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JNCHC

JOURNAL OF THE NATIONAL COLLEGIATE HONORS COUNCIL

Fall/Winter 2004

Vol. 5, No. 2

IN THIS ISSUE

THE PSYCHOLOGY AND SOCIOLOGY OF HONORS

WITH ESSAYS BY:

LAIRD R. O. EDMAN
AND
SALLY OAKES EDMAN

HEATHER L. BLYTHE

SCOTT CARNICOM
AND
MICHAEL CLUMP

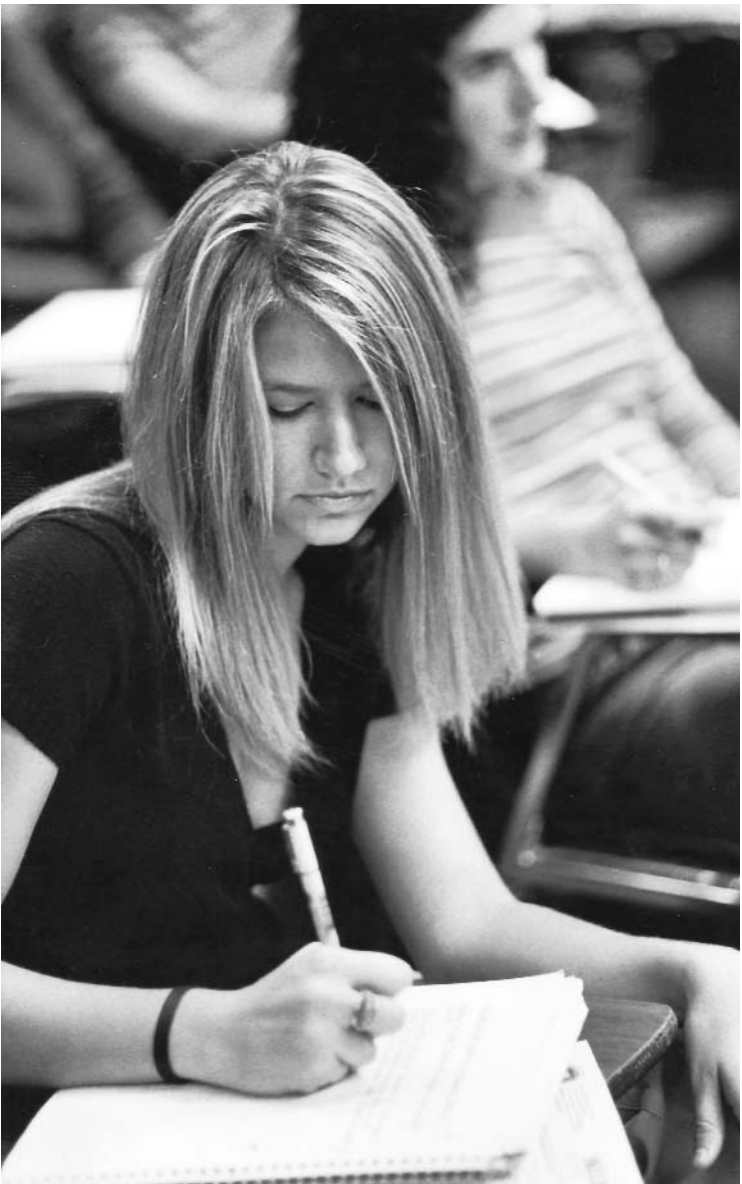
JOHN R. COSGROVE

MARCA V. C.
WOLFENSBERGER

ANNE RINN

ANNE MARIE MERLINE

GEORGE MARIZ



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VOLUME 5, No. 2

JNCHC

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**JOURNAL OF THE
NATIONAL COLLEGIATE HONORS COUNCIL**

A PUBLICATION OF THE NATIONAL COLLEGIATE HONORS COUNCIL

THE PSYCHOLOGY AND SOCIOLOGY OF HONORS

JOURNAL EDITORS

ADA LONG

DAIL MULLINS

UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA AT BIRMINGHAM

The National Collegiate Honors Council is an association of faculty, students, and others interested in honors education. Virginia McCombs, President, Oklahoma City University; Jon Schlenker, President-Elect, University of Maine, Augusta; Kate Bruce, Vice-President, University of North Carolina, Wilmington; Norm Weiner, Immediate Past President, SUNY, Oswego; Patricia Ann Speelman, Executive Director, University of Nebraska-Lincoln; John Madden, Secretary, Cerritos College; Philip Way, Treasurer, University of Cincinnati. Executive Committee: Larry Andrews, Kent State University; Richard Badenhause, Westminster College; Kambra Bolch, Texas Tech University; Akofa Bonsi, University of Alabama at Birmingham; Bruce Carter, Syracuse University; Danielle Coulter, Ball State University; David Duncan, University of Florida; Holli Hitt, Mississippi State University; Jocelyn Jackson, Morehouse College; Kathleen King, University of Maine, Augusta; James Knauer, Lock Haven University of Pennsylvania; Lydia Lyons, Hillsborough Community College; Nancy Poulson, Florida Atlantic University; Jacci Rodgers, Oklahoma City University; Stephen Rosenbaum, University of Nevada, Las Vegas; Charlie Slavin, University of Maine; Stephen Wainscott, Clemson University; Emily Zhitovovskiy, Long Island University, C. W. Post Campus.

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EDITORIAL POLICY

Journal of the National Collegiate Honors Council is a refereed periodical publishing scholarly articles on honors education. The journal uses a double-blind peer review process. Articles may include analyses of trends in teaching methodology, articles on interdisciplinary efforts, discussions of problems common to honors programs, items on the national higher education agenda, and presentations of emergent issues relevant to honors education. Submissions may be forwarded on disk or (preferably) by e-mail attachment. Submissions and inquiries should be directed to: Ada Long, JNCHC / 316 Cook Street, Saint George Island, FL 32328. Phone: 850.927.3776. E-mail: adalong@uab.edu

DEADLINES

March 1 (for spring/summer issue); September 1 (for fall/winter issue)

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CALL FOR PAPERS

The *Journal of the National Collegiate Honors Council* is now accepting papers for the fall-winter 2005/2006 issue, which will focus on the question “What is Honors?” We are interested in articles that explore, for example, what distinguishes honors curricula, students, faculty, classes, activities, standards, or requirements from the rest of the institution in which an honors program or college resides. We are most interested in submissions that tackle the question of what we mean by “Honors.”

THE DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSIONS IS SEPTEMBER 1, 2005.

The following issue (**deadline: March 1, 2006**) will be a general-interest issue.

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

We will accept material by e-mail attachment (preferred) or disk. We will not accept material by fax or hard copy.

The documentation style can be whatever is appropriate to the author’s primary discipline or approach (MLA, APA, etc.), but please avoid footnotes. Internal citation to a list of references (bibliography) is preferred; endnotes are acceptable.

There are no minimum or maximum length requirements; the length should be dictated by the topic and its most effective presentation.

Accepted essays will be edited for grammatical and typographical errors and for obvious infelicities of style or presentation. Variations in matters such as “honors” or “Honors,” “1970s” or “1970’s,” and the inclusion or exclusion of a comma before “and” in a list will usually be left to the author’s discretion.

Submissions and inquiries should be directed to:

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DEDICATION



BERNICE BRAID

Nobody has done more for the NCHC, for honors education, or for innovative teaching than Dr. Bernice Braid. She has been a leader and inspiration for almost three decades on her home campus, in the NCHC, throughout this country, and beyond. At Long Island University, Brooklyn, she is Professor of Comparative Literature, Dean of Academic and Instructional Services, and Director of the University Honors Program. In honors, she has been president of both the NCHC and the Northeast Region. More years than not since 1976, she has served as a member of the NCHC Executive Committee as well as chair of the Honors Semesters Committee. She has served as a consultant, evaluator, or workshop leader at over fifty colleges and universities in the United States and several more in other parts of the world such as Prague, Crete, and Alcalá de Henares. Students all over the world have caught fire about cultural studies through participation in one of the 30+ honors semesters she has organized, and faculty have honed their teaching skills in 20+ of her faculty institutes. Any member of NCHC during the last three decades knows Bernice as the founding mother of City as Text©. Thousands have experienced cities with Bernice's maps, handouts, instructions, and insights as their guides, and hundreds have returned to their home campuses to adopt her learning strategies in their own programs and courses. Bernice was practicing and teaching "active learning" for at least two decades before the rest of the country caught up with her, and—in this as in all things—Bernice has kept the NCHC in the forefront of excellent education. Her keen intellect and superhuman energy are the impetus behind most of NCHC's finest achievements, and we dedicate this issue of *JNCHC* to her with gratitude and pride.

DAIL W. MULLINS, JR.

Editor's Introduction

DAIL W. MULLINS, JR.

As indicated on the cover, the theme of this issue of the *Journal of the National Collegiate Honors Council* is "The Psychology and Sociology of Honors." By addressing the social and behavioral sciences, the content herein might seem designed to complement two previous issues which focused on academic subjects in honors education: the natural sciences (Vol. 1, No. 2) and the creative arts (Vol. 2, No. 2). In those thematic issues, most if not all of the articles dealt with organizational, philosophical, and pedagogical matters related to honors coursework in the respective disciplines themselves. While the social and behavioral sciences could obviously be addressed in this fashion, the editors had in mind in this instance a more direct application of these fields to honors students, faculty, and the culture of honors itself. Thus, after conferring with the editorial board, a "Call for Papers" was issued requesting submissions which dealt with such matters as "...student demographics; personality profiles [of honors students], perhaps pre- and post-admission; the 'honors environment'; campus-wide perceptions of honors programs and students; standardized tests; honors vs. non-honors curricula; 'academic dishonesty' in honors courses and programs, including plagiarism; and service learning experiences in honors."

To be honest, much of my own interest in the broad theme of "psychology and sociology" as applied to the culture of honors—and that of academia itself—stems from a number of studies and findings that have appeared both in the popular press and various scholarly publications over the past few years about increased rates of drug and alcohol abuse, depression, and even suicide among college students; about a growing atmosphere of "ruthless competitiveness" among students, and also non-tenured faculty, on college and university campuses; about a generation of students who volunteer huge amounts of time in various "service learning" activities and yet shun political involvement and the voting booth; about educational institutions which have turned the running of their facilities—their faculty, programs, policies and, in some cases, their curricula—over to a class of roving professional administrators and hired consultants; and especially about increased incidents of academic dishonesty and plagiarism among college students—particularly of the so-called "cut-and-paste" variety—abetted, of course, by the Internet and the ready availability of masses of information on virtually any topic, 24/7. Personalizing this interest even more was the fact that our own Honors Program at UAB had been forced to deal with a few incidents of "cut-and-paste" plagiarism over the past few years, and I had heard stories of similar and growing problems from other faculty at UAB and from honors administrators at other institutions.

The publication last year of the much-awaited "exposé" of college life by Tom Wolfe—the awkwardly-titled *I Am Charlotte Simmons*—seems to have added fuel to

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the fire, at least in the media, emetically producing a new wave of op-ed articles, book reviews, and pop cultural commentary now focused not just on students but the whole of the academy, including faculty and administrations, athletic programs, the “intellectual climate” of our campuses, and the general overall health of higher education. Opinions were mixed, of course, some treating Wolfe’s bawdy rendering of college life with a shrug and collective “duh!” and others calling for a long overdue and expansive review of the entire scandalous system.

While unrelated to the fictional exploits of Ms. Simmons at DuPont University but reflective of a growing public concern about campus life and especially the political atmosphere on our nation’s colleges and universities, some state legislators—most notably in Florida—have attempted to enact laws which would allow students to sue their professors and educational institutions for presenting “biased” (read, for the most part, liberal) opinions as fact in the classroom. The Florida act never made it out of committee although similar kinds of legislation requiring teachers in public schools—though not yet in colleges and universities—to “acquaint” students with non-Darwinian views of evolutionary matters may be close to passage in some states, including Alabama.

Most faculty and administrators in Honors today—and in higher education generally—are surely aware of a variety of subtle and not so subtle changes which have taken place not only in their work environment but also seemingly within the personalities and attitudes of their students and, to some extent, their faculty colleagues and administrators. Presumably we all have our own opinions about the precise nature of these changes, their relative importance, and their likely cause. But the reality of such change seems undeniable.

In his recent two-part essay in *The New York Review of Books* (“Colleges: An Endangered Species,” March 10 and 24, 2005), Andrew Delbanco, Levi Professor of Humanities at Columbia University, addresses these changes in the academy within the broader context of social, demographic, political, and economic changes in the larger society. These, in turn, have imposed pressures on institutions of higher learning to abandon their traditional roles as transmitters of a liberal and moral education and to embrace a host of new values, chief among these being “freedom” and “diversity,” as well as a re-definition of universities and colleges as primarily “job preparation” schools. The palpable changes felt by faculty today may simply reflect the machinations of their institutions in trying to deal with these pressures, as well as the social and political backlash of skepticism which has come from the public, who pay the bills, and their political representatives.

For myself, I have always been partial to the broad notion that—as our nation has accelerated its socioeconomic transition from an industrial to a post-industrial society with the concomitant shift from a labor-intensive to an education-intensive economy—the college diploma has become increasingly important, even mandatory, for individual economic stability and social mobility. Not unexpectedly, with the vastly increased numbers of students now dependent upon at least four more years of education, the institutions which house and dispense this learning—their faculties and finances, students and cultures—have come under increased scrutiny by the larger society. And the larger society does not like everything it sees.

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Colleges and universities themselves, responding to this increased attention, have instituted a multitude of reforms and “consumer-friendly” additions to campus environments, mainly in the form of “Centers”—multi-million-dollar “activity” centers which fairly resemble a Carnival cruise ship, replete with rock-climbing walls, swimming pools, indoor tracks and exercise rooms, restaurants, and even store outlets normally found in shopping malls; “student health” centers, “women’s health” centers, “Catholic student” centers, “Baptist student” centers, “black student” centers, “gay and lesbian student” centers, etc., all reflective of the sadly balkanized nature of today’s eclectic student population; subscriptions to “media” centers which allow dormitory residents the ability to download unlimited numbers of songs and movies from the Internet, this to stave off a host of recent lawsuits filed by the relevant industries against colleges and universities; as well as academic centers of one stripe or another, the Center for Human Values at Princeton and the Institute for Ethics at Duke being two examples cited by Delbanco in his essays. “But what can it mean,” he asks, “that thinking about [values and] ethics has become mostly an extracurricular activity?”

All of this can perhaps be related to the honors experience by asking how such programs themselves have managed to adjust to the tide of commercialization in higher education with its many attendant problems and promises. Has the new value of diversity, for example, brought its “clustering” phenomenon into our programs as well, or can this be mitigated, as Delbanco suggests, by attention to the classroom first, and preferably those small and intimate enough to allow students the opportunity to educate themselves “by knowing opposite lives”? Have honors programs and colleges escaped the tiresome bothers of plagiarism and cheating within their ranks, or have they too had to invoke stricter rules and Google searches of written assignments? And how have our programs handled the phenomenon of increased competitiveness among our students while encouraging excellence and independent study within their ranks?

Although the submissions received for this volume of *JNCHC* certainly did not exhaust or even touch every facet of the many complex issues raised by an invitation to address the “psychology and sociology of honors,” a number of interesting findings and ideas on this theme can be found within the pages that follow. Especially prevalent are papers which explore both real and putative differences between honors and non-honors students—whether cognitive, attitudinal, or behavioral in nature—findings which should be of both academic and practical interest to honors instructors and administrators.

Laird R. O. Edman and Sally Oakes Edman (“Emotional Intelligence and the Honors Student”), a husband and wife team at Northwestern College in Iowa, have attempted to correlate the psychological construct of emotional intelligence with the decision of eligible first-year students either to join or not to join the honors program at a selective, private, liberal arts college. Their findings, which confirm such a correlation, are presented within a larger discussion of the concept of emotional intelligence, including its history, veracity, and possible relevance to honors educators.

Heather Blythe (“Ethics on an Honors College Campus: An Analysis of Attitudes and Behaviors of Honors versus non-Honors Students”), who graduated

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from Lynchburg College this May, discusses her survey of the attitudes of honors and non-honors students about various aspects of the "academic dishonesty" issue, including the effectiveness of an "honor code," the proclivity toward Internet plagiarism among students, and their inclination to report or ignore offenders. Somewhat reminiscent of my own college experience in the mid-'60s, Blythe found, among other things, that many students generally think "buying term papers" is cheating but are reluctant to "snitch" on classmates (although honors students are apparently less reluctant to do so.) As in the Edmans' study, Blythe attempts to correlate her findings with student personality traits and temperaments.

Continuing the theme of personality studies of honors and non-honors students, Scott Carnicom and Michael Clump ("Assessing Learning Style Differences Between Honors and Non-Honors Students"), assistant professors of psychology at Marymount University in Virginia, attempt to "uncover, identify, describe, and define" some of the hypothesized differences in thinking and learning between honors and non-honors students. While there appears to be general agreement among educational psychologists that honors students, as a group, tend to be more autonomous, responsible, and motivated than their non-honors classmates, few empirical studies have been carried out to clarify purported cognitive differences in thinking and learning among the two groups.

John Cosgrove ("The Impact of Honors Programs on Undergraduate Academic Performance, Retention and Graduation"), who recently received his doctorate in higher education from the Pennsylvania State University, reports on his comparative study of students who successfully completed the requirements for graduation in honors and those who failed to do so at three Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education universities. Both sets of students are compared to a third group who possessed comparable pre-college academic credentials but who, for one reason or another, chose not to participate at all in an honors program. Assuming that his results can be generalized to the honors experience outside Pennsylvania, two findings should be of particular and perhaps surprising interest to honors faculty and administrators: (1) only twenty-five percent of students who begin in an honors program actually graduate from it; and (2) "...partial exposure to the honors program does not significantly enhance academic performance, graduation rates, time to degree, nor length of enrollment beyond what is achieved by other high-ability students."

Adding a European perspective to these matters, Marca V. C. Wolfensberger ("Qualities Honours Students are Looking for in Faculty and Courses"), director of the Honours Programme at the Faculty of Geosciences at Utrecht University, the Netherlands, asks whether the "theory-based learning context" they employ in her honours programme, with its emphases on autonomy, competence, and "relatedness," both among students and between students and faculty, is actually what students are looking for in an honours experience. Her findings reveal that prospective honours students generally seek friendly and inspirational faculty, freedom of choice in their honours coursework, and a challenging environment, though not in a competitive context. These results are compared and contrasted with those of non-honours students.

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In her article “Academic and Social Effects of Living in Honors Residence Halls,” assistant professor of psychology at Western Kentucky University Anne Rinn first surveys some of the studies which have shown that, for students generally, living in residence halls as opposed to off-campus housing is positively correlated with both academic and social development. She then extends this research to honors residence halls, where the findings are less clear, especially with regard to social effects. Although honors residence facilities do seem to enhance “...persistence and eventual graduation,” it is less obvious that honors dorms help with “...increases in social adjustment...a sense of community...[and decreased] feelings of isolation.” Because, as Rinn notes, honors students “...may experience the same feelings of seclusion as other minority groups,” further studies need to be conducted on these phenomena.

Anne Marie Merline (“Creating a Culture of Conducive Communication in Honors Seminars”), a lecturer in the University Honors Program at Colorado State University, discusses her experiences dealing with controversial topics in the classroom, especially those which arise from questions or comments by students during class that may be deemed “insensitive” or even inflammatory by other students and the instructor. In an effort to make use of what is usually referred to as a “teachable moment” following one such incident, Merline had her class read and study an on-line lesson plan on “cooperative communication” developed as an aid to instructors in resolving conflicts, encouraging dialogue, and communicating more “creatively.” Her descriptions of these awkward moments will be familiar to anyone who has spent time in front of a class of diverse students.

In the turbulent wake of the recent controversy over comments made by Lawrence Summers, the president of Harvard University, about the gender gap in science and engineering, George Mariz (“Women in Honors Education: The Case of Western Washington University”), director of the Honors Program at Western Washington University, explores some aspects of the broader issue of gender differences in higher education, at least as reflected in his honors program: What majors do Honors women choose, and why?; do women view their general education in ways different than men?; and, in a query which could be related even more directly to Summers’ comments, are there uniquely feminine issues as regards their educational choices? Although of admittedly limited size and scope, Mariz’ essay, which begins with an interesting and thorough review of the rise of women as students in American higher education, discusses some interesting findings which, if they cannot be found to support the provocative suggestions that Summers advanced, do not negate their possibility either. Well written and argued, Mariz’ article is one of those—too infrequently seen in *JNCHC*, in my opinion—which dare to approach one of those spaces “where angels fear to tread.”

LAIRD R. O. EDMAN AND SALLY OAKES EDMAN

Emotional Intelligence and the Honors Student

LAIRD R. O. EDMAN AND SALLY OAKES EDMAN

NORTHWESTERN COLLEGE, IOWA

ABSTRACT

Over the past decade the construct of emotional intelligence has captured the public imagination and become a hot topic in the popular media. While the extravagant claims for the importance of emotional intelligence have little empirical support, evidence has been growing for the existence of the construct. This study is an attempt to relate emotional intelligence to the decision of first-year college students to enroll in an honors program.

A measure of emotional intelligence was devised made up of four different Likert-type scales measuring different components of the construct. These scales were administered to 72 freshman students at a selective, private, liberal arts college. All 72 students were eligible for the college's honors program, but only 44 students chose to be a part of the program. Discriminant analysis confirmed that emotional intelligence, as measured by these 4 scales, was a significant predictor of the decision to enroll in the college honors program, predicting honors program involvement 76% of the time. This research indicates that differences in emotional intelligence may be a significant factor discriminating between honors students and their equally academically adept peers.

