**University of Denver Honors Program**

**Annual Report, Academic Year 2009-2010**

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**Summary**

In Academic Year 2009-2010, the University Honors Program continued to build on previous successes and implement changes envisioned by the 2007 Revision of the Honors Program, and goals based on the 2009 reaccreditation-based Program Review.

Primary efforts during 09-10 focused on implementation of a revised admission process, initial collection and use of assessment data, and increased student involvement. Notable accomplishments in these domains included hitting (and not exceeding) our target of approximately 100 entering students, one-third of whom entered through an application process that involved Honors Council admission review. In addition, the number of students who participated in non-curricular programming doubled over the previous year. This year we also continued efforts for better communication and collaboration with departments, and for keeping the Honors curriculum rigorous, stimulating, varied, and available; these efforts appear to be working. Specific goals for 10-11 include development of critical thinking evaluation for assessment and gaining input from students who leave the program prior to graduation with University Honors. Regarding admission, we will examine processes designed to increase student diversity and to better enable students currently at DU to join the Honors Program. Primary curricular initiatives are the addition of a second Honors natural science option (so that our students will have enough seats and some choice in their natural science sequence) and better integration of Honors Writing into the program. We also hope to increase the efficiency of our offerings by gaining approval for Honors students to register for classes early.

**Annual Report, 2009-2010**

The Academic Year 2009-2010 University Honors Program (UHP) was directed by Daniel McIntosh with Assistant Director Shawn Alfrey. The activities, policies, and procedures described below were carried out with the involvement and approval of the 09-10 Honors Council (see Appendix A). Below is a summary of the status and accomplishments of the UHP in the 09-10 academic year, including plans and goals for 10-11.

**Goals and values**

As with last year, we are using the 2009 Program Review and the vision and processes of the 2007 Revision as it develops policies, curriculum, and programs. In both the Revision and the Review, enhancement of academic quality, development of a strong Honors community, inclusive, transparent, and consistent policies, and integration of UHP with the University’s mission and other programs were consistently expressed goals. The report below is organized according to the Program Review’s five-year goals and steps to improve academic quality.

Five-year goals identified in the 2009 Program Review are:

1) Develop and implement assessment plan

2) Achieve consistent enrollment

3) Develop varied curriculum

4) Increase student engagement

5) Maintain a high percentage of students who complete University Honors

6) Integrate the Departmental Distinction Programs with the broader UHP

Steps to improve academic quality identified in the 2009 Program Review are:

1) Review courses

2) Develop application process

3) Support departments in implementation of Departmental Distinction programs

4) Use of assessment feedback

**Development, Implementation, and Use of Assessment**

In Spring 2009, Honors Council adopted a Mission Statement and associated program goals and student learning outcomes (see Appendix B), and developed an assessment plan. During 09-10, we began implementing this assessment plan. Targets set in last year’s annual report for the 09-10 year regarding Assessment are listed below, with the progress towards them during 09-10 described.

1) Develop the Portfolio site for collection and evaluation of student papers, and implement the sampling and rating of these papers by the Honors Council.

We are still working on this goal. During autumn and winter, we piloted the critical thinking evaluation to be used on student papers. The procedure did not prove reliable. Projecting the difficulties to the more specialized nature of student papers in the junior and senior years, the Honors Council determined that it was not worthwhile to collect student papers until a more reliable and valid measure of critical thinking was developed. To further explore possible ways to assess critical thinking and Honors outcomes, McIntosh attended the “Assessing Assessment” workshop at DU, and Alfrey attended a national conference on Honors Assessment in July. Developing a procedure to evaluate critical thinking is one goal for 10-11.

2) Continue the exit interview process, and further develop systems for it and an on-line senior survey.

This goal was achieved. We updated the exit interview to better assess the program goals and student learning outcomes, and this was used during 09-10. Data from this interview will be used in our assessment report. In addition, we developed an on-line exit survey so that questions related to the program goals and student learning outcomes could be easily and anonymously completed.

2) Run the first student focus group.

Enthusiasm for this assessment tool waned during 09-10. Concerns included appropriate sampling, facilitation, and analysis of information. Gains in information beyond the exit interview and on-line survey were unclear. This goal has been tabled until it is clear whether this process will prove useful enough to be worth the cost; this allows assessment effort to be focused on other areas.

3) Implement advisor rating of theses.

This goal was achieved. Honors Council approved questions allowing advisors to rate the quality and contribution of the thesis based on the field’s standards (see Appendix C). This form was used successfully this year. In addition to providing data that can be used for assessment over time (we were pleased to see variability in the ratings), it has also helped advisors and students understand the requirements for the Honors thesis. We will refine it further for 10-11.

Additional considerations.

Although we made good progress in assessment, a few aspects have proven difficult to development and implement. Primary among these is direct assessment of student outcomes. A persistent problem is the variety of subjects and courses in which the outcomes would need to be assessed. Given this range, the Council is not sure that a broad-based assessment of learning is possible; much of the evaluation is necessarily course- and topic-based and would be most appropriately done by instructors in specific classes. However, we want to avoid adding too many assessment-related tasks to busy Honors faculty beyond what they already do for their courses. To avoid unhelpful top-down requirements and facilitate assessment of outcomes relevant to the topics and goals of specific courses, after each quarter the Director will ask each faculty who taught an Honors section to indicate “whether the students achieved what you hoped and expected in the class, their  preparation, and any other thoughts about the students or the class.”

