**University of Denver Honors Program**

**Annual Report, Academic Year 2012-2013**

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**Summary**

The Honors Program continues to pursue the goals established in the 2009 Program Review’s Five Year Plan. In general, the work since 2009 has been characterized mostly by continuity among goals and steps taken to achieve them, as well as in the challenges we face regarding Honors course options, communication of requirements, and a general loss of student involvement in the Honors community after the first or second year.

Since the time of the Program Review, important gains have been made regarding enrollment stability and inclusivity; integration within the university community and with the individual department distinction programs; support of student projects and programs; overall student engagement; and, thanks to the establishment of priority registration in 2011 and continuing work to provide flexible options, greater ability for students to meet program requirements and graduate with University Honors.

In July 2014, Associate Professor of Chemistry Keith Miller became Chair of the program. During AY 2014-2015, he, and Associate Director Alfrey, with the help of graduate work study Dylan Mackie-Hernandez, worked to maintain continuity in the program’s successes and improve it where needed. . The activities, policies, and procedures described below were carried out with the involvement and approval of the 14-15 Honors Council (see Appendix A).

The discussion below describes the achievements during AY 2014-2015 as well as its challenges. It also describes how in 2015-2016 we hope to build on aspects of the strategic plan initiated by our new Chancellor, Rebecca Chopp , and to develop new goals for the program responsive to the strategic plan that are already explicit or implicit in our mission, namely: 1) to provide opportunities for honors students to do research that is interdisciplinary and engaged in the community; and 2) to attend to the student experience in a more holistic way, including enriching our community through an enhanced orientation process, student mentoring, and pilot courses involving more robust and varied programming.

Notable achievements in 2014-2015 include:

1) Admissions

* Continued steady admissions numbers despite continued changes in Admission policies and procedures
* Updated application and streamlined review process
* Increasing diversity of incoming cohort

2) Honors Requirements and Curriculum

* Continued efforts to provide flexibility for students who need alternative ways to meet Honors requirements
* Continued balance of variety and consistency in Honors courses
* Increase in natural science options in Honors Seminars

3) Integration of Departmental Distinction

* Continued efforts to improve communication with and integration of our students within the major distinction plans
* Continued efforts to improve communication with departments regarding the elements and deployment of their distinction plans

4) Programming and Enrichment

* Continued support of student projects and programs
* Continued efforts to support students involved in non-course-related intellectual, cultural, and social programming
* Improved student involvement in Honors book group, Voltaire Society, and Honors Council
* Continued development of relationship with campus and community partners, regional Honors Programs, and new participation in NCHC Partners in the Parks

Issues to be addressed in 15-16 include:

* Continued efforts to get the proper number of seats and courses
* Continued work to establish appropriate Honors options in the Natural Science common curriculum for Honors students who are not science majors and to support honors work for science majors.
* Continued work to determine whether students registered as Honors students are actively pursuing Honors requirements
* Continued effort to communicate honors requirements to FSEM instructors, students, and advisors
* Continued work to increase the diversity of applicants and incoming students
* Increased inclusivity in programming and course offerings
* Continued need to support Honors floor and coordinate with RA
* Continued loss of student involvement after first or second year
* Continued difficulty of some students in finding opportunities for research in their major or in interdisciplinary topics

**Annual Report, 2014-2015**

During Academic Year 2014-2015, the University Honors Program continued to move forward on the goals set out in the 2009 Program review and revision, and to address specific issues that emerged earlier and in the course of the year. Last year saw continued efforts regarding the goals initially identified:

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

In order to achieve these goals we continued to pursue the steps listed below:

1) Review course scheduling and quality, with increased outreach to potential faculty

2) Improve and update application process

3) Support departments in implementation of Departmental Distinction programs

4) Work with student representatives to Honors Council and honors book club and Voltaire Society leaders

5) Improve communication with students, including the addition of weekly newsletter for dissemination of honors events, including student achievements and activities

**Program Assessment**

In AY 11-12, the Provost’s Office determined that assessment of student learning outcomes was the purview of the academic departments, and supported the Honors Council recommendation that we focus not on specific learning outcomes but on program goals (see Appendix B). Since then we thus have focused on collecting information regarding student perseverance, participation in programming, completion of program requirements, student satisfaction with Honors courses, and attainment of distinction, including completion of the capstone project. For these purposes we rely on the information gained from our opt-in process to identify “active” students; course fill rates; course evaluations; end of year questionnaires and senior exit interviews ; thesis verification forms; the number of students who graduate with University Honors; and the number and diversity of students who participate in Honors events.

**Honors Enrollment and Perseverance**

Our evaluation of enrollment and perseverance includes:

* Use of Opt-In Information to track cohorts
* Students graduating with University Honors
* Timely and Adequate Advising

*1) Opt-in information to track cohorts and support perseverance*

Our opt-in process is now five years old and has provided both quantitative and qualitative information regarding individual students and cohort trends. Student responses to our email queries sent each November let us know whether a student has been and plans to continue participating in the Honors Program.

The chart below shows that the total overall number of students opting out of the program dropped every year from 2011 to 2013, from 16% to 11% to 7%, respectively. In 2014, however, the number increased significantly, to 18%. This number is the result of a change of practice where we more aggressively followed up with students and consistently removed those who did not directly respond to email reminders from the group of active honors students.

