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JNCHC

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CHINA

QATAR

AUSTRALIA

BRAZIL

CHILE

UNITED STATES

MEXICO

UK   NETHERLANDS

SWITZERLAND

Honors Around the Globe

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Honors Around the Globe

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The cover design is a collaborative effort by Sarah Halverson and Wake Up Graphics. The cover image is by Dail Mullins.

CALL FOR PAPERS

The next issue of JNCHC (deadline: March 1, 2013) invites research essays on any topic of interest to the honors community.

The issue will also include a Forum focused on the theme "Nontraditional Honors Students." We invite essays of roughly a thousand words that consider this theme in the context of your campus and/or a national/international context.

The lead essay for the Forum, which is available on the NCHC website <http://nchchonors.org>, is by Janice Rye Kinghorn and Whitney Womack Smith of Miami University Ohio; each of them has directed an honors program at a commuter campus of the university. Their essay—titled "Nontraditional Honors"—describes the benefits that honors programs and nontraditional students can and should provide to each other. Contributions to the Forum may—but need not—respond to their essay or the issues they address.

Questions that Forum contributors might consider include: What is the definition of "nontraditional students," and why do they need their own category? Is there any such thing as a traditional student? Do honors programs have a social, moral, or economic incentive or responsibility to accommodate nontraditional students? What are good ideas for recruiting them? Are some kinds of honors programs, e.g., those focusing on the liberal arts, more easily able to accommodate nontraditional students than others are? What specific advantages do nontraditional students bring to honors? Are there down sides to increasing the numbers of nontraditional students in an honors program, and, if so, what are they? Do nontraditional students participate as fully, less fully, or more fully in extracurricular honors activities than nontraditional students do? Do the curricular and co-curricular requirements of honors programs work for non-traditional, non-residential students? Is a cadre of alumni and alumnae who were nontraditional honors students a benefit to, for instance, fundraising? Does the current state of the national and global economy have an impact on the role nontraditional students can and do play in honors?

Forum essays should focus on ideas, concepts, and/or opinions related to "Nontraditional Honors Students." Examples from one's own campus can be and usually are relevant, but essays should not simply be descriptions of "what we do at our institution."

Please send all submissions to Ada Long at adalong@uab.edu.

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

We accept material by e-mail attachment. We do 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 strongly preferred, and the editor will revise all internal citations in accordance with MLA guidelines.

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

Accepted essays are edited for grammatical and typographical errors and for infelicities of style or presentation. Authors have ample opportunity to review and approve edited manuscripts before publication.

Submissions and inquiries should be directed to Ada Long at adalong@uab.edu or, if necessary, 850.927.3776.

DEDICATION

MARCA V. C. WOLFENSBERGER

Marca Wolfensberger has been active in honors education for the past two decades. She co-founded one of the first honors programs in the Netherlands in the early 1990s; ten years later she started connecting with individual members of the NCHC; and, after attending her first NCHC conference in Chicago in 2003, she has been a regular participant in annual honors conferences, bringing with her numerous colleagues—as many as thirty at just one conference—from the Netherlands. She has regularly published and presented on honors education both in the United States and in Europe, and this year she is an organizer of an international conference in the Netherlands on "Evoking Excellence in Higher Education and Beyond." The volume and seriousness of her research on honors education is reflected in the inclusion of five essays that she has authored or co-authored in just this one issue of *JNCHC*; one of these is an update of an essay she published here in 2004, only one year after attending her first NCHC conference.

Marca heads the research center Talent Development in Higher Education and Society at the Hanze University of Applied Sciences in Groningen and is also honors director and researcher at the Faculty of Geosciences, Utrecht University. She has been appointed by the Minister of Education to the jury that selects the best primary and secondary schools in the Netherlands, and, as a member of the Sirius Assessment Committee, she has reviewed proposals for "excellence" programs from over thirty institutions of higher education on behalf of the Dutch government.

Since 2008, Marca has held the title NCHC-Recommended Site Visitor and, both officially and unofficially, serves as an international supporter and advisor for honors education, always giving first priority to the personal and intellectual growth of honors students in her own program and in all honors programs. Marca has often been the first person to introduce NCHC members to honors outside of the United States through her writing, her conference participation, and her enthusiastic conversation. We thus gratefully dedicate this issue on the theme of "Honors Around the Globe" to Marca Wolfensberger.

Editor's Introduction

ADA LONG

UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA AT BIRMINGHAM

This issue of *JNCHC* begins by focusing with a wide-angle lens on the panorama of honors programs that stretch across the globe from Chile to China and from Qatar to Australia. The focus then shifts to a close-up shot of honors in one European country, the Netherlands, which has produced multiple programs and an abundance of research about them. This issue on "Honors Around the Globe" also provides insight into the history of honors, with its origins in the British educational system, its importation into the United States less than a century ago, and its exportation within the last couple of decades to institutions of higher education in numerous other countries.

Honors started out in the U.S. as a replication of the honors system in the UK, located primarily in the academic disciplines with a specialized focus on directed research. In response to Sputnik, though, a group of U.S. honors directors coalesced into a national organization that became the NCHC (see "The Wisdom of Our Elders: Honors Discussions in *The Superior Student,* 1958–65" by Larry Andrews, *JNCHC* 12.2); honors then evolved and expanded into institution-wide curricula and activities that have largely been the model for honors programs throughout the world. The organization of this journal issue reflects that history, starting with the British system, providing essays on the wide array of honors programs around the world that have adapted all or parts of the UK and U.S. models, and concluding with a lengthy and detailed look at honors in the Netherlands, which has perhaps the most unified, consistent, and self-conscious array of honors programs and research projects about honors based on the U.S. model.

Margaret Lamb has provided an excellent lead-in to our look at honors around the world in her essay "'Honours' in the United Kingdom: More Than a Difference of Spelling in Honors Education." Lamb taught in honors for fourteen years at two English universities before returning to the U.S., where she is now Senior Associate Director of the University of Connecticut Honors Program, so she is familiar with honors in both countries. She cites the literature tracing U.S. honors back to its roots in England and then describes in detail the meaning of "honours" in the UK. While U.S. honors derives from components of the UK system, such as the tutorial, it has come to imply an independent curriculum with its own selection and graduation requirements and with values that include, for instance, original research, creativity, critical thinking, global awareness, collaboration, interdisciplinarity, and problem-solving.

While these values are not intrinsic to the definition of honours in the UK, Lamb suggests that they are often present if one looks beneath the surface.

The following two essays describe honors programs that show a primary influence of the British system. In "Honours in Australia: Globally Recognised Preparation for a Career in Research (or Elsewhere)," Deirdre Barron of the Swinburne Institute of Technology and Margaret Zeegers of the University of Ballarat, both in Victoria, indicate that honors in Australia has always focused on rigorous disciplinary research. In the past, they write, universities took for granted that honors successfully prepared students for advanced post-graduate research in their fields but provided no evidence to support this assumption. In the past couple of years, government agencies have started establishing standards for all universities in Australia, and the authors argue that honors programs should, in this context, be held to high standards of accountability with documented proof of their effectiveness—an argument that seems in tune with the assessment and accountability movement in the United States and its proponents among a number of honors deans and directors. Another component of this essay's argument that probably resonates with most U.S. honors educators is the importance of research rather than vocational preparation as a primary goal in honors.

Denise de Souza Fleith, Aderson Luiz Costa Jr., and Eunice M. L. Soriano de Alencar, all of the Institute of Psychology at the University of Brasilia, describe another UK-based type of honors education in "The Tutorial Education Program: An Honors Program for Brazilian Undergraduate Students." The Ministry of Education in Brazil initiated this predominantly tutorial-based type of honors program in 1979, starting with fifteen students and now numbering more than four thousand students and four hundred teachers throughout the country. The authors describe the general structure, goals, requirements, and selection criteria for these honors opportunities throughout Brazil, and then they explain how the Tutor Education Program works in their Institute. The authors conclude by asserting that this kind of honors opportunity for academically gifted students is important not just to the students and to higher education but to the social and economic health of the country.

On the other side of South America, honors in Chile has been based more on the U.S. model. The 2006 volume of *Honors in Practice* included an essay titled "Honors in Chile: New Engagements in the Higher Education System," which is reprinted here with revisions and with a substantial Afterword. The essay was written by Juan Carlos Skewes, then of the Universidad Austral de Chile and now the Universidad Alberto Hurtado; Carlos Alberto Cioce Sampaio, then of the Universidad Regional de Blumenau and now the Paraná Federal University in Brazil; and Frederick J. Conway of San Diego State

University. In the original essay, the authors described a remarkable pilot program they developed in 2002 at the Universidad Austral de Chile (UACh)—inspired by honors education in the United States, aided by an NCHC consultant, and funded by the Chilean Ministry of Education—that adapted the honors concept to unique challenges (rural setting, rainy weather, and poorly prepared students) and opportunities (strong infrastructure, national concern about inequities in education, and a living laboratory for environmental studies) within a specific geographical and cultural context. The Afterword reports on the success of the program, as it enters its second decade, in achieving its original mission to merge academic skills with a serious commitment to environmental and social justice in its selection requirements, curriculum, and community involvement. The program has also gained a strong reputation within the university system. However, national problems that include restricted funding and social unrest present ongoing challenges to further development and expansion of honors in Chile.

Honors at the Tecnológico de Monterrey, Campus Monterrey, in Mexico also has its roots in the U.S. model, having evolved within the international degree program with guidance provided by NCHC consultants as well as numerous contacts made at NCHC conferences. In "Establishing a Latin American University Honors Program: The Case of Campus Monterrey, Tecnológico de Monterrey," Mohammad Ayub Khan and Ruben Morales-Menendez describe the components of their honors program in terms of the NCHC's "Basic Characteristics of a Fully Developed Honors Program." They describe the unique components of their program, many of which arise from its situation within an international degree program. They address some of the external factors that have determined the nature of their program, such as the "economic conditions, political situations, socio-cultural variables, demographic changes, technological developments, and legal issues," and also the internal factors that have helped shape their program: "institutional history, student diversity, faculty diversity, physical facilities, leadership style, organizational culture, operational issues, and geographical location."

While the essay on honors in Mexico describes the importation of a U.S. model of honors education, the following essay describes the exportation of NCHC's City as Text™ pedagogy to Switzerland. In "Self as Text: Adaptations of Honors Practice"—a revised reprint of an essay published in the 2012 volume of *Honors in Practice*—Michaela Ruppert Smith recounts her experience in adapting CAT™ methodology to an orientation activity at the Collège du Léman in Geneva. To prepare a class of International Baccalaureate students for a course called Theory of Knowledge, Smith collaborated with other teachers in designing a field trip to two museum exhibits and one very unusual restaurant in Zurich. This trip became an unusual,

challenging, and delightful journey of discovery during which students "questioned their basic values and integrated new ways of thinking and being into their lives."

Another direct export of U.S. honors education—on a grander scale—has taken place in Qatar. In "An American Honors Program in the Arab Gulf," Byrad Yyelland decribes the fascinating consequence of transplanting an American concept of honors education into the Middle East. As director of the seven-year-old honors program at Virginia Commonwealth University Qatar, Yyelland recounts his adaptation of ideas from the VCU Honors College to the national vision established by the royal family of Qatar: to maintain Islamic culture while at the same time promoting an ambitious agenda for economic and technological development. This double mission plays out in the VCUQatar Honors Program in ways that will interest honors administrators in other parts of the world, who typically do not face the problem of, for instance, creating an honors brochure when their students are forbidden to be photographed.

A detailed comparison of honors education in the U.S. and China is the subject of the next essay: "On Training Excellent Students in China and the United States." This essay was first published in *JNCHC* 9.2 (fall/winter 2008), when the authors—Ikuo Kitagaki and Donglin Li—were both at the Research Institute for Higher Education at Hiroshima University and were motivated in part by a move toward starting honors programs in Japan. In response to increasing global competition in advanced research and thus an accelerating need for high levels of student training, Kitagaki and Li saw the international growth of honors programs as an important means to meet this need and were interested in finding the best strategy for national development of honors programs. Their essay compares the evolution, focus, curriculum, requirements, and student services of honors programs in China and the United States. Their findings indicate more broad-based curricula and greater emphasis on service and leadership in the U.S. and stricter retention standards and foreign language requirements in China. This comparative study can help readers in the U.S. and elsewhere design and reflect upon their own honors programs.

We conclude our panoramic view of honors around the globe with "Mission, Performance Indicators, and Assessment in U. S. Honors: A View from the Netherlands" by Vladimir Bartelds, Lyndsay Drayer, and Marca V. C. Wolfensberger of Hanze University of Applied Sciences Groningen in the Netherlands. The authors focus on the role of mission statements in U.S. honors programs and their lack of alignment with either performance indicators or assessment practices. Based on a survey of 169 programs randomly selected from the 842 institutional members of NCHC in 2009, the authors conclude—

based on a wide array of quantitative and qualitative data—that not only do assessment practices typically show little correlation with mission statements or performance indicators, but they seldom include long-term outcomes for graduates of the honors program. Indicating that U.S. honors programs may not always be doing what they claim or believe they are doing, this study will be valuable to U.S. honors administrators in analyzing their current mission statements, and it warrants careful consideration in the design of new honors programs around the globe.

Having viewed U.S. honors programs from the perspective of the Netherlands, our focus shifts to the Netherlands itself for the remainder of this issue of *JNCHC*, starting with an essay titled "Laboratories for Educational Innovation: Honors Programs in the Netherlands" by Marca V. C. Wolfensberger of Utrecht University and Hanzehogeschool Groningen and co-authors Pierre Van Eijl and Albert Pilot of Utrecht University. Within a broad overview of the rapid growth of honors programs in the Netherlands, the authors make the specific case that honors fosters innovations in course content, pedagogy, and program structure that fan out—via the students and teachers in honors—into the host institutions and eventually into national policies and practices at all educational levels. The essay focuses on the kinds of honors programs that have grown up in the Netherlands, the characteristics that enable them to foster innovation, and the particular dynamics whereby their innovative practices get transferred beyond honors to promote excellence and talent in Dutch education.

In an update of a 2004 essay published in *JNCHC* 5.2, Wolfensberger—now with a co-author, G. Johan Offringa of Hanze University of Applied Sciences Groningen—offers the results of three surveys conducted in the past decade. In "Qualities Honours Students Look for in Faculty and Courses, Revisited," she and Offringa conclude from the surveys that honors students in the Netherlands, to a greater degree than their non-honors peers, seek not only academic competence but individual freedom combined with a sense of community. They also conclude that honors students' motivation tends to be intrinsic—focused on knowledge, learning, and intellectual challenge—rather than extrinsic; they are motivated less, the authors claim, by grades and future careers than non-honors students are. The authors hope that similar studies will be conducted in other countries so that they can determine whether these findings are unique to the culture of the Netherlands.

"Setting Them Free: Students as Co-Producers of Honors Education" by Bouke van Gorp, Marca V. C. Wolfensberger, and Nelleke de Jong lays out a strategy for offering honors students the freedom to help shape their own education through student-led classes; these kinds of classes are built into honors seminars at the Faculty of Geosciences Honors College of Utrecht University.

Giving students this freedom has three goals: encouraging students to explore their passions, helping them develop their best learning strategies, and getting them involved in their own education. The authors describe the benefits and challenges of this approach, stressing that it should focus on developing students' creativity rather than freeing up time for the faculty.

In "Building a Vibrant Honors Community among Commuter Students," Stan van Ginkel of Wageningen University and Pierre van Eijl and Albert Pilot of Utrecht University team up with John Zubizarreta of Columbia College in the U.S. to discuss methods of creating successful honors communities. The authors use interviews of U.S. faculty and students as one source for defining honors communities, and they apply the definitions to five programs in the Netherlands. A primary objective of the essay is to identify components of successful honors communities that can or cannot be adapted to honors programs that comprise commuter students. The essay's conclusions can equally apply to honors programs in the Netherlands, in the U.S., and around the world.

Fred Wiegant, Johannes Boonstra, Anton Peeters and Karin Scager, in "Team-Based Learning in Honors Science Education: The Benefit of Complex Writing Assignments," advocate a team-based learning approach that they have used successfully in honors science courses at Utrecht University. One of these courses requires undergraduate honors students to produce proposals for PhD theses, and the other requires that they write a popular science book. These challenging assignments produce excellent results, according to the authors, because the students guide and support each other rather than relying on the teacher to tell them what to do. As a result, students improve their skills, gain confidence in their abilities, and expand their understanding of what they can accomplish.

The following three essays focus on honors in the applied sciences. In "Selecting for Honors Programs: A Matter of Motivational Awareness," Ron Weerheijm of Rotterdam University of Applied Sciences and Jeske Weerheijm of Utrecht University give an overview of research on effective ways to recruit and select honors students, and they apply that research to the special mission of the honors programs in the Universities of Applied Sciences in the Netherlands. Designed to find, foster, and produce students who meet the standards of an "excellent professional," these honors programs adopt many of the same criteria described in the literature but adapt them to goals of success in the workplace and lifelong learning. Directors of professional honors programs in the U.S. and elsewhere will find ideas here for distinguishing honors from the standard curriculum and from traditional liberal arts programs.

In "The Reflective Professional Honours Programme of the Dutch Saxion Universities," Trijntje van Dijk describes the six characteristics that define the successful graduate of the honors program for professional students at the Saxion Universities of Applied Sciences in the Netherlands. The characteristics create a profile that determines the goals of the program while also indicating to businesses what they can expect from a graduate of the program. Van Dijk describes her interactions with American honors educators and includes in the essay a fascinating and provocative impression of U.S. honors programs from the perspective of Dutch honors educators in professional universities.

"Looping up Professional Reflection in Honours Programmes" is a companion piece to Trijntje van Dijk's essay on "The Reflective Professional Honours Programme." Here she describes the three phases, or "loops," of development through which honors students progress, addressing specific sets of questions in each loop. The questions become progressively more challenging and require increasing sophistication in personal development, teamwork, interdisciplinary cooperation, and cross-disciplinary thinking, causing students to leap beyond the loops and imagine new paradigms for their professional lives and potential contributions.

"Honors in the Master's: A New Perspective?" is a study of the proliferation of master's-level honors by Stan van Ginkel of Wageningen University in the Netherlands, Pierre van Eijl and Albert Pilot of Utrecht University in the Netherlands, and John Zubizarreta of Columbia College in the U. S. The authors provide a comparative analysis of seventeen master's-level honors programs in the Netherlands as well as other programs in the U.S., Canada, Australia, Germany, Italy, and Ireland. Honors at the master's level is probably a topic unfamiliar to most honors educators in the U.S. and may spark interest in this new and fast-proliferating initiative.

We conclude this special issue of JNCHC with another essay by Marca V. C. Wolfensberger, in which she provides a lofty and idealistic view of honors that seems an appropriate final word on "Honors Around the Globe." In "Honors Education and Global Citizenship," Wolfensberger suggests that, given the serious challenges as well as opportunities of rapidly increasing globalization, honors programs have an important role to play: to push changes toward human dignity and world peace. She discusses three pedagogical strategies—genuine conversations, interactive learning, and international exchange—that encourage honors students to develop the respect for cultural differences that will make them important contributors to a better world. Surely these are strategies and goals to which we all aspire, regardless of geography or national history.

A Panorama of
Honors Around the Globe

"Honours" in the United Kingdom: More Than a Difference of Spelling in Honors Education

MARGARET LAMB

UNIVERSITY OF CONNECTICUT

". . . [T]ranslating words and phrases is the easy part. It takes years of Anglo-Amerexperience to understand the thinking behind them . . . George Bernard Shaw said it best . . . : America and Britain are two nations divided by a common language. Between us is a Great Philosophical and Cultural Divide, which is obscured by the familiar lingo." (Walmsley 2)

The first edition of Jane Walmsley's book *Brit-Think, Ameri-Think: A Transatlantic Survival Guide* came out in 1986. I noticed the book because she was a familiar name, a TV broadcaster, American by birth (like me), married to a Brit (like me), and had lived in England for two decades (I was well into my first decade in England). I recognized from my own experience many of the examples (often hilarious) cited by the author.

When *JNCHC* editor Ada Long issued a call for contributions to a special issue on "Honors Around the Globe," Jane Walmsley's book came to mind. "Honors" and "honours" are more than different in spelling, I thought; they are also quite distinct in meaning and practice. There was more food for thought as Ada's call for contributions went on to say: "Current plans include essays on the Netherlands, Chile, Peru, Mexico, China, Australia, Qatar, and Oxford, UK." "Oxford, UK"? Oxford was very influential on the development of U.S. honors programs, but there is "honors education" to be found in many other places across the diverse terrain of UK higher education.

Two matters before I go further.

First, what do I mean by "honours" and by "honors education"? I'll use the British spelling whenever I refer to matters—features, designations, courses—that might be the equivalent of what NCHC members would recognize as "honors education." Encouragement of critical thinking is at the core of "honors education," as defined in the NCHC Monograph *Teaching*

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and Learning in Honors; the most important challenge of honors education is "a challenge to the students' previous world views and their habitual ways of developing their ideas and opinions" (West 2). Honors education is incomplete without support for the honors student in the sense of initiating the student into our own (as educators) ways of making sense of the world, especially the disciplinary (and interdisciplinary) values, perspectives, assumptions, and methods that help us derive meaning from what is around us and to shape new knowledge (West 2). Honors educational endeavors—teaching, learning, courses, activities, communities, and more—are all designed and directed toward the development of students' "self-reflectiveness; ability to reason; ability to express themselves in speech and writing, appropriate to the discourse community while remaining, authentic to the student's individuality; ability to integrate and contextualize information; passion for learning and sense of wonder; ability both to collaborate and to work independently; appreciation of the common humanity of all people and gratitude for human differences; capacity to commit to a position, recognize that it may change, and tolerate uncertainty and ambiguity" (West 3).

Second, what experiences have formed my perspectives on the issues and questions that I am raising? I graduated from a U.S. Ivy League college that had both departmental and college honors. I taught undergraduates in two English universities for fourteen years (1990–2004). My teaching career began (1990–1992) at a polytechnic university (Humberside Polytechnic, now the University of Lincoln). I taught for twelve years (1992–2004) at a highly rated, highly selective research university (University of Warwick). In both English universities, I taught in an honours degree program. Since 2004 I have directed an undergraduate program at the University of Connecticut, and for the past three years I have additionally served as Senior Associate Director of the Honors Program. I advise and teach both honors and non-honors students.

In this essay I will (1) place some characteristics of Oxford undergraduate education in a wider context of UK higher education, (2) describe some characteristics of honours across the UK, and (3) highlight some of the features of UK honours that readers of *JNCHC* will most likely recognize as honors education. (Nota Bene: I refer to the "UK" throughout this essay because the matters discussed are largely similar across England, Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland. However, there are differences in each region. Scottish universities have the most distinctive history and continue to have practices that are different from the others, not least a more persistent practice of "honours" requiring four years of study and an "ordinary degree" being capable of completion in three. For this reason, Scottish institutions of higher education have comparatively more students who complete ordinary degrees.)

PUTTING OXFORD IN CONTEXT

Don't get me wrong. Oxford is one of the world's greatest universities where highly accomplished, smart undergraduates get a wonderful education, indeed an honors education. Oxford is the educational institution that inspired pioneering U.S. honors educators early in the twentieth century. Frank Aydelotte, a U.S. Rhodes Scholar at Oxford, 1905–1907, sought to transplant in U.S. universities the rigors and rewards of Oxford's individualized tutorial system, its pass/honours curricular approach, and the value placed on stimulating intellectual conversation (Guzy; Rinn, "Rhodes Scholarships" and "Major Forerunners"). On his return from England, Aydelotte became a distinguished educationalist (professor at Indiana and MIT, president of Swarthmore) and over the next four decades advocated the spread and development of honors education in the U.S. (Rinn, "Rhodes Scholarships" 31–32).

It was the principles and practices of the Oxford approach to education that so attracted Aydelotte. At Oxford, he saw at work not an elitist version of higher education, but, to his way of thinking, a proper implementation of democratic principles. Rinn summarizes his position:

> The word "democracy" is often used to denote equality. . . . Aydelotte . . . believed the word "democracy" was misconceived. . . . [H]e did not believe democracy to mean giving equal schooling or equal education to all. Rather, while everyone should be given an equal opportunity for education, everyone should also be given an opportunity to fulfill his or her own capabilities. . . . By being held to the same requirements as all students, the brightest students were being held back and limited in their intellectual potential. ("Rhodes Scholarships" 33)

Oxford undergraduates still have "tutorials," but they are not the same as they were in the early twentieth century (Palfreyman 19–20). Oxford tutorials today are often not quite as individualized as they were in Aydelotte's day; one, two, three, and sometimes more students may participate in a tutorial together, but they still represent a distinctive Oxford method, powerfully reflective of the intellectual values—critical thinking, support, intellectual conversation—that Aydelotte and his peers advocated as the essence of honors education. Oxford tutorials, offered in the colleges, are part of "a mixed pattern of teaching . . . a combination of tutorials, lectures, demonstrations and seminars/classes, much of which is under the control of the faculties rather than the colleges" (Palfreyman 20).

Arguably the "jewel in Oxford's crown," the tutorial system is one that few UK universities (Cambridge excepted, but in slightly different form) can

replicate in full or in part (Palfreyman 14, 22). The "massification" of UK higher education over the past three decades (Palfreyman 22) means that very small group teaching, whether called tutorials or something else, is increasingly beyond the practical reach of most UK universities. In my teaching career at the University of Warwick, a highly selective university, I never taught an undergraduate class—even a discussion section—smaller than fourteen, and I can count on one hand the number of undergraduate independent studies that I supervised. Even Oxford faculty members worry about how long their distinctive tutorial system can be maintained in its current form (Palfreyman). The UK higher education funding regime (in general, rising tuition fees paid by students to supplement declining amounts of government funding) places growing pressure on the Oxford tutorial system: increased calls for improvements in quality from students and their advocates, demands from peer institutions to eliminate Oxford's and Cambridge's special funding for the tutorial system, and calls from government for Oxford to take more students (Morgan, "Rise in Number"; Patton). Time will tell whether this venerable feature of Oxford education will retain its curricular essence and prominence in the face of cost-saving and the pressure of numbers.

Oxford undergraduates continue to face the hurdles of a first public examination—preliminary exams ("prelims") or honors moderations ("mods")—and a second public examination ("finals") with the results of the latter heavily determining the final degree classification. Finals typically consists of seven or eight "papers," usually three hours each in duration, taken over a period of about a week. Unlike in the early twentieth century when graduation with honours was a minority aspiration, the honours path is now the norm. In 2011–2012, Oxford students graduating with classified honours degrees numbered 3,104; only four graduated with unclassified, ordinary degrees (Table 1).

"HONOURS" AS THE NORM ACROSS UK UNIVERSITIES

In 2010–2011, individuals graduating with first degrees from UK universities numbered 369,015. Of the total, over 90% were classified "Honours" degrees (Table 2). Determination of honours degree classification was summarized by Yorke:

> In the UK (apart from Scotland) it is typically the case that full-time students have merely to pass their first year studies in order to progress to what, in some institutions, is called 'Part 2' of the undergraduate curriculum. The honours degree classification is usually based on results from the second and final year of academic study (i.e. Part 2). . . .

The majority of institutions in the UK uses grades in the form of (what are typically called) percentage marks. These normally map on to the honours degree classification via mean percentages as follows:

70.0% and above: first class honours

60.0 to 69.9%: upper second class honours

50.0 to 59.9%: lower second class honours

40.0 to 49.9%: third class honours.

A minority of institutions use grade-scales considerably shorter than the so-called percentage scale, and determine the classification according to the 'profile' of awarded grades. (678–79)

Given that honours is now the norm rather than the exception, it is unsurprising that focus has shifted to the quality of the honours classification, with students, graduate schools, potential employers, and government all being interested in how many students obtain "good" honours degrees, widely understood as a "1st (first)" or a "2i (two-one or upper second)." Arguably, a measure of upwards pressure on the number of "good" degrees creates a form of UK grade inflation (Morgan, "Rise in Numbers"). Ninety-two percent of Oxford's most recent graduates obtained a 1st or 2i (Table 1), as did almost 60% of all UK graduates (Table 2). "Good" degrees have become a bigger share (from 57% to 61.5% over four years) of all UK undergraduate degrees (Table 3).

Table 1. Oxford University Undergraduate Degree Classifications 2011/12 (Interim Numbers)

Honours Degree Classification	Graduates	
	Number	**Percentage**
1st	918	29.6
2.1	1932	62.2
2.2	223	7.2
3rd	27	0.9
Other	4	0.1
Total	3104	100.0

Source: <http://www.ox.ac.uk/about_the_university/facts_and_figures/norrington table.html> (accessed September 2, 2012).

An "unclassified degree" without honours has come to be understood almost everywhere as a low performance. (The assumption is less true for Scotland, where honours degrees typically require four years of study and ordinary degrees only three years.) A mere 0.1% of Oxford graduates do not receive a classified honours degree (Table 1). Across England, Wales, and Northern Ireland, the comparable percentages are 4.9%, 4.2%, and 3.8% respectively in 2010–2011 (Table 2).

With the focus on "good" degrees, much attention (and faculty time) is given to defining the boundaries of degree classifications: Where should the

Table 2. Class of Degree Achieved by Students Obtaining First Degree Qualifications at Higher Education Institutions in the UK by Location 2010/11

Graduate Numbers	England	Wales	Scotland	Northern Ireland	Total UK
First	45,050	2,830	4,035	1,300	**53,215**
Upper Second	141,105	9,110	11,850	4,035	**166,100**
Lower Second	85,020	6,550	5,535	2,105	**99,210**
Third/Pass	21,825	1,425	1,210	360	**24,820**
Unclassified	15,210	865	9,145	310	**25,530**
Unexplained	130	–	5	5	**140**
Total	**308,340**	**20,780**	**31,780**	**8,115**	**369,015**
Graduate Percentages	England	Wales	Scotland	Northern Ireland	Total UK
First	14.6%	13.6%	12.7%	16.0%	**14.4%**
Upper Second	45.8%	43.8%	37.3%	49.7%	**45.0%**
Lower Second	27.6%	31.5%	17.4%	25.9%	**26.9%**
Third/Pass	7.1%	6.9%	3.8%	4.4%	**6.7%**
Unclassified	4.9%	4.2%	28.8%	3.8%	**6.9%**
Unexplained	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.1%	**0.0%**
Total	**100.0%**	**100.0%**	**100.0%**	**100.0%**	**100.0%**

Source: Table 6a, Higher Education Statistics Agency, Statistical First Release 169, <http://www.hesa.ac.uk/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=2355&Itemid=161> (downloaded July 27, 2012).