The exit interview and survey implemented in 09-10 are beginning to provide more detailed information and feedback about the program from students who completed it. However, we do not have a systematic way to find out about the perception of the program from those who choose not to complete it. This information is important for program evaluation and development in general, and also for improving Student Learning Outcome 3 (*Students will achieve Distinction in their major.)* To gain this information, we will work in 10-11 to create a system for obtaining information from those who do not finish the Honors Program.

Regarding the use of assessment data, the previous year’s information was presented to the Honors Council and used in programming decisions. In many cases, however, not enough information was available based on one year’s data. Specific actions taken based on assessment data included beginning conversations with the Writing Program regarding WRIT 1733, individual feedback from the Director to Honors instructors based on course evaluations, cohort-based extra-curricular programming, and working with Student Life to develop a better plan for assigning students to the Honors floor and Honors roommates.

Goals for 10-11

1. Develop a procedure to evaluate critical thinking that is useful both in admission decisions and in assessment of this learning outcome.
2. Consistently request feedback from Honors instructors on whether students met learning goals.
3. Develop procedure for obtaining information about the program from students who leave the program before graduation.

**Admission: Implementation of new application process for consistent and inclusive enrollment**

Our admission activities are conducted in close cooperation with the Office of Admission. Ongoing activities include numerous meetings with prospective students, development and refinement of paper and Web publicity and information, and working with the Office of Admission, the Center for Multicultural Excellence, and academic units on campus.

For 09-10, we revised the admission process so we could better control the number and nature of the entering class and to be able to admit students using criteria beyond Admission rankings, focusing on standards related to the Honors Program (e.g., critical thinking, academic motivation and performance, diversity in experiences and contributions to the program). To do this, we ceased automatically admitting all students rated as category “1” by Admission. Instead, we admitted with minimum application requirements (they needed to indicate why they want to be in the program) the top 200 Early Admit and top 354 Regular Decision students, and all Boettcher Scholars. The remainder of Admission 1’s and other students who showed a combination of academic and intellectual success, high ratings of inclusive excellence, writing ability, and resiliency were invited to apply. Further, the application was changed to include an academic paper that was used to gauge writing and critical thinking, and a letter from a teacher or counselor at the applicant’s current school.

The breakdown by admission and student type is in the table below.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Total  Invited | Applied | Enrolled |
| Waived top 1’s | 554 |  | 62 (11% of waived) |
| Invited to Apply | 664 | 70 (11% of invited) | 28 (31% of total applicants; 40% of invited applicants) |
| Applied on own |  | 19 | 8 (9% of total applicants; 42% of self-selected applicants) |
| Total Applied |  | 89 | 36 (40% of total applied) |
| Total cohort |  |  | 98 |

In addition, we regularized and publicized the process for current DU students to apply to the Program, and we added Honors Council review of these applications.

We also continued consulting with Miriam Tapia, Director of Diversity Enrollment, to assist us in evaluating and working towards inclusive excellence in the entering class.

Targets set in last year’s annual report for the 09-10 year regarding Admission are listed below, with the progress towards them during 09-10 described.

Targets 1 and 2 are related:

1) Have 70% of the class be students from the highest DU Admission rating via the auto-admit procedure.

2) Successfully implement an application process that has more input from the Honors Council, with approximately 30% of the class being admitted through application, including transfers and students entering from within DU.

These goals were surpassed. Of those enrolling, approximately 37% are students who either applied on their own or were invited to do so.

In addition, in 09-10 we refined and fully implemented the Honors Council review of applications that we had piloted in 08-09. All applications were reviewed by an Honors Council member as well as Alfrey and McIntosh. We will continue to use and polish this process for admission to support broader input into admission decisions.

3) Have a total entering class of 100 students. The target of 100 students is approximately 10% of DU’s entering class, and is just higher than the mean of 95 and median of 97 since 2001.

This target was met. The process in 08-09 had resulted in 130 admissions. In 09-10 (admission for the cohort beginning Autumn 2010), our changes reduced the total number of application-waived admissions from 110 to 63; combined with those who successfully applied, 98 started in Autumn 2010.

4) Review diversity in ethnicity, gender, geographic origin, and undergraduate Division and major in the entering class compared to similarly rated non-Honors students. The aim is to establish processes that enhance the range of experiences and perspectives in the Honors community, and ensure that there is no systematic exclusion of any academically prepared and intellectually motivated students in the admission process.

There is generally more diversity in terms of student major and interests; the gender imbalance and geographical distribution of students remained roughly the same. Two notable differences this year, however, include the absence of international students for Autumn 2010 and a decrease in ethnic and racial diversity. We are altering the procedure for international student application to invite a larger number of students to apply. With more invitations, we hope to have a larger pool of applicants, more of whom will be both interested in and qualified for the Honors Program. A difficult issue here is that the heavy load of discussion and writing in Honors classes makes English proficiency more important than for non-Honors students. To ensure that international students admitted to the program are able to benefit from it, we ended all automatic admits of international students in 2009 and instead developed an algorithm including TOEFL scores and other information regarding language proficiency in our identification of students to invite. We continue to work closely with Ali Klein in International admissions to find the right balance of diversity and fit in order to facilitate a good experience for the student, his or her classmates, and the instructor.

