

SINCLAIR HONORS PROGRAM

ANNUAL REPORT



JULY 2009

Purpose

The Sinclair Honors Program adheres to the core values statement of the National Collegiate Honors Council, of which we are a longtime member: our program “values an atmosphere that promotes academic opportunity and challenge for Honors students and faculty. Within this intellectual environment, members of Honors communities demonstrate integrity, respect, and excellence. Through the Honors experience, participants realize enhanced personal, social, and intellectual development. The NCHC recognizes the importance of life-long learning and social responsibility in preparing individuals for an increasingly complex world. These beliefs and values are reinforced among member institutions through the collegiality and shared purpose of the NCHC.” (<http://www.nchchonors.org/aboutnchc.shtml>)

History

The Honors Program at Sinclair was established in the mid-1980s at the initiative of Dean Clifford Barr at a time when many community colleges were just beginning to develop Honors curricula. Dr Mary Navarro was appointed to convene a committee and undertake to develop an academic Honors Program within the Division of Liberal Arts and Sciences. The committee drew up plans to offer a variety of course offerings, both core and special topics. The Board of Trustees approved the program and an operating budget. The Honors Committee was formally established to assist the Director, oversee the program, develop criteria for Honors course proposals, and to recruit students and faculty for the program. Dr Navarro was also advisor to ΦΘΚ, the international honor society for two-year colleges, founding Sinclair’s ΝΠ Chapter.

We offered our first two courses (English 112 and Math 116) as pilots during Winter Quarter 1987. The program soon expanded to include courses in psychology, history, biology, humanities, and physics. During the 1990s we branched out into other divisions and departments, including fine arts, business, and communications. Interdisciplinary courses were first developed under a Sinclair Foundation grant for faculty planning. Interdisciplinary courses are an essential feature of any Honors program and are a key part of articulation agreements with four-year institutions. We currently define “interdisciplinary” as any HUM course and/or any cross-listed course.

The Sinclair Honors Program is an institutional member of the National Collegiate Honors Council (NCHC) and the Mid-East Honors Association (MEHA). We have articulations with Wright State University, Miami University, Heidelberg University, and Wittenberg University allowing students who complete our program to apply for special scholarships at those institutions.

Derek Petrey was selected to become Honors Director in 2008. Previous Honors Directors Dr. Thomas Martin (1998-2006) (Coordinator, History and Humanities) and Dr. Katherine Rowell (2006-2008) (Director, Center for Teaching and Learning) currently serve on the Honors Advisory Council.



Accomplishments for AY 2008-09

1. The Honors Program has expanded its online and remote-campus offerings. This year we saw 16 online contract offerings in Honors and 21 contract offerings between Huber Heights, Englewood, and Courseview campus. The number of offerings at Courseview has been very strong, with Beverly Drapalik (English) and Sam Sawaya (HGML/SWK) (Honors Faculty of the Year, 2008) leading the offerings.
2. The Honors Program Aide and three students attended the Mideast Honors Association Conference in Kalamazoo, Michigan in March 2009.
3. Honors Faculty of the Year was awarded to Chuck Freeland (English) in April 2009. Mr. Freeland was nominated by new Honors Scholar Akmaljon Ergashev.
4. For the first time, the Honors Symposium was held in partnership with Service Learning. The combined Honors / Service Learning Symposia have had several benefits: a) increased collaboration between Honors Societies, Student Services, Service Learning, and community organizations; b) the invitation of college Honors representatives and community partners draws students to the event; c) increased participation of students; d) increased foot traffic to events through use of the Library Loggia space. Estimated foot traffic for the Fall Symposium was 60 with over 50 registrants and the Spring Symposium had 100+ foot traffic with over 60 registrants.
5. An Honors student mixer pizza luncheon was held in Winter Quarter. Approximately 30 Honors students attended along with 40 walk-ins.
6. Students from the Honors Program were invited to speak as a panel at the 2009 Retention Summit. They provided insight into the motivation and challenges of Sinclair's diverse student population.
7. The process for students to register for Honors course work as initiated in 2008 has been well received by students and most faculty have continued to express positive comments about the process.
 - a. H1 Section numbers are given to stand-alone honors courses, meaning that all the students registered for the course are honors students. This year English Composition I, and III and Humanities 125 had this distinction. An academic advisor or the Honors Program Director may give electronic permission to students who are recommended.
 - b. Other courses are now listed in the electronic bulletin as "This course is available for honors." This means that the faculty teaching the course has agreed to allow an Honors contract for the class. Students are then to:
 - i. register for the course;