Table 3. Class of Degree Achieved by Full-Time Students Obtaining First Degree Qualifications at Higher Education Institutions in the UK 2006/07 to 2010/11

Degree Type	2006/07		2007/08		2008/09		2009/10		2010/11	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
First	33,030	11.7	37,435	12.6	39,345	13.3	42,750	13.7	48,755	14.7
Upper Second	127,685	45.3	136,860	46.0	137,300	46.2	145,535	46.5	154,525	46.7
Total "good" degrees	*160,715*	*57.0*	*174,295*	*58.6*	*176,645*	*59.5*	*188,285*	*60.2*	*203,280*	*61.5*
Lower Second	82,250	29.2	84,805	28.5	82,655	27.8	86,325	27.6	88,810	26.9
Third / Pass	18,280	6.5	18,980	6.4	18,865	6.4	19,165	6.1	19,585	5.9
Unclassified	20,755	7.4	19,075	6.4	18,620	6.3	18,845	6.0	18,910	5.7
Total	**282,000**	**100.0**	**297,235**	**100.0**	**296,870**	**100.0**	**312,740**	**100.0**	**330,715**	**100.0**

Source: Table 6, Higher Education Statistics Agency, Statistical First Release 169, <http://www.hesa.ac.uk/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=2355&Itemid=161> (downloaded July 27, 2012).

line be drawn for first-class degrees? What is the numerical difference between an upper second and a lower second? Does a particular candidate deserve a pass rather than third-class honours? Do extenuating circumstances (e.g. illness or bereavement at exam time) justify deeming a particular candidate's degree to fall in a higher classification? Several algorithms are typically adopted across UK universities to make such distinctions (Yorke et al., "Some Effects"). Some features of UK higher education are designed to help institutions make these decisions with comparability across the whole system. The external examiner system (see <http://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/PolicyAndResearch/PolicyAreas/QualityAssurance/HowTheSystemWorks/Pages/ExternalExaminers.aspx>) operates to ensure that multiple examiners, inside and outside the particular university, review the assessed work, the examinations, and the practices that determine degree classification. Degree-subject benchmark standards "define what can be expected of a graduate in terms of the abilities and skills needed to develop understanding or competence in the subject" (see <https://qaa.ac.uk/academicinfrastructure/benchmark/default.asp>). Notwithstanding the many structures and practices designed to assure system-wide comparability of standards, research studies demonstrate variation across the system in how degree classification is determined (Yorke et al., "Enigmatic Variations"); this is one reason (see Elton for others) that proposals have been made over the last three decades to replace UK degree classification with another system, perhaps U.S.-style grade point averages and transcripts, or perhaps a portfolio approach.

COMPETITIVE ADMISSIONS TO
UK DEGREE COURSES

Students at the final stage of UK secondary school apply to particular universities to study particular degree "courses." UK university places are allocated via a (largely) system-wide meritocratic sorting exercise that takes place every August. UCAS (Universities and Colleges Admissions Service) provides a system for UK universities to make conditional offers to candidates, for exam results to be collated and tallied, and for degree course places to be allocated on the basis of either conditional offers being met (matching) or alternative offers being made and accepted for places not automatically filled (clearing). Students are matched with their particular university, first, if it is one of their choices, and, second, if they meet the conditions set for acceptance in an offer from the particular university. By August, students have had to decide which conditional offer they prefer and which they hold in reserve, usually a slightly less demanding conditional offer. Therefore, students who are relatively successful in their exams tend to get their first choice

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or second choice, and those who are relatively less successful take their chances scurrying for open spots in "clearing."

For the UK's academic high-achievers, GCE A level is the most typical secondary school qualification. Therefore, the currency of admissions offers for most of the UK's best and brightest students is GCE A-level exam results. While exam results are not the only matters considered in admissions decisions, they weigh very heavily, and, in the upper strata of UK universities at least, conditional offers are framed around A-level exam results. (Scotland has a separate system of exams known as "highers" that serve similar functions for Scottish applicants).

Many degree courses, especially in the more selective universities, require that particular subjects have been studied and a threshold level of exam performance obtained at A level (or its equivalent). In my experience, English undergraduates on any particular degree course have a more homogeneous academic background than their U.S. counterparts. The limited number of subjects studied at A level, the similarity of preparation in many degree subjects, and the comparative narrowness of UK degree course study itself explain part of what I observe, but so does an admissions system that competitively allocates spaces in the UK's public institutions of higher education to students with comparable exam performance.

Entry standards for UK universities can be compared by calculating average examination results for entering students (one method based on UCAS tariff points is described in *The Complete University Guide*: <http://www.the completeuniversityguide.co.uk/league-tables/key/>). The entry standards index reflects the actual qualifications of entering students. The typical conditional offer is an indication of the admissions threshold. Universities that frame offers in A-level grades (e.g. A*AA or ABB in Table 4) are, in general, more selective than those that frame offers in UCAS tariff points, e.g., 240 tariff points, that may be obtained from a much wider range of qualifications.

As a generalization, students with the highest A-level results obtain places in universities with the most competitive rankings. Oxford and Cambridge attract the cohort of students with the very best results (see Table 4). Oxbridge is no different from the Ivy League in this sense: recruitment of such a highly qualified cohort with such high expectations and ambitions tends to ensure that honors education will be the norm. The interesting question is where, in the UK university league table, honors education ceases to be the norm but continues to thrive in parts of the curriculum. This question is impossible for me to answer. All I can do is point to some of the features and places that one would need to examine.

Table 4. Extracts from Entry Standards Metrics, *The Complete University Guide*, 2013

University	For the University as a whole		For Economics/Business Studies (single honours)		For History (single honours)	
	League Table Rank	Average Entry Standards (1)	Average Entry Standards (1)	Typical Conditional Offers (2)	Average Entry Standards (1)	Typical Conditional Offers (2)
Cambridge	1	593	613/unlisted	A*AA	577	A*AA
Oxford	2	572	594/unlisted	AAA	560	AAA
Warwick	7	496	551/483	A*AA/AAA	507	AAA
Edinburgh	26	470	469/442	AAA/AAA	448	AAA
Glasgow	18	459	462/436	ABB/ABB	453	ABB
York	8	450	468/388	AAA-AAB/AAB	520	AAA
Nottingham	13	435	484/408	ABB/AAB	452	AAA
Birmingham	23	433	458/424	AAA/AAB	424	AAB
Lincoln	44	315	Unlisted/301	Nr/260 tariff points	305	280 tariff points
Northumbria	57	314	Unlisted/334	Nr/ABB 320 tariff points	338	ABB 320 tariff points
East London	115	195	196/180	240 tariff points	Unlisted	240 tariff points

Notes: "Nr" Not reported. (1) Average Entry Standards are expressed as the average UCAS Tariff points of all new university students under age 21 at the particular university. It is a weighted calculation of A-level grades and other qualifications. See <http://www.ucas.com/students/ucas_tariff/>. In Tariff calculations, GCE A-level exams graded A*, A, B, C, D, E are awarded the following points respectively: 140, 120, 100, 80, 60, and 40. (2) Some universities publicize conditional offers framed around A-level examinations. Others may frame offers in UCAS Tariff points. Equivalent conditional offers will be written for students judged to have equivalent qualifications (for example, IB, Scottish Highers, non-UK exams and grades).

Sources: <http://www.thecompleteuniversityguide.co.uk/league-tables/rankings>. Admissions websites for each individual university.

IN SEARCH OF HONORS EDUCATION IN UK UNIVERSITIES

U.S. honors education is directed at our best and brightest students and has an undeniable, functional elitist element to it (Weiner). In general, we choose our honors students from the general population using a screening process or a competitive application process. To a great extent, "best and brightest" is defined in our particular institution's context, but we do share some expectations about the character and capacity of our students that will tend to apply across the board. Whether we are talking about honors students in public research universities, small liberal arts colleges, or community colleges, we hope that all of our honors students will be able to meet and will choose to meet the challenges of honors education and will achieve levels of academic excellence, engagement, critical thinking, and preparation for the future that go well beyond the average achievements of their college peers. We choose our honors students for their readiness and their eagerness to meet such challenges.

In my experience, UK universities have nothing comparable to a U.S.-style honors program or honors college to offer a more challenging or engaging set of opportunities to a cross-section of the undergraduate population in particular fields or across the board. Once undergraduates have been admitted to particular degree courses, UK universities officially distinguish between students only in outcomes (including exam results and degree classifications), not (or rarely) in opportunities. (Unofficially, of course, instructors know most of their best students, and their interactions with these students may be richer and livelier, with more give and take than the norm.) Admissions materials tend to emphasize general characteristics of degree courses (e.g., opportunities for study abroad, particular topics to be studies, pre-professional preparation) and the general competitiveness of the degree (e.g., the league table rankings, the qualifications of entrants, the competitiveness and quality of graduate placement). In its undergraduate prospectus <http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/courses/order/warwick_experience.pdf>, the University of Warwick, for example, emphasizes its status as "a globally connected University" ("every student is an international student") and its "academic excellence," "first-class teaching," and opportunities for "involvement in original research." The emphasis on a common student experience is reinforced by policies designed to ensure comparability of UK higher education in general, e.g., the external examination system, and to define "threshold" and "typical" standards, e.g., subject benchmark standards. Opportunities for students who want to be more challenged than their peers are not commonly mentioned. Even in a Warwick exception to the

general rule, prospective business students are told about extracurricular ways, not curricular ways, to enhance learning:

> At Warwick there are great opportunities to extend your learning and give you valuable experience, including entering international student competitions, exploring a business project as part of your studies, completing an internship, and joining many entrepreneurial and business-related student societies. Whichever degree course you choose to study, you will leave WBS extremely well prepared for a career in a competitive business environment. <http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/courses/order/course_directory.pdf>

One has to look harder to find honors education in many UK universities than would be the case in their U.S. counterparts. The clues are evident in some of the general descriptions. From the Warwick undergraduate prospectus again:

> As a student at Warwick, you can share in the excitement of carrying out original research along with our academic staff. With our well-established Undergraduate Research Scholarship Scheme, you can get funding so that you can work as part of a research team, with training and supervision. . . .
>
> [Y]ou may learn through:
>
> • Lectures: the most formal way of teaching a large group of students
>
> • Seminars: a group of around a dozen students meeting with a member of staff to consider a pre-assigned topic
>
> • Tutorials: meetings of individuals or small groups with a tutor to check out how you're progressing or discuss a particular topic in detail
>
> • Laboratory/language classes in specialist facilities
>
> • Performance: Warwick has nationally recognised expertise in using theatrical performance skills to enhance learning
>
> • Independent study: the key element of your transition to university—learning to work either by yourself or as a member of a group
>
> (<http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/courses/order/warwick_experience.pdf>, 11, 13)

CONCLUSION

I know now that, as a Harvard undergraduate, I was immersed in honors education and so were all of my peers. I took for granted that I would be challenged in almost every class; I expected to be an engaged participant in well-informed, lively discussion; I expected to do research, to be encouraged to take risks, and to find ways to be creative in and out of class; and I expected to pursue graduate or professional education.

As an undergraduate teacher in one English university of average quality, the honors-caliber student occasionally emerged in classes where the majority of students strived to hit the "typical" benchmarks for subject knowledge and competence. For those occasional students, honors education came in the form of conversation with faculty members and encouragement to go beyond the syllabus and explore interesting areas of study. In contrast, as an undergraduate teacher in another English university of high quality, just shy of Oxbridge selectivity, the honors-caliber students were a recognizable group to be engaged in class discussions, encouraged to pursue essays and research on challenging topics, and enlisted to help motivate and assist others less able. Exceptional performance could be recognized using the open-endedness of assignments and exam questions allied with the open-endedness of the percentage marking scale with a region (70–100) available to denote all measures of excellent and outstanding.

As an administrator of undergraduates in highly selective U.S. university programs, I know that honors education can be found in the UK not only in the places where one would expect to find it, i.e., Oxford. My honors students studying abroad in a range of UK universities—admittedly in the top third of most UK league tables—find the challenges and supports equivalent to honors education in some but not all aspects of their experience. Just the fact that a course ("module") is part of an "honours" degree ("course") does not mean that it is necessarily honors education.

The secret for those of us looking for honors education in UK universities is to know how to look beneath the label "honours" and the various surface descriptions for its hallmarks: small class discussion, challenging assignments, room to explore beyond the "threshold" and "typical," emphasis on research, and appreciation for originality, creativity, and unconventionality, all of which are there in most UK universities if one knows how to look for them. To understand UK honours, one has to be able to locate the challenges for the very best students and the support that facilitates student success in meeting the challenges. That's where one finds honors education in UK universities.

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Honours in Australia: Globally Recognised Preparation for a Career in Research (or Elsewhere)

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INTRODUCTION

In this essay we consider the unique position of honours within undergraduate programs in Australian universities and the consequent implications for constructing pathways to research. A tension arises in academic disciplines that see honours as a fourth-year skilling program focused on the workplace when, at the institutional level, honours is positioned as the prerequisite for entry to a PhD. What emerges are competing pressures for advanced vocational training and preliminary research training for doctoral research. The tension is exacerbated by the need for universities to generate research cohorts in order to attract the funding that such cohorts bring to a university.

BACKGROUND

Our discussion of honours in Australia occurs at a time when Australian funding bodies themselves recognise that "Honours, as undertaken at Australian universities, are not commonly part of degree structures overseas and are therefore not well understood internationally" (Department of Industry Innovation Science and Research [DIISR], 2011, 9). Our discussion occurs also at a time when a First Class Honours degree or equivalent is a hurdle in eligibility for a government-funded Higher Degree by Research scholarship. An examination of historic and current documents relating to honours in Australia is largely informed by the assumption that a vibrant honours program increases the likelihood of cohorts of well-trained researchers completing their degree on time, if not early, and providing a potential pool of future academics to staff university programs.

No specific policy debates or discussions on honours took place until 2011, the only extant document relating to honours programs in Australia having been that of Murray in 1957. It is worthwhile revisiting Murray's Report of the Committee on Australian Universities to illustrate the point we want to make regarding honours. In the report, he describes the university library, rendering a description redolent of a cloistered, sequestered apartment in a monastery. The library, he writes, is a

> place where [the student] is welcomed and encouraged to pursue a personal and independent search for knowledge and understanding, where his [sic] capacities for independence of thought and judgment are enlarged, and where, above all, he [sic] is treated as a scholar, to be provided with the peaceful and uncrowded conditions conducive to scholarly work. (51)

Books and journals are absent from the space he describes, as are desks, tables, carrels, chairs, and librarians. The ideal is all that furnishes this space, and it is one to which students come: it is not one that emits the information it stores in the form of borrowings to remote places or even to the students' places of study on campus. Murray's report encapsulates the 1950s perception of the university student within a university construct that is not connected to country, language, creed, or race. It could be anywhere in the world. It exists as an infinitive (Zeegers & McCauley). This articulation of university study was driving policy-making in relation to universities in 1957, when Menzies, Prime Minister at the time, accepted Murray's recommendations for massive financial assistance to universities, setting the pattern for increasing Commonwealth Government involvement in university education (Zeegers & Barron).

In addressing the position of honours programs, the Hansard record of a 2008 hearing by the Melbourne Senate Committee notes that, between Murray's 1957 report and the time of the hearing, "We did not even have manned space flight, computers were almost non-existent, and yet it is something that is unquestioned" (29). Recent moves towards establishing the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) and the attendant Australian Quality Framework (Council for the Australian Quality Framework) have started to address the inattention to honours programs. The new standards should go a long way toward addressing the lack of agreement among universities about honours, grades, and criteria for these, with the view that:

> The purpose of the Bachelor Honours Degree qualification type is to qualify individuals who apply a body of knowledge in a specific

context to undertake professional work and as a pathway for research and further learning. (Council for the Australian Qualifications Framework, 39)

Between 1957 and 2011, honours remained a largely uncontested feature of Australian universities. The Australian Vice Chancellors Committee (AVCC) publication *Fourth Year Honours Programs: Guidelines for Good Practice* no longer exists as a discrete document but was a 1995 publication based on the Guthrie Report of 1994. The Guthrie Report is another document that is no longer available, so we cannot refer to its recommendations. Something (but not a great deal) of the importance of the honours award can be gleaned from the figures generated from the 2002 *National Summary of Post Graduate Awards* published by the Australian Vice Chancellors Committee.

The Graduate Careers Council of Australia's *Course Experience Questionnaire Tables* of 2005 does not distinguish between those who did and did not graduate with honours on any of its scales for the universities across Australia, nor do the Deans and Directors of Graduate Studies (DDoGS) have any information about honours programs or any documentation to suggest they have ever discussed honours. Even though honours is an undergraduate and not graduate program, we would expect that—since honours or at least honours equivalence is the main entry point to the postgraduate studies that they oversee—the Deans and Directors of Graduate Studies would articulate a public stance on the issue.

As of 2005, the website of the Department of Education Science and Training (DEST)—which became the Department of Education Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) after the 2007 change in government— had been content-free on the subject, as had the site for the Chairs of Academic Boards. A report conducted on behalf of the Australian Historical Association (Millar & Peel) did indicate the numbers of honours students in history at Australian universities, but these data are too specialised to be of much value in generalisations about honours programs across universities in the country. A compilation of DEST data sets in relation to enrollments in honours programs in Australian universities in 2005 (Kleeman) shows a concentration of numbers in the larger urban centres, not in rural and regional universities. The local variations indicated the need for national guidelines and policy, backed with appropriate funding programs, to ensure a measure of consistent outcomes of honours programs in relation to national awards, particularly as these apply to ranking for scholarships.

A 2005 comparison of honours outcomes with master's outcomes was illuminating at the time. A student wanting to take up higher-degree research study needed honours or some sort of equivalent, and there was a strong

argument for honours equivalence especially when it came to applications for scholarships. Master's by Coursework and Master's by Research degrees show percentages of research components undertaken by students. A Master's by Coursework, for example, usually serves as an argument for honours equivalence given its general inclusion of a 25% research component. No such transparency is evident across the universities studied in relation to their honours programs. As a consequence, the universities' research higher-degree programs have more than likely been geared to graduates from their own honours programs, but Australian Postgraduate Awards (APAs) and Australian Postgraduate Awards Industry (APAIs) are national awards, which means that graduates who would transfer to different universities in pursuit of such awards may have encountered a measure of variation in expectations in relation to research skills training that may or may not have been well founded.

The lack of debate, let alone conversation, over the years suggests that honours has been taken for granted as a pathway through the university system and that there has been little need to articulate its place in the system, hence the lack of documentation produced by universities or related bodies such as the AVCC, the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF), or the Department of Education Science and Training (DEST), which is now the Department of Education Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR), up to 2012.

In Australia, honours has a number of appellations to indicate various classifications. Universities in Australia refer to a First Class Honours as either a H1 or a H1A; a Second Class Honours is referred to as H2A and H2B or H11A and H11B; a Third Class Honours may be referred to as simply Honours. We found a lack of consistency in applying these appellations across Australian universities, but in this essay we will use H1 to indicate a First Class Honours and H2 as a Second Class Honours.

Honours programs have traditionally followed two formats in Australian universities: three years plus one honours year or four years with honours embedded. Within both formats, we have found that seven Victorian universities, for example, award H1 for a minimum 80% grade point average while two award H1 for a minimum 85%. Universities also vary in the ways H2 is allocated, not to mention H2As, H2Bs, and so on. We have categorised honours programs for 24 of the 37 public universities in Australia. Three patterns emerged:

Category 1: H1 is awarded consistently across the university for a grade of 85+. Eight universities were in this category.

Category 2: H1 is awarded across the university at 80+. Eleven universities were in this category.

Category 3: H1 grades vary between faculties. Five universities were in this category, one of which had grade variation within its faculties as well.

The documentation provided by the Australian Vice Chancellors Committee in 2002 did not give figures for the number of honours degrees awarded in any of the years it canvassed, but it did give a fifty-page printout of numbers of honours graduates, with no analysis or breakdown of the figures in particular universities or the level of honours achieved. What that document did indicate was a 12% increase in graduates going from honours degrees to higher research degrees between 1992 and 2001, suggesting that the relevance of honours in relation to APAs and APAIs research project funding was a salient consideration in outcomes for graduates with honours degrees. After this document, little relevant material is available. 2010 figures do indicate, though, that in 2009 there were 44,292 Doctor by Research (which includes PhD and Professional Doctorate) enrollments and 16,708 in Bachelor's Honours degrees (Department of Education Employment and Workplace Relations).

TOWARD A STANDARD QUALITY FRAMEWORK

Our previous review, in 2008, of universities' honours programs across rural, regional, and urban Australia indicated variation in the programs we canvassed (Zeegers & Barron). We saw that honours was localised and that there was a lack of consistency in application of policies or procedures in the implementation of honours programs. The conduct of honours programs has been very much a given aspect of undergraduate programs but has enjoyed a privileged position within academia, especially in awarding of research scholarships.

We examined universities' statements on honours programs, which indicated a tacit understanding that a dynamic honours program is the basis of a dynamic research culture within a university, an assumption that had been unquestioned since it was articulated in the 1957 Murray Report on Australian universities. In 2008, we did not question the role that honours may play within a university and its research culture, and we do not do so now, but we found that honours programs had not been singled out for attention by major organizations in the higher education field, and this situation continued until 2011. The AQF was established in 1995 to create a national system of qualifications but made no reference to honours. In 2011 the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) took over the AQF's role and specified details of requirements for higher education levels, with honours being classed as a Level 8 course: above Level 7 (bachelor's

degree) and equal with Graduate Certificates and Graduate Diplomas. This classification is significant in that it deals with issues of the sort raised in our previous work.

A strength of TEQSA in relation to honours is that it explicitly addresses the lack of consistency and transparency as it pertains to research components understood to be features of honours degrees. TEQSA's aim is to establish consistency in degree quality and standards across the country so that honours students from any university would be qualified for postgraduate research programs in any other university in the country while at the same time providing a measure of consistency in the awarding of scholarships. TEQSA also anticipates that industry will be more informed about the types of skills and qualities that an honours graduate will bring to any positions they may take up.

TEQSA has moved to address the variations in honours graduates' skills and research standards, an important consideration when it comes to the relative standing of honours students applying for nationally competitive scholarships. What we would argue needs to change, but which has not been specifically addressed in the new TEQSA arrangements, is the historical disparity in what grade is required to be awarded an H1 in universities across Australia. Universities can make their own decisions on the minimum grade and not just follow the past definitions of HIs or H2s. There is the rider:

> If a student does not hold a Bachelor degree with First Class Honours, then the HEP [Higher Education Provider] may determine that the student has demonstrated an equivalent level of academic attainment. In determining an equivalent level of academic attainment, a HEP may consider previous study, relevant work experience, research publications, referees' reports and other research experience. (DIISR, 2010, *Equivalent Attainment*)

A complicating factor is that the Australian government specifies that the equivalence applies only to H1 and not to H2 and that scholarships will be made available only to students with HI. This situation is still to be negotiated, if not actually resolved.

TEQSA has also moved to address questions that may be raised about the relative abilities of candidates to complete their higher research degrees, as required by the Research Training Scheme (RTS), which is the policy basis of postgraduate research programs in Australia whereby research students are constructed as trainees working with experts in the conduct of rigorous and trustworthy research. Honours may be seen as a program in which a potential doctoral student will approximate the research behaviours of more experienced researchers in a given field; in essence, it is research training. A

question remains: how to evaluate the equivalence of an H1 result to a Research Masters that has an ungraded pass.

The disparities that we have canvassed above have indicated that honours programs, even where they have been categorised and examined as discipline-specific, have shown disparities across universities and across various areas in the same universities in which they were offered. This situation has been addressed by TEQSA, on paper at least, and its benchmarking means that all applicants for higher research degrees may be considered equitably. Before the changes introduced in 2011, if applicants did not have an honours degree with an H1 grade, they would be judged against the sorts of criteria that were assumed to underpin an H1 grade, yet there was no evidence that an honours student who achieved an H1 had met those criteria. Universities that we investigated had no issue with demanding clear evidence of research-based activity in an honours equivalence case but accepted unquestioningly an assumption of a high level of research capacity associated with an H1 grade.

Indeed, universities had no problem setting criteria for non-honours graduates. The standard form that we found in the universities we examined had, and indeed still has, the heading *Honours Equivalence*, requiring that applicants make a case that they have engaged in research-based activities or that their professional practice has required them to engage in critical analysis and implementation of change as part of their professional activities. What TEQSA has done, then, is articulate the standards against which the criteria of an honours grade will be measured. What is more, the purpose, knowledge, and skills as well as the application of knowledge and skills, while being specified by TEQSA, have an additional "volume of learning" dimension, a set of specifications that has been lacking. We would suggest, then, a simpler approach of awarding scholarships on the basis of grade-point achievement, according to standards that have been established and articulated by TEQSA, and scrapping the entire nomenclature of H1, H2, and so on.

THE NUMBERS

In 2008, 7,174 students completed a higher degree by research (HDR), an increase of 41% since 1998 (DIISR, 2009). In 2011, the government supported 3,270 commencing APAs and at the same time announced that, in 2012, this number would be increased to 3,500 (DIISR, 2011). Of all entrants to higher degrees by research, 20.4% are honours graduates, with 16.2% entering via other postgraduate courses, e.g., master's degrees (DIISR, 2011). The rise in the numbers taking up established honours pathways to research degrees, compared with possibilities open to students via master's degrees, for example, may show that honours is more attractive in that it gives a

competitive edge in the award of scholarships. Honours is one point in the possible pathways to higher research degrees where an undergraduate degree (a bachelor's degree with honours) outranks a postgraduate degree (a master's). The honours pathway is also one that, while it has important implications for research higher degrees, is beyond the scope of any possible monitoring protocols by deans of graduate studies. One such dean we interviewed acknowledged the implied link between honours and the activities of his own research and graduate studies office but also pointed out that any monitoring of honours programs within his university occurred within faculty protocols and practices. This dimension of honours protocols and procedures remains unchanged in spite of the changes wrought by TEQSA.

An expectation of bachelor's graduates is that they have practical and professional competencies in their chosen field. An honours graduate, though, may be expected to have at least advanced enquiry skills and at most a demonstrated capacity for undertaking research to generate new knowledge or to use existing knowledge in new ways. Such an expectation, though, is not supported by evidence; it is, rather, simply a conventional assumption within Australian universities. As a pathway into higher research degrees, honours is claimed by universities to provide an opportunity, first of all, to approximate the research behaviours of those who have led the field in research activities, to learn the protocols involved, and to come to the understanding that, like Einstein, the honours student is standing on the shoulders of giants. Second of all, honours enables research students to make an authentic contribution to the world's store of knowledge by virtue of their engagement with authentic research activities. We argue that these tacit understandings, of the sort that Murray took up in his discussion of honours in Australian universities, need to be foregrounded and reviewed in current RTS contexts that are so much a part of twenty-first-century research activities in Australian universities.

If Australian universities value research, as they are required to do by the funding bodies that support their activities, they cannot with any sort of justification focus only on the vocational features of honours programs. By vocational features we mean the practical competencies associated with particular careers or professions rather than the skills associated with enquiry and scholarship. The research components of honours programs have in recent years received legislative attention that, we suggest, has created a policy climate in which Australian universities may now implement even further innovation to strengthen the position of honours as part of the research pathways in Australian universities.

THE STRENGTHS OF AQF IN THE POLICY DOMAIN

Policy is now in place to align universities' activities with national expectations for honours graduates. This policy provides a mechanism for eliminating the sort of variation that we have observed in universities across the country, especially in awarding APAs and APAIs. The awards of PhD, Professional Doctorate, and Masters by Research degrees are now underpinned by established conventions of examinations by scholars of national and international repute in their disciplinary areas. We have not found a similar underpinning of honours programs; we have instead found variations across and within faculties even when it comes to the examination of honours theses. The TEQSA position, though, now means that it has been possible to establish a national and nationally consistent standard for honours similar to that used in higher research degrees.

Honours graduates may or may not want to go on to pursue a research program. They may instead wish to take advanced skills into the workplace they have chosen as part of their own career paths, which raises the question of just what these advanced skills may be: vocational skills, critical thinking, analytical skills, and so on. Defining the standards for providing vocational training in honours will require a different process than defining standards for preparing students to do significant research. Our argument is that the latter standards need to be scrutinised in terms of policy and administrative behaviour given their implications for awarding APAs and APAIs.

CONCLUSION

We have given an historical account of the position of honours in Australian universities. We have mapped a number of assumptions that Australian universities have taken for granted in relation to their honours programs. We have shown that, prior to 2011, governing bodies and universities themselves had been inattentive to the role, content, and grading of honours. At the same time, there was an unexamined assumption that honours was the foundation for entry to research higher degree programs, an assumption that was not necessarily supported by the situation on campuses across the country. Universities, as self-accrediting bodies, had been able to operate in isolation, unaccountable to each other as far as honours or indeed their entire undergraduate programs were concerned. This inattentiveness was evident in the policy drought associated with bodies such as the AVCC and AQF which, in their advisory roles, had not singled out honours for particular consideration over the years. Honours suffered as this situation continued.

We see the new policy and its implementation in 2012 as a major step in addressing discrepancies, providing a guide to universities as they address assumptions upon which are based the awarding of scholarships for post-graduate research within vibrant research cultures. Honours programs are now open to public scrutiny, the sort of scrutiny which had been absent since 1957.