In 2015 we continued to pursue detailed information concerning student progress. This resulted again in higher numbers, though with the exception of second year students lower than those of the previous year. It should be noted that, in addition to the 14 students who opted out in their 4th year, an additional 14 students decided by the time of graduation not to complete their honors requirements.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **2011** | **2012** | **2013** | **2014** | **2015** |
| # of Honor students | 372 | 320 | 341 | 324 | 348 |
| Total  Opted out | 16% (60 of 372) | 11% (36 of 320) | 7% (21 of 341) | 18% (59 of 324) | 15% (52 of 348) |
| Opted out as 4th years | N/A | 18% (12 of 67) | 5% (4 of 79) | 24% (16 of 67) | 22% (14 of 64) |
| Opted out as 3rd years | 16% (13 of 80) | 12% (11 of 90) | 7% (6 of 86) | 25% (18 of 73) | 19% (16 of 82) |
| Opted out as 2nd years | 26% (34 of 124) | 7% (7 of 86) | 0% (0 of 82) | 16% (13 of 80) | 17% (16 of 93) |
| Opted out as 1st years | 11% (12 of 105) | 6% (6 of 97) | 10% (11 of 108) | 12% (12 of 104) | 4% (4 of 90) |

While many students did not provide their rationale, information provided by them or by their transcripts and APRs indicate that 11 of the students from the class of 2015 who left the Honors Program did so because their GPAs were too low to meet the requirement of 3.5 upon graduation; 6 left DU; 8 decided they would rather graduate early instead of completing their distinction requirements; 10 had difficulty meeting distinction requirements and thus left the program; and another 3 or 4 students never took an honors course or participated in the program.

*2) Graduation with University Honors*

In Spring 2015, of the 67 who remained active in the program throughout their four years at DU, 37 went on to graduate with University Honors. Compared with previous years, our graduation rate for 14-15 was 54%. This compares favorably with the historical average. From 2004 on (with the exception of a lower rate for the 2005 cohort, for whom program revision led to a large number of disaffected students), the average was 51%.

When compared to the original cohort of 105, of course, the graduation rate would be much smaller, about 39%. While the cohort began at 105, in many ways this initial number is spurious, especially since 6 students went on to transfer and 4 never actually participated in the program. More importantly, even with our more rigorous tracking, the information shows a steadying perseverance rate overall and for our fourth year students, whose graduation numbers numbers range from 34 to 38, with 2015’s 37 just above the average.

*3) Timely and Adequate Advising*

We have worked consistently to provide timely and adequate advising via our email listservs, website postings, and Facebook announcements, in addition to individual meetings, and the Exit Interviews suggest that students generally feel that they are getting the advising they need from Honors. Students cite the comprehensiveness of our Quarterly Advising Notes and the convenience and usefulness of our website. We have also continued Pizza and Advising sessions during advising week each quarter, and these have attracted growing numbers of students. Finally, in 2014-2015 we added weekly newsletter that includes student information, programming reminders, and upcoming deadlines, along with photos and comments from student’s activities. Tracking information suggests that these are at least perused by over two thirds of the students who receive them.

In 2013 our Fall Orientation for incoming students was extended from 30 minutes to an hour. In fall 2014, we took advantage of the additional time to include three continuing students who described their experience in honors and made a greater impression on the incoming class than the Director and Associate Director could have done. Despite our efforts to provide comprehensive information, however, Orientation continues to be a difficult time to explain honors requirements and their relation to those of DU generally. Instead, we have begun to consider Orientation more useful as an introduction to us and our community. Thus, for the 2015 incoming class we plan to include more students and a break-out session where parents can speak with us and students can share with other students. This is intended to launch a more engaged, ongoing orientation process that will include weekly get-togethers and students mentors.

We continue to invite all transfer or current applicants to meet with Alfrey to discuss scheduling and requirements so that they might know in advance of joining what their obligations will be and how these will fit with their current academic status.

Despite our various efforts, Exit Interviews indicate that some graduating seniors felt that in the past they sometimes received inaccurate or contradictory advising from advising staff and, less often, from their departments. Ongoing efforts to share our requirements with FSEM instructors and with departments seem to have made a difference for more recent cohorts, as has Alfrey’s regular participation in Friends of Advising meetings, which has helped the advising staff understand the relationship between Honors and Common Curriculum Requirements.

Perseverance Goals for 2015-2016

* Enhanced and extended orientation experience to provide information as needed and to strengthen the community with student mentoring
* Possible implementation of “mandatory” activities to ensure student involvement
* Continued collection and use of opt-in data in order to provide timely advising
* Continued communication with DU Advising Staff and FSEM instructors regarding Honors requirements
* Continued dissemination of requirements and reminders that students should seek timely distinction advising from their major departments

Consistency in student perseverance from the first year all the way through to graduation with University Honors requires that we satisfy all of our other main goals: 1) to establish an appropriate and reliable admissions process; 2) to give students the opportunity to meet honors requirements through meaningful and varied curriculum; 3) to ensure the integration of departmental distinction plans and support; and 4) to foster a lively and engaged honors community. The discussion below explains our efforts in each area.

**Admissions**

Our goals with regard to admissions include:

* Continued stable admission numbers despite changes in Admission practices and applicant demographics
* Continued focus on diversity within the Honors cohort
* Improved tracking of applicants throughout the process
* Continued efforts to provide timely and efficient communication with applicants regarding their status

Our admission activities are conducted in close cooperation with the Office of Admission. Ongoing activities include numerous meetings with prospective students, refinement of internet recruitment and outreach, and working with the Office of Admission, the Center for Multicultural Excellence, and faculty and academic units on campus. Large-scale outreach to prospective families occurs throughout the year with Pioneer Days and through the second annual “Journey to DU” Saturday presentations in April. Our targets and efforts are described below.

Changes for 14-15 included less reliance on Honors Council participation. In order to expedite notification and formation of our cohort, Honors Council no longer participates in assessment of all applications, but is called upon only in the event that Director and Associate Director have difficulty reaching consensus.