Few areas of psychology have generated as much popular interest and hyperbolic distortion as emotional intelligence. *Time* and *Newsweek* magazines have run cover stories on emotional intelligence and Oprah Winfrey has dedicated a show to the topic. The *Utne Reader* and *Parade Magazine* have both published "tests" of emotional intelligence which result in an "emotional quotient" that is, presumably, more predictive of real life outcomes than one's intelligence quotient. The International Society of Applied Emotional Intelligence exists to help the world raise its "EQ" and thus increase global harmony. *The Journal of Principled Conscience* offers "EQ activity books" for sale to help parents raise their children to have higher EQ. School curricula in over 700 school districts have been developed to help raise children's EQ (Goleman, 1997). Emotional intelligence is big business for consultants and education gurus. However, as a useful, valid psychological construct, emotional intelligence has a much more muted history.

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND THE HONORS STUDENT

The relationship of reason with emotion has been a topic of inquiry for millennia. Commonly, emotion has been thought to be an impediment to reason, while some kinds of decision-making and ways of knowing were thought to be opaque to reason and known only to “the heart” (Mayer, Salovey, & Caruso, 2000). However, while Pascal wrote “The heart has its reasons of which reason knows not” (1966, p. 113), it may be that the reasons of the heart are an integral part of the mind’s ability to reason.

The genesis of the emotional intelligence construct is located in the history of intelligence theory and the study of individual differences. Most research on emotional intelligence uses an understanding of intelligence that follows Wechsler’s (1987) definition of intelligence as the aggregate or global capacity of the individual to act purposefully, to think rationally, and to deal effectively with the environment. This definition of intelligence is mirrored in the more recent definition of intelligence proposed by the American Psychological Association Task Force on Intelligence (Neisser, Boodoo, Bouchard, Boykin, Brody, Ceci, Halpern, Loehlin, Perloff, Sternberg, & Urbina, 1996): intelligence is the “ability to understand complex ideas, to adapt effectively to the environment, to learn from experience, to engage in various forms of reasoning, and to overcome obstacles by taking thought” (p. 77).

This concept of general intelligence focuses on a person’s overall intellectual functioning and has often been used to successfully predict academic and occupational achievement (Matarrazzo, 1972; Neisser, et al., 1996; Ree & Earles, 1992). However, it says little about the specific abilities of which such overall intellectual functioning is comprised. Therefore, a number of psychologists have sought to divide general intelligence into more specific intelligences that represent either groups of abilities or specific abilities (e.g., Cattell, 1963; Ceci, 1990; Gardner, 1983; Guilford, 1967; Sternberg, 1988; Thorndike, 1920; Wechsler, 1987). One early and influential division of general intelligence posits three classes of abilities (Mayer & Geher, 1996; Thorndike, 1920). These three classes of intelligence typically involve 1) abstract, analytic, and/or verbal intelligences, 2) mechanical, performance, visual-spatial, and/or synthetic intelligences, and 3) social and/or practical intelligences.

This third class of intelligences, the social intelligences, has been the least well studied of the three, perhaps because it has been the hardest to distinguish, theoretically and empirically. As a result, the psychological study of intelligence and subsequent tests of intelligence growing out of that study have tended to focus on “verbal” and “performance” elements, a focus with which many researchers and lay people are dissatisfied (Bar-On, 1997; Ciarrochi, Chan, & Caputi, 2000; Cooper & Sawaf, 1997; Goleman, 1995; Mayer & Salovey, 1997; Salovey & Mayer, 1990). Over the past two decades, however, the construct of social intelligence has been gaining more attention (Cantor & Kihlstrom, 1987; Gardener, 1983; Mayer & Geher, 1996; Sternberg & Smith, 1985). The idea of emotional intelligence is a part of this resurgent interest in social intelligence.

In the late 1980s two psychologists, Peter Salovey at Yale and John Mayer at the University of New Hampshire, began developing a construct that would allow them to organize the growing body of research on the importance of understanding and

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using emotions and emotion-based information. Their construct, emotional intelligence, was first introduced in a somewhat obscure journal, *Imagination, Cognition, and Personality* (Salovey & Mayer, 1990), because no larger, more prestigious journals would accept their article (Salovey, 1998). In their 1990 article, Salovey and Mayer presented a conceptual framework for emotional intelligence and reported a study employing the first empirical test of emotional intelligence. In a follow-up editorial in 1993, in the journal *Intelligence*, Mayer and Salovey argued that emotional intelligence is an actual intelligence and that it may have better discriminant validity from general intelligence (that is, be a more completely separate construct) than the older, more common construct of social intelligence.

In 1995, Daniel Goleman, a science journalist, published a book that would go on to become the largest selling non-fiction book dealing with a psychological topic ever, *Emotional Intelligence*. In this book Goleman used Mayer and Salovey's work, but went far beyond Mayer and Salovey's rather modest suggestions about the existence and potential usefulness of the construct of emotional intelligence. The cover of Goleman's book made the audacious claims that emotional intelligence "redefines what it means to be smart" and "can matter more than IQ." Goleman's book was published a year after Murray and Herrnstein's controversial *The Bell Curve* (1994). Perhaps the American public was ready for a comforting antidote to Murray and Herrnstein's assertions in *The Bell Curve* about the genetic inevitability, immutability, and profound influence of IQ. Goleman's definition of emotional intelligence seemed to include personality factors that were not related to analytic IQ but which helped people get along in the world. Goleman reassured us that nice guys can finish first and that "book-smarts" aren't all they are cracked up to be.

While Goleman started an industry of self-help books, business consulting opportunities, and a new bandwagon for educators, Mayer, Salovey, and a number of other psychologists continued to refine and research the construct of emotional intelligence. Salovey and Mayer (1990) originally defined emotional intelligence as a type of emotional information processing that includes accurate appraisal and expression of emotion in the self and others; effective regulation of emotion in the self and others; and utilization of emotion in adaptive ways. The early definition used a two-part approach, first relating the general processing of emotional information and second specifying the abilities involved in such processing. Forming the groundwork for the emerging concept, emotions are considered as organized responses that are adaptive and can potentially lead to a transformation of personal social interaction into an enriching experience (Salovey & Mayer, 1990).

In 1997, Mayer and Salovey revised their definition to correct problems of vagueness: "Emotional intelligence refers to an ability to recognize the meanings of emotions and their relationships and to reason and problem-solve on the basis of them. Emotional intelligence is involved in the capacity to perceive emotions, assimilate emotion-related feelings, understand the information of those emotions, and manage them" (Mayer & Salovey, 1997, p. 267). The revised definition encompassed a model involving the ability to perceive, appraise, and express emotion; the ability to access and/or generate feelings when they facilitate thought; the ability to understand emotion and employ emotional knowledge; and the ability to regulate emotions

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to promote emotional and intellectual growth. The key point in Mayer and Salovey's conception of emotional intelligence, and one echoed by other researchers, is the idea that emotion makes thinking more intelligent and that one thinks intelligently about emotions (Mayer & Salovey, 1997). This definition creates four branches of emotional intelligence which are hierarchical, moving from more basic psychological processes to higher processes, in a theoretically developmental way (Mayer, Caruso, & Salovey, 2000; Martinez-Pons, 1997; Mayer & Salovey, 1997).

The first and most basic component of emotional intelligence is the perception, appraisal, and expression of emotion. This involves the ability to perceive and identify emotional content in a variety of situations and from many different stimuli, within both the self and others (Mayer et al., 2000). This branch of the emotional intelligence construct also includes the ability to express emotion accurately and the ability to discriminate between accurate and inaccurate, or honest versus dishonest, expressions of feeling (Mayer & Salovey, 1997).

The second component of emotional intelligence concerns emotion acting on intelligence—that is, emotional events that assist intellectual processing. Abilities included in this branch of emotional intelligence include the ability to use emotions to prioritize thinking by directing attention to important information, the ability to generate emotions vividly so as to aid in judgment and recall, the ability to use emotion to help one consider multiple perspectives, and the ability to recognize different emotional states which facilitate different problem approaches (Mayer & Salovey, 1997; Mayer, et al., 2000; Salovey & Mayer, 1990).

The third component of emotional intelligence is the ability to understand emotions and use emotional knowledge. This includes labeling emotions and recognizing relations among the emotions. It also subsumes the ability to interpret the meanings that emotions convey regarding relationships, to understand complex feelings, and to recognize likely transitions among emotions, such as the transition from anger to satisfaction (Mayer & Salovey, 1997).

The fourth and highest branch of emotional intelligence is the reflective regulation of emotions to promote emotional and intellectual growth. This branch starts with the ability to stay open to feelings, both positive and negative. This progresses to the ability to reflectively engage or detach from an emotion, the ability to reflectively monitor emotions in oneself or others, and the ability to manage emotion in oneself and others by moderating negative emotions and enhancing pleasant emotions without repressing or ignoring or exaggerating the information the emotions may convey (Mayer & Salovey, 1997; Mayer et al., 2000).

Emotional intelligence should help individuals to understand and predict aspects of everyday life, including emotion-eliciting life events, enable better adaptation to life events, and aid in life outcomes of mental health, relationship quality, work success, or physical health (Ciarrochi, Chan, Caputi, & Roberts, 2001; Mayer & Salovey, 1997). Individuals with low emotional intelligence are expected to adapt poorly to stressful life events, while individuals with high emotional intelligence should show more adaptive responses to stressful life events. Emotional intelligence is not only expected to relate to adaptation, but it is also expected to directly relate to life events and life outcomes. Ciarrochi, Chan, Caputi, and Roberts (2001) expect

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that individuals high in emotional intelligence “will arrange their lives in such a way that they experience fewer negative life events. They may also be more skilled at establishing and maintaining high-quality relationships” (p. 27).

Research support for the construct of emotional intelligence is growing. The ability to extract emotional information from faces, colors, and even abstract designs has been found to be related to empathy (Mayer et al., 1990), indicating that the ability to perceive emotions is related to the ability to use emotional information. Styles of affect regulation have been found to be related to empathy and alexithymia (the inability to recognize or express emotions) (Bekendam, 1997). The ability of subjects to accurately judge the emotions of an individual based upon that individual's thoughts is related to self-reported measures of empathy and to reported SAT scores while it is negatively related to defensiveness (Mayer & Geher, 1996), findings which are congruent with the theory of emotional intelligence and support the emotional intelligence framework. Higher emotional intelligence covaries with greater internal openness and empathy for the feelings of others (Mayer & Geher, 1996; Mayer & Salovey, 1993). The ability to identify emotion in others is correlated with measures of tacit knowledge, social skills, constructive thinking, and academic success (Stewart, 1997). Emotional intelligence has been found to be a significant predictor of concern with task mastery, life satisfaction, and depression symptomatology in the manner expected (Martinez-Pons, 1997). Level of emotional intelligence is also related to the achievement and development patterns of academically successful women who were disadvantaged as children (LePage-Lees, 1997). Finally, individuals who experience their feelings clearly and who are confident about their abilities to regulate their affect seem to be able to repair their moods more quickly and effectively following disturbing experiences (Salovey, Mayer, Goldman, Turvey, & Palfai, 1993).

Given the nature of the construct, it seems possible that emotional intelligence may be one of the elusive factors that distinguishes students who choose to participate in honors programs from those who, when given the opportunity, decline honors participation. Very little research has been done concerning the characteristics of those who choose to enroll in college or university honors programs (Clark, 2000). The research that does exist is often focused on personality characteristics of students in honors versus those not in honors, rather than on measures of ability or emotional function. Examining personality variables has not yielded robust or consistent results (Clark, 2000). Another failing of much of this research is reliance on measures of dubious theoretical or psychometric value, such as the ubiquitous Myers-Briggs Type indicator.

Most college and university honors programs require enrollees to have some minimum standardized achievement test scores coupled with meeting criteria for high school class rank and/or grade point average and, in some cases, an interview or special application and essay (Schuman, 1989). However, not all students who qualify academically for enrollment into honors programs choose to do so. Anecdotal evidence suggests that students who choose to enroll in honors tend to be more highly motivated, more curious, and more optimistic than those who decline honors participation (Harte, 1994; Link, 1994; Schuman, 1989). Honors students also tend to

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exhibit more self-control and self-discipline and tend to be more reflective concerning their own and others' experiences than their equally academically adept counterparts (Rhode, 1994).

Emotionally intelligent people are predicted to have greater self-knowledge, self-discipline, and self-confidence, as well as more success and satisfaction in social relationships than those with low emotional intelligence. Therefore participants high in emotional intelligence could be expected to be more likely to embrace the challenge of honors. It is the hypothesis of this study that level of emotional intelligence can be used to predict the likelihood of a student choosing to enroll in collegiate honors coursework.

METHOD

PARTICIPANTS

Seventy-two first semester college students (30 males and 42 females) from a Midwestern liberal arts college completed the four measures. Their ages ranged from 17 to 20 years. All were eligible for the college's freshman honors program by virtue of graduating from high school in the top five percent of their graduating class. Forty-four of the eligible participants were actually enrolled in the college's liberal arts honors program while twenty-eight had declined.

MEASURES

Four Likert-type scale measures were used to assess emotional intelligence. The Hope Scale (Snyder, Harris, Anderson, Holleran, Irving, Sigmon, Yoshinobu, Gibb, Langelle, & Harney, 1991) is a 12-item scale, with 8 items measuring the disposition to be optimistic or hopeful, such as "There are lots of ways around any problem" and 4 filler items. The Activity-Feeling States Scale (Reeve & Sickenius, 1994) is a 13-item scale assessing the perceived benefits of participating in an activity or program in terms of increasing the subject's feelings of competence, relatedness with others, tension, and self-determination. It includes questions regarding how much being a part of a particular activity leads one to feel capable, pressured, and part of a team, among other items. The Learning Motivation Questionnaire (Ryan & Connell, 1989) consists of 16 items assessing subjects' motivation for furthering their education and for studying (i.e., the reason I go to school is so people in my life won't be disappointed in me). Finally, the Trait Meta-Mood Scale (Salovey, Mayer, Goldman, Tuvey, & Palfai, 1995) is a 30-item scale designed to measure the more enduring qualities of one's reflection on his or her mood states, including paying attention to one's mood (13 items), clarity of identification of mood (11 items), and ability to repair negative mood states (6 items).

RESULTS

A discriminant analysis was conducted to explore the ability of the emotional intelligence data to predict the choice to enroll in the honors program. Discriminant analysis is a procedure used to predict group membership from a set of predictors (in

this case, the scores on the four measures administered to the participants). Based upon the measures used in this study, emotional intelligence scores predicted the decision to enroll in honors courses 76% of the time, and predicted non-involvement 63% of the time, for an overall 71% prediction rate. These results are statistically significant ($p < .01$).

DISCUSSION

The results of this study are good news for honors programs and colleges because they suggest that students in honors are not only bright but also likely to have desirably high emotional intelligence as well. That level of emotional intelligence, as measured in this study, is a significant predictor of a student's decision whether or not to enroll in an honors program lends empirical support to the anecdotal evidence available from honors directors and deans about the characteristics of honors students. Students in honors often are not only talented intellectually but also motivated, curious, and apparently more mature than their peers. Such a presentation of maturity may be a result of an ability to perceive, understand, and manage emotions and emotional information. Because of their ability to manage their own emotional responses, emotionally intelligent people should exhibit more self-discipline and greater self-knowledge than less emotionally intelligent people. The students who embrace the added challenge of an honors program or college often exhibit more self-discipline and self-knowledge than their peers, perhaps because of their greater emotional intelligence.

Higher emotional intelligence should enable students to better control and use stress to their advantage and to use their own emotional responses to increase their motivation to work when they need to work. Students with high levels of emotional intelligence should be less defensive and thus be more open to new experiences. They should also be more socially skilled and thus more interested in and successful at the community created in many honors programs and colleges. Students with better ability to repair their own mood should be more willing to challenge themselves. These are all desirable traits that many honors directors and deans have noted in their honors students. The results of this study may also be a clue as to why so many honors programs seem to appeal to women more than to men. Research has repeatedly shown women to score higher on measures of emotional intelligence than do men (Martinez-Pons, 1997; Mayer & Salovey, 1997).

The results of this study are also good news for those of us interested in the construct of emotional intelligence because the hypothesis was supported. This lends more evidence for the validity and usefulness of the construct. This research bolsters the growing body of research in support of the theory of emotional intelligence.

A note of caution concerning the results must be voiced, however. Defining a construct as ambiguous and sizable as emotional intelligence is difficult. Accurately measuring the construct is even more difficult. The measures used in this study assess a conglomerate of skills that, theoretically, are a part of emotional intelligence. However, all the measures used in this study are self-report measures. While most existing measures of emotional intelligence are self-report measures, this does not

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seem to be the best way to measure an ability or intelligence (Mayer, 1998; Mayer, Salovey, & Caruso, 2000). While self-report measures are prevalent in emotional intelligence research, their use allows for the possibility that the measures have actually tapped into personality variables, for instance by measuring general level of ambition or emotion, rather than the ability to manage one's ambition or motivation through managing one's emotional responses. This subtle but important distinction would be addressed through replication of the study using ability measures. Therefore it is clear that replication is necessary to bolster our confidence in our conclusions about the relationship between emotional intelligence and honors participation. Additional research should be conducted using other measures of emotional intelligence and involving research designs that enable the researcher to determine the relative importance of personality and ability factors in students' decision to enroll in honors and in their ability to succeed in honors.

Another caution is in order. While the measurement issue might raise concerns about the internal validity of this study, the great variety of honors programs and colleges, as well as the great variety of honors students across the country, raises questions about the study's generalizability. Different honors programs and colleges have different missions, different methods of recruiting and selecting students, different pedagogies, and different requirements for admission to and completion of honors curricula. Again, more research is necessary before we can confidently generalize the results of this study to other honors contexts.

The results of this study are encouraging, however. If emotional intelligence is indeed a significant factor in distinguishing honors students from their non-honors peers, perhaps refining our measurement procedures could lead to better ways of selecting those students who will succeed in honors. If emotional intelligence is a learnable skill, then we may be able to increase honors participation and success by teaching incoming, academically talented students better emotional intelligence skills. If honors students do have higher emotional intelligence skills than their peers, then by being aware of this difference we may be able to capitalize on those skills in our curriculum and program development.

Emotional intelligence is an interesting, new, and potentially valuable construct that adds to our understanding of how people think and behave. It helps us to better understand what abilities are useful in enabling people to negotiate the complex inner world of the self and outer world of the other. If, as the present data suggest, honors students have high emotional intelligence, then knowing what emotional intelligence is and understanding how it works in the lives of our students will help us to better serve and challenge them. Learning about this seems an intelligent thing to do.

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Ethics on an Honors College Campus: An Analysis of Attitudes and Behaviors of Honors versus Non-Honors Students

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ABSTRACT

Since cheating, or academic dishonesty, has appeared to increase over the years, it is important to observe the “new” forms of cheating present within higher learning institutions. Earlier studies have shown conflicting evidence regarding the deterrence rate of an honor code system in higher learning institutions. This study looked at the Honors and non-Honors students’ beliefs and actions regarding the honor code, the internet, and suspect cheating behaviors. Surprisingly 81 (75%) students, both Honors and non-Honors, did not believe that the honor code prevents cheating, contrary to most literature. One other area of interest dealt with the internet and its profound effects on the availability of information. Results indicated that 102 (94.4%) students believed that printing a paper from the internet is cheating, but respondents tend not to report such incidents. Chi-square analyses were also conducted for certain variables with only two being statistically significant at the .10 level or below. Possible explanations and limitations are discussed.

Cheating, or academic dishonesty, is not a new phenomenon within the educational system; whether cheating has increased over the years has become an empirical debate. Some, such as Brown and Emmett (2001), indicate that cheating is not the epidemic it appears to be while others, such as Moore (2002), tend to disagree, believing that steps need to be taken to protect the integrity of the future. While the battle over the frequency of cheating continues, the problem of defining cheating is still present. There have been hundreds of studies conducted and many discussions surrounding the elusive arena of deceitfulness on college campuses around the world; however, there needs to be a clarification of what exactly constitutes cheating (Higbee & Thomas, 2000; Thorpe, Pittenger, & Reed, 1999). Thorpe, Pittenger, &

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Reed (1999) found that specific categories of cheating allowed for a more comprehensive understanding of what should be considered cheating behavior. It is, therefore, very important to have a clear understanding of what constitutes cheating so that administrators and faculty will be able to communicate clearly to students what cheating is at a particular institution.

In regard to preventing academic dishonesty, some institutions have implemented an honor code, but it is naïve to think that having an honor code makes an institution completely immune to the dishonest student. McCabe & Trevino (1993) found that institutions with an honor code have students that do not self-report cheating as often as non-honor code institutions. It should be noted that there were outliers in this study in which there were non-honor code institutions whose students reported fewer occurrences of cheating than honor code institutions. Other studies have found that honor code institutions report lower incidents of cheating and, therefore, conclude that having an honor code is useful and effective in deterring academic dishonesty (May & Loyd, 1993; McCabe & Pavela, 2000; McCabe, Trevino, & Butterfield, 2002). Meanwhile, McCabe, Trevino, & Butterfield (1999) found that a number of students do not think that having an honor code at their institution dissuades cheaters. Overall the researchers concluded that a community atmosphere characteristic of honor code institutions is an effective tool in deterring cheaters.

Despite all the research supporting the effectiveness of an honor code, some studies have found the honor code to be ineffective as a deterrent in higher learning institutions (Gardner, Roper, Gonzalez, & Simpson, 1988; Jendrek, 1992). In cases where the code requires the student to turn in another student (i.e., the students are responsible for reporting the bulk of code violations), Jendrek (1992) discovered that many students will not turn in their fellow students. Instead, the students try to work the problem out one-on-one or in some other arrangement that does not involve the formalities required by the code. To these types of students there is no real point to having an honor code. The literature on the effectiveness of an honor code appears to be split, but differences could be due to testing methods, type of sample, and/or sampling error.

