



Honors College

#10 Plan cycle - 10

Plan cycle 2023/2024

7/1/23 - 6/30/24

Introduction

The purpose of the Honors College is to promote the academic excellence of the students who are admitted into its program and to enhance opportunities for other students, faculty members, and the local community.

Performance Objective 1 The Honors College will enhance opportunities for its students by recommending, sponsoring, and co-sponsoring lectures and programs.

1 Assessment and Benchmark

Benchmark: The Honors College will sponsor or co-sponsor a minimum of four speakers/programs per year.

Ideally these programs will be open to the public and advertised.

Prior to 2017-2018, the benchmark was a minimum of two speakers/programs per year.

1.1 Data

2019-2020:

We do not have complete data to check on this item, since our building is closed. We did have at least four events: a presentation on applying for graduate and professional school, a charity formal, an opera night, and a lecture by a scholar on Medieval Studies. Three of the four events were publicized and open to the public. The lecture was very well publicized in the local newspaper.

2020-2021:

Because of hurricanes and Covid we had only one cultural event, a presentation by persons running for the Student Government Association. We also had an Open House outdoors and planted flowers twice at the McNeese tennis courts. Also, we helped to promote a virtual forum on a writer.

2021-2022:

Primarily because of Covid, which was very strong until mid-Spring, we did not sponsor many programs for outside audiences. We sponsored a lecture by Louis Markos and contributed to one of the MFA events. Thus we only had two lectures/readings. Both events were well attended. We did have an Open House and had our Formal for the fall also. Both of these events were also well attended. We advertised for the Markos lecture in the local newspaper, which brought in some attendees from the local community.

Although we will not count this as a cultural activity for the Honors College, we did invite the Governor's Program to the lounge for a Movie Night. About 20 students were there, and the event went well. Additional activities were Honors Night celebrating our incoming freshmen and our graduates, and a graduation banquet.

2022-2023:

This year we had two speakers, one on Shakespeare and one on personal finance. We were disappointed with the numbers in the audience. Both events were scheduled during the day, which was intended to make things easier for students to attend, but might have had the opposite effect. In the future, we will try to have events during the evening. Both events were otherwise successful, however. We did not sponsor the Joe Cash lecture last year, but we do have it planned for the fall. For that event we will advertise in the newspaper.

We also had our Open House, which was well attended, and our Charity Formal, which was perhaps our best ever. In addition, the Director and some students participated in the Preview Days held by the University.

2023-2024:

We had five cultural events that we sponsored or co-sponsored for the University community. We had also planned to help with a sixth, but the Director had surgery that week, so we did not help out. (The event went on successfully without us.) Our first event was a resume workshop/review. This was hastily put together and not well attended. It would be worth trying again with a bit better preparation. We also had three very fine lectures, one on Tolkien, one on contemporary Louisiana, and one on Germanic mythology and Christianity. These were well attended, especially the ones on Tolkien and Louisiana. Unlike last year, we did these events at night, which did seem to work better. Our final event was a book signing by a former student. This event was moderately well attended, and those who came seemed to enjoy it a great deal. The three lectures were well advertised on McNeese's webpage and on social media. The book signing was advertised well on social media. The resume workshop was only advertised internally and on social media.

Other events were our Open House and Preview Days, Honors Night (at which we welcome incoming

freshmen and congratulate our graduates), our Graduation Banquet, and our Charity Formal. The latter typically has students not in Honors College. We have a few events already lined up for next year, so we seem to be doing well with this one.

Academic Year	# of events	# of attendees
2013-2014	5	—
2014-2015	3	—
2015-2016	4	—
2016-2017	5	180
2017-2018	4	236
2018-2019	4	175
2019-2020	4	150
2020-2021	1	22
2021-2022	2	95
2022-2023	2	23
2023-2024	5	113

1.1.1 Analysis of Data and Plan for Continuous Improvement

2019-2020:

We were generally pleased with this year's event. The lecture by Dr. Martin and the formal were very well attended. We also offered the preparation for graduate school talk, and it was reasonably well attended. The opera night had a good turn out also.

Our plans for next year did not come to fruition because of Covid and hurricanes. We had invited one lecturer on classical fable to come in the fall, but we changed those plans. (written in summer 2021)

2020-2021:

Because of continued problems with Covid and hurricanes, we were very limited in our offerings. Towards the end of the year, we had a presentation by Student Government Association candidates. We also had a few events online, including an open house. In view of the circumstances, we definitely did the best we could. In fact, we may have taken too many risks, but we know of no one who got sick.