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The Tutorial Education Program: An Honors Program for Brazilian Undergraduate Students

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INTRODUCTION

The Tutorial Education Program is an honors program for Brazilian under-graduates, sponsored by the Ministry of Education. Based on philosophical principles of tutorial education in which small groups of academic talented students are guided by a tutor, the program is designed to support groups of undergraduates who demonstrate outstanding performance in their academic activities. The Tutorial Education Program provides enrichment activities in order to broaden the academic development of students with exceptional potential and abilities. Our purpose in this paper is to describe this honors program for undergraduates from different states in Brazil, focusing on the underlying philosophy of the program, its purposes, the main criteria for the selection of the students, how the program is organized and evaluated, the number of participating students, and universities that provide this program. As an illustration, the paper will also provide a brief presentation of how this program is conducted in the Institute of Psychology of the University at Brasilia, Brazil.

BACKGROUND

The advantages of providing programs for academically talented students have been increasingly recognized by governments and educators in different countries. One factor that explains this recognition is growing awareness of the benefits to countries that provide opportunities for their most capable students to develop their potential more fully. Kessler and Krejci, for example,

in a meeting of gifted education scholars from different countries that was organized by the World Council for the Gifted and Talented Children, remarked that human talent was Austria's most valuable resource in international competition and that measures should be taken to develop the most capable students.

The interest in academically talented students in Taiwan, according to Wu, arose from the understanding that an island with few natural resources needs to fully develop their human resources, including among them those students with outstanding intellectual potential, who should receive special attention. Similarly, Gallagher justifies the continued interest in the education of the most capable students in the United States by pointing out the need for a supply of highly talented students who can contribute to the country's leadership in higher education and in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM-related areas). In the same vein, Weinert points out the increasing awareness, observed in several countries, of human abilities and talents as the most precious resources to nurture and benefit society.

A vast literature is available about the special characteristics and needs of the most capable students that should be fostered in order for them to develop their potential more fully (Alencar & Fleith; Colangelo & Davis; Fleith & Alencar; Heller, Mönks, Sternberg, & Subotnik; Horowitz, Subotnik, & Matthews; Shavinina; Van Tassel-Baska; Wallace & Eriksson). Although numerous strategies on how to educate capable students are described in the literature, most of the publications focus on services for talented students at the K–12 level, presenting a description of different types of enrichment and acceleration interventions in education that address these students' intellectual and social/emotional needs. Numerous studies have also been conducted on the academic and psychological benefits that result from children's participation in such acceleration or enrichment programs, but research on programs and services for academically gifted undergraduate students is comparatively scarce, or so it would seem in analysis of the literature on gifted education, including the best-known handbooks—such as those edited by Colangelo and Davis, Heller, Mönks, Sternberg and Subotnik, and Shavinina—as well as journals such as *Gifted Education International*, *Gifted and Talented International*, and *Gifted Child Quarterly*.

Among the programs for academically gifted undergraduates, however, one that deserves attention is the honors program, available to American students for a long time. According to Rinn and Plucker, Harvard University had special programs for honors students as early as 1873 and the University of Michigan as early as 1882; in 1922, Swarthmore College initiated an honors program that was the starting point for the most common types of honors

programs in higher education. Nowadays, many American colleges and universities offer honors programs to attend to the needs of academically talented undergraduate students (Hébert & McBee). These programs provide numerous opportunities for students to develop their potential, including (a) academic challenges in the form of honors courses and seminars; (b) extensive faculty contact; (c) interdisciplinary classes; (d) mentoring; (d) opportunities to participate in leadership activities and research; and (e) intellectually oriented extracurricular activities. However, little is known about honors programs for undergraduate students in countries other than the United States. The current study aims to contribute in this direction.

THE TUTORIAL EDUCATION PROGRAM

In 1979, the Brazilian Department of Improvement of Graduate Personnel of the Ministry of Education initiated the Tutorial Education Program with fifteen students from two universities. This number has increased dramatically since then, and universities from all parts of the country have requested authorization to implement the program in some of their departments. The program is based on philosophical principles of tutorial education in which groups of four to twelve academically talented students are guided by a tutor. Its purpose is to support groups of undergraduate students who demonstrate outstanding performance in their academic activities as well as high potential and abilities by providing enrichment activities to broaden their academic development. The program, as defined in 2006, aims to: (a) offer academic and interdisciplinary activities of excellence, (b) improve college education, (c) prepare students to become highly qualified professionals, (d) supply students with opportunities to further develop higher-level thinking abilities as well as social responsibilities of citizenship, and (e) enhance teamwork abilities (Ministry of Education). Also, the activities implemented by the Tutorial Education Program are designed to strengthen the partnership between the university and society, favoring cooperative exchanges and mutual learning. The students should disseminate new ideas and practices among their academic peers and members of the community (Libâneo & Costa Jr.).

Undergraduate students are selected for this program during their second, third, or fourth semester at the university. The main criteria for selection are high academic achievement, high interest, and motivation in carrying out their studies. A professor is chosen as the mentor for each group and is responsible for planning activities and supervising the students. The mentor is selected from professors who demonstrate real interest in the program, high academic productivity, and a good relationship with colleagues and students. The program is evaluated each year. The students receive a scholarship and

remain in the program throughout their undergraduate program (Alencar, Fleith, & Arancibia). The tutor is also granted a scholarship.

The role of the tutor is (a) to plan and supervise the group activities and to guide students; (b) to coordinate the students' selection procedures; (c) to submit the group's annual activities proposal to the university and to the Ministry of Education; (d) to organize data and information about the group activities to substantiate the annual report to be sent to the Ministry of Education; (e) to dedicate a minimum of ten hours a week to the Tutorial Education Program; (g) to control students' attendance and participation; and (h) to account for funds received by the group (Ministry of Education [2006]).

Up to 2010, 4,274 students and 400 tutors from public and private universities located in different regions of Brazil have participated in the program (Ministry of Education [2012]). The program includes 428 groups of students in distinct fields of knowledge, e.g., business, engineering, economics, political science, statistics, mathematics, geology, physics, chemistry, biology, psychology, education, architecture, the arts, and law. Each year higher education institutions may submit applications to the program. The Ministry of Education sponsors thirty new groups per year.

To evaluate the effectiveness of the Tutorial Education Program, the Ministry of Education (2006) adopts the following indicators: (a) annual report of the group, (b) academic performance of students of the program, (c) students' involvement in activities and projects of the program, (d) improvement and innovation of educational practices at the undergraduate level, (e) students' publications and attendance at scientific events, (f) annual self-evaluation reports prepared by students and tutors of the program, and (g) visits of Ministry of Education delegates to the groups.

THE TUTORIAL EDUCATION PROGRAM AT THE INSTITUTE OF PSYCHOLOGY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF BRASILIA

The current configuration of the Tutorial Education Program at the Institute of Psychology at the University of Brasilia includes twelve academically talented undergraduates. The students are expected to participate in the program for at least two years, after which they receive a Participation Certificate for the Tutorial Education Program that is issued by the Ministry of Education. When a student stays in the program for less than two years, he or she is entitled to receive only a statement of participation issued by the University of Brasilia.

The selection process is composed of three phases: (a) a school transcript evaluation, where the candidate must have a global grade average above the

70th percentile; (b) a written, knowledge-based test on the specific content of four fundamental areas of the course (personality, social behavior, learning, and developmental psychology), in which the candidate must earn at least 70 points out of 100; and (c) an oral exam, on which the student must also earn a grade of 70%, which assesses the student's availability, motivation, interest, and general knowledge. The Tutorial Education Program in Psychology conducts one selection process a year, with results valid for one year only; after that, another selective process is required.

The student requirements are the following: (a) to ensure the academic quality of the program; (b) to participate in all activities programmed by the tutor, including teaching, research, social, and community activities; (d) to have good academic performance in the undergraduate program; (e) to contribute to the professional development of classmates; and (f) to publish or present a scientific paper, individually or in group, each year.

In the specific case of the Institute of Psychology at the University of Brasilia, students engage in a scientific research project throughout the year. The students may elaborate and develop their own projects under the guidance of the tutor or other professor, or they may join a research team of a project that is already under development by another team of students and professor. Each project must annually generate a manuscript—a literature review or empirical study—to be submitted for publication in a journal of psychology or a related area. Independently of the research projects to which the students are committed, they each must attend a research seminar at the university, make an oral and public presentation, and present a paper in a scientific conference. Other student activities include workshops about themes of interest to the profession of psychology in Brazil, presentations and discussion of films, symposia about research themes in psychology, debates on polemical issues in psychology, and symposia on the professional development of undergraduate psychology students.

A student is removed from the Tutorial Education Program in Psychology in the following cases: (a) graduation, institutional suspension of registration, or withdrawal from the undergraduate program; (b) a personal decision to leave the program; (c) underachievement; (d) failing twice on subjects of the psychology undergraduate program; (e) non-compliance with the obligations assumed toward the university and the Ministry of Education; (f) failure to carry out the program duties; and (g) undertaking actions or involvement that are not consistent with the philosophy of the program or the University of Brasilia.

CONCLUSION

The commitment of the students who participate in the program is not only academic and professional but ethical and social as well. The focus of the program is to provide the holistic development of its participants. For developing countries like Brazil, investment in the education of academically talented students is essential, contributing to the improvement of the quality of life in the broader society. We must therefore continue to develop special programs like the Tutorial Education Program in order to meet the needs, interests, and abilities of future professionals and researchers. We must also develop studies on the short- and long-term effects of our program on the lives of those thousands who were part of it at some point in their academic journeys. The results would help us determine what should be changed and what new actions should be taken in order to keep alive the spirit of the program.

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Honors in Chile: New Engagements in the Higher Education System

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INTRODUCTION

Honors programs are rare in Latin America, and in Chile they were unknown before 2003. At the Universidad Austral de Chile, an interdisciplinary group of scholars linked to environmental studies put forward a pilot project for implementing a new experience in higher education. Challenged by an educational environment where (i) apathy and mediocrity have taken over the classrooms, (ii) monodisciplinary training rules the university campus, and (iii) authoritarian teaching persists, this has been an experiment in new ways of approaching the classroom. Stimulated by experiences in the USA, a project proposal was written, finding support in the Chilean Secretary of Education. Three years of experience have proven that a Chilean honors program can serve as a model for programs elsewhere in Latin America. In the following pages we aim to provide a summary of what this experience has meant, using the most recent class as an example. Some background about the university and the Chilean system needs to be supplied, while most of the paper deals with the particular features of this program and its immediate future.

The honors experience at the Universidad Austral de Chile (UACh) is of interest not only because of its Latin American context but also because it is

focused on a particular theme, Environmental Studies and Sustainable Human Development. After three years, the program has just completed its pilot phase, and so the time is appropriate to describe its accomplishments and challenges.

THE INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT

The Universidad Austral de Chile, located in the southern city of Valdivia, was founded in 1954. A state-sponsored regional university, UACh is among the five leading universities in the country. A body of almost 10,000 undergraduate students is distributed in its 38 schools (*escuelas*), which fall under the university's 10 faculties (*faculdades*). The 665 professors belong to 69 institutes (*institutos*), or research/teaching units.

Improving the quality of higher education has been a permanent, although not achieved, goal in the university. The low academic performance of the incoming students and their lack of motivation impede attaining this goal. Most of the UACh students belong to the lower socioeconomic brackets, and many of them come from families whose parents have never received a higher education. They graduate from public or publicly subsidized schools with extremely poor academic records. Selection in the Chilean university system operates through a national test, and students with higher scores are concentrated in the capital city of Santiago. Regional universities lag behind the Santiago universities in the students' aspirations; students see a better future if graduating from an institution where all academic and non-academic resources are concentrated.

Limitations other than the low academic skills of the students affect the university, including its provision of rigid, traditional classes that tend more to the reproduction of existing knowledge than to the acquisition of learning skills or the development of a passion for new knowledge. Non-academic factors that contribute to poor performance among students at UACh are the rainy environment and lack of recreational opportunities during the long winter period.

However, some opportunities for reversing these trends are available in the system. On the one hand, UACh has a great infrastructure, including computer labs and access to information technologies, library, and classroom facilities. The Chilean Ministry of Education is pumping new resources into the system; most of these have gone into the construction of new buildings and the renewal of equipment. A growing concern about inequities in the higher education system favors innovative initiatives that could help in finding new avenues for better prospects in the university system (Brunner et.al.).

The Chilean educational system, like many in Latin America, is highly rigid. Upon finishing high school, students choose a *carrera* ("course of

study") to pursue in the university. Such careers are traditional fields of knowledge that lead to an academic degree (licentiate) and a professional title after a four-year cycle. Programs are fixed, and each cohort follows the same path. As a result, students acquire specific perspectives and tools that enable them to reproduce this knowledge. In spite of many able students and dedicated faculty, the educational environment is characterized by authoritarian teaching and by apathy and mediocrity in the classroom. Monodisciplinary training rules the university campus. Critical thinking, passionate research, meaningful learning experiences, and serendipity are, for the most part, absent in this model.

The Center for Environmental Studies (CEAM) at the Universidad Austral de Chile is a counterpoint to this structure. CEAM is a transdisciplinary space created in 2002 to bring together faculty from the natural and social sciences to study environmental problems and contribute to policy making at the national and local levels. The university has an important group of researchers from diverse fields of knowledge working on these issues. The Center for Environmental Studies was designed to be a link between the university and the community, and between research and teaching.

THE HONORS PROGRAM IN ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES AND HUMAN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (PILOT PHASE)

The honors program proposal was inspired by U.S. experiences (Fuiks and Clark; Long; Schuman). What makes the Chilean program different is that it targets a specific field of thought: environmental studies and sustainable human development. The thematic orientation of the program was no accident since it was developed by the same faculty who organized the Center for Environmental Studies.

However, beyond the program's subject matter, there was a deep concern about the quality of undergraduate studies in the university. The program was seen as an opportunity for improving teaching and for finding new ways of creating a classroom environment consistent with the needs of the student body. The underlying idea was to radiate the ideals of an experience-centered approach to learning from the honors program to the rest of the school. This aim was based on the notions that good work deserves to be recognized and that, if given the opportunity, students would develop academic skills that otherwise are neutralized under the pressure of a peer-conformist atmosphere.

The honors program was, likewise, conceived as a local contribution to the process of improving higher education at the national level. As such it was submitted for a grant from the National Ministry of Education along the lines of innovation in the academy. The local project was not only to transform the

UACh undergraduate teaching system but to help other regional universities achieve similar goals.

The honors pilot project, from the point of view of the University's strategic plan, is the most important teaching initiative of CEAM. It contributes to the aims of "transforming nature as well as knowledge" and of "searching for answers beyond the horizon"; and by providing a transdisciplinary view of environmental issues, it helps to promote a better integration of the university's resources. It also becomes a symbol of a university striving to find new avenues for improved teaching.

The honors program is physically as well as institutionally located in CEAM, one of four A-frame houses on the campus. Originally built as faculty housing, the Center has three stories of offices, a kitchen, and a large conference room for classes and meetings. Honors students have a place to go, and they are found in every part of "Casa 4." The picture windows of the house overlook the river that separates the campus from the center of Valdivia. Open to the city and seen from the city, Casa 4 is an apt symbol of the connection the honors program makes between the campus and the region.

The goal was to create a transdisciplinary learning setting for undergraduate students from all fields of knowledge, focusing on environmental studies and sustainable human development. The topic is consistent with the university's strengths, which include ecology and humanities, and with a region where native forests, biodiversity, and wildlife are undergoing increasing stress. The honors program pilot project was funded through a grant competition of the MECESUP Program of the Chilean Ministry of Education (MECESUP AUS 0202).

The honors program has operated with the following guidelines:

1. To work with an incoming cohort of twenty students, selected among the best second- and third-year applicants.

2. To offer a seminar taught by at least three professors coming from different faculties, followed by two other seminars. After completing three seminars, students qualify for receiving the distinction of Honors on their diploma when they graduate.

3. To include a seminar style for classes, enhanced by field activities, and participation in the classroom not only of students and faculty but also community members and experts.

4. To consider non-traditional forms of evaluation. The program defined "academic products" as a means of summarizing the students' learning. Such products consist of a synthesis of the acquired knowledge, supported by any technical device (a Powerpoint presentation, a bulletin, a poster,

a representation, or whatever other means available), open to public scrutiny.

Based on this schema, the program has already served three different cohorts from the second semester of 2003 through the second semester of 2005. One hundred forty students from 30 careers have applied to the program, 60 of them being enrolled. Of these, more than 40% have completed the program. (Students are recruited from the university campuses: Miraflores and Isla Teja in Valdivia, and Puerto Montt in that city. A problem has been to sustain the Puerto Montt students' participation: they must travel for three hours each way to attend the class, and it hasn't been easy to retain them.)

The program has been advertised through the university website, and a yearly recruitment process is held. Students apply on a voluntary basis, although they may be encouraged by faculty. The selection process involves a review of the academic background and interviews of the prospective students. Main selection criteria include: GPA; motivation as substantiated in personal experience, interviews, and references; and an even distribution of students across different fields.

The seminars that have been offered are the following:

- From Multiple to Trans: Tasting Serendipity
- Coastal Maritime Biodiversity in the Chilean South
- Theory and Solution of Problems of Conservation Biology
- Global Change
- Environmental and Cultural History of the Southern Chilean Temperate Forests
- Associative Entrepreneurship for the Sustainable Development in Rural Communities
- Water as a Means for Learning about the Ecosystem and its Sustainable Use
- Bioethics, Sustainable Development and Conservation in Natural areas in Chile
- Philosophies of Development: Epistemologies, and Biology of Knowledge

An estimated fifty-five faculty have participated in the experience, thirty-four of them coming from UACh, the rest from other universities and research centers. Among them are geologists, marine biologists, ecologists, philosophers, economists, social scientists, zoologists, and foresters. In addition, a significant number of organizers, experts, and other guests have participated in these seminars. Similarly, international visitors, mainly from the United States but also from South Africa and Brazil, have joined the experience.

PHILOSOPHIES OF DEVELOPMENT:
AN ALTERNATIVE PEDAGOGY

To give a more concrete idea of the pedagogical approach of the UACh Honors Program, we describe the most recent seminar, "Philosophies of Development," which was taught during the second semester of 2005. The coordinator of the course was Carlos Alberto Cioce Sampaio, a Brazilian professor of development studies who was conducting a postdoctoral program at CEAM. This class was inspired by the need for working with the students to find new, alternative avenues for community development. Rather than abstract discussions of development philosophy, the course focused on the real needs of a rural community about forty-five minutes from the university campus. The community of Tralcao with its indigenous organization, Tralmapu, was chosen as the site for this experience.

The theoretical layout of the class included three modules: Epistemologies of Knowledge, Biology of Knowledge, and Cultural and Socioeconomic Change. Two hypotheses were considered (*ex ante*) that connected these modules: (1) socioeconomy is based on new forms of social action oriented not only by a utilitarian rationality but also by a more values-based rationality rooted in local knowledge (sometimes derogatively seen as "subjective"); and (2) that subjectivity may become a means of enriching the decision-making process (Tuan; Berkes; Lévi-Strauss; Oyarzun; Varela; Maturana & Varela). As suggested by Max-Neef, to deny subjectivity is to deny differences and the individuality of the human being.

The theme of socioeconomy can be understood through methodologies of participatory, decentralized, and socially and environmentally responsible organizational management. This type of management has an emphasis on networks of organizations where traditional/popular knowledge is valued. This type of organization can generate ideas and proposals, under the eye of local people, that are not disengaged or distanced from the details of everyday life.

What connects the three modules in the course is the search for practical elements that help to improve the well-being of disadvantaged communities through the sustainable use of natural resources. So a principal objective was to reflect critically on models of development and to explore alternatives based on a new model, called "socioeconomy," characterized by cooperation, solidarity, and the articulation of experiences. The socieconomy model is based on a new culture that values popular knowledge as well as academic knowledge, practical knowledge as well as theoretical, local solutions as well as external ones; that supports innovation and creativity; that seeks to recognize the characteristics that give us identity in a global context; that proposes

a new university closer to the community, capable of speaking a simple language and at the same time a scientific language, proposals that are based on the biology of knowledge and human evolution. The specific objectives were to: (a) identify Chilean experiences that move in the direction of socioeconomy, under criteria pointed out by Sampaio in 2005; and (b) produce materials that can serve as a proposal for implanting socioeconomy practices in the Tralcao Mapu Indigenous Community Project (Sampaio, Oterro, & Skewes).

The community of Tralcao had been working with the university to explore opportunities for ecotourism based largely on birdwatching. This is because Tralcao is located in the Rio Cruces Nature Sanctuary, a renowned site for migratory birds and especially known for its black-necked swans (*Cygnus melancorypha*). It is part of the municipality of San Jose de la Mariquina (Lakes Region), which is linked to the Sustainable Ecoregion Program of the Lakes Region, an initiative of the non-governmental organization Agenda 21, and supported by other units of the Universidad Austral de Chile: the Institute of Tourism, with its Diploma in Rural Tourism; the School of Anthropology through the dissertation of one of its students; and CEAM, through a post-doctoral project. Tralcao has faced unexpected environmental stress since 2004, when the opening of a paper pulp mill upstream resulted in the disappearance of the black-necked swans. The community was faced with few alternatives.

For their class projects, the students identified diverse projects that could potentially help the community in confronting its new circumstances. At an initial visit to Tralcao, students met with community members and informed them about the plans for the class. The students organized themselves into small groups to identity successful community projects in different parts of Chile. These projects were examples of community-based local socioproductive agreements.

These agreements are micro initiatives where raw competition is bypassed by actions that privilege a horizontal network of cooperation. The idea is to add value to small businesses, increasing the survival chances for small entrepreneurs facing an encroaching market. The notion of "community-based" suggests alternative modes of production and distribution. Community cuts across gender, territoriality and poverty. This represents a local alternative for the inclusion of marginalized ("shoeless") people, stimulating policies that would avoid the high rates of bankruptcy among local initiatives, a result of unequal access to the market. In their aim to survive competition, most of these initiatives, otherwise known as informal, rely upon low wages, fraud, postponement of social security contributions and taxes, self-exploitation and even depletion of nature (Sampaio, "Arranjos"; Sachs; Araujo, Sampaio, & Souza).

The students relied upon secondary sources and interviews with experts to develop their presentations. Each week during the semester the class focused on a specific project. The student group's presentation was followed by commentaries from two experts (a scientist and a "shoeless" philosopher, a non-academic community member) and open discussion by the rest of the class. A record was kept of each session, and the learning in the discussion was meant to improve the group's project.

The final session of the class was a public presentation to the Tralcao community of the students' findings. Community members were asked to evaluate each of the projects, based on the project's presentation and a poster, considering simplicity of language, intelligibility, and pertinence and feasibility for the local organization.

Currently the community is choosing which among the demonstration projects presented by the students have the greatest possibility for replicability in the community. Institutionally, the community is trying to create the conditions for becoming an incubator of local community-based projects in the area served by UACh.

The students had the experience of looking at potential community projects, presenting their findings in a public setting directly to the people most concerned, and getting feedback not only from their peers and teachers but from the community itself.

EVALUATION

An initial evaluation of the program, based on a survey and informal interviews, suggested the following conclusions for the Pilot Phase:

1. As an overall indication of the degree of satisfaction, out of seven points, participating students evaluated the program with a 5.9 while participating faculty with a 5.7, and the chairs of the different schools with a 5.1. These averages are well above those for any *carrera* in the university, which rarely reach the 5.0 level.

2. The program is acknowledged as forging the competencies which it aims for: critical thought, transdisciplinary integration, team working, practical engagement, and environmental awareness. Students perceived themselves as changed in their way of understanding and acting upon the world.

3. The physical setting of the program is an important component. This house provides students with a rare intellectual "home," which they use with enthusiasm.

In interviews, students reported that one of the most stimulating experiences for them in the program was to see how excited the faculty members

became when working with colleagues from other disciplines in the team-taught courses. Faculty members reported the same experience.

Transdisciplinary experiences, as when students in the course on Environmental and Cultural History of the Southern Chilean Temperate Forests got to work in the carbon analysis laboratory, or the community engagement of engineering students are among the most valued experiences reported by the students, who believe that such experiences have changed their way of understanding the world.

Another important component valued by students in their learning experience has been the opportunity of publicly sharing the products of their work. Each seminar has ended with a public display of the academic products achieved during the semester. The most important of these was the exhibit about Conservation, Global Change and Sustainability that was displayed in the university's Great Hall as part of the commemoration of the university's fiftieth anniversary.

A crucial point in the program's history was its evaluation by professor Bernice Braid, a former president of the NCHC, in November 2005. Professor Braid received a self-evaluation report that she had the opportunity to compare to her own findings through a field visit. Her report is eloquent in her concluding remarks:

> It is astonishing how completely this fledgling Honors Program, even in its Pilot years, has sought to embody the full range of attributes of highly successful and long running honors programs. . . .

> There is already in place a structure, a clear sense of the value of Honors in itself and for UACh, and a cadre of professionals on campus who can help to build on the foundation already established. Since this Program operates like a departmental honors program, it could well flourish on campus with other similar transdisciplinary programs. Where others developed, the model of this one should prove instructive, and all should be encouraged to work together in open houses and other forums where the general public is invited. . . . It is clear that I recommend not only that this Honors Program—Environmental Studies and Sustainable Human Development—be continued, but be used as a model for the establishment of parallel Honors opportunities if such are proposed.

Braid ends by suggesting that the experience be written about, "so that Chile, Latin America, and the world know more about how much the Program has accomplished in just three years, and how much it has to offer others for them to emulate."

CHALLENGES

Overall, the honors experience has demonstrated its aptness for a Latin Amercan regional university such as UACh. Such is the perception not only of direct participants, but also of other community members. The experience is seen by chairs of the *escuelas* as highly innovative and groundbreaking in academia. As such it is seen as replicable in other similar universities.

The Chilean honors experience might prove to be an avenue for bridging the gap between highly competitive universities (only three in the country) and the vast majority of higher educational institutions that deal with a socially and academically vulnerable population. By offering an alternative for excellence, the honors program contributes an opportunity for setting new teaching and learning standards in this context.

Of great importance has been the honors students' engagement in social and academic activities through which they express an emerging leadership in environmentally relevant topics such as animal rights, environmental protection for the surrounding nature sanctuary, and participation in diverse national and international seminars.

The accomplishments of the pilot phase of the UACh Honors Program are all the more notable for the fact that both faculty and students participated in the program without credit. Students did not receive academic credit for taking the three seminars. Faculty taught the courses without any reduction in their regular teaching load. This was necessary during the pilot phase, but is not sustainable in the long run.

Currently, the program aims for its consolidation at the university. In pursuing this goal, three major difficulties have been faced:

1. To convince the administration of the value of programs such as the honors program as an important ingredient both at the undergraduate level as well as a part of the campus life. The recent evaluation survey showed that the honors program is not well known on the university campus. The project's coordinators were not well enough aware of the importance of devising a strategy to involve the university administration. (The evaluator's visit proved crucial at this point.)

2. To convince the administration to invest in a program that appears not to produce immediate returns and that, seen from a different view, might be criticized for either dragging resources out of the *institutos* or for its elitist nature. It is thus important to demonstrate what the honors program can do for the university, namely:

    • Improve the quality of academic teaching

    • Attract better and more talented students

- Project the work of the University as a regional and national leader on emerging issues.

3. To develop real honors practices among instructors. Indeed, good professors mistakenly believe that what best qualifies them is their ability to attract students' attention rather than to make the students the true actors of the process. The experiences and approaches developed in the honors program can be spread to the university's regular courses.

4. To raise class requirements among students. As a non-credit course, the honors class was not seen by the students as a legitimate academic requirement. Thus the students' initial drive would be satisfied by classes involving open discussions with few or any readings. Giving honors courses regular credit recognized by the students' *carreras* would both legitimize the program and stimulate active participation.

Such difficulties are counterbalanced by some of the program's achievements. In its first three years, the honors program has been able to establish itself as part of a commonsensical view of the university's activities. It has mobilized a great number of students, visitors, faculty, and community members. International students and outside researchers and faculty have spontaneously offered to join this venture.

If some of the crucial achievements of the Program ought to be underlined, the following are certain:

1. The program showed that a transdisciplinary dialogue in the classroom was not only possible but that it stimulated the formation of new associations among students, faculty, and even the community.

2. It demonstrated the students' capabilities to push forward teamwork and to put forward their findings to their peers as well as to the larger community.

3. It explored new forms of partnership among the university and the local communities, stimulating a more horizontal relationship between them. It also integrated community activists both from local organizations and from the professional world as key players in the classroom.

4. The pilot project demonstrated that honors is a real alternative for regional universities such as the Universidad Austral de Chile.

The program's next step will be an unusual experience of academic exchange with the Regional University of Blumenau in Santa Caterina, Brazil: a group of students, faculty and staff of the Universidad Austral de Chile and other invited staff of nearby universities will travel to Brazil to present the experiences of both the honors program and the Philosophy of Development seminar. This will be an encounter between the Chilean honors program and potential replicas both in Brazil and in Chile.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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AFTERWORD

The Chilean higher education system has proven to be a failure in at least two senses. On the one hand, extreme inequalities have run unchecked since the inception in 1982 of a subsidiary system of financing and the creation of private universities by the legal body that regulates the higher educational system. On the other hand, universities have proven incapable of conferring degrees based on an integrated approach to professional training. An aerial view of central-south Chile, for example, shows massive deforestation that correlates with growing numbers of forestry engineers. Failures in development plans, large investment projects, and approaches to social problems prove that the higher education system is not providing the kind of "human capital" that the country needs.

Equity and quality are slippery words in the official rhetoric about the challenges of the new millennium. Under the surface, students and academicians experience a bitter situation in national, regional, private, and public universities. A long-standing sense of inadequacy, as suggested by the authors of this article in 2006, evolved into a massive mobilization of university students in 2011. The honors program, as its mission states, was designed to help incoming students within a system that was not prepared to integrate their studies with the realities of society: to integrate them into a meaningful course of study and to integrate academic pursuits with addressing problems of human and environmental development.

