HERU
Honors Education at Research Universities
The Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio

Conference Program
May 24-25, 2017
Conference Welcome

Welcome to the third bi-annual conference on Honors Education at Research Universities. On behalf of all who were involved in the planning of this conference, we are delighted that you are able to join us on the campus of The Ohio State University for what promises to be an intellectually stimulating two days.

This conference grew out of discussions by the Honors Directors of the Committee on Institutional Cooperation (CIC) and a few others to meet the needs of educators working with high achieving students at major research universities. That these discussions have grown into a conference with over 150 participants and 50 presentations on a wide variety of topics indicates just how essential and valuable it is to share best practices, challenges, and opportunities associated with enhancing the undergraduate experience for high ability students.

As discussions surrounding the value of higher education and special programs continue to challenge our very role as honors educators, it is vital that we come together to help define the honors experience for the 21st Century. Through conversations on the issues crucial to honors education, such as student retention, program funding, and diversity and inclusion, among many others, it is my hope that we will all return home with new information and ideas that will benefit our programs and our students. Growing our network of colleagues from a diverse range of institutions will allow us to continue these meaningful conversations throughout the years to come.

Thank you for taking the time to join us in Columbus for the 2017 conference on Honors Education at Research Universities.

Sincerely,

Linn Van Woerkom, PhD
Associate Vice Provost
Director, University Honors & Scholars Center
Professor of Physics
The Ohio State University
The History of HERU

The directors and deans of Honors Programs and Colleges in the Committee on Institutional Cooperation, CIC (the schools of the Big Ten Conference and University of Illinois at Chicago) meet annually to discuss the best practices and challenges of Honors education. In 2008 we invited our colleagues from the University of Maryland to join us at our annual meeting. They are a similar university in terms of mission, size, and scope. They are now, of course, part of the BIG 10 Conference and the CIC. It was felt to be a great benefit to all and so we began the practice of inviting a different peer institution to our annual meeting each subsequent year. Although other Honors focused conferences and meetings have much to offer, it quickly became evident that none were meeting the specific needs of Research 1 institutions. We needed a way to expand our CIC based annual meetings to allow the larger nation-wide community to meet and share best practices and scholarly work on providing enhanced educational experiences for high achieving students. Thus Honors Education at Research Universities (HERU) was born.

About the Conference

For those of us immersed in it, the place for honors education at research institutions of higher learning seems obvious. Our resources, our faculty, our academic foundations in the sciences and technology, and our emphasis on practical application of research and scholarship define and distinguish us. But it's not always an easy sell to others in the Academy or to some of the nation's best and brightest high school students who have a myriad of choices vying for their attention. The truth is, we're different. Neither better nor worse, but different.

That is why a group of Research I institutions with strong, vibrant honors programs launched HERU in 2013: Honors Education at Research Universities. HERU is the brainchild of Honors Directors/Deans in the Committee on Institutional Cooperation in recognition of the vitality and strength of honors education. By coming together during this two-day conference, we envisioned sharing best practices, discussing scholarly work, and building collaborations that would strengthen the case, and the place, for honors education at research universities.

Penn State University was the host of the inaugural HERU conference in 2013. The Planning Committee included members of the CIC and Dr. Nancy West,
Director, Honors College, University of Missouri. It was determined at that conference that it should continue and plans were made for its establishment as an ongoing professional meeting.

Oregon State University was the host for the second HERU conference in 2015. The planning committee consisted of Oregon State representatives plus interested parties from the HERU 2013 committee.

A key decision, agreed upon by general consensus, was that effort would be made to keep HERU from becoming another society with a corresponding overhead, committees, and politics. Instead it would be a bi-annual meeting with a "daisy-chain" structure of committees, passing along decision making one to another. Thus the 2013 Planning Committee created a sub-committee for Site Selection of the 2015 HERU Conference. Once the new site was selected (Oregon State University) a new Planning Committee was created, with the host serving as the Chair of the committee. And so on. Finally, it was also agreed that, as the founding members of HERU, each committee would always have representation from the CIC.

It was the hope of the founding committee and inaugural conference that HERU would be an opportunity for our peers to come together, sharing best practices and building relationships that will benefit us all. Furthermore, it is hoped that this structure will allow for an organic growth of HERU that is responsive to changing needs without imposing a cumbersome or imposing structure. In the end, HERU belongs to those who attend the conference and choose to participate. It is in good hands.

**HERU 2017 Planning Committee**

Linn Van Woerkom, *The Ohio State University*
Cynthia Jackson-Elmoore, *Michigan State University*
Bob Kirby, *University of Iowa*
Anne Krabacher, *The Ohio State University*
Jennifer Lease Butts, *University of Connecticut*
Angela K. Taylor, *The Ohio State University*
Welcome to Columbus and the campus of The Ohio State University! We hope that while you are here you’ll have the opportunity to explore beyond the halls of the conference. The OSU campus is home to over 66,000 students who enjoy both the immediate campus and the surrounding neighborhoods.

**The Ohio State University Campus**

- Check out “The Shoe,” OSU’s football stadium with a 104,000+ capacity
- Take a stroll across The Oval, OSU’s quad at the center of campus
- Dine at Sloopy’s Diner in the Ohio Union
- Check out the current exhibitions at the Wexner Center for the Arts
- Go for a jog or walk on the Olentangy River Trail

**The Short North Arts District**

On Thursday the 25th from 5:30-9:30 pm, we will provide continuous shuttle service from the Blackwell Inn to the intersection of High St. and Buttles Ave. Walk around High St. to explore unique shops, adjacent Goodale Park, and some of the best restaurants in Columbus. Favorites include:

- Jeni’s Splendid Ice Creams
- Northstar Café
- Hubbard Grille
- Kooma Sushi
- The Guild House
- Black Point
- The Pearl
- Forno Kitchen and Bar
- Marcella’s
- Philco Bar and Diner
- The Eagle
- Bakersfield
Schedule

Wednesday, May 24th - DAY 1

8:00-4:30 – Registration (Blackwell Ballroom Lobby)

8:30-9:30 – Breakfast and Opening Remarks (Blackwell Ballroom Lobby)

9:30-12:15 – Morning Breakout Sessions (Pfahl Hall)

- Curriculum – Pfahl 202 (Moderator: Anne Krabacher)
- Admissions – Pfahl 240 (Moderator: Karrie Mills)
- Assessment – Pfahl 302 (Moderator: Linn Van Woerkom)
- Experiential Learning – Pfahl 330 (Moderator: Rebecca Ward)

12:30-1:30 – Lunch (Blackwell Ballrooms A-C)

- Featured Panel: “Variations and Commonalities Among Institutions With Honors Education”
  - Moderator: Linn Van Woerkom
  - Panelists:
    - Arthur Spisak, University of Iowa
    - Patricia Smith, University of Central Arkansas
    - Jerry Herron, Wayne State University
    - Linn Van Woerkom, The Ohio State University

1:45-4:30 – Afternoon Breakout Sessions (Pfahl Hall)

- Advising – Pfahl 202 (Moderator: Linn Van Woerkom)
- The Student Experience – Pfahl 240 (Moderator: Tara Williams)
- Development/Alumni Relations – Pfahl 302 (Moderator: Cynthia Jackson-Elmoore)
- Honors Housing/Honors Academic Programs – Pfahl 330 (Moderator: Julie Humbel-Courtney)

4:30-5:30 – Optional Session/Conference Meetings (Pfahl Hall)

- Big 10 Consortium – Pfahl 202
- “Leading When You Aren’t In Charge: A Conversation About the Number Two Role in Honors” - Melissa Johnson, University of Florida - Pfahl 302

5:00-6:00 – Reception (Blackwell Ballrooms A-C)

6:30-8:00 – Dinner (Blackwell Ballrooms A-C)
Schedule

Thursday, May 25th – DAY 2

8:00-1:45 – Registration (Blackwell Ballroom Lobby)

8:30-9:30 – Breakfast (Blackwell Ballroom Lobby)

9:30-12:15 – Morning Breakout Sessions (Pfahl Hall)
  • Assessment – Pfahl 202 (Moderator: Anne Krabacher)
  • The Student Experience – Pfahl 240 (Moderator: Jennifer Butts)
  • Diversity and the Role of Students – Pfahl 302 (Moderator: Karrie Mills)
  • Experiential Learning – Pfahl 330 (Moderator: Angela Taylor)

12:30-1:30 – Lunch (Blackwell Ballrooms A-C)

