

TO: FSU Faculty Senate

CC: Henry Bass, Irinel Chiorescu, David Levenson, Paul Marty, Elizabeth Osborne,
Douglass Seaton, John Telotte

FROM: Don Latham, Chair, Honors Program Policy Committee

SUBJECT: Annual report of the Honors Program Policy Committee for 2014-2015

DATE: April 16, 2015

The 2014-2015 academic year has been a busy one for the FSU Honors Program and for the Honors Program Policy Committee. Jim Mathes, the Director of the Honors Program for the past several years, stepped down from that position in May 2014. As a result, the Honors Program Policy Committee and the Search Committee (appointed by the Dean of Undergraduate Studies) spent much of late spring and early summer conducting a national search for Jim's replacement. Both external and internal candidates were interviewed, and Paul Marty, Professor in the School of Information, was selected as the next Director. Paul assumed the duties full time in January 2015. Craig Filar, Assistant Dean and Director of the Office of National Fellowships, served as the Interim Director during Fall 2014. The Committee wishes to thank Craig for his excellent work in keeping the Honors Program moving forward.

Spring 2015 has seen much activity, with Paul assuming duties as Director, a consultant being hired (by the Dean of Undergraduate Studies) to review the FSU Honors Program, and an Honors Program Ad Hoc Committee being appointed (by the Faculty Senate President) to gather input from various constituents around the University. I might add that, as Chair of the Honors Program Policy Committee, I also served on the Ad Hoc Committee, which was chaired by Daniel Maier-Katkin (College of Criminology & Criminal Justice). The consultant's report was submitted to the Dean of Undergraduate Studies in February; the Ad Hoc Committee's report was submitted to the Faculty Senate Steering Committee in April.

Both reports identified a number of key issues and made a number of specific recommendations. I will not repeat that information here, but suffice it to say that the main issues impacting the Honors Program can be summed up as follows:

- The number of students admitted to and who enroll in the Honors Program far exceeds the number of students that can be supported by the current curriculum and resources.
- The number of students who complete a four-year experience by the time of graduation is a small fraction of the number of students who enter the program.

- The Honors courses available to students are far too few to serve students in their first two years of coursework, and there are fewer still at the junior and senior levels.
- Deans, directors, and chairs have little incentive to commit faculty to teach Honors courses.

While the issues facing the Honors Program are formidable, a ray of sunshine is evident in the success of the Honors in the Major Program. Lessons from the success of this program can perhaps be used in strengthening the Honors Program overall.

Some vital statistics related to Honors Program accomplishments over the past year include:

- Number of students invited to join the Honors Program: 3180
- Number of students who enrolled in the Honors Program: 581
- Number of students completing Honors in the Major: 180
- Number of students completing the University Honors Program: 21 in the fall + 119 in the spring = 140 total
- Number of Honors Thesis Awards: 13 in the fall (\$6,899.89) + 6 in the spring (\$3,440.00) = 19 total (\$10,339.89)
- Number of Honors Thesis Mentor Awards: 2 in the fall (\$4,000.00) + 2 in the spring (\$4,000.00) = 4 total (\$8,000.00)
- Number of Honors Thesis Kingsbury Writing Awards: 1 in the spring

Over the next academic year, the Honors Program Policy Committee will be working closely with the Director of the Honors Program to begin addressing the concerns raised and the recommendations made in the two reports. With the new Honors, Scholars, and Fellows House and a new Honors Director, this is a propitious time to significantly strengthen the Honors Program so that it can play a major role in helping the University attain its widely publicized goal of becoming a top 25 public institution and continuing to meet the metrics related to pre-eminence status.