In order to provide consistency with other DU calendars, we also changed our application deadline to include a February “priority” application deadline in and an early April deadline in advance of the absolute deadline of May 1. This provided more continuity and less confusion for incoming students and their parents. It also allowed us to recruit admitted students whose “Journey to DU” visits fell after the first two but before the final deadline and to have flexibility regarding students who applied late.

*1) Consistency in enrollment*

For admission of the cohort entering in Fall 2015, we continued to use most of the admission process initiated in 09-10. The overall enrollment target of 100 incoming students has continued since 09-10. As the number of Admit Rating 1s has increased from roughly 580 students to over 1800, we have chosen to keep our Waived 1 numbers constant and move the remaining 1s into the group of students invited to apply.

This process is necessary so that we can maintain control over the number in the entering class, and it has had the additional advantage of creating a cohort of students with both the ability and the intentionality to participate in the Honors Program. In order to gauge and ensure intentionality, for two years now we have required that all students submit an application, even those in the “waived 1” category.

The total number of students invited to apply has likewise grown from around 600 students to almost 1700 and includes targeting a diverse group of high-achieving students, many from underrepresented to apply.

This year’s incoming class is very strong with an average GPA of 3.96, and average ACT of 31.45, and an average SAT of 1348. The breakdown by admissions category and student type for the fall 2015 class is shown below.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Total  Invited | #Applied | # We Accepted | #Enrolled (after melt) |
| Waived top 1’s | 564 | \*39 (6% of those invited) | 39 | 11 (28% of those accepted) |
| Invited to Apply | 1698 | 204 (12% of those invited) | 85 (42% of received applications) | 82 (96% of those accepted) |
| Current DU and transfer |  | 5 | 4 (80% of received applications) | 5 |
| Total cohort |  |  |  | 100 (98+ 2 late Boettcher Scholars |

\*abbreviated application process

Since 2009’s huge entering class of 124, Honors has worked to regularize and gain control of the admission process such that we can roughly predict the number of students who will join the program each fall. The target of 100 students is a little less than 10% of DU’s entering class, and is just higher than the mean of 95 and median of 97 since 2001, and is meant to ensure that students will have access to program courses and other opportunities.

The target, and the algorithm we use to meet it, has allowed us, even in dynamic admission cycles, both to retain relatively consistent numbers and to increase our inclusivity and diversity. In Fall 2009, 98 new students joined the Honors Program; the Fall 2011 cohort was 95; 97 entered in Fall 2012; and 99 joined in Fall 2013; and in Fall 2014 93. The cohort for Fall 2015 currently stands at 100, plus 4 current DU students.

*2) Increasing diversity and inclusivity of incoming cohort*

Our diversity and inclusivity have gradually increased as our proportion of applications to waived 1s has increased. In fall 2014, 24 students or 23% of our incoming class will be composed of those from underrepresented groups, and 5 of the 80 white students will be first generation college students. This compares favorably with fall 2013, when 18 students or 18% of the cohort were be from underrepresented groups. Previous years include 19% in 2012, 15% in 2011, and 10% in 2010. These numbers compare favorably to DU overall.

Outreach and communication with prospective students currently at DU also continues, as has advising of prospective current student and transfer applicants in order to ensure their easy transition into the Honors Program. Our efforts to regularize and publicize the process have continued to attract more current DU students applying for and entering the program each quarter. Historically, this group also tends to include more students of color. Recruitment of current students is one strategy we have adopted to increase our diversity.

*3) Improved tracking of applicants throughout process*

In addition to working with transfer and current student applicants, communication with prospective student applicants and admitted students is ongoing and includes support of their housing selection and answering early advising questions. Tracking also involves working with the Office of Admission and email outreach to stay current regarding student decisions to deposit at DU or choose another college. Since 2012, our practice has been to keep a large reserve on the waitlist to compensate for those lost to other universities.

*4) Ongoing improvements in the application and review process*

In 2014-2015 we continued to use the application developed in 2012 (see Appendices C and D), but as mentioned above we no longer involved all faculty Honors Council members in application review. This was in acknowledgement of the hardship for faculty this represented as well as the slow turn-around the resulted. While a few ambiguities in the review form were changed, the application itself continues to include TEDx video responses. Whether these are still timely and interesting is something to be considered for the next applying class.

Admission Goals for 15-16

1) Again meet our target of a 100- student cohort for the incoming 2016 class

2) Continue to increase diversity in race/ethnicity, gender, and home state/nation; first-generation college students

3) Continue to attract highly qualified current students who may not have been aware of or interested in an honors opportunity before entering DU

4) Improve application so that the writing samples might more accurately reflect critical thinking skills

**Honors Curriculum**

Our curricular goals include:

* Offering high quality honors courses
* Providing diversity and availability of Honors courses
* Providing flexibility and options to meet Honors requirements
* Using priority registration in conjunction with proactive advising to ensure optimal course fill rate

*1) Offering high quality honors courses*

In 14-15 as in previous years, the Director solicited course proposals from all divisions across campus, and Honors Council helped assess and provide feedback regarding how each course could provide an honors experience. New courses included two seminars in the natural sciences (“Mass Extinctions,” with Bob Dores, and the second offering of “Scientific Literacy of the Citizenry,” with Keith Miller); Twentieth Century Italian History and Culture,” with Angel Castagnino; “World War I,” with Carol Helstosky; and “Introduction to American Politics,” with Peter Hanson.

In response to a desire to promote community participation and engaged scholarship, we also piloted one new Honors Writing class, taught by Alfrey with the help of 3 upper class honors student organizers of Mental Health Week. The class launched surveys and participated in Mental Health Week activities. While course evaluations were disappointing and indicated that students thought the format did not help them improve their writing, in terms of community building and engagement the class was a success. We will continue to seek ways to develop experimental and pilot coursework in support of interdisciplinary and engaged coursework that also reinforces community within the Honors Program.