1:45-4:30 – Afternoon Breakout Sessions (Pfahl Hall)
  • Advising – Pfahl 202 (Moderator: David McIntyre)
  • Administrative Organization/Faculty Engagement – Pfahl 240 (Moderator: Bob Kirby)
  • Diversity and the Role of Students – Pfahl 302 (Moderator: Lindsey Chamberlain)
  • The Role of Students/Student Retention – Pfahl 330 (Moderator: Leo Hoar)

4:30-5:30 – Reception – End of Conference Remarks (Blackwell Ballrooms A-C)

5:30-9:30 – Complimentary Shuttle between the Blackwell Inn and the Short North Arts District (Blackwell Main Entrance to High St. and Buttles)
Program of Presentations

DAY 1 - Wednesday, May 24th

Breakout Session: Curriculum
Room: Pfahl 202
Moderator: Anne Krabacher

9:30 – “Establishing the Honors Mindset in the First Year Experience Course” - Hanna Holmquist, Rebecca Bott (South Dakota State University)

It is well documented that college students make decisions about whether they will persist within their program within the first few weeks of their first semester. Thus, creating meaningful relationships and demonstrating value in the educational objectives of a program is essential to entice students to persist, particularly in rigorous co-curricular programs such as Honors. These principles have shaped the design of our Honors First Year Experience course. The goals for this course are to: 1) provide students with a framework for success in Honors; 2) engage students in a journey of identity formation; and finally 3) challenge students to examine their own interest in and commitment to Honors.

This presentation will discuss activities and assignments developed to address the overall goals of the Honors First Year Experience course. Assignments including a creative ethics project, a service assignment, a “This I Believe” essay, and participation in the university-wide Common Read introduce the guiding values of the Fishback Honors College and encourage students to consider how they might integrate these values into their academic careers and daily lives. The course also includes a practical navigation of the Honors experience through the use of our Honors Student Handbook, presentation of Honors requirements and opportunities, an academic plan, and an advising meeting. Relationships are emphasized throughout the course, which is co-taught by the Honors Advisor and Dean to connect students with college staff. Continuing Honors students reinforce the importance of relationships while serving as teaching assistants and creating smaller, more connected groups within the larger first year community.

Participants will leave this session with tools and ideas for integrating the Honors mindset into the First Year Experience course, and will also be encouraged to share their own perspectives and best practices.
10:10 – “Collaborative, Interdisciplinary Work Throughout the Honors Curriculum” - François Amar, Kristine Miller (University of Maine and Utah State University)

As land- and sea-grant research institutions, both the University of Maine and Utah State University value the research-teaching connection and challenge honors students and faculty to explore that connection across disciplines and throughout the curriculum. This presentation models and invites discussion about creative, collaborative approaches to teaching and learning within honors. Dean François Amar will discuss how the University of Maine Honors College introduces students to interdisciplinary work through a general-education Civilizations course sequence, which allows students and faculty from different disciplines to discuss big ideas from various perspectives. Students continue to build their collaborative skills as they advance through the curriculum, with interdisciplinary research opportunities—like the Sustainable Food Systems Research Collaborative—that connect students and faculty with community partners. Dr. Kristine Miller will add to this dialogue with examples of how USU’s Honors Program excites students about collaborative problem-solving in required First-Year Experience seminars and then deepens their collaborative skills in more advanced team-taught Think Tanks that examine local problems, often with community partners, though different disciplinary lenses. USU also offers for honors credit four-week Honors Book Labs, reading groups that bring together small interdisciplinary groups of honors students and faculty to discuss books of their choice without cost or evaluative responsibility for students or faculty. Both universities require thesis/capstone projects that allow students freedom to pursue their collaborative and research skills as they choose. This 30-minute presentation invites a more general conversation about creative approaches to interdisciplinary honors education at research institutions.

10:50 – “Developing Interdisciplinary, Experiential Courses: ‘Locked Up: Incarceration in Question’ – A Team-taught Block Course at UNM Honors College” - Marygold Walsh-Dilley, Megan Jacobs (University of New Mexico)

This presentation will discuss our experiences creating a truly interdisciplinary, experiential curriculum focused around the causes, experiences, and consequences of mass incarceration in the United States. Co-taught by a sociologist and a fine artist, “Locked Up: Incarceration in Question” is a Block Course in the Honors College at University of New Mexico: a 6-credit, yearlong course that combines and synthesizes two distinct fields and which culminates in an experiential project. Rooted in the idea that mass incarceration is the civil rights issue of our time, this course seeks to motivate social responsibility and action. The fall semester is devoted to building a comprehension of mass incarceration in the United States, through the lenses of sociology and art, and intertwining the two through creative and data driven research. In the fall semester, students developed and utilized artistic and design skills to communicate sociological ideas, including a visual display of data through an infographic. Additionally, students created a diptych by pairing a quote from a sociological interview with a photographic portrait of their subject. In the spring semester, students undertook service-learning projects that synthesize the materials learned, necessitate problem solving and community engagement, and allow students to reflect upon an increasingly profound social problem. Service-learning teams worked with community
partners to develop a curriculum around alternatives to violence and restorative justice to make available to local schools, to offer workshops to create an art ‘zine with at-risk and homeless youth, and to provide workshops at the local youth detention center. This presentation will share some of the challenges and unique opportunities that developing this type of course presents, as well as some of what we’ve learned about how to create stimulating, active, empathy-building learning experiences for Honors students.

11:30 – “Engaging Student Groups in a Fully-Online Honors Course” - Allen Varela (Florida International University)

This presentation is on how to engage students in a fully-online honors course. Previous research shows that students are more likely disengaged with online courses than ones face-to-face. I will discuss reasons behind disengagement including but not limited to the perception of flexibility and non-intensive work. I will provide information about certain techniques implemented in my online course, “Motivation in the Virtual World,” involving individual and group work can be applicable for courses offered online. This presentation will provide tips on engaging students through interactive video lectures. I will show the advantages as well as overcoming disadvantages of teaching online through methods from my course. I will show how to establish interdisciplinary groups based on diversity in an online environment. We will communicate the steps to organizing a user-friendly online course, so students remain engaged with course material. My data will show the final products of my students’ group work, which include 2D virtual worlds and communities. This presentation will discuss about software that can be resourceful for fully-online honors courses. Although my online class does not have face-to-face meetings, I will show how an online environment can offer the same benefits for honors students.
Breakout Session: Admissions
Room: Pfahl 240
Moderator: Karrie Mills

9:30 – “Designing an Honors Freshman Class to Increase Inclusivity and Success” – Sumana Datta, Jonathan Kotinek (Texas A&M University)

The Texas A&M University Honors Program chooses incoming Honors Freshmen through a secondary application using first an SAT/ACT score cut-off of 1380 and secondly evaluation of essay quality for applicants near the cut-off boundary to identify the last 15% of class. Incoming freshmen classes have had high average SATs, yet between 30-45% fail to earn a GPA of 3.5 or better in their first semester. The freshman class is traditionally about 45-50% Engineering majors and 63% white. Analysis of overall applicants to Texas A&M University showed that prospective students applying in the last three days (when they would not have time to access and finish the secondary University Honors application) are 45% African-American or Latinx, compared to prior applicants who are 36% African-American or Latinx. In addition, previous analysis of overall college incoming SAT scores and earned GPAs revealed that students in the Colleges of Science, Geoscience, or Engineering had higher incoming average SATs and an effective 0.2 GPA deficit compared to students from the Colleges of Liberal Arts, Education, or Business. Thus our use of a relatively high SAT score cut-off enriches for prospective Honors STEM majors who will have a harder time achieving the level of academic success required to stay in our program. By targeting late applying prospective students in majors housed in the Colleges of Liberal Arts, Education, or Business, we hope to identify a population of Honors Freshmen who are more diverse and more successfully at maintaining the required Honors GPA. Furthermore, targeting these prospective students will enable us to bring the balance of majors in our Honors Freshman class into greater agreement with the relative size of the student populations in our colleges.


The competition for high-achieving students is fierce. Providing incentives to entice this population is critical to high yields. At our institution, the honors college has created a university-wide recruitment initiative, Honors First, aimed at this population. This innovative program is both free and non-committal and allows prospective first-year students to enroll in fall classes more than two months before other incoming students. Students can now obtain a full fall schedule of classes before graduating from high school. More importantly, this program generates recruitment feedback data specific to this high-achieving population that assesses what these students value in choosing a school. Now in its third year, this data has been incorporated into our institution’s broader recruitment strategy and has led to changes in student summer orientation programming and options. The timing of this program while the university is still in session, and in more clement weather,

enables honors college staff to connect these students and their families to faculty in their planned disciplines, a proven successful strategy in attracting this population.