We will need to be careful next year, but we anticipate more opportunities to offer events. It is likely that we will do more in-house events rather than fly in speakers. We would like to offer and advertise in the newspaper our Open House and our graduate/professional school event.

2021-2022:

Although we did not reach our numerical goal, we are satisfied with the events this year. It would have been irresponsible to promote programs during certain portions of the year. Also, during the fall we were very much preoccupied with returning to normalcy after the hurricane. We had other priorities, and we had trouble finding venues.

We hope slowly to get back to normal regarding events. We would like to have at least something in the fall and in the spring. Among some possibilities would be inviting some of the law schools to visit again and having a forum for students wishing to go to graduate school.

2022-2023:

We did not meet our benchmark this year, falling two speakers/activities short. We probably were a little bit out of the habit of scheduling these events, since we did not schedule many during the last few years.

Moreover, one of our usual speakers (Southern University Law School) was still not traveling because of Covid. We have already been more proactive in scheduling for next fall, having sent out feelers to one

lecturer and to Southern University Law School. We will also be careful to schedule some events during the evening and to publicize one or more in the local newspaper as well as on the McNeese website. Our attendance for daytime events was low, so we need to change our times and do some advertising. We did advertise for our Open House, but we do not typically include it as one of our cultural activities.

2023-2024:

This year went well. We seem to have gotten back into the habit of organizing activities. The key seems to be early planning and generally having events at night (although they should not be exclusively at night). We should try for a little more variety. In the past few years, most of our events have been working with the English and Foreign Languages department, which is convenient and generally productive, but it would be good to offer a few different activities.

We generally do not advertize in the newspaper anymore. Circulation is down and using the University website and social media outlets seems more effective. Still, it might be good to advertize occasionally in the American Press.

2 Assessment and Benchmark

Benchmark: Students in HONS 100 and HONS 200 will be required to attend at least three cultural events per semester and to write short reviews of them.

2.1 Data

Academic Year	# of students in HONS 100 & HONS 200	# of students completing assignment
2017-2018	93	93
2018-2019	94	94
2019-2020	101	101
2020-2021	91	88
2021-2022	89	87
2022-2023	88	88
2023-2024	91	91

2.1.1 Analysis of Data and Plan for Continuous Improvement

2020-2021:

This year, only 96% of the students did their cultural events during the school year. We had three incompletes, two were from international students. All of these classes were online, so I think there was simply difficulty with students in carrying out the work, given Covid and hurricanes. It is also possible that the teacher did not clearly communicate the requirements clearly enough

As noted in previous years, we will try to offer more in-house cultural events. These are enjoyable, and at this point, after the height of Covid, students crave socialization. Nevertheless, we will need to be careful about getting together early in the fall, until we know how bad Covid is going to be. (At this point the Delta variant seems to be gaining strength.)

We intend to offer online cultural opportunities as well as carefully planned events in person.

2021-2022:

98% of the students completed this assignment. The 2% is attributable to one student who failed to do the assignment two semesters in a row. Despite efforts to work with this student, it is likely that she will not be a successful completer with the Honors College.

We added a few in-house cultural events, such as movies, as we had planned to do. In the spring, however, we only allowed students to count one of these, since we ultimately want to get them out and visiting different venues. In the fall we also offered a few online options, because of Covid. In the case of outstanding online events it would be good to continue to offer these occasionally.

If Covid continues to wane, we will offer a few more in-house or on-campus activities, but we will be alert to good online opportunities as well.

2022-2023:

This year 100% of the students attended their cultural events and did their evaluations of them. There seem to be several reasons for the improvement. We are getting better at using multiple forms of communication to remind students, more students are in the lounge, thus keeping abreast of events, and we are offering a few more in-house cultural events.

A few students will engage in activities that are not as cultural as others, so we need to do a better job of explaining our expectations. However, we don't want to go to the extreme of saying that only so-called high-cultural events are worthy of attending.

2023-2024:

This was another good year in terms of student participation and completion of assigned work on cultural events. All students did their work, and in the spring we did not even have any incompletes. (We usually have one or two each semester.) We have gotten good at getting the word out to students via Moodle and social media, etc. Also, the University seems to be offering more events, now that things have normalized after Covid and our two recent hurricanes.

Although not necessary, for the sake of camaraderie, it would be good to do a few more cultural events in the lounge, like movie nights or poetry readings.