Even though an institution may have an honor code, there are other factors that influence and distinguish students who cheat from those who do not. One such factor is the internet. With the introduction of the World Wide Web, it has become easier for students to take classes online, research quickly, and cheat efficiently. Many websites designed for “student” use offer low cost pre-written term papers, blurring the line between what is and is not cheating in the minds of some students who may believe that the information on the internet is for anyone’s use with no respect for the author(s) of the material. Others believe that information from the internet should be treated with as much respect as any hard-copy print material. These beliefs are probably shaped by the emphasis a professor puts on integrity in his/her courses. Even though technology is becoming a major part of an education, Lester and Diekhoff (2002) found that there is no difference between traditional and high-tech cheaters. Yet, little research exists concerning what students deem as cheating with respect to the internet. Perhaps behaviors perceived as cheating are modified by technology.

Lastly, research on academic dishonesty has led to some demographic trends. Some evidence suggests that athletes, who often have a full schedule, are more

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likely to cheat than those students who are not athletes (Storch, Storch, & Clark, 2002). Membership in Greek life also seems to have a relationship with higher levels of cheating (McCabe & Trevino, 1997; Storch & Storch, 2002). One explanation for the higher rates of cheating within these groups is the level of involvement within the group. Storch & Storch (2002) found that the more heavily involved a student is in a fraternity or sorority, the more likely that student is to cheat. If a student is very involved with certain activities, then it is possible that he or she has no time for academics. Most involved in Greek Life and sports have little time to prepare for tests or write papers because membership demands time and many commitments. The last reason for higher levels of cheating is the groups' tolerance of the activity. It may be socially acceptable for athletes or Greek members to cheat in order to focus on other duties more "important" to that group. Demographics are essential in understanding students' opinions on cheating as they may reveal that school-sponsored group affiliations see themselves as untouchable or do not view certain activities as cheating because they seem customary.

The previous research on academic dishonesty has opened up the eyes of many in higher learning institutions. This study looked at the relevance of the honor code to Honors students; the effect the internet has had in academics; how Honors students view certain suspect behaviors; and whether or not these students will report suspected cheaters. Although the honors code has variable effectiveness as a deterrent to cheating, it is likely that Honors students—because they are in a program that stresses honor and integrity—feel the code is effective. Due to the exploratory nature of this study, a significance level of .10 or less was used to determine if any analysis demonstrated a significant difference between Honors and non-Honors.

METHOD

SUBJECTS

There were 108 students who completed an anonymous survey. Of these subjects there were: 71 (65.7%) females and 37 (34.3%) males; 60 (55.6%) Honors students and 48 (44.4%) non-Honors students; 14 (13.0%) Greek Life participants and 94 (87.0%) non-participants; and 33 (30.6%) collegiate athletes and 75 (69.4%) non-athletes. The participants were: 47 (43.5%) Freshmen, 33 (30.6%) Sophomores, 13 (12.0%) Juniors, 13 (12.0%) Seniors, and 2 (1.9%) students classified as "Other" (meaning Access or special undergraduate students at the institution).

All subjects were from a small, liberal arts college in Virginia that has an honor code policy and an Honors program. The survey included ten questions aimed at certain activities that could be classified as academic dishonesty. Three different times within one week, the surveys were distributed for completion. The students in this sample were all volunteers, with no student declining to complete the survey. To ensure that no person filled out the survey twice, the experimenter gave explicit instructions not to fill out the survey if the person had previously participated.

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PROCEDURE

A survey was created to measure students' beliefs concerning what constitutes academic dishonesty, whether the student would report cheating, and what opinion the student had concerning the relevance of having an honor code (see Figure 1). There were five demographic variables and ten ethical issue questions on the survey; for statistical purposes, these questions were limited to "Yes" or "No." Survey questions ranged from student attitudes and physical responses (i.e., reporting a cheater) regarding traditional cheating methods, such as copying a neighbor's paper, to more high-tech behaviors, such as turning in a printed paper from the internet as one's own. None of the ethical issue questions dealt with areas other than cheating. For validity purposes, the survey was pre-tested using two classes in a philosophy course, "Introduction to Ethics." The pre-test groups expressed, in verbal feedback to the experimenter, good comprehension of the layout and wording of the questionnaire. No changes, therefore, were made to the original form. After the pre-test, the survey was given to students participating in the Westover Honors Program, one section of a peer-tutor training seminar, and, lastly, one section of an introductory psychology class. These three groups were convenient samples as the experimenter had access to them.

The experimenter introduced herself to the subject pool and explained the purpose of this study as trying to find a college student's own personal code of ethics regarding academic dishonesty. The survey was passed out to the subjects while the experimenter explained that the survey was completely confidential and that subjects should not put their names on the survey. It was also explained that refusing to complete a survey would not reflect on the student's grade. These statements were emphasized so the respondents would be completely honest regarding their opinions. It was also emphasized that, if any student had filled out the survey in a previous setting, he/she should not fill out another. After each student was finished, he/she turned in the questionnaire to the experimenter face down.

RESULTS

As shown in Table 1, 45 (75.0%) Honors students surveyed believe the honor code does not prevent cheating. Students were then asked if the Honor code was a personal deterrent, i.e., prevented the subject from cheating. A majority of Honors students (n=44; 73.3%) indicated that the honor code deters them personally from cheating. Compared with non-Honors students, there is little to no difference in opinions concerning the effectiveness of the honor code; 12 (25.0%) non-Honors students reported that they believe the honor code prevents cheating, and 34 (70.8%) reported that the honor code is a personal deterrent. There were also several questions regarding whether students considered certain behaviors cheating. When asked if inquiring from other students about information on a missed test due to sickness was cheating, 30 (50%) Honors students and 28 (58.3%) non-Honors students thought it to be cheating. When the same question was reworded to refer to the subject asking about the test when he/she was sick, 34 (56.7%) Honors students and 26 (54.2%) non-Honors students believed it to be cheating. In addition, 37 (61.7%)

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FIGURE 1. SURVEY GIVEN TO SUBJECTS.

Sex:

Male Female

Academic Status:

Freshman Sophomore Junior Senior Other

Are you a Westover Honors Student?

Yes No

Are you a member of Greek life on campus?

Yes No

Do you participate in a college sanctioned sport (this excludes intramurals)?

Yes No

1. You are taking a test, when you notice that the person next to you is looking at your paper and copying answers. Would you turn this person in to the professor?
 Yes No
2. You are taking a test, when you notice that the person in front of you is looking at the test of his/her neighbor and copying the answers. Would you turn this person in to the professor?
 Yes No
3. While you are searching the internet for information for a paper, you come across a paper on the same topic assigned. You print the paper out and turn it in as your own. Do you consider this cheating?
 Yes No
4. You are discussing the new topic for a paper, when your friend mentions that he/she paid for a pre-written term paper online. Would you turn this person in to the professor?
 Yes No
5. You are discussing the new topic for a paper, when a classmate mentions that he/she paid for a pre-written term paper online. Would you turn this person in to the professor?
 Yes No
6. Do you feel that the honor code on campus prevents cheating?
 Yes No
7. Do you feel that the honor code on campus prevents you from cheating?
 Yes No
8. A person is sick the day of a test. When he/she sees a classmate he/she asks what was on the test. Do you consider this cheating?
 Yes No
9. There are two sections of an intro class in which the tests are the same. A person, from the earlier section, tells a person, in the later section, what will be on the test. Do you consider this cheating?
 Yes No
10. You are sick the day of a test in class. When you see a friend that is in the same class you ask what was on the test. Do you consider this cheating?
 Yes No

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Honors students believed that, when separate sections of the same class inform one another about a test, then that behavior is cheating. Once again these numbers were similar to those of non-Honors students as 30 (62.5%) indicated that sharing information between different sections is cheating.

Respondents also indicated that they were not likely to report persons they caught cheating in the classroom. If the subject caught a fellow student copying his/her paper during class, then the subject was more likely to report the perpetrator. That is, 18 (30.0%) Honors students and 17 (35.4%) non-Honors students said they would report such a cheater. The number lowers dramatically when the subject witnesses cheating not involving his/her own work. If a respondent witnessed one student copying off the paper of another, only 6 (10.0%) Honors and 11 (22.9%) non-Honors students said they would report the cheater.

In regard to the internet, an overwhelming majority 57 (95.0%) Honors and 45 (93.8%) non-Honors students said that turning in a pre-written paper from the internet as one's own is cheating. Despite this response, most are unwilling to report such cheating. Students were asked whether they would report a friend who turned in a fraudulent paper and then a classmate who did the same. A majority of Honors students (n=40; 66.7%) and non-Honors students (n=37; 77.1%) would not report a friend who turned in a paper from the internet. When it came to a classmate, however, 33 (55.0%) Honors students would not report the incident while 34 (70.8%) non-Honors students would not report the classmate. In other words, an Honors student was more likely to report a classmate that cheated using the internet than a friend who did the same.

After comparing the percentages for each variable (see Table 1), several chi-square analyses were conducted, comparing Honors status with question responses (see Table 2). As stated earlier, a significance level of $p < .10$ was used due to the nature of the study. Only two variables concerning Honors status were found to be statistically significant. Looking at the traditional methods of cheating, Honors students were three times less likely to report a cheater copying a neighbor's paper than non-Honors students ($\chi^2=3.354$, $p=.059$). Honors students, however, were two times more likely to report a classmate who had printed a paper from the internet and turned it in as his/her own work ($\chi^2=2.839$, $p=.068$).

DISCUSSION

This study has two major limitations that will hinder the discussion of the findings: the type of questionnaire and the sample. The questionnaire was designed for ease in calculating statistics, so the answers are forced. In forcing an answer, there is no room for respondents to explain the reasons for answering a question in a certain way. Future researchers may need to allow respondents an explanation section for each question of the survey to help understand why certain people and/or groups answer in particular ways. The second limitation is the fact that the sample used was one of convenience. Some respondents could have filled out more than one questionnaire despite the lengths the experimenter took to ensure no repeat respondents. Also, respondents could have felt obligated in answering the survey to please the

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TABLE 1.
DEMOGRAPHIC AND BEHAVIORAL CHARACTERISTICS BY
HONORS STATUS OF RESPONDENTS (N=108).

Variable		Honors (n=60)		Non-Honors (n=48)	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Person Copies Your Paper?	Yes	18	30.0	17	35.4
	No	42	70.0	31	64.6
Person Copies Your Neighbor's Paper?	Yes	6	10.0	11	22.9
	No	54	90.0	37	77.1
You Print Out Paper From Net?	Yes	57	95.0	45	93.8
	No	3	5.0	3	6.3
Friend Prints Paper From Net?	Yes	20	33.3	11	22.9
	No	40	66.7	37	77.1
Classmate Prints Paper From Net?	Yes	27	45.0	14	29.2
	No	33	55.0	34	70.8
Honor Code Prevents Cheating?	Yes	15	25.0	12	25.0
	No	45	75.0	36	75.0
Honor Code Prevents You From Cheating?	Yes	44	73.3	34	70.8
	No	16	26.7	14	29.2
Sick Day of Test?	Yes	30	50.0	28	58.3
	No	30	50.0	20	41.7
You Are Sick Day of Test?	Yes	34	56.7	26	54.2
	No	26	43.3	22	45.8
2 Sections – 1 Informs the Other About Test?	Yes	37	61.7	30	62.5
	No	23	38.3	18	37.5

TABLE 2
CHI SQUARE TEST OF INDEPENDENCE RESULTS FOR
SELECTED REACTIONS BY HONORS STATUS.

<u>Variable</u>	<u>Chi Square</u>	<u>P-value</u>
Person Copies Your Paper?	.357	.790
Person Copies Your Neighbor's Paper?	3.354	.059*
You Print Out Paper From Net?	.079	.549
Friend Prints Out Paper From Net?	1.414	.165
Classmate Prints Out Paper From Net?	2.839	.068*
Sick Day of Test?	.745	.252

* Denotes that the difference was statistically significant ($p < .10$).

experimenter, but there was no pressure from the experimenter to complete it, as the experimenter was not their professor. Even with these possibilities, some groups within the sample were overrepresented, underrepresented, and not represented at all. For example, Greek Life members were overshadowed in this sample, and neither faculty members nor graduate students were included. It may be helpful to stratify the sample to get a better representation of a typical college population for a more complete look at attitudes and behaviors regarding academic dishonesty. Also, if faculty members filled out the questionnaire, major differences or similarities in opinion and behaviors could be examined. So the conclusions made from these data could result from the type of sample or sampling error.

Despite these limitations, there are some rather interesting findings. The first is that a majority of Honors and non-Honors students do not have faith in the honor code's effectiveness at deterring cheating. One possible explanation may be a student's use of cognitive heuristics. For example, when a person has witnessed cheating in the classroom or hears about someone cheating, then that person may tend to exaggerate the number of cheating incidents on campus. In another instance, the student may have had a lecture from a professor about cheating and the importance of doing one's own work. In both cases, the student has used the availability heuristic and the base rate fallacy to generalize that cheating occurs all the time and the honor code does not stop it (Brehm, Kassin, & Fein, 2002).

What is rather puzzling about the sample is that, while most students feel that many acts should be considered cheating, they are hesitant to report suspected cheaters. Possibly subjects do not feel it is their place to turn in suspected cheaters to the professor or the honor board. Subjects may lack familiarity with the procedures for reporting cheaters. In this case, the school should try to inform students about the proper procedures for handling academic dishonesty. The sample used in this study was taken from an institution that does not hold yearly formal sessions for all students to inform them about proper procedures for reporting such incidents. Instead, a

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manual that contains all the rules and procedures for honor violations is given to students during registration. Students may not have the time or desire to read such a manual to understand what constitutes cheating or the formal steps to report a cheater. This lack of understanding may explain the findings. Perhaps it may be time for institutions to reevaluate how they communicate honor code policies and procedures to students. In fact, it may prove useful to hold seminars for students during the first few weeks of school to acquaint them with the rules, regulations, and procedures so there exists no doubt in a student's mind of what cheating is and what to do about it.

Unwillingness to turn in suspected cheaters may also be due to personality traits or the temperament of the student. Shy people tend not to get actively involved in areas that require them to be put in the spotlight. If such a person were to turn in a fellow classmate for cheating, he might have to testify in front of a judicial board or honor board. This type of situation might make a shy person feel uncomfortable and anxious; to avoid the hassle, the shy student might not bother to report the cheater. Some other students have individualistic values, choosing to mind their own business and hoping that other people do the same. In this case, students might see an academically dishonest act but not feel it is their business to report them. Then there are the students who do not care what other people do, so they do not take the time and energy to report cheating of any kind. These traits can cause problems in implementing an honor code, so future studies may want to test personality characteristics.

With respect to the chi-square analyses, there are several possible explanations for the results. Why would Honors students be less likely to report an offender who copies a neighbor's paper? Perhaps Honors students feel that, if someone not close to the respondent copies another person's paper, then it is that person's problem. Honors students may not report such incidents also because they may instead confront the cheater. In this confrontation, the Honors student may try to convince the culprit to report himself/herself. It is also possible that Honors students view such occurrences in the classroom as a spur of the moment act, in which the cheater seized an opportunity and had a momentary lapse in reasoning.

On the other hand, Honors students are more likely to turn in fellow classmates for handing in a paper from the internet. One reason for such a change in attitude might be the perceived severity of the action. Copying someone's paper may result from unforeseen pressure or a spur of the moment mentality, while printing a paper from the internet and turning it in as one's own seems more premeditated. A student must search the internet for a paper on a specific topic, pay for the paper, and probably make some changes, all of which takes time, money, and effort. Another not so blatant reason may be the nature of Honors students. Most tend to be very competitive when it comes to grades. In most of their classes, teachers tend to put more emphasis on papers in terms of the final grade than on in-class activities such as tests or quizzes. If this scenario is the case, then Honors students might feel more compelled to report the offender. Yet, the lack of reporting in one situation and the willingness to report in another is quite puzzling. Perhaps, technological advances have altered students' perceptions of cheating so that traditional methods elicit less attention than the more sophisticated methods.

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There appears to be agreement about what constitutes cheating among Honors and non-Honors students, but when it comes to reporting such incidents the two groups are somewhat different. Even though there were two significant findings indicating that willingness of Honors students to report a cheater varies by situation, the low number of both Honors and non-Honors students willing to report cheating is surprising. It is no wonder that students no longer have faith in the honor code if they are unwilling to help uphold the code themselves. The perceived failure of the honor code may be due in part to the realities that students observe; when cheating behavior is not reprimanded, the cheater is more likely to continue to cheat. The lack of enforcement by students and/or the institution itself helps defeat the purpose of having an honor code. Maybe it is time to inform both Honors and non-Honors students about the honor code and their role in effectively enforcing such a code; the integrity of the Honor program, their degrees, and their education is on the line.

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SCOTT CARNICOM AND MICHAEL CLUMP

Assessing Learning Style Differences Between Honors and Non-Honors Students

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What defines an “honors” student and what key differences, if any, exist between honors and non-honors students? One obvious difference exists in measures of academic achievement; college honors students, by virtue of typical admission criteria, have higher GPA’s and standardized test scores (Long & Lange, 2002). Consistent with these higher academic credentials, honors students have often been described as more autonomous, more responsible, and more motivated (Grangaard, 2003; Orban & Chalifoux, 2002; Palmer & Wohl, 1972). Additionally, honors students tend to demonstrate to a greater degree many behaviors that positively correlate with academic performance, such as skipping class less often, preparing longer for class, asking more questions per class, spending more time rewriting papers, spending more time meeting with faculty outside class hours, watching less television, drinking less alcohol, and focusing on course grades (Clark, 2000; Harte, 1994; Long & Lange, 2002; Schuman, 1995).

While these comparisons suggest that the high academic credentials of honors students might be partially explained via their study habits, few studies have examined potential cognitive differences between honors and non-honors students. Clark (2000) found that academically talented college students possessed a greater preference for abstract, conceptual, and integrative reflection and tended to score at the intuitive end of the Myers-Briggs personality inventory (indicating more creativity and ability to engage in abstract thought), whereas less talented students tended to be more concrete. Similarly, Shaughnessy and Moore (1994) partially attributed the higher IQ scores of honors students to higher order thinking abilities. This work hints at what honors programs have intuitively asserted for years: honors students think and learn differently, and honors pedagogy should be tailored to meet these students’ unique abilities. However, further empirical research is needed to uncover, identify, describe, and define these differences in thinking and learning. The current study will attempt to further elucidate the difference between honors and non-honors students by using the Inventory of Learning Processes (ILP; Schmeck, 1982; Schmeck, Ribich, & Ramanaiah, 1977).

Schmeck *et al.* (1977) developed the ILP to assess students’ learning styles from an information processing perspective. The ILP is a self-report survey that focuses on

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the behaviors and cognitive processes that a student utilizes to acquire, retain, and recall information, with little emphasis on the modality and environmental conditions in which students prefer to learn (i.e, visual, auditory, etc...). Learning style is measured along four subscales with the ILP. In addition to assessing a student's study habits (Methodical Study subscale), the ILP measures a student's ability to correctly recall facts and details, independent of deeper understanding or synthesis (Fact Retention subscale). Additionally, the Elaborative Processing subscale assesses how students translate new information into their own terminology, generate concrete examples from their experience, apply new information to their daily life, and use visual imagery to encode ideas. Finally, the Deep Processing subscale measures the extent to which a student critically evaluates, conceptually organizes, and compares and contrasts new and existing information.

The ILP has been used in numerous studies and dissertations (approximately 70 at the latest literature search) to investigate the learning styles of students and constructs related to student learning styles. Across the literature, the Deep Processing, Elaborative Processing, and Fact Retention subscales have been found to correlate significantly and positively with measures of academic achievement, such as GPA, college entrance examination scores, and course grades (Albaili, 1993, 1994; Bartling, 1988; Gadzella, 1995; Gadzella & Baloglu, 2003; Gadzella, Ginther, & Williamson, 1987; Kozminsky & Kaufman, 1992; Miller, Alway, & McKinley, 1987; Miller, Finley, & McKinley, 1990; Schmeck & Grove, 1979; Watkins, Hattie, & Astilla, 1983; Westman, 1993). Researchers have also compared the learning styles of students classified as high achievers (GPA's or ACT scores above a median split) with those classified as low achievers. The high achievers are consistently found to score significantly higher on Deep Processing, Elaborative Processing, and Fact Retention (Gadzella, Ginther, & Williamson, 1986; Miller et al., 1987; Schmeck & Grove, 1979), but not Methodical Study.

To date, a comparison of the learning styles of honors and non-honors students has not been conducted using the ILP. Anecdotal evidence would point to differences between the two groups, but data from an information-processing perspective will help clarify how honors students think and learn. Given the numerous differences found between academic groups with the ILP (Clump & Skogsberg, 2003; Gadzella, 1995; Gadzella & Baloglu, 2003; Gadzella et al., 1986; Miller et al., 1987; Schmeck & Grove, 1979), the current investigators hypothesized that a group of new honors students would score significantly higher on the Deep Processing, Elaborative Processing, and Fact Retention subscales compared to a group of non-honors students. However, both groups were expected to score at similar levels on the Methodical Study subscale.

METHOD

PARTICIPANTS

The current study was conducted at Marymount University, a comprehensive, co-educational institution located in the Washington, DC area with approximately 1600 graduate students and 2300 undergraduates. The participants in this study

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included 17 honors students (14 females and 3 males; M age = 18.29-years-old, SD = .47) recruited from an introductory honors course and 28 non-honors students (21 females and 7 males; M age = 19.18-years-old, SD = 1.59) recruited from a section of an introductory social science course. The honors students were found to be significantly younger than the non-honors students, $t(34.14) = -2.76, p < .01$.