We will examine how our small honors college within a large, public university took the lead in a brand new recruitment initiative, facilitated a university-wide project requiring
participation of eight other academic advising offices as well as multiple other departments and programs, and look at how the participating students, faculty and staff evaluated the program. We will end the formal presentation by discussing the data and its implications that have been accumulated from participating students regarding what aspects of the university’s recruitment process they found the most valuable and effective. This is the most important piece of our project: assessing what our students found valuable so that we may continuously improve how we recruit and retain our highest achieving students.

10:50 – “Holistic Application Review: Transitioning from an Honors Program to Honors College” - Russell Shrader (Virginia Tech)

Virginia Tech’s Honors College was officially established on July 1, 2016. As part of the transition from program to college, we changed our application process beginning with the Fall 2017 entering class. Prior to becoming a college, the program utilized a separate process from the undergraduate admissions application. The separate application was labor intensive and duplicated processes already performed by admissions. Furthermore, two distinct problems surfaced: 1) some students ignored or were not aware of the Honors admissions deadlines, and 2) the information obtained in the separate Honors application was not as not in-depth as the undergraduate admissions application, leading to some qualified applicants being missed. Establishment of the Honors College necessitated a re-evaluation of our process. The goal of the new process is to ensure that the Honors College more accurately reflects the profile of Virginia Tech undergraduate students and that we work to meet the goals of Inclusive VT, Virginia Tech’s new diversity initiative.

In an effort to better serve the mission of the university and to provide holistic review, the Dean of the Honors College and Director of Honors Admissions utilize undergraduate admissions reviewers to make recommendations for Honors, based on the applicant’s overall record in relation to the region and school. The Honors admissions team then reviews the actual undergraduate application files of those recommended students and makes official offers. Our partnership with admissions helps to streamline the process by removing another requirement for applicants. This session will reflect on the first year of this new application method, offering the challenges of establishing the new system, what worked well, and what will need to be refined. Participant questions and conversation will be encouraged so that we provide a learning environment for all Honors admissions teams.
Breakout Session: Assessment
Room: Pfahl 302
Moderator: Linn Van Woerkom

9:30 – “Learning From Those Who Leave” - Elizabeth Raisanen, Renee Dorjahn (University of Oregon)

Retention, as well as support of honors students’ timely graduation, are critically important objectives for honors programs and colleges. Smart, high-achieving honors students who arrive as freshmen don’t always complete the honors programs or colleges in which they initially enroll. Although the conventional strategy when analyzing retention data involves the analysis of admissions data (including SAT scores and high school GPA) in order to predict which students are most likely to complete an honors curriculum, we have approached the analysis of honors retention data somewhat differently—by analyzing data culled from questionnaires and exit interviews completed by honors students who have decided to withdraw from an honors college. This presentation will share insights based on multiple year data analytics to identify the reasons why and when students leave the Robert D. Clark Honors College (CHC) at the University of Oregon. This data analysis informs many aspects of the CHC’s advising practices, including the development of specific advising aids and other tools to help keep students on track. Specifically, the analysis of permanent leave data has suggested that students withdraw from the CHC for reasons that are both practical (having to do with curricular concerns, time to degree, and academic success) and intangible (that is, having to do with students’ feelings about their honors college experience). The insights gleaned from the analysis of the CHC’s permanent leave data can be applied to other honors colleges and programs, whether they enroll students at earlier or later stages of their undergraduate educations. Takeaways from this presentation include descriptions of specific advising tools and best practices, new advising initiatives, and the role of ongoing data analytics to track the success of these new efforts.

10:50 – “Mapping For Success: Using Curricular Techniques to Enhance Student Engagement” - Julie Humbel-Courtney (The Ohio State University)

Limited time and resources make it imperative that programs and initiatives support our intended learning outcomes. Using curricular approaches to the design of non-classroom learning experiences can help validate their value as meaningful educational experiences, particularly when working with faculty. This session will detail how we adapted curriculum mapping techniques to assess learning outcomes and strategies that support student engagement within our learning communities.
As honors programs have become increasingly common across the U.S. higher education landscape, there have been increased calls to justify the existence of these programs. In particular, during times of tight budgets, questions have been raised about the benefit of these programs in supporting the teaching and learning mission of college and universities. The benefit to students of honors programs has seldom been studied and presents methodological challenges due to the nature of the population. Because the majority of honors programs select the highest-achieving students by traditional academic criteria, conventional statistical comparisons are often inadequate. This presentation addresses this question by examining student success outcomes using a large institutional data set (N > 22000) of honors and non-honors students at a research-intensive institution. Using a less conventional form of propensity score analysis, the analysis compared honors and non-honors students on measures of both academic success (i.e., graduation rates and GPA) and academic rigor (i.e., level of courses taken). Overall the results indicate that the honors program positively impacts student success outcomes even after accounting for the inherent selection bias of these programs. The presentation will review these findings including differences by amount of engagement in the honors program and discuss the implications for honors programs, undergraduate education in general, and for future research.
Breakout Session: Experiential Learning
Room: Pfahl 330
Moderator: Rebecca Ward

9:30 – “Honors Study Abroad: Collaborating at Virginia Tech’s Center in Switzerland” – Paul Heilker (Virginia Tech)

This session will brainstorm possibilities for collaboration among honors programs through the Virginia Tech Steger Center for International Scholarship in Switzerland (SCIS): an 18th century villa one hour north of Milan with new classroom and dining facilities. The SCIS provides students with a central base from which to experience the many cultures of Europe. Programs at the center go far beyond the traditional classroom experience to leverage Ticino’s strategic location, spectacular natural beauty, and rich cultural and historical heritage.

The VT Honors College has its own semester abroad program at the SCIS each spring. The Presidential Global Scholars Program (PGS) seeks to create change agents: it is a transdisciplinary research community in which students 1) discover what public issues they find personally compelling; 2) explore the complexities of these issues across disciplinary, cultural, and national boundaries; and thus 3) become capable of contributing positively to some transformation in the world. Virginia Tech is open to all suggestions about how students and faculty at HERU institutions might collaborate through the facilities of the Steger Center. These efforts could be informal or formal, short-term or long-term, small-scale or large-scale. For instance, students and faculty in HERU honors programs could perhaps participate directly in PGS or use the SCIS as a base for their own honors study abroad programs. Moreover, we imagine new ventures, such as a summer seminar in which American and European honors students and faculty convene at the SCIS to explore a critical, contemporary issue – such as water security, for instance – from transnational perspectives before moving out across the continent to study these issues in concrete contexts.

These suggestions are meant merely to start our conversation. Session participants will leave the roundtable with a range of possibilities for using the SCIS to advance HERU honors programs through international cooperation.


In 2012 the Schreyer Honors College developed an India program with honors-quality learning goals based on a spring on-campus course, a month-long summer travel component, and a fall capstone seminar. In 2014 we added a South America program on the same model. This presentation will review the accomplishments and challenges of both programs, with regard to the achievement of learning goals, curricular integration, staffing, finances, and student recruitment.

11:30 – “Expanding the Honors Curriculum: Some Strategies” - Edward Munn Sanchez, Steven Lynn (University of South Carolina)
Featured Panel
Room: Blackwell Ballrooms A-C
Moderator: Linn Van Woerkom

12:30 - “Variations and Commonalities Among Institutions With Honors Education” - Arthur Spisak (University of Iowa), Patricia Smith (University of Central Arkansas), Jerry Herron (Wayne State University), Linn Van Woerkom (The Ohio State University)

The Demography of Honors examines honors education at an institution level, describing the population structure and distribution of honors programs and colleges. The approach, begun by Rick Scott with the NCHC Member Survey in 2012-13, produced results that contradicted the long held belief that extensive variation was the hallmark of honors education. Findings showed commonalities including honors education being offered through general education courses along with or as part of an institution-wide (stand-alone) program that is interdisciplinary and research-intensive; or less often a departmental program, taught by borrowed faculty that as a committee advise an administrator who has very little time-in-service. The administrator and staff occupy an honors center, advise students and produce reports for the institution in the summer. Differences did not vary from one university to the next, but rather between honors colleges and programs and between four-year and two-year schools. More recent studies using a demographic framework revealed that over 1500 institutions have honors education, representing nearly 60% of not-for-profit institutions offering undergraduate degrees. Differences in institution type and institution control were explored.

