This report covers the 2012-2013 academic year and the summer of 2013. The Letters and Science Honors Program currently enrolls approximately 1300 students. Three hundred and forty-one first year students matriculated as L&S Honors students in the fall of 2012. In 2012-2013, 130 students graduated with Honors in the Liberal Arts (HLA), 127 students graduated with Honors in the Major (HM), and of all of those honors students, 34 completed both tracks earning Comprehensive Honors (CH).

The 2012-2013 academic year saw several innovations, including the first issue of the completely redesigned The Honors Challenge, the newsletter of the L&S Honors Program; the development of the Honors On-Line blog; the adoption of the scholarships.wisc.edu portal for one of our research grants; the second annual Senior Honors Thesis Symposium; and new admissions policies and procedures.

The administrative structure of the program saw some changes in this span of time. Professor Sissel Schroeder (Anthropology) began serving as Director on August 1, 2012, and continues in that position. From October 31, 2012 to July 15, 2013 the Honors Program did not have an Associate Director. On July 15, 2013, Matt Kohlstedt joined the Program as Associate Director of Administrative Services. Continuing staff include Mary Czynszak-Lyne as Office Administrator, and Jennifer Kaufmann-Buhler as Assistant Director with oversight of the program’s advising and curricular operations (Fall 2012, Spring 2013) and as Associate Director of Academic of Academic Services (Fall 2013).

Innovations

Admissions
The 2012-2013 admissions cycle proved challenging without an Associate Director to manage the process, but we pulled it off and were able to identify areas where changes to the process would increase efficiency. In preparation for the 2013-2014 cycle, we made two significant changes to our admissions process. For incoming first year student applicants, we changed the deadline for admission so that each student has 30 days to complete the application based on when they first log-in to our system. In changing our deadline process, we hoped to make the L&S Honors Program more accessible by allowing students who “missed” our email to still apply to the Program later in the spring term, and to make it possible for students to apply after they make the decision to come to UW-Madison (under the previous approach students were given an arbitrary application deadline based on when they were admitted and this deadline sometimes was early than the timing of their decision to come to UW-Madison). We hope to report on the success of this new approach in our 2013-2014 Annual Report.

For our continuing student application process (HLA) we eliminated the need for a letter of recommendation. We believe this change will make the Continuing/Transfer student application process easier for students and more accessible as well as aligning better with the application process for incoming first-year students.
Evaluation of Honors in the Major and Curriculum Changes

It has been fourteen years since the establishment of the “new” honors curriculum that created the Honors in the Major, Honors in the Liberal Arts, and Comprehensive Honors degree options for students in the College. In our 2008-2010 report to the Faculty Senate, we noted that there was considerable variation among departments in what is required for Honors in the Major. While we appreciate the value of diversity across different disciplines, we started to review programs and develop a set of best practices drawn from the curricula and experiences of different departments. Following efforts to reach out to departments about implementing constructive changes to their Honors in the Major (HM), several departments revised their HM curriculum this past year including English, Communicative Science and Disorders, Gender and Women’s Studies, Chemistry, Psychology, and Statistics. Each of these curriculum changes were approved by the Faculty Honors Committee and the L&S Curriculum Committee.

Undergraduate Initiative Fund (UIF) changes

During the 2012-2013 year, we discussed two significant innovations with respect to UIF, which were implemented beginning in Fall 2013: 1) holding information sessions for faculty interested in applying for UIF funding (to discuss logistics and goals of the program, and to promote the benefits of teaching honors courses especially to junior faculty), and 2) modifying the UIF application to encourage greater reflection from faculty on learning outcomes and goals for teaching. We plan to continue using this new application next year and actively reach out to individual faculty who might be interested in teaching small honors-only courses.

“The Honors Challenge” Newsletter

Beginning with the Fall 2012 issue, The Honors Challenge (annual newsletter of the L&S Honors Program) underwent significant changes. The issue was organized around a theme (“why honors?”), which gives the newsletter a cohesive feel. Print copies shifted from being black, red, and white to full color. Because pictures can be such an effective means of communicating complex ideas, the inclusion of many more photographs than in previous issues and the addition of graphics to tell or enhance stories reduced the amount of text. Compelling stories were added that recount the impact of gifts from the perspective of the student recipients. The result is a more dynamic and colorful newsletter, and the response to this new format has been very positive.

Honors Grants (process changes)

In spring 2013 we piloted the use of the scholarships.wisc.edu portal for one of our senior thesis grants. It was a successful trial and we hope to convert more of our grants to the scholarships.wisc.edu portal in the future.

