

## Honors College Academic Plan 2017-2023

### I. Introduction

State your department/school/college mission statement.

The Honors College provides high ability and motivated students unique and challenging educational experiences through strong partnerships with faculty from all academic units. The Honors College cultivates intellectual curiosity, research, creative activity, diverse thinking, and community service by mentoring each student from recruitment to graduation. Our curriculum consists of innovative, seminar-style courses designed by top teaching and research faculty and culminates with the honors thesis, a signature work that students complete their senior year designed to prepare them for post-graduate academic programs and future careers.

Outline briefly your “vision” for the 2017-2023 planning cycle.

Our focus in the last planning cycle was on growth and the establishment of an Honors College. We are now turning our focus to recruiting, retaining, and graduating high ability students by providing them with a premier educational experience that focuses on individualized curriculum and undergraduate research. As we near our goal of offering sufficient courses for students to graduate in the Honors College, we hope to ensure that students from all colleges see a clear path to graduation in the Honors College. This will require more targeted course development and increased collaboration in the strategic creation of courses to better align with students’ existing degree plans.

In our 50 years of supporting undergraduate research and creative endeavors, we have developed an informal network of faculty who

are committed to student excellence. We will continue this progress by strengthening partnerships with additional faculty, advisors and academic units to increase undergraduate research opportunities. The combination of a strong Honors curriculum and undergraduate research opportunities across all colleges attracts diverse students who are more likely to pursue graduate education, participate in research/scholarly activity as undergraduates and seek fellowships and awards that potentially enhance NRUF eligibility and university visibility.

Providing a quality Honors College experience is key to achieving Texas State's NRUF goals of recruiting a quality freshman class. Students who choose the Honors College at Texas State have other options for higher education. With more staff to support our students, we will be able to outperform our competitors on many initiatives and provide students with the best interdisciplinary honors experience in the state. Since all of our students and most of our faculty have a home in another department, finalizing our plan through the Read Across process is an exciting opportunity for us to better serve the needs of honors students in all disciplines.

Using University goals and initiatives as a guide, list and briefly describe your top five priorities for the 2017-2023 planning cycle and indicate the university goal/initiative to which the unit's goal is linked.

1. Courses and Curriculum – Develop pathways for all majors to graduate in the Honors College. (University Goals 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.5, 1.12, 1.13, 2.3, 3.1)
  - Elevate current senior lecturer position to Associate/Assistant Dean in charge of curriculum for the Honors College.
  - Develop a curriculum plan for students in each college and offer appropriate courses so students can efficiently graduate in all majors. This is a key component identified in the read across plans and we will report each year on the timeline for achieving this goal.
  - Expand advising resources by hiring additional student development specialists and working more closely with college advising centers.
  - Strategically target growth in faculty and staff positions in the Honors College so that each academic college has a representative in the Honors College.
  - Establish a curriculum program for Laurel Honors House students and other freshmen including US 1100 and core classes.
  - Provide honors advising to our ~2000 students and communicate effectively with advisors across campus.
  - Establish Honors faculty liaisons in each department/school to recruit faculty to propose Honors courses, to identify prospective Honors students, and to encourage undergraduate research in the department with all students.

- Establish a rotating Honors Fellows program to encourage tenured/tenure track faculty to design new courses and interact with Honors College students.
  - Survey Honors College students to better understand barriers to graduating in the Honors College and full participation in our programs.
  - Expand options for the Honors College cross-cultural competency by collaborating with Study Abroad and Study in America and establishing clearer criteria for students to satisfy this requirement for the minor in Honors Studies.
2. Undergraduate Research - Increase the number of students who complete an Honors thesis project or signature work, increase the funding and visibility of the Undergraduate Research Fellowships across all disciplines, and enhance the quality of research projects across the university. (University Goal 1.1, 1.4, 1.5, 1.6, 1.7, 1.8, 2.3, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5)
- Create a center for undergraduate research and creative endeavors to support innovation and integrate faculty from across campus.
  - Enable more students to complete an Honors thesis or signature work by ensuring information is disseminated through US 1100 and improved advising support.
  - Rebrand the Honors thesis project and ensure that it meets the career goals and disciplinary norms of students and faculty in various units.
  - Expand the number of students undertaking independent study and contract courses.
  - Increase funding for undergraduate research projects funded through URF.
  - Enhance TXSTUR, the interdisciplinary journal of undergraduate research, by increasing the number and variety of submissions, supporting a growing staff of student editors and faculty reviewers, and creating a quality print edition of the journal to complement the online edition.
  - Support the Undergraduate Research Conference to allow both oral and poster presentations from across campus and better engage all colleges and departments.
  - Establish a core group of Honors faculty liaisons from each department committed to identifying prospective Honors students and encouraging undergraduate research in the department. Make information available on the Undergraduate Research website to facilitate student engagement with faculty.
  - Pilot and develop a thesis/undergraduate research mentoring program to enable upper division students to help guide more students towards completion of a thesis.
3. Innovation - Create an intellectual community that promotes innovation, celebrates diversity, and facilitates interdisciplinary activity for both students and faculty and celebrates diversity. (University Goal 1.1, 1.13, 2.3, 3.3, 3.5)

