2014-2015 ANNUAL REPORT OF THE FACULTY HONORS COMMITTEE AND HONORS PROGRAM

Overview
It is the mission of the L&S Honors Program to enhance and enrich the undergraduate experience for highly motivated students, to provide them with opportunities to engage in research and scholarship with faculty, to create a community within the larger College, to offer high-quality and comprehensive advising, and to promote leadership, service, and engaged citizenship through a liberal-arts education.

This report covers the 2014-2015 academic year and the summer of 2015. The Letters & Science Honors Program currently enrolls 1250 students. Three hundred and fifty-one first year students matriculated as L&S Honors students in the fall of 2014. 88 students graduated with Honors in the Liberal Arts (HLA), 84 students graduated with Honors in the Major (HM), and 41 completed both tracks earning Comprehensive Honors (CH) (all numbers: actual degrees conferred). Of the 213 Honors graduates, 63.3% identified as female and 6.1% identified primarily as a member of a targeted minority group. The average GPA at graduation was a 3.743.

The L&S Honors program has an overall budget of close to half a million, detailed as follows: $200,562 general 101 funding for salaries and supplies is supplemented by approximately $27,000 annual gift endowment income used for essential operational expenses and student hourly help. Honors also awards a total of $192,000 in Undergraduate Initiative Funds a) to support instructional costs for departments offering additional Honors courses and sections and b) for the Honors Summer Senior Thesis research grants.
In addition, the Honors program expends a total of approximately $80,000 ($45,000 estimated annual endowment income, plus donor gifts in non-endowed gift accounts) to support student research, outreach, travel, and community-building events.

Administratively, the Program’s staffing remained at the previous year’s level, with Sissel Schroeder, Professor of Anthropology, as 50% Faculty Director, Mary Czynszak-Lyne as 100% administrator, and two Associate Directors: Jacqui Guthrie for Academic Services at 100%, Matt Kohlstedt for Administrative Services at 75%. The Advising Team under Jacqui Guthrie’s supervision consists of 2 senior advisors (50% graduate student PAs) and three peer advisors (part-time hourly undergraduates), and Honors hires two student hourlies for office tasks, website assistance, Honors online newsletter, and help with invitations and mailing.

2014-2015 Faculty Honors Committee Members
Sissel Schroeder, Anthropology, Chair 2012-2015
Scott Straus SS: Political Science 2012-2015
Jenny Saffran; SS: Psychology 2012-2015 (1st semester)
Diane Gooding; SS: Psychology 2015 (2nd semester)
David Danaher; H: Slavic Languages 2014-2017
Marc Kleijwegt; H: History 2012-2015
Susan Lederer; H/NS: Medical History and Bioethics 2012-2015
Admissions

Students mainly join the Honors Program in one of two ways, via initial acceptance or if they decide to pursue Honors in the Major. Initial acceptance into the Honors Program is not determined by test scores or other numerical data – motivation and interest are crucial factors. An invitation goes out to all applicants who are accepted to the UW-Madison. With a more flexible deadline for admission and acceptances to the Honors Program (implemented in 2013-14, when the change resulted in an increase to 692 applicants from 519 the previous year), we continued to see an increase in applications, to a total of 748 in 2014-15.

The increased workload is difficult to handle with a position reduced to 75% (Associate Director of Administration), and current staffing constraints would not allow us to increase the number of admitted students. That number will remain at approximately 350. We will, however, be able to be more selective in admitting candidates.

Events and Programs

Senior Honors Thesis Symposium

Each year, about 100 students produce a senior honors thesis/creative project. The fourth annual Senior Honors Thesis Symposium was held in the spring of 2015 and featured 42 seniors who shared their research in a professional-style conference. Thanks to funding by an Honors donor, the Symposium is now an annual event.

Welton Summer Sophomore Apprenticeship Program

This is a successful early-research-experience program for which students apply as Freshmen or Sophomores, funded through grants from the Brittingham Fund and the Kemper Knapp Bequest and by a donor, the Welton Family Foundation. For the summer of 2015, the Faculty Honors Committee reviewed 32 applications and selected 28 apprentices, who had faculty and academic staff mentors in 19 different academic departments across four colleges (L&S, Education, CALS, and the School of Medicine and Public Health). We want the program to offer research opportunities as well as build a community of apprentices. To achieve the latter, we hold an early reception-cum-orientation at which students and mentors get to know each other, and a second meeting in which students learn about the logistics of the retreat in July. The highlight is the annual retreat for students and their mentors, where students present their project (see below).
We’ve encouraged students to establish a Facebook page for participants to communicate with one another during the summer, and we invited the apprentices to join the welcome party for new first year students at the beginning of the semester, where they could share their experiences with the incoming first-year students and generate interest in the program.