The 17 students comprising the honors group represented almost the entire inaugural class of honors students at the University ($N = 19$). Entrance requirements to the program included a GPA of at least 3.50 and combined SAT scores of at least 1200. Not surprisingly, the honors students' average high school GPA's were significantly higher than the non-honors students' GPA's, $t(35.11) = 8.04, p < .001$. Additionally, the honors students' combined SAT scores were significantly higher than the non-honors students' SAT's, $t(20) = 5.03, p < .001$. When appropriate, the degrees of freedom for these comparisons were adjusted to compensate for unequal variances (see Table 1).

MATERIALS AND PROCEDURE

All participants provided informed consent before data collection. The ILP (Schmeck et al., 1977) was administered to both groups during the first week of classes of the fall 2004 semester. The students responded to the ILP's 62 statements by selecting either *true* or *false* to indicate if each statement represented the way they generally study and learn. An example of an item from the Deep Processing subscale (18 items) is, "I find it difficult to handle questions requiring comparison of different concepts" (Schmeck et al., 1977, p. 416). The Elaborative Processing subscale (14 items) of the ILP contains items such as, "I learn new words or ideas by visualizing a situation in which they occur" (Schmeck et al., 1977, p. 417). An example from the Fact Retention (7 items) subscale is, "I am good at learning formulas, names, and dates" (Schmeck et al., 1977, p. 417). The statement "For the exam, I prepare a set of notes integrating the information from all sources in the course" (Schmeck et al., 1977, p. 416) is an example of a question from the final subscale, Methodical Study (23 items).

The ILP's subscales have strong internal consistencies (.82 for Deep Processing, .67 for Elaborative Processing, .58 for Fact Retention, and .74 for Methodical Study) and test-retest reliabilities (.88 for Deep Processing, .80 for Elaborative Processing, .79 for Fact Retention, and .83 for Methodical Study; Schmeck et al., 1977). In addition, Gadzella (2003) found that the ILP's subscales continue to have significant and strong test-retest reliabilities 25 years after development.

RESULTS

The two groups' scores on the four subscales of the ILP were compared using separate independent-samples *t*-tests. As a result, the number of individuals on each comparison varied due to missing data on some subscales. The honors students had significantly higher scores than the non-honors students on the Deep Processing subscale, $t(36) = 2.60, p < .05$. The two groups did not significantly differ on the

TABLE 1
MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS FOR THE HONORS AND NON-HONORS STUDENTS

Subscale	Honors Students			Non-honors Students			t
	N	M	SD	N	M	SD	
High School GPA	17	3.80	.21	24	2.99	.43	8.04***
Combined SAT	11	1300.91	93.00	11	1043.64	141.86	5.03***
Deep Processing	16	14.00	2.94	22	11.05	3.79	2.60*
Elaborative Processing	14	10.00	1.88	24	9.92	2.21	.12
Fact Retention	16	5.56	1.71	26	5.50	1.21	.14
Methodical Study	16	10.38	4.77	26	10.88	4.75	-.34

Notes. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$; t 's for Age, High School GPA, and Combined SAT have been adjusted for unequal variances using Levene's method.

other three subscales, all t 's < 1.00 . See Table 1 for the means, standard deviations, and t -values for the two groups.

DISCUSSION

As hypothesized, new honors students in the current study scored significantly higher on the Deep Processing subscale. This finding suggests that these honors students entered the program already actively organizing and critically evaluating information to a greater degree than their peers. Although it is unclear whether this difference was innate or fostered at the secondary level, college honors courses could build upon this pre-existing proclivity for Deep Processing, which arguably corresponds with critical thinking ability (Gadzella & Masten, 1998; Schmeck & Ribich, 1978). Furthermore, as predicted, the honors and non-honors students did not differ along the Methodical Study subscale, challenging the assumption that honors students demonstrate significantly more effective study skills than their peers or that their high grades are the sole result of these study habits. Contrary to expectations, the honors and non-honors students did not differ in their levels of Elaborative Processing or Fact Retention. While inconsistent with previous research, the lack of difference in Fact Retention scores might be a positive indicator that the honors students' higher academic credentials did not merely result from successful recall of specific details and facts; rather, these students could have engaged in processing these details into higher order concepts. However, the lack of difference in Elaborative Processing scores presents the possibility that honors students do not initially personalize or apply information in more meaningful ways than their non-honors peers. While these results certainly warrant further investigation with additional students and institutions, they do provide an initial glimpse into the way honors students think and learn and suggest that honors courses could be tailored to better facilitate Elaborative Processing.

In addition to illustrating learning style differences between honors and non-honors students, the ILP could also be used as a longitudinal assessment tool, tracking developmental changes in honors students' learning styles across their undergraduate career. For example, Bartling (1988) found that students in general significantly increased their utilization of Deep Processing and significantly decreased their application of Methodical Study throughout college. Additionally, Jakoubek and Swenson (1993), using a full cross-sectional analysis of learning styles for college students, found that students at different college levels had significantly different scores on the Deep Processing, Methodical Study, and Elaborative Processing subscales. Thus, further investigations into the changes among honors students is also warranted to assess whether their initial high level of Deep Processing continues to escalate, if honors students also display increases in the other three subscales, and if these possible increases occur at a more accelerated rate than non-honors students.

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JOHN R. COSGROVE

The Impact of Honors Programs on Undergraduate Academic Performance, Retention, and Graduation

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the academic performance, retention, and degree-completion rates of two groups of honors students, those who completed all their honors program requirements (honors completers; $n = 30$) versus those students who started off in honors programs but did not complete these program requirements (partial honors students; $n = 82$). These two sets of honors students are then compared to a third group of similar students, those who had comparable pre-college academic credentials as the honors students, but who did not participate in an honors program (called high-ability students; $n = 108$). These three student groups entered three Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education universities as first-time, full-time freshmen in fall 1997. The study encompasses a five-year period, from fall semester 1997 through spring semester 2002. The study design is *ex post facto* and longitudinal, using secondary data primarily obtained from the institutional research offices at the respective study sites.

The results show that three out of every four students who begin honors programs fail to complete them. Honors program completers have the highest academic performance and graduation rates, and shortest time to degree completion, compared to other high ability students, including partial honors students. The analysis strongly suggests that partial exposure to the honors program does not significantly enhance academic performance, graduation rates, time to degree, nor length of enrollment beyond what is achieved by other high-ability students who were never part of these programs. These findings control for the effects of student, institutional, and honors program characteristics at the three universities cooperating in the study.

BACKGROUND AND JUSTIFICATION FOR THE STUDY

Honors programs exist in two primary forms, university-wide honors, also known as general honors, and departmental honors. Honors colleges are a third form of honors programs, however, structurally and administratively they are more similar

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to university-wide honors programs than to departmental honors programs. University-wide honors programs, which are the focus of this study, are open to all academically eligible students regardless of major or department and primarily focus on general education requirements.

Since the establishment of modern honors programs in the 1920s, there have been two distinct periods of growth in the number of these programs. The first period of growth happened during the buildup of the Cold War as a U.S. response to the launching of the Soviet's Sputnik satellite. The second expansion occurred during the latter half of the twentieth century, when colleges began to view these programs as a way to draw talented students to their campuses during a time of increased competition for students (Long, 2002; Baker, Reardon, & Riordon, 2000). Today there are nearly 1,000 honors programs existing at public and private colleges and universities nationwide, including all 14 universities in the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education (SSHE).

Despite the proliferation in the number of honors programs, they are a relatively unstudied aspect of higher education. For instance, Pascarella and Terenzini (1991) synthesized over 2,600 empirical studies conducted over 20 years in their comprehensive book concerning the impact of college on students. None of the cited studies focuses on honors program experiences. In addition, the few published studies on honors programs that have appeared in research-oriented educational journals have examined honors programs as they are implemented at two-year colleges, while even less attention has been given to them at four-year institutions.

Proponents claim that honors programs yield many student and institutional benefits, including increased student retention (Austin, 1986; Schuman, 1999), enriched academic experiences (Ory & Braskamp, 1988; Tacha, 1986), increased graduation rates (Astin, 1993), greater institution prestige and fundraising capacity, improved ability to attract and retain high-quality faculty, and as one spillover of these and other factors, honors programs purportedly raise intellectual standards across the campus (Austin, 1986). Most of these alleged benefits, however, are based upon descriptive, single-institution studies or anecdotal evidence rather than multi-site empirical data (Bulakowski & Townsend, 1995; Coursol & Wagner, 1986; DeHart, 1993; Outcalt, 1999).

While honors program advocates and educational scholars have made claims that participation in honors programs leads to increased graduation rates, they do so without differentiating the honors experiences of students who complete all of their honors program requirements from those who do not. This is a shortcoming in all honors research reviewed in preparation for this study, and runs the danger of ascribing benefits to these programs that may not exist.

Previous research on the retention aspects of honors programs has been very limited, though what work has been published only examined first-year retention rates (Pflaum, Pascarella, & Duby, 1985). Previous studies that have examined the graduation rates of honors students did not compare honors students against a control group of academically similar students who chose not to join these programs (Astin, 1993). No previous retention or graduation studies of honors program participation divided honors students into two separate groups, those who fulfilled all

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of their honors program requirements and those who did not. This study sought to redress these oversights.

METHODS

Considerations of access and budget led this study to concentrate on the 14-member Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education (SSHE). Three of SSHE's 14 universities were selected for analysis. These sites were chosen over the others because their university presidents allowed their honors programs to be studied and because each site had the institutional research capacities to supply the data needed for the study. Additionally, there were two other site selection considerations. The first was to avoid selecting honors programs that were significantly different from other programs within SSHE. This decision eliminated one program because the organization of its honors program is radically different from all other SSHE honors programs. A second selection criteria was to avoid sites that significantly changed the structure of their honors programs during the study's time period. This excluded one university, which evolved from a largely departmental to a largely university-wide honors program during this time.

The three study universities are located in different parts of the state and are homogenous. All are public, four-year colleges, with substantially White and female majority enrollments similar in size. Resident undergraduate tuition charges are identical at these sites and all participating sites held a Master's I Carnegie Classification during the 1997-98 academic year.

The research design is ex post facto and longitudinal, using secondary data primarily obtained from the institutional research offices at the respective study sites. The study encompasses a five-year period, from fall semester 1997 through spring semester 2002. This study compares the academic performance, retention, and graduation rates of three groups of students: honors program completers ($n = 30$); partial honors students ($n = 82$); and high-ability non-honors students ($n = 108$).

A goal of this study is to compare students with similar academic abilities. This comparison is based on SAT scores and high school class ranks. Preliminary data analysis reveals that 90 percent of students who entered honors programs as freshmen were ranked in the top quintile of their high school classes. To best ensure as similar a match between honors and high-ability non-honors as possible, only honors students who entered college in fall of 1997 as first-time, full-time freshmen in the top quintile of their high school classes were chosen for analysis.

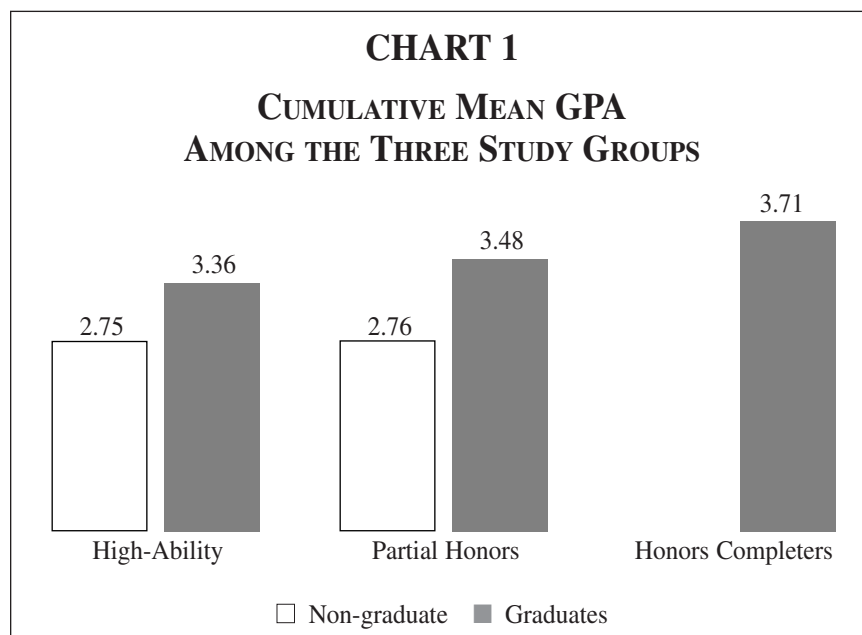
Being honors-qualified at one site does not necessarily align with qualification at the other sites. The study needed a single definition of high-ability non-honors students across the three study sites. This was set at 1150 or better SAT scores (the lowest SAT score among the study sites) and, consistent with the standard set for honors students, a high school class rank in the first quintile. This led to three populations that were closely matched.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

This study addresses three research questions. First, controlling for student background factors and campus characteristics, is there a difference in the post-matriculation academic performance and graduation rates of honors completers, partial honors students, and high-ability students? Second, among those students who graduated, do honors students graduate more quickly than similar high ability non-honors students? Third, among the students who did not graduate, is there a difference in the retention rates of partial honors students compared to high-ability students, controlling for relevant background factors?

ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE AND GRADUATION RATES

Chart 1 shows the academic performance of the graduates and non-graduates among the three populations. Honors completers have the highest mean GPA (3.71), followed by partial honors students (3.35) and high-ability students (3.22). Within each group, the graduates have a higher mean GPA than the non-graduates (note: there is a 100 percent graduation rate among honors completers). For example, among partial honors students the graduates have a mean GPA of 3.48, whereas the non-graduate GPA is 2.76. Similarly, among the high ability students the mean GPA of the graduates is 3.36, compared to 2.75 for the non-graduates. Independent samples T-tests revealed that there is a statistically significant difference in the cumulative GPA of honors completers compared to partial honors ($p < 0.001$) and to high-ability students

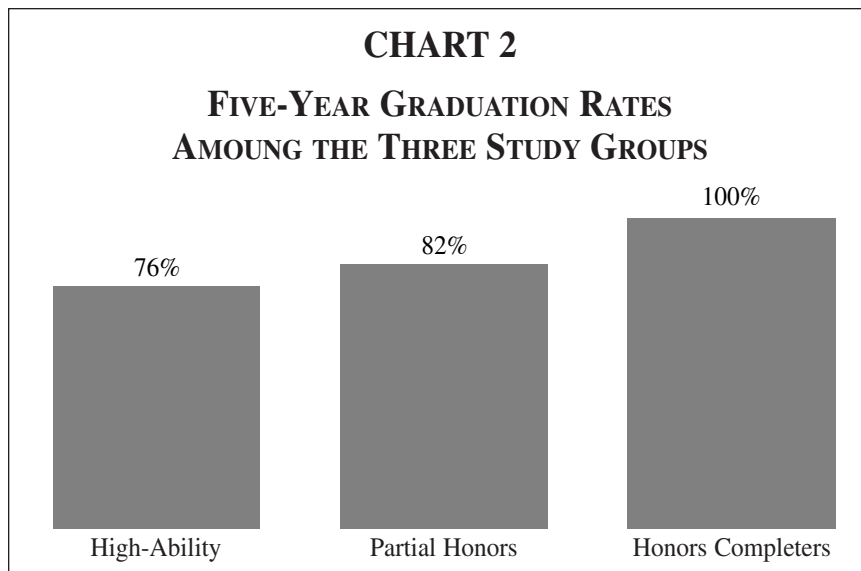


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($p < 0.001$), there is not a statistically significant difference in the cumulative GPA between partial honors students and high-ability students ($p < 0.103$). The statistically significant differences between honors completers and partial honors and high-ability students, and the statistically insignificant difference in academic performance between partial honors and high-ability students all hold when the effects of control variables (sex, SAT score, major) are taken into account. Thus, the academic performance of partial honors students is more like that of high-ability (non-honors) students than like the performance of honors completers.

Chart 2 shows the five-year graduation rates of the three groups. A total of 112 students began their collegiate careers in honors programs at the three study sites. The honors program completion rate was a low 27 percent (30 out of the 112 students who began in honors as freshmen). Thus, nearly three in four honors freshmen dropped out or otherwise failed to fulfill all of their honors program requirements. Honors completers had a 100 percent graduation rate. While it is theoretically possible that honors completers could complete all of their honor requirements and not graduate (perhaps by failing to obtain enough departmental credits to graduate), this is unlikely and did not occur in this study.

Among the 82 students who did not complete their honors program requirements, 15 dropped out of their entering college or failed to graduate during the five-year period of this study. The remaining 67 partial honors students graduated from their entering university. The overall graduation rate, therefore, of partial honors students was 82 percent. The graduation rate of partial honors students varied across the three study sites, from a low of 63 percent to a high of 90 percent. The graduation rate of high-ability non-honors students averaged 76 percent across the study sites, ranging from a low of 50 percent to a high of 78 percent. The graduation rates of honors completers, partial honors, and high-ability students significantly exceed



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the graduation rates of the general student body on each campus. Chi-square tests revealed that difference in graduation rates between high-ability and partial honors students is not statistically significant ($p < 0.337$). However, the difference in the graduation rates between honors completers and high-ability students is statistically significant ($p < 0.003$), as is the difference in the graduation rates between honors completers and partial honors students ($p < 0.012$).

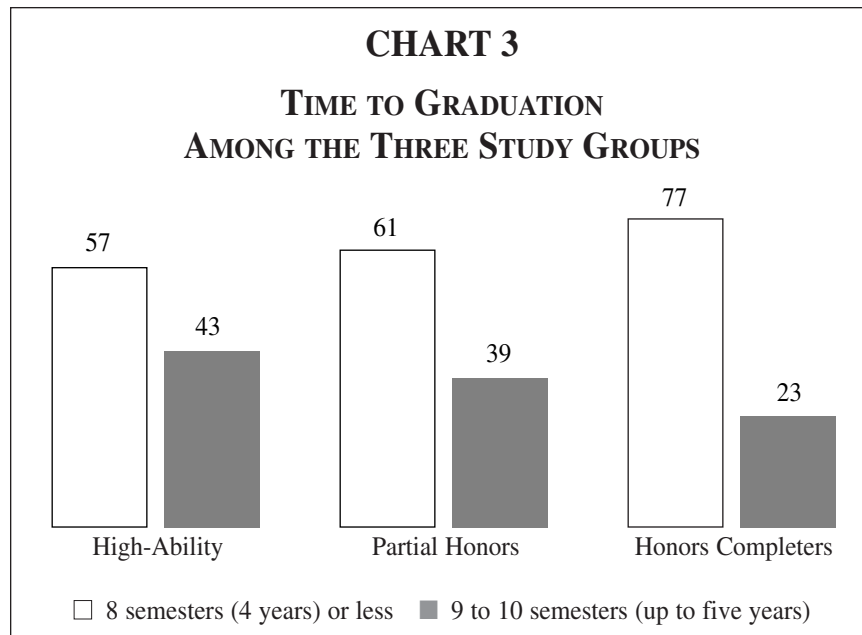
The differences in the graduation rates and mean GPA of completers is significantly higher than that of partial honors and high-ability students. Between partial honors and high-ability students the differences in graduation rates and cumulative GPA are not significant. Thus participating in, but not completing the honors curriculum, does not significantly affect GPA or graduation rates compared to a control group of high-ability students who were never enrolled in these programs. Because honors completers have a 100 percent graduation rate the multivariate analysis for this study concentrated on the comparison between the partial honors students and the high ability students. Controlling for sex, SAT score, and academic major, the analysis indicates that partial honors students are more like high-ability students than they are like honors completers. Phrased another way, partial exposure to the honors program experience does not significantly enhance graduation rates nor academic performance beyond what is achieved by other high-ability students who were not part of these programs.

TIME TO GRADUATION

The second research question examines the time to degree for these three populations. This research question seeks to answer whether among those students who graduated, do honors students graduate more quickly than partial honors or high ability non-honors students? Chart 3 shows the percent of each population that graduated in 8 semesters or less versus nine or ten semesters. As a three site aggregate, 77 percent of honors completers graduated in four years or less (eight semesters, excluding summers), compared to 61 percent of partial honors, and 57 percent of high-ability students. Again, the performance of the partial honors group is more like the high ability population than like the honors completers.

LENGTH OF RETENTION AMONG NON-GRADUATES

The third research question asks, among the students who did not graduate, is there a difference in the retention rates of partial honors students compared to high-ability students, controlling for relevant background factors? There were no dropouts among honors completers. Twenty-six high-ability students (24 percent) dropped out or otherwise failed to graduate the five-year period of this study. In contrast, 15 partial honors students (18 percent) failed to graduate. The average length of enrollment among high-ability non-graduates was 5.1 semesters, compared 4.8 semesters for partial honors students. An independent samples T-tests revealed that the difference in average length of enrollment between these two groups of non-graduates is statistically insignificant ($p < 0.713$). Therefore student status (partial or high-ability) is not



a statistically significant factor in number of semesters enrolled by those who failed to graduate. This remains true even after controlling for sex, SAT score and major.

CONCLUSIONS

Proponents of honors programs assert that these programs yield many individual and institutional benefits, yet these claims generally have not been empirically verified. Investigations of the honors program experience generally focus on honors students needs, perceptions, or satisfaction at a single institution, but fail to differentiate the varying treatment effects of honors program completion versus partial participation, and only one other study has used a control group of talented non-honors students. These oversights were addressed in this study, while controlling for the effects of student, institutional, and honors program characteristics.