The aims of the honors program of the Universidad Austral de Chile were an early reaction to a complex problem. No one could require a small program based in a regional university to solve social and educational problems of a structural nature. However, a decade later, the program has shown its ability to create an academic space where major challenges are addressed and, on a tiny scale, solved. In searching for a proper equation between quality and equity, the program's ingredients have been crucial. These ingredients include a transdisciplinary concept, an understanding of a humanly constituted environment, and an immediate connection to the larger social arena where it is placed.

A decade of honors in the UACh provides some hints about possible solutions to great issues. Inspired by honors programs in the U.S., the Chilean experience builds upon the notion of enhanced learning; faced with a non-challenging academic environment, the program was and still is intended to stimulate students from different fields of knowledge and to expand their curiosity by sharing a learning space beyond the narrow boundaries of their disciplines. This model is quite different from the common practice of having honors segments within classes and cohorts, an approach that would be risky in an academic context where social tensions are part of its foundations.

A tacit assumption of the program has been that disparate social backgrounds create a learning environment that is sensitive to the needs of the more socioeconomically disadvantaged students. Presented in a traditional format, the honors program could aggravate the unequal ground upon which students' academic careers are played out. Instead, the honors program provides a space where students who have had little or no previous interactions with each other can share bonding experiences as they search for solutions posed by the questions raised in honors classes.

A main avenue for the university to provide a learning environment with the features of an honors program was in those areas where its academic strength was greatest. Thus environmental studies arose as a clear option for confluence between the academic strength of the university and the motivations of large segments of the student body.

Three main features of the Chilean honors program became established during its first years: an extra-departmental academic unit integrating students and faculty from diverse provenances; a transdisciplinary project in environmental studies; and a process for selecting student participants that was not strictly based on academic performance. A general criterion for recruitment was selection of at least one student from each department; the student was interviewed by a selection committee, made up of faculty and former students, who put significant weight on motivation in their considerations. Issues of gender and social background were part of the focus in the recruitment process, but no formal criteria of this kind were established in the selection process.

The first three years of the program developed an academic process where the classroom and some outdoor experiences were the basis for learning. Based on honors programs at other universities, the classes focused on problems and questions—about water, for instance—and not on solutions. Presenting alternative views to explain a given reality was an essential part of the educational process, and the search for a feasible new solution to given problems was considered a requirement for each class.

Something was missing, however, in the context of Latin America, where environmental problems are deeply felt as part of an unequally built society. On the one hand, the underprivileged classes—peasants, fishermen, indigenous communities, countryside workers, and urban poor—experience a gross overexposure to environmental risks, and on the other hand is the destruction of nature. In this context, the learning process demanded a link to the community and its environment as part of the honors project. Community learning and integration of local knowledge thus became another ingredient of the Chilean honors program.

How far the program has arrived is a hard question to answer. The structure of Chilean universities, based on a strict neoliberal program, allows little, if any, space for extra-budgetary initiatives, and the notion of excellence that is publicly proclaimed in terms of retention and graduation rates has little to do with the contents of the educational process. Although there is institutional recognition of the importance of honors education, such recognition does not translate into a significant investment. After a decade of honors in the Universidad Austral de Chile, the program is still a volunteer effort of a group of faculty that aims for an alternative way of engaging the educational process with both scholarly and social dimensions. However, the program has, against the odds, prevailed in the university system, being recognized as the most innovative experience in the area. As a result, the honors program has been replicated over the years in the School of Medicine, with the specific purpose of developing research skills among medical doctors, and in the area of agronomy, veterinary science, and forestry in the context of an exchange program with Virginia Tech University.

An important indicator of the social, cultural, and educational appropriateness of the honors program for Latin American societies is the fact that, in Brazil, a couple of relevant experiences have been created based on the Chilean honors program. One of them took place at the Universidad Federal de Paraná, where the program was offered for high school students from rural areas aiming at their inclusion in a socially committed higher education system.

A major issue in the Chilean honors experience is how we should understand the success of such an academic initiative. Excellence in this context is not a technical term but a rather a socioenvironmental and scientific theme that can only be measured in terms of the program's impact on the local situation in which it aims to intervene. The importance of the Chilean honors program is not in the successful reproduction of a given model but rather in its recreation in contexts where it can contribute to an alternative educational project.

One significant change in the decade after the pilot experience in honors program took place in Chile is the increased awareness of services that are deeply needed by the higher education system in a country that is so divided by social inequalities. Excellence is a convenient concept for the promotion of institutions that aim to find a niche in the market but is far removed from the social reality that it needs to serve.

A new ingredient has arisen in the conversation that now takes place among faculty, students, and community leaders, providing a new twist that redefines the scope of the program. The transition, however, is uneasy. Scientists, for the most, prefer to work alone in the solitude of their

laboratories. We are used to measuring academic skills in terms of knowledge and careers but typically pay little attention to the context where such skills are deployed. Depletion of the once green mountains calls for a renewal in educational processes, and so does the persistent gap between the haves and the have-nots. While the Chilean honors program suggests some concrete ways of improving higher education in Chile while also addressing some of these issues, we may need to wait until the tide of current social unrest allows transformation of protests into proposals for generalizing this kind of learning.

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Establishing a Latin American University Honors Program: The Case of Campus Monterrey, Tecnológico de Monterrey, Mexico

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HISTORY IN BRIEF

The university honors program of Campus Monterrey, Tecnológico de Monterrey, evolved from the international degree program that was first offered in the spring semester of 2002. Originally six programs were offered in the School of Business and School of Engineering:

- BA Business Administration
- BA Financial Management
- BA Finance and Accounting
- BA Marketing
- BA International Business
- BS Industrial and Systems Engineering

Once introduced, the international degree program received such a good response from the student community that, in the following semesters, the number of programs available in an international version increased from six to eleven across new areas of engineering, computer science, and humanities and social sciences. Since then, the number of academic programs with an international component has been increasing steadily. Today, thirty-nine bachelor's programs are available in this modality.

When first established, the international degree program had the following requirements:

- high school GPA , TOEFL score, and admission test score;

- completion of 33% of the curriculum in a foreign language;
- completion of additional credit, equivalent to an extra course, in either a foreign language or intercultural topics; and
- a mandatory year abroad (two semesters).

As the program matured, the requirement that 33% of the curriculum be taken in a foreign language was modified. Rather than focusing on the language of the classes, we wanted to assure the best quality of our classes regardless of the language of instruction, so we started offering classes exclusively to students in the international degree program and staffing the classes with outstanding professors on campus. In the spring of 2008, we started calling these classes "honors." A requirement of the program then became completion of at least twenty classes (approximately a third of the curriculum) either in a foreign language or in the honors format. Another change was that, rather than optionally studying a language as part of their intercultural electives, students were required to dedicate at least three out of their intercultural electives to the study of a foreign language. The international degree program successfully graduated its first cohort in the fall of 2005. As of December 2010, five hundred students have graduated with twenty-eight different bachelor degrees in the international degree program format.

HOW WE BECAME AN HONORS PROGRAM

Students participating in the international degree program possessed and maintained a higher level of academic standards than the non-international-degree-program students. Therefore, we wanted our international degree program to be recognized as a fully developed university honors program. We believed that offering an honors program on our campus would provide additional growth opportunities for students who have outstanding academic records and who have the potential and motivation to reach higher academic and extracurricular goals. We contacted the National Collegiate Honors Council (NCHC) and became both institutional and professional members, participating in different activities organized by the NCHC: national conferences in Philadelphia (2007), Denver (2008); and Washington, D.C. (2009). We participated in the Assessment and Site Visitors workshop offered by NCHC in 2010. In August 2010, we invited Rosalie Otero from the University of New Mexico to visit our campus and review our program. During her visit, Otero met with students, professors, and the directors, and she visited the university facilities. After her visit, Otero made several recommendations for transforming our international degree program into a fully developed university honors program. These recommendations included:

- establishing an honors program office;

- appointing a full-time honors director, reporting to the office of the provost;

- developing strategic and annual plans;

- acquiring visible institutional support (staff, space, budget); and

- establishing faculty, student, and advisory boards for the honors program.

Once these recommendations were implemented according to our understanding and situation, we requested that Otero review our program again along with Robert Spurrier of Oklahoma State University. At this stage we did the following:

- We prepared a self-analysis in line with the seventeen characteristics of a fully developed university honors program and sent it to Otero and Spurrier.

- We provided supplementary documents including profiles of students and faculty as well as student projects.

- We did a three-hour video conference with Otero and Spurrier, in which honors professors, honors students, honors office staff, the provost, and the vice-provost participated.

- In May 2010, we visited Otero and Spurrier at their respective universities.

In June 2011, our program was recognized as a fully developed university honors program by Otero and Spurrier.

OUR HONORS PROGRAM MODEL

Our honors program is designed to identify and select talented students and to offer them an integrated educational program through our dynamic, dedicated, and well-prepared faculty. The important components of our model are described below:

ORGANIZATION OF THE PROGRAM

Our honors program belongs to the Campus Monterrey of Tecnológico de Monterrey, which is a private educational institution in Mexico that was founded in 1943. At the present time, the Tecnológico de Monterrey has campuses distributed throughout the country and has academic centers in Mexico and other Latin American countries; it also has international offices in North America, Europe, and Asia. We are a private, non-profit, independent educational institution with no political or religious affiliation. For more information about Tecnológico de Monterrey, please visit: <http://www.itesm.edu/>.

The honors program office reports to the office of the provost of Campus Monterrey, as shown in Figure 1, and the provost reports directly to the president of the campus.

Figure 1. Organizational Context of Honors Program
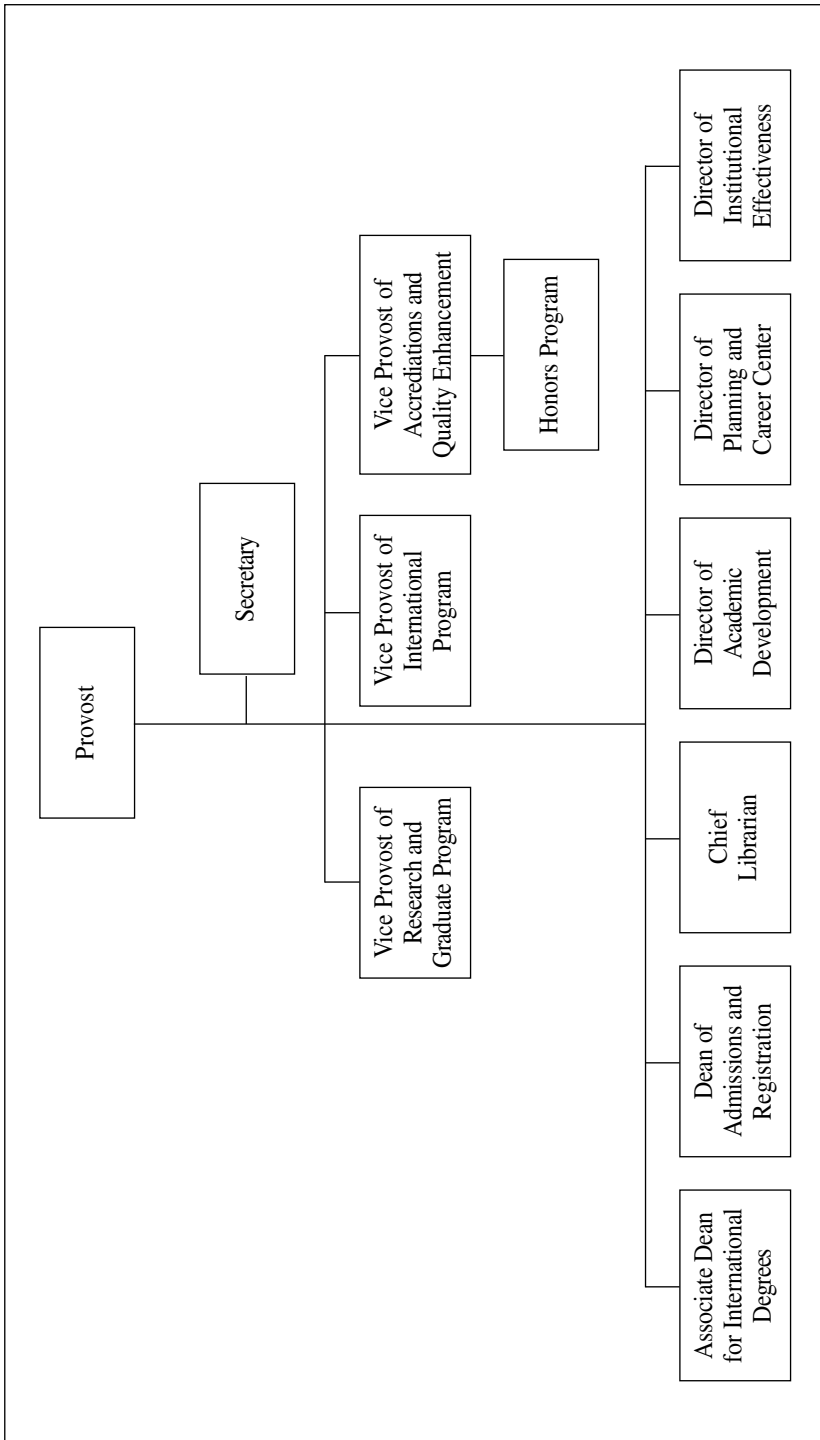
INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT

Our institutional support consists of direct and indirect support staff. The direct support staff includes:

- honors program management,
- honors program advisory board,
- honors faculty council, and
- honors student council.

The indirect support system includes:

- registration and admission office,
- library,
- student halls,
- international program office,
- scholarships,
- faculty development, and
- academic departments.

MISSION

The honors program of Tecnológico de Monterrey, Campus Monterrey, is designed based on the ideals of inspiring and nurturing the talent and potential of academically high-performing students through an optimal combination of challenging, interdisciplinary, and enriching academic and extracurricular learning and teaching activities.

VISION

The honors program will be recognized by all stakeholders—students, faculty, parents, partners, university management—nationally and internationally as a leading honors education model in providing second-to-none integral educational services offered by a group of highly qualified and motivated faculty to a group of highly motivated, intellectual, and diverse young learners. Our graduates will become leaders in their field of specialization and at the same time will have a broader understanding of issues concerning humanity, now and in the future, locally and globally.

CORE VALUES

Values we promote in our students are: caring about their personal and professional integrity; respecting the dignity and rights of others; fulfilling

their duties as local and global citizens; showing concern for others without discrimination; volunteering to participate in diverse social services; and dedicating time to effective and cooperative learning. Through our honors program we wish to promote a set of core values among our graduates that we call value-building blocks:

- Excellence

- Social responsibility

- Ethics and citizenship

- Respect for others

- Hard work

- Planning and organization

- Integrity

- Collaboration

LEARNING OUTCOMES (GRADUATE COMPETENCIES)

Based on several meetings with Samuel Schuman and Ted Estess, we identified several key learning outcomes that our honors model is already promoting. We wish our graduates to have the following qualities that are established in our traditional academic programs and that we further encourage:

- global knowledge;

- the ability to speak three languages;

- the ability to communicate and to work in multi-disciplinary and multi-cultural environments;

- personal and professional networks around the world;

- critical thinking and analytical skills; and

- the ability to solve problems and make decisions.

STRUCTURE OF OUR ACADEMIC PROGRAM

Most of our undergraduate degree programs can be completed in nine semesters. A student who enters the honors program has to comply with the following academic requirements in order to complete the program:
Semester 1, 2, 3: languages courses;

- Semester 4, 5: elective courses*;

- Semester 6, 7: mandatory year of study abroad;

- Semester 8, 9: elective courses*;

- Minimum 10 courses in honors format; and
- Minimum 10 courses in a language other than Spanish (if Spanish is her/his native language).

*Elective courses include 3 language courses and 4 courses on cultural and international issues.

Table 1 compares the criteria for graduation in the regular program with the honors program.

CHARACTERISTICS OF STUDENTS

The admission and graduation requirements for our students reflect the characteristics we seek in our students.

Table 1. Regular Program Versus Honors Program

Regular Program	Honors Program
1. Total semesters: 9	1. Total semesters: 9
2. Total courses to pass: 54	2. Total courses: 54+7*= 61
3. Career grade average: 70	3. Career grade average minimum: 85
4. TOEFL: 550	4. TOEFL: 600
5. Participation in concentrations and or modalities (not required for graduation)	5. Study abroad: Two Semesters (or equivalent)
6. Social services required by the university for graduation	6. Speak a Third Language
7. CENEVAL (National external exam)	7. Minimum 10 courses in English
	8. Minimum 10 courses in Honors format.
	9. Participation in concentrations and or modalities (not required for graduation)
	10. Social services required by the university for graduation
	11. CENEVAL (National external exam)

CENEVAL: Centro Nacional de Evaluacion para La Educacion Superior

Admission

In order to gain admission to the honors program, a student must comply with requirements beyond those for the university. The requirements for honors differ according to the backgrounds of the applicants:

Career average score:

- For students coming from the high schools of Tecnológico de Monterrey: 85/100
- For students coming from other high schools: 90/100

Admission score (SAT equivalent):

- For students coming from the high schools of Tecnológico de Monterrey: 1150
- For students coming from other high schools: 1300

TOEFL Score:

- 550 for all.

Other requirements include an interview with the honors director, a brief CV, and an essay showing particular interests in the honors program, commitment to completion of its requirements, and potential to contribute to the honors program.

Graduation

In order to graduate from the honors program and receive the Certificate of Honors, a student must fulfill the following conditions:

- pass 10 required honors courses with a grade of 85+;
- earn a career average of 85+ including the honors courses;
- have a TOEFL score of 600;
- participate in a year-long study abroad program;
- speak a third language other than Spanish and English;
- take a minimum of 10 courses in English language; and
- pass 7 electives.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE FACULTY

Our honors faculty members come from different academic disciplines (engineering, humanities, social sciences, business, and information technology) inside the campus, so they are already working as full- or part-time teachers. An honors faculty member is identified and selected, in direct collaboration with the chair of each academic department, based on the following criteria:

- He/she is a full- or part-time faculty member with a minimum five years of teaching experience at the undergraduate level or higher; two of the five years must be at Tecnológico de Monterrey. Preferences are given to associate and full professors. Alternatively, the honors director may, in collaboration with the honors faculty committee, evaluate a potential faculty member for eligibility based on other criteria.

- For teaching foundation courses, he/she possesses a master´s degree.

- For teaching specialized disciplinary courses and general education courses, he/she possesses a master´s or doctoral degree in the field or equivalent.

- He/she has received a percentile ranking above 60 in student evaluations during the last two semesters.

- He/she has received accreditation within the educational model of Tecnológico de Monterrey.

- He/she maintains an excellent reputation among directors, professors, and students.

- His/her image and behavior pattern reflect the values and ethical standards of the institution.

- He/she is proactive in carrying out responsibilities within the academy, institution, and community.

- He/she has received a minimum training of 40 hours in the field of modern quality teaching, critical thinking, and honors education.

- He/she is a leader in his or her field of specialization.

- He/she possesses at least one of the following characteristics: fluency in one or two foreign languages; academic or work experience abroad; activity in consulting, outreach or research; external relationships with, for instance, governmental agencies, NGOs, industry, and/or research centers; and openness to designing and testing new educational models, products, or research lines involving undergraduate students.

The honors director, in collaboration with the chairs of the academic departments, routinely (at least once per semester) reviews the performance of honors faculty members and gives them feedback.

Characteristics of Honors Courses

An honors course should possess the following characteristics to differentiate it from a regular course or section of a course:

- A course database must be in advanced Blackboard format.

- The course must be designated "HONR" in Blackboard, in Banner, and in student grade sheets.
- The course format must be designed under the guidance of an expert in the formulation and implementation of honors courses.
- Course reviews, redesigns, and updates—including bibliographies, teaching materials, and teaching activities—should take place each semester and at the end of the year.
- The teacher must have a pedagogical method, preferably project- or problem-based. Case-based learning is also acceptable.
- Student-faculty, one-on-one advising sessions are required during the semester.
- Learning and teaching activities must promote critical thinking in students.
- Learning and teaching activities must demonstrate diversity in some or many of the following ways:
  - structured case discussion in class,
  - written assignments based on literature review,
  - closed- and open-book exams,
  - oral presentations on assigned topics,
  - company-based research work,
  - case studies,
  - field visits,
  - laboratory work,
  - library visits,
  - field-related practical demonstrations,
  - guest speakers from industry and/or on emerging topics,
  - online team-teaching,
  - video conferences,
  - simulations,
  - role playing,
  - debate,
  - experimental learning, and
  - moral dilemma exercises.

Such activities should be an important component of the final grade in any honors section.

All courses offered in an honors format should be identified, evaluated, approved, and scheduled by the honors director in collaboration with department chairs. We encourage our honors faculty to teach in different formats, including team teaching across different disciplines. The class size is limited to 30, with an average of 15–20, whereas the normal university class size is at least 40. We value the opportunities that small classes afford students to frequently interact with each other and with the faculty, and we want faculty to provide personalized attention to students.

CURRICULUM

The honors curriculum is designed to provide students an integral learning and teaching environment supported by structured academic programs that encourage intellectual discovery, talent management, global awareness, and cultural understanding. Additionally, the curriculum promotes learning about—and quantitative application of—information and models. Honors courses, selected from the regular plan of study, are offered across a wide variety of disciplines:

• Engineering, Architecture, Art and Design;

• Computer Sciences & Information Technology;

• Medicine (under consideration);

• Biotechnology;

• Business;

• Social Sciences; and

• Humanities.

In total, an honor student takes a minimum of 10 honors courses in order to complete the program. These courses are part of our traditional academic programs and are identified in collaboration with the directors of academic departments, divisions, or schools. Currently, we are offering courses in the basic and general education area plus some electives or optional courses. However, in the near future we would like to have these minimum 10 courses, which are required for the Honors Program Certificate, distributed among 9 semesters as follows (see Appendix A for our curriculum):

• Foundation courses (common area): 5 courses (8 units per course): 40 units

• Disciplinary courses (specialization area): 2 courses (8 units per course): 16 units

• General education courses (generalization area): 2 courses (8 units per course): 16 units

- Independent study (practical or research course): 1 course (8 units per course): 8 units

The foundation courses provide basic but in-depth understanding of different disciplines. General education courses provide key competencies such as ethics, social responsibility, oral and written communication, and global awareness. Independent studies provide experiential learning, which may include internships, study abroad, off-campus programs, community service, independent research, and teaching assistantships. Overall, our honors program curriculum, like other models, is guided by the following outcomes for students:

- acquiring basic skills and knowledge,
- adapting to an interconnected world, and
- connecting knowledge with experience.

INTERNATIONAL OPTIONS

Our honors program's strength lies in the international experience our students have. Tecnológico de Monterrey offers more than three hundred international exchange programs with numerous universities in different countries of the world. The international options include:

- International exchange program: studying for a semester or year abroad, paying the academic fee to the Tecnológico de Monterrey.
- Study abroad: studying in a foreign university, paying the academic fee to the foreign university and receiving help in planning from our program director.
- Internships: working at a company in a foreign country during a semester and getting academic credit, based on how many hours the student works, or credit toward professional practice.
- Language semester: studying a foreign language abroad and getting credit for the language course or courses at Tecnológico de Monterrey.
- Specialization semester: studying in a foreign country and taking 5 to 8 courses (depending on the workload or work hours required for each course) in a specific area and getting credit for optional courses at Tecnológico de Monterrey.
- Certificate of specialization: receiving a certificate from a foreign university when the required program is complete (this option requires that a student take at least 33% of the career study plan in a language different from Spanish, obtain a score of 600 in TOEFL, meet the requirements of the foreign university, and meet the entry requirements of Tecnológico de Monterrey).

- Double degree program: earning a degree from Tecnológico de Monterrey and the foreign university upon completing the specified requirements of both institutions (a student must pass 12 to 16 courses or the equivalent in the foreign university).

- Professional plus master´s degree program: earning an undergraduate professional degree from Tecnológico de Monterrey and a master´s degree from the foreign university after completing the specified admission and graduation requirements of both institutions.

ACHIEVEMENTS

Number of Courses and Groups

The total number of courses or sections scheduled on campus during the winter semester of 2011 was 4509, of which 32 were in honors. Table 2 shows the number of honors courses and sections offered during the years 2008–2011. Typically, we receive fewer students in the winter semester than in the fall. The slight decrease (-2) in numbers from the winter of 2010 to the winter of 2011 probably resulted from academic departments offering fewer courses and wanting to maintain high enrollments. Overall, however, growth has been steady and positive

Courses Offered in English

Table 3 shows the number of courses offered in English. The rationales for teaching courses in English are: to offer local students an option to take a course or two in English in order to learn the language; to support honors program students, as they are required to take a certain number of courses in English; to provide courses in English for foreign students coming to Tecnológico de Monterrey; and to allow foreign faculty an option to teach classes at Tecnológico de Monterrey. The decline in the number of courses in English may have two causes: faculty members feel that it is more work to

Table 2. Number of Courses and Sections Offered During the Last Few Years

	2008 Jan–May	2008 Aug–Dec	2009 Jan–May	2009 Aug–Dec	2010 Jan–May	2010 Aug–Dec	2011 Jan–May
Number of courses	17	17	21	23	25	28	25
Number of sections	18	26	24	31	34	37	32

teach a course in English than in Spanish, and we ask faculty to have a TOEFL score of 600 plus to teach a course in English. When we started offering courses in English, there were no such requirements, but later we introduced some training and TOEFL requirements to assure the quality of courses taught in English. To encourage faculty to teach courses in English, we offer academic as well as financial incentives, such as helping preparing the course database.

Professors

Since the inception of the honors program, 28 professors (1.56% of the total campus faculty) professors have taught honors courses in different fields. The average number per semester is between 25 and 30 faculty members. Any honors faculty member can teach one or two honors courses per semester. Also, we offer some honors courses only once a year, not every semester. We have offered courses during the summer but would like to discourage this option in the future since honors courses require the time of a full semester.

Students per Academic Program per Semester

Table 4 compares the number of campus-wide students to those registered in the honors program per academic area in the winter semester of 2011.

Graduation Statistics

During the winter semester of 2011, Campus Monterrey graduated a total of 1147 students, of which 35 students graduated from the honors program. Table 5 shows further details. Graduating 35 students from the honors program during one semester is an encouraging number since the program is demanding and challenging in many ways for students, parents, and the university.

Table 3. Number of Courses and Groups Offered in English

	2008 Jan–May	2008 Aug–Dec	2009 Jan–May	2009 Aug–Dec	2010 Jan–May	2010 Aug–Dec	2011 Jan–May
Number of courses	123	124	125	123	115	105	109
Number of sections	155	158	157	161	149	135	88

Table 4. Summary Statistics per Academic Area

Academic Area	Total Students	Honors Students	%age
ENCSH (School of Business, Social Sciences and Humanities)	4935	292	5.92
EITI (School of Engineering and Information Technology)	5344	418	7.82
EBA (School of Biotechnology and Nutrition)	926	36	3.89
EMCS (School of Medicine and Health Sciences)	1451	0	0.00
EAAD (School of Architecture, Art and Design)	1816	47	2.59
AEP (Professional Programs for Especial Students)	6	0	0.00
IPU (International Programs for Professional)	136	0	0.00
Total	**14614**	**794**	**5.43**

Table 5. Summary Statistics of Graduates per Academic Area

Academic Area	Total Students	Honors Students	%age
ENCSH (School of Business, Social Sciences and Humanities)	392	14	3.57
EITI (School of Engineering and Information Technology)	445	20	4.49
EBA (School of Biotechnology and Nutrition)	82	1	1.22
EMCS (School of Medicine and Health Sciences)	115	0	0.00
EAAD (School of Architecture, Art and Design)	113	0	0.00
AEP (Professional Programs for Especial Students)	0	0	0.00
IPU (International Programs for Professional)	0	0	0.00
Total	**1147**	**35**	**3.05**

Profile of Our Graduates

Table 6 shows the profile of our graduates. Most of our students receive extra diplomas or awards in addition to the requirements of the honors program.

Nationality of Students

In January–May 2011, the total campus population was 14614, including 544 foreign students (3.722%). Of the 544 foreign students, 60 (11%) were honors students.

Students' Preferences for Foreign Languages

Table 7 shows students' preferences for foreign languages during the past several semesters. According to winter 2011 data, 40% of students showed a preference for German as a third language, followed by French at 39%. Historically, preference for the German and French languages has remained persistent. English (foreign) and Spanish (native) are commonly spoken languages among our students.

Students' Preferences for Foreign Countries

Generally, our records show that our students prefer the United States, France, Germany, and Italy for studying abroad. Of course, their preferences reflect the availability of a particular program in a particular country and area of studies. For example, students of art and design prefer Italy; Business,

Table 6. Profile of Our Graduates

Total of Graduated Students	35
Graduated with a Double Degree	10
Graduated with a Minor or Specialization	8
Outstanding Career Grade Average	5
Mention of Honorific Award	11
Mention of Excellency Award	6
Student Development Diploma	9
Students with TOEFL Score >= 600	34
Students with TOEFL Score >= 580	35
Graduated Students with a GPA >=85	35

Social Sciences, and Humanities prefer France, followed by the U.S.; and students of Engineering and Information Technology like Germany, followed by the U.S. (See Appendix B for further details.)

Snapshot of Student Population Mobility in a Single Semester

Table 8 shows the changes in our student population during the semester of January–May 2011. The program received 39 new honors students but also lost 65 students who did not register again for the honors program for a variety of reasons: weak academic performance; unwillingness to accept the challenges of the honors program; and financial constraints preventing their study abroad program. We graduated 35 students, and we sent out 162 students abroad on double degree programs (56) and student exchange programs (106).

