

Response by the Honors Program Committee to the Salisbury University Honors Task Force Report

The HPC understands that the Task Force Report is designed with the intention to strengthen the Bellavance Honors Program. As the report mentions, funding for the program has not increased since 1994. Yet, at the same time the number of students increased by almost 100% and the number of Honors Graduates by more than 200% between the academic years 2006-7 and 2009-10. This, together with a host of other accomplishments shows the dedication of the past and present Directors, Assistant and Associate Directors and administrative staff of the program. The HPC response to the Task Force Report is guided by the principle that any changes to the program ought to increase the support to the academic and administrative staff. This is important in order to ensure that the Honors Program will be able to serve students well. With this in mind the HPC supports the changes recommended in the Honors Task Force Report but would like to offer the following changes for consideration:

- The name change from Bellavance Honors Program to Bellavance Honors College ought to be included in the timeline as item no 10. The HPC feels that it only makes sense to use the name “college” once the changes have been made.

Budget and other financial issues

- Honors scholarships for students should be cumulative. This means that students should be able to receive other SU scholarships on top of Honors scholarships and vice versa.
- While the HPC is in favor of encouraging international travel for all students, including Honors students, we recommend that the proposed funds for international education scholarships for Honors students go towards the general scholarships for incoming Honors student freshmen. The reason for this is that there are other scholarships available specifically for international education for which Honors students can apply.
- The Task Force report allocates \$48,000 for academic scholarships and \$10,000 for International scholarships. Even if these amounts are combined and used as academic scholarships this is most likely not going to be enough to compete with our peer institutions. There should be an analysis involving the admissions office that determines what kind of Honors students SU is attracting (and what kind of students we want to attract) and what kind of scholarships are required in order to attract these students.
- Faculty who teach contractual Honors Classes need to be compensated adequately.
- The Task Force report does not mention who is responsible for compensating departments for letting faculty teach Honors classes. The compensation has to either come from outside the Honors program (e.g. the Deans or Provost) or the necessary funds have to be included in the Honors College budget.
- The HPC recognizes the need for a National Competitive Scholarships Program coordinator on campus. However, it is not clear that the best place for this coordinator would be in the Honors Program/College. It is not in the best interest for the Honors Program/College to use its sparse resources for such a

position and also, such a position should not be seen as only serving Honors students, even though these students would be a natural pool from which to recruit potential scholarship applicants. Instead the HPC proposes to add another faculty position to the proposed positions of Director and Assistant/Associate Director. The current Task Force report does not significantly add time for administrative tasks that are of a purely academic nature, such as viewing student portfolios. This type of work has increased significantly as a result of the increase in the number of students in the program and having another faculty member would help with these tasks.

- It would be desirable to compare the current budget of the Honors Program with the proposed budget in the report. It is not clear by how much the current budget will be increased.

Housing

- The HPC recommends that there be dedicated upper class Honors housing available. In addition, the lounge area in Manokin Hall should be made available as a dedicated Honors space. The Director and Assistant/Associate Directors need to be involved in recruiting RAs for Honors housing.

Curriculum

- There should be Honors-only versions of particular required Intro classes (such as Biol 210, Hist 101, etc).
- Honors classes need to be small and discussion based. The proposed Honors Fellows ought to be required, in addition to the duties outlined in the Task Force report, to serve as mentors to other faculty in order to ensure that faculty unfamiliar with Honors teaching will be able to be involved in Honors.
- The availability of contractual Honors classes ought to be limited to a student's junior and senior year. There should be a limit on how many contractual classes a student may take within the Honors curriculum.
- The HPC strongly believes that the Honors curriculum ought to include a Capstone Project. While the Task Force report recognizes the need for funds made available for Capstone Projects for departmental Honors, there are no such funds proposed for the Honors Program/College. This should be rectified. Faculty mentoring Honors research must be compensated for their efforts.