The analysis indicates that the outcomes of partial honors students are more like those of high-ability students than they are like those of honors program completers. If state, system, or campus officials are concerned about these student outcomes, this study indicates that honors program completers have the highest academic performance and graduation rates, and shortest time to degree compared to other high ability students, including students who enter honors programs but do not complete them. Much remains to be investigated before the honors program experience is fully understood. However, this analysis suggests that partial exposure to the honors program does not significantly enhance academic performance, graduation rates, time to degree, nor length of enrollment beyond what is achieved by other high-ability students who were never part of these programs.

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STUDY LIMITATIONS

The study has several limitations, including the following. First, it focuses only on university wide (general) honors programs, so no extrapolations should be made for departmental honors programs. Second, it examines one entering freshmen cohort at three Pennsylvania-owned universities, all of which are relatively homogeneous and mainly non-urban public universities of similar size, mission, finances, and admissions. At all three, the general student body, honors students, and high-ability students are, notably, overwhelmingly White and female. Inferences to private and more highly selective institutions with different population profiles may therefore be limited. Third, it could not be determined if high-ability students took any honors or department honors classes, how many if they did, nor what the effects this may have had on their academic performance and retention. Fourth, because data was not collected directly from students there was no way to measure attitudes, goals, and motivation. Motivation and goal commitments are important considerations as both are documented by the scholarly literature to be well-established positive influences upon retention and graduation behaviors. Fifth, the small number of study sites (three) and students examined (n = 220) may have produced study results that might not be duplicated by a larger scale study.

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MARCA V.C. WOLFENSBERGER

Qualities Honours Students Look for in Faculty and Courses

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ABSTRACT

The main research questions that we answer in this article are: What are characteristics of honours students and how do they value teachers and courses? Does our theory-based learning context, which is supportive of autonomy, competence, and relatedness, actually correspond to the preferences of our honours students?

Talent, selectiveness, and differentiation are quickly becoming buzzwords in higher education policy and practice in the Netherlands. Honours programmes are recognized as one of the primary means to evoke excellence in talented students. Nearly all thirteen Dutch research universities have or are developing honours programmes; the first honours programme in the Netherlands started as recently as 1993. We expect that, while European countries are implementing the bachelor-master system, honours programmes will rapidly spread across Europe during the coming years. We define honours programmes as programmes that are specifically developed to offer educational opportunities that are more challenging and demanding than the regular programmes. They are meant for the more motivated and gifted students who want more and have the capacity to do more than the regular curriculum requires from them.

Our knowledge of and insight into effective honours programmes has, unfortunately, not quite developed at the same pace as have the number of honours programmes. For example, we need specified and *a priori* defined outcomes in order to evaluate the success of honours programmes. We also need to make explicit our assumptions about the needs of students, faculty, and society that honours programmes are said to meet. Our ways of evoking excellence in students through honours programmes is in need of a theoretical underpinning. Fundamental to our understanding of effective honours programmes, we need to gain a clearer insight into the features of students participating in honours programmes. Who are those talented and motivated students who are able to do more than the regular programme can offer them? What kind of programme will challenge those students?

Honours programmes are now widely offered to talented students in the Netherlands, with the assumption those talented students will be broadly alike.

QUALITIES HONOURS STUDENTS LOOK FOR IN FACULTY AND COURSES

Honours students are commonly considered to be clever, high achieving, full of potential, and intrinsically motivated. There is, however, remarkably little research that underpins all these assumptions. Most honours programmes have admission procedures separate from those of their host university. The existence of these procedures suggests that a relevant and accurate distinction between honours and non-honours students can be made. Often, the primary selection criterion is the GPA. All we know for sure is that honours students are able to get high grades. They won't be dumb.

SELECTION

In the Netherlands, until recently, there have been no honours programmes that select only by GPA. They commonly used freestanding honors applications as explained by Stoller (2004). Selection commissions looked beyond grades and motivation played an important role (Wolfensberger, 2004). However, the transition to the Bologna-system (bachelor and master structure) has been accompanied by intensive debates about 'selectivity,' talent scouting, and differentiation (Balkenende, 2003; Vaart & Wolfensberger, 2004). Admission commissions for honours programmes or selective 'research master' programmes are now looking for quick answers and selection procedures. More and more the GPA is being considered the clear and appropriate selection criterion. Students in general are gradually becoming more aware of the potential importance of good grades as well, especially when follow-up opportunities at the masters and PhD level are taken into consideration.

I would argue that we are in need of empirical analyses of the effectiveness of different forms of selection. We need to relate the applied criteria in selection procedures to actual student outcomes in terms of study speed, motivation, and quality of student work and to the spin-off effects on the regular programme. And, in line with Stoller (2004), we should not forget to tie our choice of selection model to the characteristics, visions, goals, and mandates of our honours programmes. Assuming that we are looking for students who are the gifted leaders and famous researchers of tomorrow, I would argue that selection procedures for honours programmes should identify students who are not only talented but also most willing to learn how to translate this talent into actions that have a meaningful impact on the world. So we should look for individuals who are gifted in terms of abilities and expert in terms of achievements. This point of view is inspired by, among others, the ideas of Sternberg concerning giftedness and leadership (Sternberg, 2003 & 2004). He argues that a gifted and successful leader "decides to synthesize wisdom, intelligence, and creativity" (Sternberg, 2004, p .30). My perspective is aligned with the abiding concern of Smith with the normative, with professional ethics, and with the "role of scholarship in seeking to identify and create a better world" (Smith, 2004, p. 284), not just with high grades.

LEARNING CONTEXT

The reasons for designing honours programmes and offering this special education may be diverse. An honours programme may be a marketing device, an

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instrument for helping students to achieve a high profile, a strategy for coping with a diversified student population, a remedy to keep talented students and faculty, or a laboratory for innovations. I think that, whatever the reason, honours programmes should motivate students in a way that engenders commitment, effort, wisdom, and high-quality performance. I would suggest, supported by the views of Ryan & Deci (2000), that this means that we should look for an educational context that supports the growth of autonomy, competence, and relatedness. The idea that those three traits predict intrinsic motivation and integrated extrinsic motivation,¹ which in turn predict study behavior, has been confirmed by many studies (see Ryan & Deci, 2000 for an overview; Martens & Kirschner, 2004). Autonomy means, for instance, that students have freedom of choice concerning their goals and plan making. Focus on competence indicates that it is important that students have the feeling they are learning achieving excellence, making a difference. Relatedness corresponds with a safe learning environment. The faculty is personally involved, and peers are to be trusted. Thus, creating a learning context that supports autonomy, competence, and relatedness will enhance motivation and foster the internalization and integration of knowledge, ideas, and skills. Having said all this, we should know whether this is also the context honours students are looking for. Since students are those with whom we teach and learn, it is important that we develop a better and empirically based understanding of the quality honours students are looking for in faculty and courses. This understanding will allow us to identify the key factors of successful honours programmes.

Do honours students assess teachers and courses differently than do non-honours students? What motivates students to take part in honours? What are their opinions about education (teachers, fellow-students, courses) and what do they value as important qualities? What forms of excellence do they pursue in honours activities? If honours students are different from non-honours students, should these differences necessitate curricular, pedagogical, or personal coaching changes in academic programming? We have a lot of questions to answer in order to design honours programmes that are appropriate for all key stakeholders: students, faculty, institutions, and society. The main research questions that we will try to answer in this article are:

- What are characteristics of honours students and how do they value teachers and courses?
- Does our theory-based learning context, which is supportive of autonomy, competence, and relatedness, actually correspond with the preferences of our honours students?

¹ Ryan and Deci (2000, p.73) claim “integration occurs when identified regulations are fully assimilated to the self, which means they have been evaluated and brought into congruence with one’s other values and needs. Actions characterized by integrated motivation share many qualities with intrinsic motivation, although they are still considered extrinsic because they are done to attain separable outcomes rather than for their inherent enjoyment.”

QUALITIES HONOURS STUDENTS LOOK FOR IN FACULTY AND COURSES

Most of the research on honours programmes has taken place in the USA with its longstanding tradition of such programmes, but even in the USA empirical research on students' motivations, attitudes, and achievements is scarce. Long & Lange (2002, p. 21) wrote that "[H]onors students and programs would be better served if there were an available body of scientific knowledge from which programmatic decisions could be made." We have not seen any shift and growth in research; the body of available US research on the characteristics of honour students focuses on their personality profiles, their previous academic achievement, or their social activities or volunteer work; it rarely focuses on 'throughput' or added value: what students actually *expect* from and *do* in honours programmes (for instance Clark, 2000; Gerrity *et al.*, 1993; Harte, 1994; Rinn, in review; Shushok, 2002). And the question remains whether US results can be transferred to any European national context, where the culture and the higher education system are different.

METHODS

Given the lack of empirical research, we started with a pilot study. We designed an exploratory study to investigate differences that might exist between honours and non-honours. Our questionnaire was based on outcomes of some studies in the United States so that we would have something to which we could compare our outcomes (Baur, 1969; Gerrity *et al.*, 1993; Harte, 1994; Shushok, 2002; Rinn & Plucker, in review, Long, 2002); it also contained questions based on Dutch anecdotal information (among others: evaluation reports; Eijl *et al.*, 2004; Wolfensberger, 2004). The main idea was to get a first impression whether there are differences between honours and non-honours students in the Netherlands and therefore whether it is worthwhile to go on with research on honours students and their outcomes. Also we wanted to find out to what extent the research results on honours in the United States and the Netherlands would be comparable.

We have chosen two different honours programmes from the two largest research universities as examples of two common types of honours programmes in the Netherlands: a disciplinary honours programme at Utrecht University and an interdisciplinary honours programme at the University of Amsterdam. As stated in other research (Eijl, 2003; Wolfensberger, 2004), we can divide honours in the Netherlands into roughly three organizational categories: disciplinary, interdisciplinary, and multidisciplinary honours programmes. The first is organized and paid for by a department with a focus on one discipline. Interdisciplinary honours programmes are generally organized and paid for by the university. Students come from all departments of the university, like the faculty. They meet only in honours. Recently combinations of these types of programmes are being developed. Multidisciplinary honours programmes bear strong similarities to liberal arts and science honours colleges in the United States.

In this research we included 3 populations and 1 stratified sample. This resulted in a total of 270 useful questionnaires. From the interdisciplinary honours programme from the University of Amsterdam, the whole population filled in a questionnaire (45 out of 48 participants). As a matching group from this university, we

took a stratified sample from the disciplines. A total of 85 students filled in the questionnaire during various courses. We controlled for gender and discipline: male and female students were equally represented; science students were slightly more represented in the sample. The honours population of the disciplinary programme Human Geography and Planning of the Faculty of Geoscience at University of Utrecht consists of 13 students, 12 of whom filled in the questionnaire. We then asked all 128 first-year students in Human Geography and Planning (a third, matching population) present during an obligatory course to fill in the questionnaire. First-year honours students were not included in this population. We administered the questionnaires during the week of June 20-22, 2004.

The questionnaire consisted of 34 multiple choice/closed questions and 3 open questions. The questions focused on students' opinions of fellow students, teachers, courses, general life attitudes, and social-economic background. Also, some questions dealt with study and classroom behaviour, such as how often students asked questions during courses and if and how often they had informal contact with faculty. Students were asked to evaluate 20 qualities of fellow students, teachers, and courses respectively on a simple 1 to 5 scale (1=extremely important; 5= completely unimportant). Additionally, honours students were asked to rank the three most important reasons (from a list) that they had decided to take part in the honours programme. We evaluated the questions afterwards with some of the respondents, and some questions appeared to be ambiguous and are not included in the analyses.

We used regular statistical methods for the analyses, especially Pearson Chi-Square, Cramer's V. We also give the means of scores on the 1-5 scale. Although this is not methodologically fully correct, the means help to present the results in a straightforward manner. In this paper, a correlation that is statistically significant refers to a confidence level of 95% ($\alpha = 0.05$). We compared all honours students versus all non-honours students and we did the statistics for the two programmes separately (in other words, interdisciplinary honours students versus non-honours of the University of Amsterdam and disciplinary honours versus non-honours students in Human Geography and Planning at the University of Utrecht).

RESULTS: HONOURS STUDENTS VERSUS NON-HONOURS STUDENTS

Coming back to our main concern, what are the characteristics of honours students and how do they value teachers and courses? Does a learning context that supports (the growth of) autonomy, competence, and relatedness actually correspond to the preferences of our honours students? Let us look at some of the research results.

The honours students, being asked to rate qualities of fellow students, faculty, and courses on a scale of 1 (extremely important) to 5 (extremely unimportant), answer as follows: the qualities that honours students consider most important are that the teachers be inspiring (1.6), that courses fit in with their personal interests (1.6), that courses be challenging (1.6), that courses awaken their curiosity (1.8), and lastly that the reading materials be interesting (1.9). Besides these characteristics, honours students value some basic qualities of teachers as important, namely that

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teachers teach in a clear and structured way (1.5; 1.5) and that they have clear criteria for what they want from students (1.7).

The top five highest scores of non-honours students indicate different priorities. Firstly, they value none of the given items as extremely important (score of 1). So the means are mostly higher than 2, with the exception of the importance given to basic teaching qualities, namely clear and structured teaching and having clear criteria (resp. 1.5; 1.5; 1.5). Besides those, the top five characteristics preferred by the non-honours students are: that the courses fit with their personal interests (1.8), that study tasks are clearly structured (1.9), that teachers inspire them (2.0), that courses challenge them (2.0), and that the reading materials be interesting (2.1).

When we look at the lowest scores—what students think to be less important—we also see some differences between honours and non-honours students. For the honours students the following items are not so important: that the study load not be too heavy (3.3), that the courses be important to their career (3.0), that they earn a high grade (2.9), that the study tasks be clearly structured (2.6). The non-honours control group value as relatively unimportant that teachers be demanding (2.8), that they earn a high grade (2.8), that the study load not be too heavy (2.7).

The five highest scoring items for the honours students have to do with inherent enjoyment and indicate internal motivation. They fit with a learning context focused on relatedness, autonomy, and competence. Our findings largely correspond with Stephens and Eison (1987) who report that honours students show more intrinsic interest in learning and less in grades. They also don't think it is important that a course be important for their career (3.0 versus 2.4 for the control group), and they seem to care less about study load. We do not know whether this is because they have plenty of time or they do not mind to working more. Further investigation of time management is warranted (also stated by Gerrity *et al.*, 1993, p. 50).

In our research, honours students have a higher average score on the items that relate to intrinsic motivation and a lower average score on the items that relate to extrinsic motivation. Please note that for the control group intrinsic motivation also scores better than extrinsic motivation but not as markedly as for the honours group.

According to the above, honours students seem to be more curious than non-honours students. Do they ask more questions during courses? Yes, honours students do appear to ask more questions during courses than non-honours students (Cramer's $V=3.1$). Almost half of all honours students claim to ask questions often during courses while 84% of all non-honours students say that they either never or only occasionally ask questions during courses.

Results of the current study seem to agree with Gerrity *et al.* (1993) and Robertson's (1966) claim that honours students expect their classes to be exciting and stimulating. Gerrity links this expectation to the family backgrounds of honours students, among other factors. More honours students' parents tended to have undergraduate and graduate degrees. Our study does not indicate this difference because only some of our questions were related to family background. More questions about personal attitude and background would be required for further investigation.

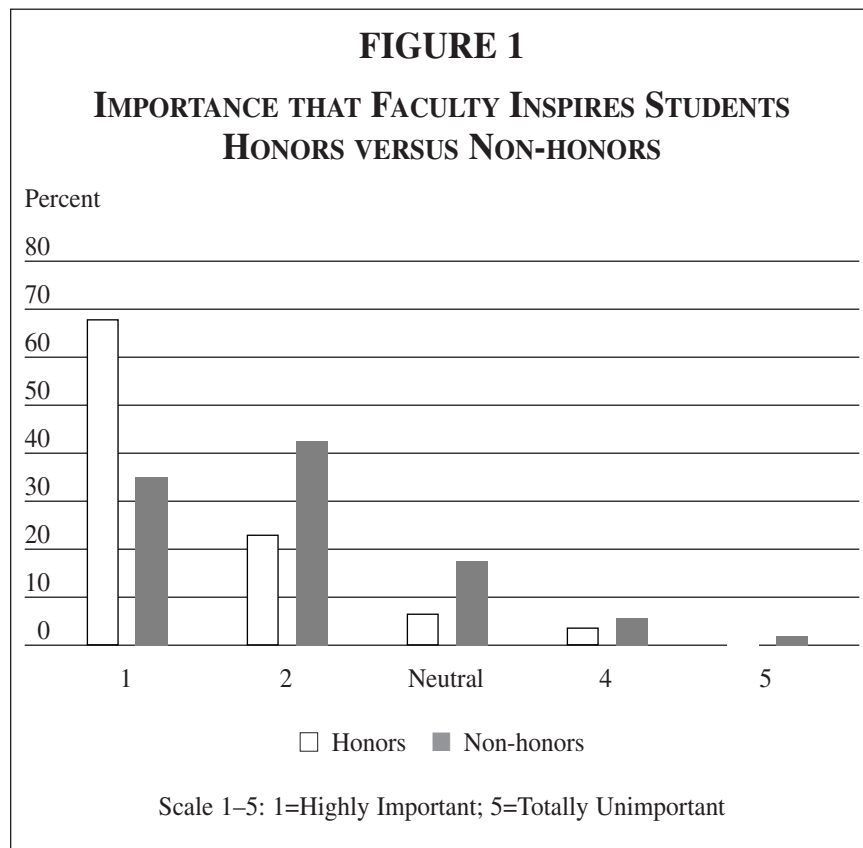
Our findings indicate that honours students seem to be more intrinsically motivated and more curious than non-honours students. Honours students value

inspiration, challenge, and relationship to their own interests as more important than their non-honours fellows do.

TEACHERS' QUALITIES

The difference between honours students and students in the control group is also pronounced in how the students value two teacher qualities: that teachers be inspiring (1.5 versus 2.0) and that they be demanding (2.4 versus 2.8 for control group).

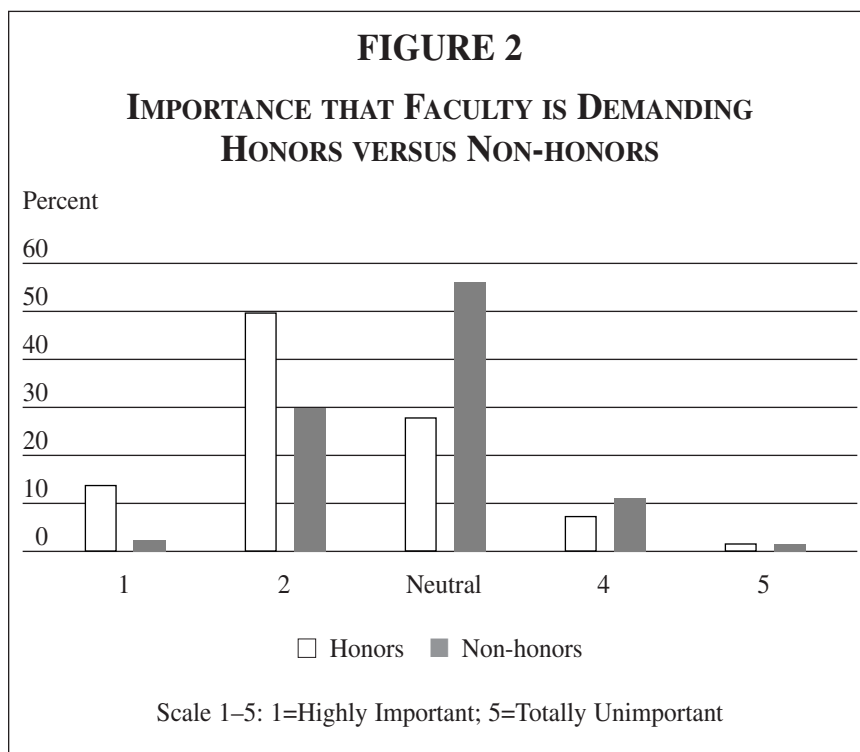
Honours students (67%) value it as very important that teacher be inspiring; only a third of the non-honours students value this as very important. This correlation is also significant (Cramer's $V=0.28$). The difference is illustrated in Figure 1.



Honours students appreciate it when a teacher is demanding: 63% of the honours students value this as very important versus 33% of the non-honours (Cramer's $V=0.28$) (see Figure 2). Accessibility of faculty does not seem to be an issue (mean 2.3

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for both groups), but, when we look more closely, an interesting difference between the two honours programmes appears.² The interdisciplinary honours students of Amsterdam do not value accessibility very highly (2.4 versus 2.2 for non-honours of Amsterdam). For the disciplinary honours students, by contrast, accessibility of faculty is much more important (1.8 versus 2.4 for first-year students at the Faculty of Geoscience).

