



Honors College

#7 Plan cycle - 7
Plan cycle 2020/2021
7/1/20 - 6/30/21

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

2015-2016:

The Honors College sponsored or co-sponsored a lecture by H.R.H Pal Gyorgy Habsburg Lothringen, the Joe and Lydia Cash Lecturer, a reading by Pulitzer-Prize-winning poet, Adam Johnson, an Open House presentation on law school by the Southern University School of Law, and the Yom HaShoah speaker (in the latter case rather minimally sponsored).

Additionally, the Honors College also helped sponsor the publication of the Arena. The Cash Lecture, Johnson Reading, and Yom HaShoah event were well publicized in the community.

2016-2017:

The Honors College sponsored or co-sponsored lectures by Jerome Neyrey, former professor at Notre Dame, and Kevin Cope of LSU (the Joe and Lydia Cash Lecturer), as well as a poetry reading by Stella Nesanovich (McNeese Emerita). We also sponsored an Open House presentation on law school by the Southern University School of Law, and helped (very minimally) with the Yom HaShoah speaker. The Honors College also helped sponsor the publication of the Arena.

With the exception of the law school presentation, all events were well advertised, including ads in the local newspaper. We also teamed with the College of Engineering and Computer Science to sponsor a workshop on applying to graduate school. This event was not well attended, but it was a start.

2017-2018:

The Honors College sponsored or co-sponsored lectures by Steven Collier Brown, a Ph.D. candidate from Harvard who had received his MFA from McNeese, and Michael Ward, a Research Fellow at Harvard. Both of these events were very well attended and were well publicized. For the Ward lecture we purchased two large ads in the local newspaper. The Honors College also helped sponsor the Law School visit from Southern Law School and (very minimally) the Yom HaShoah lecture. These events went very well, although the presentation by Southern Law School was not terribly well attended. Still, this has proved a successful venture, since two of our students last year were accepted into good law schools with good scholarships.

2018-2019:

This was a good year for events. We learned that a well-known novelist (Katie Williams) was living in town, so we asked her for a reading, which was well advertised and well attended. We also had a famous historian of the English languages, Seth Lerer, give a talk. This was also well advertised, including an ad in the newspaper, and well attended. A third event was a talk by an expert on Indian history. The attendance for this was only fair. It was given during the afternoon, so perhaps that was part of the reason for the small crowd. We also helped with two visits by law schools. These events were well publicized, but attendance was relatively light. Unfortunately there was no Yom HaShoah event this year, which we have in the past helped sponsor. There were logistical difficulties according to the director of this venture. We are considering being more active in efforts to revive this event, but are uncertain at this point, since the time commitment would be great if we were the major player.

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.

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

1.1.1 Analysis of Data and Plan for Continuous Improvement

2016-2017:

The Honors College was most successful in this area. We need to continue to find opportunities to engage students and the community, and to enhance our reputation through the media. We should consider advertising the law school presentation next year in the hopes that we might attract a few local high school students. Attendance for this event continues to grow but should be better. We should also follow up on the graduate school workshop. Effective 2017-2018, the benchmark will be increased to four speakers /programs per year, and we will begin tracking total attendance at all events.

2017-2018:

The Honors College was very successful in this area. Events were well attended, for the most part, and the speakers were well received. We have a fiction writer scheduled for the fall and are close to having a date set for a talk by Seth Lerer (late in March). We still have not been able to secure a date with Dana Gioia, but we are trying (as poet laureate and former NEA chair, he has many commitments). We will soon schedule a seminar on introducing students to graduate and professional schools.

2018-2019:

We are pleased with last year's events, particularly the reading by Williams and the lecture by Lerer. Both were truly superb and were well received. Events such as law school visits tend not to be as well attended, but they still could be important for individual students in that area. We plan to continue with our academic talks and with visits by professional schools as we get the opportunity. We currently have a poetry reading scheduled and are looking at other events. We did not offer an event on student preparation for graduate school, but we hope to do that soon.

