

Cypress College

Special Programs Quality Review Report

Program: Honors Program Coordinator: Kathryn Sonne

Names of those participating in the report: Penny Gabourie and Melanie Nabahani

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Program Mission:

The Cypress College Honors Program is designed to encourage talent and ability in highly motivated students as they begin their academic studies and prepare to transfer to a four-year college or university.

The goals of the Program are to:

- facilitate the transfer of highly motivated students
- attract high achieving high school students to Cypress College
- offer a student-oriented program, focused on cultivating the learning process through high quality, challenging teaching
- offer exciting curriculum that relies on faculty innovation and creativity

Core Measures:

Provide applicable information regarding trends in: unduplicated students, enrollments, FTES, course success rates, degrees/certificates, and transfer information.

Measures	Fall 2003	Fall 2004	Fall 2005*	Fall 2006	Fall 2007
Unduplicated students in Honors sections	127	129	196*	145	N/A
Enrollments in Honors sections	175	191	276	188	203
FTES in Honors sections	21.1	19.6	27.3	18.4	21.7
Success rates in Honors sections	71%	80%	79%	80%	N/A
Active program students	52	72	91	61	N/A
Transfer-level math- program students	32	50	65	40	N/A
Transfer-level English- program students	40	64	87	59	N/A
Both math & English- program students	27	46	64	40	N/A
Degrees- program students	19 [†]	22 [†]	28	10	N/A
Certificates- program students	5 [‡]	4 ^b	0	3 [§]	N/A

* In addition to the on-campus courses offered for fall 2005, two Honors courses were offered in the Semester Abroad Program. As a result, the overall enrollment is higher for this semester.

* One student earned two associate degrees.

† One student earned three certificates and one associate degree.

‡ Two students earned two certificates each.

§ One student earned three certificates.

Budget Trends. Provide trend information regarding the allocated budget / actual expenditures for the past several years of the program. Note any special circumstances below the table.

The Honors Program budget is actually \$7,661.00 annually. The figures below do not reflect the actual operating budget of the program. Beginning 2004-2005, the Accounting Office began transferring the expense for the director's release time and benefits to the Honors Program budget which inflated the figures. Prior to this time, this expense was not allocated to the Program budget.

	2003-2004	2004-2005	2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008
Allocated	\$8,399.00	\$23,969.00	\$25,084.00	\$26,561.00	\$27,573.00
Actual Expenditures	\$9,331.01	\$22,952.31	\$21,956.05	\$25,787.63	NA

These figures do not accurately reflect the history of the Honors Program budget. When the program was created by PAC in 1997, a budget of \$20,200 was recommended which included \$10,000 for the director's release time. The actual operating budget for the program was \$12,200. During the budget problems of 2003/2004 the operating budget was cut 31%. In 2004 – 2005 the operating budget was cut an additional 6% to the present level. Included in this allocation are clerical support, travel expense, dues, supplies and other operating expense such as sharing the cost of the copy machine located in the Transfer Center.

Narrative

Strengths: Use this section to briefly reflect upon major accomplishments of the program.

The Cypress College Honors Program is a member of the Honors Transfer Council of California (HTCC) which affords many benefits and privileges for our students. Primary among them are transfer agreements that give priority consideration for admission to universities such as UCLA, UCI, Chapman University, and Pitzer College. Students also have the opportunity to attend and present papers at the annual HTTC Student Research Conference held at UCI. Approximately 25 students attend each year. On average, Cypress College has three to four student presentations each year. Participants in the Honors Program also are eligible to apply for HTCC and university scholarships that are only available to Honors Program students. For example, several Cypress students have received the prestigious UC Regents Scholarship and one received the Wasserman Scholarship at UCLA. Currently, a Cypress College Honors student is attending graduate school with the assistance of a McNair Scholarship.

The Cypress College Honors Program was designed as separate sections of seminar style courses with a limit of 20 students in each class. This configuration supports close academic and social interaction with other highly motivated students and faculty. The courses are primarily general education and student development courses. There are Honors sections of classes available in all areas of the IGETC however; the Math department has not offered their Honors course for several years. The Programs has no plans to increase the number of Honors courses but individual faculty members have the ability to write Honors sections of their classes if they choose. The courses are open to all students who meet the stated prerequisites. Counselors encourage students to take Honors courses in their major area even if they do not choose to join the Honors Program.

The college offers between 10 and 15 Honors sections each semester. The number of classes offered depends largely on the academic divisions and the instructors. The Honors Director provides a suggested class list to the divisions, but the final decision is made at the division level. Several required courses are offered each semester. The rest of the courses are rotated to increase the variety of courses available to the students. During the semesters covered in this study, only two classes have been cancelled for low enrollment. One class with low enrollment was combined with a non-Honors section. Compared to the college wide totals, the Honors Program has a high fill rate each semester (see chart below).

Fill Rate*

	Fall 2003	Fall 2004	Fall 2005	Fall 2006	Fall 2007
Honors Classes	88%	88%	94%	80%	93%
College-wide**	No information available	73%	67%	65%	69%

*At the end of the add period

**College-wide data extracted from the Seat Count Summary Reports

The Honors courses are enhanced to include more depth or breadth of information and typically require more reading, writing and critical thinking. Although the courses are more challenging than non-Honors sections, the success rate is considerably higher than the college-wide success rate (see chart below).