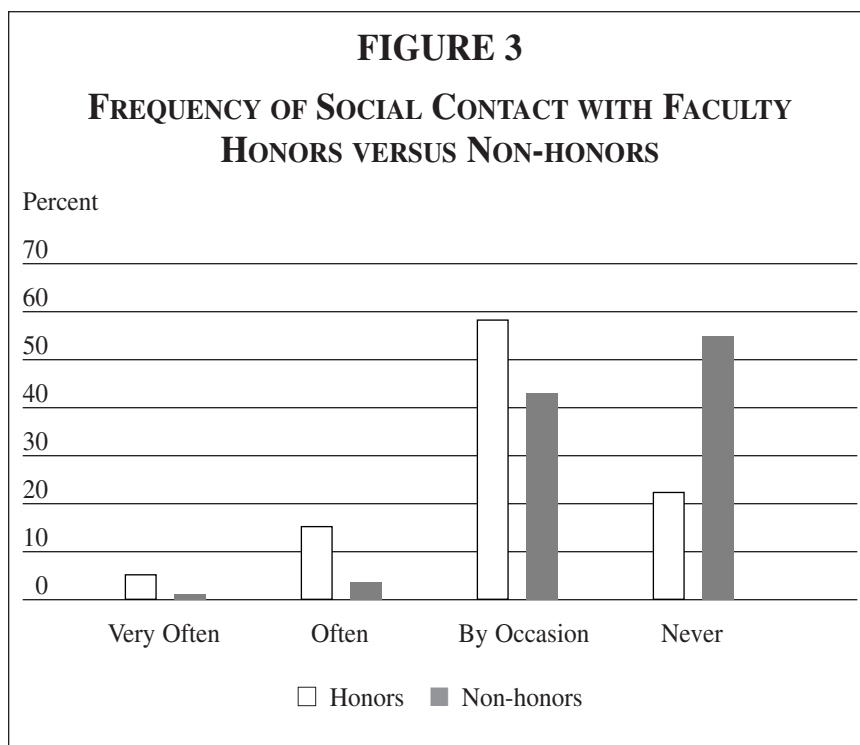


The results indicate that honours students appreciate relatedness. Do they experience this relatedness with faculty? We asked whether students have social contact with faculty outside the classroom.³ The answer appears to be yes: honours students have significantly more social contact with teachers than non-honours (Cramer's $V=0.326$). More than half of the non-honours students (53%) never have social contact with faculty while only 4% often or very often do. Of the honours students 22% never have social contact with faculty, and 21% often or very have often social contact (see Figure 3). Maybe the organizational structure discounts social contact: there are differences between the two honours programmes.

² The question is: How important is it for you that you can ask questions to faculty outside classroom? 1= very important up to 5= not important at all.

³ The question is: How often did you have social contacts with a teacher/faculty outside class this last year? 1=never up to 4=very often.

A quarter of the interdisciplinary honours students never have social contacts with faculty versus a small 10% of the disciplinary honours. This coincides with the findings of Baur (1969, p. 295) that when they had seen “one another in more than one class, honors students had more opportunities to form meaningful social ties within the academic sphere than was true of other students.”



As Gerrity’s study (1993) showed that honours students are more interested than non-honours in nonacademic activities, we asked students about their participation level in extracurricular activities organized by the department or university. After all, this kind of participation also counts as more social contact. We did not find any significant correlation. In our research, honours students do not participate more in extracurricular activities. Maybe those differences in findings can be explained by cultural differences and by differences in higher education. More research on cultural differences with regard to gifted students is needed. For instance, Peters (1998) found that academic self-concept is more correlated with intelligence in the Dutch case than in a Chinese sample. It would be worthwhile to repeat our research in an American setting. But maybe some phenomena may display themselves differently in different cultural environments, so what may be required are different ways of investigating.

Honours students value more highly than non-honours students do that teachers inspire them, that faculty are friendly and accessible and open to questions. Honours

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students ask more questions during class. Honours students have more social contact with teachers than non-honours students do. These findings can be important aids in helping programmes select teachers and guide them in their honours teaching. A mentoring relationship could be a good part of effective honours pedagogy.

THE CHOICE OF HONOURS

The overall impression is that honours students' evaluation of their academic environment indicates a high level of intrinsic motivation. The high grades that they attain are not driven by career orientation (extrinsic motivation). Honours students appear to be interested in the subject, in asking new questions, in new knowledge. This impression is reinforced by their responses to why they take part in the honours programme. 'Getting a deeper and broader knowledge and understanding,' 'learning to think critically,' and 'having more intellectual challenge' are the reasons most frequently given.⁴ Also the community of their peer honours students appears to be important: "collaboration with other motivated students" is a reason given for joining honours programmes. External reasons such as better qualification for graduate school or career are of little to no importance.

CONCLUSION

This research indicates that there are differences between honours and non-honours students in the value that they place on specific qualities of teachers, fellow-students, and courses. A learning context that is supportive of relatedness, autonomy, and competence seems to fit honours students well. These findings could help us formulate some pedagogical and curricular changes in academic programming.

Honours students seem to seek faculty who inspire them. They appreciate friendly teachers who are accessible for questions and conversations after courses. A learning context that is supportive of relatedness between students and between students and faculty seems to match with the needs of honours students. A mentoring relation could be part of this honours pedagogy. When faculty is personally involved there can be a transfer of attitude and values along with knowledge. Teachers can then become role models of scholarly leaders who have the courage to synthesize wisdom, intelligence, and creativity.

Honours students appreciate freedom. They highly value courses that correspond with their own personal interests. Freedom of choice seems to be important. Honours students seem to have a strong internal drive, so a learning context supportive of autonomy seems to fit them well.

⁴ Out of all the answers given, these four categories explain 60% of the reasons for participation. To collaborate with other highly motivated students counts for another 10%. The other 30% of the answers was scattered over 9 other answer categories, and the following reasons for participation are almost irrelevant (1 to 2 students tick them): 'to be able to do more research,' 'to qualify better for a job,' 'to qualify better for a PhD job,' 'to qualify better for admission to a master programme,' 'to improve my study planning and efficiency,' 'to have a more personal contact with teachers.'

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Honours students are looking for challenging environments. They like demanding teachers and challenging courses. They need a context in which to show and enlarge their competence. This context should not be competitive, as external outcomes seem to be irrelevant to them.

Please note that we did not include pre- and post-admission research. Therefore we cannot tell if participation in the honours programme influences the answers honours students give.

The findings of this exploratory study illustrate some differences between honours and non-honours. We believe more research into this subject is worthwhile. We would suggest changing the ambiguous questions and adding some questions about personal attitude and family background. We would advise enlarging the sample and also adding students from the third type, the multidisciplinary honours programme. We based our questions partly on American research. In comparing our findings we found a diverse picture. More research on cultural differences with regard to honours students is needed.

It would be very interesting to undertake similar research based on the same questionnaire among students participating in honours programmes in the United States. This would allow us to learn to what extent our findings are comparable. We could then join forces in order to design honours programmes that motivate students in a way that engenders commitment, effort, wisdom, creativity, and high-quality performance. This could result in evidence-based designs of attractive and successful honours programmes with strong spin-off effects on the regular programme and on the whole institution, ultimately allowing us to send off graduates who are willing and able to make a meaningful difference in the world.

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Academic and Social Effects of Living in Honors Residence Halls

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ABSTRACT

The impact of the residential environment in theories of college student development is often emphasized. Many researchers have studied the effects of on-campus living versus off-campus living, generally finding that living in residence halls is positively associated with both academic and social development. However, the study of gifted college students living in an honors residence hall is rarely addressed. This article examines the possible academic and social effects of living in an honors residence hall. Implications are discussed.

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The study of college student development often includes students' residences (i.e., residence halls, off-campus apartments, parents' homes, etc.) because of the realization that there are other influences on college student development apart from classroom or classroom-related activities. Attending college does not just mean attending classes. Researchers often emphasize the role of residence halls in college student development because residence halls provide "more opportunities to influence student growth and development in the first year or two of college than almost any other program in student affairs" (Blimling, 1993, p. 1), likely because a student spends more time in his or her living environment than anywhere else.

The importance of a student's residential environment has been supported by many researchers (e.g., Astin, 1977; Feldman & Newcomb, 1969; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991). To illustrate, Chickering (1969), in his psychosocial theory of college student development, argues development can be influenced by six major institutional factors of a college or university, including residence hall arrangements (others include clarity and consistency of institutional objectives; institutional size; curriculum, teaching, and evaluation; faculty and administration; and student culture). Through these institutional factors, students are aided in their development along seven vectors, namely achieving competence, managing emotions, becoming

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autonomous, establishing identity, freeing interpersonal relationships, clarifying purposes, and developing integrity. Residential environments are typically studied in relation to students' academic development and social development.

RESIDENCE HALLS AND ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT

Although an abundance of literature exists regarding the social climate of residence halls, the academic climate of residence halls is examined far less frequently (Denzine, 1998). Living in residence halls is often anecdotally associated with gains in students' academic development, although the research in this area is less certain. In his meta-analysis of 21 studies that compared residence hall students with those living at home, Blimling (1989) found students living in residence halls seem to perform better academically than students who live at home. However, when prior academic achievement was controlled, research did not generally support the notion that students living in residence halls would perform better academically than students living at home. High-achieving students still performed well regardless of their living arrangements. In his meta-analysis of nine studies that compared residence hall students with students living in fraternity or sorority houses, those students living in residence halls were likely to perform better academically than students living in fraternity or sorority houses. Other researchers have found a clear correlation between living in residence halls and academic achievement in the form of grade point average (Astin, 1973; Rinn, 2003).

Although the evidence is uncertain regarding the relationship between residence hall living and academic achievement, research has supported the belief that living on-campus is associated with persistence and graduation from college. Chickering (1974) found on-campus living had a significant positive effect on completion of the bachelor's degree, even when controlling for individual differences such as academic ability. In addition, living on campus increases students' chances for aspiring to attain a graduate or professional degree (Astin, 1977). Several pre-college traits may be accountable for persistence and the attainment of a degree, such as academic aptitude, family socioeconomic status, and educational aspirations, although Astin provides an estimate that living in a residence hall contributes to about 12% of the variance involved in attaining a bachelor's degree.

RESIDENCE HALLS AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Research generally supports the notion that students living in campus-organized housing tend to be more socially adjusted and tend to participate more often in extracurricular and campus activities than students living off campus (Feldman & Newcomb, 1969; Lundgren & Schwab, 1979). Living in dormitories maximizes opportunities for students to become involved in social and extracurricular activities because they are placed in the center of activity (i.e., on campus), are literally surrounded by their peers, and have easier access to faculty and staff. This involvement largely accounts for student growth and development, including a general increase in self-concept (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991), simply by exposure to other students and

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opportunities. In fact, students often cite social opportunities and the opportunity to meet other students as reasons for re-applying to live in residence halls (Cleave, 1996). Of course, living in a residence hall is not guaranteed to provide a community-like atmosphere for college students. Clark and Hirt (1998) show that living in a small residence hall does not provide a better community atmosphere than living in a large residence hall.

Students who live in a residence hall may be inclined to identify with other students in their residence hall, thus viewing themselves as part of a group. In a study of 142 students living in residence halls, Bettencourt, Charlton, Eubanks, Kernahan, and Fuller (1999) found that social identification within a residence hall group increased adjustment to college, including both academic and social adjustment. Residence halls promote a sense of community that is both inclusive and exclusive. Residential communities are inclusive because they impart a sense of belonging among group members and exclusive because only certain group members can belong to the community, those who live in the residence hall. The safety a student feels within a residence hall community can thus serve as a starting point for student exploration. Students have the freedom to explore the campus but also the safety net of their residence hall. The residence hall then becomes the “psychological home and the locus of identity development during the most concentrated and intense learning period in the lives of students” (Hughes, 1994, p. 191).

Students involved in social organizations, including Greek organizations, report fewer feelings of loneliness and isolation than students not involved in social organizations (Lane & Daugherty, 1999). Moran, Yengo, and Algier found students involved in campus student organizations are also less likely to feel isolated than non-involved students (as cited in Lane & Daugherty). Commuter students, who are generally less likely to be involved in campus activities, report feeling more isolated from peers and less socially active than those students living on campus (Lundgren & Schwab, 1979). These research findings offer further support for the importance of residence hall living in the social development of college students.

HONORS RESIDENCE HALLS

The study of living in residence halls, fraternity and sorority houses, off-campus apartments, and parents' homes is well covered in the research literature. However, consistent with the lack of research on gifted college students (Rinn & Plucker, 2004), there is also a lack of research on housing for gifted college students, typically known as honors residence halls. This paucity of research remains even though a recent study shows honors students are more likely to live on campus than non-honors students (Gerrity, Lawrence, & Sedlacek, 1993)

Honors residence halls are characteristic of honors colleges within public universities, allowing gifted college students to participate in a challenging academic program while also fulfilling the general university requirements for an undergraduate degree. Students are usually accepted to an honors college on the basis of prior academic achievement. Honors colleges, largely modeled from the elitist image of British higher education, were first started in the United States in the early twentieth

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century (Aydelotte, 1944). Residence halls in the United States are also a result of the British collegiate model, whereby students and faculty both lived and worked together (Blimling, 1993; Zeller, 1998).

In 1973, Halverson reported the educational and institutional objectives of honors colleges, which included provisions of both academic opportunities and “an environment that will encourage the aspirations of and the achievements by these students [honors students] and that will foster in them dignity, self-esteem, and a sense of their potential” (as cited in Austin, 1991, p. 11). The importance of the environment in collegiate honors education is reason for the implementation of both honors centers, which usually house a lounge, study areas, computers, honors residence halls, and so on (Austin). Although effects of living in honors residence halls are scarcely studied in the literature, a related residence has been studied, namely living-learning centers.

Living-learning centers, like honors residence halls, seek to integrate students’ academic and residential lives through courses offered for credit and non-credit activities within the residence hall itself. Classrooms, living quarters, faculty offices, lounges, and so on are generally located in the same facility or cluster of facilities. Most research tends to support the notion that living-learning centers have a positive influence on a student’s academic and social development. Students residing in living-learning centers have been shown to achieve higher grade point averages than students living in other housing arrangements (Kanoy & Bruhn, 1996) and report greater satisfaction with their environment (Clarke, 1988).

Pascarella and Terenzini (1991) found that students living in living-learning centers, as compared to conventional residence halls, “rated the institutional environment significantly stronger in intellectual press and sense of community and also reported significantly greater freshman year gains on the measure of cognitive development” (p.151). Pemberton (1969) found similar results and also noted that the transition from high school to college appeared easier for students in a living-learning center because of the supportive atmosphere. In fact, one of the most often cited important features of a living-learning center is a student’s self-reported feeling of connectedness to his or her living environment (Schein & Bowers, 1992). These findings offer a base from which to reflect on the effects of living in honors residence halls.

SPECULATION ON THE EFFECTS OF HONORS RESIDENCE HALLS

Just as living in a residence hall increases a student’s odds of persistence in college and eventual graduation, participation in an honors program increases persistence in college and also aspirations for graduate or professional degrees (Astin, 1977). Therefore, the combined effects of participating in an honors program and living in an honors residence hall would appear to result in large positive gains for the academic achievement and aspirations of gifted college students. This increase in academic achievement and aspirations could occur for several reasons.

When honors students live together in the same dormitories, they are likely to facilitate and reinforce the academic achievement of one another. Several research

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studies have supported the idea that residence halls homogeneously assigned by academic ability results in higher academic achievement and greater satisfaction with living quarters than randomly assigned residence halls (Blimling, 1989; DeCoster, 1964). Gifted students who are assigned to a high-ability residence hall or an honors residence hall would then be more satisfied with their living arrangements and achieve at higher levels than those gifted students living in other residence halls or off-campus. While the academic achievement in homogeneous residence halls is higher, the perceived intellectual environment is also greater (Golden & Smith, 1983). Students may be performing better, and they are also aware that their environment is supporting their achievement. As previously mentioned, though, some researchers have shown that high ability students will perform well in college regardless of their living environment (Stewart, 1980; Taylor & Hanson, 1971).

A similar debate exists regarding whether or not matching roommates by academic major will influence academic achievement. Taylor and Hanson (1971) argue that homogeneously grouping students by their major results in higher achievement than randomly placed students. Schroeder and Belmonte (1979) found that students assigned to residence halls by their academic major performed better academically than students in the same major who were assigned randomly to a residence hall. On the other hand, Elton and Bate (1966) argue the housing of students by academic major does not affect their academic achievement at the end of their first semester in college.

Another possible reason for an increase in achievement among students living in an honors residence hall is the environmental press theory. Using 1,722 students enrolled at 140 different colleges and universities, Thistlethwaite and Wheeler (1966) studied the effects of the college environment, especially teacher and peer subcultures, on students' aspirations to seek graduate level degrees. In controlling for sex, degree aspirations at the beginning of college, National Merit Qualifying Test score, father's educational level, mother's educational level, number of freshman scholarship applications in 1959, family financial resources in 1959, and probable major field of study, the authors examined students' intentions to pursue graduate training, as measured through college press scales. They concluded that the selectivity of an institution, or the average grade point average of an entering freshman class, has a direct positive effect on aspirations "since an undergraduate will perform best and aim highest at a school where most of his fellow students have high aspirations and are superior academically" (Drew & Astin, 1972, p. 1152). Thus, if students with high achievement and high aspirations surround a gifted college student, the student is likely to raise his aspirations to meet those of students around him.

The influence of the environmental press appears to be self-perpetuating, or to reinforce itself over time. Environments that are highly differentiated, such as an honors residence hall, tend to attract people who already share similar characteristics with the dominant group, thus reinforcing and strengthening the characteristics of the dominant group, creating a cyclical pattern (Strange, 1993). In an honors residence hall, students, by definition, have historically performed well in high school and value their academic performance in college. Because honors residence halls are usually open only to honors students, an honors residence hall will likely remain

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academically oriented and the students will likely continue to reinforce the academic achievement of one another. Therefore, it might be “incorrect to attribute behavioral variation among student groups to differential group influence, since it represents mainly the effects of differential selection and anticipatory socialization” (LeVine, 1966, p. 108). In other words, an honors residence hall might not lead to a particular behavior: Students may have joined the honors residence hall *already* displaying that behavior.

Many researchers, including Pascarella (1980) and Rossi (1966), agree that students tend to change in the direction of the environmental press, thereby reducing the differences between themselves and others. While the academic effects of the environmental press are well noted and tend to be positive, the social effects are typically less evaluated. In other words, the literature is unclear as to whether or not intellectual environmental presses can positively or negatively influence the social development of gifted college students.

Upon initial arrival at college, students involved in an honors college may experience an easier social adjustment to university life through interaction with other honors students and the formation of a community (Rutland Gillison, 2000). In the initial stages of transition to university life, especially if a student does not know any other students, the transition can be eased by the formation of structured peer groups, especially through residence hall arrangements. Instead of leaving students to develop their own friendships and social groups in a new environment, students might benefit from being automatically placed in a group. After students have time to settle in their new environment, they can then begin forming their own peer groups and friendships.

In a study of the development of peer networks, such as those just described, university freshmen that participated in the structured networks reported making a more successful transition to university life, both academically and socially, than students who did not participate (Peat, Dalziel, & Grant, 2001). Students who fail to develop successful peer relationships, particularly with their residence hall roommates, may receive lower grade point averages and have lower retention rates than students with successful peer relationships (Pace, 1970; Waldo, 1986). Participation in an honors college and living in an honors residence hall can provide a structured peer group for honors students. Some research has provided evidence for the importance of peer groups in honors programs. Honors college students representing 28 universities ranked peer support and interaction as the third most fulfilling experience of an honors college, following honors classes and outside academic activities. In addition, the advantages of participation in an honors college included intellectual commonality and cohesiveness among the honors college students (McClung & Stevenson, 1988). These ratings speak to the importance of being near like-minded peers upon entrance to college.

Conversely, honors college students cited a major disadvantage to participation in an honors college as isolation from the mainstream student body (McClung & Stevenson, 1988). Like living-learning centers, honors residence halls only attract a certain group of students. Although students report positive experiences in living-learning centers, an often-cited complaint is the seclusion from the rest of

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the campus (Leean & Miller, 1981). Likewise, students appreciate the community experience of an honors college and the proximity of other honors students, but they may also experience seclusion and isolation from the rest of campus. Even though students list seclusion as a disadvantage, is it possible that the honors students themselves form the seclusion? If so, is this seclusion and isolation helpful or harmful?

Some argue that theme dorms, or dorms that expand an area of interest beyond the classroom, can promote self-segregation (Hill, 1996). These theme dorms, like honors residence halls, attract highly distinct groups and do not offer much diversity. For example, some theme dorms are academically oriented, and many theme dorms are ethnically based. While this may allow students to build group solidarity and ease the pressures of being a minority, theme dorms also can encourage stereotypes and lessen the opportunities for students to broaden their horizons and develop friendships with other groups.

For example, the University of Massachusetts Amherst and the University of Maine have residence halls for those students who are gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender (Herbst & Malaney, 1999; Ocamb, 1996), and Rutgers University offers a residence hall for women majoring in science, engineering, or mathematics (Stinson, 1990). Many other universities offer theme dorms based on ethnic interests, substance-free commitments, and various artistic and music interests, among others. In comparing the effects of various residence hall arrangements on the academic and social experiences of college students, Clarke (1988) found that those students living in theme dorms reported less satisfaction with their peer relationships than students living in other residence hall arrangements. It is important to keep in mind that students who live in theme dorms choose to live in those dorms and perhaps may be creating self-segregation for themselves.

Students living in theme dorms may perceive themselves to be somewhat isolated from other students living in conventional residence halls. Likewise, if honors students all live in the same dormitories, they might be deprived of contact with students of other ability levels (DeCoster, 1964) and perceive the same feelings of isolation. This segregation, whether self-imposed or not, can play a large role in the development of friendships, peer groups, and reference groups.

The development of friendship usually occurs when people who have common interests are brought together in an environment. "Frequency of contact...depends on proximity, so friendship develops more easily if people live near each other, work in the same office, or meet at the same church or club" (Argyle, 1992, p. 50). Similarly, students living in the same residence hall are likely to become friends. In a study of 325 college males, Brown (1972) found the nature of a group living in a residence hall played a large role in the development of friendships. By placing students on a dormitory floor by their major, Brown was able to determine that the similarity of interests among the residents, as well as the close proximity, led to friendships among those students living on the same floor.

In a hypothetical situation, although not far from reality, suppose a gifted student is accepted to an honors college at a large, public university. Although the student does not know anyone else attending this university, or enrolled in the honors college,

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he decides to attend because of the excellent reputation of the honors college. He is assigned to an honors residence hall and is pleased to discover that he is meeting other honors students and developing friendships much more quickly than he imagined upon arrival on campus. Why is he meeting people and developing friendships? Perhaps the student finds it easier to socialize because he has been placed in a residence hall full of people like himself. Because of the proximity of the other honors students and the similarity of interests among the honors students, this hypothetical student should not have much difficulty developing relationships with other honors students.

