



## **Madison Honors College Task Force Report**

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The Honors College Task Force began meeting regularly on January 7, 2015, prior to campus visits by candidates in the now successfully concluded Honors Director Search. The purpose of the Task Force was to caucus as representatives from the colleges, bring together different skills and ideas, advocate for honors on the JMU campus, study and recommend, suggest mechanisms for support of high-achieving students, and suggest ways to inspire further coordination and cooperation. Ideally, the Task Force would communicate its findings (observations, recommendations, and options) related to the major initiative to "Establish the Madison Honors College" outlined in the JMU Strategic Plan to Dr. Linda Halpern, Vice Provost for University Programs, and to the Honors Program's next Director Dr. Bradley Newcomer.

Because the current honors program is in a period of rapid transition and complex organizational change, including the rollout of a number of new program elements and four (out of five) new full-time administrators or staff members hired within the last two-and-a-half years, this report is conceived as something of a handbook of current practices as well as a guide to needs, opportunities, approaches, and challenges. What is our planning cycle for a 2017 launch of Madison Honors College? What resources should be in place? What does dedicated teaching look like? What makes the Honors College look different? Where do we start in forming a strategy and assessments? One of the greatest needs of the future Honors College will be the creation of a shared vision. We hope that this document and the appendices will go some way towards consolidating the institutional memory and narrative arc of Honors at JMU.

Members of the Honors College Task Force are Dr. Sonya Baker (College of Visual and Performing Arts), Dr. Chris Blake (College Arts and Letters), Jared Diener (Honors Program), Dr. Philip Frana (chair, Honors Program), Lucy Green (University Writing Center), Dr. Rick Mathieu (College of Business), Dr. Scott Paulson (College of Science and Mathematics, General Education), Dr. Monica Reis-Bergan (College of Health and Behavioral Studies), and Dr. Stephanie Stockwell (College of Integrated Science and Engineering).

### **Madison Honors College: The Need**

We are fortunate that so many of the pieces needed to create an Honors College at James Madison University are already in place. The program is recognized nationally for its innovative curricular offerings. It is acknowledged as a key unit on campus toward achieving our vision to be the national model of the engaged university, as well as further enhancing our high-quality academic programs. The Honors Program is today well-positioned to cultivate intensive faculty-student mentored research and creative endeavors, high-impact educational practices among undergraduates, special skill sets and experiential learning experiences, and authentic interdisciplinary work.

The program is a select learning community that engages highly motivated and intellectually gifted students in exceptional academic experiences. Through an enriched curriculum involving small classes, faculty mentorship, and independent scholarship, honors students engage in creative learning and intellectual dialogue while cultivating their critical thinking skills. Special programs provide opportunities to push education beyond the classroom, from studying abroad to

experiential practicums. The Honors Program prepares students for advanced post-baccalaureate work or professional education, national service, enhanced career opportunities, and future leadership in global society.

The Honors curriculum is characterized by small classes, committed faculty, and meaningful participation by students in the learning process. With an average size of just 20 students, Honors classes encourage intellectual exchange and collaborative learning between students and faculty. Honors courses require a different kind of work, a kind that emphasizes discussion and persuasive argumentation and challenges students to engage in deep, rigorous, and creative thinking.

Honors students have unparalleled access to exceptional faculty members from across the university. Senior honors projects provide the framework for close, sustained collaboration with a faculty mentor. The benefits of project-based learning extend far beyond the research produced, and are often as much about the formation of enduring relationships and development of soft skills and technical expertise that make students successful throughout their lives. Honors students develop close bonds as members of a unique community of scholars. Leadership experiences and service opportunities engage students with the local community and the wider world. For many students, the Honors experience lasts beyond the four years they experience on campus, as graduates become actively engaged alumni.

Madison Honors College is intended as a magnet for some of the nation's (and perhaps the world's) top undergraduate students. An honors college will bring academic prestige to JMU and raise the university's overall academic profile. It will cultivate excellence and engagement across campus. An honors college is an investment in the entire university because honors students major in every academic program and participate in a wide variety of student organizations and co-curriculars.

### **Building an Innovative Honors College: Opportunities and Challenges**

The Honors College Task Force investigated programs at peer institutions, aspirational peers, and comprehensive universities, and also reviewed the existing model and structure of James Madison University's Honors College in accordance with JMU's Madison Plan Major Initiative #1 to "Further Enhance High-Quality Academic Programs." Through benchmarking against 34 peer institutions we were able to make comparisons with our peers. The task force conducted a strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats (SWOT) analysis of the program and identified a number of areas of focus for recommendations. The focus areas encompass the strengths of the current Honors Program and elucidate the challenges that face Honors at James Madison University.

- Task Force Areas of Focus
  - Resources, Funding
  - Mission, Vision, and Values
  - Assessment, Evaluation, and Strategic Planning
  - Advising

- Infrastructure and Community
  - Orientation and Instruction
  - Matriculation, Retention, and Progression
  - Mentorship and Research
  - Scholarships and Awards
  - Continuing the Alumni Experience and Outreach
- Recommendations (several are ongoing efforts):

[1] Develop an Honors College Strategic Plan that fosters a culture of academic, scholarly, and creative excellence, as well as integrity and shared governance. Make the Honors College an interdisciplinary center of excellence for the whole campus: support team-teaching, as well as other forms of interdisciplinary collaboration.

[2] Provide a learner-focused environment for all honors students via high impact educational practices (HIPs), development of lifelong competencies in effective communication (particularly in terms of writing across the curriculum), metacognition, critical thinking, analytical and quantitative reasoning, leading to problem solving and the effective application of knowledge to real-world problems. Continue to support cutting-edge research, scholarship (including basic, translational, and applied forms), co-curricular/civic/community engagement, and teaching and learning.

[3] Create an Honors College Assessment and Evaluation Plan, student learning objectives, and key performance indicators for each objective. Gather the statistical data needed to determine that the program is “adding value” over what is learned in other components of education at JMU.

[4] Examine current structures and develop a coherent plan for records management, longitudinal data collection, and institutional memory. Make decisions based on data and evidence, as well as qualitative information, and make fact transparent so that stakeholders can understand and respect decisions.

[5] Secure resources in the following targeted areas: faculty, student engagement, advising, and scholarships. Provide and encourage sustainable and reliable resources for participation in Honors College teaching and learning, participation in honors conferences and other scholarly meetings, professional training in honors education. Encourage an honors culture in which JMU staff and administrators are recognized as playing integral and highly respectable roles in honors student success. This will require thoughtful attention to communication and coordination of fundraising efforts and needs across Honors College programs. Where additional/separate funding is unavailable, an honors fee is encouraged as a means of paying for additional Honors College features and services (see below).

[6] Assign coordinators to various program elements (first year experience, assessment, areas of emphasis, the research semesters, scholarships, student engagement, and co-curricular planning, for example).

[7] Expand programs for new populations and different student profiles to help those students make the transition to a collegiate honors program. Promote diversity in all areas.

[8] Examine admission, growth, recruitment, scholarship and retention policies in relation to the university's mission (ongoing). Make the Honors College a destination of choice and prestige. (Marketing the prestige of the program over the scholarships would also be much less costly.) Improve and maintain student commitment to the Honors College over all four years. Create matriculation standards over those years, as well as nerdy/celebratory rites and rituals, for honors student achievement. The Honors College needs robust advising, academic planning, and an early academic warning/intervention program, particularly for "at risk" students.

[9] Increase engagement with campus and extramural partners. Write a systematic plan for identifying and developing key stakeholders (alumni, friends, schools, businesses, industries, foundations, government agencies, other private and public institutions), enhancing honors student awareness, knowledge, understanding, and application of relevant disciplines, and for publicizing Honors College events and accomplishments. Continue to use the program's advisory committees (Faculty Fellows, HAC, SHAC, etc.) to enhance the life of the Honors College and the visibility of its partnerships. Encourage sites for collaborative research activity with these external partners (for example, IIHHS, ongoing).

[10] Improve partnerships and smoother transition and transfer plans with high schools (AP, concurrent, summer institute, etc.) and community college honors programs.

[11] Increase emphasis on undergraduate research and student/faculty research as pedagogy. Increase the frequency of undergraduate scholarship and exemplary studies by integrating more fully the honors coursework, 499 tutorial, research, and writing semesters, with departmental honors to lead to a set of practices where undergraduate research and accountability structures becomes more a part of the Honors College and university-wide approach to undergraduate education. Reward or compensate faculty mentorship of undergraduates and faculty-student collaboration on projects in some way, perhaps with travel funding or reassignment time.

[12] Encourage community and grow a sense of place for social activity that is welcoming and comfortable for honors students, all JMU students, faculty, and staff, as well as members of the public.

[13] Fashion opportunities for active and experiential learning by creating new and enhancing existing service learning programs. Emphasis should be on engagement, leadership, and scholarship. Promote community-based, action research!

[14] Create a single, accessible, visible source where students can learn about all honors services and activities. Identify personal communication channels that students actually use and utilize them to effectively communicate with a greater number of students.

[15] Clarify and codify senior project processes and procedures, and ensure that they are consistent between departments and the honors program.

[16] Conceive of advising as mentorship, bridging, and transition management rather than as simply scheduling and check-box review (ongoing).

- SWOT: Strengths

The review of existing structure reveals that our Honors Program has a number of strengths. Honors is a powerful recruiting tool for JMU. While the program does not quite reach the heuristic that “most applicants will have at least a 1280 combined reading/math SAT,” it is near that standard. The average composite score for freshmen JMU students accepted into the program has remained in the 1260-1280 range over the past three years. SAT scores above 1400 are increasing slowly. By way of comparison, JMU’s average combined critical reading plus math score hovers near 1150.

Recruiting YEAR	1138	%, rank	1148	%, rank	1158*	%, rank
SAT						
SAT Composite (CR+M)	1261.79		1281.22		1272.03	
SAT percentile	86th		88th		87th	
SAT 1500-1549	0	0.0	1	0.5	1	0.5
SAT 1450-1499	0	0.0	4	2.1	3	1.5
SAT 1400-1449	11	5.6	8	4.2	14	7.1
SAT 1350-1399	13	6.7	31	16.4	23	11.7
SAT 1300-1349	40	20.5	41	21.7	44	22.3
SAT 1250-1299	58	29.7	39	20.6	31	15.7
SAT 1200-1249	35	18.0	42	22.2	45	22.8
SAT 1150-1199	20	10.3	12	6.3	23	11.7
SAT 1100-1149	14	7.2	9	4.8	5	2.5
SAT 1050-1099	1	0.5	1	0.5	6	3.0
SAT 1000-1049	3	1.5	1	0.5	2	1.0

The facilities available to Honors are quite good. The home of the Honors Program is Hillcrest House on the Bluestone campus. It is centrally located and of historical interest – being the previous residence of the university’s president. The first floor contains the offices of the executive secretary and administrative assistant, as well as a number of meeting spaces, including a conference room and reception hall. The lower level is given over to an Honors student computer lab and lounge. The offices of the Honors Program director, associate director, assistant director, and academic advisor, and the Xi of Virginia chapter office of Phi Beta Kappa, occupy the second floor of the building.

The Honors Program offers its students the opportunity to live in dedicated Honors housing. Two hundred first and second year Honors students live together in the Honors Living and Learning Center in Shenandoah Hall, a residence hall that opened on the East Campus in Fall 2009. The Honors Living and Learning Center provides experiences and facilities for high achieving, highly motivated, and intellectually curious students to live and work together with one another, with other Honors students, and with faculty members to explore their mutual interests in learning

and discovery, promoting the intellectual culture that is at the core of the Honors Program's vision and mission. Intellectual engagement is the primary driving forces in programming for the Honors Living and Learning Center. Fifty beds in a designated wing of the brand-new Grace Street Apartments will become available to honors upperclassmen in the Fall of 2015.

Recent, ambitious curricular innovations introduced by the Faculty Fellows and Honors staff – the optional Areas of Emphasis (Research, Leadership, Creativity, Service, Global Studies) and mandatory HON 100 First Year Experience ("Discovery Seminar") – have been well-received by the students. They are also showing early promise as retention tools and guides for students working towards their senior honors projects. In the 1118 freshman cohort, the first for which the Areas of Emphasis became available, 86% (12 of 14) enrolled in the Research sequence students completed the senior honors project. Students learn better when their college experiences are purposefully designed as coherent, integrated learning environments in which courses and out of class experiences reinforce one another, and build on one another. HON 100 is a first step in the process of developing scaffolding that creates awareness of academic culture beginning with enjoyable, engaging student orientation (to self, to JMU, to Honors) activities. HON 100 has also proven a great way to use honors students as a resource, providing leadership and mentoring opportunities for current students as teaching assistants.

The Honors Program also has good representation in regional and national honors organizations. Honors students, staff, and regular faculty members are presenting papers, leading discussions, and serving as elected leaders in these organizations. JMU Honors Program representatives presented eight papers at the last National Collegiate Honors Council (NCHC) meeting. Four students presented on the JMU Summer Honors Institute at the Southern Regional Honors Council (SRHC) annual conference. JMU's honors associate director is the executive director of the largest regional honors organization, a member of the NCHC conference planning committee, and co-chair of the 2-Year to 4-Year Honors Program Task Force, and the four-year public university representative to the Virginias Collegiate Honors Council (VCHC). International Affairs sophomore Elizabeth Brannon is an elected student representative to the SRHC Executive Committee and will represent our region at the national meeting in Chicago.

Dr. Melinda Adams' service to prestigious national scholarships and fellowships is recognized by all as superior. Since 2007, JMU Honors Program students have been awarded 6 Boren Awards, 5 Fulbright Scholarships, 5 Gilman Scholarships, 3 Goldwater Scholarships, 2 Rotary International Scholarships, 1 Udall Foundation Scholarship, and 1 Freeman-Asia Award.

- SWOT: Weaknesses

JMU's Honors Program also suffers from a number of weaknesses that sap its strength. The Honors Program suffers from a lack of resources and infrastructure that is overcome in the main by judicious budgeting, reliance on voluntary, borrowed, and A/P faculty and staff contributions, and student spirit.

In particular, Task Force members cited absence of a strategic plan and program assessment instruments, inadequate internal record keeping (much of it done manually on paper), lack of

dedicated classroom space, and in general trying to do too much curricular and co-curricular engagement with too little administrative staffing.

Attrition at the boundary between the general education program & honors seminars and the 499 research project also troubled task force members. The Honors Program is weak at the point where it should be strong, in support for undergraduate research. Some universities (and states) have dedicated funds available for students pursuing undergraduate research. JMU is currently discussing this at the university level. There are widely varying expectations of senior honors projects across colleges and departments, and the faculty liaison program seem especially tenuous. Some liaisons are unsure of their own departmental guidelines, know little about creative and collaborative options, and lack a clear understanding of Honors Program procedures and expectations. Pressure points for the senior project begin almost immediately, as upperclassmen who drop the program create a fog of uncertainty among their underclass peers. Unease is not easily dispelled by orientation activities that demystify the process.

Following the freshman year, many students are unable (or unwilling) to fit Honors courses – particularly multiple semester Areas of Emphasis (AoE) sequences – into their busy schedules. Following the sophomore year, many students are unable to find advisors or generate viable research problems and drop out after 499A. Task force members recognize that lack of coordination and communication between the Honors Program and departments, lack of coordination within AoE sequences, as well as the decentralized structure of JMU, play roles.

Other weaknesses are varying standards applied to Honors options (contract courses) and a lack of accountability structures. The 3.25 GPA minimum seems low in comparison to peer institutions, and does not incorporate progression standards (GPA or regular semester honors course enrollment – exceptions are often granted). The perks of being in Honors lose value over time as well. Shenandoah Hall is mainly a freshman year experience, and priority registration is of less value in the junior and senior years. Most troubling, because attrition is widespread and standards vary widely between tracks, it is easy for students to claim full Honors distinction/recognition on their resumes, vitae, and online personal webpages.

- SWOT: Opportunities

Strengths and weaknesses in the current honors program combine to present the university with a number of intramural and extramural opportunities that might be seized upon by the new honors college. First, there are a number of unrealized prospects for students to find research mentors, build up research and writing skills, and find appropriate pathways into the 499s early in their careers at JMU. Honors students can be aligned with faculty and research and creative projects through an expanded two-semester HON 100 First Year Experience sequence that leads students directly and intentionally into the Areas of Emphasis course and improved and better prescribed Honors Options. One popular idea is to turn HON 100 into a “big idea” or “gen ed plus” or “habits of mind” type course.

Bulking up undergraduate research and exemplary studies offerings in the first year will require greater, earlier collaboration between Honors and the departments. It will also necessitate

improved tracking through the program, careful enrollment management for each honors cohort, and more department-specific research, collaborative, and creative-project oriented honors classes. The Task Force members felt strongly that students should early on develop visible presentations, articulate their ideas, give sophomore lectures, critique second year proposals, brainstorm and crystallize ideas, and the like. We could, for instance, consider making designated project-based sections for honors options (available only in the sophomore year), and cap them at eight students in mixed sections. Or we could consider team-taught clusters in which students collaborate on group projects.

The Honors Program also has opportunities to capitalize upon partnerships with other student service units on campus. The new Independent Scholars major, for example, could serve as a catalyst to leadership, innovation, and big-picture/out-of-the-box problem solving among all honors students. The new Office of Undergraduate Research could be a boon to honors organizing around academic scholarship and engaged learning, helping us to coordinate, collaborate, secure resources for mentors and students, and mount workshops. Leadership, service, and entrepreneurial programming developed by the Leadership Institute, Community Service-Learning, Non-Profit Institute, and Center for Entrepreneurship represents low-hanging fruit that should be harvested immediately. And for faculty and curricular development, opportunities exist to create a jmUDESIGN summer institute initiative targeted directly at Honors.

The Honors College Capital Campaign represents a tremendous opportunity to develop prestigious faculty fellowships, merit scholarships for incoming honors students, grants for honors study abroad, funding for research and scholarly activity, and other “over the horizon” learning experiences.

- SWOT: Threats

The Task Force members also identified a couple of internal and external threats that hinder our ability to align honors vision with university mission, advance a contemplative pedagogy, teach interdisciplinary research skills, and come out of our silos as champions of intellectual pluralism and global citizenship. First, the peer/aspirational honors institutions we looked at tend to offer more student funding than JMU. The Madison Achievement Scholarships, in particular, are not providing effective leverage in recruiting honors students. Some of the problems here are related to policies that are now being reconsidered and reformed at the Academic Council level.

Our peer institutions also tend to offer more faculty involvement and adequate staffing. The Honors Program relies on voluntary course contributions, and those contributions are becoming ever harder to secure. Increasingly, the Honors Program plugs holes in course offerings with the help of adjuncts and JMU administrators. Continuity of operations and honors faculty orientation is made more challenging by turnover, and by the system of rebuilding course offerings each semester. We have been fortunate to have the goodwill of so many willing partners. But students are clamoring for more honors instruction and co-curricular involvement by recurring, veteran faculty members. As university resources continue to grow scarcer, departments and colleges will lose incentive to work with Honors.

Turnover and vacancies in honors staffing has also taken its toll. A number of intractable problems should be addressed, beyond strategic planning and assessment, but time for grappling with them is limited. One of these problems that Honors must invest time in studying involves current enrollment management practices across the university, especially restricted programs. Another involves the struggle to recruit a diverse student population to the university and to the Honors Program.

The Task Force is also aware that Honors fundraising itself may represent a sort of “threat” to the Honors Program. Potential donors could have restrictive visions for the use of endowment funds, particularly in an environment where institutional priorities are not sufficiently underscored.

- SHAC SWOT

The Development Committee of the Student Honors Advisory Council (SHAC) undertook a brief SWOT analysis of the Honors Program at its April 6<sup>th</sup> meeting. Students noted that current strengths of the program include (in order) the Honors community housing in Shenandoah Hall, the restricted enrollment in small honors classes, priority registration, the Honors 100 First Year Experience course, Areas of Emphasis, cheaper printing in the Hillcrest computer lab, honors seminars and options with an interdisciplinary feel, and a growing sense of “belonging” in the Honors Program.