Performance Objective 2 The Honors College will promote individual research, presentations, study abroad, or professional development activities on the part of students.

1 Assessment and Benchmark

Benchmark: Honors College students will be reminded every semester in HONS 100 and 200 of the requirements for honors options. They will also be given a sheet outlining the appropriate number of honors hours they should have per year. This sheet will also be posted.

1.1 Data

Academic Year	# of students graduated without requisite honors hours
2013-2014	2
2014-2015	0
2015-2016	2
2016-2017	1
2017-2018	1
2018-2019	1
2019-2020	0
2020-2021	0
2021-2022	3
2022-2023	0
2023-2024	2

1.1.1 Analysis of Data and Plan for Continuous Improvement

2020-2021:

We had no students in our program who failed to graduate with the Honors College diploma because of grades or honors hours. We are very happy about this, particularly because of the difficult circumstances of this year.

The Registrar's Office has helped us a lot by getting us the list of graduates very early, so we can check on students before it is too late. However, we will need to be extra careful during the coming year, since the number of honors options was rather low during the first Covid and the hurricane semesters.

We will need to inspect transcripts carefully early in the year.

2021-2022:

We were disappointed to have three students not have the proper number of honors hours. Although we have worked closely with students, the lack of continuity during Covid and hurricanes seems to have caused students not to be as diligent as they should have been with their honors options. Also, with the additional dual enrollment credits that many students have, they are sometimes not with us for four full years.

We hope that the additional stress we have placed on honors options during the last year in HONS 100 and HONS 200 will come to fruition next year.

We are also creating a form for each individual student that we will place in a notebook and arrange by hours taken. This should help us keep track of who will be likely to graduate with the upcoming year, so we can make sure they have sufficient honors hours.

2022-2023:

We were happy that we had no students graduate without the required number of honors hours. We did make fliers this year listing very specifically the requirements for graduating with the honors college diploma. We also intend to post that on Moodle for HONS 100 and HONS 200 next year. In addition to the possible improvement from having the form readily available and posted, we have done better at utilizing various means of communication, including social media outlets, emails, and texts. Also, we seem to be getting over some of the problems from confusion and dislocation because of Covid and hurricanes. However, we do need to remain diligent, since it is easy for students to forget their responsibilities.

2023-2024:

This year we had two students who did not achieve the appropriate number of hours. One student seems to have been affected by Covid and the hurricanes, basically ignoring our program for the last couple of years (and getting married!). This student did successfully graduate, however. The second student was close to being on track but has struggled with depression for the last couple of years, so we decided jointly to take a little pressure off the student and not encourage them to complete their honors work. This student, too, successfully graduated.

We are doing a good job of getting the word out to students concerning the requirements, and we do work with them diligently to help them complete the requirements. It is important to address these issues throughout the students' careers and especially to identify problems early in the semester before they graduate.

2 Assessment and Benchmark

Benchmark: Two or more students will receive grants to travel to conferences, study abroad, or for similar purposes.

2.1 Data

Academic Year	# of students that received grants to travel to conferences, study abroad, etc.
2013-2014	7
2014-2015	5
2015-2016	4
2016-2017	4
2017-2018	4

2018-2019	5
2019-2020	2
2020-2021	0
2021-2022	7
2022-2023	6
2023-2024	17

2020-2021:

We did not have any students expressing interest in attending conferences or doing study abroad this year. This is completely understandable because of Covid and the hurricanes.

We have at least one student who has expressed interest in study abroad. It would be worthwhile to have a guest speaker presentation on that topic.

We will continue to remind students that we have funds allocated for academic travel.

2021-2022:

This was a very good year in terms conferences and study abroad. We had two students go to Europe for study abroad (one semester each). Five students went to conferences (psychology, leadership, engineering).

This was perhaps our best year ever in this regard. Particularly with Covid still being a problem, this was a large number of students. We are thankful for Jamie Sutherland's help and for our endowed professorship that helps with these expenses.

We will continue to encourage students in HONS 100 and HONS 200 to engage in these activities. If Covid becomes less of a problem, this area might improve even more, although funding could eventually be difficult if we have too many students wanting to travel.

The University's relatively new study abroad program seems to be gaining traction, although we would like to see enhanced opportunities at other sites.

2022-2023:

In getting ready to evaluate data for 2023-2024, we noticed that this evaluation had been left blank. Accordingly, we are adding a little bit of information late (8/8/2024). We did have a good year, with two students doing summer internships, and several students going to conferences. We are also in the process of paying about half of the official costs for several students to go to Japan (planned for July 2024).