2) *Diversity and availability of honors courses*

Thanks both to priority registration and stable cohort numbers, resources are predictably and mostly satisfactorily distributed between disciplines and across quarters. We have heard very few complaints from students that honors courses were closed or scheduled inconveniently. However, there was some confusion regarding the need for Honors ASEMs and, offering 6 instead of our usual 5, there was so little interest in two of them that they were converted to non-honors sections.

Exit Interviews continue to present some conflicting views of our course offerings. Many students call for more variety and choices; others describe one strength of our curriculum the variety we provide. Similarly, some students have complained that we don’t provide enough options in ways to meet honors requirements, and some are especially pleased with the ways they’ve been able to meet the demands of the honors sequence. Clearly, the demands of students’ schedules and interests vary, and we continue to strive 1) to offer variety in our courses; and 2) provide flexibility and options in the ways students can meet our curriculum requirements. In terms of variety, Honors continued to offer both continuity and innovation in our courses. For the complete list of Honors Course see Appendix E.

3) *Providing flexibility in meeting Honors requirement*

In 14-15 Honors worked hard to disseminate information regarding options other than the traditional honors sequence for fulfilling honors requirements. Students continued to take advantage of the option to substitute Honors Seminars for Honors Advanced Seminars and vice versa. Five students developed Honors Independent Studies with Alfrey to meet Honors Seminar requirements, and several took the INTZ study abroad class as a substitute for one Honors Seminar requirement. Several students also developed Honors Contracts in order to satisfy an Honors requirement in a way especially suited to their interests. In all of these cases, Honors Council provided input regarding these contracts so that might provide a meaningful honors experience for each student.

We continued to work with current DU students or those who come into honors with AP/IB or transfer credit that satisfies the common curriculum requirements so that they can find meaningful ways to meet Honors humanities and social science requirements. A few took advantage of the case-by-case option of approved upper level coursework. Finally, a few students who entered the program in their second year and thus fulfilled the requirement satisfied by Honors WRIT took advantage of the option of taking a second Honors ASEM instead.

Overall, use of H-contracts and the upper level option remains relatively rare and we do not anticipate or desire them to become typical. H-Contracts rely on the flexibility of Honors Council, staff, and the individual instructors; the upper level choices rely on communication between the Director and Department Chairs. While relatively few students have chosen the ASEM/HSEM substitutions, it is important to provide these options; for at least a couple of students each year they make the difference between continuing or leaving the program.

A disappointment in terms of schedule options was the lack of interest in a summer quarter Honors ASEM, “The American Road Trip,” offered by Alfrey. Not only was this a sort of emergency option, it was one of few courses to be held on campus. The course schedule showed that almost all of the full ASEMS were online courses. While online offerings are a clear trend, especially for summer term, we continue to think that, because of the student-centered and discussion-based nature of our classes, online delivery is not appropriate for honors courses. Alfrey’s ASEM will be offered as a summer or regular option in the future.

4) *Optimal allocation of resources and course fill rate*

Thanks to priority registration and to our maintenance of roughly 100 incoming students each year, we have been able to plan adequately for our student needs. The course fill rate reflected this coordination (see Appendix E).

In 14-15, the fill rate for the honors sequence of courses (ASEM, AISC, HSEM, SISC, SINP, WRIT) was 77% (443 of 578), which is also the average of the rate since 10-11 (79% in 13-14; 72% in 12-13; 82% in 11-12; and 77% in 10-11).

While faculty enjoy teaching Honors Seminars and have not complained, we have learned that the honorarium we provide for these courses is less than comparable off-load courses taught in PLP or the LLCs. Accordingly, we plan to increase the stipend from $1500 to $1800 beginning AY 2015-2016.

Curriculum and Course Goals for 2015-2016

* Continue to provide variety and continuity in courses offered
* Continued outreach to faculty across campus for course proposals
* Ensure that priority registration is used appropriately and that students not active in the program do not have the privilege
* Continue to work to adequately to allocate honors course seats
* Offer summer Honors ASEM
* Increase HSEM honorarium
* Develop HSEM course dedicated to interdisciplinarity, research, and community engagement

**Integration and Completion of Departmental Distinction**

Efforts to support the integration and communication of distinction requirements include:

* Communication and support regarding Distinction requirements and deadlines
* Departments codifying and finalizing Distinction Requirements
* Coordinating with Honors Program and Registrar regarding satisfaction of requirements for graduation

Thirty-seven students produced a thesis of final project in their major that, according to their advisors met all criteria for an honors thesis. Of these, 10 were considered of “unusually superior quality.” One had already led to a scholarly publication, and another was lauded by the advisor as “among the best pieces of work that I have read form an undergraduate senior student in a very long time. I wish my graduate students could produce work at this level.” Five advisors suggested the thesis be submitted for the NCHC thesis contest; we were allowed and did submit one. The results are outstanding.

Among this group were 6 theses from the Daniels College of Business, 2 from Music Performance, and 1 from Engineering. This group attests to the successful incorporation of the final product as thesis in diverse disciplines and the full-scale integration of honors and distinction in DCB. The Honors Program has worked with DCB distinction advisors Greg Grauberger and McKenzie Mohler, students, and faculty to help Daniels ensure that business students have the resources they need to produce scholarly research in departments where such projects are new or unusual.

One issue that arose this year as a consequence of Daniels’ successful integration of the thesis requirement is the need to communicate the opportunity and requirement of Latin Honors to students at DCB not in the Honors Program. In the past, because they could not do a thesis independent of distinction, these students could not graduate Magna or Summa Cum Laude. Now that the thesis option makes this possible, DCB has realized it needs to develop a mechanism to communicate this in a timely way, and to provide adequate faculty support, to their eligible students.