In 2016-17 NCHC expanded its survey of members to include non-members, in effect conducting a census of honors programs and colleges. It investigated curricular offerings, co-curricular programming, presence of a variety of high-impact pedagogical approaches, availability of scholarships, existence of living/learning communities in dedicated honors residence halls, faculty and staff arrangements, and more. Results of this census will be presented that explore the degree and location of variation among and commonalities within colleges and universities offering honors education.
Breakout Session: Advising
Room: Pfahl 202
Moderator: Linn Van Woerkom

1:45 – “Methods to Accurately Track Honors Requirements” - Debra Rodgers (Pennsylvania State University)

The path to graduating with honors is no easy task for students and staff alike. In today’s data-driven world, it is important for staff and administrators to keep accurate records on their students. In the Schreyer Honors College we enroll approximately 2000 students, representing a wide variety of colleges, majors and academic circumstances. While the University as a whole is powered by an Oracle PeopleSoft system, we developed and maintain a companion Student Records System (SRS). This in-house system is driven by local databases and web interfaces that students, faculty, and staff can interact with online. Collectively, these databases and web applications help ensure 100% accurate, real-time data/records for our Scholars. Attend this session to learn innovative ways to process, maintain, and customize your scholars’ records and academic processes.

2:25 – “A Step-By-Step Approach to Developing Undergraduate Research and Mentoring Programs for STEMM and NonSTEMM Students” – Megan Minton (University of Cincinnati)

Connecting honors students to research experiences that thoroughly prepare them both personally and professionally can be challenging. While there is experiential value in simply acquiring a position in a lab, we find that greater growth comes from being able to articulate the broader significance of the experience to one’s own story, and to the common good. We set out to create a program that paired undergraduate students in their first or second year with trusted graduate and post-doctoral fellow mentors to conduct research in their labs. The program sought to provide undergraduates with high-level biomedical research experience, as well as to aid in the development of mentoring skills for the researchers. Incorporating professional development opportunities as well as intentional and meaningful reflection during the experience helped a significant number of our students make thoughtful decisions relative to their career choice, as well as profound personal discoveries. As the program gained momentum and credibility, we saw the need to serve students in the humanities, social sciences, education, business, music, and creative arts who might also be interested in research. This session will examine the step-by-step approach we’ve taken to creating successful and comprehensive undergraduate research and mentoring programs in both STEMM and non-STEMM disciplines.

3:05 – “Setting up an Honors Program at a Dutch University” – Menno Lievers (Utrecht University)

The Dutch university-system is markedly different from the ones in the United States and in the UK. There is no hierarchy among Dutch universities; there is no selection procedure; all students who have passed their final High School exams are entitled to enroll at a university, if they have attended courses in the subjects that are obligatory for the field of
study of their choice. As a result, the student population is extremely diverse with respect to intellectual capacities, motivation and talent.

In this context setting up an honors-program meets conflicting demands. Should an honors-program be aimed at those talented students, who are not challenged by the ‘ordinary’ study-programs? Or should an honors-program broaden the intellectual horizon of students and provide opportunities to develop their social skills and meet with students from other disciplines?

At Utrecht University the university board has opted for a mixed format in which both needs are met. Within the Faculty of Humanities this format has received remarkable different responses from students in different disciplines. Whereas history and media and performance students tend to favor an honors-program that emphasizes interdisciplinary work, philosophy students are only interested in disciplinary subjects. The honors-program in language and cultural studies has a large drop out, because the disciplines are too diverse to create a unified, coherent program. The objective to create a community of honors students within the Faculty of Humanities is likewise difficult to achieve. Setting up an international exchange program for students with such diverse interests and aspirations is also an arduous task.

The present situation demands a thoroughgoing analysis. Is the attempt to impose university wide an honors-program with a unified structure a mistake? Or should we in The Netherlands opt for an honors-program that is aimed at academic excellence?

3:45 - Gaining Consensus Among Disciplines: Standardizing the Rigor of Honors Contracts – Heidi Appel (University of Toledo)

Honors Learning Contracts can look very different among academic disciplines but can often vary in perceived quality within them. A focus on explicit goals and key features of an honors education allows a consensus among disciplines on quality rubrics for honors contracts.
Breakout Session: The Student Experience
Room: Pfahl 240
Moderator: Tara Williams

1:45 – “Study in the States: Learner-Centered Experiential Courses” – Anthony Helms, Jane Baas (Western Michigan University)

In its fifth year, Study in the States is a unique program offering educational opportunities that take place outside the classroom. Small groups of honors students – typically 10 students – have the opportunity to travel and learn with our world-class faculty outside of Michigan. This summer, we will offer five course trips lasting 7-10 days. “The Big Easy” will focus on politics, culture and environment of the Mississippi River using New Orleans as a home base. For “Learning with video games! Really?” students will visit video game companies in Santa Cruz, Silicon Valley and Pittsburgh where games are developed to promote engaged active learning. Students enrolled in “Therapeutic Gardens of the Northwest” will travel to the Pacific Northwest to learn about gardens designed to help people heal and participate in constructing a new garden in Seattle. “Media Literacy in San Francisco: Who is Missing from San Francisco’s Story” will examine the power of selection and what is edited out of society when immigrants assimilate into a culture, when the media targets select audiences, when economics eradicates affordable housing, as well as what is missing from personal narratives. Students who enroll in “Walt’s Pilgrimage” will have the opportunity to explore the legacy of Walt Disney, beginning at his birthplace in Chicago and ending in California at his gravesite. Except for the cost of tuition, all expenses for travel are paid by the honors college. Courses count toward the honors credit requirement and general education. As one student noted, “You take the classroom into the real world and watch how concepts alone can’t account for the fact that things get messy in the real world, and that there are other factors that cannot be replicated and often are not considered in the classroom.”


It is no secret that honors students are academically talented and driven individuals who excel in and out of the classroom. This session will 1) highlight ways that the Schreyer Honors College engages and empowers student leaders throughout the academic year and 2) share “best practices” used to recruit, select, train and transition leaders and teams using the “SMART” model that helps define and create win-win scenarios for the student and the College: Shared Vision, Meaningful Purpose, Awareness of Goals, Responsibility, Transition. While the honors experience helps shape students who change the world, it is the student who is inspired and motivated to think critically about leadership and the impact their leadership role can have in the world.
The mission of the University Honors Program at the University of Minnesota highlights the need for a vibrant student community among Honors students. In addition to their interactions through our Honors curriculum and Honors living-learning community, we create enhanced opportunities for our students to connect through co-curricular programming. We seek to foster the serendipitous outcomes that grow from a rich and diverse community of high-ability students. Additionally, student success research routinely identifies a sense of community as an important element of student satisfaction, retention, and timely graduation.

In the past few years, UHP has designed a variety of programs to increase a sense of comradery among our students. This presentation will highlight community-building efforts from three sources: UHP Programming Committee, University Honors Student Association student group, and newly developed UHP co-curricular initiatives. These efforts reflect our commitment to sustain student engagement and connectedness from orientation through graduation and beyond.

We will share our model for community building followed by a question and answer session. We hope participants will take away programming and event ideas that can be implemented at other institutions as well as strategies for assessing programmatic success.
Breakout Session: Development/Alumni Relations
Room: Pfahl 302
Moderator: Cynthia Jackson-Elmoore

1:45 – “Collaborating with University Offices: Development and Alumni Relations” - Sean Miller, Tigiste Habtemariam, Jessica Hoffman (Pennsylvania State University)

Collaboration is a buzzword we hear on a daily basis. But what does it mean in a University setting in relation to an honors college/program? This session will talk about ways to collaborate with University central offices and academic colleges when it comes to development and alumni relations. Sean Miller, director of development and alumni relations at the Penn State Schreyer Honors College, and Jessica Hoffman, coordinator of alumni relations and annual giving at the Penn State Schreyer Honors College, will share their insights and best practices.

2:25 – “‘Get in where you (we) fit in!’ – A Perspective on Alumni Volunteer Engagement” - Tigi Habtemariam (Pennsylvania State University)

Our alumni volunteers give back to their institutions in many diverse, important and wonderful ways: serving a term or two on an alumni group board, reviewing scholarship applications, managing check-in for an annual event, or spearheading a community service project for area alumni. In this session, we’ll explore how we’ve learned that alumni volunteer engagement can (and will) look different based on a variety of factors, especially: life stage, interests and geographic region. Join us as we discuss the importance of staff truly understanding and supporting alumni volunteers engaging at a level they find comfortable and valuable, and allowing them to “get in where they (we) fit in!”