However, suppose this hypothetical honors student finds himself satisfied with his newfound friendships in the honors residence hall and finds himself with little desire to try to interact with non-honors students. Can this self-segregation be harmful, either academically or socially? What are the consequences or benefits of not interacting with non-honors students?

Probably, this hypothetical student is having the experience of belonging to an in-group, and he is viewing non-honors students as an out-group. "We tend to see members of out-groups as more similar to each other than members of our own group—the in-group. In-group favoritism refers to the tendency to see one's own group as better on any number of dimensions and to allocate rewards to one's own group...[T]hese tendencies can form the basis of racial and ethnic prejudice" (Aronson, 1999, p.145). Honors students may begin to view non-honors students as "out-group" members. Similarly, non-honors students may view honors students as "out-group" members. In addition, Gudykunst notes that out-group members may be perceived as too different from in-group members, thereby lessening the motivation to communicate with the out-group members (as cited in Buttny, 1999). Honors students and non-honors students may eventually come to the conclusion that the other group is too different from themselves and not attempt to initiate contact with them.

At the same time though, the development of a common group identity, such as that which defines honors students, can "diffuse the effects of stigmatization, improve intergroup attitudes, and enhance institutional satisfaction and commitment among college students" (Dovidio, Gaertner, Niemann, & Snider, 2001, p. 167). Membership in an honors college might provide a social identity for gifted college students. Upon entrance to college, a gifted college student will likely seek out relationships and activities that affirm the social identity he or she believes is important. The development of a social identity within a common group identity can thus be very beneficial.

As a result, the "stigma of giftedness" (Coleman & Cross, 1988) may not be as prevalent among the gifted college student population as it is among gifted elementary and secondary school students. The stigma of giftedness is the perception by gifted students that others see them as different. If being surrounded by like-minded peers in an honors residence hall can lessen the effects of stigmatization due to less interaction with non-honors students who might perceive the honors students to be different, then the seemingly negative effects of living in an honors residence hall might not be so negative. If, due in part to living in an honors residence hall, honors

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students perform better academically and feel that they belong to a group free of stigmas, perhaps the benefits outweigh the costs.

A student's reference group is also an important component of the social effects of living in an honors residence hall and a factor to consider when evaluating the effects of self-segregation. The concept of reference groups stems from Festinger's (1954) theory of social comparison, which assumes that people have a drive to obtain an accurate appraisal of their own abilities, and, in the absence of objective means for doing so, people evaluate their abilities by comparison with the abilities of others. In addition, people are likely to compare themselves to others of like abilities in order to gain a more accurate appraisal of themselves. In the case of honors students, external comparison can depend on residence hall arrangement.

Honors students living in an honors residence hall may view their reference group only in terms of other honors students living in their honors residence hall, especially if self-segregation is occurring. Honors students not living in an honors residence hall may be able to obtain a more accurate portrayal of their abilities because they are able to view their reference group in terms of both other honors students and non-honors students.

To evaluate one's abilities accurately, it is helpful to know where one stands relative to all ability levels rather than just the level of similar ability. Several researchers (e.g., Festinger, 1954) argue that, in comparing ability levels, one compares his or her ability only with others of similar ability. Davis (1966) argues that gifted students probably do not compare themselves across institutional settings or from one residence hall to another. However, Bassis (1977) argues that students at any particular institution are likely to realize where that institution falls on the selectivity continuum, at least in a broad sense. In his empirical study, Bassis found that college students, in forming their reference groups, are likely to incorporate across-institution comparisons when evaluating themselves. Thus, honors students may recognize the selectivity of their honors residence hall as compared to other residence halls on campus.

If gifted students who are involved in an honors college and live in an honors residence hall have engaged in self-segregation from the rest of the campus, researchers and educators are left to wonder how likely it is that these gifted students will develop reference groups beyond the walls of their own residence hall, thus affecting their self-evaluation.

IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSION

Although the research literature generally provides support for the positive academic and social effects of living in college or university residence halls (e.g., Feldman & Newcomb, 1969; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991), evidence concerning honors residence halls is far less clear. Living in conventional residence halls likely contributes to persistence and eventual graduation from college, leads to increases in social adjustment, provides a sense of community, decreases feelings of isolation, and generally results in a greater satisfaction with the university experience (Astin, 1977; Lundgren & Schwab, 1979). Participation in an honors college seems to lead

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to the same experiences. Thus, the combination of participation in an honors college and living in an honors residence hall appears positive.

While living in an honors residence hall can influence the academic achievement of gifted college students, the social effects are arguably controversial. Honors students living in honors residence halls are able to form a common group identity, but they may also engage in self-segregation, the formation of narrow peer groups and reference groups, and they may experience isolation from the rest of the campus. It is uncertain whether the potential benefits of living in an honors residence hall outweigh the potential costs.

Empirical research needs to be conducted in this elusive area of higher education. The study of gifted college students and their living environments is largely understudied as compared to other minority groups on campus, yet these students may experience the same feelings of seclusion as other minority groups. Empirical findings could provide more solid evidence regarding the academic and social effects of living in an honors residence hall and could assist researchers, honors college administrators, and others in the improvement of collegiate honors education.

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Creating a Culture of Conducive Communication in Honors Seminars

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In his book “The Courage to Teach,” Parker Palmer discusses the various roles of the teacher in the college classroom. One facet he speaks about is the power that teachers possess: “teachers possess the power to create conditions that can help students learn a great deal.” I believe teachers who are student-centered know this and carry this out to the best of their ability. One issue that I agree with, but other instructors reject, is another point that Parker Palmer embraces. He also contends that “we must talk to each other about our inner lives. The lives of the students must always come first, even if it means that the subject gets short-changed.” It is my experience that teachers have the ability to create a powerful learning culture when both teachers and students disclose their inner selves. I have found that students learn to attach meaning to the content of the course by discussing personal opinion and experience. Students and teachers alike teach and learn through mutual discussion. To me this is learning, and in the honors classroom where seminars are the norm, honest and productive dialogue is the key to learning.

In order to create conditions that help students learn and talk about their inner lives, I have actively used communication skills guidelines that can make a difference in the outcome of classroom dynamics. From teaching honors and non-honors sections of courses that cover the same material, it has become clear to me that our high expectations for honors students can overshadow the fact that they are at the same level of maturity and can consequently have the same level of interpersonal communication as their non-honors peers. Careful guidance is crucial for a respectful classroom experience that gives way to maximum learning.

The four one-semester seminars that make up the core of the Honors Program at Colorado State University facilitate the completion of the University’s written and oral communication requirements as well as historical perspectives, requirements in the arts and humanities, U.S. values in public institutions, the social and behavioral sciences, and global and cultural awareness. In these seminars, outside of courses that do not take the human condition into consideration, the importance of civil dialogue is key to success in the classroom.

All of the honors seminars that I teach consider issues of a diverse society. The definition of diversity incorporates a myriad of ideas which makes the discussion difficult. The course that serves as the basis of the lessons I have learned about creating

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a classroom culture of conducive communication is an honors course I call “Race from the Atlantic.” This seminar, like all of the seminars that are the core of the Honors Program at Colorado State University, relies heavily on student discussion and the guidance of the instructor to move the students through a conversation of the history and realities of the human condition.

“Race from the Atlantic” uses feature articles from *The Atlantic Monthly* magazine. With a generous educational copyright policy and feature articles about the diversity of ideas and cultural groups, The Atlantic Monthly works well for the interdisciplinary nature of the honors courses at CSU. Social facts, derived from other texts, give the articles a starting point for each topic to be discussed from a sociological perspective. These facts give the students a taste of the “sociological imagination.” The sociological imagination allows the students to understand the topic at hand and their life experiences in a different way, that of a larger social context.

These thoughts of communication came to me rather suddenly while teaching a section of “Race from The Atlantic” last fall when verbal attacks along racial lines became a part of my seminar. Half way through the semester, a white male directed a comment to a biracial student about minorities needing to move out of depressed areas to improve their lives. I knew that his comments were due, in part, to how and where he grew up, and I knew that he did not know any social facts about the state of urban minorities in the United States. His lack of knowledge and his opinion based on his rural background was hindered by a lack of skills to communicate his question in a way that would allow learning to take place. This interaction so deeply disturbed me and many of the students, that I had to dismiss the class for that session. For several hours I did not know how to respond to his statement and how to recognize and rectify what had been said so that we could continue to learn. I knew it was necessary to take time out from the content and concentrate on communication skills that the students did not have or were not using at the time. I suspended the syllabus for a week and gave my students the following set of communication skills gleaned from <http://www.coopcomm.org/workbook.htm>:

- Challenge One: Listening more carefully and more responsively - acknowledging the feelings and wants that others are expressing - compassionately allowing people to feel whatever they feel (which sets the example for others to hear and accept my feelings, also).
- Challenge Two: Explaining my conversational intent and inviting consent by using conversational openers such as, “Right now I would like to take a few minutes and ask you about... [subject].” The more important the conversation, the more important it is to know & share the overall goal.
- Challenge Three: Expressing myself more clearly and more completely -giving my listeners the information they need to understand (mentally reconstruct) my experiences. One good way is to use “the five I-messages”: what/how I observe, feel, interpret/evaluate, want, and hope for.

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- Challenge Four: Translating my criticisms and complaints into requests & explaining the positive results of having my request granted—doing this for both my own complaints and the complaints that others bring to me.
- Challenge Five: Asking questions more “open-endedly” and more creatively. “How did you like that movie?” is an open-ended question that invites a wide range of answers. “Did you like it?” suggests only “yes” or “no” as answers and does not encourage discussion. (How do you feel about this suggestion?)
- Challenge Six: Thanking. Expressing more appreciation, gratitude, encouragement and delight. In a world full of problems, look for opportunities to give praise. Both at home & at work, it is the bond of appreciation that makes relationships strong enough to allow for problem-solving.
- Challenge Seven: Making the effort... Making better communication an important part of my everyday life by seeing each conversation as an opportunity to grow in skill, awareness and compassion and turning each opponent into a learning and problem-solving partner.

That week we did some role playing, and we staged a debate where the communication skills were to be a central part of the dialogue. The rest of the semester went well, although at that time I was sure it was due in part to the fact that students stayed away from controversy and did not make statements they wanted to make. But I learned through teaching the next semester that productive communication in the classroom is in part due to active attention to how the students can better relate to each other and to the instructor, and learn the content of the course while making personal connections of understanding.

In the spring, the semester following this incident, I agreed to teach a non-honors sociology course entitled “Contemporary Race and Ethnic Relations.” This course had an enrollment of almost 80 students. As the new semester approached, I wondered if I was crazy to teach 80 students the same material that got 19 previous students in a verbal tangle only the semester before.

Indeed, I was crazy enough, and along with the syllabus I handed out the communication skills guidelines that I was felt compelled to hand out in the previous honors course. About three weeks into the semester it happened: Five minutes before the class period was over, a student, Drew, mentioned his family pride in Southern Culture and the value of a Confederate flag that his grandfather has stored in his basement. In the few minutes left, frenzied comments flew. All of these responses centered on the hatred that the Confederate flag represents. Saved by the bell, the students left, and I sighed a breath of relief that the conversation was over.

It remained so until I awoke around 3 o'clock the next morning. I realized that Drew had not mentioned anything except the fact that a Confederate flag was a treasured family heirloom. He did not say, or insinuate, that he was anti-Union or racist in any way. The students who did speak, did not hear what he was saying, and assumed that Drew was rallying for everything negative the Confederate flag represents. Those last few minutes of class that day were really just the beginning, and it was my responsibility to drag the Confederate flag out of the basement and wave it in front of my

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students the next class period, so I could present the ideas about how to talk about differing values, opinions, and experiences central to the learning process.

I went into the next class session and asked the students to pull out their syllabi and to again take a look at the communication skills that I had included. I asked Drew to again mention what he had said in class before, and for students to respond with the communication skills listed.

I asked the students to “listen more carefully and more responsively” (challenge one), and asked Drew to use challenge three, with “I” statements to re-state what he had stated before. The questions began with ideas like “I want to ask you about what this flag means to your family” (challenge two), and challenge five was articulated by asking “why did you tell that to us?” (the class). The conversation was broadened to include ideas such as differing value systems and the challenges of opinions and experiences used to understand the idea of diversity.

I used challenge six after class that day, sending them all a message of gratitude. I reiterated my feeling of classroom success that last class of the week. At this early point in the semester, the students learned that making the effort, challenge seven, would make this a course to remember. I was right. The rest of the semester went just as well. The students surpassed my expectations, and I will remember that week as one of the highlights of my teaching career.

One personal connection and several communication skills later, they learned both lessons. Throughout the semester, the students were not hesitant to ask the tough questions. Students shared their opinions as answers, others answered back with social facts, and vice-versa. The class became a safe haven and a climate of mutual respect, even though we tackled the tough stereotypes and questions of racial and ethnic relations. I was overwhelmed with pride in what they had learned and how they had learned it. This happened because they were willing to communicate in a respectful and methodical way. The motto of the class became “just ask” although high levels of respect were implied.

These two classes taught me my most important lesson for managing the psychology of students as individuals into a sociology of one class culture to encourage thought, learning, personal growth, and knowledge. I know now that if non-honors students can reach the height of respect and communication needed, honors students will benefit from the same instruction. As is the case at many institutions of higher education, the honors students at Colorado State University are not diverse, with most coming from white, middle to upper-class families.

I am glad I have “the courage to teach” the tough topics that this generation, and all generations, have to take on. Besides issues of social inequality, these guidelines can also be successfully used to examine other important social issues that are key to understanding the world in which we live but that are controversial to those with differing experiences and worldviews. We foster our charges with the elements that it takes to be an educated person. One that is of utmost importance for the classroom is the art of conversation. This is especially important when two or more divergent opinions or experiences are at the forefront of the learning process. The social facts are not debatable, but the lenses of life are in the eye of the beholder. It is our job as instructors to focus these ideas into an enriching learning experience.

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Women in Honors Education: The Case of Western Washington University

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This essay is concerned with women and their educational experience in an Honors Program, and with their educational choices. It deals briefly with the history of women in higher education in the Western world and in the light of this history compares WWU Honors women with historical trends, with men and women students in the institution, and with students nationally in terms of major choices and career aspirations. It is not an attempt to view Honors women's education comprehensively nor to look at WWU women along side Honors women more generally. In fact, it is not possible to do so, as figures on major choices among women in Honors Programs nationally are not available. It does try to answer some specific questions—What majors do Honors women at Western Washington University chose, and why? Do women regard their general education in ways different from men? More generally, are there uniquely feminine issues as regards their educational choices?

It is interesting to note that in an arena where there is a great deal of research regarding the character of the Honors experience and the value it adds to a student's education that so little has been done as regards Honors students' choices of majors and their ideas more generally about their educational experiences. There are no aggregate national data on major choices for Honors students, much less for women students. Thus this essay can offer only limited conclusions as regards the experience of Honors students, and it can compare the experience of women only with national figures on women's choices of majors and with male student in the program. It is, however, the author's hope that Honors Directors and Deans will hereby be stimulated to ask questions of this sort of their own programs and to contribute to broaden the discussion on the nature of Honors education.

Any assessment of women in higher education must examine the historical place they have occupied in education more generally in Western societies, and in the case of this essay, particularly with reference to the United States, in both theory and practice. Indeed, it is only after education became higher education in the sense in which that term is now commonly used and understood that is possible to say much that is meaningful about women in education. From the earliest days in

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the Western tradition, ideas about education dealt with the education of women, and in his *Republic*, Plato included them in the community and opened educational opportunities for them on the same basis as men. Renaissance Humanists considered the education of women to be pivotal in maintaining the moral health of society, though they always considered women's positions in education and life more generally to be subservient to men's. Vives, Luther, Melanchthon, Erasmus, and More all wrote extensively on the topic.

Of course real world opportunities never keep pace with theory in Europe, and it was not until the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries that women began to gain access to higher education, and then only in the face of entrenched opposition on the part of men, particularly in terms of training for the professions of law and medicine, where they faced formidable obstacles. It was therefore not until the late nineteenth century that discussions about women had much practical relevance.

In the United States there was less theorizing about education for women until the twentieth century, but opportunities were significantly more abundant. Public education for women, but not higher education, existed from the nation's inception, though the opportunities for women differed from those for men. Dames schools on the English and European model existed in colonial times, providing training in the "practical arts" (e.g., sewing) along side instruction reading, writing, and music. Boston public schools admitted girls beginning in 1769, a practice that spread throughout the New England states after the Revolution. By the 1830s coeducational primary schools were becoming more numerous, moving westward with the frontier and statehood, and coeducational high schools were increasingly common. Mark Twain's depiction of schools in *Tom Sawyer* and many of his other novels, and stories of girls and boys receiving instruction together reflected an American reality that would have been virtually unimaginable to Europeans. In his *Democracy in America* Tocqueville noticed young women in the schools and was struck by their self-confidence and brashness.

Likewise, women in the United States found opportunities in higher education much earlier than their counterparts in Europe, and while women were struggling in Britain to be allowed to take examinations that would qualify them for admission to the universities, and even as women in Germany battled to be allowed to attend classes as auditors in universities, women in the United States were already being admitted to colleges and universities. The first coeducational college, Oberlin, was founded in 1833, and Cornell University, founded in 1865 with an odd public-private charter, admitted anyone, regardless of gender, who wanted to follow the courses of study it offered. Mount Holyoke, the first women's college, opened in 1837, with Vassar following in 1861. More than a dozen women's colleges were founded in the two decades immediately after the Civil War, and their numbers grew rapidly until by 1950 they reached their high-water mark of more than 260. Some public universities admitted women very early, with the University of Utah setting the pace in 1850. Other states created normal schools before the Civil War, with the first, in Lexington, Massachusetts, opening its doors in 1839. Women always were enrolled in these institutions and often constituted a majority of the student body. By 1861 there were more than a dozen normal schools, and their numbers grew rapidly after 1865; there

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were more than 100 in 1875, and on the eve of America's entry into the First World War there were more than 230.

Very simply, women were a presence in higher education earlier and in much greater numbers in the United States than in Europe. Yet the situation in the United States resembled that in Europe in many ways. While teaching as a profession was open to women, few others were. Some medical schools openly denied women admission on the grounds that they would be depriving men of places, and others regarded the admission of women as a waste, as they would almost certainly become mothers and thus not have time to practice the profession for which they were trained. Such prejudice persisted into the 1970s. The other professions, in fact most other fields of study, remained closed to them. Nonetheless, women continued to enter higher education in ever larger numbers, and by 1950 they constituted roughly 40% of all enrollment, a figure somewhat skewed by the large number of men who began to attend institutions of higher education on the GI Bill immediately after World War II. At the large public universities, women tended to enroll in what had become the traditional field of study for them, education, until the 1960s. In smaller, private institutions, especially women's colleges such as Vassar, Smith, and Mount Holyoke, they tended toward a much greater variety of majors and were much more likely to enter medicine and the natural sciences than were women students in public universities.

There are symmetries and asymmetries between the experiences of European and US women in higher education. When they first began to enter universities in Europe women's aspirations were very similar to men's. They sought entry to the professions, particularly medicine. Women in the United States who attended women's colleges resembled women in Europe in terms of academic aspirations. Such choices may initially seem surprising, but these women came overwhelmingly from professional families, where gendered expectations and career paths for women seem not to have been so pronounced as in other segments of society. Those in public higher education in the United States, which more likely meant normal schools than anything else, found themselves early shunted into fields that would soon become "traditional" for women, especially teaching and nursing. Whether in the United States or Europe, women found the road to the professions very difficult. In a few instances men welcomed them, and faculty members sometimes fought to advance female education; almost inevitably these were senior male faculty. More often both male students and faculty were hostile and through informal and formal means made the road very rough. Some women were able to survive the rigors of a demanding education compounded by the difficulties of artificial obstructions, but most were discouraged or opted for other routes through higher education. Until well after the Second World War this situation prevailed in both Europe and the United States.

Very slowly after 1945 the situation began to change. In limited numbers women began to make inroads into professional areas, most particularly law and medicine, and by the 1960s in both the US and Europe increasing numbers of women were entering these fields. In Europe the admission of women to these areas continued—and to an extent continues—at a more moderate rate, with some notable exceptions such as dentistry in France and the law in Great Britain—while in the US the pace of change began to quicken quite dramatically

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In the United States the 1970s landscape of higher education experienced a transformation in terms of the gender composition of the student body. By the later part of the decade the number of women in higher education surpassed the number of men, and they now have constituted a majority of enrollment for more than two decades. The figures demand somewhat closer scrutiny, as in the 1970s women were still much more likely than men to be part-time students and to be enrolled in non-degree programs. Nonetheless, by 1980 it was indisputable that they constituted the majority of the higher education population. Beginning in the 1970s, they also became a substantial portion of the enrollment in law and medicine, and by 2003, there were approximately as many women entering law schools as men, and their numbers approached those of men in medical schools.

Once women became a majority in higher education a number of issues began to emerge, some of which called into question the very foundations of educational thinking: how women were treated in class room settings; their ideas about the ends of education itself; the place of work, profession and family in their lives; among many others. It is important to note that prior to the late twentieth century, almost all thinking about these matters was based almost exclusively, whether tacitly or explicitly, on a male-gendered foundation. In light of this lack of symmetry between the theoretical base of higher education and the part women are now playing, it is important to ask questions in light of women's ideas and experience. Do women perceive the educational process and their role in it in some specifically female way? Do men and women choose different degree fields, and is there a gender basis to major selection? Do women's ideas about general education and training in a discipline differ from those of men? The experience of women in Western Washington University's Honors Program provides a small but nonetheless revealing laboratory in which to ask and to answer these questions, if only in the most provisional way. By exploring Honors women's roles in reforming general education and their choice of majors, it is possible to get an idea about their thinking in these areas to make a few tentative conclusions.