Development Committee students also reported a number of weaknesses (again, in order): lack of “standardization” among and between departments related to senior project requirements, limited choice and variety in honors course offerings, additional honors credit requirements that place a burden on students trying to fulfill major graduation requirements, the lack of information, “scare factor,” and difficulty in securing a mentor in the run-up to the senior project semesters. Students are clearly spooked by senior project requirements in the Honors Program, and that unease is felt (and communicated by upperclassmen – on social media, for instance) before the students even arrive on campus for the freshman year.

- Planning Worksheets to HAC, FFs, student focus group

A common Honors College planning worksheet was also distributed to three focus groups of about 20 people each. The first focus group was composed of sophomores in the program. Another was composed of faculty members invested in the program (including instructors, fellows, and task force members). A third group was composed of members of the Honors Advisory Council.

In the exercise, intended as a brainstorming “academic game,” respondents were asked consider hypothetical options from each of six separate categories: Scholarships, Admissions Standards, Infrastructure/Housing, Faculty, Curriculum, and Capstone Experience. The options were developed from real characteristics of honors colleges at peer institutions. To create a sense of “forced options” and budget constraints, each option had a dollar figure attached that very roughly approximated the relative cost of the option. Individuals were asked to keep to a predetermined

“budget,” but had some flexibility to construct alternative options. After making their selections, members were asked to discuss in small groups the rationale for constructing a college in this way.

The results were said to be both conducive to conversation and truly illuminating, particularly when shared across all of the focus groups. Responses within each group were remarkably uniform. Advisory Council members allocated the most budget dollars to full scholarships for honors students, favored fairly routine by-the-numbers admissions decisions, full-time adjunct instructors without tenure who teach all honors classes, and a capstone requirement fulfilled by a mentored service learning project. Students favored a relatively low commitment to honors scholarships, totaling no more than quarter scholarships for tuition and fees and full scholarships for 10% of the honors student body. Instead, they sunk their funds into full-time honors faculty members who teach honors courses on a three year rotating basis before returning to home departments. Students gravitated to options already manifest in the JMU Honors Program, but favored the expansion of creative senior projects in total number and in acceptance by more departments. Faculty members threw their weight behind ambitious recruiting goals and tough admissions standards. Faculty members want the Honors Program to attract top-caliber students who will engage in research and creative endeavors – and in particular traditional research rather than creative or collaborative projects. While more moderately than the advisory council, they recognize a need for competitive scholarships connected to progression standards.

All three groups seemed satisfied with current housing options and physical infrastructure, though the faculty showed little interest in grouping honors students into a dedicated residential hall (the current arrangement for freshmen and some upperclassmen). All three groups also generally agreed that the curriculum should consist of a specialized three-hour course each semester for four years, one that leads to completion of a senior project. The complexity of the current system came up regularly in Task Force discussions. All groups wanted to see discipline brought to honors offerings, more “scaffolding” and shared learning objectives to bond courses together (particularly between the honors general education courses, areas of emphasis sequences, interdisciplinary seminars, and 499s), fewer instances of special pleadings for substitution credits, and less reliance on honors options, where there are sometimes large variations in quality. A summary of the planning worksheet options is included in the appendix.

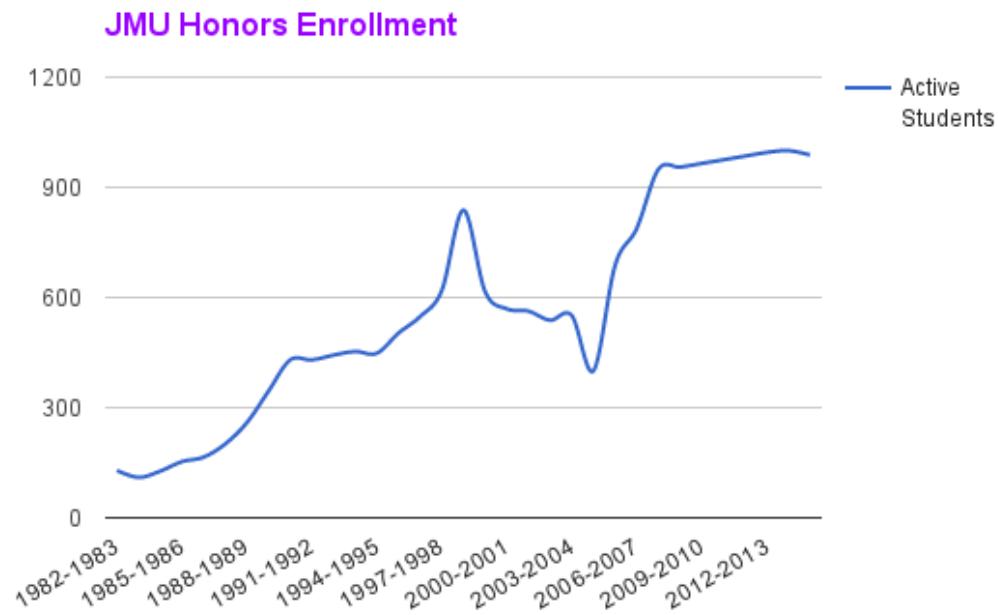
- Resources

The Honors Program has experienced challenges in recent years in meeting its goal of providing the highest quality in its academic programs. The funding received by the program (and by the university as a whole) has not kept pace with the need to meet student demand for instruction, sustain daily operations, and support new instructional initiatives. There is a need for additional funding for honors scholars enhancements that attract and retain the best students to the program. The Center for Faculty Innovation “buys out” faculty from departments. If Honors goes this route, the buyout has to be large enough to cover losing the faculty member.

Madison Honors College must attract faculty members of excellence to teach honors courses that are qualitatively different from non-honors courses. Honors colleges across the nation nurture pedagogies that emphasize innovative course enhancement, co-curricular engagement, and higher

order learning objectives. Some portion of the fee will be used to encourage faculty to engage in a range of innovative teaching practices, explore new topics, and challenge honors students (and themselves) in new ways. Honors faculty members should be offered an attractive teaching assignment, the prestige of receiving a major university honor in the process, and support for creative activity. The fee will also begin to address compensation issues when departments reassign faculty members to teach an honors course.

Task Force members hope that the transition to an Honors College with faculty, co-curricular, scholarship, and staffing enhancements could be accomplished by an additional infusion of funding. As the October 2008 Academic Program Review made clear, the Honors Program "should be the academic flagship of the university and have institution-wide support to develop and implement innovative programs." Our ability to maintain that position is threatened by a lack of financial resources for our programs.



Expanded enrollments in the current Honors Program have not been adequately compensated for by enrollment growth funding. Enrollment in the Honors Program has grown from 550 students in 2003-2004 to 1,000 students in the current academic year. Over the same period of time, the operating budget for Honors has remained relatively constant, growing only from \$45,000 to \$51,000. To remain competitive, the Honors Program must become more dependent on non-state funding resources to supplement General Fund allocations for basic operations and equipment needs.

The JMU Honors Program faces stiff in-state and out-of-state competition from schools with honors-specific scholarship support. The Task Force is appreciative of the effort to secure resources through the Capital Campaign and SCHEV budget recommendations. The Task Force would prefer these funding sources over an honors fee. However, the Task Force is mindful that in a resource-

constrained environment, the university may need to consider an academic fee paid by students in the Honors Program. A fee could be sought to support instructional enhancements, offer faculty members attractive honors teaching assignments, provide grants for undergraduate research projects, fund student travel abroad and to academic conferences, give a limited number needs-based fee waivers, and/or support meaningful off-campus retreats and other community events in the Honors College.

In particular, the Task Force members see an immediate need for six regular faculty positions representing and periodically drawn from each of the colleges, a full-time administrative office specialist III (already approved!), a second academic officer, and a coordinator of student engagement. These enhancements would help Madison Honors College compete as a national leader in undergraduate Honors education.

Honors fees at other universities vary widely. The amount requested for a JMU Honors College-specific fee could be moderate when compared to the fees charged by Honors programs and colleges across the nation.

#### *Honors student fees at other universities*

- Northern Arizona University, University Honors Program – \$100/semester (began Fall 2013)
- Lane Community College Honors Program – \$100/one-time
- University of Illinois (Springfield) Honors Program – \$500/semester; (\$700/semester beginning Fall 2014)
- University of Arizona Honors College – \$250/semester
- University of Central Arkansas, Schedler Honors College -- \$110/semester
- Arizona State, Barrett Honors College – \$500/semester
- Clemson, Calhoun Honors College – \$400/semester
- U. Mass, Commonwealth Honors College – \$150/semester
- U. Mass (Amherst) Honors College – \$300/semester
- Western Michigan University, Lee Honors College – \$100/semester
- University of Oregon, Clark Honors College – \$3,573/year (began Fall 2013)
- Hinds Community College – \$15/semester
- UNLV Honors College – \$30/semester
- U. Texas Business Honors Program – \$150/semester (began Fall 2003)
- U. North Florida Honors & Scholars program – \$200 one-time *fee*
- Auburn Honors College – first-year Honors student - \$250/semester; second-year Honors student – \$225/semester; third-year and beyond Honors student - \$200/semester
- University of Houston Honors College – academic support services fee - \$125/semester; materials resources/activity fee - \$125/semester; initial admit term fee - \$200

## **History, Mission, and Vision**

James Madison University (then known as Madison College) officially announced the Honors Program in April 1961 as 6.0 credits of independent study culminating in a senior thesis project. The program was administered by an Honors Committee chaired by the college's chief academic officer, Dean Percy H. Warren. Honors Committee members represented all four divisions of Madison College: Dr. Louis G. Locke, Dr. J. Emmert Ikenberry, Dr. Elmer L. Smith, and Dr. Charles G. Caldwell.

A single student in the Department of Sociology, Lynda Garland Kern Dunnigan, completed the university's first senior honors thesis under the supervision of Dr. Elmer Smith and Dr. Anthony Sas in May 1962. The thesis was entitled "The Agrarian Reform in Communist China with Emphasis upon Kwangtung Province." Dunnigan and other students who completed a thesis graduated "with honors." Over the next seven years, 44 students completed the program with honors. In June 1969 Madison College began recognizing graduates on the basis of cumulative grade point averages, and completion of a senior honors thesis led instead to graduation "with distinction."

In 1975 the program expanded – at the urging of Dr. Rosalind Trent, Dr. Todd Zeiss, Dr. John Sweigart, and Dr. Philip F. Riley – to encompass a more comprehensive Academic Honors Program, mounting honors sections and seminars for high-ability freshmen and sophomores. The Academic Honors Program was administered by Dr. Philip F. Riley of the History Department. The number of students completing theses increased from about 3 per year to 20 between 1976 and 1980. In 1982, at the urging of department heads, the program hired its first director, Dr. Jeanne R. Nostrand of the English Department. Fifty honors undergraduate students were admitted to the program in that year, and students who completed all four years of the program were designated "Honors Scholars."

In April 1986 the university named Dr. Joanne V. Gabbin of the English Department as the director of the Honors Program. The Program soon thereafter moved into permanent offices at Hillcrest House. The origins of the current three-track structure – then called Honors Scholars, Subject-Area Honors, and Senior Honors Project – may be traced to Gabbin's first year of leadership. The program soon expanded to admit 100 students each year, and over the next decade recruited Music assistant professor Douglas Kehlenbrink, English instructor Michael L. Allain, and English associate professor Joyce S. Wszalek as assistant directors. Gabbin developed a number of program enhancements, including Brown Bag lunch talks, the Honors Symposium, Honors Opportunity Program, and Honors Learning Community. She also created an Honors Program Advisory Board. By 1999 more than 75 Honors students graduated with distinction. Gabbin left the Honors Program in 2005 to become executive director of the Furious Flower Poetry Center.

In 2005 Dr. Maureen Shanahan of Art History became the interim director of the Honors Program, and supervision shifted from the office of the vice president for academic affairs to the new office of University Studies. The university hired Dr. Barry Falk as the new director in 2007. More than 111 students completed senior honors projects by 2008.

The JMU Honors Program has produced a number of publications over the years, including Honors Update (2000-2006), Honors News (2005), the honors arts journal *Fugue*, an alumni

newsletter called Epilogue, and the *James Madison Undergraduate Research Journal* (JMURJ) (2009-present). JMURJ is a multidisciplinary, student-run, peer-reviewed undergraduate research journal that gives undergraduates an outlet for their scholarly work while preparing them for their experiences beyond JMU. JMURJ's mission is to promote, publish, and share the excellent scholarly research by undergraduate students across James Madison University. JMURJ seeks to connect James Madison University's undergraduate students in all fields of study with their peers, their school, and their community.

- Institutional Context

The National Collegiate Honors Council's definition of honors education prioritizes student learning over everything else. Through small classes and independent study, Honors students cultivate the habits of critical thinking, independent analysis, and creative expression under the guidance of outstanding professors. The program offers unique opportunities such as study abroad, priority registration, an Honors residence hall, financial support, and special programming. JMU Honors is housed within University Programs, which coordinates programs fostering "academic excellence, faculty development, student research, internationalization, and diversity" on campus. The program holds institutional membership in the National Collegiate Honors Council (NCHC), Southern Regional Honors Council (SRHC), and Virginias Collegiate Honors Council (VCHC).

The mission of the program is "to challenge its outstanding undergraduate students to expand their intellectual horizons and expectations by offering them an enhanced and supportive learning environment." Through the Honors Program, students receive preparation for graduate or professional schools and careers, and expand their knowledge of themselves, others, and the world. The program offers a number of activities that supplement the standard curriculum. Co-curricular Honors events include outside speakers, field trips, concerts, and other special events.

The mission of the Honors Program fits well the mission, vision, and values expressed by the university as a whole. The Honors mission is focused on developing excellence in leadership, scholarship, and service among highly motivated and intellectually gifted students. JMU's vision is to be the national model for the engaged university – developing, deep and purposeful reflective learners, preparing them for citizenship in a lively democracy, and encouraging them to serve the public good and address critical societal problems. Our values are JMU's values: raising the academic bar, highlighting connections between people and ideas on- and off-campus, striving to be inclusive, seeking to be innovative and entrepreneurial, acting with integrity, and focusing on the personal challenges and opportunities of our students.

What the program lacks is a strategic plan that communicates Honors College goals and objectives, specifies actions and control mechanisms needed to achieve those goals in the future, and clearly addresses all of the other critical elements developed during sessions of thoughtful planning and decision-making. No such document currently exists. Madison Honors College must sustainably tie together strategic planning, and use of resources, with delivery of mission-centric students learning. It's also important if Madison Honors College is to emerge as a national leader. For the sake of convenience, here are the first several items on the program review instrument for use by NCHC site visitors and informal program reviewers:

- Mission statement clearly and specifically defines the objectives, responsibilities, and unique curricular focus of honors.
- Mission statement clearly and specifically correlates with the institutional mission.
- Strategic planning documents clearly and specifically outline future directions and priorities for the program, and resource allocation is closely tied to planning objectives.
- Strategic planning documents are systematically reviewed according to a published schedule.
- Course and program level assessment practices are widespread and fully integrated into the practices of the program. Clear evidence exists that data is regularly gathered and used to improve the design/delivery of courses and the program.

An effective strategic plan depends on a thorough understanding of the people and interests the Honors College will serve and partner with, managerial roles and resources available, and a vision of the future that emerges from attention to the global perspective, to intent, to thinking in time, and to the evidence. JMU celebrates its connection to founding father James Madison, and in that spirit it seems appropriate for Madison Honors College to write its own foundational document or charter documents. The spade work needed to define the deepening and broadening experiences has begun, but is not finished. There is, for instance, no nuanced explanation of the Honors Program's approach to interdisciplinarity, nor how it should be used to describe developmental modes of thinking, relevant metaphors, or actual honors student work at JMU. No such document providing philosophical grounding for the program currently exists. Dr. Bill Hawk has pledged to help us with this task, which could draw upon the unprecedented efforts to teach ethics to every student at JMU through the Madison Collaborative: Ethical Reasoning in Action.

Signature honors programming is dependent upon students (and faculty) engaged in the pursuit of disciplines as a necessary precondition to interdisciplinary study. Disciplinary knowledge is necessary in the development of interdisciplinary understanding. Interdisciplinarity study, though, seeks to transcend these disciplinary boundaries, both conceptually and pragmatically. Honors involves simultaneous searches for total knowledge and integration, as well as solutions to problems and questions that are inadequately addressed by any single existing discipline.

Our job is to make students and faculty aware of the differing insights and methods of various academic disciplines and various cultures on the nature of what it means to be human. We are together the caretakers of the human image. Put differently, one *should* join JMU Honors to become a self-assessing person by developing the arts of inquiry, conversation, and collaboration. The methods to accomplish this requires full and active engagement with the university's various pedagogies and resources. But some Honors Program students say to others that they joined for the perks – a room in Shenandoah Hall, priority enrollment, etc. No one should be particularly surprised to hear a student say this. Messages are everywhere in American society for youth to be driven, competitive, and efficient with one's effort. The surprise is that so many honors students join and stay in the program for the *ideas, community engagement, and moral development*. We have witnessed JMU students, who joined for the "wrong" reasons, get caught up in their honors education in spite of themselves as they matured.

Even the official reason for joining – mentioned in the discussion of mission and values above – could be seen as merely a resume enhancer. Indeed, to some extent we even present the notion of growth as resume enhancement when we recruit. But personal development needs *analysis of competing perspectives* and *ideas in action* as content for it to take place. Interdisciplinarity study provides a skill set that helps resolve all sorts of tensions – between research and public policy, experts and activists, or even interesting patterns and practices.

- National Context

After World War II, the demand for higher education increased dramatically and spawned the creation of the many honors programs to accommodate and compete for this new and more diverse population of exceptional students. The creation of these honors programs occurred, primarily, at larger public institutions because elite, private institutions remained relatively static in size and were out of financial reach of many students. Honors programs promised small class sizes, regular and rich interactions with faculty and staff, and access to additional sources of financial aid. These benefits are critical recruitment tools for large institutions and institutions that do not have an undergraduate-centered culture.

Colleges and universities have faced more rapid increases in student population in more recent times. According to the National Center on Education Statistics, postsecondary student population size in the United States has increased by 48% since 1990. In response to this growth, many institutions have re-focused attention on their honors programs as a key factor for attracting to better support for continually more diverse groups of talented students. Because the majority of undergraduates set up permanent residence within ~125 miles of their undergraduate institutions, state legislatures have also gained interest in supporting successful honors programs as a strategy to keep the best and brightest students in-state for their careers and related economic contributions. This new attention has facilitated the development of more comprehensive honors programs and the emergence of many honors colleges. According to a 2013 survey of member institutions, the National Collegiate Honors Council discovered a 6-fold increase in the number of honors colleges from 1994 to 2013, the majority growing out of existing honors programs.

- Interdisciplinary Studies

The field of “Interdisciplinary Studies” is a response to increasing specialization and fragmentation of knowledge. Disciplines and majors, as we now understand them, are relatively recent in origin, having come into being in the 1880s and 1890s. Prior to that, a college education was essentially interdisciplinary, designed to prepare students (almost all of whom were wealthy, white males) for leadership in business, government and the professions. With disciplines and majors came paradigms of scholarship – rule-bounded investigative methods and theory and assumptions and ways of presenting evidence and arguments that differed one discipline from the next, producing ever more specialized knowledge as this proceeded over time.

Even as early as the late 1880s at Princeton, the call went out for an integrated “general education,” to combat specialization, led by James McCosh. Although he sought non-departmental and therefore interdisciplinary courses, the liberal arts general education approach that emerged at

Princeton veered from his aim, being instead a sequence of departmental courses in the humanities. This sequence, not unlike a portion of our present day general education requirements, produced disciplinary diversity, but only through a distributive approach. In other words, no stand-alone interdisciplinary courses were available to help students “build the big picture.”