_Welton Sophomore Apprentice Retreat_
In late July each year the Program sponsors the annual summer retreat at Hilltop Farm outside Spring Green for students with Welton Sophomore Summer Honors Research Apprenticeships and for their faculty and staff 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, and participants embrace the opportunity for exchange offered by this day-long special event.

_Go Big Read Luncheon_
2014-2015 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 and several First Year Interest Groups (FIGs), which allows our students to engage with the author in an intimate setting. In 2014-2015 the Go Big Read book was *I am Malala*, by Malala Yousafzai. We had more than 80 students, staff and faculty participate at this event.

_Annual Fall Retreat_
The 2014 annual Fall Retreat for our first-year Honors students provided them with an opportunity 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 how to obtain balance in their lives.

_Comencement_
As in previous years, the Honors Program hosted two Commencement ceremonies for students and their families, one in May and a more intimate one in December.

_Grants and Awards Workshops, Symposium/Retreat Workshops_
For all major grant categories – Welton, Trewartha, Summer Research, Leadership Trust – we offer one or several workshops to assist students in putting together a strong application. For the Senior Thesis Symposium and Welton Retreat, workshops focus on public speaking skills and effective strategies for giving an academic presentation.

_Curriculum_
25 Honors in the Major curricula were revised and approved through governance (Faculty Honors Committee and L&S Curriculum Committee) during the 2014/15 school year. This is an unusually high number. Most revisions were the result of the finding that many Honors in the Major curricula had been using graduate-level coursework, not a best practice by Higher Education Commission standards, and resulting revisions to individual curricula were minor.
In addition to shepherding the revision of these Honors in the Major curricula, the Program also worked with partners across the college and campus to put in place DARS fixes to honor policy set long ago but not previously coded, put in place revised policy around elective study abroad coursework and how it will count for a student’s Honors requirements, and finalized a *Thesis Away from UW-Madison* that is now fully implemented. These relatively minor revisions to policies and DARS coding corrections help streamline our student’s progression on their curricular journey and cut down on the need for manual exceptions to requirements.

The Honors Program is interested in partnering with the FIGS Program and instructors to plan for Honors FIGS. In fall 2014, the Honors Program offered two Honors FIGs: *Goodness, Happiness and the Meaning of Life* (19 enrolled) and *Molecular Archaeology and the Legacy of Greece and Rome in Modern Culture* (18 enrolled).

The Honors Program awards Undergraduate Initiative Funds to strengthen the UW-Madison Honors curriculum, supporting departments willing to increase or maintain their curricular offerings for Honors students. An annual call in fall semester invites applications from departments seeking funds for lecturer replacement or S&E to enable faculty to teach Honors courses or Honors-only discussion sections. (See below: Program Grants and Awards/Curriculum)

We continue to work closely with departments as they develop their honors offerings. This includes helping them determine which honors course designation is a best fit for a particular course, verifying that courses are set up with correct Honors designations and requisites, and promoting the courses that departments are able to create happens throughout the year. Additionally, as departments adjust to budget constraints, the Honors Program Director and Associate Director for Academic Services spend significant time working with departments that are eliminating Honors courses or trying to find more efficient ways of teaching their Honors offerings. When course offerings are eliminated or altered, associated curricula also need to be adjusted. Maintaining a variety of Honors course offerings and ample offerings for the number of students pursuing the degree is a priority for us, and increasingly this happens in individual consultations with departments.

**Advising**

**Staffing**

The Honors Program employs two 50% graduate Project Assistants (PAs) to serve as the primary advisors to Honors students, from SOAR through graduation. These positions provide both support and a professional development experience for two graduate students. By learning the basics of academic advising, curriculum, and administration, these graduate students have more opportunities for careers in universities and colleges after graduation. Furthermore, the opportunity significantly enhances their understanding of undergraduate students, which better prepares them to teach and mentor undergraduates in future roles.
Advising is a demanding job that requires significant training and mentorship around both content (academic policies, curriculum and non-academic opportunities) and counseling theory. It takes many years to become a skilled advisor, fully prepared to support and mentor Honors students through the many opportunities and challenges that they face in college. Relying on PAs to staff our advising team, when many roll off within 1-3 school years, is resource-intensive in requiring hiring, training and close mentoring by the Associate Director for Academic Services. This ensures accurate and appropriate advising of our most curious and enthusiastic students, who benefit from the enthusiasm and general relatability of PA advisors.