2023-2024:

This was a tremendously good year for us in terms of widening students' opportunities. Not only did we directly help 17 students (and some more than once), we had a good variety of opportunities that students chose. With great excitement, we helped send eight students to a study abroad trip to Japan. We helped nine students attend conferences, including several national conferences. A few students attended conferences with help from other organizations. Among the conferences our students attended are the meetings of the National Athletic Trainers Association, the American Chemical Society, Delta Sigma Pi, the NCECA, and the National Society of Black Engineers.

Moreover, we can see possible tangible results. Two of our international students, whom we have sent to several conferences, were offered very fine jobs in their respective areas (business and engineering). One of our students, whom we helped in the summer of 2023 with a summer research opportunity at the University of Kansas, chose to attend that university for pharmacy school.

2.1.1 Analysis of Data and Plan for Continuous Improvement**2020-2021:**

We are not greatly concerned that we have not had students travel this year. With Covid and other difficulties, it was the last thing on anyone's mind, and there were few opportunities.

We will need to be extra diligent to make students aware of the options, however, since students often imitate what previous students have done, and there are no examples from this year to imitate.

We will try to ask someone to talk about study abroad at one of the seminars, or in a special program.

2021-2022:

We will continue to make students aware that we encourage study abroad, conferences, and similar activities and that we have the funds to help. The best vehicle for doing this is HONS 100 and HONS 200. Students also learn of opportunities and consider taking them, as they see others do so. We will invite our two students who engaged in study abroad to talk with the students in seminar.

2022-2023:

This was a very good year for us in terms of student participation in special projects that include travel. We paid about half of the official costs for two students to travel to Paris (on a university-sponsored trip). We paid the costs for two students to attend conferences (one in engineering and one in business). We also paid the expenses for two students to engage in research opportunities this summer (both in biology/health care). A third is engaging in a similar research opportunity, but she did not require financial assistance. We also have in the works payments for eight students next year to travel to Japan (again on a university-sponsored trip). We are covering about half of their official costs.

We will continue to let students know of opportunities and of the ability of the Honors College to cover costs. The sponsorship of the students traveling to Japan will take a very large chunk out of our Foundation budget, but we can be frugal next year if we need to be.

2023-2024:

This was a unique year for us, and we are unlikely to achieve similar results for some time. Because we helped so many students so substantially, our reserve funds are quite limited. We will be able to help students this year, although not as many. We can also ask about using alternate accounts with the Foundation. (There is an account specifically for student travel.) In 2024-2025, we will continue to encourage students to travel, but we will need to be careful, and perhaps cut back in other areas.

Performance Objective 3 The Honors College will enhance its study, office, and resource spaces.

1 Assessment and Benchmark

Benchmark: The Honors College will enhance its collection of books, recordings, and films by adding at least 20 such items each year.

1.1 Data

Academic Year	# of books ordered	# of DVDs ordered	Total # of books, DVDs, and testing aids ordered
2013-2014	6	8	14
2014-2015	20	8	28
2015-2016	14	7	21
2016-2017	21	4	25
2017-2018	22	1	23
2018-2019	10	15	25
2019-2020	6	4	10
2020-2021	2	0	2
2021-2022	10	0	10
2022-2023	28	1	29
2023-2024	16	1	17

1.1.1 Analysis of Data and Plan for Continuous Improvement

2019-2020:

We did not meet our objective, but this does not present a problem. We enhanced our space through many other purchases, such as chairs, a water cooler, and a chart of the periodic table. Also, during Spring 2020, Covid hit, so we were no longer in our space.

2020-2021:

Again, we did not come close to meeting our goal. During the early fall of 2020, we focused more on getting Covid-related materials, like an air purifier. Almost immediately after school started, we had two major hurricanes. At this point, we are still in the process of assessing what we need. We will certainly need to replace some books, etc., but our space is not officially open, so we cannot get a good sense of what we need. We did buy two books for standardized tests, which students were allowed to use in my office in Kaufman.

2021-2022:

Again, we did not buy many books and no CDs, although we had several books donated. This year, we were much more concerned with returning the lounge to a workable state than in acquiring new materials. (For instance, for several months we did not have bookcases for the books we had, so it would have been foolish to worry about ordering more.)

I expect that we will meet our benchmark next year, and we do now have room for books. It is likely that we will de-emphasize CDs, since the internet is making them more and more (but not totally) superfluous. It is possible we will revise our benchmark next year. One of our student workers has taken on the task for being our official librarian, so we will seek her input for books to be ordered.

