



09/21/12

Educational Support and Administrative Review

[University Honors Program]

1. Overview of Department

1.1 *The Honors Program is a distinguished degree option for outstanding students at UNA. The program is open primarily to entering first year students; second year and transfer students may be admitted on a case-by-case basis. The deadline for application for first year students is December 1 (December 3rd for 2013). Transfer and current students should contact the Honors Program. Admission is selective. The Honors Program is open to students in all majors and colleges. The Honors Program curriculum consists of 27 credit hours of honors coursework, co-curricular and extra-curricular activities, a civic engagement component, and a Capstone Project. There are no additional credit hours beyond the hours required for a typical degree. Honors courses replace required courses in the university curriculum and in individual majors. To remain in the Honors Program students must maintain a 3.25 GPA, adhere to university policies, participate in program activities, and make satisfactory progress toward completion of the academic requirements. Students who complete the program graduate with the distinction “University Honors.”*

The Honors Program operates with a budget of approximately \$111,321. This figure includes the total salary and benefit package of the Administrative Assistant position that also supports the Writing Center and Learning Communities. The Honors Program also oversees a scholarship budget of \$215,000 that includes

responsibility for awarding UNA's Housing scholarship program.

1.2 Mission statement for the department/area

The mission of the Honors Program is to create a supportive campus community of the best students and to offer an educational experience that is challenging as well as enjoyable.

1.3 Goals and objectives of the department/area

Long Term Goals

- 1. Increase diversity in the Honors Program*
- 2. Recruit a critical mass of 300 elite students to UNA and the Honors Program*
- 3. Retain a percentage of students over five years comparable to national averages*
- 4. Move to Honors College status*

Annual Goals

- 1. Develop the citizenship and service capacities of Honors Program students*
- 2. Develop the leadership capacities of Honors Program students*
- 3. Develop the global perspectives of Honors Students*

4. *Develop the high order communication skills of Honors Program students*
5. *Develop the digital literacies of Honors Program students*
6. *Emphasize the QEP – Research Literacy*

1.4 Governance structure of the department/area

In its current configuration, the Honors Program staff consists of a half time Faculty Director. In this position, the Director reports to AVPAA. Honors Program staff also includes a .33 FTE Administrative Assistant.

1.5 Brief description of the national status of the department/area (including emerging issues and trends).

Honors education in the U.S. dates back to the creation of Swarthmore's Honors Program in 1922. Virtually all colleges and universities have an Honors component in some form, though not always a comprehensive residential component. Honors education frequently runs parallel to but separate from the honors and awards granted by the college or university at commencement. In 2005, somewhat later than most of UNA's peers, the University Honors Program at UNA was created as a comprehensive university-wide academic and has to date graduated four classes. The University Honors Program generally incorporates individual academic department's honors course and sequences.

In their academic credentials, students in the Honors Program generally equal or surpass honors students in similarly configured programs at peer institutions. Honors Program students regularly have their work accepted for presentation at the National Collegiate Honors Council Conference and other student research conferences.

2. Department/Area Evaluation

2.1 Description of the means of assessment of department/area goals.

The primary assessment is through completion of the curriculum of Honors coursework, (Y/N rubric) including Honors Contract courses and the Honors Capstone Project. Additionally, student participation in Honors co-curricular and extracurricular programming that meet Program goals is self-reported in assessment documents every semester and compiled annually. Honors students also complete surveys (3 point Likert scale) each year, the data from which enables additional assessment of progress toward Program goals.

2.2 Summary of the results of the assessment/s

The Honors Program is making strides in each area. Honors students are disproportionately (+) represented in annual awards and in leadership positions. Honors students are disproportionately (+) represented in study abroad. Students continue to report they are satisfied with the level of support, emphasis and encouragement toward all Program goals. The Honors Program continues to attract a strong entering class each year with levels of diversity commensurate with that challenge at a regional university with limited scholarship support.

2.3 Recent improvements based on the results of the assessments

Added:

- *digital component to Honors contract requirements*
- *public presentation component to Honors contract*
- *digital component to Honors Capstone requirement*
- *public presentation component to Honors Capstone*
- *increased communication efforts with respect to goals via email and social media*
- *new Honors social media presence*
- *updated Honors web site*
- *creation of Honors 301 Global Issues Forum*
- *digital presentation component to Honors 101 and 201 forum courses.*

2.4 Appropriate documentation to support the assessment of departmental/area goals

Some data is submitted as a part of annual reports and can be accessed through this page:

<http://www.una.edu/research/institutional-effectiveness.html>

Other data pertaining to the academic progress of UNA Honors Program students, because of its sensitive nature, is maintained by the Honors Program and can be viewed at any time by contacting the Honors Program office at (256) 765-5057 or mmarthaler@una.edu

2.5 Brief analysis of those areas in need of improvement and an action plan for improvement in these areas

1. *Recruitment and retention of male students*
A proposed Pre-Engineering program co-sponsored by the Honors Program may assist in this effort.

2. *Develop new mechanisms for making progress toward Goals #2 (Leadership), #3 (Global Perspectives), and #5 (Digital Literacies) to include methods of assessing that progress.*

- *Goal #2 – Provide more information about leadership opportunities in regular Program communications*
- *Goal #3 – Develop closer partnership with the Office of International Programs*
- *Goal #5 – Bring speakers from tech fields to address Program gatherings & provide more information about tech careers in regular Program communications*

3. Facilities and Resources that address the adequacy of resources and support services to support the goals and objectives of the department/area

3.1 Equipment

Currently, the Program has mostly adequate resources in the area of office equipment, copier, fax, printers, computers, and furniture. Much of the furniture in common areas of the Honors Program building was purchased with Honors Program budget rather than funds from the Department of Housing, even though the Honors budget has no corresponding line item for that purpose.

3.2 Space

The overall square footage of office space designated for Honors Program use is sufficient with the current staff configuration but inadequate to accommodate new staff and student interns/workers. The overall facility is aging and to a significant degree antiquated in the residential areas on the upper floors.

Needed:

- *Replacement facility with 60+ beds and suite style residence to keep pace with the demands of recruiting elite students*
- *Improved landscaping around existing facility*

3.3 Staff

To grow the Program and accommodate already existing needs, the Program needs the support of a full time administrative support position.

Needed:

- *additional staff/Assistant Director*
- *and/or full time Administrative Assistant*

3.4 Other

- *Needed: additional operating budget \$10,000*

4. Achievements

To date, a brief list of substantive achievements of the Honors Program include the following:

- *Graduated four classes*
- *95% of Honors Program graduates are working full time in their fields or in graduate school*
- *Average ACT of most recent two classes = 29*
- *Expected completion/overall five year retention rate as of 2009 through December 2012 = 51%*

5. Responses to Previous Review Recommendations

No previous review recommendations

6. Vision and Plans for the Future of the area

The Program can and should grow toward an enrollment equal to 7-10% of the overall undergraduate student population. A new Honors facility with suite style housing will be needed in the next five years to replace the aging facility currently in use, but it is critical for the health and cohesion of the Program that the structure be in a central location on campus as is the current building. Once additional Honors Program staff are in place and additional operating funds are secured, a revisioning of Program curriculum and requirements would follow to prepare for a Program 2-3 times its current population.

7. Unit Recommendations

- 7.1 Recommendations for changes, which are within the control of the department/area, if appropriate.

None at the present time

- 7.2 Recommendations for changes that require action at the Vice President, Provost, or higher levels.

Recommended:

- *Additional full time staff position in support of the Honors Program*
- *Full deliberation should be given to the creation of an Honors College with a full time Honors Dean*