PROGRAM EVALUATION AND FEEDBACK

We have designed several mechanisms to monitor the progress of the honors program on a semester and annual basis. We monitor the following areas:

Table 7. Preferences for Foreign Languages

	2008 Jan–May	2008 Aug–Dec	2009 Jan–May	2009 Aug–Dec	2010 Jan–May	2010 Aug–Dec	2011 Jan–May
German	34%	34%	36%	30%	34%	34%	40%
Chinese	12%	9%	9%	6%	7%	5%	1%
French	30%	25%	32%	33%	37%	31%	39%
Italian	12%	10%	12%	13%	11%	13%	4%
English	7%	17%	8%	15%	6%	13%	13%
Japanese	5%	5%	4%	4%	4%	4%	3%

Table 8. Student Population Mobility

First-semester students (new entrance to the program)	39
Withdrawals (dropouts)	65
Total re-registration (existing population) for following semester	755
Graduated students	35
Study abroad	162

National Collegiate Honors Council Indicators

Our program has been recognized by the recommended site visitors of the National Collegiate Honors Council (U.S.), as a successful, fully developed honors program. The NCHC uses seventeen criteria to determine if a program is fully developed, and we do self-analysis using these criteria.

Academic Performance Evaluation

We administer a critical thinking questionnaire—California Critical Thinking Skills Test (CCTST)—to our students. The five variables used in testing are: inductive reasoning; deductive reasoning; analysis and interpretation; inference; and evaluation and explanation. We have also administered an Educational Testing Service (ETS) test to 33% of our freshman, junior, and senior honors students with excellent results.

Program Impact Evaluation

In order to evaluate the learning outcomes of the program, we use an online system called System for the Evaluation Management of Academic Programs or SAEP (Sistema para la Administration de la Evaluacion de Programa Academicos). Involving faculty and department chairs, experts in SAEP do the following:

- review the profiles of the graduates (graduate competencies);
- design a plan of evaluation (identify courses that help developing those competencies; define a specific learning activity within these courses, and design rubrics to evaluate the learning outcomes with the involvement of training staff);
- evaluate the results through faculty reports at the end of every semester; and
- improve actions if necessary.

Faculty

In order to select, develop, and evaluate an honors professor, we use the following indicators:

- academic preparation;
- faculty status (our preference is full-time rather than adjunct faculty);
- classification (from instructor to full-professor);
- number of teaching years both at and ouside of Tecnológico de Monterrey;
- student evaluations;

- training records;
- TOEFL scores;
- training in honors education;
- certification in any teaching method;
- participation in research and consulting;
- awards received; and
- other activities such as social service.

Course Indicators

Individual course indicators are measured against the minimum requirements established by the honors office. An honors course must incorproate these elements:

- technological platform (database in the advanced version of Blackboard),
- honors teaching method,
- use of I-clicker,
- research project,
- critical thinking element,
- software or laboratory, and
- field visit.

Student Indicators

The student indicators, as shown in Table 9, are measured against the minimum requirements established by the honors program office.

PARTICIPATION IN NCHC AND REGIONAL HONORS COUNCIL ACTIVITIES

1. NCHC Conference in Phoenix, Arizona, 2011.

2. New Directors Institute held in Lincoln, Nebraska, July 7–10, 2011.

Currently we have both institutional and professional memberships and we are receiving copies of the NCHC Monograph Series, *Honors in Practice*, and the *Journal of the National Collegiate Honors Council*.

INTER-HONORS COLLABORATIONS

Mohammad Ayub Khan and Ruben Morales-Menendez visited the University of New Mexico and Oklahoma State University in the U.S. in order to learn about their honors programs. During the visit, they visited honors

facilities and met with honors administrators, honors faculty, and honors students. Future collaborative projects they discussed during the visit included:

- honors faculty exchanges,
- honors student exchanges,
- joint summer schools and seminars,
- team teaching, and
- video conferences.

CHALLENGES AND BENEFITS OF OFFERING AN HONORS PROGRAM.

CHALLENGES

Matching Teaching and Learning Strategies

Teaching and learning have different orientations (Ulrich). In teaching, the focus is on input and the teacher whereas in learning the focus is on outcomes and the students (Boyatzis). Bringing these two elements together is a challenge. The first decision facing honors directors is identifying the best

Table 9. Student Indicators

Entry Checklist	Maintenance Checklist	Graduation Checklist	Post-Graduation Checklist
1. Country, State	1. Grade average	1. Career average	1. Year of graduation
2. Admission score	2. Semester	2. TOEFL	2. Job situation and position or post
3. Grade average (high school)	3. Participation in different activities, concentrations, modalities,	3. Third language	3. Company, country
4. Languages		4. A year abroad (equivalent of two semesters)	4. Salary average
5. Scholarship or awards	4. Honors courses	5. Honors courses	5. Any other information (alumni association, social activities, higher studies, etc.)
6. TOEFL	5. English courses	6. Course in English	
7. Gender	6. Third language	7. Completion of required 7 elective courses	
8. Career (major)	7. Study abroad		
9. Conduct	8. Progress on required 7 elective courses	8. Any other distinction	

combination of teaching strategies and learning styles to support honors education.

Financial Support

Offering an honors program requires budget allocation and resource redistribution. Small classroom size means lower class efficiency when university classes typically enroll 40+ students. Facilities such as offices, laboratories, and library space require additional investment from the university (Collins et al.). Universities must allocate enough financial resources to support the honors program, which is a serious challenge in times of funding shortages.

Identifying and Developing Activities for Students

Implementing extracurricular activities for honors students requires time and effort. Such activities include conferences, seminars, internships, research projects, socio-cultural events, and international programs (Collins et al.), all of which require management time, logistical support, and financial help.

Adapting to the Larger University Environment

Another challenging job is maintaining the innovative features of an honors program within the traditional format of a larger university. Honors students are influenced by both the honors program environment and the larger institutional environment (Campbell & Fuqua).

Elitism

Another challenge facing honors programs is the accusation of elitism (Spurrier). Some groups—including faculty, students, and even management—complain about the use of university resources to serve a small group of gifted and privileged students and faculty while ignoring the vast majority of students and faculy, depriving them of equal privileges.

Retention

Another challenge is retention (Mckay). Recruiting students is a challenge in the first place, and keeping them in the program until they graduate is an even greater hurdle. Students may leave the program for a variety of reasons, the most important being that an honors education demands extra efforts from students to maintain a high level of academic standards, that participation in extracurricular activities is time-consuming, and that participating in international exchange programs is expensive, inconvenient, and intimidating.

Promotion

Promoting an honors program among local, national, and international communities is a challenging task. Convincing parents and employers of the benefits of honors requires management time, resources, and careful strategies.

THE BENEFITS

Innovative Curricula

An honors program may help faculty develop new curricula as well as learning and teaching activities, so it can serve as an incubator for innovations that benefit the larger university population (Schmidt).

Creation and Promotion of a Faculty Research Culture

Honors projects can include traditional research, creative work, or a combination of both. By incorporating research into their undergraduate teaching, faculty members receive intellectual stimulation from the fresh ideas of undergraduates and can use honors projects to launch further research of their own. Faculty at universities with established honors programs can involve undergraduate students in research without having to seek approval from their academic departments (Black et al.).

Creation and Promotion of a Student Research Culture

Honors work raises undergraduate expectations and strengthens the curriculum, especially in the area of academic research. Honors programs introduce undergraduates to the research process, a skill that is needed before advancing to graduate studies (Black et. al.).

Improvement of the Academic Environment

An honors program can lead to improvement of the academic environment for talented students and motivated faculty in several ways: (1) collaborative learning, (2) student-faculty contact, (3) level of academic challenge, (4) enriching educational experiences, and, (5) supportive campus environment (Brint, Cantwell & Hannerman). Academic and extracurricular activities organized by honors students on campus, for example, set an example of hard work, discipline, and leadership for the general university population.

Enhancement of Institutional Reputation and Prestige

Honors programs enhance a university's reputation by setting high admission and graduation standards (Otero). An honors program attracts

outstanding students and committed faculty, thus increasing a university's visibility and its opportunities to attract external funding (Pinto).

Enhancement of Employment Opportunities

Students who graduate from honors programs often get better and higher-paying jobs than regular students do.

CONCLUSION

Any education model is influenced by forces both internal and external to the institution. External forces (macro variables) are relatively uncontrollable for any institution, whether education or business, and include economic conditions, political situations, socio-cultural variables, demographic changes, technological developments, and legal issues. Internal factors include institutional history, student diversity, faculty diversity, physical facilities, leadership style, organizational culture, operational issues, and geographical location. In designing our honors program, we have taken both external and internal factors into considerations. Internally, we have strong leadership; the environment is conducive to learning; the facilities are modern; Internet connections are available; and the students are diverse. Though some political, financial, and security problems face the nation, Mexico is one of the growing economies in Latin America and in the world. Moreover, our university is located in the heart of the industrialized city of Monterrey, which is internationally known.

We have found wisdom in the assertion that honors programs offer unique opportunities and special strengths as well as particular problems and challenges (Schuman), and we also know that one of the strengths of honors program is that they are diverse in terms of models (Long). Since there is no one standard model, universities have options to design their own honors programs in accord with their unique needs. Like most honors administrators, we have found that honors courses stimulate creativity, critical thinking, and analytical skills (Guzy), and we have also learned that challenges range from student selection, curriculum design, faculty development, resource availability, and facility allocation to general program administration. With help from the NCHC <http://www.nchchonors.org/>, we have found that the benefits far outweigh the challenges.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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APPENDIX A

CURRICULUM

Basic Education (Foundation Courses)

Engineering
- MA1016 Mathematics-I
- MA1018 Mathematics-II
- MA2010 Differential Equations
- F1002 Physics-I
- F1003 Physics-II
- MA1006 Probability and Statistics
- Q1001 Chemical
- IQ1001 Mass Material
- IQ2000 Mass Energy
- F1005 Electricity and Magnetism
- Q1004 Laboratory of Chemical
- M2025 Quantitative Methods in Engineering
- AR3017 Integrative Project-I
- AR3020 Integrative Project-II
- AD1005 Management and Innovation in Business Models
- CF1010 Accounting and Cost Management
- MT1003 Marketing and Creativity
- FZ1006 Personal and Company Finances
- EC1010 Economy for Business Creation

Humanities and Social Sciences
- MA1016 Mathematics I
- MA1018 Mathematics II
- F1002 Physics 1
- DL1009 Creativity and Innovation
- AD1005 Management and Innovation in Business Model
- AV2009 Management and Evaluation of Media Projects
- CF1010 Accounting and Cost Management
- MT1003 Marketing and Creativity
- EC1008 Business Economics
- EC1009 Macroeconomic Environment
- NI2016 Legal Fundamentals of International Business
- RI1004 International Perspective
- CO2003 Quantitative Methods for Social Research
- NI3036 International Business Agreements

Business
- MA1016 Mathematics I
- MA1018 Mathematics II
- AD1005 Management and Innovation of Business Models
- NI1001 Enterprise, Culture and Business in the World
- MT1003 Marketing and Creativity
- EC1008 Business Economics
- EC1009 Macroeconomics Environment
- D1021 Legal Aspects of Business
- CF1011 Management Accounting
- D1022 Company Law and Intellectual Property
- FZ1006 Personal and Company Finances
- DL1009 Creativity and Innovation
- NI3036 International Business Agreements

General Education

- AR1007 History of Architecture and City
- H1016 Foreign Language
- H1040 Analysis and Verbal Expression
- HS2000 Humanity and Beautiful Arts
- H1018 Ethics, Person and Society
- H2001 Verbal Expression and Professional Environment
- EM1005 Entrepreneurship
- HS2005 Citizenship
- HS2006 Applied Ethics
- H2003 Contemporary Art and Society
- P3011 Civil Society and Citizen Participation

APPENDIX B

STUDENT PREFERENCES FOR FOREIGN COUNTRIES

School of Architecture, Art and Industrial Design **16**
    Australia 2
    Spain 2
    USA 3
    Italy 8
    Sweden 1

School of Biotechnology and Health **7**
    Denmark 1
    New Zealand 1
    Sweden 3
    Switzerland 2

School of Engineering and Information Technology **72**
    Germany 26
    Australia 5
    Canada 2
    China 1
    South Korea 1
    USA 16
    France 12
    UK 3
    Italy 5
    Sweden 1

School of Business, Social Sciences and Humanities **67**
    Germany 9
    Australia 7
    Brazil 2
    Canada 5
    China 5
    Spain 1
    USA 12
    France 20
    England 1
    Northern Ireland 1
    Italy 1
    Singapore 1
    Switzerland 2

Grand Total **162**

Self as Text:
Adaptations of Honors Practice in Switzerland

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[Editor's note: What follows is a slightly revised reprint of an essay published in Honors in Practice *7 (2011): 175–80.]*

City as Text™, the experiential learning program developed by the NCHC Honors Semesters Committee, has been adopted and adapted by hundreds if not thousands of educational institutions throughout the United States and beyond. Having served on the Honors Semesters Committee, I exported this learning strategy to Switzerland while teaching in an International Baccalaureate Program in Geneva. I adapted City as Text™ for multi-disciplinary college preparatory students in Europe, and that adaptation might now serve in turn as a model for experiential learning in honors programs and colleges in the United States and internationally. The focus and link between the City as Text™ experiences on two different continents and at two different levels of education will be what I call "Self as Text."

The experiential learning experience that is the extension of and variation on NCHC's City as Text™ involved an educational trip from Geneva to Zurich taken by eighty-five International Baccalaureate Theory of Knowledge students accompanied by eight multi-disciplinary teachers. The Theory of Knowledge course serves to encourage eleventh- and twelfth-grade students, through an interdisciplinary inquiry into "what it means to know," to gain both a summative and forward-looking perspective on their education and on themselves as knowers. The course is most effectively taught by means of active learning, exploring essential questions that challenge students to discover and analyze the major ways in which we know and to make interconnections between these modes of knowing and the subject areas they have been studying.

The trip served the purpose of initiating the eleventh-graders into the course. The students had been told that they would be going to two exhibits. The first was Gunther von Hagens' *Body Worlds*, an exhibit of artfully displayed plasticized human cadavers, skinned to reveal (as the exhibit brochure

announced) their "interior faces" of skeleton, muscles, nerves, and organs. The second was *Buddha's Paradise* at the Rietberg Museum in Zurich, displaying two-thousand-year-old Buddhist art. The students also knew that most of us would be eating dinner at a restaurant in Zürich where you eat in the dark. Finally, the students knew that they would be required to produce a criteria-based, graded, reflective essay on the trip activities.

The students, generally between sixteen and seventeen years old, were a multi-lingual and multi-cultural group, and for the most part they were used to that context. All spoke English but in many cases not as their mother tongue and generally in addition to several other languages. As IB students, they were an academically select group. The challenge for us teachers in planning the trip curriculum was to determine what kinds of tasks would engage students already well-versed in diversity and difference. What kinds of activities would challenge them to step even further outside of themselves and gain a yet wider perspective on self/other/world? Martha Nussbaum has expressed this challenge eloquently in her concept of "narrative imagination" or "the invitation to become, to a certain extent, philosophical exiles from our own ways of life, seeing them from the vantage point of the outsiders and asking the questions an outsider is likely to ask about their meaning and function" (Gillison 34). I see this questioning of self, what I call "Self as Text," as also the end goal of the mapping done in NCHC's City as Text™.

In planning the trip curriculum, we were fortunate to have a large choice of exhibits in Zurich to select from, including both *Body Worlds* and *Buddha's Paradise*, but as a creative and motivated team of teachers we would also like to take some credit for having chosen to juxtapose these two exhibits. As is the case in many team initiatives to develop a curriculum, a blending of ideas and possibilities took place among us, a creative and seemingly magical process that was not random but intensely purposeful work. As soon as we learned of these two exhibits, we saw the potential the combination held. How many of our students, we asked ourselves, had already been to any of the controversial *Body Worlds* exhibits? None, as it turned out. How many were familiar with Buddhism in the context of Gandhara, Pakistan, and Bamiyan, Afghanistan, two thousand years ago? Several knew that giant Buddha statues had been destroyed by the Taliban, a fact that was also a central component of the exhibition; however, learning about the earlier historical context of these sculptures and engaging with issues of who decides whether to destroy or preserve the past, and according to what criteria, was something new. Newer still was comparing and contrasting this exhibit with that of *Body Worlds* and issues it raised about the preservation and/or destruction of the human body and, some would say, the soul.

Once we had realized the potential of the exhibits, the rest of the planning soon followed. Since the two exhibits conveyed information first of all through the sense of sight, we imagined a third activity that could not be experienced visually. We decided to take them to a restaurant in Zurich called "Blindekuh," or "Blind Man's Bluff." The restaurant is completely dark. You enter, are led to your table, and are served a three-course meal in total darkness. We chose not to reveal to the students in advance that the waiters and waitresses were all blind. We were sure that the "Blindekuh" would require some intense and unfamiliar mapping on the part of the students.

In subsequent reflections on our experience of both the trip and its planning, I have repeatedly come back to the process of mapping. In the NCHC monograph *Place as Text: Approaches to Active Learning*, Bernice Braid addresses the crucial role of mapping, by now a core concept of honors teaching and learning. Students and teachers engaged in a City as Text™ assignment, she says, are asked to observe a place and its people in their given context—what Braid calls "focused observation" (16). She says that the questions are: "Whom do I watch? Why? What do I expect? Why? Am I ever surprised? By what?" (15). Braid stresses the importance of knowing how I, the observer, respond. In the end, mapping becomes a metaphor for a personal voyage of discovery, of learning how to stand on foreign ground and find a new touchstone, a place on which to stand, a new perspective from which to see. True learning brings forth a paradigm shift in our own journeys of discovery—a new way of seeing that is a new way of thinking and of being within ourselves, with others, and in the world. This magic worked itself out through our mapping and planning of the trip to Zurich as well as the transformations the trip brought forth in our students, who, like their college counterparts, learned how to ask new questions, re-learned how to be surprised by the unexpected, and responded with their own magic mirror of "Self as Text."

But let's go back to those students on the train. As background information for their voyage of discovery, we had provided students with a handout to orient them to the two exhibits and the restaurant. The handout began with the introduction to the *Buddha's Paradise* exhibit from the webpage, followed by a list of orienting yet largely open-ended questions and a page of key ideas or "unifying themes" about Buddhism. We also provided a set of questions to use for reflection on the Buddha exhibit, focusing on the ethics of destruction or preservation of the past.

After having seen *Buddha's Paradise* and looked into her magic mirror of "Self as Text," my student Ethar Abd_Al-Shakour wrote: "The past should be left for the future generations to look back to and reflect. . . . As for me, I wouldn't want to destroy any part of me for the future me because everything I have and am is what makes me *me* and what makes me unique and different

from everyone else." Ethar's words demonstrate the active, engaged learning that went on for this sixteen-year-old student. She reflected on the impact of the contemporary destruction of an over two-thousand-year-old tradition and made a personal connection between the ethics of the preserving or destroying the past and the value of sustaining her own identity; this is important learning at any age.

Another student, Rebecca, always a strong defender of her faith, reflected: "I learned a lot about the religion itself, as well, and what I learned from it is not to agree or disagree, but to understand and accept different beliefs." This was no trivial statement for Rebecca, who was empowered through her active learning experience to lead others not only from the perspective of her traditional faith but also from a perspective of tolerance that is vital to twenty-first-century global citizenship.

Second on our background handout was a copy of the *Body Worlds* exhibit's mission statement, followed by a page I had put together called "An Assembly of Random Thoughts," which could or could not apply to this exhibit. These thoughts included: "Is it art? Is it science? Is it awesome? Is it disturbing? 'The Devil made me do it,' said Faust. Cultural perspectives on THE DEAD—are you grateful?" The juxtaposition of these ideas was meant to be jarring and to trigger creative reflection on the part of the students.

Diana Baranga responded: "The extent to which science has driven human knowledge is admirable. . . . However, the exhibition was also disturbing. . . . It is true that we use technology for the progression of human kind, but how far should we be allowed to go?" Her question echoes many like it that have been asked about this controversial exhibit and asked throughout history, often after a horrendous event like the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The key to knowledge is learning how to ask the right questions, and Diana ranks as an outstanding student in the questions she raises. I often feel humbled by her philosophical, ethical, and deeply felt contributions to class discussions. She did not ask her essential question about human knowledge lightly.

The third component of the background handout related to the restaurant, and it was a page of questions leading to reflections on sight and light followed by a nineteenth-century poem by John Godfrey Saxe entitled "The Blind Men and the Elephant." While the ancient story that this poem is based on is well-known, not all of the students had heard this tale that underscores a basic honors education call to consider claims as well as counter-claims, to understand that our knowledge and indeed our 'truths' are interpretive in nature, and to realize that any interpretation is one among many and capable of being changed.

In his reflection on the restaurant experience, Jeremy Dejardin noted: "In fact, the only people capable of serving the food in pitch black are blind people. . . . I started having images projected into my mind's eye of who and what was there. I think my hearing was the sense that deceived me the most because I was focusing too much on it so that I heard things which weren't real." Through his experiential learning at the "Blindekuh," Jeremy looked at the reflection in the mirror of self/other/world and no longer found in it the same conventional images. Instead, like many artistic and literary counterparts, he had somehow gone through the magic mirror and come out the other side, where "who and what was there" were "images projected into . . . [his] mind's eye" and he heard things that "weren't real." In this dark yet quite vivid and marvelous world, only the blind could "see." For Jeremy, Self as Text took on mythical proportions in the "Blindekuh."

I think all who went to the "Blindekuh" during our discovery tour to Zurich would agree that, along with the exhibits, it offered stunning new perspectives. Most of us who went on the trip came back with the sense of having learned an incredible amount about ourselves, others, and the world. Long past the debriefings in our large group and in our various small classes, the Zurich experiences lived on as a reference point in many different contexts. The bonds that had been formed remained strong as well and continued to work their magic for students and teachers.

As teachers we felt that we had succeeded in what we had set out to do. The students had come through their experiential learning orientation to the course and its emphasis on critical, reflective, and transformative thinking with flying colors. In the spirit of a City as Text™ "voyage of discovery" (Braid 14) and of Nussbaum's "narrative imagination" (Gillison 34), the students had brought about their own paradigm shifts and found new touchstones of reality, new eyes with which to see themselves and the world. We could indeed call this process "Self as Text," which is a life-long process that both college honors education and pre-college adaptations of it aim to promote. At all stages of our lives, responsible knowers can never stop seeking new perspectives, new eyes from which to see. Through our adaptation of an NCHC practice, our college preparatory students had successfully gone on a communal and individual voyage of discovery. In their reflective essays they later articulated, recollected, and preserved this particular voyage in their narrative imagination. Through their adventure in experiential learning they had ventured outside of themselves, scrutinized evidence, and considered multiple points of view. In dialogue with community and through personal reflection, they had questioned their basic values and integrated new ways of thinking and being into their lives.

As their teachers, we felt rewarded for our efforts. We had stimulated and supported our students' intellectual, social, moral, and emotional growth, helping prepare them well for the future journey of higher education, college honors, and continued life-long learning. All it had taken was work and dedication on the part of a group of teachers who, like our students, were willing to embark on a journey of "Self as Text" and make the most of it. In the spirit of honors teaching and learning at any level, everyone had come home the richer for having left. Together we had forged strong communal bonds, charted exciting new intellectual territory, and set new personal goals. We had deepened our understanding of ourselves, of each other, and of the global culture that calls on us to be capable and effective leaders.

City as Text™ is innately a tripartite process that encompasses Self as Text, City as Text™, and World as Text. In honors practices and their many adaptations, we are empowering future leaders of a new, demanding, socially just, and globally sustainable tomorrow. Part of the magic of "Self as Text" is that the mirror is large and multi-faceted; it invites us to embark on a life-long journey where all of us can find and re-find, invent and re-invent, ways of learning and seeing and knowing in ever-expanding contexts.

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An American Honors Program in the Arab Gulf

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INTRODUCTION

The first Western honors program to be established in the Arab Gulf is offered in Doha, Qatar, on a small satellite campus of an American university. Doha is the capital city of Qatar, a sovereign Arab state physically located on a small peninsula bordering Saudi Arabia in the south and jutting into the Persian Gulf. With a population of only 1.7 million, roughly 11 % of whom are Qatar nationals (according to the 2010 Qatar Census), Qatar "ranks as the world's richest country per capita," due primarily to wise investment and control of "the third largest reserves of natural gas in the world" (Greenfield). Qatar's ruling monarchy, the Al-Thani family, has strongly supported education and research in the nation by inviting top-ranked institutions from around the world to set up campuses in Qatar. One testament to the success of this initiative is that 70% of Qatar's population had attained a secondary degree by 2010 (Statistics Authority and the Diplomatic Institute). Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) School of the Arts was the first external institution invited to Qatar due to its ranking as the #1 American public school of art and design. Virginia Commonwealth University Qatar (VCUQatar) became the first Western university to offer an undergraduate honors program in this part of the world.

The challenge and opportunity of creating an honors program in Qatar has been adapting the concept of academic excellence to this country's unique national vision as well as to the family- and tribe-oriented culture of its citizens. While still in its infancy, the honors program is rapidly evolving, as demonstrated, for instance, in the 2012 graduation of the first male from this originally all-female program. Like Qatar itself, the VCUQatar Honors Program reflects a commitment to cultural history and tradition while at the same time promoting rapid progress in knowledge and technology.

BACKGROUND

VCUQatar is situated within Education City, a fourteen million square-meter campus in Doha, the capital city of Qatar. As of August 2012,

Education City also houses Carnegie Mellon University in Qatar, Georgetown University School of Foreign Service Qatar, HEC Paris in Qatar, Northwestern University in Qatar, Texas A&M University at Qatar, University College London Qatar, and Weill Cornell Medical College in Qatar. Harvard Law School's Institute for Global Law and Policy will join in January 2013 (Qatar Foundation, "Qatar Foundation announces collaboration . . ."). Students within Education City are able to pursue their own individual curricula but also benefit from cross-registration at the other universities (VCUQatar).

In 1995, His Highness the Amir Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani established Qatar Foundation (QF) as a non-profit organization to help the people of Qatar progress into the twenty-first century through education and research. His wife, Her Highness Sheikha Moza bint Nasser, is chairperson of the organization. In 1997, Her Highness asked QF to invite VCU School of the Arts to set up a campus in Doha. The design field offers a viable business option for young women in Qatar, and it was believed that formal education in design would provide these young women with opportunities beyond mere employment. The goal was to provide young women in Qatar with the ability to "assume leadership roles in business industry, and contribute in the development of the world around them" ("Jamila Visit" 153). Richard Toscan, dean of the School of the Arts, travelled to Doha to meet with officials from the Qatar Foundation, and VCU was subsequently awarded the contract to establish a small school under the name Shaqab College of Design Arts (SCODA), which was the first Western institution to establish a presence in Qatar. SCODA opened classes in September 1998, offering Bachelor of Fine Arts degrees in fashion design, graphic design, and interior design.

In 2001, the Shaqab College of Design Arts became the VCU Qatar College of Design Arts, and then in 2002 it became an official branch campus of VCU.

The first VCU degrees were awarded to students who completed their course work in Qatar in June 2002 ("Year-long VCUQ festivities"). The Doha campus featured male and female staff, but the student population was female only until September 2007, when the first male students were accepted at the campus. VCUQatar serves Qatari students but also students from around the world, including Australia, Britain, Canada, Egypt, India, Jordan, Namibia, New Zealand, Oman, Pakistan, Philippines, Sudan, Syria, Turkey, and the United States. As of May 2012, VCUQatar has produced 363 graduates.

In 2004, Christina Lindholm, then dean of VCUQatar, entered into discussion with Timothy Hulsey, dean of the VCU Honors College, regarding the possibility of establishing an honors program on the Doha campus. The VCUQatar Honors Program was launched September 2005. The impetus for

creating the program lay in VCU's promise that students in Doha would have the same educational opportunities as students on the American campuses and this included an honors education. Lindhom explained,

> . . . [The honors program] was meant as an encouragement for excellence and as a recognition of the students who were doing fantastic work. Several of the students were performing at standards equal to or better than the ones on main campus. They were a very motivated and dedicated group and deserved to have the honors designation on their diplomas.

The objective of this honors program has therefore been to provide an intellectually stimulating and fulfilling environment for those students with superior academic skills and drive. The objective is consistent with Sam Schuman's argument that, "First, and most obviously, honors programs cultivate outstanding students by enriching the instructional and co-curricular careers of students of exceptional promise and/or motivation" (13).

Lindhom and Hulsey collaboratively determined the nature and process of the VCUQatar Honors Program. They chose to incorporate honors components into existing courses rather than offer separate courses for honors students because the student population was too small to make honors-only sections viable. Once Hulsey approved the adjusted syllabi for the program, he traveled to Doha for the official launch of the honors program. The VCU Honors College continues to approve each section offering an honors component before these courses can be offered. The same goes for Independent Study contracts carrying honors credit. The first honors graduating class was in 2009, and as of May 2012, twenty students have graduated with academic honors. The first male honors student was in the 2012 cohort.

Since its inception, approximately one in seven VCUQatar students have participated in the honors program. A format for strong academic learning, the VCUQatar Honors Program is an active contributor to Qatar's national plan for the future.

QATAR NATIONAL VISION 2030

"In November 2008 His Highness Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al-Thani, Heir Apparent, launched *Qatar National Vision 2030 (QNV 2030)*" (General Secretariat for Development Planning [2012] iii). The focus of this vision is to protect Qatar's traditional Islamic values while developing long-term goals for the country as it moves into the future. The goal is to transform Qatar's economy from carbon-based to knowledge-based and, in so doing provide substantive contributions to the nation of Qatar, the Arab Gulf region, and the world (General Secretariat for Development Planning [2012]). "The National

Vision aims at transforming Qatar into an advanced country by 2030, capable of sustaining its own development and providing for a high standard of living for all of its people and generations to come" (General Secretariat for Development Planning [2008] 2).

Qatar's national vision rests on four pillars: human development, social development, economic development and environmental development (General Secretariat for Development Planning [2008]). Within the overarching parameters of this vision, the Qatar Foundation (QF) is responsible for growth in science and research, community development, and education (Qatar Foundation, "Qatar's journey . . . "). QF's vision for education is to focus on "bringing world-class education, work experience and career opportunities to Qatar's young people" ("Qatar Foundation's Three Pillars"). VCUQatar and its honors program are active contributors to this vision.