In addition to two PAs, the Advising Team employs three peer advisors – undergraduates who are trained and mentored to answer basic questions from students. As is the case with PAs, supporting undergraduate peer advisors is resource-intensive. The peer advisors benefit from an excellent professional development opportunity and Honors students appreciate being able to discuss their goals and concerns with someone their own age.

**SOAR Advising**
The L&S Honors Program continues to advise at every first-year student SOAR session. During the 2015 summer, we served 344 incoming first-year honors students over 27, two-day SOAR sessions. 93% of L&S Honors SOAR attendee respondents to a survey about their SOAR experience agreed or strongly agreed with the statement “I am satisfied with the academic advising experience at SOAR”.

**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. These small group meetings are well-attended and survey results indicate that students appreciate learning about their DARS and other academic tools. In addition to group advising, first-year students are encouraged to access advisors via drop-ins, email and individual appointments to assure a strong transition to college.

**Advising for Graduating Seniors**
L&S Honors Program Advisors continues to audit students for graduation (based on students’ declared intent to graduate in each semester), and proactively contacts students about dropping honors, or coming in for advising to discuss graduation options. Additionally, we offer 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. These efforts have led to fewer urgent phone calls and visits from students and parents alike, and has proven a very valuable use of advising resources.

**Program Grants and Awards**

**Curriculum**
For the 2015-2016 academic year, the Faculty Honors Committee and L&S Honors Program awarded $125,000 to departments in support of 35 Honors-only courses (either small stand-alone Honors courses or faculty-taught sections of larger courses) and Honors curriculum development.
Student Research and Leadership Opportunities
The Faculty Honors Committee recommended funding for grants and awards totaling over $125,000 to 66 students in several categories: Welton Sophomore Summer Research Apprenticeships, Trewartha Undergraduate Honors Research Grants, Honors Senior Thesis Summer Research Grants, the Leadership Trust Award (see following par.), the Abraham S. Burack Travel Award for Study Abroad, the Directors’ Travel Award for Study Abroad, and the Kurz and Bromley Conference Travel Grants.

Leadership Trust Awards
We have a generous grant from an anonymous donor 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 in the spirit of the Wisconsin Idea. Since 2003, we have awarded funds for more than twenty different projects, many of which are being continued by subsequent generations of students. In 2014-2015 the Faculty Honors Committee selected two Leadership Trust awardees: Hannah Mast (who initiated a Bayview after-school recycling program) and Monica Gresset (who designed an inclusive MCAT preparation program making study materials that have been proven successful available to participants at no cost). A 2013-14 Leadership Trust awardee, Jacob (Jake) Roble, paused for a year and has now resumed his project, a community health initiative for South Madison. These students have designed and are implementing leadership service programs and developing important leadership skills in the process.

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, which are led by Matt Kohlstedt. The sessions are held on Fridays, are attended by students and their families, and attract over 1,000 registered guests during the calendar year. Matt Kohlstedt also attended the Office of Admissions prospective student recruitment fair in Milwaukee, and was a panelist and information session participant for the four spring Your UW Days. We regularly send representatives to other campus recruiting events such as those for Chicago Scholars. We have also increased our outreach efforts to other campus partners such as the Chancellor’s Scholars Program and the Powers-Knapp Program. Honors has an active presence at other Outreach events across and beyond campus such as the Major’s Fair and Summer Collegiate Experience.
During the fourth Wisconsin Science Festival hosted by UW-Madison in October 2014, Washburn Observatory was a featured sight and was visited by over 350 elementary and high school students along with members of the public.

Parents’ Day:
The Honors Program hosts a Saturday-morning breakfast event for the families of Honors students. We provide an overview of the Honors Program, with ample opportunity for parents (and students) to ask questions and engage in conversation with Honors Program representatives.