Student Success Rate*

	Fall 2003	Fall 2004	Fall 2005	Fall 2006
Honors Classes	71%	80%	79%	80%
College-wide**	65.8%	63.5%	65.1%	64.7%

* Success rate is defined as the number of students who earn an A, B, C or Cr grade.

** College-wide data extracted from the Fall 2005 and Fall 2007 Institutional Effectiveness Reports

Cypress College students who complete the Honors Program requirements enjoy an unusually high acceptance rate to universities. For example, the acceptance rate for UCLA is approximately 40% for the average population. In contrast, the acceptance rate for Honors students averages 87% to 92%. Cypress Honors students have also been accepted to many other prestigious universities such as UC Berkeley, UCI, USC, Columbia University and University of Pennsylvania Wharton School of Business in addition to many California State Universities and independent colleges and universities in California. Each year several Honors Program students are nominated for Outstanding Graduate of the Year and several have been selected.

The Honors Program represents a significant investment by the campus. In return, the Honors Program students make a significant contribution to the campus and community. In fall 2005 Honors Program students volunteered 607 hours in service to such organizations as the Tiger Woods Learning Center, the Orange County Food Bank, the Orange County Election Board and Paint Your Heart Out as well as on-campus tutoring in the Math Lab and assisting with Kinderkaminata and Senior Day. In fall 2006, they volunteered 483 hours in similar activities. Other service activities include running a registration drive on campus to encourage students to register to vote and working to pass Measure X which provided funds for the construction on campus. Honors Program students have served as mentors for international students and the University Transfer Achievement Program (UTAP). They are also well represented in campus organizations such as Associated Students, Student Activities, Alpha Gamma Sigma, the Chronicle, and campus committees. In addition, several Honors students work as Supplemental Instruction (SI) facilitators and Peer Assisted Learning (PAL) tutors. The Honors Program students are often called upon to represent Cypress College at campus and community functions. For example, they have been speakers at Opening Day, Americana and community organizations.

Since the Honors Program imposes additional requirements that students must meet prior to transfer, many have been reluctant to become involved with Study Abroad. In spring 2005 the District offered the first Honors Semester Abroad. Honors sections of most of the classes offered were available. This semester filled immediately. Since that time, two other Semester Abroad Programs have offered Honors courses with good success.

Challenges: *Please provide any insight into significant challenges or obstacles that may have curtailed the success of the program. Identify the types of changes necessary for improvement.*

Two of the most significant challenges of the Program are the amount of release time for the director and lack of funds to secure adequate clerical support.

The Honors Program Director originally had 40% release time to administer the Program, participate in the national and state honors organizations, recruit students, and work with the divisions and instructors. During the budget difficulties in 2003-2004, this was reduced by 50%. As a result many goals remain unrealized. There is not enough time to conduct the daily business of the program, make high school visitations, build relationships with personnel, and recruit new students. Therefore, the Program primarily utilizes on-campus recruitment through the assessment process, the Honors

classes and instructor recommendations to attract new students which limits the growth of the Program. Several future activities were included in the original proposal for the Honors Program. Many of these have not been achieved due to the limited release time and lack of consistent clerical support. Restoration of the previous release time would help to realize the vision of the Program originators as "...the hub of the wheel of campus intellectual life".

The enrollment figures on page one indicate the number of active Program students who are enrolled in an Honors course and finish it successfully for each of the fall semesters listed. These figures are unduplicated and do not include all of the students participating in the Honors Program. For example, there are currently 148 students who are enrolled in Cypress College this semester who have been accepted into the Honors Program. There are a variety of reasons why the enrollment does not mirror this number.

- 1) Students can apply for the Program any time during the semester and many students take an Honors Program class to try it out and apply for the Program after finishing it.
- 2) Students who have taken several Honors Program classes may not find an Honors class that fits into their schedule or requirements for a specific semester and therefore do not enroll for an Honors class but still participate in the Program.
- 3) The Program requires a minimum of six courses in Honors. Therefore, students must take more than one Honors class each semester if they are to finish the Program in two years.
- 4) Since time limitations prohibit off-campus recruiting, many new students don't become aware of the Program until they are here and already enrolled in courses.
- 5) While the Program recommends that students take only two Honors courses a semester, some students take many more and finish the Program requirements a semester or two before they are ready to transfer and are not counted in the active Program students statistic.

While it has long been a goal to increase participation in the Program, with limited time and assistance, only so much can be accomplished.

Phi Theta Kappa is an international honor society that is often associated with Honors Programs. This organization offers many advantages for students:

*"Phi Theta Kappa's mission is two-fold: 1) recognize and encourage the academic achievement of two-year college students and (2) provide opportunities for individual growth and development through participation in honors, leadership, service and fellowship programming."***

Some of the benefits of membership in Phi Theta Kappa are scholarship opportunities, a leadership development program, civic engagement programs and a comprehensive multidisciplinary Honors Program for use as an honor course, seminar, or community colloquy. There are also opportunities for student involvement in research. The Honors Program has long recognized the benefits of establishing a Phi Theta Kappa Chapter at Cypress College; however, it involves a significant time commitment. Therefore, we have declined to participate. With additional release time, we could open up this opportunity to Cypress students.

