

**2007-2008 Annual Report
University Honors Program
Division of Undergraduate Academic Programs**

Submitted by: Dr. Larry Blanton, Director

Programs:

There were no major changes in scope or volume of activities for the University Honors Program this academic year.

After several years of falling below our goal for the size of the incoming class, we welcomed an incoming class of 189 (39 over our goal) for Fall 2007. The goal for Fall 2008 was 175; at present we have 179 students in our incoming group. The long-term plan was to reach and then remain at an entering class of 200 with a steady-state population of 800. We may need to re-examine these goals in light of the planned increases in undergraduate enrollment at NC State.

Our entering groups have become increasingly male (from a nearly 50:50 split in 2003 to 66:34 male:female) and our college distributions are becoming increasingly unbalanced compared to the overall entering freshman class (which may not be a valid benchmark). It is possible that one trend (more engineers) is driving the other (more males), but the data have caught our attention and we will be examining the situation to determine possible contributing causes and how they might be addressed.

Spring 2008 saw the graduation of the last of the “pre-Fall 2003” UHP students. The program underwent a major refocusing that took effect in Fall 2003. It had been a continuing point of confusion to deal with two distinct groups of students with differing program requirements. The program requirements have remained essentially unchanged since Fall 2003. This Spring marked our second major graduation of students from the “new UHP.” In the coming year we plan to accomplish analyses of these first two cohorts.

Completion of the new UHP requires completion of a Capstone Research Project. Developing the parameters for the Capstone that will be applicable across all discipline is an ongoing challenge. As predicted, the Capstone is causing the most difficulty amongst the non-science and engineering students in the UHP.

Significant Achievements:

1. Thanks to the efforts of Administrative Assistant Dwayne Barnes, we launched a “Brick Campaign” to raise discretionary funds for the UHP. Flyers were distributed in the UHP newsletter and will also be included with the folders with the completion certificates of all our graduating students.
2. Our HON seminar seats were 96% occupied in Spring 2008 and current enrollment shows 98% occupancy for Fall 2008.
3. R.L. Blanton served once again (third year in a row) on the national panel for NSF Graduate Research Fellowships (one of only two NC State faculty members on any of the

panels in 2008; he was the only NC State panel member in 2007). This has provided him with insight into the NSF GRF process, which he has passed along to NC State students in one-on-one advising and through Fellowship Advising Office information sessions.

4. R.L. Blanton is co-editor with Roman Taraban (Texas Tech University) of *Creating Effective Undergraduate Research Programs in Science: The Transformation from Student to Scientist*, to be published on June 20, 2008 by Teachers College Press.
5. Our graduates continue to be highly competitive for highly prestigious graduate and professional schools. Our students were successful in competitions for national and international scholarships and fellowships. Both of NC State's 2008 Goldwater Scholars (and one of the two honorable mentions) are UHP students. Two of the four Hollings Scholars; 2 of the 5 NDSEG Fellows; and 8 of the 18 NSF Graduate Research Fellows are UHP students.
6. UHP staff members were engaged across campus (see appendix for list of committees and service activities)
7. We continued to implement technology to leverage our staff time and better achieve program goals. This included major server upgrades for our student database system, installation of an information panel in the Honors Village Commons Building, and continued development of the database for Phi Beta Kappa.
8. The UHP provided significant support for the administrative aspects of the campus chapter of Phi Beta Kappa. We engaged in discussions with the campus chapter of Sigma Xi and Phi Kappa Phi and will develop recommendations for how to best support these and other honorary societies on campus.
9. Six UHP students presented their research to senior adults through an ENCORE course at the McKimmon Center.
10. UHP students presented their research at a number of local, regional, state, and national events. Knowing how many did so is a continuing challenge that we are seeking to address! Two of the student presentations (at the Mid-Atlantic Popular Culture Conference in Philadelphia) involved research that was a direct outcome from an HON seminar.

Staff Growth:

Our year began with the loss of a key staff member, Katrin Baker, who left NC State in August 2007 for the Robertson Scholars Program (Duke/UNC-Chapel Hill). We conducted a successful search that resulted in hiring Tresa Barlage as Assistant Director with primary responsibility for the Honors Village. Tresa has previously been Katrin's counterpart in University Housing, so the transition was relatively painless, and we expect that Tresa's background in housing will contribute to a continued flourishing of the Honors Village and the UHP-University Housing Partnership.