A second approach, developed by Robert Maynard Hutchins and Mortimer J. Adler at the University of Chicago in the 1930s, centers on Greek classical texts and other “Great Books” of the western canon. A core curriculum was established that was interdisciplinary, at least in terms of the humanities (across the lines that divide philosophy, religion, history, literature, and the study of language). Unlike the previous Princeton model that stressed the integration of disciplines for the purpose of connecting specific pieces of knowledge to the larger contours of a student’s personal and civic life, the University of Chicago program focused on a specific Greco-Roman-Euro-centric content designed to introduce students to a common fund of wisdom.

As the natural and social sciences grew in stature and emphasis at universities following World War II, the core curriculum came to include study of these disciplines in the arts and sciences. However, the natural sciences have always had an unstable presence in the core curriculum, because its practitioners are trained to rarely devote instructional time to critical reflection of the underlying assumptions of scientific protocols.

John Dewey, at Columbia University and Arthur O. Lovejoy, at Johns Hopkins University were the leading lights of the third approach, which is concerned primarily with intellectual development (cognitive and moral) and personal growth of students. Unlike the Hutchins/Adler emphasis on western wisdom, the Dewey/Lovejoy model of interdisciplinarity stresses “process” and lacks a specific “content.” Of the three, the latter model has perhaps been the most influential in American higher education. It fits well with the “discovery” beginning in the 1960s of the importance of including in the core curriculum the voices of non-western writers, people of color in the west, and women.

By the 1980s, this sort of multicultural inclusion in general education requirements led to a heated debate between “traditionalists” (actually, Hutchins/Adler proponents) and “progressives” (actually, Dewey/Lovejoy proponents) about what should be and should not be in the canon. Equally heated in that decade and ever since has been the degree, if any, to which “dead-white-male” authors of the Great Books are blinded by their own historical and cultural assumptions about what topics are worth studying and what counts as ratiocination (how to reason methodically and logically).

- JMU Honors and Interdisciplinarity

JMU’s Honors Program seems to have sprung to life in the throes of the struggle between the Great Books and the cognitive/moral development approaches. Rather than choosing one or the other or pronouncing a “pox on both houses,” the Honors Program opted for a third way, blending the two. In higher education in America, this is decidedly unique, even to this day. These blended interdisciplinary studies approaches work on different levels. We introduce in our honors courses content (history of ideas about self or human nature) centered in (some of) the great ideas and

discoveries in the western canon (Hutchins/Adler). Residing at a level beyond the content is a way of Socratic, seminar teaching, presenting the thinker's idea as a live option, making a case for its inherent truth, and connecting it with a student's lived experience.

The JMU Honors Program begins to operate on a level beyond the other two, one that existentially engages students in a process of cognitive and moral development (Dewey/Lovejoy). This process has been updated by work in the 1950s-1980s of developmental psychologists at Harvard such as William Perry and Carol Gilligan, and feminist scholars from the Stone Center at Wellesley College (Mary Field Belenky and her colleagues).

In still other courses, the conflict over disparate social and cultural arrangements and public policy pronouncements becomes more specific. Either we examine differing societal formulations or survey some "hot button" social problems along with their attendant policy implications. In each case, students have to choose from multiple possibilities, all the while keeping in mind how a choice in one area calls out for consistency with choices in other areas. What is taking place for students can be nothing short of "building the big picture" with respect to society and public policy. The developmental component pushes students toward and through what William Perry terms "multiplicity" and into contextual pluralism.

Honors Program faculty members directly engage notions of pluralism, expressly examining diversity in a variety of ways – through religion, race, gender, social class, and culture, but also legal systems, medical systems, scientific and technological and environmental systems, and so forth. The JMU Honors Program embraced inclusive education, and since the 1980s has fostered interdisciplinary courses that have come to be known under the moniker as "minor studies" – Native American Studies, Environmental Studies, Gender Studies, Religious Studies, and so forth.

Encountering this content brings with it an inherent challenge, requiring nearly every participant to question assumptions and taken-for-granted, received "wisdoms" acquired in one's youth. Having small classes all semester puts students in a position to make more frequent oral and written contributions. By taking more responsibility for what transpires in the classroom, a student has a greater number of opportunities to make "commitments in the face of contextual pluralism." Results from Perry's studies show that this pushes students' development to a more mature response to the variety they will encounter in civic and community life. The Eight Key Questions framing the Madison Collaborative, as complemented by the seven student learning outcomes, provide sophisticated cognitive and attitudinal scaffolding. The Madison Collaborative could provide an excellent springboard to more formally addressing the development of flexible social, intellectual, and moral capacities and skill sets in our honors students.

## **Assessment, Evaluation, and Strategic Planning**

Dr. Linda Suskie, former vice president of the Middle States Commission on Higher Education, notes that "students learn better when their college experiences are purposefully designed as coherent, integrated learning experiences in which courses and out-of-class experiences build on and reinforce one another." Madison Honors College will need to define student learning outcomes for some of its courses – particularly upper division ones – figure out how to generate data on those

outcomes, and figure out what to do with the data when it is in our possession. We will need to establish a methodology for a feedback loop.

- Program Goals/Assessment Plans

A fair number of crucial questions drive Honors College assessment:

- What does our program value?
- What does our program actually do?
- What are our programmatic aspirations?
- Where do we already have these things happening?
- How can we get direct measurement data?
- Where can we get indirect and extramural measurement data? (A-Day, student surveys, focus groups, interviews, employers, alumni?)

What is the educational value provided by an Honors program or college? What have Honors students learned or gained from participating in Honors that their non-Honors counterparts have not? Why is Madison Honors College important? (Says former NCHC president Dr. Greg Lanier, “If Honors exists *just* to bring in better students, universities probably don’t need it.”) Why should Honors be funded? What is the quality of evidence that supports the answers and justifies our existence? Honors colleges have critics. How do we document achievement in Honors programs to justify significant and costly investments made in small classes, undergraduate research opportunities, special speakers, faculty stipends, and so forth?

What is in the air we breathe? What are our goals? How are leadership, service, and intellectual ability built into the curriculum? It maybe that Madison Honors College should be thought of as a portmanteau – focusing on the toolbox, not the content – at least where program goals are concerned. What do we need to do? We need to promote curricular coherence. We need to facilitate collaboration at all levels, and across the university silos. We must showcase our strengths. We need to think of ourselves as the Apple Computer of higher education, but then figure out how to actually celebrate and market our innovative products. We need to build from the bottom up, while satisfying multiple “drivers.” Above all, we need to keep it simple.

- JMU Honors SLOs/Matrix

We need to make our program goals and assessment plans feasible, manageable, and transparent. We need to establish clear, measurable, expected outcomes of student learning. We also need to ensure that students have sufficient opportunities to demonstrate success, systematically gather, analyze, and interpret evidence to determine how well student learning matches our expectations. We can use the resulting information to understand and improve student learning. From our investigations of honors colleges across the nation, we have gleaned all sorts of potential student learning objectives: Interdisciplinarity, Content Knowledge, Communication Skills, Critical Thinking, Higher-Order Quantitative and Qualitative Reasoning, Diversity/Intercultural Competence, Aesthetic Perspective, General Knowledge, Project Management, Values/Integrity/Ethical Reasoning, Problem Solving, Citizenship, Persistence, Self-

Reliance, Leadership, Diversity, Creativity, Professional Behavior/Skills, International Experience, Foreign Language Proficiency, Active Learning, Interdisciplinary Learning, Service Learning/Social Awareness/Civic Engagement, Community Service, Cultural Awareness, Self-Confidence, Research Skills, Connections, Identity, Argument and Persuasion, and many more.

From the goals we develop from our thinking about the “value added” by Madison Honors College, we can collaborate with our faculty to devise appropriate evaluative instruments, which in turn could be distributed for discussions with new instructors. Here are a couple of examples of what we mean by this:

### CIVIC ENGAGEMENT RUBRIC

	<b>Mastered 4</b>	<b>Proficient 3</b>	<b>Developing 2</b>	<b>Beginning 1</b>
<b>Demonstrates civic identity and commitment</b>	Prioritizes civic engagement deriving from a clear sense of civic identity and an ongoing commitment to public action.	Develops civic-engagement projects that express growth of one's civic identity and commitment.	Participates in civic-engagement activities as a demonstrated expression of one's civic identity.	When prompted, participates in civic-engagement activities not suggested or derived from personal or civic identity.
<b>Engages in reflective civic action</b>	Organizes complex or multiple civic engagement activities, accompanied by reflective insights and/or analysis about the aims and accomplishments of one's actions.	Performs community service that is characterized by team leadership and reflective insights and/or analysis about the aims and accomplishments of one's actions.	Explains the connection between participation in civically focused actions and the benefits of these actions to valued individual(s) or communities.	When prompted, describes participation in civic activities but shows little understanding of their aims or effects and connection to one's core values and commitments.
<b>Negotiates civic contexts and structures</b>	Collaborates in one or more projects across and within community contexts and structures to achieve a civic aim.	Designs and/or helps organize a project within community contexts and structures to achieve a civic aim.	Identifies intentional ways to participate in civic contexts and structures.	When prompted, reports on relationship between a service project's goals and larger civic contexts and structures.

### INTEGRATIVE SCHOLARSHIP RUBRIC

	<b>Mastered 4</b>	<b>Proficient 3</b>	<b>Developing 2</b>	<b>Beginning 1</b>
<b>Designs and produces a research and/or creative project in the appropriate disciplinary or multidisciplinary context.</b>	Independently transfers skills, abilities, theories, and/or methodologies acquired in a disciplinary or multidisciplinary instructional situation to new situations to solve complex research and/or creative problems in a project of one's own design. Expresses insight and originality in projects, e.g., by synthesizing primary resources accurately with secondary sources.	Synthesizes skills, abilities, theories, and/or methodologies attained in disciplinary or multidisciplinary instruction to frame research and/or creative problems. Analyzes ideas in a thorough way, organizes materials and research data or creative techniques to produce detailed projects.	When prompted, analyzes skills, abilities, theories, and/or methodologies learned in disciplinary or multidisciplinary instruction to demonstrate detailed understanding of research and/or creative problems.	When prompted, identifies and applies in a basic way skills, abilities, theories, and/or methodologies discovered in disciplinary or multidisciplinary instruction to describe research and/or creative problems.
<b>Tests ideas in the public square.</b>	Synthesizes language, concepts and expression to enhance meaning and produce persuasive insights in oral or written public presentations. Anticipates relevant audience needs and authorizes conclusions with fully developed supports that are communicated clearly and effectively.	Persuades the audience appropriate to the written or oral presentation of the central claims in the argument, and connects explicitly content and form by demonstrating an acute awareness of audience needs.	Connects in a basic way ideas being communicated (content) with how they are expressed (form) in public settings, expressing awareness of the type and composition of the audience.	States ideas in public in an organized form appropriate to the audience that includes the purpose, supportive evidence, examples and/or narratives.
<b>Reflects on personal and/or social implications of research and/or creative projects.</b>	Meaningfully evaluates and contextualizes connections among one's own lived experiences outside of the formal classroom and/or academic experiences such as internships and study abroad, with academic research and/or creative projects to deepen understanding and broaden one's own points of view.	Analyzes examples of life experiences, drawn from a variety of contexts (e.g., family life, artistic participation, civic involvement, work experience), to illuminate research and/or creative projects.	Compares and contrasts life experiences and academic knowledge related to research and/or creative projects, sketching perspectives other than one's own.	Identifies connections between life experiences and academic texts and ideas perceived as similar and related to or different and not connected with one's own interests.

A coherent picture emerges in the process of curriculum and activity mapping. Aligning course objectives to program objectives may be accomplished by a curriculum alignment matrix which

maps each onto the other. Curriculum mapping helps articulate the plan for designing and delivering learning outcomes. We have an opportunity here to work with the Faculty Fellows and other stakeholders to identify the broad outcomes expected of all students, and then work backwards to design academic and co-curricular program outcomes. We can then design course level outcomes that will lead to the achievement of both program and institutional goals. Students will participate in Honors College experiences that speak to the outcomes, “accumulating” and integrating the learning and practices that lead to the development of desired knowledge and skills.

Here is an example of the results of a focus on backward design in the form of a curricular matrix that identifies those moments when learning outcomes are introduced (I), practiced (P),

Program Element	Critical Thinking	Communication	Intercultural Competence
	Evaluate how content is shaped by the context in which it was created.	Formulates and develops claims with sufficient support, including reasoning, evidence, and persuasive appeals, and proper attribution where necessary	Considers views of diverse peoples and expresses constructive engagement with radically different worldviews.
Honors Core I	I, A journal	I, A comparison paper	I, A journal/exam
Honors Core II	P	P	P
Honors Core III	P, A journal, exam, research/position paper/presentation	P	P, A journal, exam, paper/presentation
Honors Core IV	P	P, A research/position paper/presentation	
Honors Seminar	P	P	
Oxford Tutorial	P, A lit review	P	
Honors Thesis	M, A thesis project	M, A thesis project	
Thesis Reflection			
Senior Seminar	M		M, A global studies related assignment
Study Abroad			P

mastered (M), and assessed (A).

We are fortunate to have Dr. Stephanie Stockwell as an Honors Faculty Fellow, as she is also an experienced Center for Faculty Innovation facilitator who can assist us in the principles, methods, and strategies of backward design and course alignment. She is finely attuned to designing instruction that aligns learning objectives, assessments, and activities; articulating and justifying design and pedagogical choices; and fostering relationships amongst colleagues across disciplines, colleges, and ranks.

On a side note: Honors College Task Force members are particularly interested in bolstering the skill area objectives of honors courses, and in particular early (freshman and sophomore) emphasis on developing *research skills* and *writing across the honors curriculum*. Honors students need more exposure to strategies for invention and arrangement in the writing process. They need prompts that lead them to summarize, paraphrase, quote responsibly and selectively, and outline, and then

use these strategies in constructing formal papers. Honors students need to incorporate the elements of good writing (vividness, development, organization, voice) into their own work. They need to write and rewrite papers in order to practice making their work direct, clear, lucid, well-organized, and appropriate in tone.

Students need to see that writing may be used to ask questions – that is, to understand that writing is exploratory. They need to use various forms (e.g., narrative, description, dialogue) to help articulate their inquiries and develop the implications of their thought. They need opportunities to respond critically to their classmates' works-in-progress. They need to use writing to make decisive and forceful arguments. Honors students need to conduct and incorporate library and internet research into their writing as a means of engaging in academic conversations. And they need to use academic documentation with clarity and consistency. We sometimes hear honors students complain that they did more writing in high school than they do at JMU, and these self-reported student observations are more common in some majors than in others.

- Student Attitude, Values, Self-Assessment Survey data

Madison Honors College will need to collect across-the-board as well as longitudinal data. It may consider portfolios: collections of student work based on selected assignments in the curriculum. It will need to engage in cohort tracking: collecting of data on student performance tracked across the entire baccalaureate experience. Some performance indicators we use for other good purposes are not always useful in program assessment and evaluation. We do not use course grades as assessment devices. We are not looking at individual students; we are concerned about programs and cohorts. Graduation rates, student retention rates, graduate school acceptance rates, job placement rates, racial/ethnic ratios, demographic/financial ratios, student-to-faculty ratios – these are all important, but they do not get at what honors students are actually learning in their honors classes. We suggest that Madison Honors College look at its data gathering options, whether it be classroom course data, summative senior project performance assessments, self-assessment and reflection, interviews and surveys of attitudes and values, archival measures, assessment of collaborations, and the like. Adjudicated performances like the Honors Symposium are wonderful opportunities for gathering assessment data.

We are fortunate to have the nationally recognized Center for Assessment and Research Studies (CARS) and services of Dr. Jeanne Horst and graduate students at our disposal. Bo Bashkov, a student in the program, has used Assessment Day test data to compare students in the Honors Program against non-honors JMU peers and the student body generally. He has made a preliminary study of the relationship between SAT scores in Math and Verbal, and the distribution patterns in sense of belong by group, feelings of morale, impulsivity, academic entitlement, psychological entitlement, extraversion and agreeableness, conscientiousness and neuroticism, openness and social justice, and test-taking effort in one cohort of students. The results are made available in the appendix to this report. More such data collection is recommended, as long as it serves the end of institutional effectiveness.

Assessment is a cycle. Once Madison Honors College has an assessment plan, we can approve new courses, assess student learning, and then use assessment results to revise goals, teaching

methodologies, curriculum, and budgeting priorities. Assessment and evaluation will help us do the critical thinking we need about what we are doing as a program. If we plan and review, we can assure that honors students upon completion of their undergraduate careers will have significant experience and have produced significant work in the areas we specify.

- NCHC certification context

The NCHC Assessment & Evaluation Committee has made progress on rather specific assessments in honors program reviews (what used to be called “voluntary certification”) among member institutions. The complete document runs to 33 pages and 73 measurable dimensions. As a convenience, we attach a copy as an appendix to this report.

## **Advising**

The Honors Program provides specialized academic advising to current and prospective JMU Honors students. All new first year Honors students are advised by a Freshman Faculty Advisor during their first semester at JMU. Beginning in the second semester, our students’ transition to their major advisors and to the Honors Academic Advisor.

The Honors Program Advisor provides detailed information about the Honors Program and works closely with students to integrate Honors, General Education, and major and minor requirements. The Honors Advisor does not replace the advising that students receive from the major advisor(s). Rather, the Honors Advisor serves as the primary contact for all Honors-related questions and concerns and as an additional resource for other academic and university matters. Walk-in Hillcrest and Shenandoah Hall advising is available to honors students.

A comprehensive, holistic approach to advising students taken by Jared Diener in the Honors Program has helped the Task Force understand who the students are that will tend to finish honors, and which of them will find the challenges too great. Majors and minors that are not credit heavy allow students more opportunity and freedom to undertake required honors seminars and work on the honors project. Majors that have active, engaged honors faculty liaisons and honors research and writing seminars retain students to completion. Students who establish connections with faculty early in their careers do well. Success also comes to those who receive good advising from major and honors, plan ahead, and make arrangements to pursue the senior honors project well before the second semester of the junior year. Other crucial, underappreciated, foundations for student success in the program include:

- Completion of *both* honors seminars by the end of the sophomore year.
- Participation in undergraduate research and/or creative activity, particularly in summer internships.
- Enrollment in summer classes to make room for honors work.
- Taking pride in/valuing participation in the honors program, the senior project.
- Enjoying their honors classes and instructors.
- Demonstrating the persistence, determination, and a strong work ethic necessary to the completion of a multi-semester honors senior project.

Honors students who tend to drop the program have trouble fitting honors into majors that are credit-heavy. They are double majors, involved in pre-professional programs, or are focused on admissions and progression standards in restricted programs. They do not seek to build connections to faculty members prior to beginning the senior honors project, or have difficulty finding a faculty advisor. They do not receive – or do not seek out – information or advising about honors early in their careers at JMU. They do not complete both Honors seminars by the end of the sophomore year. They are unable to afford honors seminar abroad – which might otherwise allow them to complete their seminar requirements. They do not see value in the honors program, honors seminars, or the senior honors project, but rather are in honors for the “perks”: priority registration, etc. They do not enjoy their honors classes.

## **Infrastructure and Community**

The Task Force agreed that facilities for honors students on the JMU campus are generally quite good. Shenandoah Hall, open to all Track I freshmen, is one of the newest and finest dormitories on campus, as is Grace Street for upperclassmen. Hillcrest House is centrally located and within walking distance of Skyline and Bluestone classrooms and lecture halls. Suggestions for additional facilities included a couple of classrooms/meeting rooms with flexible seating arrangements for up to twenty-five students. Dedicated classrooms will create a legitimate departmental physical presence for Madison Honors College, as all honors classrooms are reserved from the general pool on a first come, first served basis. This means that the general purpose classroom scheduling request deadline looms large for Honors, which can put unusual pressure on the Faculty Fellows to approve the next semester’s schedule of classes and also to the review and approve new honors course proposals. Honors classrooms might be made accessible to students for group meetings; honors students are six times as likely to hold a recognized campus leadership position as their non-honors JMU peers.