** <http://www.ptk.org/about/>

An additional concern is the upcoming UCLA Transfer Alliance Program (TAP) review. TAP is an agreement that UCLA makes with community college Honors Programs whereby, students who complete the Program requirements are given priority consideration for admission to UCLA College of Letters and Sciences. Unlike other transfer agreements that are extended to all members of the HTCC, membership in TAP is individual. Colleges apply to become members and are expected to actively participate in TAP conferences and meetings. Every ten years UCLA conducts a review of the Honors Programs that are members of TAP to insure the quality of the Honors Program and the degree of campus support. Cypress will undergo a review in 2008-09. Similar to accreditation, the Program assembles a package of information that answers specific questions and organizes a site visit. The team reviews the packet and interviews students, faculty, administrators and Honors Program staff. They also evaluate the office and space allocated to the Program. The Program will receive a written report with suggestions that require a written response. This process is extremely time consuming. Since TAP is of vital importance to the Program students, preparing for and following up on the review will necessitate cuts in other Honors Program activities unless additional time is made available.

The Program has struggled with clerical support since its inception. Originally, the Program proposal suggested 10 hours per week as appropriate. Several methods were tried to fill this position. In the beginning, current permanent part-time workers increased their hours and took on the additional tasks. This resulted in three different employees in as many years. Then a part-time person was hired but, due to restrictions on the number of weeks a part-time employee can work, this left many weeks at the beginning and end of semesters with no assistance. When the budget cuts in 2003-2004 were implemented, we began using student workers some of whom have been excellent but they move on quickly. The end result is constant turnover, recruitment and training requiring close supervision which further eats into the director's limited time. This fall a former student returned to work for the Program, however, her 13 weeks are done and the Program once again has no clerical support in the office. In fall 2005, a request for a 50% clerical assistant I position was submitted but it remains unfunded. Consistent, professional clerical assistance would not only free the director's time but would also increase the quality and consistency of the Program record keeping. This would improve the Program in several ways. Student progress could be tracked more closely, early alerts could be initiated, and Program information could be disseminated to the feeder high schools.

Long-range Plan and Objectives

In the following section, identify general goals and specific, measurable objectives your area plans to achieve within the next three years. Programs should identify 3-5 goals, with at least one goal per year. Goals set for next year that require fiscal resources must also be submitted as a Budget Request and Action Plan (separate form).

I. **Goal: Improve the function and professionalism of the Honors Office**

Supports Strategic Direction (if applicable):

Direction 2, Goal 1: Improve the utilization of technology within the student services units to facilitate success for all students.

Direction 4, Goal 1: Improve communications and understanding among all members of the campus community.

Direction 5, Goal 1: Develop, strengthen, and participate in collaborative relationships with business, civic and community organizations.

Direction 5, Goal 2: Develop, strengthen and participate in collaborative relationships with other educational institutions.

Objective: Hire a 100% clerical assistant I to be shared 50% with Service Learning.

1.1. Person(s) responsible: Director and Dean

1.2. Timeframe: By the end of fiscal year 2009/2010

1.3. Fiscal resources needed (if not applicable, indicate "NA"): \$20,000

II. **Goal: Increase family involvement.**

Supports Strategic Direction (if applicable):

Direction 1, Goal 3: Encourage and improve the dissemination of information related to instructional improvement and student success.

Direction 4, Goal 2: Create and maintain a welcoming, caring and respectful campus climate.

Direction 5: Establishing and strengthening collaborative relationships with other educational institutions and with the communities we serve.

1. Objective: Institute a Family night to introduce the family members of the Honors students to the Program requirements.

1.1. Person(s) responsible: Honors Program Director and Counselor

1.2. Timeframe: Fall 2008

1.3. Fiscal resources needed (if not applicable, indicate "NA"): N/A

2. Objective: Create a family handbook

2.1 Person(s) responsible: Honors Program Director and Counselor

2.2. Timeframe: Fall 2008

2,3 Fiscal resources needed (if not applicable, indicate "NA"):

III. Goal: Increase Honors Program faculty training and evaluation.

Supports Strategic Direction (if applicable):

Direction 1, Goal 2: Develop new courses, programs and services, and instructional strategies to improve retention, persistence, and student success of an increasingly diverse student population.

Direction 1, Goal 4: Maintain and improve the instructional program and environment.

1. Objective: Create faculty handbook.

1.1 Person(s) responsible: Honors Program Director

1.2. Timeframe: Fall 2008

1.3 Fiscal resources needed (if not applicable, indicate "NA"): N/A

2. Objective: Conduct faculty evaluations.

2.1 Person(s) responsible: Honors Program Director

2.2. Timeframe: Spring 2009

2.3 Fiscal resources needed (if not applicable, indicate "NA"): N/A

Reminder: If fiscal resources are needed for next year's goals, submit a separate **Budget Request and Action Plan** for budget unit review.