As Exit Interviews indicate, most graduating Honors students felt that the opportunity to do research and produce a thesis was incredibly valuable. Many also cited the value of the distinction plan itself, which in a growing number of departments included a clear timetable, access to advisors, and valuable coursework in research methodologies.

*1) Communication regarding distinction requirements*

Over the last few years we have worked with departments and advisors to provide guidelines regarding distinction plans and to help them develop methods and timelines for their dissemination to students. Based on the experience of our students and the information we received from advisors and distinction coordinators, it seems that this requirement has been successfully integrated into the honors requirements, and that it has been a beneficial process for our students.

Issues that arose last year include the change in the INTS dual degree that no longer can accommodate the thesis in its timetable. Two of our students who had met all other honors requirements could not graduate with University Honors because the new dual degree timetable made it impossible for them to complete a thesis. A new one-year graduate program will supposedly solve that issue for future students.

At least two of our most active honors students in Engineering also felt that distinction was not possible for them given other requirements and their otherwise laudable investment in mentoring the new class of STEM students. A spring quarter meeting with Engineering Chair and faculty resulted in clarification of requirements that will serve honors engineering students well. In fact, as a result of this communication one student whose work would otherwise have been overlooked as appropriate for distinction was able to graduate with distinction and University Honors. Clearly, ongoing communication among students, departments, and honors must remain a priority.

*2) Codifying and finalizing distinction requirements*

A number of departments on campus have reached out to the Honors Program for feedback regarding their distinction requirements, including Lamont’s BM distinction plan and that of Computer Science and Media, Film, and Journalism Studies in 2014, ongoing work in Daniels, including efforts to develop a Handbook for all Daniels students regarding distinction, thesis requirements and advisors, and Latin Honors. Most recently, in spring 2015, the meeting between Engineering and the Honors Program described above involved how the final project required of Engineering students could satisfy distinction requirements.

*3) Adequately communicating distinction attainment to honors and registrar*

Communication and cooperation between Honors and the distinction coordinators continues and continues from time to time to involve confusion, regarding who develops and disseminates distinction requirements and when and whether the Honors Program should be notified regarding a student’s satisfaction of them. For students graduating with University Honors, we must receive a Thesis Verification form signed by the thesis advisor during the 7th week of the quarter students will graduate (see Appendix F). Based on this information we send the registrar the list of students graduating with University Honors. Students not in the Honors Program do not need to provide this form. Whether in the Honors Program or not, information regarding distinction or Latin Honors must be sent by the department to the registrar’s office.

**Participation in Honors Community and Enrichment Activities**

Our efforts to support our student community include:

* Fostering Involvement in the Honors Community
* Supporting Student Projects and Programs
* Supporting Campus and Course Enrichment
* Providing Varied and Thoughtful Honors Programming
* Providing Opportunities for student input and exchange

*1) Fostering Involvement in the Honors Community*

As a result of our consistent efforts to improve offerings and communication, participation in our programming has continued to increase since the 2008 revision to the program. In toto, 620 students attended honors events in 14-15, 84 of them at student-organized Voltaire Society events. 440 students participated in events in 13-14, 599 students attended honors events in 12-13, and 651 students attended honors events in 11-12. The large number in 11-12 reflects two incredibly popular summer advanced screenings of the last two *Harry Potter* films which attracted over 60 students total. Likewise, the very low number in 13-14 probably reflects lost momentum as a result of the previous year’s budget shortfall and resultant cancellations.

All things being equal, the numbers for 14-15 show a continued trend toward considerably greater engagement in our students as well as more variety in activities. This is in part a result of the work of the Voltaire Society organizers, who planned and publicized a steady menu of activities, especially in the last half of the academic year. In 09-10, 340 students participated (at least 170 or 50% of whom were unique Honors students); in 10-11 529 students (195 different individuals) attended Honors events. Of our 599 participants in 12-13, 197 or 58% of honors students participated in at least 1 event, and even the small number in 13-14 included a larger than usual number (203 of 324, or 62%) of distinct individuals. AY 14-15 had the second largest number of participants, of whom more than 210 (60% of our 348 members) were unique individuals.

In 14-15 we continued efforts at communication through the web, email, and Facebook. The website has been helpful in communicating with both current and prospective students. The Honors website also houses information regarding Extreme Academics, and both Honors and Extreme Academics are *Facebook* groups. Thanks to the time spent by Dylan Mackie-Hernandez, our graduate work study, our *Facebook* groups have become go-to sites for students to share inquiries and information as well as for us to get the word out regarding upcoming events. The addition of the weekly Honors Newsletter has also helped students learn about events and requirements.

Honors housing continues to attract roughly a third of our incoming students, and thanks to our close communication with Amanda Harris in Student Life our students have largely been able to get their housing requests. While coordination with the Honors RAs has also improved over the last few years, the last two academic years have seen difficulties: first, with a group of students whose bad behavior cast a pall on the floor’s reputation; and, most recently, because continuity and momentum in programming and communication were disrupted by our RA becoming sick and leaving the Honors floor without notifying us.

It remains very important that the Honors floor provide a meaningful experience for our students. Although Exit Interviews indicate that those who’ve lived there have made valuable friendships, the lack of distinct opportunities or programming meaningfully linked to honors is a weakness in our program and results is a less engaged community. In 14-15 Miller and Alfrey met with students on the honors floor and as a result of this meeting purchased bean bag chairs to encourage more group time in the otherwise nearly empty lounge. For 15-16 we are discussing mandatory programming and priority status for honors floor students for our annual Retreat and other opportunities.

The Honors Program continues to provide academic support for individual student projects and campus groups; to provide programming for cultural and social enrichment; to encourage student involvement in internships, information sessions, and conferences; and to encourage students to pursue their interests in the Voltaire Society and Book Group, and serving on the Honors Council.