Another important task is to build honors community on campus while firmly cementing that community into campus life. Honors Advisory Council member Jack Kaye makes a thoughtful contribution in this regard. He argues that an honors program should help create a sense of community for its students without either burdening the already-busy students with too many more additional requirements for things that are difficult to achieve in the classroom. Additionally, he argues, there should be some way of maintaining that sense of community without creating too much of a sense of “separateness” (or “self-importance”) for the honors students.

Our sense is that the JMU honors students do not want to be perceived as thinking that they are better than the non-honors students, and want to maintain their friendships with a broad cross-section of the student body. Figuring out how to maintain a sustainable balance between having a real sense of community among the honors students – giving them additional opportunities to interact and learn from each other – while not overly burdening them or separating them from other students seems like a real challenge. Stakeholders perceive good things in the JMU Honors Program, but do not hear much about other activities that help to build that sense of community. That does not mean that they do not exist – only that they are not visible.

In his campus interview, Dr. Brad Newcomer spoke of creating a “third space,” a physical centerpiece, for informal/situated learning. This creative space – open to all – would serve as a link between the campus community and the honors program. Newcomer envisions such a space as something of a salon for the sharing of interdisciplinary thought and to facilitate dialogue on enduring societal questions. But it would also become a space where students could be moved to active participation in solving real-world problems. This third space does not really exist now, as most informal, sanctioned honors activities take place in the Shenandoah multipurpose room. The multipurpose room is secured by card access, and so freshmen living in the hall must “hold” the door open for upperclassmen – and only during events pre-approved by the Shenandoah Hall residential director Glenda Cosby.

- Hillcrest House

Hillcrest is the home of the Honors Program. Located in the Bluestone area of campus, across from the Carrier Library, Hillcrest houses the Honors Program offices, a reception area and conference room, and the Honors student lounge and computer lab. Built for JMU's first president, Julian Burruss, and his wife in 1914, Hillcrest served as the home of JMU presidents for more than 60 years. The house was renovated in 1949 and refurbished in 1967. Hillcrest was retired as the president's residence in 1978 and has been the home of the Honors Program since its inception.

Located in the basement of Hillcrest House, the student lounge and computer lab are open from 7am -midnight, 7-days a week to Honors students only. The lounge includes a reading area with couches and coffee tables, a small kitchen for use by students, and a quiet room with beanbags. The computer lab consists of 12 new computers (installed in summer 2013) and a printer. At 4.5 cents a page, this is the cheapest printing on campus. Access to the student lounge is through a rear entrance to the building and requires a JACard.

- Student Housing (Shenandoah and Grace Street)

The five-story Shenandoah Hall is the designated on-campus residence for Honors students. It houses the Honors Living and Learning Center and the Huber Residential Learning Community. The Honors Living and Learning Center challenges members to engage in a range of leadership and service activities. About 80% of entering honors freshmen choose to live in the “A” wing hall, as well as about 100 honors upperclassmen in the “B” wing. Most students living in Shenandoah have honors roommates, but a few have non-Honors roommates. For the last few years, the Honors Program has benefited greatly from the services of Faculty Member in Residence Dr. Debbie Sturm, an assistant professor of Graduate Psychology and director of Counseling Programs. So many of our honors student are “strivers,” and the stress management program pioneered by Dr. Sturm, her graduate students, and the Honors RAs has proved invaluable.

The Honors Program offers its students the opportunity to live in dedicated Honors housing. Two hundred first and second year Honors students live together in the Honors Living and Learning Center in Shenandoah Hall, a residence hall that opened on the East Campus in fall 2009. The Honors Living and Learning Center provides experiences and facilities for high achieving, highly motivated, and intellectually curious students to live and work together with one another,

with other Honors students, and with faculty members to explore their mutual interests in learning and discovery, promoting the intellectual culture that is at the core of the Honors Program's vision and mission. Intellectual engagement is the primary driving forces in programming for the Honors Living and Learning Center.

Shenandoah Hall is air-conditioned and provides wireless internet access. It is located next to a new dining hall and is across the street from the university's arboretum. Entering freshmen are encouraged, but not required, to live in the Honors residence hall. Honors students who come to JMU planning to live with a non-Honors student may be able to live in the Honors residence if space permits. The Skyline campus residential area consists of Chesapeake, Potomac, and Shenandoah halls. Each of the halls has study lounges, kitchens, entertainment rooms, and laundry facilities. Shenandoah Hall, which opened in Fall 2009, is the newest Skyline Hall Area residential facility.

In the Fall of 2015, approximately 50 Honors sophomores will be living together in one wing of one floor of JMU's new Grace Street Apartments for upperclassmen (particularly sophomores). All of the on-campus residential halls are operated by the Office of Residential Life. ORL reported that the Honors wing in Grace Street filled up in an unprecedented three minutes. Honors administrators should consider doubling their request for suites in 2015, and review the current arrangement to keep an honors presence in Shenandoah B.

It is likely that the freshman residential learning component of the program is crucial to the academic success of students – honors GPA for the 2012 Track I students was 3.579 compared to their non-honors peers with comparable ARS scores of 11-12, who carried a 3.119 cumulative average. That effect does not seem to carry over to subsequent years. The average GPA of the 132 sophomores who chose to live on campus in their sophomore year was 3.606. The average GPA of the 84 sophomores who lived off campus in 2012 was a respectable 3.537. The GPA average for all four class levels in the honors program is in the range of 3.5-3.6.

By the numbers	
Shenandoah	75
Greek	15
Chesapeake	11
Frederikson	9
Logan	6
Chandler	5
White	4
Converse	2
Rockingham	2
Hillside	1
Huffman	1
Wayland	1
On Campus	132
Off Campus	84

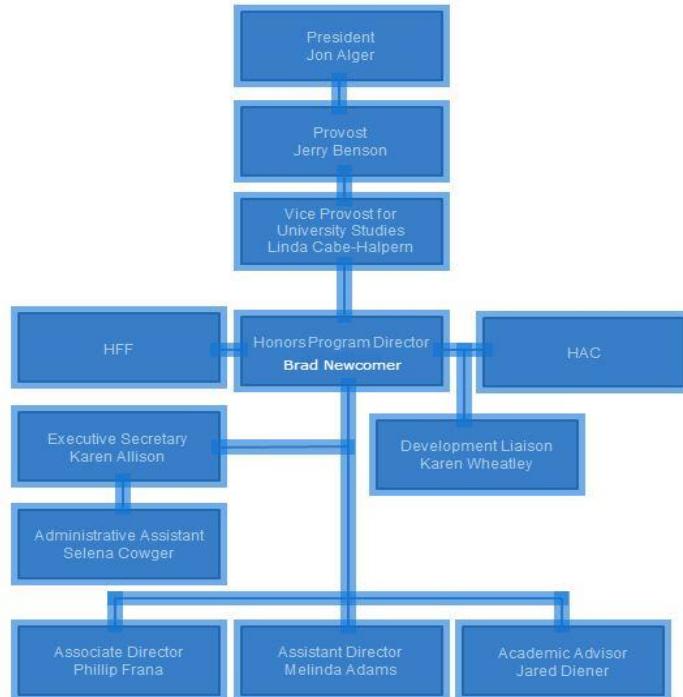
GPA comparison	
On Campus GPA	3.606
Shenandoah Hall GPA	3.592
2012 Class GPA (overall)	3.579
Off Campus GPA	3.537

- Organization and Governance

The Honors Program currently has a full-time director, a full-time associate director, a half-time assistant director (who doubles as the campus national fellowships and scholarships coordinator), a full-time executive secretary, and a half-time administrative assistant. The half-time administrative assistant position will become full-time in the summer of 2015. The Honors Program is directed by Dr. Bradley Newcomer (Physics) and administered by the directors of the Honors Program and the Honors Faculty Fellows. The associate director is Dr. Philip Frana (IdLS, Independent Scholars). The assistant director and prestigious scholarship coordinator is Dr. Melinda Adams. The honors program academic advisor is Jared Diener. The Executive Secretary is Karen Allison. The administrative assistant is Selena Cowger.

- Faculty Fellows

The Honors Faculty Fellows, a program developed through collaboration between the Honors Program and the JMU College Deans, began in the 2011-2012 academic year. Each Faculty Fellow serves a three year term. The Faculty Fellows replaced Honors Program Committee in overseeing the Honors Program curriculum, providing the Honors Program with courses (especially new and advanced honors courses), and engaging honors students in other ways outside of the classroom.



The Honors Faculty Fellows comprise one faculty member from each of JMU's six undergraduate colleges. They play a major role in shaping the curricular and programmatic direction of the Honors Program. The Fellows engage regularly with Honors students, staff, parents, and alumni through a wide range of activities inside and outside of the classroom. Some volunteer to teach honors seminars, but it is not required.

- Honors Liaisons

The job of honors faculty liaisons is to be a two-way channel between Honors and department heads and faculty members in individual departments. The liaison system does not seem to be working as intended. Task Force members noted this "disconnect" on a number of occasions in their meetings, and expressed frustration at the lack of communication between the departments and the current program. It may be that regular liaison meetings will address the problem, but it is

also possible that it is time for an overhaul in the system as a whole. Currently, a number of departments have appointed no liaison, and in other cases the position seems to turn over quickly.

- SHAC

The Students Honors Advisory Council (SHAC) began as the Honors Student Advisory Council (HSAC). HSAC was composed of at least eight honors students from all four classes and five colleges. Council members served one year terms. The Council offered advice and support to the Honors Program directors and organized social events in the Honors community, including movie nights, picnics, and midnight breakfasts during finals week.

The Student Honors Advisory Council serves as the student government body for the JMU Honors Program. This group of 20-30 Honors students represents the interests of Honors students, develops community through the Madison Honors student organization, and works directly with Honors staff members to develop programs and initiatives that are student-centered. The student council plays a direct role in shaping the future of the Honors Program.

Membership terms begin in January and are renewable every year. The council is governed by an executive committee consisting of a president, vice-president, and secretary/historian. All non-EC members serve on one of two committees: Development and Madison Honors. Meetings take place once a month. Honors Program directors work closely with the council on projects and initiatives and are present at meetings and events.

The SHAC Development Committee works on special projects that further the mission of the Honors Program, including but not limited to: the student-mentoring program, curriculum review, programming development, admissions, and student retention. They will produce research reports as needed. The Development Committee also assists the Honors Program in increasing its public profile and generating media content, as well as assisting in Honors recruiting efforts, such as participating in Choices and visiting with prospective students during campus visits.

The Madison Honors Committee serves as the core leadership for Madison Honors, the officially recognized student organization for the Honors Program. The purpose of Madison Honors is to create social, educational, and service opportunities for all JMU Honors students. The chair of the committee will lead Madison Honors and the committee will elect additional officers internally. Madison Honors is hosted under the umbrella of SHAC, but involvement in Madison Honors events and activities is not restricted to SHAC members.

- Honors Advisory Council

The Honors Advisory Council is described and discussed in a separate section below on “Continuing the Alumni Experience and Outreach.”

- Data Management

While the hard infrastructure of the current Honors Program is very good, the soft infrastructure in need of review, with an eye toward digitizing its records management

infrastructure, document-handling, and evaluation and review processes. Good records management practices help organizations improve access to information, control the growth of materials taking up valuable office space, reduce operating costs, safeguard institutional memory, support management decision making, and meet legal requirements. The honors staff needs to examine what resources are needed for good recordkeeping, determine who will be responsible, and develop a code book of required data fields. Staff should also engage in a review of current records that document activities in Honors, and establish recordkeeping requirements and common procedures. A plan for organizing and maintaining records should be established, as well as procedures for archiving records for assessment and evaluation purposes and for purging files no longer needed.

Digital records provide easier access, routing, and sharing of documents in the modern office. Document databases may be used for management and audit purposes. A switch to electronic records in the Madison Honors College will represent a potential cost-saving opportunity. The task of securing confidential information is also simplified with a digital document management system. We are dedicated to the efficient and effective use of resources. We accept the responsibility of the public's trust and are accountable for our actions.

In general, Madison Honors College should consider maintaining/having access to records on data collected at time of application, supplemented by data collected directly from student online forms. The Honors College will need access to personal data, application and recruiting information, school term and permanent residence, completion of curriculum requirements and various rites of passage, advising comments, grant and scholarship application and funding. The Honors College should also have the ability to generate student directories and rosters, as well as various statistical reports. A faculty information area for inputting course descriptions and mentor/administrator notes would also be invaluable.

THIS IS AN HONORS EDUCATION



### Learning in Depth

Honors is about highly focused, discipline-oriented learning experiences. The committed student engages in research and creative scholarship that leads to new integrations, new knowledge, and new understandings.



### Enduring Questions

The Honors teaching faculty confront students with alternative modes of inquiry, exploration, discovery, tolerance of ambiguity, and place an aggressive emphasis on Interdisciplinarity.



### Experiential Learning

Honors emphasizes exploration and discovery rather than the acquisition of specific knowledge sets. The focus is on hands-on learning and practical engagement. Projects are student-driven and facilitated by faculty as resource people who provide no necessary, single conclusion to be drawn by all or many students.

## Who are we?

### Honors Teaching Assistants

Margot Asmuth  
Angelica Babauta  
Elizabeth Brannon  
Jordan ("Ali") Byrd  
Sean Byrne  
Victor Hammarin  
Catherine Herron  
Megan Hines  
Jessica Hunt  
Kunal Jain  
Jackie Jessop  
Laura Johansen  
Kara Krantz  
Connor Linehan  
Samantha Logan  
Lauren Maher  
Alexandra Mason  
Ruth Menger  
Sarah Miller  
Holly Millet  
Donna Moberg  
Dorothy O'Donnell  
Rachel Pittard  
Victoria Price  
Elizabeth Schaefermeier  
Tanner Post  
Maria Restrepo Chavez  
Caroline Utne  
Lindy Westenhoff  
Emily Winter

### Honors Teaching Coordinators

Jared Diener, M.St., University of Oxford  
Philip L. Frana, Ph.D., Iowa State University  
Debbie C. Sturm, Ph.D., UNC at Charlotte

*A large number of other people also contribute to the daily life of JMU Honors. They include the Honors staff, Honors Faculty Fellows, the Honors Departmental Liaisons, and the Honors Advisory Council.*

### Honors Staff

Melinda Adams, Ph.D., Assistant Director  
Karen Allison, Executive Secretary  
Selena Cowger, Administrative Assistant  
Jared Diener, M.St., Academic Advisor  
Philip L. Frana, Ph.D., Interim Director

### Honors Faculty Fellows

Scott Lunsford, Ph.D. (Arts & Letters)  
Monica Reis-Bergan Ph.D., (H & BS)  
Andre Neveu, Ph.D. (Business)  
Andrew Connell, Ph.D. (Viz & Perform Arts)  
Cheri Beverly, PhD. (Education)  
Brian C. Utter, Ph.D. (Science & Math)  
Stephanie Stockwell, Ph.D. (ISAT)

### Honors Dept. Liaisons

Susan Barnes (Education), David Bernstein (Computer Science), Keri Bethune (Education), Cheri Beverly (Education), Vipul Bhatt (Economics), William Buck (Theatre/Dance), Matt Chamberlin (IdLS), Andy Connell (Music), Laura Davis (Libraries), Michelle Duncan (Business), Annick Dupal (Communications Studies), Kirk Elwood (International Business), Allison Fagan (English), Lynn Fichter (Environmental Science), Jason Fink (Quantitative Finance), Dolores Flamiano (SMAD), Lincoln Gray (CSD), Susan Halsell (Biology), Gina MacDonald (Chemistry), Trent Hargens (Kinesiology), Yonggaung Hu (History), Jonathan Keller (International Affairs/Political Science), Val Larsen (Marketing), Timothy Louwers (Accounting), Scott Lunsford (Writing), Sam Morton (Engineering), Kane Nashimoto (Math), Katherine Ott (Health Sciences), Tara Parsons (Justice Studies), Nancy Poe (Social Work), Tomas Regalado (Modern Foreign Languages), Monica Reis-Bergan (Psychology), Erika Sawin (Nursing), Sean Scully, Maureen Shanahan (Art), David Shonk (Hospitality), Richard Showalter (Military Science), Rebecca Simmons (CIS), Hui He Sono (Finance), Eric Stark (Management), Stephanie Stockwell (ISAT), Megan Tracy (Anthropology), Ann Wallace (Education), Anne Wiles (Philosophy & Religion)

### Honors Advisory Council

Deborah Barnard, Mary Lou Bourne, Steven D. Brown, Janet Carter, Lynette Chappell-Williams, Anne Collins, Alex DerHovhannessian, Ken Driver, Scott Ford, Jack Kaye, Andy Kohen, Kelly Brown Lands, Aaron Lawler, Susan MacGhee, Sean McCrae, Cara Modisett, Jill Norcross, Dave Pruitt, Melissa Reed, Dave Rennynson, Dan Richardson, Heather Tedesco, Tomalei Vess, Matt Wallace

## Orientation and Instruction

Task Force members agreed that a *better balance between choice and common experiences* in Honors must be struck in any future JMU honors college. The honors program wants to promote inclusivity in its membership. It allows students to live in Shenandoah Hall in the freshman year, but also anywhere else on campus they should wish – including the various residential learning communities. The director works with departments to create a slate of honors sections of general education courses for these students to choose from. This slate expands, from the second semester on, to include honors options and independent study. In the sophomore year, some students voluntarily pursue one of five or six area of emphasis sequences. Some complete those areas by crossing lines between sequences and by pursuing practicum credit hours. In the sophomore and junior years, honors students have available to them a variety of honors interdisciplinary and study abroad seminars.<sup>1</sup> Those who complete the program generally do so by pursuing senior projects in their home departments.

This choice has been good for busy students pursuing rigorous, challenging academic programs. But it has come at the expense of communal experiences. In any given semester, to cite one example, approximately a quarter of honors students are separately engaged in pursuing honors options. These options may be valuable to the student experience, but no data has to our knowledge been collected to determine how well they work as pathways to progress through the program. Anecdotal evidence suggests that many students pursue options as the only alternative in a tight schedule, because they do not find sufficient variation in the honors curricular offerings or class times, or out of lack of enthusiasm for the program. Occasionally, students “enroll” in options (that is, submit contracts) simply to maintain their standing in the program and secure priority registration privileges. Sometimes these students drop the option – and the program – as soon as the registration period has passed.

The Task Force would prefer to see various elements of the program become well-defined curricular tracks as paths to the senior capstone. The areas of emphasis were approved by the Faculty Fellows in part as feeders into the 499s, but the numbers of successful completers has been small over this curricular feature’s short history. Yet, of the Fall 2011 cohort of students who had the first access to several areas of emphasis sequences, it is remarkable that so many are finishing their senior honors projects. About 30% of all honors students finish the current Honors Program, but 54% of students who complete the areas of emphasis sequence are on track to finish in the spring of 2015. The number is particularly striking

Areas of Emphasis	Finishing SHP	Total	
Research	12	14	86%
Global Studies	7	16	44%
Civic Engagement	7	12	58%
Leadership	17	38	45%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>54%</b>
<b>Students who did not complete AOE</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>262</b>	<b>26%</b>
<b>Track 3 Students in this cohort</b>		<b>18</b>	

<sup>1</sup> The total number of seats filled in honors courses (gen eds, AoE, seminars, study abroads, etc.) in the Fall of 2014 was 784, In Spring 2015: 521. In Summer 2015: 48. (Total is 1,353.) The total number of option credits earned in Fall 2014 was 722. The total in Spring 2015 was 707.

in the Research area, where 86% of students were finishing their projects in the fall and spring semesters of 2015.