The first of these areas is in general education. Beginning in September 2000 Western's Honors Program began a review of its general education program with particular attention to its first-year sequence required of all entering first-year students and to its other general education courses that served as introductions to the disciplines. At the time the sequence was a year-long set of interdisciplinary humanities courses that began with the most ancient parts of the Western traditions such as the *Epic of Gilgamesh*, Homer, and the Hebrew Bible, and concluded with modern authors such as Kafka, Proust, Joyce, Woolf, and T.S. Eliot. It had been in place for well over a decade, and while there was no evident discontent with it, either among students or faculty, it seemed to the director to be an area ripe for review.

The director asked program faculty whether or not they thought the sequence needed modification, and to suggest any changes they would like to see implemented. They responded that it might be a good idea to ask students to weigh in with their ideas about the general education program, and eventually the process developed into a suggestion that student reflections on their general educations would make an interesting and informative presentation at the National Collegiate Honors Council annual

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meeting. The director asked faculty to nominate junior-level students whom they believed were particularly well suited to reflect critically on their experience in the Honors general education curriculum and to recommend changes they thought would benefit students in the program. After discussions with these faculty involving several nominees, the director chose three students, two female and one male, one in English and art, a second in sociology, and a third in theater. All received a specific assignment: they were each to examine their general education experience in Honors carefully and critically, and to write a short paper (not more than 2,500 words) describing that experience and recommending any changes they thought appropriate. They would present these papers at the annual meeting of the National Collegiate Honors Council in Chicago in 2001—by this time all three students would have entered their senior year. They received no other instructions, except that they were to work independently of one another, and they were encouraged to think broadly and to understand that their opinions would be heard and that there was absolutely nothing sacred in the then-current Honors general education program. They were free, in fact encouraged, to give vent to anything negative they found in this part of the program and to recommend any changes they believed might be either necessary or beneficial. The director made it very clear to these students that their opinions were extremely important in rethinking Honors general education and that there definitely was no party line that they were expected to follow.

They carried out their charge carefully and with relish, and their papers, while alike in many ways, differed in some important respects. All were highly satisfied with their experience in Honors general education courses, and all three praised the first-year sequence in particular. They enjoyed the content, the instructors, the sequence's interdisciplinary approach, and its emphasis on discussion and paper writing. They were also unanimous in regard to other facets of the sequence: they believed it immersed them in the culture of Honors and it introduced them to other Honors students. In addition, they indicated a high degree of approval as regarded other general education classes in Honors, though they were not quite as enthusiastic about these classes as about the sequence. When asked to recommend changes, their responses differed by gender. The male student, the theatre major, was satisfied with all the courses and recommended no changes. On the other hand, both female students were interested in seeing some modifications in the sequence. In particular, they recommended that non-Western material be integrated into these courses.

In discussions subsequent to the return of all parties to campus, all three students indicated they preferred to have the sequence divided in such a way as not to compromise the integrity of the current material—they specifically opposed the transformation of a Western humanities sequence into a World humanities sequence (as changes were finally implemented, Western subject matter was covered in two terms and the third quarter dealt with non-Western cultures). The students did not recommend additional material on race or gender in the sequence (in response to specific questions from the Director, one of the women students noted that “we already get enough of that stuff”).

All this information was then circulated to the rest of the Honors student body, except to those then enrolled in the sequence, in a dual form: a narrative describing

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the process of developing ideas for possible curricular changes that might result from the students' recommendations, and a survey asking students if they would like to see such changes in the sequence implemented. The response was overwhelming favorable, essentially unanimous, to changes along the lines the female students had suggested. These suggestions were then embodied in a series of curricular changes that were submitted to the appropriate curricular committees, and they received approval in time to be implemented for the 2003-2004 academic year. The program is now surveying students in the new sequence in regard to their satisfaction with the courses and will ask for suggestions in terms of fine-tuning the restructured first-year sequence. In the entire process of curricular change it is important to note the sum of things. The experience and ideas of three students is scarcely persuasive, but the high degree of agreement between their recommendations and the response of a much larger student body with fairly broad experience in general education at the college level makes a more compelling case. These students are satisfied, indeed enthusiastic about the essentially traditional general education they are receiving, and while they want to see changes, those changes are not wholesale.

A second set of issues arose as a result of the observations of one of the female students about the program's general education courses outside the first-year sequence. Honors has a full suite of classes that introduce students to the disciplines, e.g., psychology, sociology, economics, philosophy, and so on. The three students who presented at the Chicago meeting all indicated their experiences in this portion of their Honors general education were quite good, and all gave both the instructors and the classes themselves very high marks. One woman student had questions about them. She noted that these courses, while good in themselves, neither depended upon nor in any systematic way built on the first-year sequence, nor did they provide a foundation for the typical experience for Honors students in the third year, the Honors Seminars. This student expressed an interest in finding a way to create some integration or bridge between the first and third year, i.e., between the sequence and the disciplinary courses. The other students agreed with the first student's opinions, but they also had no specific suggestions as regards a direction for change.

The survey of the student body found no uniform opinion, and the director, after very considerable discussion with the Honors Board, the faculty advisory body for the program, is currently engaged in conversations with department chairs, as representatives of the disciplines, to discover if there is a way to integrate the sequence with the program's introductory disciplinary courses, or the seminars, or both.

A new chapter of this story has begun recently. Within the last year, the program has created a student board, and it has renewed the discussions concerning the general education program. This body represents a much larger sample of the program's student body, and attendance at its meetings is in the dozens, and it thus contains a much wider spectrum of student opinion than the small sample that recommended changes in general education earlier. While it is far too early to say definitely where the student board, on which women students are very prominently represented, will take these discussions and the recommendations they will make, as this is written they are on the road to making the required sequence larger and moving from three to four required classes and adding traditional Western cultural content to the classes.

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A look at Western Honors women students' choices of major proves to be another interesting area. There is a good deal of local and national evidence available to study this matter, though the data have not been uniformly collected, and one must be careful with the figures. With reference to both local and national trends, however, it is possible to look at developments over a considerable period of time. The time frame this paper employs, with some exceptions noted below, is the three decades between 1970-1 and 2000-1. There are both practical and substantial reasons for choosing these dates. For example, there is a good deal of evidence, and it is easily accessible. More important, it is during this period that women became a majority in higher education. This is also an era in which higher education itself underwent very significant changes in terms of the degree preferences for both genders, and in terms of women entering what had been traditionally male fields.

At the national level information is available on virtually all graduates, and there is as well information on the gender of graduates in most fields. For Western Washington University there are data for graduates and currently enrolled students by declared major (not all current students have declared majors), for both Honors and non-Honors students, and there is information on the gender of Western graduates by major since 1983. Using this information it is possible to create profiles of both alumni and current Western Honors and non-Honors students and to compare them, and to compare Western data with national figures. For the graduates of Western's Honors Program the director can supplement this information through correspondence and conversations with a number of alumni. Obviously much of this last is anecdotal and while some of this evidence may be suggestive, it does not have the same reliability as the other data and any reader must regard them as suggestive rather than conclusive.

Before going further, it will be helpful to locate Western Washington University in the larger context of higher education in the United States and to situate the Honors Program within the university. As of fall quarter 2004, the university had about 12,500 students, the vast majority of whom were undergraduates (there were a total of approximately 600 students in all graduate programs). The freshman class in September 2004 had an entering high school grade average of about 3.55 on a 4.00 scale, and average SAT scores of about 1140 on the re-centered scale. In terms of gender distribution, the university's first-year class was about 55% female and 45% male, which was very close to the university's gender distribution in entering classes over the past three decades.

The comparable information for the Honors Program was as follows: the entering class in September 2004 had an average entering grade point of about 3.91 and an SAT average of slightly over 1320 (the grade point average and SAT scores of students in the entering class have remained virtually constant over the last decade, allowing for changes when the SAT was re-centered). In terms of its gender composition the class was about 65% female and 35% male. These too, were pretty typical percentages, but there had been quite significant variation by class in terms of gender distribution; at the extremes, one entering class was composed of 81% females and 19% males, while another was 59% female and 41% male, the lowest percentage of women students in any Honors first-year class. In every year for which it was possible to obtain information, women not only outnumbered men in the entering

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class, but in every first-year class the percentage of women beginning in the program was higher than the percentage of women in the university's entering class as a whole. In terms of graduation, women constituted about 62% of the graduates since 1970, and while that number is slightly lower than the percentages in the program as a whole, it is higher than the percentage of women in the university's graduating classes in general.

The most interesting data, in terms of both national figures and comparisons within the university concern choices of major among women Honors students. It is important to note here that in some cases precise assessments of difference and similarity are difficult owing to a number of factors. Universities now collect a wider variety of information than formerly, and of course, universities have changed in the period being used for comparison. For instance, in 1970-1971, Western's Department of English offered six separate majors. It now offers five and three additional areas of program concentration supplementary to the major. Only three of these majors/programs are continuous across the period being considered here. Some of the old majors have ceased to exist or they have moved to other departments such as journalism, where in turn, they have undergone significant modifications and no longer can be considered the same major. The new majors/program concentrations in English are in some cases unlike anything that existed previously, e.g., film studies and linguistics. It is difficult in some cases to compare local and national data, owing in some instances to differences in methods of gathering data, and in others to changes in nomenclature or to dissimilarities in classification.

To cite but a few relevant cases, in 1975-6, Western had no collegiate school of business, and there were only limited major options within its existing Department of Business. Many students with this interest completed a major in the Department of Economics (then in the College of Arts and Sciences, and now in the College of Business and Economics). To note another problem, national statistics consider psychology as a separate category. At Western it is grouped with the social sciences, and in a recent collegiate reorganization of the university it became part of the College of Social Sciences and Humanities, though there were serious discussions within the department about its placement. A substantial number of its faculty wanted the department to be housed in the newly created College of Sciences and Technology. For the purposes of this essay, psychology is grouped with the social sciences, and it is considered as such in reporting data on student choices of major and degree field. Yet another distinction concerns the major in education, historically among the most popular degree options for students. Though Western began as a normal school, it now offers few majors in education as such, with degrees in elementary education and interdisciplinary child development standing as two of the few options that bears the title, education major. All students who are certified to teach must complete an academic major in one of the disciplinary departments, and though the university awards these students the BA in Education degree, they have typically completed a major in some field such as psychology, English, or political science. One program in the Woodring College of Education, Adult and Higher Education, offers work only at the graduate level and has no undergraduate students. Since the university reports all degrees in education aggregately, without regard to major field, level, or

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specialization, this paper follows that practice. It thus appears in reporting student preferences that this major is the single most popular or among the most popular student preference, but in fact, there are several separate majors in this category at Western.

The lack of consistency between local and national reporting practices and the unique characteristics of this university require some additional qualifications. The university has a nearly unique college of environmental studies, Huxley College of the Environment; there are fewer than twenty such colleges in the United States, and Huxley College, created in 1968, is one of the oldest in the country. In addition, Huxley was from its inception devoted to the study of the environment, while most others became colleges by adding the appropriate curricula and functions to an already-existing unit, e.g., a college of forestry or a college of agriculture. Huxley also offers majors which resemble to some extent degree programs in other universities in biology or chemistry departments, or in colleges of forestry or agriculture. In other cases, the Huxley majors are unique or at least have titles dissimilar from those offered at other institutions. Consequently, it can sometimes be difficult to make comparisons between Huxley majors and those offered at other institutions.

In yet another respect Western's reporting practices differ from national ones. In national statistics degrees in history are reported under the designation "social sciences and history." The classification follows national trends in the secondary school curriculum, where history and social studies, including sociology, anthropology, economics, geography, and political science, are taught in conjunction with one another. The practice of reporting their collective enrollments masks some very significant changes in student preferences. While enrollments in this combined group of majors decreased by about eighteen per cent in the period from 1970-1971 to 2000-2001, the decline was far from uniform across all the disciplines. The number of students majoring in history declined by forty-four per cent, while the number of students taking degrees in sociology fell twenty-three percent. During this period sociology surpassed history among students taking degrees in the so-called social studies disciplines. Political science, whose enrollments were static over this period (growing by about one per cent), is now the leading degree choice among students in this area. Economics has grown as a major preference by about twenty-three per cent in this period. At Western, history is counted among the humanities, and in this essay it is considered a humanistic discipline, while geography, sociology, anthropology, economics, and political science are counted as social sciences. As this essay proceeds to look at changes in local and national changes in degree preferences, the above considerations are important to keep in mind.

Between 1970-1971 and 2000-2001 several national degree trends emerged. The number of students majoring in education, the humanities, and the social sciences, including history, all declined. Students migrated to other areas, in some cases with notable suddenness, whose enrollments rose dramatically. Education was the most prominent casualty among the changes in major preferences. It had dominated higher education up to that point: in 1970-1971 more than 21% of all undergraduate degrees granted to students were in education. By the middle 1980s business emerged as the most popular major, claiming 24% of all bachelor's degrees. The

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humanities and social sciences also suffered significant attrition. Students did not abandon these fields altogether, and as groups of majors they continued to hold student interest as degree options, but they no longer commanded as large a following.

In the same period women became more prominent in many fields, especially medicine and the law (between 1970 and 2000 the number of women physicians rose more than eightfold, while the number of women lawyers increased more than fourteen fold). Changes were evident in a number of other areas as well. In 1970-1 women obtained 13.7% of all degrees in the natural sciences, but by 2000-2001, they received 41% of the bachelor's degrees in those fields. Comparable figure for other areas included mathematics, 38% in 1970-1 and 48% in 2000-1, biological sciences, 29% and 59%, and in engineering 1% and 18%. These figures should not mask other trends. Notwithstanding their gains in these fields, degrees granted to women in many areas remained and continue to remain very low. In 2000-2001 fewer than 1% of women graduating from colleges and universities received bachelor's degrees in mathematics. Only 1.6% of women graduates received computer science degrees in the same period; by contrast, 5.7% of men did. In 2000-2001 women constituted 57.2% of all bachelor's degrees but only 38% of those in mathematics, engineering, biological sciences, physical sciences, and computer science. A majority of the degrees granted to women in these fields were in the biological sciences. In total, degrees in natural and applied sciences, mathematics and applied technical fields constituted only about 10% of all degrees awarded to women.

There are no aggregated national data for degrees granted to women in a number of fields before the 1980s, and so it is not possible to write with authority in terms of women's degree preferences with the same precision across the entire period from 1970-1 to 2000-2001. National statistics for 1985-6 indicate that without regard for gender, the most popular degree options in descending order were business administration, education, social sciences and history, health professions (this designation includes a large number of degree options, including nursing, health services administration, communications sciences and disorders, and medical laboratory technologies among others), psychology, and engineering. By 2000-2001, there had been some changes, and the most popular major fields without regard to gender were business administration, education, social sciences and history, education, psychology, and health professions. For women the most popular options were business administration, education, social sciences and history, psychology, and health professions.

In citing degree preferences for Western Washington University, it is important to remember that the character of the institution makes some kinds of comparisons difficult or impossible. For instance, the university has no majors in the health professions, save for a small program in speech and hearing sciences. It has a few, very specialized engineering programs. Likewise, while it qualifies as a "comprehensive" university in terms currently in use at the national level, it began as a normal school, and it now has a distinctly liberal arts orientation. Within the state Western is known as "the" liberal arts university—no cognitive dissonance intended—and it is overwhelmingly undergraduate. Outside education, the university has few professional programs. Finally, changes in local terminology make it difficult at times to make compare local and national figures. As noted above, it is not possible to

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cover the territory described above for Western in the same way as it is when dealing with national figures, as the university did not record degree by gender until the middle 1980s, and so the bench marks for the university in the following comparisons are 1983-4, 1990-1 and 2000-1. In terms of student preferences, the university's most popular majors in 1983-1984 were elementary education, psychology, business administration, special education, and visual-communication/education. In 1990-1 the preferences were, in order, business administration, psychology, environmental science, and elementary education. For women only, the most popular degree options were elementary education, psychology, English, business administration, and speech-communication (not to be confused with speech and hearing sciences). During this period there were some changes in the education major, though they do not alter the overall pattern in a significant manner.

By 2000-2001 these degree preferences had changed slightly. For the institution as a whole the most popular degrees were, in order, elementary education, business administration, English, psychology, and communication (formerly speech-communication). For women only, the most popular majors were elementary education, psychology, English, business administration, and political science.

In citing statistics for the Honors Program it makes more sense to look at degree preferences aggregated across a larger time span. As Honors is small, constituting slightly more than 2% of the university's total enrollment, annual figures might convey wild swings in student preferences from year to year, and so, the following statistics have been aggregated for the years 1990-1991 to 2000-2001. This is a sample of well over than two hundred majors (some students had more than one major). For these years, the most popular degree options among Honors students without regard to gender were environmental science, history, English, biology, and mathematics. For women, the most popular majors were environmental science, biology, English, and (tie) chemistry (including biochemistry) and political science. Clearly degree choices here show a disproportionate choice of majors in the natural sciences among Honors women students. Not only were the sciences the most popular among majors women, women were more likely to major in the natural sciences and mathematics than men. Women received an astonishing 94% of the environmental science degrees granted to students in Honors, 79% of those in biology, and 50% each of those in chemistry, physics, and mathematics. During this period 36% of Honors women took degrees in the natural sciences as opposed to 29% of the men. About 30% of women students majored in the humanities disciplines (including the fine arts), and about 20% majored in social sciences, with the remainder widely distributed among various applied disciplines, including business administration, speech and hearing science, and education.

The foregoing raises some interesting points both as regards ideas about general education and degree preferences. In so far as the evidence allows one to draw conclusions, Honors women's ideas about the general education that they are receiving do not differ in any significant way from men's. They do not believe that Honors general education requires significant alteration. While the numerical evidence is not large enough to be compelling, Honors students, and a substantial majority of them are women, they are highly satisfied with a traditional general education.

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Women writing systematic treatises on this area might come to different or at least more elaborate conclusions than those who were required to reflect and write on their experience in college, but these women looked to be very much in the main stream. It is certainly true that much has changed in both the superficial and deep structures of general education in the past generation, and someone thinking about general education in 2004 is not looking at the same practices or courses as an observer or participant in the process in say, 1960, particularly as concerns the social sciences and the humanities. If the canon is wider, or the variety of history being taught is different, these are still literature and history.

A more compelling issue has to do with major preferences among Honors women. Women in Honors at Western resemble no group so much as those who were just entering higher education in Europe in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in Europe and those in private women's colleges in the United States during the 1800s, i.e., in that period when women were making their initial forays into a new educational world. They were interested overwhelmingly in traditional male subjects, and they had serious, if often frustrated, and quite conscious aspirations to careers in traditional male-dominated fields. Women in Western's Honors Program demonstrate a preference for the professions and are very interested in medicine, university teaching, the civil service, and law. In proportion to their numbers, they apply and are accepted into law school at about the same rate as men, while they are more likely to apply and be accepted to medical school than are men. Women in Honors at Western outnumber men by about two to one, but in applying to and being accepted into medical school, they outnumber men by about three to one.

Why do so many women in Honors at Western choose science degrees or majors that prepare them for specific professions? On the basis of the evidence, it appears that there is no single answer. In terms of science, the university's reputation in environmental sciences and the presence of a college devoted solely to the study of the environment are no doubt important. Likewise, charismatic professors in the natural sciences, though not necessarily women, draw students. It may be that the university simply attracts students interested in the sciences. Informal discussions between the director and students have elicited no broad trends. Some women science students indicate that their families have encouraged them in this area, while a very few others are interested in this area in part because it is male dominated and financially rewarding. Others, a majority, indicate they are pursuing science majors for a number of other reasons, including personal interest, a strong orientation toward environmental issues, and faculty role models. Anecdotal conversations with the director indicate that they believe science majors and careers in science are simply natural pursuits for them, and few if any express a desire to challenge accepted stereotypes or batter down the walls of exclusion, which many of them do not appear to believe exist any longer. Indeed, among those who have expressed an opinion to the director, they regard any field as open to them, and they believe their choices of degree as no more gendered than those of male students.

Whatever the reasons, the prevalence of women in science in Honors is a striking fact. Nor does the preference for science majors among women appear to be abating. Among women students in the program who have declared majors about 35% are

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in the natural sciences, and for undeclared women students expressing a preference, 40% have indicated an interest in a science major, with about 20% citing humanistic disciplines and a scant 12% opting for social science majors. The rest are scattered across a wide variety of applied disciplines.

The evidence on which this piece rests is very narrow, representing the experience of a single program during a fifteen-year span, a relatively short time period. Nonetheless, the evidence is striking when compared with national figures. It remains to be seen whether the experience of the Western Honors Program is unusual or unique, or whether it resembles the record of other programs. How different Western's women Honors students are from women in other Honors Programs is an open question, but at the moment the program appears to be playing a disproportionate role in producing the next generation of women scientists, possibly in distinctly larger numbers than has been the case heretofore. There is no question that *something* is going on here, but the real questions are (1) *what, precisely* is going on, (2) what more general lessons can Honors programs draw from these data, and (3) what are the implications for the future? There is much to consider in this area. It is the author's hope that this piece will stir interest in other institutions to conduct similar studies and to ruminate on the issues raised here.

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Note: The titles below are intended to be merely representative. The bibliography on the higher education of women is enormous, and the number of important titles in the field has grown by an order of magnitude in the past two decades. At this point, no one can have control of more than a part of it.

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John R. Cosgrove received his Ph.D. in Higher Education from The Pennsylvania State University and this study was extrapolated from his doctoral dissertation. He was in between jobs when this article went to press. Correspondences sent to his dissertation chair, J. Fredericks Volkwein (volkwein@psu.edu), will be forwarded to him.

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