*2) Support of Student Projects and Programs*

*Special Honors Funding for Individual Projects*

We continue to work to get the word out regarding the availability of Special Honors Funding for student projects. In AY14-15, the number of student applicants increased to 8, of whom all but 1 (who ended up finding funding from her department) received up to $1,000 to support internships, conference attendance or other projects. This surpasses past years, whose previous high, in 11-12, was 4. In total, the Honors Program awarded our students over $6700 to support their academic work.

In part because of her role with Extreme Academics and as External Fellowships mentor, Alfrey has been able to guide students interested in applying for postgraduate academic work. One of our students was awarded a Fulbright Teaching Fellowship, another will be participating in a year-long internship with Princeton in Africa, and a third year student was the Colorado recipient of the Truman Scholarship. He is currently serving an internship with IAEA supported with honors funds and discovered with the help of an honors alumna.

*Support of Student Groups, Campus, and Community Organizations*

The Honors Program also agreed once again to sponsor DU’s Model UN team (which, because of internal problems, did not get off the ground in 14-15, but is on track for 15-16) and took a key role in supporting student efforts for Mental Health Week, including a very successful Symposium with leading researchers.

Honors has also worked with such organizations as Teach for America, EuroScholars, and the El Pomar Foundation to disseminate information and educate our students regarding opportunities these organizations provide.

*Preisendanz-Schmid Scholarship*

The one scholarship offered by the Honors Program, the Preisendanz-Schmid Scholarship, was folded into need-based financial aid in 2010. Our subsequent efforts to provide special honors funding on a rolling, case-by-case application process has successfully filled the gap left by that change. In addition, the transformation of our Scholarship into a form of recognition for all-around excellence in an Honors student – with nomination from honors students and faculty -- has reinforced the sense of community and provided recognition for students who help to strengthen it. This spring, Meg McIntyre was recognized as our exemplary community member, and funds will be applied to her tuition costs in 15-16.

*3) Support of Campus and Course Enrichment*

In 14-15 Honors continued to focus on academic enrichment and support for our students and the larger DU community. Honors again sponsored projects and events across campus, such as the Phi Beta Kappa Visiting Scholar (this year musician and artist Mark Mothersbaugh). We supported Professor Carol Helstosky bringing to her class a World War I historian, sent Chaplain Gary Brower’s Honors Seminar on animal rights to the Stock Show, and supported our Honors Geography sequence through both field trips in Professor Sullivan’s class and for Professor Erika Trigoso purchase 3D software and course weather balloon.

The Honors Program also worked with the Front Range Honors Council to host a Hillel-developed “Ask Big Questions” workshop, which Alfrey and 4 honors students attended. Something modelled on this workshop is being considered for part of the first year honors experience in 15-16. The Honors Program also provided sponsorship for the National Council of Honors Colleges annual meeting in Denver, which included registration for 6 honors students.

*4) Providing Varied and Thoughtful Programming*

Exit Interviews and Questionnaires each year indicate the importance of social and cultural programming, especially trips to the theatre, symphony, and museums. Still, for some the real goal is social connection, and less structured, cultural events are desired. Programming developed in 14-15 was meant to provide both types of opportunities. In addition to performances at 3 different area theatres and a performance of Beethoven’s 9th by the CSO, students had the opportunity to grab their DUH water bottle and t-shirt at the fall picnic, go ice skating on Keystone Lake, and end the year with an ice cream social. The annual Honors banquet included Carol Helstosky speaking on the centennial of World War I. Every quarter also included an opportunity to get together with Miller and Alfrey for pizza and advising.

As discussed below, the Book Group and Voltaire Society allow students to set their own agenda. A less formal group met in the Honors “Cave” every Tuesday for “Harry Potter Read Aloud,” organized by one of our honors students. A complete list of activities and number of recorded attendees is included as Appendix G.

*5) Providing Opportunities for Student Planning and Organization*

*The Voltaire Society*

As mentioned above, AY 14-15 saw renewed energy in the Voltaire Society, first with the help of student Ethan Draper, who organized a trip to the Botanic Gardens and Liks ice cream; and especially once two students, Maggie Sava and Bryce Anderson-Gregson, took the reins and worked to find and publicize a variety of events. These included a “Beach-ish” film series, a trip to the Museum of Nature and Science, the annual “Dining Out for Life” evening, and an end of year excursion to Elitch’s.

*Honors/Pioneer Book Group*

The book group foundered some in 14-15 as a result of the two named presidents both studying abroad during winter quarter. Plans are to reinvigorate the book group through connecting it with events organized by Voltaire. A fall Denver Museum of Nature and Science Sherlock Holmes event will serve as the occasion to motivate book group students to ready the classic detective stories. Other attempts to reinvigorate the group will be ongoing and come from Alfrey as well as Ryan Carson, continuing president.

*Honors Council*

Student involvement in the Honors Council has increased over the last two years, and Ay 14-15 saw consistent and conscientious work by our student representatives. Emily Wolverton and Nick Stubler were especially successful at reaching out to honors students. They hosted a late night Voodoo Doughnuts event on the Honors floor as well as pizza in the cave to learn of their fellow honors students’ concerns and interests. The survey they launched informs our plans for 15-16, below.