3:05 – “Building a Loyal Alumni Constituency From Scratch” – Sean Miller, Jessica Hoffman (Pennsylvania State University)

When the Schreyer Honors College was founded in 1997 with a landmark gift from William and Joan Schreyer, it was a blessing and a curse. The blessing being the College was founded and endowed, providing tremendous opportunities for our Scholars. The curse being the College was so new, it did not have the alumni support already in place to enhance the experiences of its Scholars beyond the Schreyer endowment. Attend this session to hear how SHC was able to attract successful alumni from across the University to support the College via mentoring and philanthropy and how a new alumni volunteer board was formed to support the initiatives of the College and its Scholars. Sean Miller, Director of Development and Alumni Relations and Jessica Hoffman, Coordinator of Stewardship, will share their experiences with you to help you create and/or grow alumni programs for your honors college/program.

Participants can expect to learn: 1) How the Schreyer Honors College built an honors constituency within the greater University alumni base, and how that may apply to other honors colleges and programs; 2) How the Schreyer Honors began an alumni volunteer board and how a group at your institution can support your college or program.
3:45 – “An Emergency Scholarship Campaign for Scholars” - Mitch Kirsch, Tigi Habtemariam, Jessica Hoffman (Pennsylvania State University)

The Schreyer Honors College relies on a robust campaign each fall semester to raise tens of thousands in annual funds for an emergency scholarship fund. The primary target for this campaign is parents of current Schreyer scholars, since the majority of our scholars (>60%) do not demonstrate significant financial need. This emergency fund serves as a resource for scholars who find themselves in financial crises during the academic year. Schreyer Honors College staff from multiple teams – development, student affairs, public relations - work on this complex initiative that has proven to be a successful safety net helping scholars to remain enrolled when they might otherwise have to withdraw from the university.

In this presentation, we will discuss the origin and conceptual purpose of the fund, the annual giving strategies behind bringing in the dollars, and the impact of these gifts on both our students and our fundraising objectives. Examples of the crowdfunding campaign will be presented, in addition to the related financial data outcomes. Outcomes of this session: 1) Participants will understand how an emergency scholarship program can be introduced and implemented; 2) Participants will learn the financial impact of an emergency scholarship program.
Breakout Session: Honors Housing/Honors-Academic Programs
Room: Pfahl 330
Moderator: Julie Humbel-Courtney

1:45 – “Effects of a Pre-Semester Academic Workshop and Residence in an Honors Hall for First-Year Students” - Bob Kirby, Emily Johnson, Art Spisak (University of Iowa)

Activities that take place early in a student’s college career can have a strong influence on their academic engagement and success. Two common experiences that many honors programs promote are pre-semester programs and living-learning communities for their students. This presentation addresses how a pre-semester academic workshop experience and an honors living-learning community for entering first-year students impacted student engagement and success in an honors program and research university.

The pre-semester academic experience, titled Honors Primetime, is a four-day, one semester hour course divided into small academic workshops and offered the week before fall semester classes begin. It is an elective option for entering honors students, and about one-third to one-half of the entering class chooses to take part. Honors House, the non-disciplinary specific living learning community for entering honors students, is also optional, and about one-third to one-half of the entering class elects to live in this residence hall. The majority of students who elect to take part in Primetime also elect to live in Honors House.

This study compares students who lived in Honors House and/or took part in Primetime to their entering class peers who did not elect these options. It tracks the levels of the students’ engagement with the honors program and also measures of their academic success, such as grade point average, during their undergraduate experience. Data collected thus far indicate that students who elected to participate in Primetime and live in Honors House were significantly more engaged in the honors program and had greater academic success overall.

2:25 – “Living Learning Community: A Must for Honors Education” - Umer Rahman (Florida International University)

Why should learning be limited to classrooms? At Florida International University, we have dedicated Honors Living Learning Community that embeds curriculum with state of the art living community. We promote interactive learning models through workshops, lectures, tutoring program, community outreach, off-hours advising and informal faculty and administrator meet-ups.

It is pertinent for Honors College today to have a space beyond the classroom; a space where students can continue their academic and development journey. This presentation explores best practices that have gone through many trials and tribulations throughout the years in making a truly unique experience for our students, faculty and administrators. In the past, our community has evolved from a wing in a residence hall to now an entire building of our own. We have learned valuable lessons in programming including: How to build and sustain partnerships amongst other units; How to incorporate Honors within Res-Life; How to embed service projects; and how to get buy-in from students.
3:05 – “Transition to an Honors Program Living Learning Community (LLC): Why & How?” - Roberta Berry (Georgia Institute of Technology)

Why consider transitioning an Honors Program to an LLC, with Honors Program students residing together in one or more residence halls, and with Honors Program staff offices, classrooms, and community space located onsite?

Sustaining student commitment to an Honors Program community can be challenging, especially in a large research university. Students have many opportunities to join other communities on campus and often live at a distance from fellow Honors Program students. An LLC supports and enriches the experience of community across diverse majors and interests, from first year to graduation, by co-location of students in-residence, staff offices, and faculty (teaching classes), and the delivery of curricular and extra-curricular programming and resources onsite.

Why care about sustaining community? Students who live and learn together in a community enjoy enhanced opportunities to connect with fellow students, staff, and faculty, and to learn more deeply and broadly—in hallway conversations, study sessions, after-class chats over coffee, planned and spontaneous extra-curriculars. Discussions begun in the classroom extend into the night, entrepreneurial ideas and start-up partnerships are born, students find common interests and join campus clubs together, relationships with faculty deepen and research relationships begin.

How to transition to an Honors Program LLC? The move requires sustained commitment from all levels and all divisions of the university—housing, facilities, parking, maintenance, information technology, parking, and academic units. This requires a vision and mission that appeals and connects to all levels and divisions.

The presentation will include discussion of the transition experience for the Georgia Tech Honors Program beginning in fall 2014, and the results as measured by survey data and observations.

3:45 – “The Honors Program at the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, Utrecht, The Netherlands: Unique Student Characteristics?” – Bas Swildens (University of Utrecht)

In 2014, for the first time at the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, Bachelor students with high grades (65 out of 223) could apply for an honors program (VBHP). The VBHP comprises 15EC \(^1\) on (extern) broadening courses, 15EC on in-depth clinical lessons and 15EC on the thesis at honors level. The design of the VBHP is largely based on research of e.g. Renzulli (2002) and Sternberg (2003).

In order to (re)shape the VBHP to the needs and wishes of the veterinary honors student, and to gain insight in possible indicators that can be used for selecting future honors students, we conducted a research on characteristics and motivations of our students. We used the framework of Scager (2012), examining differences between honors and regular students on a set of characteristics related to excellence.

Veterinary Bachelor honors students (N= 22) and regular veterinary students (N=117) completed a self-assessment inquiry. Results of our study show that the veterinary honors student differed from regular veterinary student with high grades in the characteristics desire to learn and enjoyment of studying. In contrast to other faculties of the Utrecht University\(^2\), veterinary honors student did not differ from the regular veterinary student in their openness.
for new experiences and creativity. Results and implications will be discussed during the presentation. Moreover, results of the second phase of the project (started in November), in which the motivation of students to join the VBHP will be examined, will be available and discussed at the time of the conference.

1) 1 European Credit roughly is the equivalent of 0.5 US College Credit
2) Faculties of Law, Humanities, Physics, Liberal arts and sciences

Optional Session
Room: Pfahl 302

4:30 – “Leading When You Aren’t In Charge: A Conversation About the Number Two Role in Honors” - Melissa Johnson (University of Florida)

Large honors programs and colleges found at our research universities often include an extensive and diversified honors staff. Academic advisors, development officers, and student development personnel all play an integral role in the daily operations of honors even though they aren’t the dean or director.

While the track to becoming an honors dean or director has been fairly well defined (most often via tenured faculty positions), less is known or discussed about other full-time honors personnel and their potential career trajectories. In addition, professional development offerings in our field are often geared towards the person “in charge” of honors or for honors teaching faculty.

This session is designed for the cadre of staff who do not serve as the dean or director but have substantial full-time administrative responsibilities in honors - sometimes referred to as the “number two” role at the associate or assistant level. We will use this session as an opportunity to network with others who share a common purpose and function.