Recognizing the decreased number of students of color, we have obtained information from the Admission office for review in detail this autumn. In particular, we will look for places in which UHP diverges from similarly ranked non-Honors DU students; these would likely be useful areas to focus our efforts to increase diversity in UHP.

Goals for 10-11

1) Track applications from current DU students and continue to develop procedures to facilitate entry of interested and qualified students already attending DU and those transferring to DU.

2) Determine if there are any points in the admission process in which UHP falls behind in terms of facilitating diversity compared to a matched comparison group of students not in Honors. Then, based on this information, develop procedures to enhance diversity in Honors, including international students and members of typically underrepresented groups.

**Curriculum and Course Review**

Course offerings are detailed in Appendix C. During 09-10 we increased the total number of non-WRIT courses by three to 29 and increased seat caps on AHUM sections. Total courses and seats by requirement category were 5 AHUM (100 seats, increase of 10), 5 SOCS (107 seats, increase of 32), 3 NATS (160 seats/3 terms, increase of 40; but sequenced seats for only 40-60 students), 5 CORE (75 seats), 10 HNRS seminars (135 seats, decrease of 10), and 8 WRIT 1733 (120, not previously counted). The overall fill rate was 84%, comparable to 85% in 08-09. The number of seats is noticeable progress towards the goal of having the seats available to meet the cohort’s needs, but in many cases was fewer than necessary given the large entering class in Autumn 2009.

The 08-09 report listed several issues that needed to be considered; below each is information or progress on the issue during 09-10.

1) Increase alternative ways of meeting the AHUM, SOCS, and NATS requirements. Students who have tested or transferred out of both university AHUM or SOCS requirements are being encouraged to take upper-division courses in AHUM or SOCS that meet departmental and UHP approval to fulfill their Honors AHUM and SOCS requirements.

A handful of students took advantage of the two alternative ways to meet requirements for Humanities, Social Sciences, and WI-CORE/ASEM: H-contracts and approved upper division courses in a department outside the major or minor. The number of H-contracts appears to be increasing for 10-11 as the procedure becomes more established and known. However, it remains relatively rare (we expect fewer than 5 per requirement) and we do not anticipate or desire it to become typical; we believe it is best used as a way to meet a particular student’s educational goals rather than as a way to meet the program’s need to offer the proper number of seats.

2) We will need to offer more CORE/ASEM classes, as this is now a required Honors course for most of our students. This is easier than altering AHUM, SOCS, and NATS courses, as there is no immediate loss of seats by changing a WI CORE/ASEM from non-honors to Honors.

3) Depending on attrition, we will need to offer more Honors Seminars, closer to 13. As these are funded by the UHP, this has budgetary implications, also.

We are offering 5 ASEM (75 seats) in 2010-2011. In addition, we are developing a system to better track how many students are active in the Honors Program so that we can offer the correct number of seats in ASEM, HSEM, and WRIT. The change in the Common Curriculum requiring 1 ASEM as opposed to 3 CORE in differing categories, one of which is writing-intensive, has had the benefit of simplifying for students the issue of Honors requirements.

4) Both the higher numbers and longer term issues would be diminished by smaller cohorts. However, the Honors Council has expressed concern about this option as it would require further reduction in the number of highly ranked students automatically admitted, and risks losing a critical mass for variety of courses, community events/programming, and inclusiveness and variety in the entering class.

The Honors Council reaffirmed the desire for cohorts of 100 students.

5) Early registration for Honors students would allow them more flexibility in selecting non-Honors courses to avoid conflicts with Honors classes. This could increase fill rates and ease difficulty for students in meeting their honors requirements.

The desirability of early registration for Honors students became even more evident in 09-10. Students must take Honors courses in the context of their other Common Curriculum classes and requirements for their major(s) and minor(s). With only a few Honors course options available to Honors students each year to meet these requirements, students often report scheduling conflicts. Although the seats in Honors sections are reserved for Honors students only, students too often experience the situation of having the only open sections of other required courses (e.g., the only remaining sections for lectures or labs for introductory major courses, calculus) overlapping with the couple sections of Honors courses available that quarter. Early registration would allow more Honors students to get into the Honors sections, as they could register for sections of other courses that do not conflict with the Honors and Distinction Courses. This would allow more Honors students to complete the Honors curriculum and would make better use of University teaching resources committed to Honors and Distinction programs.

For these reasons and others, the Honors Council voted to pursue early registration for Honors Students; we plan to present the proposal to Undergraduate Council this autumn.

6) Even with the above, it may be necessary to offer more Honors sections.

We are continuing to monitor fill rates and course offerings. We hope that early registration will be approved and will increase the efficiency of our course offerings. In addition, we are developing a system to better monitor the progress of students and the number that can be expected to need Honors courses. Nonetheless, given changes in NSM described below, we aim to offer more natural science seats in 11-12.