- ii. bring a copy of the fee bill listing the course to the Honors office, room 10-339;
 - iii. complete and sign the Honors Course Registration Eligibility Form in the Honors office. If the course is full, it is hoped that adding one student to the course for honors will be permitted by counselors.
 - iv. the Honors designation appears **only** on official transcripts.
- c. For any course not listed as available for honors, the student needs to contact the instructor to see if the instructor is willing to do an **honors contract**. Once the student has an honors contract and is registered for that course, the Honors Registration Eligibility Form can be completed in the Honors office. A student can successfully register for courses not officially listed as available for honors once they are registered for the course and the completed, signed and approved honors contract is filed with the Honors director. In other words, the instructor has to agree to do an honors contract with a student first and then the student can apply for Honors credit to be added to his transcript if he earns a final grade of A or B.
- d. For payload purposes, this process must be completed by the seventh day of the quarter. Specific dates are published on our website.
8. The Honors Medallion was awarded to 12 students who had completed all requirements of the Honors Program. This includes 5 Honors Courses, 20 hours of community service, and a portfolio.
9. Four Honors Scholars graduating this year have won substantial scholarships to Miami University and Wright State.
10. 18 new Honors Scholars were interviewed and added to the program.

Proposals for 2009-2010

1. Currently, Honors designation only shows on official transcripts. We would like to figure out a way for honors to be recorded on the unofficial transcripts printed from Web Advisor and campus kiosks.
2. The webpage needs to be completely revamped. Work on this will begin in August and will continue throughout the summer. Before this can be done, a paper copy of all current pages of the website must be preserved for archival purposes.
3. Increased student participation and expansion of the Honors / Service Learning Symposia.
4. Creation of an electronic system for portfolio management using ANGEL.

Our websites



The Honors website (first set up in 1996) is one of the most complete, at Sinclair. It includes course listings and syllabi, handbooks for faculty and students, various forms, full descriptions of the program's activities, and links to related programs such as Service Learning, ΦΘΚ, and Ohio Fellows. We

have recently added a “testimonials” page with comments and news from former Honors Scholars who have moved on to graduate school or the working world.

The my.sinclair website has been online for four years. Honors Scholars, students in honors courses and others who scored high on the Accuplacer test are members of the Honors ANGEL Community and receive updates and news via e-mail and announcements on the student homepage. This has proved to be a valuable recruiting tool for Honors courses. In addition, faculty may submit their contracts online through a simple and convenient one-stop form. One hundred seventy faculty are currently members of the Honors Program Community.

Recruiting

As with most Honors programs – particularly at nonresidential schools – our greatest challenge is informing students about the availability of Honors courses and persuading them to register. The most effective method of recruiting Honors students is through faculty announcing the availability of Honors course work in their classes and allowing students to add the Honors component after the first class has met. Our Honors Scholars also serve as ambassadors for the program, and several students have joined the program due to “word-of-mouth” advertising. The location of the Honors Program Office and the relocation of Phi Theta Kappa to Bldg. 10 have provided a prominence to both entities that heightens student awareness of programs and activities that support academic excellence.

Participation

Students may elect to participate in Honors two ways:

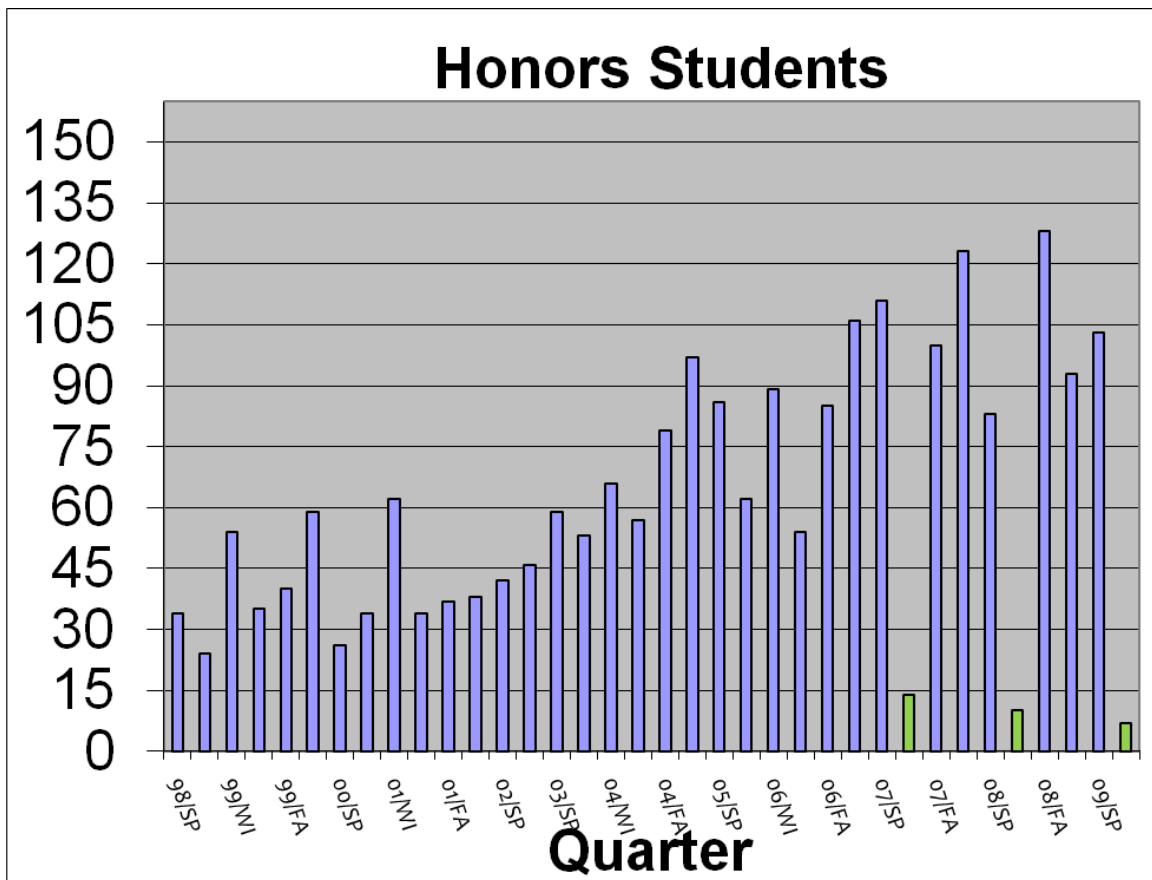
1. Honors Scholars Program

Students may apply to become Honors Scholars. Upon acceptance, scholars undertake to complete five honors experiences while maintaining an overall 3.25 GPA. Three of the five honors courses must be in different disciplines and one course must be Interdisciplinary Honors. In addition to other financial aid and scholarships, Honors Scholars may apply for up to six Honors Program Scholarships on a per-quarter basis during their time in the program. Honors Scholars are required to fulfill a Service Learning requirement before completing the program. Students will perform unpaid community service as part of a selected Honors course or through an Experience-Based Education (EBE) course.

2. Individual Honors Courses

Qualified students may enroll in individual Honors courses whether or not they plan to become Honors Scholars. To receive Honors credit, a student must earn a minimum of "B" in the course.

As of spring 2009, we have around 60 active Honors Scholars, “active” meaning “enrolled this academic year, all requirements not yet completed.” Since 1998, about 60 Scholars have completed all requirements and moved on to four-year institutions.



The green bars represent summer Honors enrollment, which did not start until 2007.

Honors Program Leadership

The Director's responsibilities include:

- maintaining and supervising the Honors Program Office in room 10-339
- recruiting Honors faculty
- recruiting students for courses and for Honors Scholars Program
- coordinating Honors courses
- maintaining student records
- handling applications for Honors Scholars and Honors Scholarships
- developing in-service programs for Honors Faculty
- planning the quarterly Honors Symposium
- working with Honors programs at our transfer institutions including Wright State University, Wittenberg University, Miami University, and University of Dayton

The Honors Council member is expected to:

- oversee the development of new Honors courses
- help recruit faculty to teach honors courses
- help identify students as potential Honors Scholars
- interview students applying for admission to the Program
- support and assist the Honors Director and ΦΘΚ advisor

- review applications for Honors Scholarships
- help identify new Service Learning opportunities
- serve on a subcommittee

The members of the Honors Council are:

- Director of the Honors Program
- Advisors of Phi Theta Kappa
- a representative of the Admissions Office
- an academic counselor
- faculty members who teach, or may teach, Honors courses
- a student member of Phi Theta Kappa
- up to three (3) Honors Scholars

The Program Aide

Our administrative assistant, Shirley Vogel, was shared with ΦΘΚ. This arrangement benefits both programs, helping them to work together more closely – both serve similar student populations, and there is overlap in membership and participation. Besides answering student questions and handling drop-in visitors to the Honors Program office, Shirley maintained the databases, created the program for the first Honors / Service Learning Symposium and took care of routine office tasks like filing, typing and copying.

After five months of employment, Shirley passed away from complications due to heart surgery in May 2009. Her funeral was well attended and she was sincerely mourned by the many students, faculty, and staff whose lives were touched by her. While we are currently planning to hire a new AA this fall, Shirley will be sorely missed.