More specifically we will discuss the variety of roles we fulfill, typical challenges and unique opportunities we find in our positions, and capacity-building for future roles in honors or undergraduate education. We will conclude with a conversation about the ways various associations can meet our professional development needs.
DAY 2 - Thursday, May 25th

Breakout Session: Assessment
Pfahl 202
Moderator: Anne Krabacher

9:30 – “Using Data and Assessment Outcomes to Guide Decisions” - Erica Rojas, Jennifer Wiseman (University of Utah)

The Honors College at the University of Utah (UU) has taken important steps to become data-driven and to make decisions based on assessment outcomes. This presentation will discuss how continuous program assessment and data gathering have been used to show the value of an Honors education across campus and how they have influenced decisions regarding curriculum and student services. Additionally, we will discuss the impact data has had on our admissions, retention, and graduation. As part of this presentation, we will share the steps the UU Honors College took to integrate data as part of our decision-making and the lessons we have learned along the way. Participants will have the opportunity to reflect on how data is used (or not used) in their units and share their experiences with other colleagues.

10:50 – “Honors & Scholars ePortfolio Overview and Assessment” – Leo Hoar, Lindsey Joyce Chamberlain, (The Ohio State University)

In this program, we will discuss the introduction and use of an ePortfolio platform throughout the Honors student experience at OSU. We will describe how it was integrated into Honors experiences, the supports we put in place for it, how it can be used in a variety of ways inside and outside the classroom, and how we assess its effectiveness.

11:30 – “Engaging Engineers: Honors Community Engagement as a Bridge Among Academic Disciplines” - Heidi Appel (University of Toledo)

Honors education serves all honors students well but its focus on the liberal arts is not uniformly valued by students in professional programs like engineering, education, nursing, and pharmacy. We have designed a new course that bridges that divide through work with local agencies to provide help in extending their impacts in the community. Student teams help to identify best practices, make recommendations, and write a grant proposal that the agency can then use to secure funding. Students gain interdisciplinary and interprofessional training, experience in proposal writing, and the opportunity to develop the proposal further to become their required honors thesis.
Breakout Session: The Student Experience
Room: Pfahl 240
Moderator: Jennifer Butts

9:30 – “Identifying Mental Health Concerns of Honors Students” - Kathleen Bieschke, Mitch Kirsch (Pennsylvania State University)

Across the country, it has been well documented that college students have serious mental health concerns and that demand for services has increased. How do high-achieving students fit into this equation? Are they more, or less likely to seek help from mental health professionals? Are scholar needs different from other college students? How can honors college staff best meet the demand from our scholars?

Using data provided the Center for Collegiate Mental Health, a practice-science research network of over 300 college and university counseling centers, this presentation will examine the mental health concerns of honors students and in particular, determine whether there are particular subsets of honors students who evidence more concerns. Mental health initiatives implemented at Penn State will be presented.

The presenters will introduce the topic with the goal of engaging participants in conversation and discussion.

Outcomes of this session: 1) Participants will be able to identify common mental health concerns of honors students; 2) Participants will be able to identify innovative strategies for addressing honors students concerns.

10:50 – “Scholarship and Service: The Eminence Fellows Program and Its Unique Cohort-based Service Model” - Rebecca Ward (The Ohio State University)

The Eminence Fellows Program is Ohio State’s top merit scholarship, awarding 20-25 incoming freshmen full cost-of-attendance scholarships each year. The program tasks each incoming class with researching the Columbus community to find important problems and issues addressing our city. They must then design, develop, and facilitate an initiative to address the issue. It is a unique way to develop a team dynamic as the group directs their brainpower towards making a difference.

The Program Coordinator, joined by two current Fellows will share experiences and perspectives on a few of the class initiatives. There are existing hurdles as well as successful outcomes and the presentation will open up for questions and discussion at the conclusion.
In higher education we often ask our colleagues, how do we teach history as an interdisciplinary course that engages our students? Three years ago, I was introduced to “Reacting to the Past (RTTP)” as pedagogy and have never looked back. My course, entitled, “Inhabiting Other Lives” teaches about history of South Asia from the perspective of religion, culture, political geography and identity. I embedded RTTP along with “City as Text” (pedagogy) to make students understand the importance of nationalism which is rooted in religious context within South Asia.

The presentation will emphasize on why we need innovative pedagogies to teach our evolving student body. I will also share my experience along with other colleagues who have successfully embedded RTTP as part of their curriculum. The presentation will explore how we can add RTTP to existent courses to enhance student participation and bring about positive learning outcomes.
**Breakout Session: Diversity and the Role of Students**

Room: Pfahl 302  
Moderator: Karrie Mills

**9:30 – “First Gens in Honors: What Works and What is Next?” - Bess German, Justin Micomonaco (Michigan State University)**

Recent quantitative modeling of student success in the Honors College at Michigan State University (MSU) identified two trends among first generation college students requiring attention. In reviewing matriculation data, first generation students are significantly less likely to accept an invitation to join the Honors College in the first place. Also, when controlling for other entering characteristics, the strongest predictor of students not persisting in the Honors College at MSU is first generation status. Preliminary research into the matter suggests that high-achieving first generation students are a unique set of students that require a nuanced approach that, in some cases, deviates from the recommendations found in the general literature about first generation students. To address these concerns, the MSU Honors College has developed a multi-pronged intervention of new initiatives to address these issues. In this session, we will discuss the reasons honors students do not persist as well as initial initiatives designed to encourage successful completion of honors requirements. Importantly, the session will feature a facilitated discussion encouraging participants to share observations and strategies for next steps to support first generation students in honors programs.

**10:10 - Increasing Inclusivity: A Three-Pronged Approach to Expanding Diversity in Honors Education - Tamy Burnett (University of Nebraska)**

Honors education has long been the purview of the elite—the best and the brightest students are recruited, nurtured, and rewarded. Standard metrics in American education for determining who qualifies as the “best” or the “brightest,” however, tend to favor students with privilege. Consequently, Honors education programs have a legacy of being more readily accessible to those who are already advantaged. Often this results in Honors populations that are mostly homogenous and fail to accurately represent the wealth of diverse backgrounds, experiences, and identities of the student body at large—especially at predominately white institutions. To be effective, efforts to create a more diverse Honors community must account for multiple factors.

This presentation will explain the three-pronged approach undertaken by the University Honors Program at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln to actively increase and maintain diversity among the Honors student body. The three-pronged approach focuses on recruitment practices, curricular experiences, and co-curricular programming. Specifically, the presenter will discuss efforts to diversify the image of Honors in recruitment materials while also authentically representing the current Honors student body. Next, the presenter will explain efforts to increase opportunities for integrating a commitment to diversity into Honors curriculum and to connect students with faculty of color. Finally, the presenter will describe intentional means of increasing student awareness about the value of diversity, as well as recognizing and addressing barriers to inclusivity, via co-curricular programming and student leadership development. Although they are yet in the initial stages, these efforts have seen
preliminary success. Hopefully, they may serve as an example for other institutions seeking to increase diversity in their student populations.

11:30 - “Sense of Belonging and Social Networks in High-Achieving Students” – Kay Banks (University of South Carolina)
Breakout Session: Experiential Learning
Room: Pfahl 330
Moderator: Angela Taylor

9:30 – Teaching Clinical Reasoning and Decision-Making Skills by Visualizing the Thought Process: an Interdisciplinary Gaming Project Involving Honours Students from Veterinary and Computing Sciences – Andrea Lauman (Utrecht University)

Clinical reasoning comprises the capability of a person to link its own observations and interpretations to medical knowledge, thereby rendering this an essential skill to master in professional veterinary and medical health care (1). Teaching and learning this skill can be challenging for both teacher and student, because of the complexity of the thought process (1). Moreover, the limited availability of real patients necessitates teachers to rely on paper casuistries for practicing purposes. However, serious games, which are designed for the simulation of real-life situations, may offer a solution (2,3).

In health sciences, serious games can be used to provide students with the opportunity to practice clinical reasoning and decision-making skills in a safe, authentic environment (1,2). Several games have already been developed and used in human medical sciences (1-4), but in veterinary medicine, their availability is scarce. As a result, an interdisciplinary serious gaming project was set-up with computing science students and veterinary honours students.

The project aimed to develop a serious game for veterinary students to practice their clinical reasoning skills using interactive casuistries, gain insight in the work processes of a different discipline, deepen the veterinary students’ knowledge regarding the structure of the clinical reasoning process and familiarize the computing science students with the process of designing software for a commissioning party. The end product of this collaboration is a software program which allows teachers to program new cases which can subsequently be worked by students by having them systematically go through the different steps of the clinical thought process, while receiving feedback following each completed step. Moreover, this project provides a great example of how an interdisciplinary collaboration can contribute to the professional development of the (honours) student.