Targets for 09-10 with comments are below:

1) Offer enough seats and use the flexibility allowed in the system to meet the needs of the current Honors class, without increasing section sizes beyond what is appropriate for the Honors Program, and without resorting to waivers of Honors requirements.

This is an ongoing goal. We did not waive any Honors requirements. We increased Honors NATS beyond what we are comfortable with, but are working to alleviate this for 11-12. For the most part, with H-contracts, upper-division courses, assistance from NSM and the Writing Center, especially, we were able to meet the immediate, vocalized demand. It is not known how many students were unable to schedule classes and did not let us know, put off meeting requirements until this year, or have decided to drop the program because of scheduling difficulties or for some other reason. We will monitor this year, and also try to collect data to determine the needs going forward.

2) Increase the variety of classes available for the entering 2010 students.

This goal is being met. Beyond seat counts, we again sent a request for proposals out to all faculty to encourage those who had not previously taught in Honors (or had not taught for some time) to consider offering a class. In 09-10, we had a total of 28 honors courses, of which 11 were new. For 10-11, we plan on four new instructors and 5 new courses. The goal is to bring variety into the course offerings without sacrificing consistency. We will evaluate over time how the goals of variety and consistency are being met.

Beyond adding a new social science for all Honors students, the addition in 10-11 of an Honors section of ECON 1020 is particularly important for DCB students. This course is a result of work with DCB and Economics during 09-10 to provide a way for DCB students to fulfill their Honors social science requirement even if they have tested out of a social science. Adding ECON 1020 was particularly important, as the expected section of Honors Psychology was lost.

3) Further develop criteria for Honors courses and support faculty in increasing the rigor, depth, and breadth of Honors classes.

This goal was accomplished. The Honors Council course and H-contract review process implemented in 08-09 was strengthened and continued in 09-10. Having Honors Council review courses and H-contracts provides support and resources to work with faculty as these are developed. The process now typically involves the Director (or Assistant Director for HSEMs) consulting with the faculty member (plus the student for H-contracts) developing the course prior to submission to Honors Council, and often includes feedback from the Council for the instructor and student for refinement.

Based on the above, assessment data, and emerging issues, goals for 10-11 include:

1) Offering a second Honors natural science course for non-natural science/engineering majors.

Approximately 20 students who are not majoring or minoring in the natural sciences or engineering take the first-year major sequences in Biology, Chemistry or Physics to meet their Honors natural science requirement. Even with these seats, we do not yet offer the appropriate number of seats for Honors students to meet their Honors natural science requirement. With increases in major/minor need for Concepts in Biology, and University pressure to decrease class size, the primary non-Honors-NATS/SI:NP option (Concepts in Biology) is being lost for 11-12. Based on the previous year’s enrollment, there is not room in the Chemistry or Physics major first-year sequences to absorb these students from Concepts. We are thus working with Biology and NSM to develop a second Honors natural science course (SI:NP) for non-majors. A 45-seat Honors non-major Biology class would absorb 20 seats currently in the Honors Geography sequence (increased from 40 in 09-10 out of necessity), and the 20 now in major/minor sequences. This would bring the Honors Geography sequence back down to 45 (3 labs of 15), would make scheduling easier (with only one Honors natural science, students who have other required courses during this time are unable to take Honors natural science), and would provide more variety in Honors curriculum.

2) Development and implementation of an annual “opt-in” system to track which and how many Honors students remain active in the program.

The Honors Program admits approximately 100 students per year, and approximately 50 per year graduate with University Honors. This means that about 50% of students stop participating in Honors at some point during their time at DU. We currently do not formally track which students remain active in the Honors Program between admission and graduation, so do not know when they functionally drop out. In 10-11 we plan to develop and implement an opt-in system whereby students annually must express their intention to remain in the program. (Those who do not opt in remain in the Honors Program, but will be considered “inactive” until they meet with the Director or Assistant Director to review their plan.) We anticipate several benefits from this procedure:

a) We will be able to identify students who are uncertain of or are having trouble completing Honors requirements sooner, with the goal of providing more timely advising and support.

b) Information regarding annual attrition will allow us to admit incoming students and request seats in Honors sections appropriate to our actual resources and needs. The information will help our admission outreach, curriculum development, and extra-curricular budgeting and planning.

c) While we do expect significant attrition over four years, an opt-in procedure will help us identify common times and reasons for students leaving the program. This would permit us in turn to make changes in our program to support students who would have liked to stay in the program. Those who leave the program can provide information on the reasons for their decision nearer to the time they make that decision.

d) An opt-in procedure will allow us to ensure that only Honors students receive the advising and programming benefits of the Honors Program. If Honors students were to have the opportunity for early registration, such a system would limit that benefit to students who are active in the program and need that sort of scheduling and planning support.

3) Better integration and inclusion of WRIT 1733

The only course that all Honors students must take is WRIT 1733. This course has shown wide variation in ratings by students. For 10-11, we plan to (a) work more closely with the Writing Program to make all sections of WRIT 1733 an Honors experience, (b) better communicate with students the importance of WRIT 1733 and the need for all to develop as writers, and (c) use the opportunity for some type of shared first-year Honors experience.