STUDENT PARTICIPANTS

In the first few years of the program, students were identified as possible honors participants by way of faculty recommendations and review of their grade point averages. Dean Lindholm recalled strong interest in the program from the beginning:

> We then met with [potential students] to ask if they were interested, stressing that it would be additional work. Many were, but not all. I think there were about 18 in the first group. In the early years of VCU, we had a lot of high achieving students, hungry for the opportunity to 'do something'. The oil wealth had hit Qatar in the 1970s and 80s and I think that they were excited by the intellectual challenge and the chance to prove themselves. Certificates and Honors are a very big deal in Qatar.

VCUQatar honors students continue to appreciate the medal they receive upon graduating with honors, the special recognition they receive at convocation, and the social cachet of graduating with honors.

The local culture is based upon strong family and tribal ties. Students are highly motivated to do well in order to honor the family and tribal name, and they abhor the thought of bringing shame in any way. These admirable characteristics provide strong motivation to do well enough to enter the honors program and succeed once admitted into the program. Loyalty to tribe and family led to a different outcome in one instance, however, when a qualifying student declined to join the honors program because a family member was not eligible. She did not want her relative to feel left out. Setting herself apart as an individual within this collectivist culture was not something this young woman was willing to do.

Initially, faculty took on the additional work of teaching honors curricula on a volunteer basis. Today, any faculty member might be assigned one or more sections with honors components as part of their standard teaching load. Students from all design majors, as well as the painting, printmaking, and art history programs, are able to enter the honors program if they meet the criteria. To be eligible, students must:

- have a minimum 3.5 Grade Point Average (GPA);

- submit a letter of endorsement from a VCUQatar faculty member; and

- complete the application and essay (available on the VCU Honors College website: <http://www.honors.vcu.edu>) and provide one printed copy to the coordinator of the VCUQatar Honors Program, Dr. Byrad Yyelland.

Students may apply for entry into the VCUQatar Honors Program during the second semester of their freshman year or the first semester of their sophomore year and must apply to both the VCUQatar Honors Program and the VCU Honors College.

THE PROGRAM

The honors curriculum has evolved over time. The program required 18 honors credits until 2012, but as of September 2012 that number has increased to 24. Eighteen of these credits are in Core Education Program (CORE) courses required for all students. The list below identifies the CORE honors courses, all of which are three-credit courses.

- UNIV 112 – Focused Inquiry II

- UNIV 200 – Writing and Rhetoric

- ENGL 215 – Textual Analysis

- ENGL 388 – Writing in the Workplace

- PHYS 107 – Wonders of Technology

- SOCY 100 – General Sociology

In addition to the 18 core credits, students are required to complete three credits in their major.

- Art History: Art Historical Methods

- Fashion Design: Business of Design

- Graphic Design: Business of Design

- Interior Design courses: Business of Design

- Painting and Printmaking: Concepts and Issues (2 credits rather than 3)

Honors students may fulfill the remaining honors credits, to achieve a total of 24, in any combination of the following courses

- General Education courses
  - Art History Survey II
  - Honors-Only Topics (when offered)
  - Introduction to Contemporary Math
- Courses in the major
  - Senior Seminar (capstone)
  - Senior Studio (capstone)
  - Senior Design Studio II (capstone)

The program offers two additional ways for students to earn honors credit. First, students may work with a willing faculty member to develop an honors component in a course that does not already have an approved component. This is known as a non-honors-to-honors course contract. Students can earn a maximum of six credits with this option. Finally, students have the option of developing an Honors Independent Study and presenting it to a faculty member. Should the faculty member agree to work with the student in supervising and grading the work, and should the contract be approved by the VCUQatar Honors Program coordinator and the VCU Honors College, the student may earn a maximum of nine independent-study credits, thus potentially capitalizing on unique study opportunities that might develop external to the honors curriculum.

In order to graduate with honors, students must meet the following criteria:

- 24 honors credits
- 3.5 overall GPA (including every course *attempted*)
- 3.2 honors GPA (including every honors course *attempted*)
- Successful completion and submission of an honors dossier.

The dossier is a form of "capstone or thesis project (and is) one of the most pervasive characteristics of honors education" (Schuman 50).

While faculty members are automatically assigned to teach honors students if they are assigned honors-designated sections of honors-approved courses, some faculty members have expressed interest in teaching unique honors-only sections of established courses or courses developed specifically for honors students. These are two options we are in the process of developing and plan to initiate in the spring semester of 2013.

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE CAMPUSES

VCUQatar is substantively different from the home campus in Richmond. "Virginia Commonwealth University is a comprehensive state-aided institution, comprised of 10 schools, one college, a 750-bed teaching/research hospital and a Level 1 Trauma Center, located in Richmond, Virginia and enrolling more than 31,000 students on two campuses" (VCU). VCUQatar, on the other hand, serves a student population of slightly more than 200 with about 50 faculty members. The VCU Honors College in Richmond, according to its website, serves approximately 1,000 students whereas the VCUQatar Honors Program features approximately 30 students each year. The VCU Honors College is led by a dean, senior associate dean, assistant dean, national scholarships director, director of student services, coordinator of business and educational services, and coordinator of academic affairs. Teaching faculty come from all areas of the Richmond campus on a per-course basis, and the Honors College buys their time from their home departments. In contrast, the VCUQatar program is led on a part-time basis by one coordinator and a volunteer faculty member. Neither receives additional remuneration for these efforts, but the coordinator has been given a one-course release for the past two years. The faculty member has not been granted a course reduction but is able to include working with honors as part of the service requirement of faculty positions. As is the case for most faculty at VCUQatar, the coordinator and faculty volunteer are employed with one-year contracts. VCUQatar does not have a tenure system.

I have served as coordinator of the VCUQatar Honors Program for three years. Even though I had no experience in honors administration, I was offered this role because I serve as Director of the Liberal Arts and Sciences Program and teach courses within that program at VCUQatar. Like most honors administrators, I thus serve in the dual capacity of "both faculty and administration" (Long 8). I have worked with a new faculty volunteer each of the three years I have served as coordinator. The first faculty volunteer was a graduate of the VCU honors program and was able to provide extensive firsthand knowledge during that first year. The two subsequent volunteers had no knowledge or experience with the honors program but were willing to help and to learn. Given our limited background in or knowledge about honors, we have relied heavily on the dean and staff of the VCU Honors College. We have also gathered additional information from online searches of other programs around the world, electronic journals, monographs published by the National Collegiate Honors Council, and workshops and networking at NCHC conferences.

CHALLENGES

One challenge we face at VCUQatar is a tightly restricted offering of electives in the art and design curricula, keeping the list of possible honors courses to a minimum and requiring inclusion of some art or design classes for honors credit. Another factor is the small size of VCUQatar; we do not have the large slate of courses offered at multiple times and days of the week that one would find on a larger university campus. A third challenge is that our faculty members have not received specialized training to teach honors-level material either in the classroom or in Independent Study contracts. Fourth, yearly variations in which courses offer honors credit cause confusion for faculty, administrators, and students; these variations are a consequence of the flexibility we have incorporated into our process of adding honors components to non-honors classes, a flexibility that was introduced in order to help accommodate student needs within our tightly restricted curricula. Retaining faculty who are experienced with the honors program is the fifth challenge because an international branch campus like VCUQatar with one-year contracts creates an intrinsically transient faculty population. Finally, we regularly face the challenge of students who refuse to be photographed. Some students on North American campuses might also refuse to be photographed but, in Qatar, Arabic custom prohibits women from being photographed, and the vast majority of VCUQatar students, and therefore honors students, are women. This cultural restriction has caused difficulties in our attempts to promote the honors program in local and international media.

SUCCESSES

One of our successes is that students enter the honors program each year and have done so since the program was implemented. A second success is our high retention rate. Most honors students stay with the program through to graduation.

Of our four graduating honors cohorts to date, one graduating group achieved a singular success. All VCU honors students, whether in the U.S. or Qatar, write and submit capstone dossiers as one requirement for graduation. These dossiers are graded in a double-blind process, and it is the norm that students receive a request for revision. All eight VCUQatar honors graduates of 2010 submitted dossiers that were accepted by the VCU Honors College with no suggested revisions—an outstanding accomplishment that reflects the caliber of students in our program, their diligent efforts, and the mentoring provided by faculty members, the instructors in the VCUQatar Writing Center, and the overall support staff of the Doha campus.

NEW INITIATIVES AND FUTURE PLANS

We have worked extensively with the VCU Honors College to develop a standardized honors curriculum, and we believe this curriculum will eliminate much of the confusion caused by shifting honors credits. This curriculum also emphasizes a liberal arts focus that has been one of the overriding goals of the VCU Honors College from its inception; this focus is particularly important in the design programs given the tight focus of their curricula on design courses alone.

Secondly, during the 2011–2012 academic year we worked closely with students in the program to develop an Honors Student Association with officer positions. Our goal is to see our honors association work collaboratively with the VCUQatar Student Association to enhance the profile of the honors community within the overall VCUQatar student population. We are actively encouraging honors student leaders to take the lead in arranging school-related activities and social events for honors students. These activities are supported by our third initiative: regular publication of the *VCUQatar Honors Student Newsletter* beginning in January 2013. We also hope to establish a blog for honors students at VCUQatar. The VCU Honors College already features a newsletter and blog, and we plan to contribute periodic supplements to contribute an active voice on the Richmond campus.

I am also working to provide honors-related training for faculty and administrators in VCUQatar. One option is to bring personnel from the VCU Honors College and the Center for Teaching Excellence on the home campus to provide training. An alternative is for them to develop a series of tutorials that we can watch online and discuss in training sessions. We have the technology to hold synchronous video conversations across the campuses, but planning a large meeting is problematic due to teaching schedules and time differences (seven or eight hours, depending on daylight savings time) between the campuses. Pre-taped tutorials running about twenty minutes can resolve this problem, enabling a group of faculty to watch the tape together, discuss it, and develop follow-up questions that can be addressed in future tutorials.

CONCLUSION

The VCUQatar Honors Program has grown from infancy to adulthood in a relatively short time and now features a standardized curriculum and thriving student participation. We fully expect to continue fine-tuning and improving the program as it unfolds and as new challenges and opportunities arise. One possibility under discussion at the moment is an honors-only course to be offered in tandem with other Education City universities and to provide honors credit regardless of where students are registered as long as they are

in a recognized honors program within their home university. Whether this class comes to fruition remains to be seen, but, regardless, we will continue to work collaboratively with the VCU Honors College, Qatar Foundation, and other institutions of Education City help achieve the goals laid out by Qatar National Vision 2030 and the VCU Honors College. The merger of these two cultures—with their very different histories, traditions, customs, needs, and expectations—has made the VCUQatar Honors Program a unique blend of Middle-Eastern and Western values in the service of our most promising students.

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On Training Excellent Students in China and the United States

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INTRODUCTION

In many countries, the training of researchers who will be internationally competitive has become a primary objective, leading to extensive discussion of the curricula, educational content, and methods that may ensure a high level of student achievement. In this global climate, only the most excellent students have the potential to engage successfully in international competition and become leading-edge researchers in the world-wide marketplace of research. Thus, any country seeking to be internationally competitive must consider ways to further raise the level of excellent students.

In this study, we investigate university programs, specifically honors programs, that take special measures for training the most excellent students. Honors programs can be found in the United States, Canada, the Netherlands, China, Singapore, Chile, and other countries; among these, the highest number of honors programs in 2005 were in the U.S. (Digby) and China. Consequently, the authors chose these two countries as the objects of this study, surveying and comparing the characteristics of honors programs as training courses for excellent students. In both countries, the focus of our study was limited to higher-level universities. In the case of China, only universities identified by Kitagaki & Fuang in 2008 as "Key Chinese Universities" were investigated. A small sample of universities in the U. S. was selected from the 2006 *America's Best Value Colleges* (Owens & Meltzer et al.). Our other major sources of information were university websites and the literature available through the National Collegiate Honors Council.

In both China and the U.S., honors programs have a common aim to gather and train particularly excellent students in the universities while the

specific content of each program and training course is distinct. The characteristics observed in the two countries as well as the comparison of such characteristics may help serve as models for Japan and other countries wishing to create honors programs.

CHINA

Starting in 1993, the "211 Project" in China targeted key universities for the twenty-first century with the aim of creating a global revolution in new technology. This project has now been succeeded by the "985 Project," with its central concept being to create world-class universities. As of 2007, over a hundred universities, including Peking University and Tsinghua University, have been designated as key universities for developing honors programs.

Our research on these universities has shown that honors programs have been put into practice in 42 universities. It can be assumed that the existence of these and future honors programs will exert a great influence on the development of science and technology in China.

The authors provide below an overview of the characteristics of honors programs practiced in the key universities.

CHRONOLOGY

The chronological development of honors programs in China can be summarized by division into the periods indicated in Table 1, which shows a rapid increase in the number of honors programs after 1990. The first university to introduce an honors program was the University of Science & Technology of China, which in 1978 initiated a program called "Special Class for the Gifted Young" for students who had not yet completed a secondary education. This program was set up to train gifted students in the fields of science and technology. Making the most of its successful experience, this university also founded the "Experimental Class of Teaching Reform" in 1989 for the purpose of training students who had been evaluated as the most excellent at the entrance examination of the university.

In 1986, the "Special Class of Mathematics" was established at Nankai University, and in 1989 Nanjing University established an honors program by adding two intensified classes to the science curriculum and the humanities curriculum. Among the key universities, the University of Science & Technology of China, Nankai University, and Nanjing University were the first to adopt honors programs.

Other general honors programs have been put into practice since 1985. The authors counted the number of such honors programs in each specified time division from 1985 up to 2004. The results of four different data sets are shown in Figure 1 together with the approximate regression line.

DISCIPLINES

Table 2 shows the number of honors programs arranged by discipline, showing that "science" courses comprise over 66% while "humanities" courses comprise fewer than 25%. It should be noted that "humanities" courses in this instance include economics and business administration.

Because the Fundamental Science Class of Tsinghua University, the top-ranking university (Searchina Research Institute), was included in the science

Table 1: Chronological Development of Honors Programs in the Key Universities of China

Chronological Period	1975–	1980–	1985–	1990–	1995–	2000–	2005–	Total
Percent (Number of Programs)	1 (1)	0 (0)	3 (3)	5 (5)	13 (12)	41 (39)	38 (36)	100 (95)

Figure 1: Changes in the Number of University-Level Honors Programs in China (1985–2004)
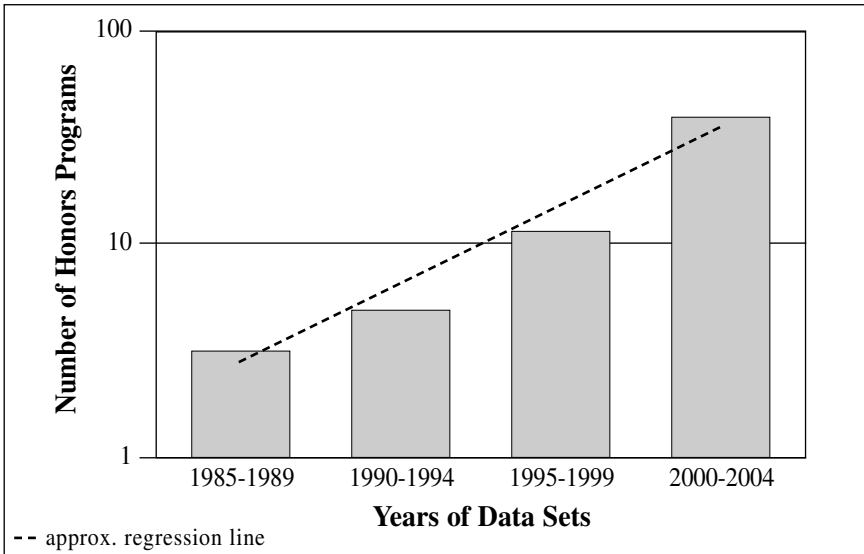
Table 2: Disciplinary Focus of Honors Programs

Course	Science	Humanities	Other	Total
Percent (Number of Programs)	69 (66)	25 (24)	5 (5)	100 (95)

courses, the authors will describe the outline of its honors program. The Center for Advanced Study at Tsinghua University was founded in 1997. This Center has as its objectives to strengthen fundamental research, foster creative human resources, and expand international academic exchange and cooperation. Toward these objectives, the Fundamental Science Class was established in 1998, and the sixty most excellent students were recruited in 1999. In this Class, great importance has been attached not only to fostering talents in mathematics and physics but also to emphasizing education in the liberal arts.

Tsinghua University also has an honors program called the "Sino-Foreign Culture Integrated Class," which corresponds to the humanities course. This class was started in 1999 with the recruitment of nearly thirty students. The objective of this program was to remove a traditional barrier existing between courses of study and to promote the coordination and unification of multiple courses, thus establishing the basis for "Chinese and English Culture" or, in American terms, interdisciplinary study. Through reading the sutras as literature, the program has been putting an emphasis on strengthening the exchange of "Sino-Foreign Culture" as well as the global expansion of Chinese culture.

Training programs that are difficult to categorize as either humanities or science courses are classified as "Other." For instance, the "21st-Century Student Union" of East China Normal University, which was founded in 1994, is a program aimed at training future leaders and is included in "Other."

TRAINING

In general, five major points about honors education in China can be identified.

The first point relates to the goals. Some honors programs have included education in the liberal arts, but on the whole they have focused on science and technology. In an attempt to model themselves after world-class universities, about 70% of all honors programs are focused on science.

The second point relates to preferential treatment. Students who have been admitted to honors programs are given various privileges such as library access, scholarships, and residency in privileged dormitories.

The third point is the retention system. An excellent student who has been admitted to a special class may be eliminated and returned to a normal class if he/she cannot maintain excellence in examination results. East China University of Science and Technology, for instance, has a dropout system for the lowest-ranking students in which roughly 20% of the students—those whose performance is lowest on a school end-of-term examination—are weeded out.

The fourth point is the tutorial system. The number of students admitted to an honors program is naturally small. Specific teachers are assigned to these students as individual tutors. In many cases, teachers and students mutually choose each other.

The fifth point involves the method of selecting excellent students. As is the case with college entrance exams like the SAT or ACT, the selection method is based on test results and can be said to be objective. In this way, a set percentage of all students is selected.

UNITED STATES

The 2006 *America's Best Value Colleges* (Owens et al.) lists the names of respected and competitively priced universities in the U. S. We cross-checked this list with the information collected in the 2005 edition of *Peterson's Smart Choices: Honors Programs & Colleges* (Digby) and took a sampling of 71 institutions of higher education broken down into 60 public and 11 private universities. In view of the quantitative underrepresentation of private universities, we restricted our survey to state universities in this study.

CHRONOLOGY

Sixty state universities listed honors programs and/or colleges *in Peterson's Smart Choices*; one of them listed two programs and another listed three, so we found a total of 63 honors programs/colleges. Forty-two program descriptions among these 63 included the year in which they were established. Table 3 shows the chronology of the establishment of these programs by decade, starting in the 1950s. Some universities did not record the establishment year of their program, so the authors computed the year themselves. For example, Ohio State University indicated that their honors program was twenty years old, so we assumed it was founded in 1985, twenty years before the publication of this Peterson's guide.

In the changes seen from the 1950s to the 1990s, there is little evidence of a steady growth in the number of honors programs despite a general assumption that such growth has occurred. Instead, within this limited sample there seem to have been two periods of rapid growth in the 1960s and 1980s. The influence of the Sputnik launch in 1957 on the rapid growth in the 1960s would be an interesting topic for further study. *[Editor's note: The influence of Sputnik and the Cold War on the growth of honors has been a focus of several recent studies, most notably "The Wisdom of Our Elders: Honors Discussions in* The Superior Student*, 1958–65" by Larry Andrews in* JNCHC *12.2 (fall/winter 2011): 17–46.]*

PROGRAM CHARACTERISTICS

The literature about honors programs and colleges in the United States contains a great variety of essays about leadership (Wilson), internships, social service (Parker), creation of community (Cobane, Thurman, and Lindsey), and interactions among class participants. The authors examined references to four key concepts—interaction among class participants, involvement in society, leadership, and internships—and tabulated the number and percentage of programs that referred to these concepts. The results are shown in Table 4.

One example—the concept of "interaction among the class participants"—will illustrate the methodology we used in devising this table. First, from the many descriptive sentences that attached importance to this concept, we took a sampling of the words that appeared frequently. As a result, four words—"seminar," "colloquium," "interaction," and "communication"— together with their variations (such as plural forms and other parts of speech) were obtained and identified as keywords. Then we examined descriptions of all 63 honors programs and counted the number of keywords. Consequently, it can be said that, in 45 out of the 63 programs, "interaction among class participants" was an important concept. We used the same method of calculation for the concepts of "involvement in society," "leadership," and "internship."

From Table 4, it can be seen that 75% of program descriptions focused on the concept of "interaction among the class participants"; almost half focused on "involvement in society"; and nearly 40% stressed "leadership."

Table 3: Establishment of U.S. Honors Programs by Decade Since the 1950s

Chronological Period	1950–	1960–	1970–	1980–	1990–	2000–	Total
Percent (Number of Programs)	5 (2)	33 (14)	12 (5)	29 (12)	14 (6)	7 (3)	100 (42)

Table 4. Use Situations of the Words for Explanation of Honors College/Programs

Concept	interaction among class participants	involvement in society	leadership	internship
Key words	seminar/colloquium/ interact/communicate	social/service/ community	leader	internship
Percent (Number of Programs)	75 (45)	48 (29)	38 (23)	32 (19)

CHARACTERISTIC PRACTICES

For the 2005 edition of *Peterson's Smart Choices: Honors Programs & Colleges*, Digby sent a questionnaire to universities with honors programs in order to obtain details about each program, and she published the replies without modification. Using these data, we calculated our basic statistics.

Among the respondents, 80% reported on general honors programs that required more work than departmental honors. In terms of the relative size of honors programs, 52% were large (with the number of enrolled students over 500), 22% mid-sized (100–500), and the rest small (<100). These results indicate that most major public research universities in the United States have adopted general programs and that more than half of these enroll over 500 students. However, 62% of the universities have no specialized honors advising system; 37% do have special academic advising for honors; 22% have a special honors fellowship advising system; and 5% have special honors graduate advising. Ten percent have both a special academic advising system and a special fellowship advising in honors.

The literature indicates that the roles of honors directors or deans differ according to program size. In a small program (fewer than 100 enrolled students), the director seems to be responsible for all components and activities of the program. Large programs (over 500 students), employ several administrators who divide and/or share the responsibilities (Shuman, 2006; Long, 1995).

FINDINGS

Our comparison between honors programs in China and the United States yields the following results:

1. In China, there has been a steady increase in the number of honors programs since they were introduced in the 1970s. In the United States, where honors program have existed for a longer period of time, growth may have been more sporadic.

2. Two of the earliest programs in the United States were established at Colorado State University in 1957 and Purdue University in 1958. The initial honors program at a major university in China was started at Nankai University in 1986, two decades later than in the U. S.

3. Descriptions of honors colleges and programs in the United States focus significant attention on communication, leadership, internships, social service, etc.; it seems that great importance has been attached to such activities as preparation for students' social and professional futures. By contrast, descriptions of honors programs in China focus on traditionally

distinct courses of study in the humanities and in science courses such as electricity, mechanics, physics, and economics.

4. Frequently, science-oriented honors programs in China emphasize the importance of studying a foreign language as part of the required curriculum. For instance, the importance of learning English is implemented in the following honors curricula: Special Class for Excellent Students of Nanjin University of Science and Technology; Longji Class of Lanzhou University; Experimental School of Harbin Institute of Technology; Fundamental Science Class of Central South University; and the Department of Excellent Students of Science and Technology of East China University of Science and Technology.

5. In both countries, it is usual that the results of nation-wide examinations are taken into consideration in the admission of students into an honors system. In China, the entrance examinations are nation-wide and unified; in the U. S., the SAT and ACT are standard requirements for honors admission.

6. In any university of either country, there is a tendency to provide various kinds of preferential treatment to students who are admitted to honors classes. Such students receive such privileges as access to libraries, scholarships, and admission to special dormitories.

7. At a university in either country, even after students are admitted to an honors class, they must maintain a certain minimum level of grades and/or examination results. If they fall short of such a level, they are obliged to return to a non-honors class. In the case of East China University of Science and Technology, students with a relatively low level of accomplishment are automatically eliminated at the end of each school term, and vacancies are filled by recruiting from the general student population. United States universities tend to have more diverse and complex policies on retention.

8. In U.S. universities, special honors academic advisers are often appointed. At some universities, honors fellowship advisers take on the role of honors advisers. In China as well, there is a tutorial system in which a teacher individually advises each honors student. However, honors fellowship advising was not found at universities in China that were surveyed for this study.

CONCLUSION

In the universities of Japan, honors programs are virtually nonexistent. One of the reasons lies in the fact that there is a cultural emphasis on equality and distrust of elitism. On the other hand, as the percentage of students

who go on to higher-level schools has grown to almost 50%, a wide variety of learning capabilities is now found in university students. Unless honors programs are put into practice, Japanese universities will find it difficult to cultivate excellent students who are able to stand up in international competition. Our study has resulted from awareness of this issue, and we believe that the situations of honors programs in China and the United States, including a comparison between the two, will be a good guide for Japan and for other countries facing similar situations.

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Mission, Performance Indicators, and Assessment in U. S. Honors: A View from the Netherlands

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INTRODUCTION

A mission statement that identifies the goals and aims of an honors program is a key step in program development. The NCHC's Basic Characteristics of a Fully Developed Honors Program states unequivocally that a successful honors program "has a clear mandate from the institution's administration in the form of a mission statement or charter document that includes the objectives and responsibilities of honors and defines the place of honors in the administrative and academic structure of the institution." According to Mrozinski, mission statements are public definitions of purpose published in a college's catalog, website, or other planning documents and are generally required by accrediting bodies. Such mission statements have now become standard for honors programs and colleges.

Before we examine the online mission statements of current honors programs, we need to look at the history of such statements outside the academic world. Mission statements have long been standard in the for-profit sector, where they specify what the company does, how it does it, why it does it, and where it is going in the future. A mission statement can transform a leader's vision into substance in the profit-sector (Drucker). Stone uses the Quaker State Corporation in 1993 as corporate example of the strength of a mission statement. The company had fallen on hard times, and, fearing a possible takeover, the Quaker State board redefined its core mission: "To funnel a wide range of lubricants through a massive network of mechanics, retailers and drive-through lube shops" (Murray). By 1995, Quaker State had transformed itself from a company selling motor oil to a branded consumer-products company, a solid number two behind Pennzoil. "Clearly, the new mission played a key role in shaping Quaker's turnaround" (Murray). In the context

of healthcare, Bart concluded in 1999 that sufficient evidence existed to "challenge those critics and cynics who liked to pronounce (unjustifiably) that mission statements were not important or that there was no direct link between a mission statement and performance" (19).

Mission statements are crucial for nonprofit organizations as well, where achieving the mission is analogous to making a profit in the private sector (Brinckerhoff). In their book *Profiles of Excellence*, a study of achieving excellence in the nonprofit sector, Knauft, Berger, and Gray found in 1999 that the key to success was having a clearly articulated mission statement along with goals to carry out the mission. At the same time that mission statements were becoming standard in the for-profit and nonprofit worlds, colleges and universities in the U.S. were also embracing the value of an articulated mission statement (Morphew). Already in 1994, the Association of American Colleges found that 80% of all universities and colleges were revising their mission statements. Finally, a well-articulated mission statement seems also a basic need for honors programs (Morphew): it gives a shared sense of purpose in the institution (457); it manages the expectations of external publics like prospective students and parents (469); it is required by accrediting bodies (458); and virtually all honors programs have one (458).

According to online mission statements of honors programs, directors and faculty want to achieve more than providing a comfortable environment for participating students. They want their students, for instance, "to become intellectually engaged and socially responsible, and to remain so throughout their lives" (Spelman College). Ideally, an honors program translates its mission into specific goals, creates a set of performance indicators, and assesses the outgoing students to see whether they live up to the mission at the end of the honors program and thereafter: "Note that goals typically flow from the mission statement, and outcomes are aligned with goals. In addition, the program's mission, goals and outcomes should relate to the mission and goals of the college and institution' (Charles Drew University). R. A. Stone has expanded on this view of mission statement in the following comments:

> If the mission is correctly formulated, it will be aligned with the organization's strategies, tactics, operations, and administrative support systems. In addition to the crucial communication phase, managers at all levels need to translate the key elements of the mission into objectives and goals that guide the execution of the mission and are meaningful to all employees. The goals and objectives should also be linked to the reward and performance evaluation system.

Our interest in honors program management is evoked by the development of honors programs worldwide: the numbers of universities offering honors

programs have been steadily growing both in the United States (Digby; Long) and in Europe (Ginkel; Kiley). As the U.S. has a long history in honors education, it constitutes a valuable point of reference. In this study we investigate the link between the content of U.S. honors programs' mission statements, goals to be achieved, performance indicators, and outcomes in order to determine if mission statements in the U.S. have served the purpose for which they are designed; such a determination can offer important guidance to developing honors programs in other parts of the world.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The overall question of this study is: to what extent do connections exist between mission statements, performance indicators, and program assessments that might indicate a significant alignment and indicate the effectiveness of honors programs? Therefore we investigated the following research questions:

1. What goals are described in the mission statements of honors programs?

2. What performance indicators do honors programs set to reach these goals?

3. How do honors programs assess their outcomes?

METHODS

The study has a mixed methods approach, using document analysis and open-question email surveys. To identify the goals described in the mission statements of honors programs, we randomly chose 169 mission statements from the websites of honors programs and colleges that are members of the National Collegiate Honors Council. The application of document analysis techniques identified elements that were embedded in these mission statements (Merriam). To answer the second two questions about performance indicators and outcomes assessment, we sent a short, open-question email survey to the directors of the same 169 honors programs.