10:10 – “Undergraduate Research and/or Creative Activity Experience: Is It a Liability or an Asset to Honors Programs and Colleges?” - Madhavan Soundararajan, Justina Clark (University of Nebraska)

Several studies have indicated that an undergraduate research and/or Creative activity experience help students not only make right decisions under critical situations but also reinforce their decision-making skills. However many Honors programs and Colleges due to a variety of reasons are faced with the decision of making this experience a priority or an apology. It is imperative that research-led pedagogical approach should include attainment of transferable skills which should include the theoretical knowledge and practical abilities to explore the existing opportunities and create new opportunities, to develop action plans and effectively network. Faculty guidance in this enterprise, is rather critical, when they are able to combine enthusiasm with interpersonal, organizational and research skills in facilitating
positive outcomes as reported in a survey (Science 316, 548-549, 2007). We at the University of Nebraska strongly believe that an undergraduate research or creative activity experience in general is an asset not only to students whether or not they are in the Honors program, but in particular to the University itself. To that end, we have taken some measurable and qualitative steps to enhance student learning through their research experience. This presentation will provide details of those efforts and discuss reasons why an undergraduate research experience should not be compromised as its benefits far outweigh its liabilities.


As everyone at this conference knows, Honors students are notoriously tethered to their GPA. Assignments that unleash creativity can seem threatening. What if they fail (a.k.a. B+)? They hew to the safe path. Drawing on Rebecca Solnit’s A Field Guide to Getting Lost, this conversation will be about freeing students from academic house arrest: syllabi with rubrics that protect students from taking chances. Two experiential setting are on offer. Off campus venues with potential to destabilize the status quo include: Honors Appalachia, class at the Wagner Free Institute of Science, an art gallery in Old City, a walking tour of Ireland, and class at Graterford Maximum Security Prison. On campus classrooms that potentially destabilize expectations: assignments that elude Siri.

In a recent and unscientific survey, I asked students about memorable assignments that they valued. They described taking chances, feeling a little uncertain, a little lost along the way. They all shared an element of ego-danger (my assessment). In the end the work had to go public. What were those assignments? The conversation will turn on what faculty can do to remind themselves how it feels to be exposed, to take a chance, to fail (heroically)—or not. What happens when the professor assigns her/himself the assignment?

11:30 – “More than Mentoring: Creating Student and Young Alumni Engagement Opportunities” - Chip Tuson (The Ohio State University)

Mentoring is one of the most common forms of student-alumni interaction, but while the returns are great there are opportunities to do more. Student programming and young alumni programming are often handled separately at institutions. However, when combined, the results can be powerful. This session will discuss how one department is working to blur the lines between student and alumni engagement, to increase opportunities for students to interact with alumni, and for alumni to give back to their alma mater.
Breakout Session: Advising
Room: Pfahl 202
Moderator: David McIntyre

1:45 – “The Value of Creating Career Partnerships” - Lisa Kerchinski (Pennsylvania State University)

How do we help students maximize access to career resources at our Universities? With limited staff resources and budgets, partnering with other constituents to create advantageous opportunities for honors students is key. This session will 1) provide examples of partnerships and strategies utilized at Penn State Schreyer Honors College 2) Provide a forum to share challenges and “best practices.” Whether students are interested in graduate school, fellowships, or a job, working collaboratively with other units will allow honors students to take full advantage of the resources at our respective campuses. The challenges of working together within large institutions will be discussed. Participants will have an opportunity to develop ideas to implement on your respective campuses during this session.

3:05 – “A Multifaceted Approach to Advising in Honors” - Hanna Holmquist, Rebecca Bott (South Dakota State University)

National data suggest that half or more of students who begin an Honors curriculum will not complete it. Advising is an important component of the Honors student experience and can have a significant impact on student success and completion in Honors. South Dakota State University’s Fishback Honors College has several approaches to advising Honors students in an effort to achieve the following goals: Provide multiple mechanisms for students, faculty, and advisors to access Honors information; Empower students to take ownership of their Honors experience; Build relationships between Honors students and staff; Enhance persistence in Honors.

This presentation will discuss strategies that can be employed to meet the goals listed above. These strategies include: Creation of an Honors College Student Handbook; Online tracking of each student’s Honors credits and progress toward completing the Honors requirements; Advising meetings with first semester Honors students; Major-specific Honors advising guides; Online advising surveys designed to gather student questions and feedback.

Some of the advising strategies that will be discussed can be implemented immediately within any Honors College or Program, but most efforts yield the greatest potential for impact when created in collaboration with other campus units. Many of us are performing the Honors Advisor role in addition to other duties and obligations, so relationships with advising professionals from other areas of campus is extremely important and can create manifold increases for advising possibilities. As such, this presentation will also suggest ways to maximize impact and reach of advising efforts—particularly with limited staff and resources.


Student success is shaped by lessons learned in classroom, lessons taught by distinguished faculty, lessons experienced on campus. No greater lesson has more value than
one that shapes the way we perceive the world and our role in it. The impact of a mentor is significant and the success of a Schreyer Scholar is often shaped by successful and meaningful mentoring relationships. The Schreyer Honors College also believes that the best way to prepare to lead is to learn from those who have led and who want to share their experience, their vision, and their wisdom. The SHC Mentoring Programs are designed to engage the student in a meaningful one-on-one mentoring relationship that will help shape them as leaders in their respective fields. In this session, participants can expect to hear about: 1) Principles for implementing a successful mentoring program; 2) Personal stories of success; 3) Impact of Mentor/Protégé relationships; 4) Anticipating and overcoming challenges faced by any mentoring program.
Breakout Session: Administrative Organization/Faculty Engagement
Room: Pfahl 240
Moderator: Bob Kirby

1:45 – “Becoming a College and Creating a New Diploma Structure” – Sara Vandyke (Virginia Tech)

Honors at Virginia Tech has never had a required set of courses or experiences for every student. Given this flexibility, six diploma options were developed gradually over time as the needs of our students grew. This structure soon began to provide more confusion than clarity, and data from our annual student assessment tool and graduation reports consistently showed that students gravitated away from the more intensive research- and thesis-based honors diploma options.

In Summer 2016, the University Honors program was officially renamed the Virginia Tech Honors College. This new push to assert honors education at Virginia Tech on the national stage meant rethinking our curriculum, among other things, to make way for innovative academic experiences and, specifically, the way students earn an honors diploma. Virginia Tech is currently undergoing an academic rebranding as a university to focus on the educational needs of the 21st century student. The concept of the VT-Shaped student, or a student who combines both disciplinary depth and interdisciplinary capabilities with guided experiential learning, became the inspiration for the new Honors College diplomas.

Ultimately, the concept of the VT-Shaped student, our long-held understanding of critical experiences for undergraduates, and our new college mission statement were the components that informed the creation of the new diploma structure, which intentionally maintains our legacy of curricular flexibility. At the time of the conference, the new diploma structure will have existed only a semester. We hope to report data on the progress of the transition and student reactions to the new structure.

2:25 – “Effectively Engaging Faculty in Enhancing Honors Experiences” - Theresa Culley, Debbie Brawn, Raj Mehta (University of Cincinnati)

An important challenge for honors programs and colleges nationwide lies in how to engage faculty across the university – whether it be teaching honors courses or working directly with students and staff. Many faculty are already involved in their own departments with substantial teaching and service loads, but these same faculty can be indispensable to the success of honors programs. The challenge is in finding ways to engage with these faculty that fulfill their interests and align with their requirements of professional advancement.

At the University of Cincinnati, we are using a new model of a Provost Fellow, a faculty member selected to liaise with other faculty throughout the university on behalf of the University Honors Program (UHP). A primary responsibility of the Provost Fellow is to help faculty understand the unique nature of the UHP, how it differs from most honors programs, and how individual faculty can benefit from engaging with the UHP. The UHP’s vision is to develop students into global citizen scholars who lead innovative efforts to solve the world’s complex problems. Deep engagement with faculty is critical to this and to our model of learning through experience, reflection and integration.

One Provost Fellow responsibility is to work with faculty across colleges to develop honors seminar courses. These seminars offer unique opportunities for faculty to develop
creative and collaborative courses that are outside of their normal teaching responsibilities. The Provost Fellow has also begun a new summer research program, UHP+DISCOVER, to match honors students with faculty in non-STEMM fields. Finally, the Provost Fellow developed a Graduate Pathways Program to help honors students find suitable programs after graduation. Having a Provost Fellow as an advocate for the UHP has helped the program reach out effectively to faculty throughout the university, ultimately better serving the students within our honors program.

