

Formation of the IUPUI Honors College Recommendations from the Academic Affairs Committee

In his 14 October 2008 State of the University Address, President McRobbie urged faculty to “make no small plans” in our goals and aspirations for the future. During that address, President McRobbie directed our campus to begin the development of a new IUPUI Honors College to commence operations at the beginning of the 2009/2010 academic year.

In May 2008, the Academic Affairs Committee (AAC) expressed support for the formation of an Honors College, tempered by strong reservations. We recommended that any development of an Honors College at IUPUI include a significant, parallel commitment to strengthening the infrastructure of undergraduate arts and sciences mission at IUPUI. We maintained that allocation of the needed faculty, administration, and support staff to launch and sustain a successful Honors College could not be justified when several schools on campus most responsible for the discipline-specific teaching of undergraduate students on campus (honors and otherwise), lack the quality resources, facilities, and space to provide these Honors Students with a high-quality undergraduate experience in their major and school. We recommended that development of an Honors College should proceed only with a sustainable and long-term campus commitment to improving the Arts and Science mission of IUPUI.

The question for our campus is no longer whether to proceed with the Honors College. Rather, it is how to develop the academic structure of an Honors College in such a way to ensure a high quality experience for IUPUI students. Establishing and maintaining a successful Honors College is not a simple matter. It entails high expectations for curricular experiences and significant, personal interactions between Honors College staff, faculty, and students. It obligates our campus to provide adequate and long-term support services for faculty and students. It requires the creation of new academic policies and practices, as well as adaptation of existing policies in the existing Honors Program. It necessitates a dedicated operational budget that includes not only the Honors College itself, but also directs resources to the schools on campus responsible for the discipline-specific teaching of undergraduate students on campus such that we do not diminish the resources available for and commitment to the non-honors undergraduate students at IUPUI. Finally, it requires strong leadership to successfully link these components to the greater academic goals of IUPUI, turning the vision of an Honors College into reality.

Now that the President has committed to the creation of an Honors College at IUPUI, with support from Chancellor Bantz and Executive Vice Chancellor Uday Sukhatme, the AAC recognizes the brevity of time involved in the formation of the IUPUI Honors College, and the need for the IUPUI campus administration to appropriately seek and receive support from various Faculty Council governing committees. ***To this end, we provide the following recommendations and request further information such that we proceed carefully to ensure that we are not making hollow promises to our students, faculty, or the greater IUPUI community.***

The recommendations below are beyond the scope of a single Faculty Council committee's mandate or charge. Input from Academic Affairs, Budgetary Affairs, Faculty Affairs, Student Affairs, the Undergraduate Curriculum Advisory Committee, and other appropriate committees should be simultaneous and ongoing, and should happen concurrently and in cooperation with the search for a new Dean. Monthly discussion at Faculty Council, Town Hall meetings, and other appropriate forums around the campus are also recommended.

Recommendations:

- 1) **Convene a Faculty Committee to Develop Guidelines for the IUPUI Honors College:** Significant work needs to be undertaken to develop the Honors College, properly supported with library staff and resources, laboratory prep staff, internship coordinators, and advisors. Our recommendation is that this work begin immediately (January 2009) to:
- 2) **Develop a Roadmap for the first 5 years of the Honors College:** As recommended in the IUPUI Honors Program Review (May 2008), we urge the Honors College Committee to work with the National Collegiate Honors Council (NCHC) to develop a strategic action plan or roadmap for transitioning the existing Honors Program over the next two year's time, with the ultimate goal of implementing full Honors College status within five years, as recommended in the Vision Paper. ***Such important academic decisions will be done in conjunction with a new Dean, but should not be left solely to his or her discretion.***
 - a. **Develop a framework for IUPUI Honors Courses:** Currently, there are no guidelines as to how or who determines honors courses to be taught, the content of courses, or the instructors. The Honors curriculum should reflect the current Honors Program offerings, the aspirations and best practices set out in the IUPUI Honors College Vision Paper, and be strongly shaped by the framework of the RISE initiative. It should also reflect the NCHC's Basic Characteristics of a Fully Developed Honors College, and outline how the Honors College will interface with other existing IUPUI Honors Programs, such as that in the Kelley School of Business. Additional guidelines may have to be established for graduation requirements and degree notations.
 - b. **Develop the Honors Faculty Fellow program:** Setting out the duties and responsibilities of Honors Faculty Fellows is a significant issue in developing the Honors College. "Manpower" limitations will be a significant issue to address and one that should not be minimized. With resources stretched thin at IUPUI, the ability of the departments to deliver traditional course offerings must not be compromised by a lack of experienced faculty. The Faculty Affairs Committee may wish to have oversight of how faculty will be recruited, selected, and compensated. Discussion must begin such that the Honors College Faculty Fellow designation is a desirable distinction, with recognition of the significant faculty time invested in mentoring Honors Students.
 - c. **Develop a plan for Honors Staff and Supporting Units:** The duties and responsibilities of Honors College staff and how they interface with other schools is an equally important issue. How will advising duties coordinated by Honors College staff, University College advisors, and School advisors? How can the use of important campus resources such as the library be fully integrated into the Honors College framework? IUPUI advisors, staff, library faculty and others should be involved in these discussions.
- 3) **Initiate a national search for an Honors Dean.** A search committee was convened in Fall 2008 to write the initial advertisement to begin the search in Winter 2009. We recognize that the search for a new dean will be concurrent with the development of the Honors College, and anticipate that she or he will champion this process to shape the new Honors College, using the program review and Vision Paper as a starting point.

This initial groundwork should begin immediately to allow time for Spring 2009 Faculty Council discussions. The AAC requests a role in oversight of this process, which should also have the involvement of students, advisors, and Faculty Council endorsement. The AAC also requests a significant role in the Honors College Dean search process during the interview stage. Further, consideration should be given to ensuring that other faculty committees (Faculty Affairs, Student Affairs) are represented in developing the Honors College Roadmap.

**4) Financial Planning: What is the structure of the Honors College Operating Budget?,
To be discussed publicly by Faculty Council in the soonest possible timeframe:**

While we have discussed general guidelines that will allow the campus to implement the formation of the Honors College (CTE funds, Enrollment Shaping, and existing Honors College funds), far more detail and clear data from the IUPUI Administration must be provided to the faculty regarding the yearly operational costs of the Honors College.

1. Costs associated with Honors College academic advisors, staffing and operation
2. Near-term and long-term space needs, and associated costs
3. The amount of increased administrative costs and how the costs will be funded
4. Costs associated with Honors College course instruction
5. Costs associated with faculty release time and how this affects each School in its ability to offer its existing curriculum to ensure that the non-honors students' education will not be negatively affected
6. How the Honors College budget fits into current / future budgets at the departmental, programmatic and/or institutional level.
7. An analysis of mechanisms to minimize administrative costs by studying the structure of those universities mentioned in the Vision Papers with large successful Honors Programs.

The AAC requests that Chancellor Bantz and/or Executive Vice Chancellor Uday Sukhatme meet as soon as possible with the Faculty Council for an extended discussion of these issues. We request a thorough examination of the operational budget by the Budgetary Affairs Committee or another appropriate faculty committee.

Summary

IUPUI faculty desire to be a partner in creating a strong Honors College that will attract some of the best students in the nation and around the world, while ensuring that the non-honors undergraduate experience is not diminished. In order to successfully launch the Honors College by the academic year 2009/2010, critical planning and decisions need to be begin immediately for the implementation process to begin. An IUPUI Honors College is an opportunity for our campus to enhance the collective IUPUI experience and contribute to increasing the University's reputation both regionally and nationally. By addressing the points contained in this document, we hope to provide guidance that will lead to the formation of a quality Honors College and to provide all IUPUI students with a high quality undergraduate experience.

Respectfully Submitted,

Members of the Academic Affairs Committee

Kathy Marrs (Chair), Teresa Bennett, Linda Brothers, Sopanis (Minnie) Cho, Scott Evenbeck, John Hassell, Sara Horton-Deutsch, Karen Janke, Bruce Kitchens, Teresa Molinder-Houge, Richard Nickolson, Bill Orme, Jeff Watt, Jamie Workman.

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