The growth of the Honors Village and its critical role in the success of the UHP led to a decision to partner with University Housing to convert the half-time graduate resident assistant position to a full-time residential community director position. The terms of the partnership are:

1. University Housing and the University Honors Program will equally share the full costs of the position;

2. University Housing will be the official "home" of this position and will be the primary evaluator;
3. The University Honors Program will be asked for input into the annual evaluation process associated with the position;
4. A major point in the evaluation process will be the quality of the partnership (i.e., the work of this individual as a partner and someone who is supporting the partnership and assisting in its growth); and
5. Periodic review of the position itself (not the person) will occur every 2 years (or whenever the position becomes open, whichever occurs first). This review will include not only potential modifications of the specifics of the partnership agreement, but also consideration of continuing the shared funding of the position.

A national search was conducted (with UHP participation in the search). Jordan Luzader, currently a graduate resident assistant elsewhere at NC State, will assume the position of Honors Village Community Director on July 1, 2008.

The UHP has no plans for hiring new full-time employees. However, it should be noted that we only have three advisers for nearly 500 UHP students. With the continued growth of the program and additional demand for opportunity advising from our students, we need to develop a plan for additional hiring over the long-term. Additional demands upon our administrative staff would also be difficult to absorb.

We do need to plan for additional Honors Village Fellows so that each fellow will only have responsibility for a small group of incoming students. The cost of the Honors Village Fellows is shared by the UHP and University Housing, so increasing the number of fellows must take into account the budget processes of both units. We plan to increase the number of fellows by at least two in the 2009-2010 academic year.

At the moment, we have good diversity amongst our full-time staff: three males (1 EPA, 2 SPA) and three females (2 EPA, 1 SPA); three Caucasians (2 EPA, 1 SPA) and three African-Americans (1 EPA, 2 SPA). In all of our hiring processes we are mindful of diversity. We are careful to ensure that our search committees are diverse, that our job opportunities are made known to a wide audience, and that we follow carefully all university hiring procedures.

Recommendations and concerns for the future:

- The overall Honors situation at NC State needs the oversight of an Honors Council or similar body. There needs to be a common voice to address such things as appropriate recognition of Honors students, H-sections, H-contracts, program review, etc.
- The University Honors Program needs greater visibility amongst the senior administrators at NC State.
- The University Honors Program will never reach its potential for positive impact upon NC State and its students without significant flexible funding. Our students are amazingly talented and innovative, truly educational entrepreneurs. We need to be able to fund their dreams, ideas, and adventures. Doing so will reap rewards that will increase the stature of

NC State. Somehow we must be declared to be a high priority development target at the University level.

- The HON seminar series is a constant challenge in terms of obtaining instructors from the departments. Every semester this is a scramble and it occupies a tremendous amount of time. Some departments in high need areas will not offer seminars for us. We have no replacement for a long-standing seminar instructor who retired this Spring. We lost all of our Philosophy and Religion seminars for Fall 2008 and most likely for Spring 2009. Changing teaching load patterns in the College of Humanities and Social Sciences will add to the difficulties of obtaining instructors. There needs to be a major re-thinking of the HON seminar series, perhaps in the context of an overall first year seminar program. Or perhaps the HON seminar series can serve as a mechanism for increasing the number of interdisciplinary courses?
- The proposed enrollment increases for the University overall will necessitate a reconsideration of the UHP enrollment goals. What is the proper size of the UHP, not only in relation to the size of the overall entering class, but also in terms of delivering on our research and scholarship focus?
- The Visiting Scholar Apartment has been an ongoing challenge, in terms of filling it with someone who will actually do something with and for the students of the UHP.
- The UNC in Washington Program is a continuing challenge, costly both in money and time. It isn't simply a matter of publicity. Students are concerned about the cost and they are concerned about the required courses fitting in their Plan of Study. Help is needed in both of these areas.

UHP Examples for the Five University Focus Areas

Producing leaders for the state, nation, and the world

- A central goal of the University Honors Program is to produce future leaders. Our challenging academic program and our focus on research and scholarship in the discipline help our students to yield students who are competitive for national and international scholarships and fellowships and who are competitive applicants for top graduate and professional programs. Both of NC State's 2008 Goldwater Scholars (and one of the two honorable mentions) are UHP students. Two of the four Hollings Scholars; two of the five NDSEG Fellows; and 8 of the 18 NSF Graduate Research Fellows are UHP students.
- The Honors Village sponsorship of the Leadershape Conference for leadership development of undergraduate students for 60 NC State students, at least 5 of whom are University Honors Program or Honors Village students.

