

## INSTITUTIONAL ASSESSMENT REPORT

**HONORS PROGRAM / 2012**

### Department's Relationship to the College Mission and Strategic Plan

*(completed Spring semester or on accreditation cycle)*

*In a paragraph or two, discuss how the department's work carries out the Mission and Strategic Plan.*

The Honors Program, currently in its 25<sup>th</sup> year, supports the College Mission by providing a “quality college experience” and “[s]uperior teaching” that “promotes intellectual, social, and personal growth.” Honors students learn in a small, seminar environment that encourages a free and open exchange of ideas, along with enrichment activities that will help high-achieving students reach for even higher levels of excellence. This alternative general education program meets the needs of the upper tier of students at this institution.

The Honors Program supports the *Strategic Long-Range Plan* as follows:

#### I. Student Learning:

- (a) **Deliver a high quality, consistent, rigorous education to all of our students.** Award-winning Honors faculty members strive to offer students a superior educational experience, consistent with the abilities of the academically talented.
- (f) **Target and address the needs of high-achieving students.** Each of the 17 honors courses has a non-honors counterpart in a specific discipline. Six courses fulfill the general education humanities requirement for the Associate of Arts degree. Two fulfill the general education social science/Constitution requirement; two meet the lab science general education requirement; one meets the math general education requirement; three fulfill communications general education requirements; and two others fulfill social/behavioral science requirements.

#### II. Student Support:

- a. **Provide educational services and resources that meet the evolving needs of the diverse community.** The honors seminar rooms at the Hillsboro and Arnold campuses provide honors students computers, books and references, and a dedicated space to study, learn, and socialize.

## **Summary of Departmental Activities, Assessment and Use of Results**

*(completed Spring semester or on accreditation cycle)*

*(may include process flowchart)*

*Provide a brief overview of major accomplishments since the last review and how assessment results have been used to improve services/learning outcomes.*

### *Activities and Accomplishments*

- During this review period, the Honors Program has evolved and grown with the addition of a new dedicated Honors seminar room at the Jefferson College-Arnold campus. We identified the need for expanding the Honors Program to the JCA campus when Dena McCaffrey, Director, JCA and NW, notified us of repeated student requests for honors offerings up north. High-performing students reported their desire to participate in the program but pointed out the difficulties involved in travelling down to the Hillsboro campus to do so. As a result, the new seminar room was designed with best practices for honors education, including natural lighting, u-shaped seminar-style configuration of desks, and computers/printers placed around the perimeter of the classroom. The beautiful new Honors space at JCA improves upon the design of the Hillsboro honors room with the additional bonus of classroom computers, which give honors instructors the flexibility to do many more classroom activities to enrich instruction. The computers are also available for Honors students to use for their projects and assignments when class is not in session.
- The extension of Honors offerings to JCA has allowed students from the northern portion of the county to have the option of pursuing a more challenging curriculum. The program is still in its early stages at JCA, but we have successfully filled three or four sections of Honors courses each semester for the past two years, including offerings in English, History, Philosophy, Humanities, and Speech/Drama.
- Another student-initiated change involved expanding the math and science offerings of the Honors Program. In the previous reporting period, we had no honors math and only a single honors science course. To add more general education choices to our program, we invited Dr. Ryan Groeneman and Ms. Connie Kuchar to design a new course in their respective disciplines. Dr. Groeneman's Honors General Chemistry course was on the schedule and beginning to fill when he accepted a position at another institution, so we are holding the course in abeyance until we identify another extremely well-qualified chemistry instructor for the honors faculty. Ms. Kuchar's Honors College Algebra class will be running for the first time in Spring 2013. Dr. Patti McDaniel has also agreed to join the honors faculty and offer a section of Honors Biology at JCA beginning in Spring 2014 (to alternate with the fall offering of Honors Biology at Hillsboro).

### *Assessment*

- As part of this review, the former Vice President, Dr. Joyce Banjac, asked the Honors Faculty to consider a number of pertinent questions, including:
  - How are honors classes different from sections of non-honors?
  - What is the curriculum process for course development/changes in the honors program?
  - What criteria are used to determine honors faculty?
  - How can we support honors student connectedness?
  - How can we work with PTK? With the PTK honors topic?
  - What are our student outcomes? Trends?
  - How can we improve the visibility of the program on the web? Across campus?
- As part of this review process, we have drafted a document that contains the following portions:
  - Honors Program Vision and Philosophy
  - How Honors Faculty Are Chosen
  - The Honors Program and Adjuncts
  - How Honors Courses Are Added to the Curriculum
  - For each Honors course, a one-page discussion of how it differs from its non-honors counterpart

We expect to finish codifying long-standing Honors Program methods by early Spring 2013.