**Plans and Goals in response to new DU Strategic Plan**

In response to the strategic plan initiated by Chancellor Chopp and our goals to increase engagement and opportunities for honors students, the following initiatives and pilots are planned for 15-16:

*1) Increase Community engagement*

In order to strengthen student connections and increase participation across their four years in the program, Miller and Alfrey have developed the following plans:

* Restructure Honors Orientation to allow for more student –to-student discussion and input.
* Expand “orientation” events to include quarter- or year-long meetings to discuss requirements and opportunities. These should be organized and led mostly by upper class honors students in order to help establish a system or network of honors mentorship.
* Increase presence by Miller and Alfrey at honors events, greater integration with honors RA, and preference and floor-only activities.
* Make participation in some events mandatory; perhaps including participation in opt-in requirements
* Develop programming with curricular value, e.g., Partners in the Parks-style Retreat
* Work with CME to make the Honors Program more welcoming and inclusive

*2) Develop more opportunities for community engaged and interdisciplinary research*

* Pilot honors seminars dedicated to supporting research projects and finding ways to incentivize participation from faculty from across campus
* Review honors seminar options and timing; perhaps provide first year experience
* Reach out to community partners to provide community research opportunities. DPS Shakespeare Festival and Colorado Reading Partners two possibilities. CCESL’s Science Shop another possible source
* Add fellowship information and support and more integration of Extreme Academics and the URC in programming and publicity
* Strengthen community partnerships for internships. Miller has begun this with a new year-long paid internship in the Mayor’s office, secured by June 2015 graduate Chelsea Warren
* Explore possible alternatives for final thesis project
* Work with departments to identify distinction opportunities for students

**Appendix A: Honors Council** **for 2014-2015**

Director: Keith Miller [keith.miller@du.edu](mailto:keith.miller@du.edu)

Associate Director: Shawn Alfrey [shawn.alfrey@du.ed](mailto:shawn.alfrey@du.ed)

Arts/Humanities

Greg Robbins, Religious Studies, [grobbins@du.edu](mailto:grobbins@du.edu) , class of 16, 1st term

Anne Penner, Theatre, [Anne.penner@du.edu](mailto:Anne.penner@du.edu), class of 17, 1st term

Daniels School of Business

Jeff Engelstad, Real Estate/Const. Management, [jengelst@du.edu](https://listserv.du.edu/mailman/options/hnrscouncil-07/jengelst--at--du.edu), class of 16, 2nd current term

Haragopal (HG) Parsa, Hospitality Management, [hparsa@du.edu](mailto:hparsa@du.edu), class of 16, 1st current term

Engineering

David Gao, Electrical and Computer Engineering, [Wenzhong.Gao@du.edu](mailto:Wenzhong.Gao@du.edu), class of 15, first term

Mike Gross, Computer Science, [mikegoss@cs.du.edu](mailto:mikegoss@cs.du.edu), class of 16, 1st term

International Studies

Robert Uttaro (INTS) [Robert.uttaro@du.edu](mailto:Robert.uttaro@du.edu), class of 17, first term

Jonathan Adelman (INTS), [Jonathan.Adelman@du.edu](mailto:Jonathan.Adelman@du.edu), class of 15, second term

Natural Sciences

Nick Galatos, Math, [Nikolaos.Galatos@du.edu](mailto:Nikolaos.Galatos@du.edu), class of 17, 1st term

Don Sullivan, Geography, [dsulliva@du.edu](mailto:dsulliva@du.edu), class of 15, second term

Social Sciences

Bonnie Clark, Anthropology, [Bonnie.Clark@du.edu](mailto:Bonnie.Clark@du.edu), class of 16, 1st term

Nancy Wadsworth, Political Science, [nancy.wadsworth@du.edu](mailto:nancy.wadsworth@du.edu), class of 17, 1st term

Students

Nick Stubler, [nstubler@me.com](mailto:nstubler@me.com)

Emily Wolverton, [emilywolverton@hotmail.com](mailto:emilywolverton@hotmail.com)

**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 Application Form (Approved Spring 2010)**

**Application to the University Honors Program**

This application to the University Honors Program allows you to supplement your admissions information and test scores with examples of your writing ability and intellectual curiosity. Please email your application to shawn.alfrey@du.edu, or send it with this cover sheet to: **University Honors Program, University of Denver, Mary Reed Building 2, 2199 S. University Blvd., Denver, CO, 80208-4801.** Applications are considered as received according to a rolling admissions process.

***Personal Data***

1. NAME : \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ EMAIL:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ PHONE:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

2. ADDRESS: Street \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

3. DU ID#: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

4. STATUS: \_\_Entering First-Year Student

\_\_Transfer Student entering as (please circle): first-year sophomore junior

\_\_Current DU Student (please circle): first-year sophomore junior

(All current DU and transfer students must meet with Honors staff to develop a curriculum plan prior to admission.)

5. MAJOR (if known): \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

6. HIGH SCHOOL INFORMATION: GPA \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (indicate whether weighted or unweighted)

SAT (reading and math only) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ACT\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

7. COLLEGE INFORMATION: DU GPA\_\_\_\_\_\_ (IF TRANSFER, CURRENT SCHOOL GPA \_\_\_\_)

***Written Material to Accompany Honors Application***

8. Why do you want to join the University Honors Program? Please answer in 250 words or fewer.

9. How will your personal experiences and/or background contribute to the diversity and breadth of perspectives in the Honors community? Please answer in 250 words or fewer.

10. Below are links to two short videos from a recent TEDx event at DU that focused on “radical collaboration.” Please choose one and respond to the issues it raises and the methods it uses to address them.

*The Interfaith Amigos* - http://tedxdu.com/2011/05/the-interfaith-amigos-breaking-the-taboos-of-interfaith-dialogue/

*Collaborative Art in Countries of Conflict* - http://tedxdu.com/2011/05/morehshin-allahyari-collaborative-art-in-countries-of-conflict/

11. Please attach or have forwarded a letter of recommendation from a teacher or faculty member from your current school or college. For first-quarter DU students, please also include a letter from one of your DU instructors. The letter should answer the questions: What about the student makes him or her able to benefit from a rigorous academic regime, contribute to our diverse and vibrant community, and be an overall good candidate for the University Honors Program?