Criteria for all Honors Courses

Regardless of the type of Honors course, all Honors Courses must meet the following minimum criteria:

1. A significant portion of the grade must be based on research and/or service learning, writing and presentation. Some form of presentation should be required in every Honors course.
2. Students will be expected to interact and participate fully. Percentage of grade to be based on participation is at the instructor's discretion (unless there is a departmental rule).
3. Examinations and assignments that require students to demonstrate a command of the vocabulary and concepts of the subject; critical analysis and synthesis skills; problem solving; and mastery of the English language.
4. For interdisciplinary courses, integration of two or more disciplines. A list of courses that will be considered interdisciplinary is being elaborated for this fall.

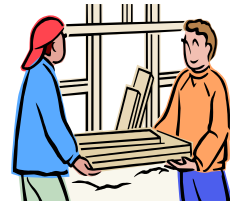
Financial Aid



We currently offer Honors Scholars Academic Excellence scholarships valued at up to \$400 per quarter for six quarters. The requirements are that students have an active FAFSA on file, have obtained a 3.5 cumulative GPA, and be enrolled for at least six hours for the quarter aid is requested. This arrangement has worked well for us; we are almost always able to award some money to Honors Scholars who request it.

Service Learning

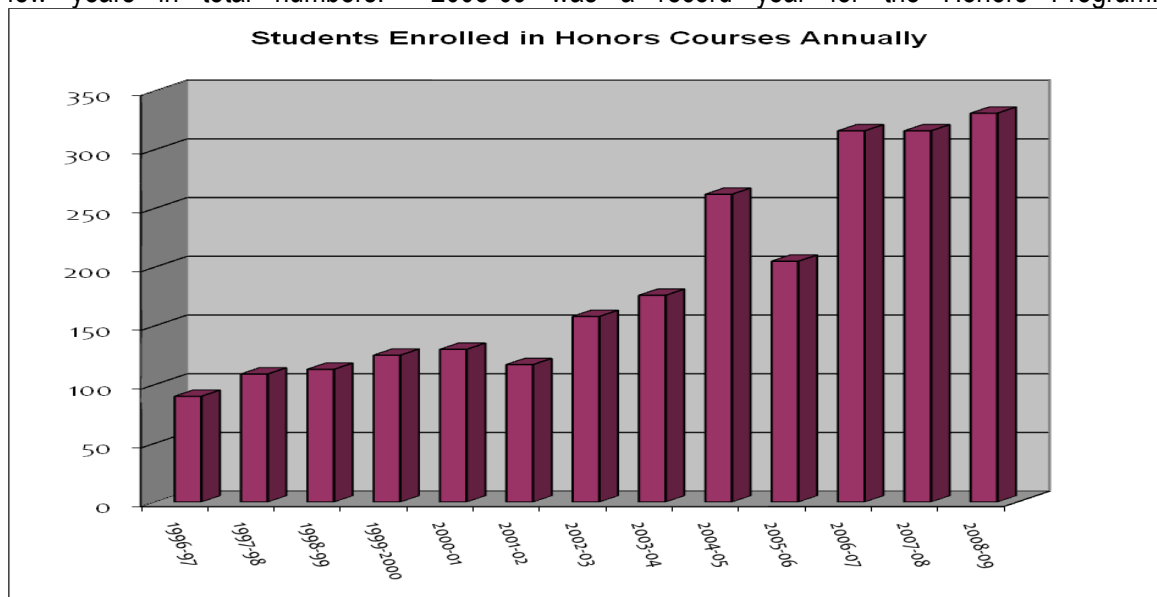
Beginning in January 1998, each student admitted to the Honors Scholars Program must complete a Service Learning project before "graduating" from the program. The Honors Council believes that Honors students, as leaders of tomorrow, should make a commitment to community service. Students can volunteer at a local homeless shelter, work with the Lincoln School mentoring program, participate in a service project at your church, volunteer at a museum or outdoor education center, at the Park District, join a Habitat for Humanity project, serve on the board of a nonprofit organization -- the possibilities are endless.



In the Honors Program, "Service Learning" is defined as a not-for-pay activity that benefits the public good. The Honors Committee has the sole right to determine whether a given activity fits this definition. This activity may be an internship such as that required by Ohio Fellows, but still must be not-for pay and for the public good.

Honors Course Enrollment

Due to Dr. Rowell's significant procedural improvements, enrollment in Honors sections has shown consistent and substantial growth. The chart below shows a steady gain over the past few years in total numbers. 2008-09 was a record year for the Honors Program.



Pictorial



Recruiter from Heidelberg University speaking with an Honors Student at the Honors / Service Learning Symposium.



Jessica Crosley (Sinclair '09) presents her Sociology Honors presentation at the Honors / Service Learning Symposium. Jessica also presented at the Mid Eastern Honors Association regional conference this year.



Recruiters from Miami University at the Symposium.



A seeing-eye dog (and her owner) catch the eye of President Johnson.



2009 Honors Faculty Chuck Freeland (ENG) with the President and Provost.