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.

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 completing assignment
2013-2014	100%
2014-2015	100%
2015-2016	100%*
2016-2017	100%

*2015-2016: Only one student presenting inappropriate events.

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

2.1.1 Analysis of Data and Plan for Continuous Improvement

2016-2017:

The teacher of HONS 100 and HONS 200 should continue to emphasize the importance of thoughtful and articulate evaluation of cultural events. Effective 2017-2018, we will provide the number of students completing the assignment instead of percentage.

2017-2018:

Students continue to do well in this area, and the director has been diligent in reminding them. The director will check the rosters for HUMN 105h and HONS 100 and 200 to make sure that the appropriate students are registered. In the event that a student cannot take HUMN 105h in the freshman year s/he will be required to take it or an HONS 425 course.

2018-2019:

Students seem to be responding well to our efforts to get them to attend cultural events. We also managed to get students on board with registering for HONS 100 and HONS 200.

We are offering a few more in-house cultural events, such as opera night, which students (surprisingly) enjoy.

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.

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

1.1.1 Analysis of Data and Plan for Continuous Improvement

2016-2017:

It is always a disappointment to see students graduate without the proper number of hours. Especially in certain majors there seems to be a greater chance of this happening, so the director needs to be careful with students in those majors. However, over the years significant progress has been made in this area.

2017-2018:

Again, progress is good in this area, although we hate to see even one student fail to get the appropriate number of classes. We need to continue to be diligent to check transcripts and identify potential problems early on. The director has noticed that particularly in performing arts there is a tendency for students not to get the required areas, since this major has so many one and two-hour courses and tends to be somewhat insular.

We will give students specific guidelines on how many honors hours they should have at the end of each year. It is likely that most students who fail to get their appropriate hours simply do so by putting things off and are not sufficiently aware that they are behind. This should help in the performing arts and other areas where students may not realize that they are gradually falling behind. We will hand out these guidelines in HONS 100 and HONS 200 and will post them. We will add more procedures if we continue to have problems.

2018-2019:

This was a good year for us in terms of graduation. We had only one of 24 who did not have the appropriate hours. As noted above, it is always a disappointment to lose even one student. The student in question had taken at least two internships, so we did not maintain as much consistent contact with him as would have been desirable. We need to try to anticipate difficulties with interning students and maintain continued contact with them.

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 up 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.

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

2015-2016:

One student received scholarships/grants for study abroad in Italy; another, who will study in Ireland this fall, is having her scholarship grant finalized. One received a grant for an internship in Pakistan over the Christmas Break, and the last had expenses paid to attend a national conference.

2016-2017:

One student received scholarships/grants for study during the fall in Ireland, one for summer study in France, another for the Loop Abroad College Veterinary Service in Thailand. Another student received a small grant for an LSAT study program at Southern Law School. We also gave a grant to Sigma Tau Delta for their trip to their national convention, since three current and one former student (now a graduate student) attended.

2017-2018:

One student was awarded an Honors College scholarship to go to England for summer 2018; this student also received a Disney internship in fall 2017. One student received an Honors College scholarship to attend a student leadership conference; he also attended a second conference for which he received money from another source. One student received an Honors College scholarship for summer study in France. Another student received an Honors College scholarship to deliver a paper on mechanical engineering in Montreal during the summer.

2018-2019:

We did a lot this year in aiding students, but we would like to have done more. We helped send two students to the Sigma Tau Delta conference, where one gave a paper. We paid almost all the costs for two students to travel for an art trip to New York City. This was a splendid opportunity for them. We also helped substantially with one student who gave a paper at a conference in Athens, Greece, and then visited some museums and historical sites.

Unfortunately the University changed its policies so that we could not help another student who wanted to study abroad. We have hopes now that the University has found an effective avenue to encourage study abroad. We do have a student who is currently applying under the new program.

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.