**Appendix D: Application Review Form** 

**Appendix E: Honors Courses, 2014-15**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Type** | **Title** | **Instructor** | **Actual** | **Cap** |
| **Autumn 14** |  |  |  |  |
| ASEM 2589-1 | Thinking | Charles Reichardt | 15 | 15 |
| ENGL1110-5 | Literary Inquiry | Bin Ramke | 12 | 20 |
| ENGL/JUST 2742-1 | Modern Hebrew Literature in Translation | Adam Rovner | 16 | 14 |
| GEOG 1264-1 | Global Environmental Change I | Erika Trigoso | 35 | 40 |
| HIST 1360 | World War I | Carol Helstosky | 20 | 20 |
| HNRS 2400-1 | Mass Extinctions | Bob Dores | 14 | 15 |
| HNRS 2400-2 | The Impact of Technology on Society | Dan Connolly | 6 | 15 |
| HNRS 2400-3 | Scientific Literacy of the Citizenry | Keith Miller | 6 | 15 |
| **Winter 15** |  |  |  |  |
| ASEM 2670-1 | Development in Latin America | Rafael Ioris | 16 | 16 |
| ASEM 2661-1 | French Revolution | Beth Karlsgodt | 16 | 16 |
| COMN 1210-1 | Foundations of Communication | Roy Wood | 15 | 25 |
| ECON 1020-3 | Micro and Macro Economics I | Yavuz Yasar | 17 | 25 |
| GEOG 1265 -1 | Global Environmental Change II | Don Sullivan | 32 | 40 |
| HNRS 2400-4 | Pets, Partners, or Pot Roast? | Gary Brower | 13 | 15 |
| HNRS 2400-3 | Engaging the Bard: DPS Shakespeare Festival | Shawn Alfrey | 3 | 6 |
| HNRS 2400-7 | Mind of a Leader | Karen Loeb | 11 | 15 |
| HNRS 2400-2 | Migration and Diaspora Narratives | Maik Nwosu | 8 | 15 |
| **Spring 15** |  |  |  |  |
| ASEM 2410-1 | Science and Religion on Dialogue | Greg Robbins | 13 | 16 |
| ASEM2449-1 | American Material Culture | Bonnie Clark | 7 | 16 |
| GEOG 1266-1 | Global Environmental Change III | Kuzera | 30 | 40 |
| PPOL 1910-1 | Foundations in Public Policy | Richard Lamm | 20 | 25 |
| PLSC 1000-1 | Introduction to American Politics | Peter Hanson | 13 | 25 |
| HNRS 2400-1 | Engaging the Bard II: DPS Shakespeare Festival | Shawn Alfrey | 5 | 9 |
| HNRS 2400-2 | Memories of Atrocity | Lydia Gil | 13 | 15 |
| WRIT1733-1 | Honors Writing | Doug Hesse | 8 | 15 |
| WRIT1733-2 | Honors Writing | Shawn Alfrey | 14 | 15 |
| WRIT1733-3 | Honors Writing | Jennifer Campbell | 8 | 15 |
| WRIT1733-4 | Honors Writing | John Tiedemann | 15 | 15 |
| WRIT 1733-5 | Honors Writing | Pauline Reid | 14 | 15 |
| WRIT 1733-6 | Honors Writing | Geoffrey Stacks | 15 | 15 |
| WRIT 1733-7 | Honors Writing | Kara Taczak | 13 | 15 |
| **Seats** |  | **72%** | **443** | **578** |

**Appendix F: Thesis Verification Form**

You must complete the student section of this form, and provide to your faculty sponsor in time for her or him to complete and send to the 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. Failure to submit this completed form in time 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 #**

**Local Address: Local Phone:**

**Email:**

**Permanent Address: 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.)

**(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):

does not meet criteria and is not of adequate quality for an Honors thesis/project

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

3. Would you like this thesis to be entered in the NCHC thesis contest? Yes; No

4. All student requirements for the Departmental Distinction program will be completed by graduation (check one).  Yes;  No

5. Any comments on the quality or creativity of the thesis/project?  
  
6. I certify that the thesis/project will be completed by:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Signed: Date:

**Appendix G: Honors Events and Student Attendees, 2014-15**

Honors organized events:

9/114 - Honors Orientation (Approx. 100 students and their parents)

9/10/14 – Honors Picnic (65)

9/18/14 – Beethoven’s 9th Symphony at CSO (28)

10/13/14 – Pizza and Advising (36)

10/16/14 – *Vanya and Masha and Sonia and Spike DCPA* (15+2)

1/7/15 – Study Abroad Café (7)

1/8/15 – Honors Banquet with Professor Susan Schulten (65)

1/25/15 – Ice Skating at Keystone Lake (20)

1/29/15 – *Tommy Lee Jones Goes to the Opera Alone*, Buntport Theatre (12)

2/2/15 – Pizza and Advising (25)

3/10/15 – Student Representative Get Togethers (20)

3/6/13 – *Cartier: Brilliant*, Denver Art Museum (8)

4/13/15 - 5/ /15 – Pizza and Advising (12)

4/18/15 - *In the Red and Brown Water*, Curious Theatre (18)

4/20/15 – Dining Out for Life, Tom’s Urban - Voltaire (31)

5/1/15 – Mythical Creatures, Denver Museum of Nature and Science - Voltaire (12)

5/9/15 – *Diavola*, Newman Center (10)

5/20/15 – Ice Cream Social (30)

5/30/15 – Elitch’s – Voltaire (13)

6/5/15– Graduating Student Reception (65 people, students and family members)

Voltaire *Beach(ish )* Film Series – winter through spring quarter (28)