## **Internal and External Data Collection and Analysis**

*(completed by Fall semester or on accreditation cycle)*

*Gather and analyze relevant internal and external data (link to data).*

### ***Internal Data***

#### **Faculty Indicators for Honors (H), (School Years 2007-2012) School Terms 200801 through 201203 (Summer 2007 through Spring 2012)**

Number of Course Sections Taught	Total Students	Attrition Number ("W" Grades)	Attrition Percent	Student Credit Hours Earned	Average Students	Average GPA	Annualized 5-Year Program FTE
102	1,339	136	10.2%	3,357	13.1	2,848	22.4

Notes: Attrition % represents the number of "W" grades conferred as a percentage of ALL students.  
Annualized Program FTE is the number of graded credit hours divided by 150 (30 hours/yr for 5 years).

### ***Summary of Internal Data***

- 1,339 students enrolled in honors courses for a total of 3,357 credit hours earned. That is a modest increase from the last Internal Assessment Review period, when 1,181 students enrolled for 3,346 credit hours. The increase reflects both a larger number of honors course offerings and the recent expanded course offerings at JCA.
- English courses continue to make up the bulk of honors offerings, with 629 students attempting them.
- The Honors Program average attrition rate was 10.2%, slightly below the Arts & Science average attrition rate overall of 10.4%.
- We must bear in mind that in expanding the program to the JCA campus and in the spirit of honors course being innovative and highly responsive to student needs, courses are sometimes run with very low enrollments. For example, we have experimented with various days/time periods for honors course offerings, including traditional two- or three-day-a-week morning offerings, as well as one-day-a-week afternoon and evening offerings. Additionally, the Honors Program restricts class size to 15 to stay within the philosophical framework of seminar-style learning.
- As might be expected from high-achieving students, the average GPA is marginally higher in Honors courses, at 2.848 (College average is 2.682).
- All full time faculty members complete a performance review and discuss performance goals and course-level assessment annually with the Division Chair. During the current Institutional Assessment Review process, all honors faculty members performed either peer review or self-review of their honors seminar teaching. The Honors Program strives to maintain perhaps the strongest group of instructors at this institution. All but one of the current Honors faculty has earned one or more teaching awards and other academic distinctions, including the Emerson Electric Excellence in Teaching Award, the Governor's Award for Teaching Excellence, the Phi Theta Kappa Faculty of the Year Award, and the Linda Johnston Excellence in Assessment Award.

### ***External Data***

As part of this review process, we conducted an Honors Program Student Satisfaction Survey (Office of Research & Planning report attached). We surveyed 81 students who had attempted Honors courses in the past two years. Twenty students responded to the survey. Our questions were meant to discover, if possible, how students were finding out about the program, how satisfied they were with the Honors experience, what courses they might like to see added to the program, and what students would say to other students about taking Honors classes.

- We have noted several trends amongst students who have taken honors courses: the majority of students who take one honors course actually end up taking at least one more, and often several more. Secondly, there is a high degree of satisfaction amongst Honors Program students, as noted both in our formal survey and as reported anecdotally by Honors faculty who have heard directly from their students.
- Not surprisingly, 95% of respondents to the survey rated Honors courses as a generally better learning experience than their regular, non-honors courses. The majority of respondents also pointed to small class size, seminar-style instruction, and the instructor as being the three major sources of their satisfaction, which “instructor” being chosen by 90% of students surveyed.
- While 85% of those surveyed found it easy or very easy to register for honors courses, 15% of respondents reported having some challenge to very difficult to register. Comments associated with this question all indicated difficulties with courses either not being offered when they could take them, or with Honors courses being closed by the time they were able to register. The Honors Faculty has agreed with a suggestion made by Dr. Banjac that at least one of these two issues could be addressed easily by allowing Honors Program students to register early, at the same time that Athletes and Veterans register. We would like administration support to help us effect this beneficial change.
- 56% of students surveyed asked for more morning Honors courses. For the first time ever, this past year, we did offer two Honors courses simultaneously on the Hillsboro campus (Honors Comp II and Honors Theatre Appreciation). Both classes did achieve sufficient enrollment, although the Honors Theatre class did not completely fill. We hope to keep experimenting with dual offerings of morning courses in future, preferably pairing courses that would not “compete” with one another, for example, a science course with a humanities course, or a math course against a philosophy course. The only real negative of offering two Honors courses at the same time period is that one of them must be held in a classroom other than the Honors seminar room. Only 30% of students surveyed chose “dedicated honors classroom and work space” as a major source of their satisfaction with the Honors Program, so we think that the location is much less important than the style of instruction, the instructor, and the philosophy of the program itself.
- One survey question asked students to comment on what they wished they had known about the Honors Program earlier in their educational experience. One student replied that the “honors program wasn't explained to me when I asked my advisor about it during my first semester back in college.” In fact, the student continues, the advisor “dismissed it” altogether as an option. Another student reports that he “found out” about the Honors Program in his “second year at Jeffco,” but “wish[es]” he “had learned of it earlier so” he “could have taken more Honors classes.” Both of these comments, as well as several others that more generally indicate a desire to have known more about Honors earlier suggest to us that we need to take action to better inform core advisors and our colleagues about the program and its benefits to students. We also determined that we need to make a stronger effort to market the program across both campuses.