3:05 – “A 21st Century Honors Education: From Theory to Practice” - Jennifer Lease Butts, Jaclyn Chancey (University of Connecticut)

In Fall 2016, the UConn Honors Program advisory board approved the adoption of a new theoretical framework to inform practice and assessment. This framework, grounded in gifted education research by Joseph Renzulli and colleagues, seeks to differentiate an Honors Program experience from the larger UConn experience. Renzulli’s research focuses on broad exposure to new areas for students, the development of expertise through mentorship, and public presentations of work in meaningful settings. The framework we have created defines desired outcomes of an Honors education as well as the types of practices that should lead to these outcomes.

In Spring 2017, a task force composed of faculty, administrators, and honors students completed work on a new curriculum and awards model based on this framework. The purpose of this group included moving from two Honors awards (Sophomore Honors and Honors Scholar – effectively a 2 + 2 set of Honors requirements) to a more comprehensive model of Honors awards and requirements based on the adopted framework.

In this presentation, we will first describe the new framework and the process of defining our new curricular model. We will briefly discuss the make-up and processes of the Task Force and the role that it played in garnering campus-wide support for the proposed changes. Then we will turn to the future: What is next in terms of student and faculty support, planning, implementation of the new model? What assessment and program evaluation practices will we need to implement in order to test the model and further Honors research? We will invite colleagues to share similar experiences with curricular/requirements revisions with the larger group, making the session interactive for the audience.
Breakout Session: Diversity and the Role of Students
Room: Pfahl 302
Moderator: Lindsey Chamberlain

1:45 – “Authenticity and Balancing Acts in Peer Education” - Amber Zoe Smith (Virginia Tech)

In the Virginia Tech Honors College, peer educators are the primary instructors of our first-year seminars and reading seminars, so they receive intense training and support. One of our best faculty development practices is emphasizing authenticity in the decision-making processes of teaching.

All peer educators want to be good teachers, but they do not often realize that their idea of the perfect teacher is a highly personal amalgamation from many sources including their own past teachers, their parents, media depictions, and their cultural relationship with education. Few students realistically compare that ideal with themselves, which can lead to feelings of inferiority when it clashes with their own personality and instincts. We help students confront these concepts and prepare for peer education challenges through an assignment cycle that fuses composition pedagogy with best practices in honors education.

We begin by imagining teaching identity as a giant mixing board with peer educators as engineers who balance the overall sound through continuous adjustments. Like moving a slider from one end of a dial to the other, a peer educator’s movement toward one identity is equal movement away from its opposite: supporter vs. motivator or impartial vs. honest. Students brainstorm challenging balancing acts and reflect on their likely and ideal positions between extremes. Finally, they discuss their responses with each other.

Assessment data since we began using this faculty development technique three years ago indicate that our peer educators 1) start the semester at a high level of confidence in their decision-making; 2) gain a common vocabulary that enables them to name and discuss their experiences; 3) come to rely on each other’s diverse perspectives while also becoming more comfortable and flexible with their own ideas; and 4) are more willing to cross over into new peer education settings that share these transferrable skills.

2:25 – “Ogden Leaders Program: Developing Student Innovation and Accomplishment” - Michael Blandino (Louisiana State University)

Entering its fifth year, the Roger Hadfield Ogden Leaders program has been a platform for creativity and positive impact, and can serve as a model for similar initiatives. The program’s goal is to encourage innovative thinking among top students, to channel such innovation toward a well-defined budget and operational plan, and to foster the completion of a major off-campus project. Student interest in making proposals is driven by the access to resources, to garnering the support of the college and its network, and to the difference that can be made through such a project. Due to the variable nature of the proposals, support of the implementation of these projects requires an adaptive model that is well matched by an extensive research university. A novel aspect of the Ogden Leaders program in comparison to other student initiative programs is its requirement that projects have local relevance to the State of Louisiana. This element of the program’s design has led to service-oriented projects related to our state’s challenges in education, race, and coastal erosion.
The Honors College at Georgia State University is located in the former home of the Atlanta Life Insurance Company, founded by Alonzo F. Herndon who was born into slavery yet became the nation’s first black millionaire. Herndon, his wife Adrienne, and later his son Norris, were early and ardent advocates for civil rights. Our location in the last physical structure built for Herndon’s company, provides a springboard into the history and current context of the national and local struggle for civil rights. One part serendipity, one part intentionality, and one part fate produced an experimental seminar course on the legacy of the Herndon family, a fruitful relationship with a local foundation, and the development of relationships with legendary civil rights leaders such as Lonnie C. King, Dr. Rev. CT Vivian, Charles Black, and others.

This presentation will have three foci. The first is to describe the goals, objectives, and outcomes of the now popular seminar course, complete with examples of students’ archival research at the Auburn Avenue Research Library African American Life and Culture, and clips from a documentary on the course produced by Atlanta Interfaith Broadcasting Company. The second is to describe how the course led to a fruitful relationship with a local foundation to support and endow the initiative. The third is to describe how the initiative nurtures still tender relationships, in the heart of Sweet Auburn Avenue, the heart and soul of the African American community prior to 1960.

The question of merit and how it is applied is pervasive throughout higher education. From the selection of students, to the assessment of their performance, the identification of merit is often based on widely accepted assumptions and seemingly objective measures. But is merit ever objective and universal? A critical examination of our understanding of the concept of merit is much needed at this historical juncture.

The University of Kansas is a majority white school; the Honors Program within has historically drawn many of its students from the high schools located in the wealthy suburbs of Kansas City. This paper will explore the Honors Program’s evolving understanding of merit at a time when more energy is spent creating a more inclusive community, ensure respect and safety for an increasingly more diverse student population and affirm equity in all of their practices.

My goal is to complicate our understanding of merit by putting it in dialogue with the interrelated concepts of belonging and inclusion. In doing so, I will also be looking into the ways in which belonging and inclusion affect Honors education on college campuses.
Breakout Session: The Role of Students/Student Retention
Room: Pfahl 330
Moderator: Leo Hoar

1:45 – “They Come But WHY Do They Finish? Early Career Factors Related to Honors Program Completion” - Jaclyn Chancey, Patricia Szarek (University of Connecticut)

In 2013, Goodstein & Szarek published the results of a small research study connecting a mid-career award with retention and graduation in the UConn Honors Program. The strong relationship that they reported has continued to hold, with recipients of our Sophomore Honors award graduating as Honors Scholars at a rate three times that of those who do not receive the award. However, that study did not allow us to determine what aspect(s) of the mid-career award are most influential. This presentation will report on a new study that unpacked the effects of multiple components of the award—including GPA, co-curricular engagement, and interdisciplinary coursework—on Honors retention and eventual graduation.

2:25 – “Recruitment, Engagement and Retention: Maximizing the Role of Student Leaders” - Nicole Baron, Krista Klein, Issata Oluwadare (Rutgers University)

At the new Honors College at Rutgers University–New Brunswick, more than 150 of its 1,000 first- and second-year students hold leadership roles, growing and enhancing the community and contributing to its mission of Curiosity. Knowledge. Purpose. In fact, these student leaders are playing a crucial role in the recruitment, engagement, and retention of the student population—a job that they are uniquely suited to doing.

Charged with retaining and attracting top talent across New Jersey and beyond, the Honors College population will be approximately 2,000 students by 2018 with a current average SAT score of 600 points above the national average (on the 2,400 scale). Students are invited prior to enrolling in their initial year of college and remain members throughout their four years. First-year students are required to live in the Honors College living-learning facility, which helps build understanding of its mission and strong bonds to the community, while second-year students reside in honors cohort housing across campus and engage through events as well as opportunities tailored for them.

The Honors College attributes its strong student leader presence to the way students are empowered and the range of opportunities provided, including an Ambassador program, Student Advisory Board, four different Residential Leadership positions, five student-initiated organizations, a Media Team, and Diversity Peer Educators. All opportunities are advised by staff.

This session will review the unique ways that the Honors College of Rutgers-New Brunswick leverages the skills, enthusiasm, and passion of students for the Honors College. Through strategic selection processes, training, supervision, and evaluation practices, this relationship is mutually beneficial as the college gains student commitment and the students learn transferrable skills. Further, university faculty and administrators see students as stakeholders and partners in the educational process and in creating a thriving high-achieving community. There is no stronger way to connect with our students.