The Honors On-Line Blog

In an effort to improve our communications with our students, we started a “blog” in spring 2013 to share opportunities and events with Honors students. The new blog has made it easier for our office to share opportunities and events with our students, make it easier for us to produce our weekly newsletter, and allows our students to dynamically search the blog to find relevant entries. We are always happy to promote opportunities that are relevant to our students through the blog.
On-line forms (now available)

Last year we learned that our triplicate paper forms used for HM declarations and withdrawals, as well as withdrawals from HLA, were no longer going to be available from the copy shop on campus, so we transformed these commonly used forms to on-line pdfs that advisors can use to declare students for HM or to withdraw students from HLA or HM. The registrar’s office has indicated that we may eventually be able to move our Honors in the Major declaration process to an automated workflow through the ISIS system. Once all of the majors in the College of Letters & Science have adopted the automated major declaration process, we will be able to move forward with developing a similar procedure for HM declaration.

Ongoing Activities

Continued Engagement with Campus Initiatives and Committees

Staff in the L&S Honors Program participated in a number of different campus committees and activities.

- Mary Czynszak-Lyne - HR Design, high administrative search committees, L&S Classified Issues Committee, L&S Climate Committee, Campus Transportation Committee, Campus Diversity and Climate Committee, Limited Term Employee (LTE) Advisory Committee (Chair), and the Classified Staff Executive Committee.
- Jennifer Kaufmann-Buhler - Council on Academic Advising, OAT committee, DARS 101 instructor (Office of Undergraduate Advising), Cete (committee on the biosciences), Campus Pre-Health Committee, L&S State of Advising Work Group, ex-officio member of the L&S Curriculum Committee. Jennifer has also participated in the L&S advisor training led by Rebekah Pare.
- Matt Kohlstedt – University Honors Committee, Project Management Symposium, L&S Career Initiative Retreat.
- Sissel Schroeder - FIG Planning Committee, University Honors Committee, Faculty Honors Committee (Chair), L&S Dean’s Prize Committee, Lakeshore Nature Preserve Committee, consultant to Ethnic Studies Subcommittee of the Undergraduate Education Committee, participant in the Joseph F. Kaufmann Administrative Development Program, Undergraduate Research Group, NAGPRA Committee on the Determination of Cultural Affiliation (Chair), and various committees in the Department of Anthropology, including Chair of the Merit and Budget Committee.

Senior Honors Thesis Symposium

In the fall of 2011 the L&S Honors Program created a new initiative to showcase the research experiences of our Honors in the Major students working on a Senior Honors Thesis. Each year, about 100 students produce a senior honors thesis/creative project. The second annual Senior Honors Thesis Symposium was held in the spring of 2013 and featured approximately sixty seniors who shared their research in a professional-style conference. Students were required to register for the event and submit an abstract, and papers were grouped in an inter-disciplinary fashion to encourage students to hear from other students outside of their own discipline. In preparation, we offered a workshop for participants in which students learned effective strategies for giving an academic talk. Participants were encouraged to invite friends and family as well as faculty and staff with whom they have worked, and underclass honors students were encouraged
to attend to learn more about research. The event was very successful, and we are excited to offer it again this year.

**Welton Summer Sophomore Apprenticeship Program**
In an effort to increase community among students in the Welton Sophomore Summer Apprenticeship Program, this past summer we created more opportunities for our apprentices to meet and interact. There was an early reception at which they had the chance to mingle and meet, and a second meeting in which they learned about the logistics of the retreat in July. The result was increased camaraderie and a sense of community among the students in the program, and a more successful retreat.

**SeniorHonors Thesis Workshop**
In the spring of 2013 we held a special senior honors thesis workshop with the Writing Center for interested students to learn about our senior honors thesis grants and to learn about resources (from the Writing Center) for completing a thesis.

**Curriculum**
In fall 2012 we were able to offer three honors FIGs: Monsters, Bodies, and Borders led by Professors Susan Bernstein (English) and A. Finn Enke (History); Human Nature, Animal Nature led by Professor Charles Snowdon (Psychology), and Politics and Protest led by Professor Russ Castronovo (English).

**Participation in the Wisconsin Science Festival**
September 2011 was the first Wisconsin Science Festival hosted by UW-Madison. Washburn Observatory was visited by nearly 400 elementary students. Washburn Observatory continues to be a featured sight for the Wisconsin Science Festival.