- Increase visibility of Honors as a place for faculty to bring new ideas about teaching and learning to life in unique and experimental courses.
  - Encourage student driven research. Our undergraduates have a spirit of entrepreneurship and enterprise and often bring us the best innovations.
  - Work with a center or office of undergraduate research and establish a formal network of faculty mentors interested in undergraduate research.
  - Establish a multicultural center in our space.
  - Strategically design new honors courses that serve the planned minors in Latino Studies and African American Studies.
  - Establish peer writing and public speaking programs.
  - Maintain the Gallery of the Common Experience as a space to promote diversity and interdisciplinary activity.
  - Continue cross campus and community collaborations in support of the Common Experience and other initiatives.
4. Prestige - Increase the prestige of the Honors College at the state and national levels. (University Goal 3)
- Amplify work with undergraduate admissions to recruit top students, especially targeting National Merit Semifinalists and Finalists.
  - Create and enforce participation requirements that ensure the Honors College is focusing on our most active students.
  - Complete Phi Beta Kappa application in 2021.
  - Improve our efforts to identify students for national and international fellowships such as Boren, Truman, Udall, etc.
  - Enforce GPA requirements and continue to increase freshman entrance requirements while maintaining diversity.
  - Increase average SAT/ACT/class rank of students admitted to the Honors College.
  - Support students attending regional and national conferences including the National Collegiate Honors Conference.
  - Enhance outreach efforts to engage alumni in mentorship of Honors students and speaking engagements on campus.
  - Enhance marketing efforts.

Based on unit goals, list the number of new (not replacement) faculty lines you plan to request in the 2017-2018 academic year and in the remaining 2-6 years.

2017-2018

- 1 senior lecturer position

- Additional funding for per course faculty in departments equivalent to 1 senior lecturer position
- Elevation of current senior lecturer position with administrative duties to Assistant/Associate Dean

Remaining 2-6 years

- 3 lecturer positions in the Honors College
- 4 lecturer positions in other units to support the Honors College in addition to per course buy out funding (Note: These may not be assigned as entire units, but as per course funding to departments.) The Honors College is currently awarding departments \$3,500 per course for replacement faculty when they release an instructor to teach an Honors course, so this funding would include course replacement costs.

The Honors College is seeking to increase the number of classes taken by the current students and the number of Honors College graduates. Additional growth in courses will entail adding lecturer positions and providing per course funding to departments. We estimate this cost as the equivalent of four lecturer positions outside of the college and an additional four positions in the college.

The largest source of classes in the Honors College is current Texas State faculty who teach in the Honors College on a regular basis. Replacement funding is provided to the departments to cover additional costs associated with hiring replacements for faculty who are released to teach in the Honors College.

Faculty who report directly to the Honors College are essential to allowing us to fulfill the needs of our diverse students and to provide support for students engaging in undergraduate research or completing a thesis. One of the primary factors determining whether or not a student will complete a thesis is if a faculty member asks them to do so. Additional lecturers would have a semester course load consisting normally of one lower division class (in the core curriculum), one upper division class, one quarter time for supervising students in independent study and thesis and one quarter time of administrative duties. As we add faculty and staff in the Honors College, we will focus on individual colleges in turn and will seek to make our new hires in keeping with that goal by choosing individuals who can best serve the students in each college.

- Honors Faculty Fellows Funding (program to provide incentives to tenured and tenure-track faculty in exchange for developing new

honors courses and mentoring students).

It is critical that the Honor College also attract tenured and tenure-track faculty. Honors students expect to work with highly qualified faculty. By engaging faculty from different departments, we can also use their expertise to enable our curriculum development and planning.

Based on unit initiatives outlined in your plan, estimate the total amount of new funding that your unit will realistically need in the 2017-2018 academic year and in the remaining 2-6 years.

2017-2018 TOTAL: \$20-25,000

- Additional senior lecturer - we have been granted a 75% appointment for this year already so an additional \$11,250 would be needed to bring this appointment to full time.
- New Assistant/Associate Dean – unknown, but estimated at \$0-\$25,000 – Our current senior lecturer serving as director of Academic Development is retiring. This would recast that replacement position as an Assistant or Associate Dean.

Years 2-6: By year 6, \$517,000 per year.

- Additional faculty lines by year 6 at 3 new lines at \$50,000 per line is \$150,000.
- Additional faculty funding allocated to departments would need to increase to \$200,000 per year.
- Additional three student development specialist positions at \$39,000 per year.

Honors advising is a critical component of ensuring students are able to graduate in the Honors College. We are also proposing to add student development specialists in the Honors College to serve as advisors. New hires in the Honors College in staff and faculty would be targeted so that we have one Honors College employee assigned to each academic college.