- Another question asked “What would you tell others about Honors?” One student remarked the following: “Do the honors program because you get a much better learning experience. The teachers are all fantastic and they seem to care more about the class than others. When you’re in the honors program, it makes you feel as if you are part of something bigger than yourself, almost like a family.”
- Feedback from both program graduates and receiving four-year programs indicate that the Honors Program is effective in preparing high-achieving students for Honors studies in their baccalaureate programs. For example, the Pierre Laclède Honors College at UMSL has mentioned several times to both faculty and students that they welcome our students, knowing they will be prepared for the rigor of enriched classes.

### **Annual Cost per FTE and Trend Analyses**

*(completed by Fall semester)*

*Provide cost per FTE and analyze for the period being evaluated.*

#### ***Cost per FTE***

Honors Program costs are almost entirely integrated into the various specific disciplines that offer courses under the Honors’ umbrella. Consequently, the Honors Program cost is quite small. Over the past five years, the average annual expense of the program has been approximately \$1000. We have planned to spend significantly more than that this upcoming year to promote the program and to celebrate the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the program, and the following year to obtain new furniture and laptops for the honors seminar room, but otherwise, we expect costs to continue to remain quite modest in the next five-year period.

#### ***Enrollment Trends***

##### **Total Students & Credit Hours Earned for Honors (H)**

**School Terms 200801 Through 201203 (Summer 2007 through Spring 2012)**

Year	Total Students	Student Credit Hours Earned
2008	241	570
2009	238	580
2010	268	685
2011	299	785
2012	293	737
	1,339	3,357

Source: L:\BanSnap\oracle\_developer\_sql\Pullgrade\_for Institutional Effectiveness Review.sql (200801-201203)

Excel: L:\Projects2\Acad\_Dept\InstructionalProgramReview\2012\_InstitutionalAssessment\SQL-Honors\_200801-201203

Enrollment in Honors courses has been on a slight upward trajectory at both the Hillsboro and Arnold campuses. We had a total of 24 Honors Program graduates this year, which was up slightly from past years (usually 20-23 graduates). Most notably, though, of those 24 graduates,

19 received an Honors Diploma (having completed four or more Honors courses), which is the highest total ever.

The only course of concern in terms of continued low enrollment is the PSC250H, Honors Model UN, which has averaged only 5 students over this current review period. Some possible reasons for low enrollment include the fact that during this review period it has been offered as an independent study course with online components. We will continue to monitor this course, and if enrollments do not increase, we may have to replace it with another offering.

## **SWOT Analysis**

*(completed by Fall semester)*

*Using the data collected and analyzed, complete a SWOT analysis. Reference and link data for each.*

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Internal Strengths</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Good variety of course offerings</li> <li>➤ Expansion to JCA</li> <li>➤ Excellent, award-winning faculty</li> <li>➤ Support of administration and Student Services personnel</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Internal Weaknesses</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Visibility and distinctiveness of the program</li> <li>➤ Honors web presence (not easily found or as inviting as it could be)</li> <li>➤ Lack of codification</li> <li>➤ Offering classes with low enrollment is not cost effective, but necessary to meet the needs of high-achieving students</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>External Opportunities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ To attract area high school students to Honors</li> <li>➤ To increase visibility across campuses and in community</li> <li>➤ To create a stronger web presence</li> <li>➤ To connect more closely with Phi Theta Kappa students and bring more into the Honors Program</li> <li>➤ To support Honors Program students financially</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>External Threats</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Advisors who direct students away from honors, or who misinform them</li> <li>➤ Honors Resource Center maintenance (furniture, carpets, paint, blinds, computers/printer)</li> <li>➤ Not enough of the best students are drawn to our program</li> <li>➤ National Career Technical Honors Society establishment on campus confuses students who think that is the Honors Program</li> </ul>