**Community Building and Communication, on campus and beyond**

*The Honors On-Line Blog*
The Honors Program makes weekly blog posts about opportunities that may be of interest to Honors students. The Honors Online (HOL) weekly emailed newsletter points students to these blog entries. Students tell us how much they appreciate being informed of grant opportunities, study abroad information sessions, honors course offerings and more. During the 2014-2015 school year, we tracked approximately 2,100 individual page views of blog entries each month.

*“The Honors Challenge”*
The annual full-color newsletter of the Honors Program is sent to approximately 6,000 alumni and other interested parties. The November 2014 newsletter featured stories around the theme of “Why We Explore”.

*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 2014-2015, 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 Lakeshore Nature Preserve clean-up days, co-sponsored a two-day group study café at the beginning of final exam week each semester, coordinated a scavenger hunt for new students, 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*
Inaugurated in the fall of 2010, the Honors Fall Kickoff has become an annual tradition, now in the form of a Wisconsin-style tailgate picnic on the lawn at Washburn, where we welcome our incoming and returning Honors students. Attendance has been growing each year, up to about 150 students (plus some staff, and faculty) in September 2014.

**Additional Engagement across Campus**
Staff in the L&S Honors Program participated in a number of different campus committees and activities.

- Mary Czynszak-Lyne - HR Design, high and mid-level administrative search committees, L&S Classified Issues Committee, L&S Climate Committee, Campus Diversity and Climate Committee, Limited Term Employee (LTE) Advisory Committee (Chair), Temporary Employee (TE) Committee (co-lead), Institutional
Conflict of Interest Committee, the On Wisconsin Society, and the Classified Staff Executive Committee, numerous ad-hoc and standing shared governance committees

- Jacqui Guthrie – Ex-officio member of the L&S Curriculum Committee, L&S CC Sub-Committee on Mandatory Major Declaration Implementation, Council on Academic Advising (CAA), Orientation Advising Team (OAT), Cete (committee on the biosciences), Campus Pre-Health Committee, ASEC-appointed Student Misconduct Hearing Panel committee.
- Sissel Schroeder - FIG Planning Committee, University Honors Committee, Faculty Honors Committee (Chair), L&S Dean’s Prize Committee, Lakeshore Nature Preserve Committee (Chair), consultant to Ethnic Studies Subcommittee of the Undergraduate Education Committee, 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.

Speech Team of UW-Madison

The L&S Honors Program assumed sponsorship of the UW Forensics Team – now named “Speech Team of Wisconsin” – in 2003. Defunct since 1992, Forensics had been resurrected by a core of active students in 2001, who subsequently sought official sponsorship at the university. The Honors Program with donor support also subsidizes a portion of the part-time salary of a coach for the team, Ben Jedd, who has helped make the team competitive at all levels. Honors also helps with travel arrangements and logistics.

Challenges:

Like all units of the College our main challenges concern resources. For 2014-2015 we had one full-time academic staff member, one full-time classified staff member, one three-quarter time academic staff member, a half-time faculty director, two half-time Project Assistants, and (through gift-fund support) three undergraduate student workers. This is by far the smallest FTE to student ratio of any of the Honors Programs/Colleges among our CIC peer universities. Only about 50% of the CIC peers provide student advising, and our advising is considerably more comprehensive 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. In covering SOAR in summer 2015, we effectively over-extended our resources.

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 the Speech Team of Wisconsin, support of community service activities, etc. are based, in part or wholly, on annual proposals to a variety of funding sources that are also increasingly in demand to fund other programs. The generosity of donors has
allowed the Honors Program to maintain its offerings in times of significantly reduced state support.

With all of the budget cuts over the past eight years, now compounded by the emphasis on metrics as a tool for determining resource allocation, 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 take on an overload in order to sustain an honors program.

The cumulative effect of the budget cuts over the past eight years has reduced our 101-funded operating budget to the bare bones. As is the case with many units across campus, we are doing more with fewer state resources and keep searching for additional efficiencies that will allow us to continue to meet our mission and programmatic goals with fewer state resources. We improve and simplify the workflow of student forms whenever possible. To maintain our mission goal of high-impact advising we use well-trained peer advisors who are supported by unrestricted gift funds, in addition to the two 50% PAs and the Associate Director for Academic Services. We continue to transition grant and scholarship applications to electronic web-based submission: all applicable L&S Honors Program grant applications are now live on the scholarships.wisc.edu portal.

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