SAMPLING

The sample of 169 mission statements was randomly selected from the 842 member institutions listed on its website in 2009 by the NCHC, the largest association of higher education honors programs in the U.S. (Driscoll). We systematically analyzed every fifth institution on the website list <http://www.nchchonors.org>. To be included in the subset, the institution had to meet three criteria:

1. The institution had to be a U.S. institution (membership in the NCHC is open to foreign institutions, but we limited our study to U.S. institutions);

2. The institution had to have a three- or four-year undergraduate program so that we could compare the results to universities in Europe, where undergraduate programs in general last three or four years; and

3. The institution had to have a mission statement available on its website.

If an honors program's home institution did not meet all three criteria, it was not included, and the criteria were applied to the next institution on the alphabetical list. In total, 264 U.S. universities were analyzed from the NCHC website: 262 universities had mission statements available, and 169 indicated they offered three- or four-year honors programs. This sample of 169 gives a reliability factor for the total population of NCHC members between 93% and 94%.

MISSION STATEMENT ANALYSIS

Document analysis techniques were used to identify elements embedded in the mission statements (Merriam). Two researchers independently analyzed the sample of mission statements for keywords that expressed an intention or goal. To avoid the stronger impact that longer mission statements could have on the results, we counted every key word only once per mission statement. To check our results we redid the coding, identifying key terms and key phrases (cf. Morphew 461) using the program MAXQDA (Lewins). In addition, three native English professors were asked to randomly select and code six mission statements. The inter-rater agreement was 70% on terms that we and the alternative raters selected. Our coding turned out to be in closer agreement because 96% of the key words that our alternative raters selected were also selected by us.

QUESTIONNAIRE

All 169 institutions selected for analysis of their mission statements received an email survey addressed to the honors director. Follow-up consisted of reminder emails and telephone calls. The email survey (see Appendix) consisted of six questions, with the first two concerning performance indicators.

Because the impression exists that performance indicators and assessment are often imposed by higher administration (Achterberg 37–39), we first asked honors directors to indicate which performance indicators were set by upper administration. The second question related to performance indicators set by administrators or faculty: "Which performance indicators have you set to establish the success of the honors program?"

The third and fourth questions related to the outcomes of the honors program, namely whether honors programs systematically kept track of their

alumni and, if so, whether they used a specific instrument to monitor the accomplishments of their alumni.

The last two questions related to alignment of goals as named in the mission statement and measurements related to student outcomes. We asked if directors connect the data from monitoring alumni to the goals they had set for the honors program: if yes, then how, and, if no, then why not. The last question of the survey asked if the respondents thought it was important to measure the success of their honors program.

QUESTIONNAIRE ANALYSIS

The answers to questions 1 and 2 were analyzed for key terms and separated into four categories: quantitative output, quantitative level description, perception, and qualitative, content-oriented performance indicators. The answers to question 6 were indicated on a 4-point Likert scale.

RESULTS

GOALS CONTAINED IN THE MISSION STATEMENTS

We identified 66 different keywords describing the goals of honors programs in the selection of 169 mission statements, as indicated in Table 1. The 66 keywords occurred 1,359 times in the sample of 169 mission statements, leading to an average of 8 different key words used per mission statement. The length of mission statements varied from 12 to 257 words. Our findings are similar to the findings of Morphew who found 118 elements in 299 mission statements of U.S. universities (461).

On the basis of this list of key words, a category system was developed, starting with individual keywords that were clustered into subcategories: target group description, educational benefits, educational environment, post graduation/career benefits, and ethical benefits (Table 2). The results, using MAXQDA (Lewins), showed that there was virtually no difference between the keyword clustering and the key-phrase clustering; only 4 of the 66 keywords moved to a different subcategory in key-phrase clustering, which still led to the same goal clustering.

Table 3 is a visualization of the distribution of keyword occurrences in the 5 main goal clusters. Category 1, containing the target group description, includes keywords like "gifted," "ability," "motivation," and "talented," which describe the student population at which the honors program is targeted. Of the 1359 total keyword occurrences, 403 (30%) were in this cluster. Category 2, containing keywords like "research," "project," "in-depth," and "challenge," describes methods of teaching and learning; 674 keywords (50%) belonged in this cluster. Category 3, containing keywords like

"community" (internal), "intellectual," and "smaller" (groups), describes the educational environment; 97 keywords (7%) belonged to this cluster. Category 4, consisting of keywords like "career," "employer," and "successful," advertises benefits either in graduate programs or in professional life;

Table 1. List of 66 Keywords and Number of Occurrences in 169 Mission Statements

challenge	82	social	26	inquiry (isitive)	8
intellectual	77	depth (in-)	25	nurture	8
experience	65	achievements(-rs)	23	integrity	8
research	63	discussion	22	society	6
community, internal	62	profession(al)	21	outstanding	5
excellence	49	exceptional	17	breadth	5
scholarship (-stic)	48	encouraging	15	atmosphere	4
leadership	45	ability	14	accomplished	4
motivation	44	responsibility	14	collaboration	3
enriching(d)	41	distinction	14	culture, internal	3
interdisciplinary(-ty)	41	commitment	13	global citizen (-ship)	3
talented	39	rigor	13	dedication	2
critical (thinking)	37	succesful	13	augment	2
smaller	36	stimulation	12	camaraderie	2
creativity	34	innovative	11	dialogue	2
enhance(-d)	31	career	11	credential	2
culture, external	31	gifted	10	valuable	2
community, external	29	diverse	10	discipleship	1
skills	28	potential	10	cross-disciplinary	1
project	28	communication	9	interpersonal	1
independent	27	intensity	9	revolutionary	1
engagement	26	ethical	9	employers	1

Words with an identical meaning, e.g. scholarship and scholastic, were identified as one keyword. Identical words with a distinctive different meaning were identified with a qualifier, e.g. "community, internal" to identify the learning community of honors students as opposed to "community, external" to identify, for instance, community service.

Table 2. Keyword Clustering: The 66 Keywords Identified in 169 Mission Statements Categorized into 5 Main Goal Clusters

Keywords		Main category
talented (high) ability gifted potential accomplished achievements(-rs)	dedication motivation distinction outstanding scholarship (-stic) exceptional	Target group description
breadth challenge creativity cross-disciplinary depth (in-) discussion encouraging enhance(d) enriching(d) excellence experience	inquiry (isitive) intellectual interdisciplinary(-ty) nurture research smaller augment revolutionary stimulation skills project	Educational benefits/ aims/methods
atmosphere community (int) collaboration commitment	culture (int) camaradary intensity	Educational Environment
critical (thinking) communication career credential innovative employers	leadership profession(al) successful independent valuable	Postgrad/career benefits
community (ext) culturally (ext) dialogue global citizen (ship) society (ext) integrity ethical	social responsibility discipleship rigor interpersonal engagement diverse	Ethical benefits

109 (8%) keywords belonged to this cluster. Category 5 includes keywords such as "ethical," social" (external), "community," and "global" that describe ethical benefits to the students; 85 keywords (6%) belonged to this cluster.

The five main goal clusters focus on all phases of student participation before, during, and after finishing the honors program. Romney categorized performance indicators into two types: those related to process and to outcome. Our fist three phases (target group description, educational benefits, and educational environment) can be interpreted as process-oriented during the honors program while the last two phases (postgraduate/career benefits and ethical benefits) relate to outcome. In our results the process of offering a challenging, interesting, well-run honors program to the appropriate student population accounts for 86% of the keywords we identified. In contrast, the results related to outcome, as in the lasting, beneficial effects for students who have completed the honors program, account for only 14% of the keywords.

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS IN RELATION TO GOALS

Research on effective performance indicators in higher education, both inside and outside the U.S., includes Sizer's and later Ball and Halwachi's

Table 3. Distribution of 1359 Keywords Indentified in 169 Mission Statements
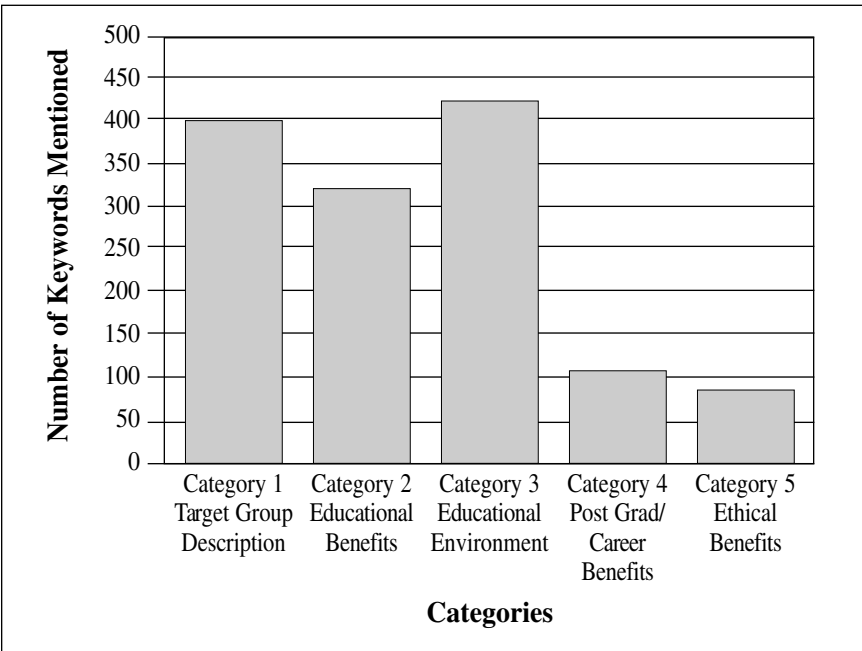
descriptors: "relevant," "verifiable," "free from bias," "quantifiable," "economically feasible," and "accepted in the institution." Our study, however, is not about passing judgment on performance indicators; we are simply trying to find out which ones are used in honors programs.

In the responses from 51 honors directors, 30% of 169 to whom we sent our survey, the idea that performance indicators are imposed on honors programs is not supported; 40 of the 51 respondents indicated that no formal performance indicators were set for them by higher administration.

A minority of 5 respondents reported they did not use performance indicators to analyze their honors programs whereas 46 respondents reported they did. The number of performance indicators used by these 46 respondents varied from 1 to 15, resulting in a total of 190 reported performance indicators. The 38 different performance indicators, together with the number of times a performance indicator was reported, are shown in Table 4.

We then subdivided the performance indicators into four categories as shown in Table 5.

Table 4. List of Performance Indicators and Number of Times Reported

PI	No.	PI	No.	PI	No.
retention rate	23	job starts	4	lifelong Learners	2
graduation rate	20	publications/present	4	**academic**	2
GPA	14	**community (internal)**	4	visibility	2
entr. grad schools	13	**diversity**	3	quality Projects	2
thesis	12	**scholarships**	3	alumni Success	2
total enrollment	8	**volunteer**	3	SLO	2
program completion	7	**intellectual**	3	internship applicants	1
studentsatisfaction	7	**engagement**	3	**cultural initiative**	1
research	7	part.Hons Coursework	3	**creativity**	1
SAT/ACT	6	program Growth	2	assessment Instrument	1
awards	6	%freshman joining	2	Hons Adv Council assessment	1
attracting new students	5	grant applicants	2	**leadership**	1
faculty perception	5	**rigorous**	2		

A total of 46 respondents reported the above performance indicators. The bold-faced keywords (12 in total) were also identified in our analysis of mission statements.

Initially, we expected all performance indicators to be quantitative; however, a number of respondents reported performance indicators based on perception and/or qualitative in nature. Therefore, we made four categories:

1. quantitative output, e.g., retention rate, graduation rate, and percentage of freshmen joining the program;

2. quantitative level description, e.g., number of awards, number of scholarships, GPA, and SAT/ACT scores;

3. perception, e.g., student and staff satisfaction; and

4. qualitative, content-oriented indicators, e.g., thesis writing, volunteering, visibility, and leadership.

The most frequently named performance indicators belong to categories A and B, which have a strong organizational focus. Category C, performance indicators were relatively rare: only 2 of the 38 terms and 12 of the 190 performance indicators reported to us (6%). One might conclude that honors directors have taken to heart the warning of Moore and Kuol that "the perceptions of students' definitions of good teaching are both invalid and misleading" (134). Category D indicators are mentioned 59 times, but some of these indicators are partly qualitative and partly quantitative. The top three in this category are research, thesis, and publications/presentations, which can be seen as similar to a citation index: quantitative in nature but a strong indicator of qualitative impact.

Table 5. PIs from 46 Respondents Divided into Four Categories
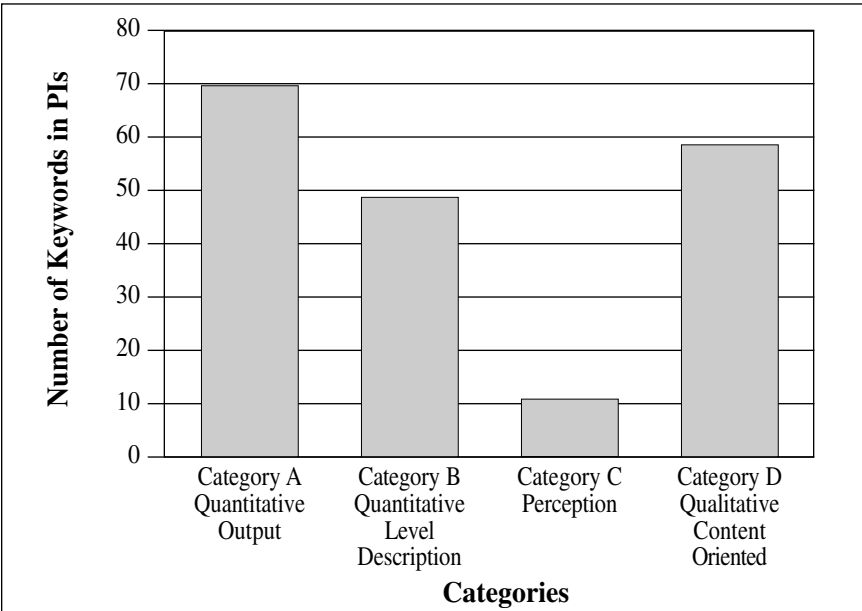
Applying Romney's categorization of performance indicators, our research categories A, B, and C can be seen as relating to process goals and category D as relating to outcome goals. We see a strong emphasis on process (131 occurrences) and little on outcome (59 occurrences)—the same pattern we identified in the mission statement analysis.

ASSESSMENT OF OUTCOMES

Finally, we were interested to know if and how honors directors assessed the success of their program after students completed it. In addition to identifying a number of key terms in mission statements that indicated lasting effects on students (category 4 describing post-graduation/career benefits and category 5 describing ethical benefits), our survey asked about the alumni of the honors program. Half of the 51 respondents indicated they had no alumni tracking at all, a smaller group (14%) was in the process of developing an alumni tracking system, 8% had only informal contact, and 28% indicated that they did have an alumni tracking system.

Alumni tracking appears to be a work in progress among respondents as 42% have a tracking system in place or are in the process of developing one. That leaves 58% of institutions having no formal alumni-related assessment, making it difficult to determine if the long term goals of these honors programs are being met.

CONNECTION BETWEEN MISSION STATEMENTS, PERFORMANCE INDICATORS, AND PROGRAM ASSESSMENT

The mission statements of all respondents were compared with their reported performance indicators to find identical key terms suggesting alignment between the two. We saw little alignment between goals as described in the mission statements (Table 1) and the list of key terms in the performance indicators (Table 4). Only twelve key terms appeared in both lists (bold in Table 4).

We also analyzed the connections between mission statements and performance indicators at the level of individual honors program, taking into account that 30% of institutions responded to our survey. Forty of the 51 respondents (78%) showed no common key terms between the mission statements as published on the website and the performance indicators they reported to us. Of the eleven that did show overlap, four respondents had one key term in common in their mission statement and performance indicators, six had two or three overlapping key terms, and one showed five overlapping key terms. Of course, the length of the mission statement and the number of keywords used influenced the results of these analyses.

In the survey, we asked honors directors whether they thought that the three elements—mission statement, performance indicators, and assessment—were connected in their honors program. Five of the respondents (10%) indicated that they were, 8 were working on improving the connection (16%), and 38 (75%) thought the three elements were not connected in their programs. In addition, two respondents denied the importance of the connection.

Of the five respondents who thought their mission statement, performance indicators, and outcomes assessment were connected, only one demonstrated a significant overlap between keywords in the mission statement and performance indicators: half of the keywords identified in the mission statement were also found in the performance indicators. This respondent was also developing a specific instrument to monitor the accomplishments of honors alumni. This respondent, Debra Schroeder of the College of St. Scholastica, gave us permission to quote her response: "I think that it is of utmost importance to measure the success of the Honors Program. Although I believe that it adds value to the college experience of our honors students, there are empirical data relevant to whether it really does. Moral, professional, and fiscal pressures require such measurements. That doesn't mean I've yet succeeded at doing it well. But, I'll keep trying!"

The last question of the survey asked if the respondents thought it important to "measure" the success of their honors program. On a 4-point Likert scale, 23 respondents answered very important, 20 answered somewhat important, 2 answered of minor importance, and 5 answered not important. One respondent commented, "These questions are both motivating and discouraging. We have much to do." Another wrote that assessment of success is "[c]ritical. Of course, the debate comes in defining success. Yet, if you can't agree on some definition and use this definition to justify resources and efforts, how can you conclude that an honors program makes an impact?"

DISCUSSION

The National Collegiate of Honors Council proposes that, in order to be "fully developed," an honors program should have a mission statement. NCHC members comply with that guideline; we found that over 99% of the websites gave a mission statement. Whether members comply with the NCHC's definition of a mission statement as a document "that includes the objectives and responsibilities of honors" is debatable. The strong emphasis we found in the mission statements is on process (87% of the key terms) as opposed to outcome (14%). In the performance indicators the same pattern is visible, though less clear: 69% of the key terms deal with process and 31% with outcome. Monitoring the accomplishments of alumni is not yet standard

practice for honors programs, with fewer than half having a tracking system in place or developing one.

The finding of this study is that a connection between mission statement, performance indicators, and program assessment is not clearly visible in U.S. honors programs. The small overlap between key terms in the mission statement and the performance indicators, combined with the small number of programs that have follow-up with their alumni, leads to this conclusion. While honors programs in the United States, which have been well-established throughout the country for half a century, are showing movement toward aligning these three elements, other countries that are starting to develop honors programs might do well to build such an alignment into the design of their programs.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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APPENDIX

Dear NAME HONORS DIRECTOR,

The honors program of NAME UNIVERSITY has been randomly selected from the member list of NCHC as a research subject, together with 168 other honors programs in the US.

As research team Excellence in Higher Education and Society of the Hanze university of Applied Sciences in Groningen, the Netherlands we aim to provide a deeper understanding of the practice of honors education.

Our 6 questions below focus on two aspects of honors education. The first part is about performance indicators of honors programs. What targets do you set yourself or are set for you to deem your honors program successful? The second part is about how you establish the results of your honors program in alumni.

We hope for your cooperation in this matter, you are kindly requested to reply to this email before April 18th 2011. If we have not heard from you by then we will send a reminding email.

Attached you will find a supporting letter from the previous President of the NCHC, Mr. J. Zubizarreta.

Kind regards,

Marca Wolfensberger, research team leader

Lindsay Drayer, Ph.D., researcher

Vladimir Bartelds, Bsc, researcher

Start of Survey

1. Which performance indicators are set for you to establish the success of the honors program (e.g. by the Board of the university)?

2. Which performance indicators have you set to establish the success of the honors program?

3. Do you keep track of your alumni systematically? If yes, how? If no, why not?

4. Do you use a specific instrument to monitor the accomplishments of your alumni? Please elaborate.

5. Do you connect these data to the goals you have set for the honors program? If yes, how? If no, why not?

6. Do you think it is important to "measure" the success of your honors program?
   - ☐ not at all
   - ☐ minor importance
   - ☐ somewhat important
   - ☐ very important

END of Survey.

The results of this research will be presented at the Annual NCHC-conference in Phoenix, 2011. Of course we will provide you with the results personally as well. These results will be anonymous and untraceable beyond the raw data, might you be worried about public disclosure of university policies.

A Close-Up of
Honors in the Netherlands

Laboratories for Educational Innovation: Honors Programs in the Netherlands

MARCA V. C. WOLFENSBERGER

UTRECHT UNIVERSITY & HANZEHOGESCHOOL GRONINGEN

PIERRE VAN EIJL AND ALBERT PILOT

UTRECHT UNIVERSITY, THE NETHERLANDS

INTRODUCTION

In Dutch universities, honors programs are a fast growing development. The first such programs started in 1993. Twenty years later a large number of programs are implemented at nearly all research universities and also at many universities of applied sciences in the Netherlands. Recent data have revealed significant diversity in the types and structures of honors programs, many of which have functioned as laboratories of educational innovation within university-wide curricula and had positive spin-off effects on the regular curriculum and also on the transfer of talented students from secondary into higher education. Especially in the last decade, these spin-offs have had a strong influence on educational policy in the Netherlands at the primary and secondary as well as university levels.

In 2004 we described in this journal the increasing number of Dutch universities that had developed honors programs for the more motivated and able students wanting to do more than the regular curriculum offered them (Wolfensberger et al., "Honours Programs"). As a result, talented and motivated students were receiving many new opportunities. The development of honors programs was relevant as an important innovation in higher education with a wide influence on all university programs. Since 2004, this trend has continued to a degree that warrants an update of our earlier findings.

BACKGROUND

In the Netherlands as well as most countries in the world, honors programs are designed to offer educational opportunities that are more

challenging and demanding than regular programs, and they are designed for motivated and gifted students who want more and have the capacity to do more than the regular curriculum requires from them. Selection and admission procedures are thus an important component of honors programs. Selectivity is a rather new phenomenon at most Dutch universities, and honors admission procedures have attracted criticism as they have done in the U.S. and other countries. Debates about elitism, equal access, social class, and diversion of resources to talented students have taken place among faculty and researchers as well as university administrations (Bastedo & Gumport; Weiner; Long; Zeegers & Barron). In the rather egalitarian Dutch society, a focus on talent in the selection process is also an issue for discussion (Van Eijl et al., "Talent"). An emphasis on grades can lead to competition among students. Selectivity, competition, and differentiation in tuition are still new and unusual elements in the Dutch educational system, which has an emphasis on broad educational participation without entrance selection (Hofstede; Van Eijl et al., "Honours Programmes"; Van Eijl et al., "Talent"). Selection does take place at both the start and end of secondary education when students must take a national examination supplied and regulated by the government, but, once a student has obtained a diploma, he or she has traditionally been able to enter any university program. The Dutch situation has been unlike America, where high schools are typically inclusive but then students are admitted to universities based on standardized tests.

There have always been debates about what creates excellent educational outcomes: the motivation, giftedness, or social background of the students. Many argue that intelligence is not the exclusive or reliable predictor for success (Terman; Oden; Keesen; Carnicom & Snyder). Other predictors have included personality characteristics such as perseverance, creative thinking, and problem-solving ability (Reis & Renzulli; Campbell & Campbell) as well as organizational talent and the power to employ intelligence and wisdom (Sternberg, "Intelligence" and "WICS"). Mönks as well as Campbell et al. have described the significance of contexts like family, school, and friends. In relation to honors programs, one could also argue that it is appropriate or possible to decide who is gifted only after participation. Among these predictors, ours focuses on motivation and giftedness because our honors programs are specially developed for the more motivated and able students who want to do more than the regular program.

The development of honors programs in the Netherlands has been strongly influenced in the last decade by the implementation of the bachelor-master structure. All over Europe, the realization of the "European Higher Education Area" has been an important issue on the agenda of universities and other institutions of higher education. The main issue has been to implement a

structure of bachelor's and master's programs that will facilitate student mobility and comparison of grades. Implementation started in 1999 when the Ministers responsible for higher education from twenty-nine European countries signed the Bologna Declaration, agreeing on important joint objectives for the development of a single, cohesive European Higher Education Area by 2010. In 2003, the Ministers from thirty-three European countries met in Berlin to review the progress achieved and to set priorities and new objectives for the coming years, with a view to speeding up the European Higher Education Area. The Netherlands was way ahead of many of the other countries because, in nearly all Dutch institutions, bachelor-master programs for all new students had been introduced in 2002 along with many of the reforms associated with this process.

In the Netherlands, all research universities at present have honors programs for four main reasons. First, with implementation of the bachelor-master, many undergraduate programs were broadened, creating new opportunities for honors programs that allow for enrichment. Second, it is becoming more important for students to distinguish themselves in order, for instance, to be admitted to selective master programs in the Netherlands or abroad, and honors programs provide opportunities for students to achieve this kind of distinction through, for instance, an honors certificate or diploma upon graduation. Third, political discussions about the knowledge economy and the need to strengthen the Dutch and European innovative capacity have led to a renewed emphasis on talent and research. Excellence in teaching and research has been on the political agenda of the government in projects like "Ruim Baan voor Talent" ("Make Way for Talent") and Sirius (about a hundred million dollars for developing talent programs in higher education), and honors programs have fitted well into this agenda. Traditionally, the emphasis in the Netherlands has always been on equality, equity, and access (Hofstede), but the new focus on excellence supports the rapid development of honors programs at Dutch universities. Maybe in the end Dutch culture will be able to add excellence to the list without displacing the other traditional emphases. Fourth and finally, the growth of honors programs at Dutch universities may be explained by the fact that the Anglo-Saxon Higher Education system served as a model for the European bachelor-master implementation, and honors programs are a widespread phenomenon in this model. Considering the forward position of the Netherlands in the introduction of the bachelor-master system and in the implementation of honors, honors programs are likely to spread to other European countries as they adopt the system.

Dutch honors programs demonstrate a great variety in pedagogical design and organization. Their main goal is to provide academic opportunities that challenge students to perform at their highest level of excellence.

Additional goals involve stimulating talent, attracting new teachers and students of outstanding academic ability, creating connections between educational programs, and providing a laboratory for educational experiments that can be adopted by regular programs. The latter is also cited as an important goal of honors programs in the United States: "[E]ducational innovation and honors have often been allied. The development of honors courses and curricula is necessarily an exercise in innovation." (Austin, *Honors Programs* 16; cf. also Dennison). Innovation is one of the NCHC's Basic Characteristics of a Fully Developed Honors Program "The program serves as a laboratory within which faculty feel welcome to experiment with new subjects, approaches, and pedagogies. When proven successful, such efforts in curriculum and pedagogical development can serve as prototypes for initiatives that can become institutionalized across the campus."

Given the explicit or implicit goal of innovation, we should expect honors programs to generate spin-off effects on regular programs. Demonstration that honors programs are a source of innovation along with understanding of their spin-off effects strengthens the position of and appreciation for these programs; it may also help to refute the point of view that they are exclusively for "a happy few" participating students. At the same time, while we recognize that all students profit from the challenge of learning to do their own thinking and making their own choices, we also know that not all practices in honors programs should be transferred to regular programs: "For gifted students, the content level involved in the discovery and problem solving could be at a higher level of abstraction than possible for the average student. . . . Also, Shore and Delcourt note that ability grouping, acceleration, and differential programming are particularly useful for gifted students" (Gallagher 688). Our focus is on those innovations that have, in fact, been successfully realized in regular programs and had their origin in honors programs, whether or not the adaptation was planned at the outset.

The main research questions of this paper are the following:

- To what extent do Dutch honors programs function as laboratories for educational innovation in regular programs?

- What kinds of innovations and changes in regular programs do honors programs generate?

- What characteristics of honors programs are related to this spin-off effect?

These questions are addressed after an explanation of our research methods and an update on the characteristics of Dutch honors programs.

RESEARCH METHODS

We selected honors programs specifically defined as programs developed to offer educational opportunities that are more challenging and demanding than regular programs. A first inventory of all honors programs at Dutch research-based universities was made in 2003, the most recent inventory in 2010 (Wolfensberger et al., "Learning"). The inventory is, we believe, rather complete; some programs that were currently being developed have now been included as well as information received until summer 2012. Because of the fast development in recent years, we expect great changes in the near future. For this reason, we mainly report qualitative findings.

The first focus in the analysis was on the programs and their characteristics: target group, educational methods, subjects, selection and admission procedures, duration, assessment, recognition, awards, and the innovation function. The research was limited to programs that consist of a series of courses or modules, and individual "honors" assignments within courses were not included. We made an inventory of innovations that were adopted in regular programs and had their origin in honors programs. These innovations were categorized according to content, pedagogy, and structure of the regular program. In the inventory we also asked about factors that stimulated the innovations.

We have used the data of a previous study (Wolfensberger et al, "Honours Programs"), a 2012 inventory of honors programs in research universities (Wolfensberger et al.,"Learning"), and an overview by the Audit Committee Sirius in 2012. For the honors programs in the universities of applied sciences, we used the overview of the audit committee and the inventory by Wolfensberger, de Jong, and Drayer. Additional information came from documents, websites, and interviews with teachers, coordinators, and directors of honors programs. Examples of honors program spin-offs were also derived from a study on the pedagogy of honors education (Van Eijl et al, "Talent").

CHARACTERISTICS OF HONORS PROGRAMS AT DUTCH UNIVERSITIES

The inventory resulted in about 50 honors programs and colleges at 11 of the 13 research-based universities and about 40 programs at 19 of the 40 universities of applied sciences. Honors programs are rather new in the Netherlands: the first started in 1993, but many programs started after 2008. This recent growth in programs is related to a fostering policy of the universities and the government and also by the introduction of the bachelor-master system. Universities and students are discovering that it is becoming more

important to distinguish themselves in the competition for international master studies.

Between our study in 2004 and now, the number of programs at research universities increased from 25 to about 50. Even more important, the number of students increased to about 5000, roughly 3% of each cohort. Utrecht University is the frontrunner in this development with more than 15%. A new phenomenon is the development of honors programs at the Universities of Applied Sciences. These 19 universities, which focus on professional education, saw the number of programs increase from almost zero in 2004 to about 40 in 2010. All 19 have programs within one or more departments; 8 have programs that involve students of all departments. The number of students is still low but rapidly growing (Wolfensberger et al., "Learning"). The programs focus on excellent professionals as well as personal development. The development of this innovation is attractive for many students, faculty, and administrators.

