

June 8, 2026

Honors Program Policy Committee Year End Report for 2025-2026

Dear Faculty Senate Members and Faculty Senate Steering Committee,

The Honors Program Policy Committee (HPPC) met eight times during this academic year, 4 times during the fall, and 4 times during the spring. All meetings were conducted via Zoom. With the extraordinary recent growth of the Honors Program, the HPPC was primarily focused on expanding offerings for honors students that continued to reflect the rigor and value of the current Honors Signature and Honors Discovery courses. We also welcomed the support of Dr. DeOnte Brown in the role of Dean of Undergraduate Studies. This report will provide a brief overview of the most significant tasks and topics addressed by the HPPC this year.

- ***Honors Enhanced Courses***

Last year the HPPC began working on alternatives to the current honors augmentation process, which requires students to enter into a one-on-one contract with faculty outlining the additional work that is required to “augment” a course for honors credit. The HPPC continued this discussion in our first meeting of the fall semester. The goals of developing an alternative to the current process were to 1) ease faculty burden for those courses in which multiple honors students would seek to augment 2) increase offerings within the major for honors students and 3) provide honors curriculum throughout the 4 year undergraduate degree program, which is becoming particularly relevant given the number of college credit hours that many students have earned prior to beginning at FSU (the current honors cohort came in with 36 credit hours on average). The HPPC began this process by sending a survey to current faculty requesting feedback on the following prompts:

- What problems are programs/departments currently experiencing with honors individual augmentation (e.g., control, staffing, or otherwise)?
- What are some desired aspects of an alternative arrangement to honors individual augmentation for high-enrollment courses in these departments or programs?
- What would it take for an alternative arrangement to be implemented in said programs or departments (e.g., remuneration, support, published strategies, faculty buy-in, etc.)? What needs must be met?

Additionally, two examples of this type of honors augment alternative were piloted in the Fall semester of 2025 in the Department of Physics and the College of Entrepreneurship. Both departments provided descriptions of the assignments required of the students augmenting the course, and both provided positive feedback regarding the process and the deliverables resulting from this alternative. Members of the HPPC discussed potential structure for these alternatives and potential options for augmentation assignments. A one-page informational document was developed by Dr. Michael Furman to provide to departments that traditionally have had high honors enrollment. Within the discussions relating to this topic the HPPC committee suggested the re-implementation of an Honors Canvas course that could provide more detailed information for faculty about the various types of honors courses. This could also serve as a repository for examples of assignments and activities representative of honors level work and provide guidance for instructors for enhance an existing course.

- ***Honors Application***

A new essay prompt was developed by the HPPC last year and implemented for the Honors application for this year’s application cycle. Erin Verity joined our March meeting to provide information on the most recent application cycle as well as feedback on how well the new application prompt served to enrich the information available for evaluating each applicant. Over 10,000 individuals applied for the honors program and a waiting list was implemented this year to ensure the admitted cohort did not exceed

available resources. Erin shared that the academic profile of the cohort of students admitted to the honors program this year exceeded that of previous years demonstrating the increased interest in the honors by high achieving applicants. The prompt that was implemented was found to be effective, but the reviewers felt that it was asking the students to answer too much for the word count provided. Answers tended to be slightly vague as students attempted to address all aspects of the prompt. Considering this, the HPPC revised the prompt and also developed a second prompt that could be used in subsequent application cycles.

- ***Honors Graduate Teaching Fellowship Program***

In October of 2025 the Honors Graduate Teaching Fellowship Program was introduced by Dr. Craig Fillar and Dr. Michael Furman as an innovative option to expand course offerings for honors students, as well as providing valuable professional experience for doctoral candidates. Invitations to apply for this program were extended in fall of 2025. Applicants were nominated by their department/program and were required to letters of support and a course proposal. Seventeen applicants completed the application and seven were selected for interview in December 2025. The four inaugural fellows and the proposed courses are as follows:

- Laura Anthony (Biological Sciences) “The Intersection of Communication and Science”
- Cole Patoine (Health, Nutrition, and Food Science) “Emerging Science: Evidence and Trends in Human Nutrition, Health and Chronic Disease”
- Harrison Miller (Psychology) “NPCs and Main Characters: The Psychology of the Self from Buddha to BeReal”
- Sarah Bliss (English) “Judging a Book by its Cover: Books as Objects and Literature”

These doctoral students began working under the mentorship of Dr. Furman in spring 2026 to develop their proposed courses. Courses are projected to launch in the Fall semester of 2026 and the fellows will be provided with formative evaluation and feedback throughout the academic year. The HPPC will play a role in the continued development of this program as it is implemented in the coming academic year.

- ***HITM***

Dr. Michael Franklin met with HPPC for several of our meetings to discuss his continued efforts to increase Honors in the Major (HITM) applications and departmental involvement. Through Dr. Franklin’s collaboration with faculty across campus, his work on cross promotion with the Center of Undergraduate Research and his efforts to increase the visibility, the HITM program saw a 20% increase in the approved applications to begin HITM in the summer or fall of 2026. A new collaboration with the writing center provided HITM students with assistance in thesis preparation. HITM students received a combined \$17,000 in funding for materials and conference presentations and 34 mentor materials awards were provided for faculty actively participating as directors of HITM theses. The HPPC greatly appreciates the tremendous work completed by Michael Franklin as he expands opportunities for honors students and supports faculty who facilitate these experiences.

- ***Honors Thesis Excellence Award***

Honors Thesis Excellence Awards were provided in the areas of STEM, Arts and Humanities and Social Sciences. The Fall 2025 nominations period included HITM projects completed during Spring 2025 (15 nominations) while the Spring 2026 nominations period included HITM projects completed during Summer and Fall 2025 (11 total submissions). All six of this year's recipients were invited to return to campus to receive their awards at the Spring 2026 Medallion Ceremony. Thank you to the following faculty members who participated in the judging committees: Dr. Craig Filar (fall and spring), Dr. Michael Furman (fall and spring) Dr. Lisa Lyons (fall and spring), Dr. Neelam Bharti (fall), Dr. Doug Norton (fall), Dr. Aaron Thomas (fall and spring) and Dr. Daniel Gott (fall), Dr. Azat Gundogan (spring).

- ***HITM Mentor Award***

This year, as in prior years, HPPC members judged the Honors In The Major Mentor (HITM) Award, awarded each Spring semester to account for honors thesis mentoring in the prior Spring, Summer, and Fall semesters. Out of 34 nominations, we received 29 completed applications for this award. As in previous years, three deserving mentors were awarded in the disciplines of STEM, Arts and Humanities, Social Sciences.

In closing, I would like to extend my greatest appreciation to the committee members, Neelam Bharti, Nancy Rogers, Lisa Lyons, Paul Marty, Andy Ballard, Rochelle Marrinan, Sylwia Piatkowska, and Aaron Thomas; *ex officio* members Craig Filar, Michael Furman, Katie Femrite, Dean Joe O'Shea and Dean DeOnte Brown; student members Grady Anderson and Jordan Brown; and Michael Franklin for their hard work and patience on the HPPC this year. Thank you also to Tarez Graban for her continued availability as a resource (while on sabbatical this year) as I navigated this new role.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Mia Newlin-Bradner', with a stylized, cursive script.

Mia Newlin-Bradner, PhD, MSN, RN, DipACLM
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