4) Continued attention to course seat caps and total seats offered

The University’s decision to lower seat caps to 100 and push for general reductions in the size of large classes has the effect of increasing seat counts in smaller classes. Combined with higher total enrollment in the last years, this is making it generally more difficult for Divisions and Department to offer the smaller sections required by Honors. In some cases (e.g., natural science), solutions are being developed. In others (especially the social sciences, which tend to have larger introductory class sizes than humanities) the strain is more evident. For 10-11, Psychology was required to drop the enrollment cap on regular PSYC 1001 classes from 125 to 100; the seats lost from the regular PSYC 1001 classes were moved to what was to be the Honors section, making it too large for Honors. By retaining the higher seat caps for humanities and natural science courses, and adding the economics course, we are planning to offer the number of seats necessary for a 100 person class in 10-11. There is no margin planned for the larger entering class of 2009, and we do not yet know how much difficulty this will cause, or if attrition will decrease demand. The class has already experienced noticeable attrition, with 11 students expressly withdrawing in 09-10. This attrition may be related both to the dominance of automatic admits (and resulting lack of intentionality on the part of entering students) and the difficulty they experienced in registering for Honors courses during their first year.

**Student Engagement: Community Programming**

Honors community programming is designed to support informal interactions among Honors students and faculty, provide intellectual and cultural enrichment, and facilitate Honors students’ participation and engagement in the wider community. To increase these opportunities and make them more valuable for our students, we focused on improving communication with students, expanding our programming in type of event and campus reach, increasing faculty involvement, and developing the potential of our Honors floor and other community spaces and amenities.

Community Space and Cyberspace

The revised website has been helpful in communicating with both current and prospective students. It is meant to help students navigate with ease to related academic sites, and it provides prospective students more information about the application process and our student profiles. It also includes student highlights intended both to share student accomplishments and telescope the types of achievement students might pursue. The Home Page includes a list of upcoming activities. To further support student engagement, we began an Honors Facebook page, which has many friends and seems to get the word out about upcoming events more effectively than our listserv. Our new space has two big bulletin boards and our bulletin boards in the Cave (student lounge) also provide information of interest to Honors students.

One point that comes up in almost every exit interview is the value students gained from living on the Honors floor. Unfortunately, several students were disappointed in Autumn 2009 when they arrived on campus expecting and not having Honors housing. To make the best and fairest assignments of the limited space, concerted effort was put toward the issue of Honors housing. In spring McIntosh and Alfrey met with Mandy Harris and Justin Price to develop a system to clarify responsibilities and procedures. In the revised system, Honors compiles the list of Honors housing requests (Honors floor, Honors roommate, etc.) and Housing shares with Honors the evolving assignments. It appears that our efforts (in combination with a smaller entering class) have been successful; our incoming students know and seem satisfied with their assignments. Only 1 student is currently on the Honors floor waitlist (as opposed to last year’s 56 students who were denied the honors housing they requested). One student was unhappy with his assignment, but thanks to the close communication between Honors and Student Life, the issue was resolved.

Programming on the Honors floor was better suited to our Honors students this year because of the efforts of our wonderful RA, Ginny Woodfork (an Honors student), and because requirements specified by Student Life have relaxed and now allow for more varied events. In 10-11 we hope to capitalize on this and strengthen the integration of Honors floor and Honors Program programming.

Finally, the Honors community benefitted from the Honors Office relocation and improvements made to the Honors Cave and Seminar Room. Students congregated in the Cave regularly, and took advantage of the space and amenities. The Cave was also home to quarterly Faculty Wine and Cheese gatherings, which attracted a diverse group of Honors faculty and Council members. The Seminar Room’s capacity was increased by our new furniture, making it possible for our larger SOCS classes to utilize it. Also, the improved technology in the room made it easier and more appealing for many of our faculty teaching there. The Seminar Room was well utilized this year by Honors courses and other Honors events, including a Bioethetics Debate and the graduating senior reception.

Programming for 09-10

Programming in 09-10 benefitted from the ability to plan events earlier in the year and from experience and momentum from programming in the previous two years. A complete list of activities and number of recorded attendees is included as Appendix D. Our programming was attended by at least 170 unique Honors students, with more than 340 in attendance across events. (Counts exclude Honors Orientation.) This is a significant increase over the previous year, in which total attendance was 128, involving 86 unique students. In addition, we are working to include more Honors faculty, as students value the opportunity to interact with faculty outside the classroom; this year 13 different faculty participated in various events.

Continuation of the usual programming included the September picnic, the Village Vanguard Performance at the Newman Center, DCPA’s annual Shakespeare performance, a year-end ice cream social, and graduating student reception. This reception is an especially celebratory event, where students bring family members, get their honors cords, and have a chance to peruse the theses written by their peers.

In addition to our usual types of programming, we launched a series of cohort-only activities and an experiment or two. The First Year Banquet, with guest speaker Professor Bin Ramke, brought around 60 of our new students together and helped them begin their academic journey with a lovely dinner and stimulating discussion. Our planned trip to the Chatfield Corn Maze in October for our second year students did not fare so well; because so few students were willing or able to make the trip, we were forced to cancel. Our junior/senior retreat was similarly cancelled, though many students wanted but were unable to attend because of the conflict in our scheduling with Granddad’s weekend. Our final experiment, the Winter Dance, was a qualified success, and attracted around 25 mostly first year students.

