



University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire

105 Garfield Avenue • P.O. Box 4004 • Eau Claire, WI 54702-4004

Date: May 14th, 2019

To: Provost and Vice Chancellor, Patricia Kleine

From: MEMBERS OF THE UNIVERSITY SENATE ACADEMIC POLICIES COMMITTEE

Subject: APC report regarding program review of the University Honors Program

The Academic Policies Committee (APC) appreciates the time and effort of Interim Director, David Jones of the University Honors Program, the members of the Internal Review Committee (Phil Ihinger, Dan Janik, Hans Kishel) and the external reviewer (Dr. John Falconer) for the review of the University Honors Program. The internal review committee and external reviewer reports provided the committee useful information to assist us in forming our recommendations. While the APC recommendations are generally summarized on the attached spreadsheet APC is providing additional details in the form of this letter.

COMMENDATIONS:

The University Honors Program is to be commended for the following:

1. The program's commitment to reaching the University's guidepost goals.
2. The program's strong contribution to the University's EDI efforts.
3. The program's recruitment and retention of "High Achieving Students".
4. A high proportion of the program's courses employ High Impact Practices (HIPs).
5. The program's commitment to the assessment of student learning.
6. The program's nationally recognized holistic admissions practice.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Better coordination between ARCC and the University Honors Program to manage advising workload. With recent changes in advising and the advent of ARCC, the role of advising for faculty in all academic programs has changed. The interim director, IRC, and external reviewer identified the advising workload demands on the program due to a disconnect between the needs of Honor students and the ability of ARCC advisors to meet those needs in the context of the Honors Program. This situation has become so egregious that the Program Associate has taken on these responsibilities with no compensation and the program utilizes a large proportion of student advisees to deal with the advising demands. The external reviewer recommended the creation of .50 FTE assistant director position or support course reassignments for 1-2 faculty members to advise Honors students and the APC agrees with the latter as a first start. There is also the need for ARCC advisors to become well-versed on the Honors Program and its students needs as recommended by the Associate Vice Chancellor.

2. Defined workload responsibilities for the Director position. According to the program's self-study, IRC report, and the external reviewer report, current staff are doing more work than their position descriptions include, and these efforts can not be maintained. At the time of the writing of this letter, a search for a Director is underway with a more defined role. It will be worth watching how the revamped responsibilities for this position impact the persistent workload issues in the program.

EXCELLENCE: Our measure, our motto, our goal.

Academic Policies Committee

University Senate

3. Commitment of resources from Administration. The self-study provided a detailed synopsis of how the program is using its resources responsibly, especially given the high SCH/FTE ratios. The Honors Program is managing exceptionally despite its limited human resources of 2.0 FTE. According to the external reviewer, if either one of the current positions was lost, the program would suffer greatly. The program's reliance on a strong student employee system is also a concern due to sustainability issues. The growth of the program over the last couple of years warrant more support or a discussion of capping student participation in the program. Unfortunately, this concern has persisted as it was identified in the 2013 APC program review letter.

Summary Recommendation:

The University Honors Program continues to do an outstanding job with its mission "To provide highly motivated, high potential students with a challenging and supportive learning community that allows them to develop their distinctive abilities, and to create a foundation for high-value intellectual, professional, and personal achievements in future settings." For the program to continue in these efforts, the APC recommends these immediate actions:

- Improve direct channels of communication between Honors and other administrative leadership
- Determine the ideal program size based on the budget
- Attract tenure-track faculty to teach Honors students
- Continue to boost enrollment and satisfaction for students of color
- Increase support for low income and 1st generation students

APC strongly supports the recommendation from all the other review levels to "strengthen and review early" considering the recommendations made above.

Cc.

Dr. David Jones, Interim Director, University Honors Program

Dr. Mary Hoffman, Director of Academic Planning and Assessment