The Task Force discussed a number of orientation and instruction topics in their deliberations, but formed no conclusions and made no curricular suggestions beyond the aforementioned need for more common (classroom) experiences, more coherence in reaching the goal of greater integration of exemplary studies projects in the first three years, and honors student and mentor participation in the senior project semesters. What follows is a helpful guide to current practices.

- Orientation

Orientation serves the purpose of making our students “educational groupies.” We want to create leaders for the future. We want to be innovative and entrepreneurial, encourage high-impact teaching and learning practices for our most intellectually curious and most socially engaged and committed students, do interdisciplinary work along the borders between established disciplines, solve big picture problems we will all face in coming decades, and get global and intercultural exposure. We need to communicate those expectations in our orientation activities.

- Track I

Last year, the Honors Program piloted an early Honors Freshman Orientation for its 208 new Track I students. We believe the program was successful, but have hit the pause button for the time being. We had three reasons for doing so. First, orientation planning put extraordinary burdens on the honors staff, which already consumes the weeks leading up to the first day of classes with semester planning and vacation time. Second, the early honors orientation also conflicted with other orientation preparation activities. Many potential upperclassmen helpers were unavailable because of their own engagement in preparations for 1787 Orientation (as FrOGs), residential housing (as RAs), and other organizational activities (as student leaders). JMU staff and facilities were also unavailable due to training schedules. Third, both Student Honors Advisory Council representatives and some freshman focus group members recommended against continuing the orientation program in its current form as it was perceived to make JMU orientation abnormally lengthy. This is bolstered by study of regular 1787 orientation feedback.

Instead, the Task Force recommends that Honors simply focus on integrating the Tuesday Honors orientation schedule of events into 1787. Tisha McCoy-Ntiamoah and Sarah Sunde in the Orientation Office are working to make room in the regular Tuesday and Wednesday move-in schedule for multiple welcome and orientation events for students and parents in HHS 2301.

- Tracks II and III

Two years ago, the Honors Program initiated a Track II orientation for students who join its ranks from the on-campus population. There is currently no Track III orientation, as these students are engaged in departmental 499 projects over three semesters. The Honors Program provides mainly administrative and tracking support to Track III students and departments.

- First Year Experience (HON 100)

The Honors First Year Seminar, which is in part an orientation activity, meets for fifty minutes once a week in the fall semester and is led by 30 undergraduate teaching assistants and three administrative faculty coordinators. Here, Track I students meet and work with other high-ability students for the purpose of exchanging ideas and considering alternative futures as a basis for launching personalized academic programs and professional careers. The seminar helps students understand James Madison University and its 100+ year history as a comprehensive university providing learning, scholarship, and service activities. These activities prepare students from Virginia, the nation, and the world for positions of leadership as citizens of the global community. We challenge students to use the HON 100 seminar in conjunction with other learning opportunities available through the JMU general education program to understand their place and role at the university.

HON 100 made its debut in 2014, and quickly became known as the “Discovery” seminar because of its tripartite ambitions: to Discover Yourself, Discover JMU, and Discover Honors (see below). Students discuss their core values with one another, think about their collective and individual missions in life, develop our goals, define strategies to attain those goals, and figure out ways to measure and track progress.

*Discover Yourself:* One of the most important aspects of the collegiate experience is to know ourselves better. Socrates called this “the examined life.” In college we are expected to find out what we are good at, what we like and do not like, and what we want out of life. But human beings also exist in relationship with others, and there is meaning in the way those relationships grow. Our challenge is to learn our purpose and make conscious choices that benefit ourselves and all of the many other people with whom we share the planet.

*Discover Our Community:* JMU and the Shenandoah Valley have much to offer. It is likely students have come to JMU because of what they observed on previous visits. TAs ask students to discover as much as they can that will stretch them as human beings, to take some educated risks, to hone their intercultural competencies, to engage in interdisciplinary learning, and look for opportunities for civic engagement in the Harrisonburg area.

*Discover Honors:* Our strength as a learning community is combining the liberal arts core with high-impact practices developed through undergraduate research, internships and service, global learning, and collaboration. The Honors Program values academic competence, critical thinking, leadership and teamwork, self-reliance, aesthetic understanding and creativity, transferable skills, civic responsibility, and an irresistible thirst for knowledge and wisdom. In short, we aspire for more. We want students to become educated and enlightened citizens who are dedicated to meaningful, lifelong learning.

What attitudes, competencies, and habits of mind do we strive for in HON 100? By the conclusion of the “Discovery” course, students should be able to understand and engage in a developmental way with their personal narrative and experience, and the differing narratives and experiences of other people. They are encouraged to develop a more nuanced understanding of the

journey to know themselves and the world around them. In short they are here to cultivate their humanity. Or, as Martha Nussbaum wrote, "Think what it might be like to be in the shoes of a person different from oneself, to be an intelligent reader of that person's story, and to understand the emotions and wishes and desires that someone so placed might have."

In HON 100 students examine our own attitudes and expectations, our world view and assumptions, and our preconceptions about what it means to be educated and enlightened. They develop an understanding of what it means to think critically and have productive conversations about their values. They learn to cultivate a sensitive and affirming community environment that expresses an appreciation of oneself and others. They wake up to an awareness of civic responsibility. They nurture their own self-efficacy. "If she can do it, so can I," goes the old saying. What's the best way to build up creative confidence? By observing and emulating the actions of successful people who are similar. We can do so much more together than we can do separately. And more fortunately, Honors is a community for building systems of guided mastery.

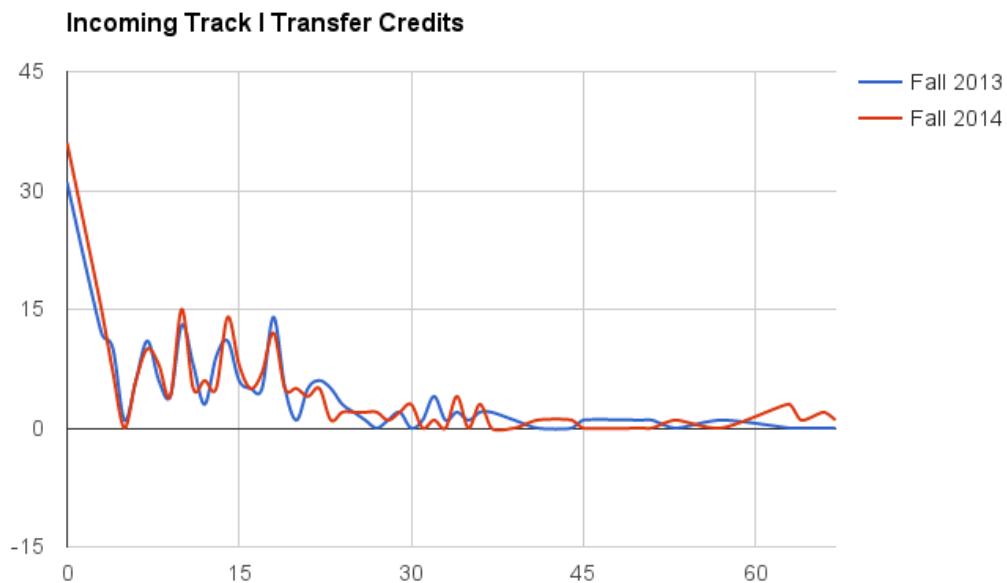
- Instruction

The Honors Program currently borrows about 18-22 faculty members per semester to teach general education honors courses, and 12-14 faculty members to teach upper division areas of emphasis and interdisciplinary seminars. Typically, the director teaches one honors seminar each year, the associate director teaches two courses, and the academic advisor teaches one course. Currently, the associate director, the academic advisor, and the faculty member in residence coordinate TA effort in the fall HON 100 First Year Experience course. About six faculty members are recruited to co-teach three 6.0 credit hour honors study abroad courses. Each honors study abroad meets one night each week in the spring semester before the study abroad trip embarks in May.

The Honors Program currently does not compensate faculty and JMU full-time staff members borrowed from departments. These departments are not compensated for the purpose of backfilling the position. Adjunct instructors are paid about \$3,000 per 3.0 hour course, less than the going rate at other local colleges and also less than some individual departments at JMU. An increasing proportion of Honors courses are being taught by respected administrators in the JMU community, including JMU President Dr. Jon Alger, Dr. Brian Charette of the Office of University Planning and Analysis, and Dr. Ken Newbold from the Office of Research and Scholarship. New instructors are recruited directly by the Honors director and Faculty Fellows. Orientation of new honors faculty instructors is not institutionalized, but remains a personal endeavor of the director of the honors program. Put another way, honors instructors are approved through the course proposal process rather than through a separate training program.

- General Education

The offerings and requirements of the JMU Honors Program bear a close relationship to those of the University. The Honors curriculum is not harder courses with more work, but an increased opportunity to cultivate habits of critical thinking, communication, creative expression and independent thought through smaller classes taught by exceptional faculty. Most Honors courses are limited to 20 students.



Honors sections of regular university courses appear in the Schedule of Classes with a normal departmental designator and number followed by an H (e.g., POSC 225H). These courses may count toward General Education requirements, major requirements, or elective credits. They cover the essential content of the regular non-Honors courses (as described in the university catalog), but also include a breadth of experience appropriate to Honors study (e.g., greater use of primary sources, more fully developed theoretical background, some integration of interdisciplinary perspectives and more creative learning methodologies including added emphasis on discussion, writing, research and active learning experiences away from the classroom). These courses encourage creativity, critical thinking, problem solving, and deeper intellectual inquiry.

The Special Cluster Two Honors sequence, “Global Cities,” allows freshmen Honors students to complete the nine-credit Cluster Two General Education requirement with only six credits. HON 201E (Fall) and 202E (Spring) are open to first-year students only. This is an extremely attractive option for our incoming freshmen, more and more of whom are coming to JMU with college credit and even associate’s degrees. In fact, 90% of our incoming freshmen arrive with some transfer credit – see chart for frequency counts of credit hours and two-year trend. Eight to ten sections of a

research and writing intensive course like Global Cities coupled with another similar Cluster One honors course, could become the common curricular experience shared by most freshmen.

- Areas of Emphasis

The Areas of Emphasis sequences are optional three-semester programs organized around a theme. Honors students in Tracks I and II have the option of fulfilling the Honors seminar requirements through an area of emphasis. Students gain theoretical background and practical experience in one of the following areas: global studies, leadership, research, service, and creativity. The areas of emphasis sequences consist of two 3.0-credit hour seminars and a 1.0 to 3.0 hour practicum. Students begin the course sequence in the fall semester of the sophomore year. There is one introductory course offered for each area of emphasis. The primary goal of these courses is to introduce students to key skills associated with the area each serves, while establishing a cohort of students with similar interests. Experiential courses are taken in each area in the spring semester of the sophomore year. Experiential courses come in two varieties: "deepening" and "broadening." Deepening courses are restricted to students in one particular emphasis area and are intended to provide a more in-depth exploration of the skills/concepts introduced in the first seminar course. Broadening courses are open to students of more than one emphasis area. Practicum courses are taken in the fall semester of the junior year. These courses are student-driven, and usually manifest as an extension of the second semester experiences.

Objectives of the Area of Emphasis sequences include developing advanced knowledge and skills in creativity, leadership, research, global studies, or service that can further longer term goals and interests; developing ideas and faculty connections for the Senior Honors Project; and realizing the benefits of experiential learning versus classroom learning. Completion of an area of emphasis appears as a special designation on the transcript. Currently, only two of the areas of emphasis sequences have regular (if unofficial) coordinators: Dr. Stephanie Stockwell coordinates the Research area and director of study abroad Felix Wang coordinates the global studies area. The Task Force recommends that official coordinators be assigned to each of the Area of Emphasis sequences.

The Areas of Emphasis do have common learning objectives. Each area is dedicated to increasing the capacity to think critically and creatively and developing stronger written, oral, and visual communication skills. Global Studies students are encouraged to develop a better understanding of global political, economic, social, and cultural relationships. They develop a greater appreciation of diverse cultures and societies and a greater awareness of current global events and affairs. Leadership students are encouraged to develop a set of leadership skills and tools through practice. They practice team leadership through active group participation and are enjoined to describe how ethics, morals, and values relate to leadership challenges. Research area students use current technologies for accessing, synthesizing, and integrating information. They learn how to identify and assess hypotheses and appropriate research strategies.

Service learning students develop a greater awareness of the social issues, people, culture, as well as political and social structures for a community in which they resident or visit. They use the reflective process to identify multiple perspectives, identify meaning and to develop future actions

from service and community experiences. They are moved to identify root causes and possible solutions for a social issue, increase awareness of current events as they relate to social issues, and demonstrate a commitment to be an engaged citizen. Creativity area students are encouraged to develop a precise grasp of the role of interconnection and juxtaposition of disparate elements in creative thinking, engage in cross- or multi-disciplinary modes of creative inquiry, exploration, and discovery, while aiming for integration, tolerance of ambiguity, and examination of enduring questions. These students review proposed mechanisms for creative and innovative thought, differentiate between various motivations for learning, and explore the place and meaning of discovery in the human experience.

- Interdisciplinary Seminars

Honors Interdisciplinary Seminars are unique courses designed specifically for the Honors Program. These courses explore a range of complex topics that deal with contemporary issues in society, multicultural and comparative studies, and advanced applications in business and the natural and social sciences. Seminars are designed to be flexible and feature experimental styles of teaching. Seminars are always interdisciplinary and may be team-taught by faculty from different departments or disciplines. The content of seminars may include extensive readings in original sources, creative writing, analysis of current information from various media, community involvement, trips off campus, involvement with guest speakers and artists and, most certainly, discussions.

Honors seminars are unique to the Honors Program. They explore complex topics that deal with contemporary issues in society, multicultural and comparative studies, and advanced applications in business and the natural and social sciences. All Track I and II Honors students must complete two Honors seminars.

Topics for Honors seminars may be proposed by faculty, students or Honors Program staff and must be approved by the Honors Program Committee. The seminars carry an HON prefix (e.g., HON 200) and are offered at the 200 and 300 levels. It is assumed that 200-level seminars are approachable by all Honors students and 300-level seminars demand some prior university academic experience. Some Honors seminars may (with permission from the student's major adviser or program head) be substituted for electives in the student's major.

- Honors Options

Honors Options allow students to earn Honors credit for non-Honors upper level (200 or above) JMU courses not regularly offered as Honors courses. Options involve agreements between an Honors student and a professor that the student will complete an additional or enhanced assignment that will make the course eligible for Honors credit. They provide students with the freedom to design a portion of their curriculum and are a great way for students to get to know their professors. Honors options count toward Honors elective requirements. They cannot be used to satisfy Honors General Education requirements. There is no limit to the number of Honors options that a student may attempt, but no more than two Honors options should be attempted in any given semester.

- Study Abroad/Study Away

The Honors Program strongly encourages and supports students to study abroad. In addition to the range of study abroad options available through the Office of International Programs, Honors students can choose from two programs which enable them to earn Honors credit through their study abroad experience. The JMU Honors Seminars Abroad program is open to a limited number of first- and second-year Track I and Track II honors students. Honors Seminars Abroad are three-week programs in May/June designed by the Honors Program. Students earn six academic credits (which fulfill the Honors seminar requirement) through a course of study in a new and exciting part of the world.

Recent Honors seminars have been conducted in Barcelona, Florence, London, Malta, and South Africa. Students who participate in the Honors Abroad Program to Oxford, Cambridge, and St. Andrews Universities in the United Kingdom earn 12.0 honors credits for their experience. Honors students may also choose to study abroad for a semester or full academic year at one of Britain's oldest and most respected universities. Honors students receive special Honors credits for study at Oxford and St. Andrews. We welcome potential inclusion of more domestic "study away" seminar options – including those offered through the NCHC's Partners in the Parks and Semesters programs.

### **Matriculation, Retention, and Progression**

The Honors Program currently offers three honors curriculum tracks to academically talented students at James Madison University. Track I Honors Scholars apply to the program as high school seniors and complete 27.0 hours in honors, including 6.0 credit hours of honors courses in General Education, 9.0 hours of electives designated as honors or honors option, 6.0 hours in cross-disciplinary honors seminars or colloquia, and six credit hours of independent study in the form of a senior honors project.

Track II Honors Scholars is available by application to high achieving students in their first and second years at James Madison. Student who complete Track II will graduate as Honors Scholars and graduation with distinction will appear on the students' records. Candidates in Track II complete at least 24.0 hours in honors, including a 6.0-hour seminar project, 6.0 hours in honors seminars, and 12.0 credit hours of electives in honors courses. Track III involves completion of a senior honors project. The track is open to students in their junior year who have not already matriculated into the Honors Program but have a record of achievement making them eligible to pursue independent research leading to the completion of a 6.0 credit honors project during their senior year.

Students transferring to JMU as second semester freshmen through second semester sophomores are encouraged to apply to the Honors Program. Those admitted enter as Track II Honors Scholars. Honors coursework undertaken at a previous institution may in some instances be accepted to fulfill JMU Honors requirements. The Honors Program has a transfer memorandum of understanding with the two-year Honors Program at Northern Virginia Community College (NOVA CC).

- Recruiting

Approximately 200 high-achieving entering first-year students are admitted as Track I Honors Scholars each year. Students complete a separate application for the Honors Program, and they must apply to JMU before applying to Honors. The application includes information about class rank, high school grades, standardized test scores, honors and distinctions, leadership, extracurricular activities, and several essays. The Honors Program typically receives anywhere from 1,000 to 1,500 applications each year. In the 2014-2015 recruiting season, the program received 1,022 applications and made offers to 679 students, with an initial yield of 237 or 34.9%. The three-year trend is fewer, more highly qualified applicants, but with a higher percentage yield. Some of this trend may be due to the introduction of a second essay to the application process in 2013.

The Honors Early Action deadline is typically December 1st. The Regular Decision deadline is February 28th. Honors Early Action applicants do not have an advantage over Honors Regular Decision applicants in the selection process. Some Honors Early Action applications may be deferred to Honors Regular Decision. Students with 1280 combined reading/math (or 30 ACT) and mostly A's in high school core courses are encouraged to apply. Applicants are expected to have a strong record of achievement in honors and AP courses, and significant extracurricular and leadership experiences. Honors acceptance rates are in the range of 50-60% of those who apply.

Current JMU students who have completed one to three semesters at JMU with a cumulative GPA of 3.5 or higher are eligible to apply for Track II Honors. Track II students take 24 credit hours of Honors seminars, courses designated Honors and/or Honors options, and complete a Senior Honors Project. They must maintain a cumulative GPA of at least 3.25. Students who successfully complete this program are designated "Honors Scholar" in the commencement program and on their transcripts and diplomas. The criteria for selection include: Grade point average at JMU of at least 3.5 and an essay of 200-300 words in which the applicant discusses his or her educational and career goals and how being in the Honors Program at JMU may assist them in accomplishing those goals.