In 09-10 we expanded our co-programming with other areas on campus, something that helped our students reach across to others and that connected faculty and students in lively and diverse areas of interest. Co-programming included shared sponsorship with the Political Science Department of Constitution Day games and goodies; an information session regarding participation in activities organized by the Center for Community Engagement and Service Learning; support of three lunch talks with the Math Department’s visiting scholar, Italian mathematician Roberto Benaduci; and hosting a luncheon and talk with Phi Beta Kappa visiting Professor Jack Burden. In November faculty members and members of the Social Justice LLC and Pioneer Leadership Program joined with us in a catered dinner, performance, and conversation with the performers of *Ameriville* at Curious Theatre. This event was very successful and will serve as the model for planned events like it during 10-11. In the spring we helped publicize and bought tickets for the *Vagina Monologues* and helped sponsor the FloBots presentation on activism and social justice. Our final event was a debate arranged by Prof. Candace Upton between her Honors Bio-Ethics Seminar students and the DU team that won the national Bioethics Debate.

To get students more involved in their Honors community, we focused on strengthening the Voltaire Society and Book Group as student-led organizations. This year student leadership was elicited and then guided by our graduate work-study to develop a distinct menu of activities. With their own budget, they managed a movie night, bowling and a very successful “Dining Out for Life.” For AY 2010-2011 we will continue working on this modest success. The Honors Council remained an unfulfilled area of Honors student involvement. No one was interested in running for the two open spots.

Programming Planned for 10-11

Our experience this year has led us to think more strategically about programming and student engagement. We will continue to publicize and solicit involvement in Voltaire, and hope that an established budget and one pre-planned event -- a Halloween screening of Hitchcock’s *Psycho* with the Colorado Symphony playing the score -- will be a fun way to spark interest. Likewise, the Book Group will initially be launched by us. We have chosen the first book, Isabelle Allende’s *House of the Spirits,* with hopes that the opportunity to see its stage adaptation at DCPA will give the group an exciting beginning. We will solicit leadership from some of the first and second year students who were active last year. Evidence that programming efforts in 09-10 paid off in terms of engagement is that there was a competitive election for student representatives to Honors Council. We will try to keep those not elected to Honors Council involved through a student advisory team to provide continued input and communication to and from students.

We have revisited each of the cohort-only events and made changes in our scheduling and outreach that we believe will make each one more well-attended and successful in 10-11. First, we will open these unique opportunities to all interested Honors students. We have also revised the schedule. The Retreat will be in early October, the Banquet upon return from the December break, and the Dance on April 1. Thus the Retreat will launch the year and be publicized during our Discoveries Week Orientation, and we believe parent interest will prove motivating. The Banquet will include a talk by Anthropology Professor Tracy Ehlers related to a reading students will be able to do during the break. Historically, Honors students appreciate the opportunity to pursue stimulating reading during the time between Autumn and Winter quarters.

Some logistical and practical issues continue to interfere with student participation. The end of year questionnaire on Portfolio indicated that students appreciated what was offered in terms of programming but usually had difficulty in terms of scheduling. Some also wanted more variety of events. For AY 2010-2011, we will focus on further diversifying our offerings and will try to offer a ski day or sporting event in addition to our cultural and social events. Because we learned that many students still do not feel completely knowledgeable regarding questions of Honors academic requirements, Study Abroad or dual degree programs, we will include “advising” opportunities in our programming. We will have a pizza and advising evening in the Autumn, a Study Abroad café in the Winter and a dual degree information evening in the Spring. Throughout our cultural programming, we will also strive to include more faculty members in the mix, as this is another desire voiced by student respondents and a necessary component of the Honors community.

Finally, we plan to continue efforts to increase funding for student scholarly activities. Last year, we developed an application and system for awarding funds to students for thesis work and other academic projects. We are working to further publicize this. In addition, in 10-11 we will no longer be able to use the Preisendanz-Schmid scholarship to fund senior thesis research. As it has been folded into need-based financial aid, we are increasing the amount available for thesis support to offset the loss. Our goal is a net increase in support for student-initiated research and academic projects.

**Graduation with University Honors**

Of the 86 students who graduated in 2010 and had been members of the Honors Program, 44, or 51%, graduated with University Honors. This compares favorably with 2009’s 51 students who graduated with Honors (41%) and matches the 51% average of other years since 2004. The class of 2010 was greatly affected by the changes in the Honors Program since the 2007 Review, and the increase in the graduation rate of Honors students is heartening. As our numbers become stable in the next years, we anticipate good student perseverance. We also look forward to Spring 2012, when the first class will graduate under the new Distinction plan requirements. We expect that this will provide continuity for students who might otherwise have left the program during their transition into their major and thesis work.

**Integration and Support of Departmental Distinction Programs**

In 09-10 we continued to work with departments in refining Distinction plans and preparing them for implementation as the 2008 entering class began moving toward entry into these programs. We worked with Korbel as they redesigned their Distinction program to increase Honors student exposure to tenure-line faculty; this revision was approved by Honors Council last spring. The newly separate Communications department also altered its Distinction plan to fit their revised program, and this also was approved in the Spring. We have continued communication with Lamont, and they altered their criteria for admission to Distinction for the performance degree.