**Outreach**
It has long been part of the philosophy of the L&S Honors Program to actively recruit prospective students to attend UW-Madison and to join the Honors Program. Many applicants take a university’s Honors offerings into account when considering which university to attend, and the Honors Program has been an enthusiastic partner with the broader university community in encouraging the best high school students to attend UW-Madison. In cooperation with the Office of Admissions, the Honors Program hosts approximately 45 prospective student information sessions each year. The sessions, which are held on Fridays and attended by students and their families, attract nearly 1,000 registered guests over the course of a calendar year. These info sessions would typically be conducted by the Associate Director of Administrative Services, but because that position was vacant for much of 2012-2013, one of our professional advisors who had been an L&S Honors undergraduate took over the responsibility of hosting these events, with the Assistant Director sometimes stepping in, too.

**Program Grants and Awards**
For the 2012-2013 academic year, the L&S Honors Program awarded $115,000 to departments in support of 24 Honors-only courses (either small stand-alone Honors courses or faculty taught sections of larger courses) and Honors curriculum development. In addition, the Program provided grants and awards totaling $135,000 to 52 students in several categories: Welton
Sophomore Summer Research Apprenticeships, Trewartha Undergraduate Honors Research Grants, Honors Senior Thesis Summer Research Grants, Leadership Trust Awards, the Mark Mensink Honors Research Award, the Abraham S. Burack Travel Award for Study Abroad, and the Kurz and Bromley Conference Travel Grants.

**Leadership Trust Awards**
We have a generous grant from a donor who wishes to remain anonymous to pay two semesters of in-state tuition and a $3,000 supply allowance for student initiated programs that provide services and benefits to the University community and beyond. Since 2003, we have awarded funds for more than twenty different projects, most of which are still being continued by subsequent generations of students. In 2012-2013, we awarded one Leadership Trust Awards. The recipient was AnaElise Beckman, who has created a program called “Sustainable Projects: Working with Middle School Students at Jefferson Middle School.” These awards have stimulated some outstanding service projects among our students and have allowed the recipients to develop important leadership skills.

The Honors Program co-hosted with the Journal of Undergraduates International Studies (JUIS) leadership a celebration of the Journal’s tenth anniversary and release of the fall 2012 edition. Invited guests included David Codden, the first editor of the Journal.

**Program Enhancements**

**Speech Team of UW-Madison**
The L&S Honors Program assumed sponsorship of the UW Forensics Team in 2003. Forensics had effectively died at the UW in 1992 but was resurrected by a core of active students in 2001. These students, on their own initiative, began training and competing in local and regional forensics meets and, shortly thereafter, began seeking official sponsorship at the university. The Honors Program has also subsidized the part-time salary of a coach for the team, Ben Jedd, who has been able to make great strides in making the team competitive at all levels. In 2012-2013 the team doubled in size, student Jayme Marsh earned five tournament championships and was the state poetry champion, Jason Schwartz earned three tournament championships, and the team placed first in individual events at the University of Utah National Tournament. The Team formally changed its name to Speech Team of UW-Madison fall 2013.

**Go Big Read**
In 2010, the Honors Common Book Program was supplanted by the start of Go Big Read. 2012-2013 marked the third year in which the Honors Program collaborated with UW-Housing to co-host a luncheon during the fall semester with the author for Honors students, which allows our students to engage with the author in an intimate setting. In 2012-2013 the Go Big Read book was *Radioactive: Marie and Pierre Curie, A Tale of Love and Fallout*, by Lauren Redniss. For the 2013-2014 academic year the Go Big Read selection was *A Tale for the Time Being*, by Ruth Ozeki.

**Student Retreats**
In late July each year the Program sponsors the annual summer retreat at Hilltop Farm in Spring Green for students with Welton Sophomore Summer Honors Research Apprenticeships and for their faculty mentors. Student presentations are quite impressive in terms of their grasp of the
research problems they have been studying and their poise in presenting their work to a broad audience. The annual Fall Retreat for our first-year Honors students is held in September or October each year and provides first year students with a chance to meet faculty and staff and ask questions about a variety of topics including disciplinary and career interests, study abroad and service learning opportunities, and to how to obtain balance in their lives.

**Community Building Efforts**

**Honors Student Organization (HSO)**

HSO is a student led organization with limited staff assistance that works to build a sense of community among Honors students. In 2012-2013, the HSO continued with the successful Wednesdays@Washburn monthly event. The students select and invite UW-Madison faculty to have a conversation with Honors students in an informal setting with a light supper at Washburn Observatory. In addition to Wednesdays@Washburn, HSO hosted an ice skating event, sponsored a group study party at the beginning of final exam week each semester, helped with fund raising for WPR, and served as hosts along with the Honors Program for the annual Honors Fall Kickoff welcoming incoming students and returning students. HSO also attended performances of the Madison Opera and other cultural offerings at the Overture Center or campus venues.