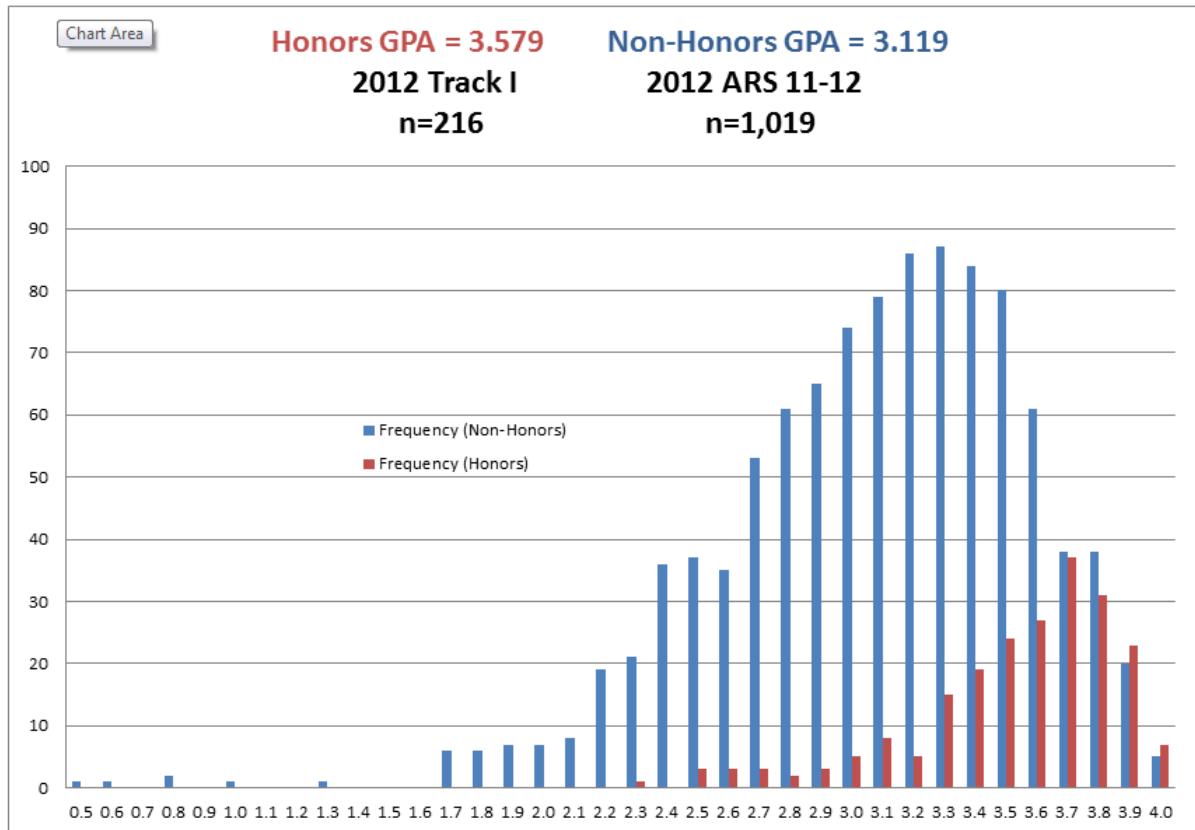
## TOP TWENTY HONORS MAJORS

COMPARING 2008 & 2014

1. Biology	1. Biology
2. Psychology	2. Psychology
3. Intl Affairs	3. Health Sci
4. Health Sci	4. Nursing
5. Media Arts	5. Media Arts
6. English	6. Finance
7. Finance	7. CSD
8. IdLS	8. Comm Stud
9. History	9. IdLS
10. Marketing	10. Math
11. Political Sci	11. English
12. CSD	12. Economics
13. Music	13. MOFL
14. Nursing	14. Theat/Dance
15. Studio Art	15. Political Sci
16. Management	16. Accounting
17. Accounting	17. Chemistry
18. Kinesiology	18. ISAT
19. Biotech	19. Music
20. ISAT	20. Comp Sci

Current JMU students who are not in Tracks I or II but would like to pursue independent research leading to the completion of the Senior Honors Project are eligible to enter the program through Track III. The Senior Honors Project allows students with initiative, originality and intellectual maturity to synthesize information they have learned in courses with their independent study of a topic of their choice.

Admission to Track III is open to those juniors, including transfer students, with at least a cumulative GPA of 3.5 who give sufficient evidence of initiative, originality and intellectual maturity to warrant the expectation of distinction in the program. The minimum 3.25 GPA must be maintained through graduation to remain in good standing in the Honors Program. A degree "With Distinction" in the major field is awarded to students completing this project with a grade of B or better.



- Admissions and Retention

The program currently fluctuates between 950 and 1,000 students each year. The Honors Program recruits 200 prospective freshmen, and adds about 150 Track II and III students, each year. The retention rate for freshmen is above 80%, but fewer than 30% of Track I and Track II students complete the program. Most of those who drop do so by the end of the junior year, when priority registration is no longer considered a perk and when the honors curriculum shifts to the

499A-B-C Honors senior project sequence. See the charts below for percentage completion of senior projects in various tracks, departments, and special program cohorts. The percentages vary widely.

Predictive validity is the degree to which an instrument is able to predict how well an individual will do in a future situation. The current interim director, Dr. Phil Frana, is attempting to create such a predictive validity study of the applications he reviews each year. (See appendix on Early Action and Regular Decision scoring.) He scored a number of variables on a 0.0-1.0 scale: class rank; weighted and unweighted high school GPA; math and verbal SAT scores; leadership, service, and honors; essays; visual inspection of transcript; advanced placement grades. He then correlated final averages against first year JMU GPA. He has observed a Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient of +0.1316.

We need to recruit students who view intelligence as a muscle that develops with exercise, rather than as a static crystal. One change to the application we might consider is a second essay that asks students to provide evidence of unstructured activities in addition to formal co-curriculars. We can learn much about prospects by reading essays that describe interests they engage in without formal direction from adult leaders or supervisors.

<b>Completed Senior Projects - Tracks 1-3 - 2006-2013</b>							
	Total	Track 3	% Track 3		Total	Track 3	% Track 3
<b>College of Arts &amp; Letters</b>	<b>253</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>34%</b>	<b>College of Health and Behavioral Studies</b>	<b>208</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>46%</b>
Anthropology	18	8	44%	Athletic Training	1		
English	39	10	26%	CSD	25	11	44%
History	51	32	63%	Dietetics	7	5	71%
International Affairs	21	3	14%	Health Sciences	20	7	35%
Justice Studies	18	4	22%	Kinesiology	23	9	39%
Modern Foreign Languages	14	4	29%	Nursing	2		
Philosophy & Religion	10	5	50%	Psychology	123	61	50%
Political Science	24	7	29%	Social Work	7	3	43%
Public Administration	4	1	25%	<b>College of Integrated Science and Engineering</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>36%</b>
SCOM	23	8	35%	Computer Science	5		
SMAD	19	1	5%	Engineering	3	1	33%
Sociology	8	3	38%	Geographic Science	2	1	50%
WRTC	4	1	25%	Intelligence Analysis			
<b>College of Business</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>12%</b>	ISAT	34	14	41%
Accounting	1			<b>College of Science and Mathematics</b>	<b>133</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>44%</b>
CIS	2			Biology	72	24	33%
Economics	5			Biotechnology	13	9	69%
Finance	3	1	33%	Chemistry	20	10	50%
International Business	2			Geology & Environmental Science	9	7	78%
Management	7			Math	11	5	45%
Marketing	5	2	40%	Physics	7	4	57%
Quantitative Finance	1			Statistics	1		
<b>College of Education</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>College of Visual and Performing Arts</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>29%</b>
				Art History	7	4	57%
				Interior Design			
				Music	6		
				Music Education	2		
				Studio Art	13	3	23%
				Theatre and Dance	3	2	67%
<b>TOTAL # OF PROJECTS</b>	<b>705</b>						
<b>TOTAL # OF TRACK 3</b>	<b>271</b>						
<b>TOTAL % TRACK 3</b>	<b>38.44%</b>						

<b>Honors Cohort - Fall 2011 JMU Admits</b>		<b>Areas of Emphasis</b>	<b>Finishing SHP Total</b>		
Total (Tracks 1 & 2)	337				
Currently Finishing SHP	106	Research	12	14	86%
	31%	Global Studies	7	16	44%
		Civic Engagement	7	12	58%
Track 1	155	Leadership	17	38	45%
Finishing SHP	56	TOTAL	43	80	54%
	36%				
		<b>Students who did not complete AOE</b>			
Track 2	181		67	262	26%
Finishing SHP	50				
	28%	<b>Track 3 Students in this cohort</b>		18	
<b>GPA Data</b>					
Finishing SHP	3.653				
Not finishing SHP	3.539				
SHP & AOE	3.692				
AOE, not SHP	3.535				
SHP, not AOE	3.63				
Track 3 GPA	3.53				

<b>Colleges &amp; Majors - Fall 2011 Cohort</b>					
		<b>Finishing SHP Total</b>			<b>Finishing SHP Total</b>
<b>College of Arts &amp; Letters</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>32% Track 3s</b>		
Anthropology	0	1	0%		
English	5	15	33%		
History	1	5	20%	3	
International Affairs	0	10	0%		
Justice Studies	1	6	17%	1	
Modern Foreign Languag	3	7	43%		
Philosophy & Religion	0	3	0%	1	
Political Science	1	9	11%		
Public Administration	0	1	0%		
SCOM	9	18	50%		
SMAD	7	27	26%		
Sociology	2	2	100%		
WRTC	7	10	70%		
<b>College of Business</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>8%</b>		
Accounting	0	7	0%		
CIS	0	1	0%		
Economics	2	10	20%		
Finance	1	11	9%	1	
International Business	0	6	0%		
Management	1	8	13%		
Marketing	1	14	7%		
Quantitative Finance	0	9	0%		
<b>College of Education</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>24%</b>		
<b>College of Health and Behavioral Studies</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>40% Track 3s</b>		
CSD	11	16	69%		
Dietetics	1	2	50%		
Health Sciences	5	16	31%		
Kinesiology	0	10	0%	1	
Nursing	6	14	43%		
Psychology	14	33	42%	2	
Social Work	0	1	0%		
<b>College of Integrated Science and Enginee</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>44%</b>		
Computer Science	0	6	0%		
Engineering	2	5	40%	3	
Geographic Science	3	5	60%		
Intelligence Analysis	0	1	0%		
ISAT	6	8	75%	1	
<b>College of Science and Mathematics</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>41%</b>		
Biology	10	29	34%		
Biotechnology	5	8	63%		
Chemistry	5	6	83%	1	
Math	2	9	22%	1	
Physics	1	5	20%		
Statistics	1	2	50%		
<b>College of Visual and Performing Arts</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>33%</b>		
Interior Design	0	1	0%		
Music	1	8	13%	1	
Studio Art	1	4	25%		
Theatre and Dance	5	8	63%		

In general, we can say that the benchmarks we use and inferences we make at time of admission need more study. For instance, while we do indicate which documents are used in the evaluation of applicants to the Honors Program, but do not formally describe the characteristics we are looking for, which might include (for example) intellectual achievement, motivation, maturity, initiative, written communication skills, artistic interests, leadership skills, analytical ability, originality, integrity, collaboration skills, respect for the life of the mind, service to others, scholarly potential (research ability, creativity, effective writing), leadership potential (initiative, follow-through, honesty, orientation to others), and service potential (civic engagement).

We also do not currently share rubrics or admission point percentages with potential applicants. Here is an example of such a rubric. Admissions rubrics are especially helpful in auditing outcomes of admission decisions.

- Progression Standards

All new Honors students (except Track III) must meet with the Honors Advisor before a determined deadline in order to maintain good standing in the program. Failure to do so results in probation. To remain in good standing in the Honors Program, Honors students must take at least one Honors course, seminar, Honors Option, or Senior Honors Project course each semester until all Honors requirements are completed. Failure to meet this requirement will result in the student being placed on immediate probation for that semester. Students who do not fulfill an Honors requirement for two consecutive semesters are dismissed from the program. Students who are studying abroad, attending off-campus internships, or otherwise participating in a program off-campus, are exempt from this policy during that period only; they must inform the Honors Program in writing one semester prior to departure. (This requirement does not apply to Track III students.)

To remain in good standing in the Honors Program, Honors students must also maintain a minimum 3.25 cumulative GPA. Failure to meet this requirement will result in immediate probation for one semester, provided the student meets the following minimum cumulative GPA standards: Juniors (or 5th semester): 3.20; Sophomores (or 3rd & 4th semesters): 3.00; Freshmen (or 2nd semester): grace period – no probation. GPA's below these minimum standards result in dismissal. A student on probation is dismissed from the program if the cumulative GPA does not return to

I-Squared Writing Assessment	Exceptional/Outstanding (4)	Commendable/Very Good (3)	Acceptable/Marginal (2)	Unacceptable/Below Expectations (1)
<b>Elbow Essay</b>				
Shows understanding of purpose				
Shows understanding of main parts of argument				
Delineates the primary strengths of the essay				
Raises questions and issues related to the essay				
<b>Total</b>				
<b>Honors College Essay</b>				
Shows understanding of Honors purpose				
Distinguishes self creatively				
Distinguishes self academically				
Distinguishes self in leadership/service/collaborative work				
<b>Total</b>				
<b>Mechanics &amp; Organization of Elbow &amp; HC Essays</b>				
Coherent sentences and appropriate word choices				
Strong paragraphs and sentence variety				
Sufficiently addresses the question				
Use of specific detail and examples				
<b>Total</b>				
<b>On-site Essay</b>				
Answers prompt completely				
Shows attention to content of lecture				
Shows reflection on content of lecture				
<b>Total</b>				

3.25 or above by the end of the probationary semester. In all cases, students must have a cumulative GPA of 3.25 to graduate from the Honors Program. Scholarships which require a student to maintain a 3.00 or higher cumulative GPA and/or to be in good standing in the Honors Program may not be renewed for the second academic year, if applicable.

Priority registration privileges are revoked while on probation. Students on probation may still register for Honors courses to be taken in the following semester, although students whose probationary period ends in dismissal will not be allowed to enroll in these or other honors courses. Students who withdraw from the program or are dismissed can re-enter the program as Track III students in their junior year if they have achieved a cumulative 3.5 GPA.

- Celebrations of Student Year/Matriculation into the 499s

The Task Force recognizes that attrition is a challenge for the honors program. The departure of so many students affects the morale of those who remain, and also diminishes interest by potential faculty mentors. Word is out – even among prospectives and their parents – that this is a program most students do not choose to finish. Many great JMU honors students, who want to finish what they've started, come to feel that they are "quitters." Others claim the honor, the SWOT revealed, despite their lack of persistence in the program. Track II students are particularly apt to drop out before or during the 499s.

The Task Force suggests looking into the creation of liminal performances and benchmarks along the path to graduation from the honors college. The performances and benchmarks could take the form of off-campus retreats, celebrations of student accomplishments, matriculation rituals, or moments of inception. We could initiate a service hours requirement. Sophomores could present on their collaborative projects in front of extramural evaluators or alumni. Acceptance into the upper reaches of the honors curriculum could be formalized and restricted to students with mentor-mentee contracts. We could restrict Track II to students who have faculty letters of recommendation. These are only ideas.

The honors senior project is the capstone experience for Track I, II and III students. Honors students produce a research or creative project in an appropriate disciplinary or multi-disciplinary context. All students are expected to proficiently express ideas (one's own and those of others) in an organized, coherent, and error-free fashion, using the standard conventions appropriate to the content, genre, and/or format. A degree of distinction in the major field is awarded to students completing this project with high marks. It may be worth thinking about how students who complete the honors program get recognized near graduation – and how parents may get to see that recognition. Perhaps having everyone (students and parents) know that there would be some "higher profile" kind of recognition before graduation could help with retention.

- Diversity

National data on racial and socioeconomic diversity in Honors programs is lacking, but recent publications from individual programs note a number of negative trends in diversity at Honors institutions. Minority honors enrollments tend to be small at both public and private institutions and in need of the "presence of students from lower economic classes." Honors for these students

may even be considered a “risky luxury [they] cannot afford.”<sup>2</sup> Emphasis on standardized test scores in honors admissions decisions also privilege a view of prospective students that discounts other abilities, particularly those in the arts and humanities. It is possible that the talents and values favored in honors education are not the same talents and values measured in the admissions process.

An innovative honors program is generally conceived as one that is not exclusive, but that serves “all students by bringing in the kind of student colleagues who question traditional academic points of view.”<sup>3</sup> Fortunately, the JMU Honors Program is not simply selecting good test-takers. Unweighted high school GPA, particularly in math classes, is generally considered the best single predictor of first and second-year college grades, but JMU Honors takes the additional step in developing a portrait of the student by evaluating two essays written in response to specific prompts, leadership and service activities, formal accomplishments, and class rank.

Madison Honors College should continue to explore alternative means for selecting students for participation in honors, consider including a formal diversity statement in its vision or values statement adopting promising practices from elsewhere, examine recruitment and admissions and scholarship practices for underserved populations, and assess curriculum and class structure for inclusiveness. The Honors College at West Virginia University saw a dramatic increase in the number of in-state students after implementation of a well-funded prestigious scholarships program in honors, but saw a diminishing percentage of low-income students enrolled in the program in subsequent years. At the same time that we create a culture of assessment with thoughtfully constructed rubrics, we must retain structures and procedures for admissions that emphasize qualitative, “whole file” reviews of applicants with less rigid reliance on isolated quantitative metrics such as grade-point averages and standardized test scores. And of course diversity matters at the faculty level too.

A number of options are available to us. We can build values statements that emphasize achievement and potential over and above absolute attributes of giftedness – traits, characteristics, and behaviors that are universally associated with talent potential and performance. In other words, we want high-achieving students, not just high-ability students. We can encourage inclusive recruitment, especially from underperforming, rural, or financially disadvantaged schools, and “whole file” reviews of applicants that supplement and go beyond the traditional admissions rubrics. We can form connections to Valley Scholars and Centennial Scholars. We can continue to encourage the Summer Honors Institute student participation as a vital pathway to increase diversity in the Honors Program. We can enrich the academic environment at JMU by being intentional in service to the diverse communities we serve, including the Shenandoah Valley, Virginia, and the Northeast. We can encourage key faculty, students, and alumni to mentor diverse

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<sup>2</sup> Russell A. Carey, “Inclusive Honors Education: The Imperative for Change and Promising Practices,” Clinton School of Public Service, unpublished manuscript dated March 15, 2013; William A. Ashton, “Honors Needs Diversity More Than the Diverse Need Honors,” *Journal of the National Collegiate Honors Council* 10.1 (2009): 65-68.

<sup>3</sup> James Clauss, “The Benefits of Honors Education for All College Students,” *Journal of the National Collegiate Honors Council* 13.2 (2011): 95-100.

students. We are fortunate that JMU professors Dr. David Owusu-Ansah and Dr. Frances Flannery have already pledged to help us create inclusive structures, such as cooperative learning, and pathways for minority students that we accept into the program.

A formal agreement between the NOVA Community College Honors Programs and the JMU Honors Program was made in spring 2014 to attract more community college graduates into honors. We should continue to monitor developments at other area community colleges as their honors programs grow and become more rigorous.

- Summer Honors Institute

The Summer Honors Institute introduces exceptional high school students to the university honors experience. During this one-week camp students take mini honors classes on a variety of subjects. An interactive learning environment brings students and faculty members together in discussion, experimentation, and critical thinking. Students interact with JMU professors and learn about the different majors offered at the university. Additional information sessions provide advice and inside info on various aspects of the college experience. Fun activities take place on- and off-campus as students explore campus life and learn about the local area. Current honors students serve as counselors/mentors for the duration of the program.

The summer camp has already proved an effective recruitment tool to attract top high school students to JMU and to the Honors Program. Efforts have been made to keep costs low. However, most of the costs are borne by the students. The program is able to offer a few partial scholarships each year to low-income students. With more internal and external funding, the summer camp could be more selective in targeting a diverse group of students.

Students are expected to attend two or three “classes” each day. Class size is restricted to 10-15 as class size needs to be small enough for interaction, discussion, and hands-on learning. The classes represent a range of disciplines from across the colleges and the university. The faculty-led classes are as experiential and hands-on as possible. As much as possible, the learning sessions are interesting, engaging and fun. Diversity of topics and disciplines is key. Information sessions about various aspects of the college experience are interspersed throughout the week. Topics include college admissions tips and best practices; major and career exploration; the honors experience; and campus life.

A major appeal of the program is the opportunity for students to experience campus life and take advantage of some of the attractions of the surrounding area. One of the most important features of the summer camp experience is the interaction between current Honors students, serving as camp counselors, and the students. In fact, as far as recruiting and “selling” the JMU experience, there may not be a more valuable aspect to the program. We place a large portion of the responsibility on the counselors for planning and executing activities. They are expected to stay on campus for the duration of the camp, sleeping in the dorms, walking with students to and from class, helping with in-class activities, arranging excursions, etc. 5-6 counselors is ideal (1:5 or 1:6 counselor to student ratio).

