointed for a second year.”

U. of Michigan

College? No. There are two kinds of programs. A regular one and a new, more intensive one for “liberal arts” students (see below).

Rel. to dept. courses: Virtually all departments have 100-200 level honors courses. About ½ of all courses taken in first 2 years by honors students are these courses. Regular courses can be “converted” to honors courses with agreement of prof. and HP. Most departments have senior thesis required for departmental honors. Not quite clear if honors in department required for general honors.

Criteria for 1st year admissions: No automatic admit (but damn close to it!). SAT median range 1370-1480, median GPA 3.8-4.0. Students are “invited” to join after general admissions.

Admissions beyond 1st year: Not mentioned.

Requirements:

1. Eight honors courses in first two years including first year, fall term: Classical Civ. 101 (honors section), or Great Books 191 (any section – all for honors students) and first year, winter term: Classical Civ. 102 (honors section) or Great Books 192 (any section) or approved honors course.
2. GPA of 3.2
3. For the more intensive “Honors in the Liberal Arts”
 1. The requirements listed above.
 2. 15 credits of courses approved by the HP at the upper level—automatically approved if the course could be used for MA or PH.D. credit (so some 400 level courses count).
 3. 3.4 GPA
 4. Portfolio of work approved by HP faculty committee.

Perks: special housing options (72% of first year students chose it, 20% of second year students chose it); does not mention priority enrollment, “lunch with honors” program with visiting scholars and weekly faculty/student lunches.

of staff: 9 plus departmental special advisors

Comments: Intensive advising beginning with summer orientation program; 1st-2nd year students can participate in University Research Opportunity Program, emphasis on post baccalaureate fellowships.

University of North Carolina

College? No. Flavor of the program:

Like Honors programs you'll find at other universities, we offer special Honors seminars and Honors sections of many undergraduate courses — about 120 Honors courses each year, in fact, drawn from more than thirty areas of study. We also offer the opportunity to write a senior Honors thesis in any undergraduate major. The Carolina difference begins with what you won't find as a part of our Honors experience. You won't find Honors students living in special dorms. You won't find Honors students taking a separate curriculum to which other students do not have access. You won't find a small cohort of Honors students who feel that they are the only students into ideas.

What you will find is an Honors Program that spearheads a university-wide commitment to providing as stimulating and enriching an academic environment as you can find on any college campus in America.

Rel. to dept. courses: about 120 general honors courses offered by departments annually.

Criteria for 1st year admissions: no fixed parameters, but they (go out of their way) to mention (several times) that UNC is VERY selective. They have 18,000 applicants each year for 3,500 spots. About 200 (6%) join the HP.

Admissions beyond 1st year: Up to the end of the 3rd semester.

Requirements: I didn't see any listed, not even a GPA. (Might be there and I missed it!)

Perks: Priority enrollment in honors courses, but not generally. The honors courses are open to any student with a GPA \geq 3.0. No special housing.

Honors courses and seminars emphasize student participation and writing. They are for students who embrace the chance to work hard, read more, take risks, defend a belief, and challenge received wisdom. You don't get extra credit, more quality points, or an easy A by taking Honors courses. You just get the most challenging and enriching educational experience you can find anywhere

of staff: Associate Dean for Honors, plus 4, plus a committee of faculty advisors. The associate dean also serves as the director of the James M. Johnston Center for Undergraduate Excellence. Staff are located in the Johnston Center.

Comments: emphasis on close relationships with faculty and on advising; an “opportunities” program like RC's.

Penn State

College? Yes, Schreyer Honors College (SHC). Students have “simultaneous” membership in SHC and other “academic colleges” (“colleges” means in this context academic units like Cook, MGSA, Engineering, and not what we mean by “colleges” when using that term to refer to DC, LC, RC and UC). There is a separate admissions application for SHC.

Rel. to dept. courses: There are about 200 general honors courses per year.

Criteria for 1st year admissions: No automatic admit. “Excellent SAT’s and GPA” plus a “strong motivation” for joining the program. Apparently a F/S committee reviews the applications to SHC.

Admissions beyond 1st year: Here’s what they say:

Rising juniors with excellent records and the nomination of their major programs are also invited to join by application through their academic major department.

Requirements:

1. To remain in the Honors College, students must take at least three honors courses per year, file annual plans of study, and maintain a grade-point average of 3.33 each semester.
2. All 1st year students must take an honors composition course taught by the English Department.
3. All students must do a senior thesis.

Perks: The honors courses typically satisfy Gen. Ed. Requirements; priority in enrolling in all courses, special housing is optional; honors courses are smaller (“usually between 15-25”), can convert non-honors courses to honors course, 400 level courses count as honors courses for 1st and 2nd year students, courses that can be used for graduate credit can be used by 3rd and 4th year students. Dinners with visiting scholars, funds available for research internships and study abroad.

of staff: Dean, Ass’t Dean plus 2 staff and faculty advisory committee.

Comments: Alumnae/i organization

U of Maryland

College? No.

Rel. to dept. courses: Most departments seem to have honors courses/sections of 100 and some 200 level courses.

criteria for 1st year admissions: no fixed criteria. Application to the HP is part of the regular admissions process with a special section for those applying. About 14% of incoming class in the HP. Last year 425 first year students.

GPA			SAT's				
4.0	221	3.5 26	3.0	2	1500-1600	27	
3.9	50	3.4	4		1400-1490	110	
3.8	72	3.3	3		1300-1390	234	444? (Doesn't add up!)
3.7	42	3.2	4		1200-1290	70	
3.6	20	3.1	0		1100-1190	3	
					Below 1100	0	

admissions beyond 1st year: GPA ≥ 3.4 ; completed 2 honors courses with B or better; transfer students can be admitted at time of admissions.

Requirements: First year: 12 credits in HP courses including an “interdisciplinary honors colloquium” and capstone course requirement in senior year. (I did not see a GPA requirement, but see below.) *First year students are required to live in honors housing (in which about 60-65% of residents will be HP students).*

Perks: all honors courses open to students with 3.0 GPA, but HP students get priority, private music instruction (about $\frac{1}{2}$ of entering class “will indicate proficiency in vocal or instrumental music”); residence ed programs linked to honors courses.

of staff: Couldn't determine from the webpage

Comments: Summer orientation for honors students. First year students are assigned an Honors faculty advisor from their major department or an Honors professional staff member if no major is declared. Some scholarships (but apparently not many) for HP students.

Appendix B: List of Faculty Resources Supporting Honors Programs in 2004-5

Seniors registered for Honors Thesis or Research

Department	Students	College Thesis	Students
Anthro	3	Henry Rutgers	108
Art Hist	4	Mabel Smith Douglass	22
Asian	2	DC General	26
Chem	5	Robeson	5
Comp Lit	1	LC General	21
Comp Sci	6	UC	3
Econ	1		
English	11	Total	185
French	5		
Geo Sci	0		
Geog	1		
German	5		
History	6		
IWL	14		
Jewish Std	1		
Life Sci	8		
Physics	2		
Poli Sci	5		
Psych	14		
PuertoRHCS	1		
Religion	4		
Soc	10		
Spanish	1		
WGS	2		
Totals	112		

The first two lists (Departmental and College) are for the most part mutually exclusive, so the total number of students in Departmental or College Honors Thesis or Honors Research Projects is approximately 297

Honors Seminars/Courses

RC	19
LC	4
UC	4
DC	11
FAS	47
Total	85