State the facilities (e.g. offices, research and lab space, classrooms) that will be required for anticipated growth and new unit goals.

The Honors College occupies space on three floors of Lampasas as well as an additional classroom in ASBN 353. The space on the 4<sup>th</sup> floor of Lampasas is home to the Honors Coffee Forum and the Gallery of the Common Experience, one of our biggest assets. Immediate needs are for improvements in office space for efficiency and increased restroom facilities due to growth. An additional classroom will be needed. We are working with facilities to develop a plan for better use of our space.

## II. Process



Describe, in a brief paragraph, the process used to develop your plan, including the nature and extent of faculty involvement.

This plan has been developed using input from Honors College faculty and staff, including our graduate assistants, and in response to student concerns. We have also used information from student responses on exit surveys and discussions with faculty who teach in the Honors College. Since the Honors College is the subject of a Read Across committee, we also look forward to revising this plan based on the input of the entire university.



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### III. Program Maintenance

Maintenance Need	Reason for Need	Cost	Result of Funding
Funding for per course reimbursement to departments	Each semester, departments are reimbursed for releasing faculty to the Honors College at a rate of \$3500 per course.	\$30,000/year	This funding is currently being covered, but is not currently in the Honors College permanent budget. The result is availability of courses.
Permanent funding for half-time lecturer	We have a half time position currently assigned to the Honors College and connected to our freshman learning community.	\$29,000/year	This funding is currently being covered, but is not currently in the Honors College permanent budget. Result is additional course offered each semester, additional administrative support and better integration with our residential learning community.
Additional student activities	Several items are currently funded through the provost's office. These include \$6,000/year to support the Gallery of the Common Experience, \$3,000/year to support an awards reception, and around \$1,000/year to support a Phi Beta Kappa application or other honor society costs.	\$10000/year	These costs enhance the student experience for our current students by allowing us to celebrate their achievements. The Gallery of the Common Experience is integral to recruitment and serving the broader community. Funding will be needed to continue to apply to Phi Beta Kappa.
Graduate assistant	Currently, graduate assistants serve a critical role in supporting our staff. Although we have a need for two GA positions, only one is funded for nine months.	\$15,804/year	Improved tracking of students as graduate assistants work on maintaining student records. Additional staff support for Honors College events.
Graduate assistant	We currently have no GA funding for summer although the Honors College participates in New Student Orientation and maintains the coffee forum throughout the summer.	\$3,951/year	Adequate staffing for New Student Orientation and other summer initiatives.

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### IV. Planning Goals (University Goal Statements)

Dept.	Unit Goal	1 yr	2-6 years	New Resources Required	Cost	Source of Resources	Assessment Criteria	University Initiative
<b>University Goal 1: Promote the success of all students.</b>								
Honors	Student Development Specialist x 3		x	Salary	\$117,000	University	Number of students completing coursework for honors, increased recruitment activities. Participation of students from all colleges and number of students completing thesis.	1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.5, 1.6, 1.8, 1.13, also 3.1, 3.3, 3.5
<b>University Goal 2: Offer high quality academic and educational programming.</b>								
Honors	Lecturer Line 1	x	x	Salary	\$45,000/year (partially funded for yr. 1)	University	Addition of courses, creation of writer's group or other relevant student programming, number of students completing thesis.	2.3, also, 1.7, 1.8, 1.9, 2.1, 2.2, 2.7
Honors	Honors Faculty Fellows Funding		x	Summer Research Funding	\$30,000/year	University	New courses, improvement in diversity of majors.	2.3, also 1.5, 2.2, 2.7
Honors	Lecturer Lines – in the Honors College x 3		x	Salary	\$150,000/year	University	Courses offered, recruiting activities, number of students completing thesis	2.3, also, 1.7, 1.8, 1.9, 2.1, 2.2, 2.7
Honors	Assistant/Associate Dean	x	x	Unknown	\$0-25,000/year	University	Coordination of curriculum, increased recruitment activities.	2.3, also, 1.3, 1.5, 1.7, 1.8, 1.9, 1.10, 2.1, 2.2, 2.7
Honors	Lecturer Lines – outside the Honors College x 4		x	Salary	\$200,000/year	University	Courses offered, recruiting activities, number of students completing thesis	2.3, also 1.5, 2.2, 2.7
<b>University Goal 3: Achieve significant progress in research and creative activity as measured by national standards.</b>								

Honors	Same items as above: As new lecturer lines and honors faculty fellows are focused on both classroom instruction and increasing undergraduate research, additional measures could be added in the research area.						Students completing independent study, submitting URF proposals, presenting at conferences, papers submitted with honors students as authors	3.1, 3.3, 3.5
<b>University Goal 4: Provide the necessary services, resources, and infrastructure to support the university's strategic direction.</b>								