## **Mentorship and Research**

- Senior Projects

Students receive 6.0 hours of course credit for the Senior Honors Project by registering for three consecutive 499 courses beginning in the third year. These courses are offered through the student's major. Students may pursue one of three types of project: a traditional written research thesis reflecting substantial scholarship and demonstrating outstanding research and writing skills; a creative work such as a performance, an exhibit, equipment design and construction, web design, business plan, or other "hands-on" activities; a collaborative project, which can take the form of either a research thesis or a creative project. Selection of project type must be determined in conjunction with the student's faculty adviser and department. Some departments may require completion of one or the other project types. Collaborative projects are always contingent on the approval of faculty advisers and second readers. We have already noted the need for writing and research in honors courses, beginning in the freshman year. Our students need more practice articulating their ideas in words.

- Centrality of Honors Undergraduate Research

JMU stakeholders are united in their desire to raise the "academic bar" for undergraduates on campus by encouraging the growth of honors undergraduate research. Three notions are clear: (1) JMU's strategic plans highlight the centrality of undergraduate scholarship; (2) department heads and college deans highly value mentored undergraduate scholarship as an especially effective pedagogy, given that scholarship takes different forms in different colleges; (3) raising the academic bar for undergraduates can be achieved, but only over a period of time and with dedicated resources as JMU embraces this goal as central to its identity. The opportunity is there to boost undergraduate research and creative projects in both the frequency of its production and the status of its recognition.

Madison Honors College will serve as a magnet for highly gifted students majoring in disciplines across the university. From that vantage point we perceive a university landscape transformed by faculty with new skills, a culture of assessment, and scarce resources. Undergraduate research remains central to JMU's tradition of contributing to the body of knowledge or creative corpus of the community, and the honors college will play a major role by supporting and supplementing the training of more than a thousand top-flight undergraduate scholars.

We find ourselves asking key questions about the future sustainability of undergraduate research: What is the role of undergraduate research in the current educational environment? How can research be tied to service learning? Can we blur the boundaries between research, service, and creative senior project endeavors? What are the "best practices" and how should they be facilitated in instruction and inculcated in the faculty as a whole, and among other research partners? How could honors instructors serve as writing, communications, and library research coordinators? Should personal experiences be part of the research process? If so, how could they implement a reflective capstone essay given a diverse honors student body? What opportunities are there for students to engage in the integrative arts, in scholarly reflection, and in preparation for post-

baccalaureate planning? What does effective research pedagogy look like, and how can our institution best support its requirements?

We believe that the ongoing infrastructural demands of scientific inquiry in higher education offer guidance to future practitioners of honors undergraduate research. Science, particularly the complex and costly “big science” agendas pursued by the nation’s comprehensive and research universities today, is collaborative and inclusive by nature and necessity. As long ago as 1989 the National Science Foundation argued that “[i]t is clear that the academic community regards the involvement of undergraduate student majors in meaningful research ... as one of the most powerful instructional tools.”<sup>4</sup> Today students in the sciences work together easily. Lists of co-authors on scientific publications grow longer, and the number and quality of student co-authors increases with each passing year. Despite the great value of students as research partners, the introduction of undergraduate research in the humanities and social sciences remains suspect. The time has come to engage students across all the disciplines in a culture of collaborative work, where students can act as full research partners.

The relationship between student and faculty is of “fellow inquirers”; and, as the teacher draws the student into the inquiry, through the art of conversation (broadly understood to include scientific research, artistic expression, moral reasoning, etc.), then the questions as to what a student is or a professor is seem to evaporate into a common quest – to become articulate, self-assessing human beings. It should no longer be difficult for faculty members to imagine their students in this sort of fellow inquirer role, nor should they resist empowering them to participate on an equal footing. The path to graduate school these days begins at the undergraduate level, not with matriculation into the master’s and Ph.D. programs.

- Boyer Commission and After

The 1998 report of the Boyer Commission of the Carnegie Commission on Higher Education recommended that research-based faculty-student collaboration be infused across the board into higher education curricula. The Boyer Commission dwelt on the deficiencies of schools where faculty and administrators were not doing nearly enough to prepare students for “intellectual and creative development” through inquiry-based education, and instead engaged by default mainly in “simple transmission of knowledge.”<sup>5</sup> To address this deficiency the Commission made a number specific recommendations related to undergraduate research, including (1) undergraduate research, (2) research-based pedagogies, (3) internship opportunities, and (4) renewal in interdisciplinary education.

Boyer also challenged universities to “break out of the tired old teaching versus research debate and define in more creative ways what it means to be a scholar.”<sup>6</sup> Boyer wanted faculty fellowship with students, and even occasionally followership. The Commission followed the advice of social

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<sup>4</sup> National Science Foundation, *Report on the National Science Foundation Disciplinary Workshops on Undergraduate Education* (NSF 89-3, April 1989).

<sup>5</sup> Boyer Commission on Educating Undergraduates in the Research University, *Reinventing Undergraduate Education: A Blueprint for America’s Research Universities* (1998), 12.

<sup>6</sup> *ibid.*, 38.

learning theorists Jean Lave and Etienne Wenger on the importance of the novice's legitimate peripheral participation in authentic communities of practice (CoP). Here, a student gains knowledge and skills by learning the ropes through "model-guided trials by practitioners." The student passes through several levels in their training by the "expert other," emerging as legitimate and self-expressing practitioners themselves.

Since the issuance of the Boyer report, universities across the country have pursued agendas focused on mentorship. Faculty members are encouraged to think of learning as a social process, domain competence as something learned through the acquisition of expertise rather than as something innate, and teaching as an active (not passive) process where the learner develops communicative facilities and is permitted to grasp firmly the reigns of authority. This new direction is, among cognitive psychologists at least, termed the situated cognitive apprenticeship model for undergraduate research. Boyer called for learning activities, concludes educational psychologist CarolAnne M. Kardash, that reflected "real-world rather than decontextualized academic tasks of instructional tools." Subsequent reports by the National Science Foundation and National Research Council reinforced these conclusions with more hard data.

There is among the JMU faculty strong agreement to include all undergraduates, not just honors undergraduates, in the research agendas of faculty members and their departments. How do we become a top undergraduate research institution? In addition to serious mentorship between faculty and students, which is already flourishing on our campus, a number of features have emerged as hallmarks of top undergraduate research programs. At top programs meaningful projects and original research is preeminent. New hypotheses, challenges to old paradigms, and real-world problems are favored over recapitulation of arguments. Often, the best research generates new questions and problems to be debated and unlocked by future generations of researchers.

Also, at top programs the projects emerge from deliberate, planned interdisciplinary training and approaches defined by departments, colleges, and the universities. The training may involve hands-on approaches to material problems or widely-accepted techniques for exploring substantive issues. Next, the student's research is shared as widely as possible. Dissemination may take place at local or national conferences, special university-wide celebrations, or by serendipity at extramural events. Dissemination makes the research credible. Finally, top programs are constantly self-assessing, giving the undergraduates opportunities for evaluating the research experience, their own self-confidence and personal growth, and reflecting on the uptake of new skill sets.

- Research in Madison Honors College

What skills are we trying to add to the Madison Honors College student toolkit? We want bright, sagacious students to make their lives extraordinary by seizing opportunities for growth and development. Marcia Baxter Magolda, a constructive-developmental pedagogue now working in Educational Leadership at Miami University, argues that the greatest cognitive and personal development emerges from curricular goals focused on promoting "self-authorship" where students are validated as "knowers" and knowledge is grasped as "mutually constructed meaning."

This view is consonant with the plans and purposes of the coming Madison Honors College. Here, students emerge from a K-12 educational context where absolute knowing is prized above all else (usually confirmed by standardized test for school achievement and college admissions), pass through a period of transitional knowing where authorities come into conflict or disparities in thinking and expressing emerge, and ends in the restless search for independent and contextual knowing framed by the identity and internal direction of the learner.

Undergraduate scholarship is at the heart of a good education. Successful completion of the current honors program requires a senior honors project, which consists of a traditional research project or a performance, exhibit, or other creative work. Our students study one-on-one with established scholars, practitioners or policy makers. Writing a senior thesis is intended to be the most intellectually challenging and, in many cases, the most rewarding experience they will have at JMU.

What do we mean when we speak today of research? Is the research process, whatever it may be, essentially the same thing in the natural sciences, the social sciences, and the humanities? A review of the literatures shows that the skill sets cluster in ways that reflect the modes of the undergraduate citizen-scholar: (1) inquiry – investigating ideas, texts, concepts, and data to arrive at sound conclusions (connected thinking); (2) conversation – articulating and defending positions based upon scholarly inquiry (persuasive speech, cogent writing); and (3) collaboration on scholarly projects (real-world problem-solving, peer-to-peer learning, faculty mentorship, leadership).

Here is a breakdown of the ways a competent scholar in the Madison Honors College might come to integrate innocuous facts and arrive at valuable conclusions while learning to do research. (We recommend further study of the relations between research, pedagogy, and service learning in the era of globalization for our honors mentors.)

- Inquiry Competencies

accessing and assessing primary sources and peer-reviewed evidence  
understanding the research process and formulating hypotheses  
learning techniques, including

- reading
- recognizing
- organizing
- referencing
- reasoning

acquiring and mastering tools

designing experiments or tests of the hypotheses

collecting, analyzing, interpreting data and relating results, including:

- identifying main and subordinate ideas
  - summarizing other work
  - recognizing purpose, audience, episteme, and tone
  - rhetorical analysis
  - identifying, forming, and explaining deductions and inferences
- epistemological reflection and potentially reformulation of hypotheses

- Conversational Competencies

skilled writing, including:

- identifying main and subordinate ideas
- organizing and outlining
- varying style to match audience
- editing
- arguing expressively and imaginatively

communicating research results

effective speaking, including:

- arguing coherently
- presenting with clarity
- maintaining good “body language”
- answering questions effectively

properly employing oral presentation technology

relate results to the “bigger picture”

- Collaborative Competencies

understanding how knowledge is constructed or learned  
understanding how experts in various domains think  
becoming aware of contemporary concepts and models in many fields  
becoming part of a community of practice  
forming peer research interest groups  
setting goals consistent with objectives  
following a schedule  
tolerating obstacles  
integrating theory and practice  
learning ethical conduct  
building self-confidence  
accepting constructive criticism  
achieving scholarly independence

The literature on undergraduate research also identifies a number of structural or institutional goals for such programs. These goals are sometimes implemented within the framework and mandate of an office of undergraduate research (and creative activities). They include:

reducing the isolation of the student inside the institution  
understanding the interrelatedness of the various disciplines  
clarifying student career paths  
preparing students for post-baccalaureate research  
persisting to graduation across disciplines  
involving faculty in undergraduate research programs and re-energizing their own research

Research by academic authorities demonstrates that retention rates increase as much as 20% when underrepresented students are drawn into research partnerships with peers and faculty members. For exceptional students, participation in undergraduate research opportunities has been shown to as much as double student expectations for obtaining a doctorate, in one case from 40 to 80%.

What can we do to better prepare on-campus research mentors? We often assume that the tenured, tenure-track, and RTA faculty members hired by James Madison University have the basic skills necessary to engage in undergraduate research project planning and management. This is not necessarily the case. Faculty members who have completed a dissertation may have worked

months in relative isolation, without supervision or interaction with mentors. Some may not have a well-developed feel for academic writing as a social activity. Others may not have a sufficiently clear understanding of research practices and ethic outside of their own particular disciplines: Can Honors theses be cross-checked, as they are in the sciences, for verifiability, replicability, falsifiability, and the transparency of their research protocols? Must they have a moral voice or vision as found in most products of the humanities? Should they strive for value-free research, a norm of the social sciences? JMU instructors may not have ready answers to those questions.

Past experience with our research courses suggests that scholars in interdisciplinary research are pursuing a distinct form of intellectual livelihood and pursue shared cultural presumptions. What does interdisciplinary honors research assume and imply? What special demands does it make on those who buy into it? The question of whether someone has produced interdisciplinary research requires a community of assessment, usually one that is preexistent. This community is held to be competent to assess not just whether a piece of scholarship is actually new, but whether its producer has grappled with previously formed protocols and made out of their research something that is actually “interesting” to its practitioners. Are the mentors we lean heavily upon really familiar with the results of professional scholarship on interdisciplinary teaching and learning?

Past experience also suggests that JMU instructors sometimes hesitate to undertake Honors research projects because of the difficulty in assessing whether the student has sufficient training and knowledge to conduct research in the topic at hand. We must ask ourselves whether we have devised undergraduate research pedagogies that develop skills for communication, teamwork, critical thinking, and lifelong learning in each student. We currently have no method for assessing student performance consistent with the goals and content of our honors courses. We do not systematically attempt to begin from the student’s own experience and training before asking them to throw themselves into research projects. Our bridges to departments on campus remain informal contrivances. We need to seek ways to reinforce and integrate these informal relationships in order to reduce artificial barriers.

We believe that guiding undergraduate students in research is a real strength of this university. If guiding undergraduates in research is a task upon which faculty time is well spent, we should go the extra distance and fully embrace the fact that teaching and research are as mutually beneficial activities. On many campuses like ours, students are immediately integrated into the daily activities of campus intellectual life through formal faculty-student interest matching. This “Match” of interests and needs is sometimes facilitated by an office of undergraduate research but could be incorporated as a regular activity of the coming Honors College. The Match, ideally, precipitates all sorts of further experiences that engage students:

- Experience in research leading to publication in refereed journals
- Experience in presenting research in a variety of formats such as posters and oral presentations
- Experience in writing and revising grant proposals
- Experience in laboratory management
- Experience in developing research protocols
- Experience in oral presentations

and that engage faculty members:

- Experience in supervising independent scholarship of undergraduates
- Experience in exploring and implementing resource materials related to student learning
- Experience with methods of assessing student learning
- Experience mentoring non-majors
- Experience with pedagogies alternative to lecture-only formats
- Experience in articulating a philosophy of teaching in research

What can we do to better prepare students for mentoring? Students themselves vary in their expectations of mentors. While most rely heavily on the 499A tutorial encounter for project guidance, an impressive minority prefer independence at this stage – which sometimes leads to complications and obstacles down the road. We find it remarkable how often the student neglects to share his final research précis with the tutor, and the frequency with which his progress is still adjudged satisfactory by the tutor. Students want their mentors to be flexible, understanding of radical shifts in direction, respectful of student aims, and generally approachable and encouraging. Not too surprisingly, they are less interested in negative but constructive feedback, becoming dependent upon a faculty member's own research agenda, or non-specific career advice.

What do students want to accomplish in the mentoring relationship? What do they really do when they write their senior projects? We need to explore ways of monitoring creative research that is highly individual and based on resources beyond the library too. How do students find sources in creative projects? What sorts of data analysis, communication, or interpretive skills do they need in order to ferret them out? How do they make selections? How do they interact with sources in ways that are mindful of their responsibilities to JMU's Institutional Review Board policies? How do they react to these sources once they have identified them? How heavily do they lean on their mentor's preexisting research program?

More mundane abilities also matter. For most students, completing the senior honors project is the first sustained (multi-semester), scholarly production of their lives. Do our honors students have adequate time-management skills? Do they understand how to measure and account for the duration of tasks against the progression of time? Can they construct a reasonable project schedule and locate the start and finish dates of the terminal elements?

Action items:

- Prepare and maintain a database of "Match"-worthy research opportunities
- Post and maintain a list of JMU departmental research methods classes
- Formalize training in IRB application and Gantt chart construction
- Meet with library faculty about current student research activity

What can we do to improve the institutional culture and magnify administrative support? JMU, a large comprehensive university, offers a wide range of baccalaureate programs and is uniquely positioned to foster student research. Most of our faculty time is dedicated to a unique brand of undergraduate-centered teaching and research, and encourages participation and presentation in state and national conferences. This participation is uneven, and comprehensive universities must

carefully husband their resources. Students should be offered resources and an environment to make direct contributions to academic and community life.

Summer is a prime time for conducting research by both faculty and students, yet this is precisely the time when students may need to earn money to support tuition and other college-related expenses. Students need access to summer stipends that allow students to devote weeks of fulltime effort to ongoing thesis research. Perhaps it is time to explore the possibility of a summer research grant program as an incubator for the most ambitious and time-consuming student research projects. Stipends might be in the form of scholarship support or paid salary.

Undergraduate publishing and extramural evaluation should also be a priority. The Mercyhurst Undergraduate Journals and Conferences Directory (UJDC) encourages undergraduate scholarship by facilitating the development and use of undergraduate publications and conferences. The UJCD lists journals, electronic and paper, and conferences, that will consider undergraduate student essays, research papers, poetry, short fiction, photography, cartoons, and art, without regard to the undergraduate student's institutional affiliation. The *National Honors Report, Pittsburgh Undergraduate Review*, and *Maine Scholar* publish interdisciplinary scholarship by students in all fields. *Agora*, *Hermenaut*, and *Prometheus* encourage undergraduate submissions from the humanistic disciplines. The *Caltech Undergraduate Research Journal*, *Journal of Undergraduate Sciences*, *Journal of Young Investigators*, *Journal of Undergraduate Research in Bioengineering*, and *URJHS: Undergraduate Research Journal for the Human Sciences* are journals for the sciences. In the creative arts, undergraduates may submit to the peer-reviewed *Allegheny Review*. In economics, the appropriate journal is the *University Avenue Undergraduate Journal of Economics*. For English, students may submit to *The Oswald Review*. Budding mathematicians should submit to the *Rose-Hulman Undergraduate Math Journal*, which publishes expository work as well as proposals. Nursing majors have the *Journal of Undergraduate Nursing Scholarship*, which publishes original research papers as well as essays on current issues in nursing and health care. Philosophy students enjoy a variety of outlets for their work, including *Aporia*, *The Dualist*, *The Interlocutor*, and *Meteorite*. The *Journal of Undergraduate Research in Physics* publishes papers in pure and applied physics with the sponsorship of faculty members. *Issues in Political Economy* is a student-run journal devoted to publishing research in fields related to economics. The *Journal of Psychology and the Behavioral Sciences* is an annual journal open to graduates and undergraduates. The *Psi Chi Journal of Undergraduate Research* publishes quarterly in fields related to psychology.

We also need to collect and disseminate statistics on faculty involvement in undergraduate interdisciplinary research, and break those statistics down into categories showing the numbers of students and faculty members involved from each academic unit on campus, as well as the specific type of activity or deliverables. We should track the number of mentors in each department, the percentage of faculty involved in mentorship in each department, the number of projects, the number of theses, numbers of meetings, number of presentations, and number of publications. Collecting and disseminating undergraduate research statistics is something the whole campus needs to pursue, not just the Honors College. Research mentoring activity is a crucial measure of the vitality of our undergraduate programs.

What is the research role of the Faculty Fellows here? The Provost has repeatedly expressed the hope that undergraduate research be central to JMU's identity. The ambition to have an honors college affords us a unique opportunity to rethink our incentive, opportunity, and awards structure. Clearly, undergraduate research is not the business of individual units – it is JMU's business. That means standards, reporting, and shared or single-channel dissemination of results. That also means some group must be charged with the responsibility of making and enforcing policy. Imagine the Faculty Fellows acting as an undergraduate research clearinghouse that would teach students and faculty, and apply appropriate oversight, collection, and dissemination processes, to foster successful student scholarly and creative productions and student/faculty collaborations. The overwhelming task of matching students with faculty mentors: again, that effort should be university wide.

We need to know, specifically, about our expectations for undergraduates engaging in this sort of activity on campus, whether those expectations diverge, and whether the diversity of the work product matches up well against high standards. We also need to know how undergraduate research becomes a valuable community resource, where it blurs the interface between teaching and learning and service, and how it satisfies the student's and research supervisor's expectations. We must take our message to new faculty orientation, but do it in a way that includes information on all undergraduate research activity on campus.