**Honors Fall Kickoff**

In the fall of 2010 we hosted the first Honors Fall Kickoff to welcome our incoming and returning Honors students with an ice cream and cookie reception. In the fall of 2011, we moved the Honors Fall Kickoff to the lawn at Washburn and had a Wisconsin-style tail-gate/picnic. This was such a success that it has continued each year since, and attendance has been growing each year.

**Advising**

**Graduate Student Assistantships in the Honors Program**

Each year we are fortunate to have two 50% graduate Project Assistants (PAs) who are employed by the Honors Program as professional academic advisors. This is a fantastic opportunity for funding support for graduate students in the university, and a valuable professional development experience for them. By learning the basics of academic advising, curriculum and administration, these graduate students have more opportunities for careers in universities and colleges after they graduate, and it significantly enhances their understanding of undergraduate students, which better prepares them to teach and mentor undergraduates. In addition to being an opportunity for graduate students to develop professionally, the L&S Honors Program benefits from the unique skills, interests, and abilities that these graduate students bring to our program. We love the energy and creativity that all of our graduate students have brought to the program, appreciate the innovations that have grown from their interests, and believe that working with graduate students in this way is a benefit to the program, the college, and the university.

**SOAR Advising**

L&S Honors Program was heavily involved in the development of the new SOAR advising model that was piloted the summer of 2012. Through the 2011-2012 academic year, Jennifer
Kaufmann-Buhler served on the SOAR Advising Committee and, starting in the spring of 2011, Charles Snowdon participated in the SOAR Vision Committee. In response to the changes occurring in the SOAR structure, the L&S Honors Advising Team re-conceptualized their SOAR advising model, created new materials and a new presentation, and established new SOAR activities to engage students in the advising process. The L&S Honors Program continued to advise at each first year SOAR session, typically seeing between 8-12 students per day.

In the summer of 2012, 88% of students who responded to the SOAR survey indicated that they were satisfied with their academic advising experience in our unit. Comments in the SOAR survey indicate that students in the L&S Honors advising room appreciated the individual advising that they received. Students commented that they felt comfortable in the space, found the academic and peer advisors helpful, and appreciated the presentations and activities in the Honors advising room.

Building on this success, in the summer of 2013, we eliminated our powerpoint presentation altogether in favor of a discussion and activity based model. To facilitate this process we had to significantly update our SOAR workbook to allow it to serve as a visual in place of a formal presentation. This new advising experience allowed students to better connect with other students in the room and encouraged students to engage more deeply at SOAR in their interests and goals. We received very good feedback from students, and plan to continue that model this upcoming year.

Advising for First-Year Students

The L&S Honors Program Advising staff continued to offer small group advising (Honors 181 and Honors 182) in the fall semester. In the fall of 2010 we made a significant change to Honors 181, reducing the set content, and opening more of the session to general questions. In our evaluations since that time we have seen a marked increase in the number of students who found the session useful. We continue to see strong attendance numbers for Honors 181 and 182 in the Fall of 2012 we had 265 students at Honors 181 and 260 at Honors 182. Greater attendance means that more of our students are familiar with honors requirements and opportunities, and have learned critical advising and enrollment tools such as DARS and the Student Center. These group advising sessions have also provided a timely way to alert students to critical upcoming deadlines (particularly drop deadlines) and to encourage students to talk with us if they are thinking about dropping a class. Since 2010, we have seen a decrease in the number of first year honors students who end up on probation after their first semester.

Advising for Graduating Seniors

To assist the registrar’s office in clearing up honors graduation deficiencies, in the fall of 2010, the L&S Honors Program Advisors began individually auditing students for graduation (based on students who had declared their intent to graduate in each semester), and proactively contacting students about dropping honors, or coming in for advising to discuss graduation options. We also have been more proactive in enforcing our good standing rules for the Honors in the Liberal Arts Program in order to reduce the number of graduation deficiencies. We have offered drop-in advising specifically for graduation checks so that graduating honors students could check with an advisor to ensure that they were able to graduate in their intended semester.
Advising for All Students

The L&S Honors Program website publicizes our Advising Syllabus, provides advisor profiles, answers to frequently asked questions, and provides information about the various advising options offered through our office. Advisors link their advising profiles to the walk-in hours posted on the Web Calendar. An instant messaging chat advising program has been initiated that is available one hour a day (Monday though Thursday), in the evening, which has proven popular among our students, especially those studying abroad.

In the Spring of 2012, the L&S Honors Program Advisors put together a professional development series in collaboration with career services for honors students. We organized workshops on internships and marketing a liberal arts degree, as well as an L&S Honors alumni event in which several graduates shared their post-graduate experiences.