To facilitate communication, each department has a Distinction coordinator who receives emails about the Honors Program and annual lists of Honors students in their departments. These periodic communications seem to be increasing awareness and two-way communication between Honors and the Departments. This communication and cooperation will continue in 10-11, and become even more important as all students will soon need to complete their Distinction plan.

With the inclusion of departmental distinction plans, the Honors Program should be able to offer its students four years of an honors experience including breadth in the liberal arts, depth in the major, and their production of knowledge through completion of the thesis or final project. Such continuity – as well as the increased perseverance of students no longer lost in the sometimes hazy transition from honors sequence to thesis in the major – is a major goal of this effort. The fruits should be reaped beginning in 11-12, when the first class under this new structure graduates.

**Appendix A: Honors Council** **for 2009-2010**

**Director:** Danny McIntosh (daniel.mcintosh@du.edu)

**Assistant Director:** Shawn Alfrey (shawn.alfrey@du.ed)

**Arts/Humanities**

Allison Horsley, Theatre, Allison.Horsley@du.edu, class of 10, first term

Susan Schulten, History, sschulte@du.edu, class of 11, first term

**Daniels School of Business**

Jeff Engelstad, Real Estate/ Construction Management, jengelst@du.edu, class of 10, first term

Joan Winn, Management, jwinn@du.edu, class of 11, first term

**Engineering**

Peter Laz, Mechanical and Materials, plaz@du.edu, class of 10, first term

Siavash Pourkamali, Electrical and Computer Engineering, spourkam@du.edu, class of 11, first term

**International Studies**

class of 10 – open -

Jonathan Adelman (INTS), jadelman@du.edu, class of 11, first term

**Natural Sciences**

Don Sullivan, Geography, dsulliva@du.edu, class of 10, first term

Mike Daniels, Geography, J.Michael.Daniels@du.edu, class of 11, first term

**Social Sciences**

Dan Lair, Human Communications, Daniel.Lair@du.edu, class of 10, first term

Tracey Ehlers, Anthropology, tehlers@du.edu, class of 11, first term

**Students**

Year 1-2: Katherine Mercier, katherine.mercier@du.edu

Year 3-4: Lauren Golder, lauren.golder@du.edu

**Appendix B: Mission, Program and Student Goals**

Approved Spring, 2009

Mission

The University of Denver’s Honors Program fosters an intellectually engaged and vibrant community of students, staff, and faculty. It promotes a distinctive broad and liberal arts education that challenges students to cultivate depth in critical and creative thought, and facilitates students’ original contributions to intellectual life, their community, and their chosen field.

Program goals

Program Goal 1: *Students will indicate that they felt challenged in Honors courses.*

Program Goal 2: *Students will report that they experienced intellectual engagement through the Honors Program.*

Program Goal 3: *Students will report that their Honors classes provided distinct educational experiences.*

Program Goal 4: *Students will participate in Honors community activities outside the classroom.*

Student learning outcomes

SLO 1) *Students’ levels of critical thinking demonstrated in their written work will increase across time.*

SLO *2) Students will accurately evaluate the level of critical thinking in their own work.*

SLO 3) *Students will achieve Distinction in their major.*

SLO 4) *Students’ capstone project in their major will be an original contribution to their field.*

**Appendix C: Revised Thesis Verification Form**

**Verification of Completion of Senior Thesis/Project & Distinction**

Student must complete the first section of this form, and then give to the faculty thesis/project advisor in time for her or him to complete and **send to the University Honors Program (MRB 2, or shawn.alfrey@du.edu)** **by the beginning of the seventh week of the graduation quarter**. This form will be used to certify to the Registrar’s Office that the student has completed the thesis and Distinction requirements for graduation with University Honors. Late submission may result in the student’s name being omitted from the University Honors list in the graduation program.

**(Student Completes First)**

**Student Name: DU ID #**

**Phone: Email:**

**Anticipated Graduation Term:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Thesis/Project Title:**

I am a Business major who entered DU before fall 2008, and have satisfied the thesis/project requirement by taking the 6 hours of Business Honors coursework. (Also requires Business faculty signature below.)

**(Faculty Completes before sending to University Honors)**

Name: Department:

Extension: E-mail:

1. Based on the standards in my department and field, I certify that the thesis/project (please check one):

meets all criteria and is of adequate quality for an Honors thesis/project.

meets all and exceeds some criteria for an Honors thesis/project.

meets all and exceeds most criteria for an Honors thesis/project.

is of unusually superior quality, far exceeding expectations for an Honors thesis/project.

