

DATE: March 5, 2007

TO: Planning & Review Committee
Julie Furst-Bowe, Provost

FROM: Janice Coker, Associate Vice Chancellor

SUBJECT: *Response to the PRC's Review of the Honors Program*

Attached you will find our response to the PRC's review of the Honors program.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE PROGRAM DIRECTOR

I appreciate the PRC accepting the University Honors Program (UHP) for review, and I am grateful for the additional efforts required to construct an appropriate assessment format. I believe that, as the UHP goes forward—indeed, in order for the UHP to go forward—the continued attention of the PRC will be essential.

Following are my responses to the Recommendations put forward by my PRC consultants.

Recruitment/Retention

- 1. Publicity.** The program should be publicized across campus (and to alumni). Student work should be recognized. Possibilities include recognition of Honor's Contracts at Stout's Research Day. Encourage students to submit their research to the Stout Student Research Journal. Consider giving students an Honors Option credit for publishing (or requiring all contracts be submitted).

Response:

We have begun re-establishing contact with alums (UHP grads and participants) by inviting them to the Spring 07 Colloquium, with two events just for them. Stout Foundation personnel and monies have helped make this possible. Going forward, we should be able to construct on-campus alum activities in conjunction with the Colloquia, our signature event. B) To create campus publicity, I will establish a schedule of meetings with the program directors in each college. I will explore the possibility of meeting with new Stout faculty during their orientation. Finally, as much as possible, I will continue to represent the UHP at Stout Saturdays, as I am doing now. C) This year, as we always have in the past, we communicated with more than 300 accepted Stout students about Honors at Stout. We host campus/class/dorm visits through the spring term, and we host an Honors Preview Day. Through these efforts, we target our key audience: students and families. D) I have encouraged students to submit to the student research journal since its founding. A UHP honors contract was included in the very first issue. I can take no credit for this, however, as that student submitted his project because his contract mentor suggested he do so. For five years or so, we have included a

question on the mentor evaluation asking whether the project is suitable for presentation/submission and a number of student projects have been presented at UW System, UW-Stout, UMHC, and NCUR meetings. We will continue to encourage students to submit to our student research journal. E) I will discuss the suggestion of awarding additional option credit for publishing with the advisory board.

2. **Web Page.** Revise and enhance the UHP Webpage. Use a visual layout to indicate how requirements are related. Make this a recruiting tool.

Response:

The web page is indeed an essential tool and ours is not doing us many favors. We will improve it—how or with what monies I do not know, but it must be significantly improved.

3. **Recognition.** Ensure that notation of successful completion of Honors requirements be recorded on transcripts of previous and future graduates. Ensure that the Honors courses are so noted on student transcripts.

Response:

Successful completion of UHP requirements has been noted on transcripts of all former students. We will continue to do so. We will continue to work with the office of registration and records to note honors course completion on transcripts. As matters stand, some courses use “honors” in their titles, while some do not.

Program

4. **Tracking student progress.** Implement the “keeping pace” tracking of requirements by the UHP office. Work with the Registrar to use the DARS system to track Honors requirements.

Response:

We will implement the “keep pace” requirements. We have prepared to do so by re-ordering student records so that they are accessible to us. We will seek help when we encounter obstacles to implementation. We will also work with the Registrar to solve the problem of honors requirements and the DARS.

Support/Follow-up

- 5. Alumni survey/retention.** Conduct surveys of graduates who have participated in UHP (not just graduates). Tailor the survey for the UHP program. Include questions to determine factors for students dropping out of the program.

Response:

We will survey graduates who have been UHP participants in AY 2007-08. Further, we will develop a periodic survey similar to the 3 and 5 year alum surveys used by the PRC.

- 6. Advisory Board.** Increase the size of the advisory board to include alumni and other stake holders. Meet regularly. Empower the advisory board to take more responsibility for the program.

Response:

I will add alums to the advisory board and I will add other stake holders as they become known. I will meet regularly with the board. My first step toward empowering the board will be to seek a board member to serve as its chair, with the UHP program director hereafter serving on the board ex officio.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE ASSOCIATE VICE CHANCELLOR

We are very fortunate to have the Chancellor's support for the Honors Program. The Chancellor recently formed an Honors Taskforce with representation from each of the colleges/schools and student services as well as two student members. The taskforce has been charged with the following, many of which relate to issues the PRC wishes to see addressed.

- ❖ Model for Honors Program – Investigate other universities and consider what changes UW-Stout could make to improve the model for the Honors Program.
- ❖ Budget – Develop a detailed budget to be implemented July 1, 2007.
- ❖ Administration – Consider where the Honors Program should be housed and who will be accountable for the program.
- ❖ Program Enrollment and Promotion – Determine the projected enrollment growth for the next three to five years and consider how to increase the visibility of the program.

- 1. Financial Support.** Work with the program director to obtain additional monetary support from the University that will be dedicated for UHP program: scholarships, student research support, and travel money for students and staff.

Response:

The Honors Taskforce will be recommending a detailed budget for presentation to the Chancellor. This should include an increase in the supplies and services budget for the Honors Program which is currently funded at a minimal level. Increased staffing and a method of funding more honors courses will also be considered.

Honors students are eligible to request student research funds and I will work with the program director to increase students' awareness of this source of funding. In addition, the program director and I will meet with the Foundation to investigate the possibility of directing some scholarship funding to honors students.

- 2. Find additional Support.** For the program director who is overloaded. Encourage the advisory board to take up some of the load. Assist in supporting additional courses.

Response:

The Honors Program Advisory Board does serve in an advisory role so I am not clear how greater involvement would necessarily reduce the workload for the program director. This semester the advisory board and the Honors taskforce will be meeting with Gary Bell, an external consultant, who will be on our campus April 13-14. Issues related to management/administration of the program and workload of the program director will be discussed. Stability in the classified position for the Honors Office should be helpful in supporting the program director and the taskforce could consider recommending an increase in classified support for the program.

- 3. Program evaluation and Possible Revision.** Work with the program director on the continuing program evaluation and provide support for carrying out recommendations.

Response:

The Honors Taskforce will be investigating other university honors programs and evaluating such factors as marketing/promotion, application/admission policies, program requirements, scholarships, relationships with employers and graduate schools, and other unique features. The final report of the taskforce to the Chancellor will include a recommendation for a model for the Honors Program that will encompass possible program revision, support for courses, projections for growing enrollment and the budget to support these endeavors.