Advising Training

In the summer of 2011, Jennifer Kaufmann-Buhler created a new Peer Advisor Training program that included a new peer advising handbook, multiple group meetings, discussions, and activities to help our new peer advisors learn about the goals of the honors program, our policies and procedures, and the process of advising. Our Advisor Development Program continues to successfully provide new and continuing Honors advisors (both professional and peer advisors) an overview of the advising field with particular emphasis on conceptual and relational issues of advising. Readings, group activities, role plays and discussions were used to explore the definitions and values of advising, to examine the commonalities and diversities of our target population of high-achieving students, and to build and enhance advising-related skills. The advising team meets weekly to enhance their skills and discuss any particularly difficult issues that have arisen. As part of the evaluation process Jennifer Kaufman-Buhler sits in on an advising appointment with each advisor to provide feedback.

Awards to Honors Staff

Jennifer-Kaufmann-Buhler received the inaugural Early Career Excellence in Undergraduate Advising Award.

Challenges:

Like all units of the College our main challenges concern resources. For much of 2012-2013 we had one full-time academic staff member, one full time classified staff member, a half-time faculty director, and two half time Project Assistants plus a third Project Assistant (PA) who had a 33.4% appointment. The third PA was a one-time boost to help us cope with reduced staffing. We also had three students who were hired as hourly employees. This is by far the smallest FTE to student ratio of any of the Honors Programs/Colleges among the CIC peer universities. Only about 50% of the CIC peers provide student advising, and our advising is considerably more comprehensive and high touch than the advising provided for Honors students at our CIC peers. Not only do we provide general academic advising throughout the year, but we also provide advising as part of new student orientation, which most of our peers do not do. Nonetheless, by working hard and working smart, we are able to meet most of our mission. We utilize the intelligence and motivation of our undergraduate students as Peer Advisors, who we currently support with Gift Funds.
At Wisconsin, we do not have to worry about the academic profile of our undergraduates and, philosophically, we in Honors prefer need-based scholarships over merit-based awards. However, many of our signature programs – the Welton Sophomore Summer Honors Research Apprenticeships, support of Speech Team, support of community service activities, etc. are based, in part or wholly, on annual proposals to a variety of funding sources that are also in demand to fund other programs as well or being phased out all together under resource pressure. We continue to actively seek long-term continuous support (endowments or bequests) to support our most successful programs and have had some success in the past year-and-a-half: gifts have made it possible for us to potentially expand the Welton Sophomore Summer Honors Research Apprenticeships, grow the number of students on the Speech Team and allow more students to travel to competitions, and increase the range of opportunities we can offer our students. The generosity of donors has been most heartwarming to see, and has allowed the Honors Program to flourish in times of significantly reduced state support.

With all of the budget cuts over the past 7 years, it has become increasingly difficult for departments to collaborate with us in offering honors level courses. Although we can provide lecturer replacement funds for several courses, many departments cannot afford to have their faculty diverted from their regular teaching needs to teach honors courses. Some wonderful faculty are actually doing overloads in order to be able to teach an honors class, but we should not count on faculty volunteering to have an overload in order to sustain an honors program. We did begin to see greater diversity in the Honors course offerings in 2012-2013 compared to earlier years.

The cumulative effect of the budget cuts over the past 7 years has reduced our 101-funded operating budget to the bare bones. With the departure of the full-time Associate Director at the end of October 2012, that staff position was reduced to 75% to meet needed budget cuts, but it remained vacant throughout the remainder of the academic year. As is the case with many units across campus, we are doing more with fewer state resources and have implemented a number of efficiencies in recent years to allow us to continue to meet our mission and programmatic goals with fewer state resources. For example, to maintain our mission goal of high impact advising practices we use well-trained peer advisors who are supported by unrestricted gift funds, in addition to two 50% PAs who serve as professional advisors.

With our vision of Honors that is consistent with intellectual curiosity and the goals of the Wisconsin Idea, we hope to maintain an exciting and vibrant program with diverse students who will be the future of our state, our nation and our world.

2012-2013 Faculty Honors Committee Members
Bryce Aul (Student representative, Biology)
Susan Bernstein (English)
Dana Geary (Geoscience)
Sabine Gross (German)
Liam Kane-Grade (Student Member, Journalism)
Marc Kleijwegt (History)
Susan Lederer (Medical History and Bioethics, History of Science)
Jenny Saffran (Psychology)
Sissel Schroeder (Anthropology, Chair)
Scott Straus (Political Science)
JingCai Ying (Student representative, Political Science and English)

*Ex Officio:*
Mary Czynszak-Lyne, Office Administrator
Jennifer Kaufmann-Buhler, Assistant Director