### **Internal Strengths**

- The Honors Program offers 17 different general education courses, which give students a variety of choices.
- The JCA Honors seminar room is a beautiful space, and the program is growing satisfactorily there.
- Perhaps the greatest strength of this program is the faculty. All but one are multiple-award winners; all work consistently to offer students an innovative course of instruction that is rigorous and exciting.
- We have been grateful for the continued support of the administration and college staff in helping us maintain and improve this program. Especially noteworthy are the many staff members in Student Services who do everything from gathering data to ordering Honors cords to preparing Honors

Certificates and Diplomas. They also take care of mailing out recruitment letters and taking information about the program into area high schools.

### Internal Weaknesses

- **Weakness:** The visibility and distinctiveness of the Honors Program needs to be improved. Students have reported a complete lack of awareness that such a program even exists at Jefferson College. In addition, with the start of the National Technical Honors Society chapter last year, more confusion has been added to the mix, with some students thinking they are joining the Honors Program by signing up for NTHS.
  - **Action Plan:** We are planning several Honors Program events to coincide with the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the program in the spring. Promotional giveaways of inexpensive items, new tee-shirts for current Honors students and polos for Honors faculty will help to advertise the program around campus.
- **Weakness:** Honors web presence (not easily found or as inviting as it could be)
  - **Action Item:** We determined that our web presence was often overlooked because students must drill down through the college website through Arts and Science Education to find the honors link. To remedy this problem, we asked our administrative computing to create a simple, masking URL that could take students directly to the Honors Program web site. They did so ([www.jeffco.edu/honors](http://www.jeffco.edu/honors)) recently, so we can now advertise this direct link to students via inexpensive promotional items that carry the address. We will order and distribute promotional items this spring, in conjunction with the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration of the Honors Program.
- **Weakness:** Lack of codification
  - **Action Item:** We are continuing to draft Honors Program procedures and philosophy.
- **Weakness:** Offering classes with low enrollment is not cost effective
  - **Action Item:** These courses are necessary to meet the needs of high-achieving students. We will continue to advertise course offerings through targeted personal announcements to current and potential Honors students to help fill seats that might otherwise remain empty. As we grow our program at JCA, and here in terms of new course offerings, we expect to still run a very few courses with low enrollment, but also expect to see a continuing upward trend in enrollments for those courses.

### External Opportunities

- To attract area high school students to Honors
  - We are grateful to Carrie Flesh and other Admissions personnel who help promote our program. Several Honors faculty members have indicated a willingness to distribute Honors Program brochures directly to area high school counselors each year to forge even stronger connections.
- To increase visibility across campuses and in community
  - We will address this by publicizing both a masking URL that will take interested students directly to the Honors web page and a new honors email address ([honors\\_program@jeffco.edu](mailto:honors_program@jeffco.edu)) that will take the place of an individual person's name as a point of contact.
  - We will celebrate the Honors Program's 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary in the spring, with one or two special events.
- To create a stronger web presence
  - We will improve the current web page, but also create an Honors Facebook page that might have more impact than a static web page at [jeffco.edu](http://jeffco.edu).
- To connect more closely with Phi Theta Kappa students and bring more into the Honors Program
  - We will attempt to resurrect the revolving topics Honors Humanities course. This course was originally developed many years ago to address the changing two-year Phi Theta Kappa theme. The purpose of the course was obscured over time and it devolved into a poetry course and then simply left the schedule. We hope that reviving it for its intended purpose will



- improve the connection between the Honors Program and Phi Theta Kappa, so that more of the best students—those tapped for PTK—are also participating in Honors courses.
- To support Honors Program students financially
  - We intend to create an Honors Faculty Scholarship. The Honors Faculty has expressed a strong interest in directing our annual contributions to the Foundation toward a scholarship that would support the best students in our program. Such a scholarship would expand the efforts of the Elizabeth Hoyt Clark Honors Scholarship and provide more opportunities for rewarding high-achieving students.