Creating educational innovation

- Our HON seminar series provides NC State faculty members with the opportunity to create new courses in frontier areas. Dr. Lamont Welch (Department of English) was a first-time HON seminar instructor, offering HON 293F, Poetry and Visual Culture, a direct off-shoot from his current scholarship. He indicated that his experience teaching the course had guided the future direction of his scholarship. Mr. Darby Orcutt (University Libraries) offered HON 294C, Comics and Religion: Visual Narratives of the Transcendent. The semester projects of two of the students from his previous offering of the course were accepted as presentations at the Mid-Atlantic Popular Culture

Conference in Philadelphia. Mr Orcutt thinks that the papers from the Spring 2008 course can be published as a reader on the subject. Dr. Larry Blanton (UHP Director) offered HON 296C: The Creative Process in Science--Realities, Comparisons, and Cultural Perceptions, giving him the opportunity to explore a new area and to create a new interdisciplinary course. Dr. Anna Bigelow (Department of Philosophy and Religion) offered HON 294R, Conflict and Religion, leading to the development of a new course in Religious Studies.

- Our experiential learning courses enable our students to be entrepreneurial in their education, crafting customized educational experiences. These include independent research projects, but also projects involving extension and engagement or service-learning activities.

Driving innovation in energy and the environment

- The Honors Quad hosted the Energy Conservation Challenge, educating students on energy usage and conservation by monitoring usage and handing out compact fluorescent light bulbs
- Our HON seminar offerings allow students to explore these areas, including Dr. Robert Bruck's HON 371 (Environmental Science and Technology), and special one credit-hour HON seminars offered by Provost Nielsen (HON 398Z: Energy--it's not your father's Oldsmobile anymore), Dr. JoAnn Burkholder (HON 398A: Issues in Aquatic Ecology), and Dr. Bruck (HON 398E: Current Challenges in the Environment- the Ethical Dilemma).

Appendix

Campus and other Engagement by UHP Staff Members

Larry Blanton (Director)

- Graduate School representative on two Ph.D. committees
- Member of Ph.D. committees of two students (1 in Plant Biology; 1 in Crop Science)
- Member, Advisory Board, Center for Excellence in Curricular Engagement
- Chair, Committee on Members in Course, Zeta of NC Chapter of Phi Beta Kappa
- Judge, NC State Graduate Student Research Symposium
- Panel Member, Fellowship Advising Office information session on STEM fellowships
- Campus Coordinator, UNC in Washington Program
- Program Director, Beckman Scholars Program
- Panel Member, NSF Graduate Research Fellowships

Tresa Barlage (Assistant Director)

Committee Memberships

- Member, Professional Growth Committee (PGC) for Division of Student Affairs – coordinating various developmental seminars for SA staff; personally coordinating 3 “Lunch and Learn” article discussions
- Co-Chair, Community Director Search Committee – co-coordinated the search process with Lisa LaBarbera
- Member, Assistant Director Search Committee – assisted in the recruiting and hiring of 2 Assistant Directors for University Housing
- Member, Teaching Fellows Advisory Board – providing input to scholarship program
- Member, NC State Leadership Advisory Committee
- Leader of the Pack, application reviewer

Service Activities

- Service NC STATE, Aug 25; Shift coordinator
- Advisor to Inter-Residence Council Fall Retreat to Beech Mountain, NC
- Women’s Center Chocolate Festival Volunteer
- Women’s Center Rape Crisis Hotline Volunteer
- Women’s Center “Student Bridges” mentoring programming, serving as mentor to undergraduate student
- Minority Career Fair Volunteer

Carolyn Veale (Assistant Director)

Committee Memberships

- DUAP Assessment Team (A-Team)
- Scholarship and Student Aid Committee (Chair)

- African American Coordinating Committee
- Open House Committee
- Recruiter's Roundtable
- Advisors Roundtable
- Wolfpack Welcome Week Committee
- UHP Assistant Director Search

Service Activities

- Chancellor Leadership Award Application Reviewer
- Office of Admissions (High Achieving Students Day at Open House)
- Park Visitation Day participant
- CALS WISE Visitation Day participant
- CALS Honors Visitation Day participant
- Engineering Open House
- College of Education Visitation Day
- Pre-College Program Visitation Day

Diversity Activities

- African American Coordinating Committee
- Wolfpack Chapter of the NAACP (Advisor)
- Facilitated a communication workshop for Multi-Cultural Student Affairs
- Advisement of African American Campus Student Leaders (Nubian Message Editor, Student Chief Justice)
- Meet regularly with a majority of the African American freshmen in the UHP on a monthly basis

Dwayne Barnes (Administrative Support Specialist)

Committees

- Building Liaison for Clark Hall (new appointment, Spring 2008)

Claude Raines (Business and Technology Applications Analyst)

Committees

- Triangle FileMaker User Group
- Raleigh/Durham Adobe Users Group
- Filemaker TechNet

Service

- ASPSA mentor

Marquette Russell (Administrative Support Associate)

Committees & Service

- Elected to the NC State Staff Senate