

**University Honors Advisory Council**  
**31 August 2015**

**Minutes**

Present: Bell-Werner, M.; Berger, C.; Dean, V. (guest); Hecht, K; Omondi, L; Seltzer, C.; Shustrin, K.; Smallman, L; Toberman, I.; Voss, E.; Ruckh, E. (chair)

I. Welcome to New Members

Welcome to Dr. Linda Omondi, Clinical Associate Professor of Nursing and Dr. Catherine Seltzer, Associate Professor of English. Dr. Omondi brings her rich background in clinical experience and Dr. Seltzer her keen sensitivity to how language generates meaning; both bring their experience teaching honors at SIUE.

II. Approval of Minutes of 1 May 2014

Due to the forgetfulness of the Director, minutes were not approved. We will take them up, if he can remember, at the next regular meeting

III. Update from Director

A. Website

We watched the second cut of short honors video intended for the main honors webpage. General enthusiasm. Eric reports that 10 other videos are being prepared for other pages in the honors website; draft text for the website is up. It needs to be reviewed. Eric asked people to consider volunteering to edit and revise the webpages. He would like a student member, the alum, and at least two others to be involved. This work to be done in October and November.

B. Fall 2015 Enrollment

Honors enrollment for AY15-16 was robust. We have an incoming class of approximately 170 honors students (approximately 100-110 applied directly to the program, separately from those admitted as Meridian or Provost Scholars, and 90 were admitted). If we are successful at winning approval of a new program, we will have to consider the cohort size; budget estimates are being prepared for two cohort sizes (100 and 150). An honors program of 400 would be about 3.5% of the undergraduate population; an honors program of 600 be about 5.2% of the undergraduate population. We had a brief conversation of how to fill those slots, revolving around whether to admit automatically provost scholars. Since we don't know whether the provost scholarship will be given another year, the conversation got ahead of itself. Eric reminded people that we will have time to work this out once we know if we will be able to move forward with a reformed program (we

really did get ahead of ourselves). Eric asked that some folks be prepared to work with him on this issue in Spring 16 and function as an admissions committee.

### C. Honors Reform

The executive summary has been provided. Eric pointed out the biggest change in the proposal since the end of Spring 15: the addition of a pro-seminar sequence. Eric explained how this idea emerged from rich conversations with Parviz and Denise. Hard copies of the entire draft of the reform proposal are being made and will be distributed, via campus mail, to the Council by the middle of the week. All draft components are available on the SharePoint site. Last pieces [sample courses of study for various majors (to see how the proposed honors program maps into them), first-second year retention numbers, graduation rates (both from Sally Boutelle), bibliography, table of contents] will be added through the month of September. The complete draft is also being reviewed by Dr. Denise Cobb, Dr. Erin Behnen, Dr. Tom Jordan, and Dr. Zenia Agustin.

Eric asked people to familiarize themselves with the whole of the proposal. He apologized for his wordiness (or he forget). He asked that people review the proposal for clarity, coherence, and integrity. He also asked people to think about prioritizing components of the program. Which pieces can be bargained away? Eric expressed his sense of priority: enhancement of the first-year experience and the creation of an capstone experience. Eric also wanted to guidance on the council's view of this matter by the end of September.

Charles and Catherine pointed out the importance of keeping class size small (below 25). In order to have the sort of intense conversations and engagement that we intend this is crucial. Charles pointed out it was also cheap. Eric agreed to remind the Provost of the efficiency of small classes. Subsequently, Eric remembered that teaching rhetoric is labor intensive (this he had forgotten). It will be pedagogically important to keep the 120 and 121 linked seminars capped at 20. He will work this into budget planning.

Ian Toberman has begun preparing a series of sample curricula, showing how the reformed honors program maps into majors across the campus. Dr. Voss requested such samples (if I remember he is a chemist) at the end of last Spring. Ian will talk about them to the committee at our next meeting. The good news is the proposed program is mapping well into majors, even giving small credit-hour savings (2-3 credit-hours). Ian also pointed out that with the proposed addition of the Pro-seminar sequence, there are honors 'contacts'/'experiences' just about every semester (good for mentoring to emerge). Once these sample curricula are prepared, they will be made available (at some point during September).

Formal review of the proposal will begin at our next regular meeting, 3-4.30pm on 14 September 2015 in the Provost's Conference Room.