2.1.1 Analysis of Data and Plan for Continuous Improvement

2016-2017:

This area has been most successful, especially because of two endowed professorships and also the use of Foundation money, which does not usually require the red tape typical of spending money with regular University funds. Scholarship red tape for study abroad has been largely taken care of by the Scholarships Office.

2017-2018:

Again, this has been a wonderful experience. The Scholarship Office has expedited summer scholarships, and additional monies are available from two endowed professorships. As more and more students engage in activities, the word gets out.

We will continue to support these students and will remind all students of the opportunities. We have, in fact, already secured spots for three students to go to New York on an art history trip in fall 2018.

We will also continue to support the Arena and Sigma Tau Delta as appropriate. We sometimes make offers to other groups, but they usually have their own funds.

2018-2019:

As noted, we are relatively pleased with last year's success, although we were saddened that we could not help one student who wanted to study abroad. We have good hopes that his situation is being improved.

We continue to post Calls for Papers and similar information. We also continue to support the Arena and Sigma Tau Delta. We are also open to supporting other student organizations and ventures.

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.

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		2

1.1.1 Analysis of Data and Plan for Continuous Improvement

2016-2017:

It would be good to enhance our collection of opera and drama as well as to build our library with a range of books. Effective 2017-2018, the benchmark will be increased to 20 items added to the Honors College collection.

2017-2018:

We ordered many test preparation books as well as other books. This was a good idea, since we have several students preparing for graduate and professional schools. However, we did not order enough DVDs or cultural items and entertaining movies. We have already picked a few to order and will try to elicit requests from students.

2018-2019:

We ordered a good balance of materials this year including test preparation manuals, academic books, entertaining movies, and more cultural movies.

Since the Honors College moved its space, we may focus more in the coming year on purchasing furniture, etc., although we still plan to buy some books and movies. This summer we purchased a smart TV, which enhances opportunities for viewing different things and also provides a better viewing experience, since our previous television was older than some of our students!

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.

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

2015-2016:

The Honors College bought two computers, one for the student lounge and one for the office, mostly for student workers. We also purchased a new printer for the lounge.

With money from an endowed professorship we purchased 200 relatively expensive graduation medals.

2016-2017:

There was no immediate need to purchase equipment during the academic year.

2017-2018:

One computer unexpectedly had problems, so we replaced it, as well as an older computer. We know of no further needs, except perhaps to acquire some furniture that would be less bulky and more efficient.

2018-2019:

As noted above, we moved spaces, which necessitates some upgrades. The necessity is especially great since now all prospective students will be walking through the lounge. We purchased a new TV (see above), a new

printer/scanner, and a new keyboard.

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.

2.1.1 Analysis of Data and Plan for Continuous Improvement

2016-2017:

We are doing well in this area. Although the computers in the library are functional, one is very old, and we need to get a new printer, as well as a table to cut down on clutter. Within the next few years, new chairs and tables should be purchased for the lounge (which is used for study and for HONS 100 and HONS 200). We also need a new TV or to acquire technology for a smart room.

2017-2018:

The Honors College facilities are generally in good shape. At this point we mostly need to spruce up by adding a few plants, fun games, etc. We are in the process of acquiring a new smart TV that is no longer needed in the language lab.

Eventually we should replace our tables and chairs, but they are probably fine for another year or two. It would also be good to organize more, so students will easily see what we have.

2018-2019:

Because of our move and the increased visibility of the lounge, major upgrades were necessary. We have made good progress with adding the TV and some other equipment and by getting rid of a lot of mismatched material.

Continuing our upgrades will be a major focus in the upcoming year. We should get a full-size refrigerator and probably a water cooler (the director and some students are disturbed by the number of water bottles we currently use).

Redesigning the director's office is also necessary and in the works. We are adding a new desk, since the old one was broken, and matching book cases, since we no longer have built-in bookcases.

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 fall 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 coffee maker, and a refrigerator, at a minimum.