What can we do to foster external relations? Beyond workforce development, we are in the business of creating scholar-citizens. JMU must work hard to highlight undergraduate research with formal invitations to state political leaders, education administrators, trustees, local leaders, and all members of the campus community. We must supply press releases to local media on a timely basis. We should encourage our best presenters to disseminate their research widely. We must promote alumni involvement in undergraduate research as successful project- and thesis-completers. In the longer-term, we might explore collaborations between students working on theses in multiple programs, on multiple college campuses, or in virtual environments. Members of the public should be drawn into our practices as well, submitting topics for research, working with the Honors Advisory Council, and encouraging our students to produce significant findings.

## Scholarships and Awards

- Hillcrests

The Honors Advisory Council established the Hillcrest Scholarship Program in 2012 to support select outstanding sophomore honors students who wish to pursue an off-campus summer enrichment experience that complements classroom learning. Hillcrest scholars are chosen for the quality "of their proposed project, their academic achievements and intellectual promise, their leadership experience and community engagement, and their ability to make a significant contribution to society in the future." The first two Hillcrest awards went to Michelle Amaya, who engaged in a service-leadership global health immersion program in Bolivia, and Carly Starke, who worked at the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to engineer a vaccine vector for typhoid fever. (Current winners and projects are described in an appendix.)

The Honors Program coordinates applications from JMU students for nationally competitive scholarships. Many of the most prestigious awards require JMU nomination or coordination either through the Honors Program or through other JMU units. Dr. Melinda Adams is JMU's prestigious scholarships coordinator.

- Madison Achievements

One of the key attributes of the Honors Program is its interdisciplinarity. This is not simply a curricular imperative. The program actively seeks to attract students from all majors on the JMU campus. Representing the whole campus equitably is difficult. This year for instance, despite best efforts to diversify the honors talent pool, 34.6% of the incoming freshman class are attracted to only five majors (Biology, Health Sciences, Nursing, Accounting, and International Business). It is true that many of these students will fan out into other programs following classroom exposure, but concentration of majors remains at the end of the college years. Of the 518 honors senior projects completed since 2010, 39% are in five majors (Biology, Communication Sciences & Disorders, History, ISAT, and Psychology).

The college deans have been discussing ways to bring greater intentionality to the link between the Madison Achievement awards to Honors, as well as magnify the impact of the awards. Currently, departments make Madison Scholarship offers to students. These students, upon acceptance of the award, are made automatic offers of honors admission. The Honors Program is separately recruiting students to the program. Reimagining the awards as Madison Honors Scholarships in particular colleges or majors might raise the profile of the awards and create a package that emphasizes a special collegiate experience. Retention of the scholarship could be tied to completion of Honors Program requirements. Integration of Madison awards with Honors would require a review of GPA minimums for retention. Currently, Madison scholars must achieve a 3.0 cumulative grade point average by the end of each academic year to qualify for renewal. The Honors standard is 3.25.

Many of us are interested in using the Madison Achievement program to advance interdisciplinary academic study at JMU. One possibility is to encourage cross-disciplinary collaboration through a residential learning community. A Madison Achievement living and learning program in a designated JMU dormitory would help us establish such an environment. The program could match small groups of students to mentors who would work with them on multi-semester traditional research projects, creative or entrepreneurial projects, and/or practica or experiential projects. Another possibility is a co-curricular, service learning track leading to some sort of "engaged" notation on their major degree – making it an "engaged degree."

- Provost Award for Excellence in Honors Teaching and Service

The success of the Honors Program depends critically upon its ability to attract the university's best faculty into the program. The Provost Award for Excellence in Honors Teaching and Service is given annually to a faculty member in recognition of outstanding teaching, advising or other service in support of the Honors Program. The recipient of this award receives a \$1,000 honorarium and is recognized at a reception hosted by the Provost in March.

Eligible Candidates include current faculty, including both full-time and adjunct, who have done one or more of the following:

- taught an Honors course or seminar at JMU
- supervised Senior Honors Projects
- served as a faculty liaison
- provided other unpaid service to the program

Evaluation criteria include: innovation in teaching or advising, impact on students, effectiveness of teaching or advising, excellence in the development of course content, demonstrated student successes related to the senior project, and commitment to the Honors Program and its goal of meeting the educational needs of talented, highly motivated students. Nominations for the Honors Program Distinguished Teaching and Service Award are accepted from Honors students and University faculty, including department heads. Nominees from prior years who submitted supporting material are automatically reconsidered. Nominations must be received by mid-December. The Faculty Fellows, minus any member(s) nominated for the award, serve as the Award Selection Committee.

### **Continuing the Alumni Experience and Outreach**

The Honors Advisory Council (HAC) was created in the fall of 2009 in a partnership between the Honors Program and the Development Office. The Honors Advisory Council is part of the JMU Honors Program community, providing advice and links to resources to support the Program's overall vision and mission: Resources, Relationships, and Reputation. The HAC is primarily composed of JMU alums and parents of honors students. The vision of the HAC is to create lines of dialogue, engaging with the university community, prospective students, alumni, and the public leading to increased financial resources for the Honors Program, mentorships for Honors Program students, and an enhanced reputation for the program at the national level.

The HAC prizes collaboration, communication, and creativity among its members. They value strong working relationships with JMU students, faculty and staff, alumni, donors, and fellow board members because those relationships are critical to the achievement of our vision. They value effective communication because the Honors Program's mission cannot be fulfilled unless the university community, prospective students, alumni, and the public hear its message clearly and often. They value creativity and innovation because being open to doing things differently will enhance the potential for assisting the Honors Program. The HAC was instrumental in the creation of the Hillcrest Scholarship Program, which provides about \$5,000 each to a select number of honors students to support extraordinary off-campus research or service/leadership experiences in the summer following the junior year.

The Honors Advisory Council has asserted that good alumni relations involves "keeping the conversation going" both offline and online, and by providing mentorship and job shadowing opportunities to current students. Members understand that the educational needs of young people have become significantly more varied: needs of general collegiate undergraduate education; needs associated with social roles (acquisition and updating of occupational knowledge

and skills, participation in social life, and improvement of the quality of family life); and needs of general culture and personal development (learning for the purposes of health maintenance, leisure time, and personal development).

Lifelong learning is not only a good idea but a real necessity. "Learning as a kind of being" – this is the slogan of the day. *Homo studens* is the hero of our time. In a knowledge economy, growth is based on improvement and innovation of work processes, products, and services and is a result of knowledge productivity. HAC members have emphasized that in a knowledge economy, in which improvement and innovation are required for long-term survival; standardization is not the goal but rather the extraordinary, the surprising, and the artistic. The knowledge economy will ask request the autonomous or independent individual to undertake learning for personal growth. When workers become active participants in process improvement, they also take on more responsibility. Emancipated employees will critically examine the corporate goals, the ethics of governance, and shareholder property of their knowledge work. In a knowledge economy, corporate success, entrepreneurship, and individual emancipation will be difficult to separate. Honors is well-positioned to help with this kind of learning and approach to life and work.

In short, economic growth, innovation, social cohesion, and lifelong learning are considered as inseparable. It is clear that our HAC members – and our alumni – are interested in promoting Madison Honors College activities that reinforce what are sometimes called the six pillars of lifelong learning: learning to know, learning to do, learning to live, learning to be, learning to change, and learning for sustainability. These interests are equally shared by our current honors students.

In 2013-2014, Honors Advisory Council members drafted a short statement of support in favor of the transition from honors program to college. In the report, members noted that the most well-developed, successful honors programs and honors colleges share a number of characteristics: resources and university representation comparable to that of the academic college deans; a cohesive curriculum; scholarships and grants; programs to promote student success; a strategic plan and related data.

The HAC noted that whether a director or a dean, honors leadership in the most competitive honors programs have some sort of representation on the provost's council of deans and have regular, independent interactions with the provost, either as a direct report or as a part of a more informal structure. This structure sets the expectation for collaboration of other academic units with honors, facilitates the allocation of resources for honors, ensures the specific inclusion of honors in fund-raising efforts, and gives voice to honors in university-level initiatives and decisions. Academic and administrative space coupled with dedicated on-campus housing space serve as a visible university commitment to honors and give honors the flexibility and control to build innovative curricular and co-curricular programs. Prospective honors students across the country often cite student-centered spaces, space for varied faculty-student interactions, and other space-related amenities as key recruitment tools. Some honors programs also use space as a way to recruit faculty members to teach honors courses and encourage interactions with students.

Funding to support the development and teaching of honors courses, student and faculty recruitment initiatives, and co-curricular honors activities allows honors to effectively guide the

honors curriculum to best serve student development. Without significant funding, honors programs are left to depend on the good will of individual faculty members, their departments and schools. Dependence on other units also means that honors has little say in course topics or the overall academic experience of honors students. As faculty, departments, and schools are asked to do more with less as federal and state dollars for higher education shrink, honors programs that are dependent on faculty volunteerism are at-risk.

Central to many nationally recognized honors programs is a core curriculum focused on the academic, personal, and professional development of student, across the student's entire time at the university. The learning objectives and overarching goals are most often set by a team of honors faculty and staff from across the university. Course and special learning opportunity proposals are reviewed by a honors curriculum committee and typically follow an honors-designed assessment rubric geared toward measure progress toward the goals of the honors curriculum. Most often these honors courses serve to meet the requirements of the core curriculum but participation in the honors curriculum may also exempt the student from the core curriculum altogether. The honors curriculum also often serves as a way to more specifically address the mission and strategic plan of the university, e.g. experiential learning, internationalization, and interdisciplinarity. Departmental and school honors programs that are overseen by central honors are also more common in highly-developed honors programs.

Honors should keep an eye on both the depth and breadth of its curricular and co-curricular offerings. *Depth* - this relates to the student taking advantage of the opportunity to really "dig into something," which typically would be through the senior project. HAC members hope that the students get the idea that they should think of this as an opportunity and not as a burden. It should be fun for them to really sink their teeth into something that they want to do – and that does not have to tie into anything specific. They can have good faculty (and, where needed, institutional) support, and the potential to access some limited resources that may be needed for them to accomplish their work. Members agree that it is important that there be some kind of "product" at the end - whether it is a written report, a presentation, or some combination of the above. It is nice there is already an event, the Honors Symposium, associated with that part of the program. HAC hopes that the message gets out to students and faculty that this is a real opportunity and nothing to be feared or avoided. This may be the part where the JMU program has one of its bigger challenges.

*Breadth* – that's not really a good word - perhaps "*interconnectedness*" would be better. Honors students should get to see how different areas of human activity are interconnected in the general education clusters and also in ways that may not come in the regular curriculum. In particular, it is good if honors students can really get a sense of the "couplings" that connect things that might otherwise (superficially, at least) be considered as "separate activities." There are lots of potential examples of this. The coupling of natural and social science is one example, but there could be others – various combinations of natural sciences, social sciences, humanities, etc. that might not otherwise be made in regular courses. Some of the JMU honors classes already do this, but we need to be intentional in making sure they do. Students should also be encouraged to get a sense of breadth/*interconnectedness* through non-class activities. Madison Honors College should continue

to foster strong relationships with other units, especially Independent Scholars, Community-Service Learning, the Institute for Innovation in Health and Human Services (IIHHS), the coming Office of Undergraduate Research, and Co-curricular Records Pilot sponsored by Student Success and Dr. Randy Mitchell.

Beyond this, student-centered programs designed to facilitate the development of students' ability to compete for prestigious scholarships, graduate school programs, and employment are critical parts of the success of honors and the development of a cohesive honors community. Not only do these programs increase the number of Rhodes, Marshall, Goldwater, Fulbright, and other prestigious national scholarships, they also serve to increase honors retention rates, better support the overall development of students, and enhance the reputation of the university and its faculty.

The HAC is in favor of an Honors College where select or all incoming honors freshmen receive comprehensive scholarship funds to cover tuition, fees, room, and board. These scholarships might be renewable for seven additional semesters, provided the student remains in good standing. If only select students received the aforementioned scholarship, the remaining honors students could receive a fixed sum (\$500 - \$5000). In addition, most honors students could have access, through an application, to additional honors funds for research activities, study abroad, and other enhanced curricular and co-curricular experiences. Scholarship and grant funds are particularly important for recruiting for diversity.

## **Conclusion**

The best honors programs are built on a model of continual improvement – setting goals, measuring progress, and adapting to maximize success. Centralized and equal support of honors as an academic unit facilitates honors ability to gather specific, accurate data on recruitment, retention, graduation, employment, national scholarships, and assessment of program elements while enabling direct responses to those data. James Madison University has experienced much more rapid growth than represented in national trends, with enrollments increasing by more than 80% since 1990. These increases in overall population size have increased expectations for the JMU honors program – accommodating a significantly larger group of students, offering a more comprehensive set of enhanced learning experiences, and serving as a flagship recruitment program for the best students.

Under the leadership of Dr. Linda Halpern and Dr. Barry Falk, the JMU Honors Program has risen to the occasion. With the honors student population rising and the number of honors courses growing, an honors residential component added, an engaged Honors Advisory Council created, Hillcrest scholarship developed and funds raised, recruitment and orientation programs implemented, a shared vision developed, and more. These Honors Program enhancements have largely been shouldered on the good will of faculty, the exceptional commitment of honors staff, the Honors Advisory Council, and a few of key stakeholders.

The Honors Program is poised to enter its next phase of development in Madison Honors College, and will assuredly become a national model for best practices in honors education and a hot spot for the best and brightest students while making significant contributions to the vision and core qualities set forth in JMU's most recent strategic plan. With a renewed university investment in honors education through the creation of an honors college, the Honors Advisory Council believes JMU will be able to capitalize on the exceptional opportunities already in place. The creation of an honors college will facilitate the inclusion of the honors leader in Academic Council decision-making, the development of a concrete strategy and timeline for dedicated honors classroom space, implementation of a timeline and strategy for funding for the development and teaching of honors courses, the creation of new programmatic elements, and student grants and scholarships, the implementation of a four-year, developmental curriculum, creation of student success initiatives that enhance students ability to compete on a national stage, the formulation of an honors strategic plan, related assessment data, and a plan for continual improvement.

Of JMU's 25 SCHEV approved peer institutions, 10 have already established honors colleges. JMU competes directly for students with the 14 other public, four-year colleges in Virginia. Five of those institutions have honors colleges and a number of others have well-developed honors programs with more financial support, space, and programmatic elements than JMU. Through increased visibility and additional resources, an Honors College at JMU will enhance our ability to compete for the most talented and engaged students who will contribute to *a community committed to academic rigor*. An Honors College can also serve to *promote access, inclusion, and diversity* through outreach, recruitment initiatives, direct student support, and student success initiatives.

## **Recent Articles on JMU Honors**

"Alternative Spring Break in Jamaica" <http://www.jmu.edu/news/honorsprog/2013/10/08-jamaicaspringbreak.shtml>

"Biotechnology Student Wins Prestigious National Scholarship"  
<http://www.jmu.edu/news/biology/2014/03/21-balsamo-goldwater.shtml>

"Challenge, Yes, but also Support; Forget TV Dramatizations: Honors student Caitlin McAvoy ('15) Reveals the Atmosphere of JMU's Musical Theatre Program"  
<http://www.jmu.edu/stories/2014/mcavoy-caitlin-musical-theatre-major.shtml>

"Collaborative Science: Honors Student Joe Balsamo Conducts Cutting-Edge Research on the Development of the Auditory System" <http://www.jmu.edu/stories/2014/balsamo-joe-hillcrest-scholar-research.shtml>

"Dave Pruett on Reason and Wonder: A Copernican Revolution in Science and Spirit and the Honors Course that Helped Him Write It" <http://sites.jmu.edu/jmuresearch/reason-and-wonder/>

"Debbie Sturm: New Honors Faculty Member in Residence"  
<http://www.jmu.edu/news/honorsprog/2013/10/09-debbiesturm.shtml>

"Detectives' Scour Rare Periodicals for Clues to 20th Century Life"  
<http://www.jmu.edu/news/2011/12/29-detectives-scour-rare-periodicals-for-clues-20th-century-life.shtml>

"Diving into Honors Challenges: Student-Athletes Compete in the Top Level of JMU Academics"  
<http://www.jmu.edu/stories/2013/honors-student-athlete-camilla-czulada.shtml>

"Hannah Pellegrino and the Honors Class of 2017"  
<http://www.jmu.edu/news/honorsprog/2013/10/21-pellegrino.shtml>

"ISAT Algae-Based Oil Extraction Project Wins Innovation Award"  
<http://www.isat.jmu.edu/features/algaeaward.html>

"James Madison University Research Journal Releases Initial Volume"  
<http://www.jmu.edu/news/honorsprog/2014/03/21-jmurj.shtml>

"Living the Education: Hillcrest Scholar Emily Thyroff ('15) Studies in Australia's Rain Forest"  
<http://www.jmu.edu/stories/2014/thyroff-emily-hillcrest-global-studies.shtml>

"The Lure of Undergraduate Research: Opportunities for Research in International Affairs Solidified Zachary Ochoa's Decision to Come to JMU" <http://www.jmu.edu/stories/2014/ochoa-zachary-superpower-research.shtml>

"Margo Deihl: The Face of Arthritis for the Arthritis Foundation"  
<http://www.arthritis.org/facesofarthritis/faces-gallery/margo-deihl/>

"New Honors Program Faculty Admins: Phil Frana and Jared Diener"  
<http://www.jmu.edu/news/honorsprog/2013/09/19-newstaff.shtml>

"Out of the Classroom, Into the World: Honors Study Abroad Builds Independence, Confidence and a New, Globally Minded Perspective"  
<https://www.jamesmadisonuniversity.net/stories/2013/honors-seminar-abroad.shtml>

"Professor Debbie Sturm Wins Outstanding Teacher Award"  
[http://www.breezejmu.org/news/article\\_7e4edc6a-44ea-11e3-8747-001a4bcf6878.html](http://www.breezejmu.org/news/article_7e4edc6a-44ea-11e3-8747-001a4bcf6878.html)

"Professors and the Road to Success: Carly Starke and a Chance to Discover"  
<http://www.jmu.edu/stories/2013/starke-carly-and-professors.shtml>

"Professors Lori Britt and Rob Alexander Assist with Honors Project"  
<http://www.jmu.edu/stories/academic-affairs/2014/03-01-britt.shtml>

"Realizing Your Dreams: Hillcrest Scholarships" <http://www.jmu.edu/stories/2013/realizing-dreams.shtml>

"Seeing Beyond Boundaries: Michelle Amaya's ('14) Summer Enrichment Experience Abroad Confirms the Importance of a Broad World View" <http://www.jmu.edu/stories/2013/amaya-michelle-abroad-experience.shtml>

"Sophomore Biotech Major Joe Bannister Lands Internship at NIH"  
<http://www.jmu.edu/news/2014/06/20-joe-bannister-feature.shtml>

"Study Just One Science? That's Not Enough for ISAT Major"  
<http://www.jmu.edu/news/2014/05/28-ashleigh-cotting-honors-student.shtml>

"Unconfined Challenges: She Wanted a Good Challenge — That's Why She Chose JMU"  
<https://www.jamesmadisonuniversity.net/stories/2012/kuhnley-amanda.shtml>

"Undergraduate Research Put Wallace on Path to Medical School"  
<http://www.jmu.edu/stories/2013/2013-matt-wallace.shtml>

"A Winning Combo: Student-athlete Shannon Rano ('15) of Branchburg, N.J., Excels in Political Science and Soccer" <https://www.jamesmadisonuniversity.net/stories/2013/honors-student-athlete-shannon-rano.shtml>

"'Why Madison?' Honors Advisory Council" <http://www.jmu.edu/stories/president-journal/2012/102612-honors-advisory-council.shtml>

## **APPENDICES**

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