### External Threats

- **Possible Threat:** Advisors who direct students away from honors, or who misinform them
  - **Action Plan:** Expand our efforts to attend core advisor training sessions; get program brochures and laminated advisor guides to each core advisor (individualized with that advisor's name). We will create a laminated Honors Program advisor's guide; an easy, low-cost reference sheet that might keep the Honors Program guidelines at hand for core advisors who sometimes, through their own faulty memory or lack of knowledge, spread misinformation to students or fail to make them aware that Honors would be a viable option for them.
- **Possible Threat:** Honors Resource Center maintenance (furniture, carpets, paint, blinds, computers/printer)
  - **Action Plan:** Prepare a budget request this fall to plan for updated furniture and laptops and new printers for the Hillsboro Honors seminar room.
- **Possible Threat:** Not enough of the best students are drawn to our program
  - **Action Plan:** Increase awareness of the program through promotional items, connections with area high schools, and a stronger web presence.
  - **Action Plan:** Resurrect the PTK-revolving themes Honors Humanities course to forge a stronger bond between Honors and PTK and thus draw more of the highest-achieving students into the program.
- **Possible Threat:** National Career Technical Honors Society establishment on campus confuses students who think that is the Honors Program
  - **Action Plan:** We cannot think of any way to really address this threat beyond simply trying to make our own program more distinctive.

### DEPARTMENTAL ACTION PLANS for *Honors / 2012*

Org	Aim	Obj	Action Plan	KPI	\$	Other Req	Responsible Party	End Date	Status	Target Year	Metric Desc	Metric Value	Benchmark Desc	Benchmark Value	Target Desc	Target Value
55207	1	6	Institute Honors Humanities PTK-rotating theme course		Adjunct cost, approx. \$2100		St. John/Davenport		Pending (New Plan)	Fall 2013	HUM250H on schedule with current PTK theme	0 HUM205H Sections				1 HUM250H Section per semester
55207	2	14	Distribute Honors Program promotional items		Already in budget for 2012		St. John & Honors Faculty		Pending (New Plan)	Spring 2013 and on-going	Purchase items and give away at events and to advisors.	0 Items				TBD
55207	2	14	Codify Honors Program policies		No cost		St. John & Honors Faculty		Pending (New Plan)	Spring 2013	Completed document lists Honors Program policies and one-page description for each honors course.	0 policy documentation				1 policy document
55207	2	14	Create Honors Facebook page		No cost		St. John & Honors Faculty		Pending (New Plan)	When Facebook is available in faculty offices	Administration approved Facebook page; page created and maintained.	0 Facebook pages				1 Facebook page
55207	1	6	Create Honors Faculty Scholarship		No cost		St. John & Honors Faculty		Pending (New Plan)	2014	Scholarship of at least \$500 is established (and perhaps matched) by Foundation.	0 \$500 scholarships				1 \$500 Scholarship
55207	2	14	Create laminated advisors' guide		\$100		St. John & Honors Faculty		Pending (New Plan)	2014	20 laminated guides completed and distributed to core advisors.	0 guides				20 guides
551	1	6	Make Honors Seminar Room (FA202) a computer classroom				Andrea St. John/Allan Wamsley			Spring 2014	Laptop computers and printer		0 laptops currently			18 laptops and 1 printer in FA202
551	5	28	New furniture for Honors Seminar Room (FA202)				Andrea St. John			Spring 2014	Chairs, desks, laptop tethers		Current furniture in disrepair; 0 computer desks			Chairs, desks, laptop tethers in FA202

## Evaluation



Meets Expectations

*Comments:*



Requires Attention and Submission of a Follow-Up Report

*Comments:*



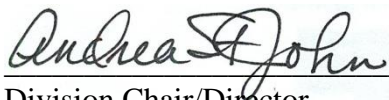
Does Not Meet Expectations and Requires Submission of a Follow-Up Report

*Comments:*

Follow-up report required by: \_\_\_\_\_

*Comments:* \_\_\_\_\_ (Date)

## Approvals

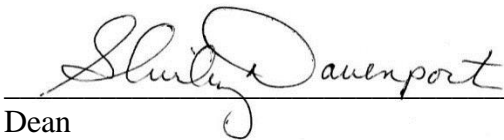


Division Chair/Director

*Comments:*

10-29-12

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date



Dean

*Comments:*

November 8, 2012

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date



Vice President/President

*Comments:*

January 31, 2013

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date