2022-2023:

We made progress in restoring the library. We probably lost many items during the hurricane, so we are slowly making up for that. We have a good collection, so we just need to fill in gaps as we notice them. We try to buy a balance of academic books, fun books, and test prep books. The later, of course need to be kept up to date. As noted above, we are now focusing more on books than CDs and DVDs, because so much is available on the internet.

2023-2024:

We missed our target by just a bit this year, but that does not represent a problem. The library has a good assortment of books. We had a fairly wide range of acquisitions including some test preparation books, some fun books to read, and some books written by our visiting speakers.

2 Assessment and Benchmark

Benchmark: The director will examine equipment including computers to make sure that students and office personnel have adequate resources.

2.1 Data

2019-2020:

We purchased two computers this year. One of these was a laptop, which we did not have and thought it would be good for presentations, etc. The laptop came in very handy during Covid and the hurricanes.

2020-2021:

It is difficult to assess our needs right now because of hurricane damage. Technically, our building is not open, but in making visits, I judged that we should get some new computers, so we ordered four. At one time all the computers had been removed from the office, so we assumed they had been disposed of or stolen. However, at least some have reappeared. Given the bad condition of the buildings and the age of the computers, the purchase of four new ones will probably end up being a wise decision.

2021-2022:

By necessity we rather thoroughly updated our technology. After the hurricane, computers were generally not

working or did not have the proper connections. We replaced all but one computer, the one in the library. We also got new printers.

Although the process was slow and painful, we ultimately made quite an improvement to our work and study spaces.

2022-2023:

We made good progress in this area. We replaced the computer in the library, although we have yet to get a printer for it. We also bought a color printer, which we did not have before. At this point we probably only need to by a printer for the library, and then see if anything seems to be aging. We will probably keep a standing order from Amazon for printer cartridges; sometimes we run out of them completely and that can cause problems.

2023-2024:

We made very good progress in this area. We added one computer and one printer, and we placed a standing order with Amazon, so we don't run out of the main type of cartridges used by our computers. We also were able to use hurricane insurance money to buy a very nice class marking board for the library. We also repaired our wobbly tables in the lounge and added a few puzzles and lego collections.

The lounge and offices are now in better shape than before the hurricanes of 2021.

2.1.1 Analysis of Data and Plan for Continuous Improvement

2019-2020:

During most of the year, our goal of having a good, functioning place for students was met. We had reorganized relatively well after moving, and had secured many items, like a water cooler, that made our space inviting. We did have decorating to do, and we needed a new refrigerator.

By the middle of spring, with Covid arriving, our focused on the lounge and other areas pretty much vanished, since we were not allowed to be there. At that point we simply planned what we would need for the next year.

2020-2021:

The year started with cautious optimism. Everyone was a little scared, but we had done our best to make the lounge inviting and safe, with plenty of disinfectant and an air purifier. Sadly, after only a week or two of normalcy, our building was closed because of hurricanes. At this point it did not seem appropriate to buy new materials, instead we tried to salvage what we could. Unfortunately our instructions were not followed as to what should be saved, so we will have to buy a great deal of furniture etc. We already began this process in the summer of 2021 and will continue full steam in Ffall 2021 and beyond. However, there was a lot of destruction both my nature and by humans, so this will be a slow process. We need to buy additional bookcases, sofas, tables, a coffeee maker, and a refrigerator, at a minimum.

2021-2022:

With a lot of help from Jamie Sutherland, IT, student workers, and our endowed professorships, we were able to update virtually all computers (and we even managed to function with old ones when he had to).

Next year we should probably get a computer and printer for the library and a color printer. We might consider getting another laptop, since our current one is getting a little old.

After we make these purchases, we will need to replace the computers as they age. It would also be good to check on cartridges at least at the beginning of the semesters, so we don't run out unexpectedly. Fortunately most of our printers use the same type, so that makes it easier to keep extras on hand.

2022-2023:

We are doing fine in this area. We simply need to continue to purchase items as we notice they are needed. We do need a new printer for the library. We also need to put in a standing order for toner so we don't run out.

2023-2024:

Assuming we have no major problems, we are in good shape in this area. We will probably need to replace one of the student-worker computers soon. It is very old. We might also add a plush chair for the lounge and create a small reading/study area by the window. We also need to make sure to keep cartridges for the color printer. At this point, we probably don't need to place a standing order, but we might need to consider it.