1. How much of a contribution to the student’s field is this thesis/project (check one)?

not at all;  a little bit;  somewhat;  quite a bit;  a great deal;

1. (For students entering DU Fall 2008 or later) All student requirements for the Departmental Distinction program will be completed by graduation (check one).  Yes;  No
2. Can you describe the contribution of the thesis/project, and comment on the quality, creativity, or other aspects of the thesis/project? (Use reverse if desired)

1. I certify that the thesis/project will be completed by the following date:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Signed: Date:

**Appendix C: Honors Courses, 2009-2010**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Type** | **Title** | **Instructor** | **Actual** | **Cap** |
| **Autumn 09** |  |  |  |  |
| AHUM 1110 | "How to Live: In the City or Not | Bin Ramke | 19 | 20 |
| SOCS 1610 | Foundations in Political Science | Don Schaefer | 24 | 25 |
| SOCS 1210-2 | Foundations in Communications | Roy Wood | 16 | 20 |
| NATS 1264 | Global Environmental Change I | Hillary Hamann | 41 | 40 |
| CORE 2661 | French Revolution | Beth Krlsgodt | 10 | 15 |
| CORE 2510 | Freud and Marx | Carol Helstosky | 15 | 15 |
| HNRS 2400-1 | Impact of Tech | Daniel Connolly | 8 | 15 |
| HNRS 2400-2 | Evolution and/or Religion | Wellhofer | 10 | 15 |
| HNRS 2400-3 | Sacred and Secular | Brower | 13 | 15 |
| **Winter 10** |  |  |  |  |
| AHUM 1216 | Foundations in History: War and Presidency | Susan Schulten | 20 | 20 |
| AHUM 1610 | Foundations in Philosophy: Greek Moral Philosophy | Roscoe Hill | 21 | 20 |
| AHUM 1716-1 | Foundations in Religion: | Ginette Ishimatsu | 14 | 20 |
| SOCS 1810 | Foundations in Sociology | Peter Adler | 16 | 17 |
| NATS 1265 | Global Environmental Change II | Donald Sullivan | 54 | 60 |
| CORE 2641 | Work in the Popular Imagination | Dan Lair | 10 | 15 |
| HNRS 2400-1 | The Deformed Sex: Archaic and Classical Greek Women | Jennifer Bates | 5 | 10 |
| HNRS 2400-2 | The Mind of a Leader | Karen Loeb | 11 | 15 |
| HNRS 2400-3 | Francophone Cultural Landscapes | Grall-Johnson | 13 | 15 |
| HNRS 2400-4 | Engaging the Bard: DPS Shakespeare Festival | Shawn Alfrey | 6 | 10 |
| WRIT1733-1 | Honors Writing | Geoffrey Bateman | 11 | 14 |
| WRIT1733-2 | Honors Writing | Heather Martin | 15 | 15 |
| WRIT1733-3 | Honors Writing | Jennifer Novak | 14 | 15 |
| WRIT1733-4 | Honors Writing | Jennifer Novak | 8 | 15 |
| **Spring 10** |  |  |  |  |
| AHUM 1810 | Foundations in Theatre | Allison Horsley | 10 | 20 |
| SOCS 1910 | Foundations in Public Policy | Richard Lamm | 20 | 25 |
| SOCS 1710 | Foundations in Psychology | George Potts | 21 | 25 |
| NATS 1266 | Global Environmental Change III | James Daniels | 47 | 60 |
| CORE 2584 | The Harlem Renaissance | Sidra Wahaltere | 15 | 15 |
| CORE 2666 | Murder in America | Lisa Pasko | 15 | 15 |
| HNRS 2400 | Engaging the Bard: DPS Shakespeare Festival | Shawn Alfrey | 2 | 10 |
| HNRS 2400 | Bioethics in 21st Century | Candace Upton | 14 | 15 |
| HNRS 2400 | Women and Men in Love in the Italian Renaissance | James Gilroy | 11 | 15 |
| WRIT1733-1 | Honors Writing | Herring | 15 | 15 |
| WRIT1733-2 | Honors Writing | Sanz | 14 | 15 |
| WRIT1733-3 | Honors Writing | Alfrey | 16 | 15 |
| WRIT1733-4 | Honors Writing | Ludwig | 12 | 15 |
| **Seats** |  | **84%** | **586** | **701** |

**Appendix D: Honors Events and Student Attendees, 2009-2010**

9/7/09 – Honors Orientation (Approx. 130 students)

9/16/09 – CCESL Information Session *(*6)

9/17/09 – Constitution Day (10 Honors + 25 other students)

9/22/09 – Honors Picnic(90 + 4 faculty)

10/6/09 – First Year Banquet (63)

10/22/09 – Roberto Beneduci lecture (5 Honors + others)

10/31/09 – Voltaire Movie Night (6)

11/18/09 – *Ameriville* at Curious Theatre(24 Honors + PLP and faculty)

1/6/10 – Honors Dance (25)

1/15/10 – Village Vanguard Jazz Orchestra at Newman Center (11 + 2 faculty)

2/25/10 – Bowling with Voltaire (5)

2/9/10 – Phi Beta Kappa Speaker Jack Borden (3)

3/25/10 – Flobots *White Flag Warriors* (10)

3/31/10 – *Othello* at DCPA (34 + 6)

4/8/10 – *Vagina Monologues* (approx. 15)

4/29/10 – Voltaire: Dining out for Life (21 + 1 faculty)

5/25/10 – Ice Cream Social (approx. 30 + 2)

6/5/10 – Graduating Student Reception (31 students and family members +2)