Dutch honors programs are rather uniformly distributed among the disciplines, including medical, scientific, and technological fields. Programs in the liberal arts often combine specialization with multidisciplinary study; University College Utrecht and University College Maastricht are two examples that provide this kind of integrative combination. Recently, leadership and personal development are becoming more common elements of honors education (Wolfensberger et al., "Learning").

The key characteristic of honors programs we included in our study is that they have been developed for the more motivated and talented students, and this purpose is reflected in their selection procedures, study tasks, and forms of assessment and certification. The programs differ in duration, structure, types of students involved, years of study in which they are scheduled, number of credits required, total credit hours, educational methods, and assessment, but, despite all these differences, they share a number of common characteristics. Many of these characteristics are found in the United States (Austin, "Orientation"), but honors programs in the Netherlands are more likely to focus on the disciplines and research activities, to be additional to the regular curriculum, and to include a fast-growing number of honors master's programs. Here is a summary of our findings on these characteristics:

a. Honors programs use mainly small-scale educational methods varying from individual education to groups of twenty students, thus enhancing the interaction between the participants and between students and teacher as well as providing more opportunities to follow the individual interests of students. Active participation is evident, e.g., in discussion and feedback, presentations of research, and excursions. Peer-interaction is an important characteristic of honors in the Netherlands.

b. Many context-specific and pedagogical innovations as well as up-to-date content are found in honors programs. Special attention is paid to academic skills, interdisciplinary pedagogy, reflective student portfolios, student participation, challenging course content, new ways of assessment, peer feedback, and discussion among peers. In a number of programs, special attention is paid to research, design, and other professional competencies. Quite a number of programs offer opportunities for honors students to do research at an earlier stage and at a more advanced level than in regular programs. Frequently a connection is made with master's or PhD programs. Honors programs are often perceived as nurseries for research talent.

c. Honors programs are more demanding in content and in quantity. In many honors programs students receive "honors credits," which have no legal status but are testimonials to the time spent in the honors program. However, in an increasing number of honors programs students receive grade points for having participated in these programs instead of the regular programs. Completion of an honors program is typically acknowledged with a testimonial, a certificate, an additional phrase on the diploma, or a special diploma. Honors graduation is sometimes an official academic event, e.g., the vice-chancellor presents the honors diploma to the students.

d. Honors programs use different types of admission criteria including GPA and level of motivation as revealed in letters of application and interviews. Letters of recommendation from mentors also play a role. We did not find programs which use only an average number of credits or average GPA.

e. Some honors programs are meant for non-freshman students, but others are meant for all bachelor's students. Regular bachelor's programs at Dutch research universities take three years after six years of secondary school or, at universities of applied sciences, four years after typically five years of secondary school. All students have to complete a bachelor's thesis or other substantial capstone assignment. Most programs have a coordinator or director, usually a teacher or a coach in the program, who organizes and develops the program. Coaches encourage the students to work on their academic achievement and to be involved in new challenges.

f. Many honors programs involve innovation in content and pedagogy that can then be transferred to regular programs. Innovation is usually not stated as an objective of an honors program but is certainly one of the intended effects.

STUDENT POPULATION:
DIFFERENCES IN ETHNICITY AND GENDER

In 2009, 3.2 % of the new bachelor's students in Dutch research universities participated in honors programs or colleges (Wolfensberger et al., "Learning"). In 2011 the highest percentages were at Utrecht University, where participation was 15%, and at Maastricht University, where it was 9.1% (Utrecht University Board)). The national percentage grew one third in 2009–2011 (Audit Committee Sirius). The number of students in honors colleges is rather large: each year 230 students start at Utrecht University College; 190 at Roosevelt Academy; 200 at Maastricht University College; 200 at Leiden University College; and 200 at Amsterdam University College. Twente University will start in 2013 with 60–100 students. At the master's level, four front-running universities now involve about 2% of the students. At the universities of applied sciences, the percentage of participating honors students was lower in 2011 (about 1.5–2%) because they started later, but the percentage is rapidly rising, the highest now being at Hanzehogeschool with about 950 students, which is 6.2% of the total enrollment. The overall dropout rate from honors programs is reported to be between 10% and 30%, mainly because of schedule conflicts among students and problems in the development of the new programs. The total number of Dutch honors students in 2011 was about 7,000.

The numbers and percentages related to honors should be considered in the general context that, in 2009, 63% of the Dutch cohort of pupils went into higher education (67% of the women, 58% of the men). The percentage of non-western women is about the same as western women while the percentage of non-western men is behind but growing (Vogels & Turkenburg). Although we have no overall data on gender and ethnicity in the population of honors students in the Netherlands, our impression, based on visits and interviews, is that the male/female ratio is about 40/60 and that non-western students are still under-represented in honors programs.

FINANCING HONORS PROGRAMS

We see a lot of diversity in the way honors programs are funded. So far, some have been financed by grants for educational innovation, some by the central administration of a university, and some by a department. Until now, there has been little or no differentiation in the costs for students; all EU students in Dutch universities pay about 1771 euros ($2,270 U.S. dollars) per year for their higher education. Almost none of the honors programs require students to pay extra for participation. No special grants are available for honors students. However, general budget reductions in higher education have led to new debates on the financing of honors programs.

Breeding Ground for
Researchers and Professionals

In many honors programs at research universities, special attention is paid to research competencies. Sometimes students get experience in research by spending a visiting semester at a research institution so that they can discover whether they are really interested and competent in research. The university benefits by hosting a breeding ground for highly talented students; after a positive evaluation of their activities by the student and university, many students enter a master's and then PhD program.

In honors programs at universities of applied sciences, special attention is often paid to professional competencies, creating a new initiative for faculty, students, and professional organizations. This development is especially relevant in a knowledge-intensive society where professional competencies are fast-changing not only in science and technology but also in medical, educational, and entrepreneurial domains.

A TYPOLOGY OF HONORS PROGRAMS
AT DUTCH UNIVERSITIES

Based on analysis of the data in our inventory, we have drawn up a typology of honors programs. We can distinguish three types of honors programs: disciplinary, interdisciplinary, and multidisciplinary.

In disciplinary honors programs, deepening the understanding of subjects, methodologies, and research within a discipline is the main goal. Students usually take honors courses as add-ons to their regular program. The departments encourage and finance these kinds of honors programs, and participating teachers and students originate from the department.

In interdisciplinary honors programs, the focus is on subjects and themes that include and go beyond different disciplines and also on interdisciplinary methodologies. These programs are an add-on for students wanting to broaden their academic education beyond the scope of their main subject. These types of honors program are organized and financed at the level of the university as a whole. In most, students and teachers are drawn from all over the university.

Most of the multidisciplinary programs are liberal arts and sciences colleges, offering a full substitute for regular programs and a full honors bachelor's degree. Connections between the disciplines are not an explicit issue for discussion. Most of these programs are a full substitute for regular programs, and most are liberal arts and sciences colleges offering a full honors bachelor's degree. Selection is strict, and students must maintain a high GPA. These full-degree programs are analogous to some honors colleges in the

U.S. and are distinct from the other honors programs. Another kind of multi-disciplinary program is the so-called TWIN program that leads to a double-major bachelor's degree, e.g., math and physics.

SPIN-OFF EFFECTS IN REGULAR PROGRAMS

We have categorized spin-off effects into three main fields of innovation: course content, pedagogy, and program structure. By spin-off in course content we mean the development of a new course or a change in the content of a course in the regular program that is directly induced by the honors program. By spin-off in pedagogy, we mean changes in the activities of teachers and students in non-honors courses. Spin-off in the field of program structure includes changes in the overall structure, sequence, and outline of a program.

SPIN-OFF EFFECTS IN COURSE CONTENT

Disciplinary honors programs appear to have had sizable spin-off effects in course content, where a strong content relationship exists between the disciplinary honors program and the regular program. The innovative and experimental content of honors programs is in most cases closely connected to the regular program and can be easily integrated into it after proven success.

Many interdisciplinary honors programs develop new courses on interdisciplinary subjects. Those courses aim at a deeper understanding of interdisciplinary relationships between subjects and are specifically meant for students in the honors program. Some of these courses eventually become an option for students in the regular program as regular courses become duplicates of honors courses.

Examples

A group of students in the honors program of the Department of Geosciences at Utrecht University did their research projects at universities in Bergen, Norway, and Barcelona, Spain. They discovered that considerably more attention was paid to qualitative methods of research abroad than at Utrecht University. Back in Utrecht, they started a discussion of research methods with their teachers, leading to discussion in the departmental newsletter. As a result, the next group of honors students was offered special lectures on qualitative methods of research. Within a year, these special lectures were made available to all 150 students in the regular curriculum. Ten years later, all undergraduate students now do a final research project and write a thesis, using a quantitative, qualitative, or mixed methods approach.

Another example is the development of student-driven courses. Undergraduate students discovered that honors students learned to take responsibility for their own learning by choosing a course topic and faculty

member and together designing course assignments, e.g., papers, fieldwork, and films. Now all senior undergraduate students and also faculty members have the freedom to create such courses.

A more broad-based example has occurred in the same honors program in Geosciences, a disciplinary program (Harms & Hogenstijn) that evolved into a three-year interdisciplinary program with about sixty students (Wolfensberger & Gorp). Despite many changes, the core of the program remained the same: evoking excellence by connecting cognitive, personal, and professional development. As citizenship is an important element in the program, an honors tradition has been interest in ethical and affective issues, e.g., in dialogues about science and its application (Nussbaum). Honors students have introduced these elements of their honors education into their regular classes, resulting in grants and prizes for the Department of Geosciences.

In the double-major TWIN programs in the Department of Science at Utrecht University, the spin-off effects flow across disciplines. Typically, the TWIN-programs offer a rare opportunity for faculty members of two scientific fields to cooperate and co-create an educational program. TWIN-programs require a rethinking of disciplinary basics as well as fine-tuning of the content.

Spin-off Effects in Pedagogy

Most of the disciplinary honors programs appear also to have had sizable spin-off effects in pedagogy. Teachers have acquired new understanding and skills in instructional methods, assignments, coaching of students, peer feedback, and honors communities. They reported transferring these skills rather easily into the standard program. Spin-off is also stimulated by the flow of information between honors and non-honors students; honors students function as agents of innovation. The spin-off effects of disciplinary honors programs become visible in a relatively short time, and we found that departments as a whole profit from the educational innovations.

For interdisciplinary programs, it was difficult to get reliable data about the spin-off effects on pedagogy. However, it appears that teachers in such honors programs become more conscious of their responsibility to raise the educational quality within their regular program. The teachers and students of these interdisciplinary programs come from various departments but join in the program. These teachers take their new understanding and skills in the field of pedagogy back to their regular program, but, because the setting in their department is different and their students have virtually no communication with those in the honors program, it is likely to be more difficult for them to apply their new skills. However, we found some clear instances of spin-off effects, especially when new regular programs were designed or old ones revised.

Example

The University of Amsterdam uses its interdisciplinary honors program for motivated first-year students as a breeding ground for different kinds of instructional activities, e.g., the digital portfolio, that have then been disseminated throughout the university. In this case, the spin-off effects have also influenced the honors program itself, which has grown from involving six departments to being implemented in almost all departments of the university.

SPIN-OFF EFFECTS IN PROGRAM STRUCTURE

Honors colleges appeared to provide excellent contexts for experiments and innovations in interdisciplinary subjects, instructional methods, challenging assignments, and course organization. The success of such innovations in some cases led to replication in the university as a whole. Students in these full-degree colleges work only with other honors students and do not interact with other students at the "mother university"; hence, they do not function as agents of innovative change in the regular program. However, faculty members often have positions in both the honors college and host institution, which means that they can function as liaisons. We found indeed important examples of innovations along these lines.

Example

University College Utrecht (UCU) has influenced not only other university programs at Utrecht University but also honors programs and colleges in other universities. This first honors college in the Netherlands, despite initial resistance to it within Utrecht University, found a solid base when it proved to be a success: the learning results were outstanding; the students were highly motivated and made excellent progress; and the faculty, who were selected because they were known as outstanding teachers, were positive about this kind of learning and teaching. The students, the University Board, and many faculty involved in UCU showed their commitment to this innovative program in discussions about large-scale curriculum reform when the bachelor-master system was introduced. After this green light, UCU became a breeding ground for exceptional teachers and students. UCU had attracted a group of teachers who had authority among their peers and showed enthusiasm for trying out new educational concepts. As indicated in evaluation data, the diversity of the student population, many of whom were international students brought up in different educational systems, forced the teachers and staff of UCU to experiment with instructional content and form. The selection system, which did not exist in regular programs elsewhere in the Netherlands, brought a capable and motivated as well as diverse group of students together and facilitated this experimentation. The interaction between

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teachers from different academic disciplines was also a source of inspiration for spin-off. Teachers thus gained experiences that were later transplanted into regular programs.

With this international bachelor's program at an honors level, Utrecht University obtained a wide-ranging expertise in liberal arts and sciences learning, a new educational concept in Dutch universities. When Utrecht University introduced the bachelor-master structure in the whole university, the UCU program played the role of a visionary model for the new programs, specifically in its emphasis on a broad spectrum of academic education and skills; freedom of choice in requirements; coaching of the students; more tests and feedback within the courses; and marked reduction in the number of students who had to repeat a course.

Many other research universities also introduced spin-off honors colleges—e.g., Maastricht, Amsterdam, Leiden, and Twente—and Utrecht University started a second one, the Roosevelt Academy in Middelburg. Utrecht University also started to implement the concept of honors colleges at the department level, e.g., the Utrecht Law College (Van Gestel et al.). The Junior College Utrecht was founded as a bridge between secondary education and research universities (Van der Valk and Pilot), Hanzehogeschool will start a Junior Honors Academy as a bridge to the universities of applied sciences.

Another example is the Honors College Amsterdam, a combined liberal arts and sciences honors college of the University of Amsterdam and the VU University Amsterdam, both large research universities. Started in 2010, this college offers a series of honors courses for bachelor-level students of both universities.

KEY ISSUES IN UNDERSTANDING THE SPIN-OFF EFFECTS

At least four characteristics of honors programs are important to their spin-off effects on course content, pedagogy, and program structure.

Innovation as an Aim

In many honors programs, the administration has implicitly or explicitly encouraged innovation. In seven of ten universities of applied sciences, innovation has been an explicit part of the mission from the start (Wolfensberger et al., "Learning"). While many interdisciplinary honors programs explicitly include innovation in their mission, others were established with a unique goal of some kind and stressing spin-off effects that would be counter-productive; even programs like this, though, often indicate that they see spin-off effects in regular programs. For example, the double-degree programs of the Department of Science at Utrecht University have demonstrated that teachers

who previously did not communicate very much now show more interaction about subject matter and pedagogy.

Many teachers and administrators involved in honors are also innovators, eager to experiment with new ideas and play a liaison role in the flow of ideas. Some are "early adopters and persons with authority" whose role is "to decrease uncertainty about a new idea by adopting it and conveying a subjective evaluation of the innovation to near-peers by means of interpersonal networks" (Rogers 240). These early adopters often work in honors programs as well as regular programs, hastening the communication and acceptance of innovations. Van Poucke indicates that, for an innovation to be successful, it needs to go through the full process of development, crystallization, and realization. Knowing and understanding an innovation—forming an opinion on it in the 'safe' environment of an honors program with a small group of enthusiastic students—makes it easier for a teacher to implement it in a regular program.

EDUCATIONAL INNOVATIONS:
HONORS PROGRAMS AS BREEDING PLACES

Spin-off effects are a consequence of honors programs that serve as breeding places for innovation, often transforming regular programs while the honors program continues to evolve even further. Honors programs like the one in Geosciences at Utrecht University mention this kind of spin-off effect in their mission statement, defining their honors program as a platform for innovation of regular programs.

We found that many honors teachers report being stimulated to use their creativity by working in honors and experiencing freedom as well as responsibility to create new courses that serve the needs of the students (Audit Committee). Pedagogical innovations and interdisciplinary courses are risky for teachers, but they transfer a wide range of innovations—reflective digital portfolios, personal tutors, challenging assignments, seminars, interdisciplinary student collaboration, talent coaching, research projects, peer discussions, peer feedback, peer teaching, peer assessment—to regular programs even when such transfer is not an official policy.

CREDITS OR NO CREDITS:
INFLUENCE ON THE ACCEPTANCE OF INNOVATIONS

One possibility is that innovation is more easily accepted by and implemented in regular programs when no credits are given to the honors students, the assumption being that the students' intrinsic motivation is higher when no credits are given. Another advantage of this possibility is that, in the Dutch

educational system, there are fewer administrative obstacles (such as accred-itation procedures) when no credits are given. However, giving credits to all honors activities consolidates these programs more firmly in the university structure.

Honors programs vary widely in assignment of credits and/or grades. In many cases, honors assessments or credits have no influence on students' grades in their regular program. Programs also differ in the way they are com-pleted: in some, at least a part of the honors study load is an add-on; in oth-ers, honors students do a part of their regular curriculum in an honors format with assignments that are different and more demanding; in still others, stu-dents do the honors program and the regular curriculum simultaneously. Students sometimes receive so-called "honorary credits," which are not offi-cial credits but do indicate the workload of the course, and some programs give "extra credits," which are official but can be used only for electives. However, most multidisciplinary programs offer a full curriculum instead of the regular program, and these programs do give official credits and provide an official bachelor's diploma.

Selection and Motivation: Fostering Spin-off Effects

Most honors programs have selection and admission procedures that result in significant self-selection before the official procedure even starts. A student has to enroll, show some intellectual achievement, and write a letter of motivation. Above-average grades are required in most programs and pro-vide information about intellectual performance, but they do not reveal acad-emic potential, creativity, and personal qualities. In admissions procedures, therefore, all Dutch institutions look beyond grades and place high value on motivation. Students selected on the basis of motivation rather than grades are usually seeking a challenge to perform at their highest level of excellence, and they appreciate working with other strongly motivated students, as shown, for example, in the honors evaluations of the Department of Geosciences at Utrecht University (Van Eijl et al., "Talent"). These students are committed to each other and to their subject content, so teachers are will-ing to experiment.

Student participation and feedback are especially useful to faculty mem-bers when they implement innovations. Birdwell-Pheasant argues,

> . . . the single most important distinction between honors and non-honors courses are [*sic*] the honors students: dedicated, motivated, fascinated students with solid foundations in prior work and with new creative insights. They spark each other (and the professor), and

learning takes on a whole new dimension . . . The essence of honors programs, I believe, is putting gifted people in touch with one another." (25)

The selection procedures are thus crucial to creating a context in which educational innovations can be developed and tested. Self-reflection and peer interaction/feedback are important outcomes when mistakes are allowed and then used to improve performance in a safe learning process. Furthermore, as the courses are often add-ons, the consequences of failure are rather low.

In our study of the innovative capacity of honors programs, we mainly focused on characteristics of the programs themselves. However, we found evidence that the way an honors program is integrated into a department is also important for its innovative capacity (Van Poucke). An honors program is often perceived as a network that fosters relationships between students and faculty, thereby facilitating spin-off effects (Fenwick). The formal and informal exchange of knowledge and experience among teachers, students, honors directors, and university administrators appears to be important for successful spin-off effects. The concept of "learning organizations" (Senge) helps explain the successful spin-off effects and innovation process at Utrecht University, focusing on the the kinds of innovative people involved and on the phases of innovation: (1) initiation (reaching consensus, providing a concrete scenario for innovation, and deciding on process factors); (2) implementation; and (3) consolidation. At Utrecht University the focus of Havelock and Huberman on infrastructure, authority, and consensus also provided a better understanding of how to foster of the process. The high level of faculty authority from the start of Utrecht University College made a big difference in the spin-off effects into the regular programs (Pilot). The first results of spin-off then strengthened the implementation of further innovations and the general focus on talent development in the university and beyond; as Havelock & Huberman suggest, success breeds success.

CONCLUSIONS

Our study has shown that educational innovations in course content, pedagogy, and program structure are both characteristics and outcomes of honors programs; after their obvious advantages had proven successful, they appeared to spread readily into regular programs as participants adopted and disseminated the new ideas.

We found five important features of honors programs regarding spin-off effects in regular programs:

1. Inclusion of innovation in the programmatic mission, whether explicit or implicit;

2. Intellectual quality and passion that create appeal for students, even when no credits are given, and for teachers, who then promote innovation throughout the university;

3. Selection process (including self-selection) that creates a safe learning environment in which experimentation can take place;

4. Quality and dynamism of educational innovations that produce continuous programmatic change as well as university-wide dissemination; and

5. Long-term impacts on national educational policy to promote academic excellence and talent development at all levels of education.

Honors programs are rapidly developing in Dutch universities as a way to evoke excellence in students and serve as laboratories of innovation. We expect that this interest in honors programs will grow and evolve, leading to new questions:

• Will the spin-off from honors programs concentrate on bachelor students or also involve more master's-level students in honors programs (Van Ginkel et al., "Honors in the Master's")? Will honors programs involve all domains in the same way or will there be large differences between humanities, social sciences, science and technology, and medical sciences? What will be the position of liberal arts honors colleges and programs? Will the universities of applied sciences be successful in developing honors programs related to the professional excellence, and what spin-off will these programs provide?

• How will the institutions finance honors programs: institutionally, at the departmental level, and/or with outside funding? How much does the cost of education for an honors student differ from that of regular students? How can we show that a higher cost is 'worth it' for the institution as a whole? Should students pay higher tuition for honors programs? Should honors programs in the Netherlands follow the models of the U.S. and Canada where honors replaces regular courses rather than being an add-on?

• How can the assessment of learning outcomes be organized in a valid and reliable way? What are the best forms of assessment and certification? Do they differ in important ways from those employed in the regular programs and courses, and, if they do, what implications does that difference have for innovations in the regular programs?

• How is further spin-off related to the issue of the added value of honors programs? What kind of feedback or evaluation of their efforts should students receive, and should they get evaluation in the form of a grade? Can grades be an obstacle to risk-taking and even participation? How can the

organization and the rules for giving credit best be regulated? When all universities offer honors programs, how can the differences between programs and certificates be described and perhaps standardized? How can quality assurance be organized? What procedures are advisable for developing extracurricular activities?

• What should be the authority and responsibility of honors units in the structure of the departments and the university? What will be the role of a Dutch organization of honors programs and colleges: organizing seminars and conferences on honors, evoking excellence, encouraging scholarly activities, sharing experiences, and/or fostering innovation? How can such an organization play a role in professional development of honors teachers across Dutch universities?

Recent developments in Dutch honors programs have stimulated many research activities in the past years on important issues in honors education and opportunities for spin-off: e.g., developing latent talent (Coppoolse et al.), professional excellence (Paans et al.), challenging assignments (Scager et al., "Challenging"), citizenship related to global mindedness (Schutte et al.), honors communities (Van Ginkel et al., "Building"), selection (Scager et al., "Do Honors Students") and professional development of honors teachers (Ten Berge & Scager; Kazemier).

We look forward to continued vitality in research about honors and to expanding our findings about innovation in honors not just in the Netherlands but in comparison with U.S. honors programs, which have been offered across the country for many years, and with newer honors programs around the globe. We assume that the spin-off effects we have seen in the Netherlands are characteristic of honors education everywhere, and we look forward to research that investigates and, we hope, confirms this assumption.

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Qualities Honours Students Look for in Faculty and Courses, Revisited

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INTRODUCTION

In the eight years since the original version of this study was published, a lot has changed in the Dutch honours landscape. Stimulated by governmental measures, many new honours programmes were—and are being—developed, not only within academic universities but now also in more than half of the universities of applied sciences (UAS) (Wolfensberger, Jong & Drayer). Honours programmes, which we define as programmes that are specifically developed to offer educational opportunities that are more challenging and demanding than regular programmes, are recognized as one of the primary means to evoke excellence in talented students. 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.

Although the body of knowledge is increasing, our insight into effective honours programmes has not developed at the same pace as has 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 is the need for 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 that those talented students will be broadly alike. Honours students are commonly considered to be clever, high-achieving, full of potential, and intrinsically motivated. Most honours programmes have admission procedures separate from those of their host university, and the existence of these procedures suggests that a relevant and accurate distinction between honours and non-honours students can be made. What we need to explore is the kind of peers, teachers, courses, and programs that this special category of students—honours students—look for and need in their education.

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 instrument for helping students to achieve a high profile, a strategy for coping with a diversified student population, a remedy to retain talented students and faculty, or a laboratory for innovations. We think that, whatever the reason, honours programmes should motivate students in a way that engenders commitment, effort, wisdom, and high-quality performance. We would suggest, supported by the views of Ryan & Deci, that we should therefore look for an educational context that supports the growth of autonomy, competence, and relatedness. The idea that those three traits predict "integrated motivation" and intrinsic as well as extrinsic motivation (Ryan & Deci 73), which in turn predict study behavior, has been confirmed by many studies (see overview in Ryan & Deci; also Martens & Kirschner). 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, and making a difference. Relatedness corresponds with a safe learning environment or honours community where the faculty is personally involved and peers are to be trusted. Creating a learning context that supports autonomy, competence, and relatedness thus enhances motivation and fosters the internalization and integration of knowledge, ideas, and skills. We assume that this context is what honours students are looking for, but we need to develop a better, empirically based understanding of what honours students seek and need 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?

- Are possible differences constant over time and consistent across (types of) universities?

- Does our theory-based learning context, which is supportive of autonomy, academic competence, and relatedness through an honours community, actually correspond with the preferences of our honours students?

Most of the research on honours programmes has taken place in the U.S. with its longstanding tradition of such programmes, but even in the U.S. empirical research on students' motivations, attitudes, and achievements is scarce. Long & Lange 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" (21). We have not seen any significant shift and growth in research; the body of available U.S. research on the characteristics of honours students typically 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 (Clark; Gerrity *et al*.; Harte; Rinn & Plucker; Shushok). A question also remains whether U.S. results can be transferred to a 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; Gerrity *et al*.; Harte; Shushok; Rinn & Plucker; Long & Lange); it also contained questions based on Dutch (anecdotal) information (among others: evaluation reports; van Eijl *et al*.; Wolfensberger, van Eijl, & Pilot). 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.

The present paper strives to validate and expand some of the outcomes of the 2004 article. Since the pilot study, modified versions of the original questionnaire were administered to honours and non-honours students from different fields and universities on several occasions (see Table 1). In total, 1,451 students from two academic and one applied university were questioned. For the pilot, two different honours programmes from the two largest research universities were chosen as examples of 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 (van Eijl, Wolfensberger, et al.; Wolfensberger, van Eijl et al.), we can divide honours in the Netherlands into

Table 1. Number of Respondents by University, Type of Programme and Survey Period

University	H(onours) or N(on-Honours)	Type of Honours Programme	2003–2004 (pilot)	2005–2007	2010–2011
University of Amsterdam	H	Interdisciplinary	45	84	–
University of Amsterdam	N		85	–	–
Utrecht University	H	Disciplinary*	12	37	–
		Disciplinary, Multidisciplinary	–	–	187
Utrecht University	N		128	326	205
Hanze UAS Groningen	H	Combination of Disciplinary and Interdisciplinary	–	–	152
Hanze UAS Groningen	N		–	–	179
Totals			**270**	**447**	**734****

* Human Geography and Planning;
** Of these, for 11 students either their university or their participation in an honours programme or both is unclear.

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, like the faculty, come from all departments of the university, and they meet only in honours. Recently combinations of these types of programmes are being developed. Finally, multidisciplinary honours programmes bear strong similarities to liberal arts and sciences honours colleges in the United States.

In the pilot that we conducted in 2003–2004, we included 3 populations and 1 stratified sample, resulting in a total of 270 useful questionnaires. From the interdisciplinary honours programme at 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. The honours population of the disciplinary programme Human Geography and Planning of the Faculty of Geoscience at University of Utrecht consisted 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. Similar procedures were followed subsequently at the same universities in Amsterdam and Utrecht in 2005–2007 and at Utrecht University and the Hanze University of Applied Sciences Groningen in 2010–2011.

The pilot questionnaire consisted mostly of closed questions, focusing on students' opinions of fellow students, teachers, courses, general life attitudes, and socioeconomic 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 qualities of fellow students, teachers, and courses respectively on a simple 1 to 5 scale (1 = very important; 5 = totally 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.

In the 2005–2007 version of the questionnaire, modifications were made to the pilot version. Some items were slightly rephrased, others were added. In 2010–2011 a shortened version containing 13 questions about teachers only was administered as part of a larger questionnaire for another study. The five (almost) identical questions about teachers that were part of all three data collections are the subject of our new analyses.

We used regular statistical methods for the analyses, especially Pearson Chi-Square, Cramer's V. We also gave the means of scores on the 1–5 scale.

Although this methodology is perhaps not fully correct, the means help present the results in a straightforward manner. In this paper, a result that is statistically significant refers to a confidence level of 95% ($a = 0.05$). We compared all honours students versus all non-honours students and—with regard to the pilot—did the statistics for the two programmes separately (in other words, interdisciplinary honours versus non-honours students of the University of Amsterdam and disciplinary honours versus non-honours students in Human Geography and Planning at the University of Utrecht).

RESULTS OF THE PILOT STUDY: HONOURS STUDENTS VERSUS NON-HONOURS STUDENTS

The honours students, being asked to rate qualities of faculty and courses on a scale of 1 (very important) to 5 (totally unimportant), answered as follows: most important is that the teachers be inspiring (1.5), that courses fit in with their personal interests (1.5), that courses be challenging (1.6), that courses awaken their curiosity (1.8), that teachers be friendly (2.0), and that the reading materials be interesting (2.0). Honours students rated highly that teachers teach in a clear and structured way (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 indicated different priorities. They valued none of the given items as very important (score of 1), so the means are mostly higher than 2, with the exception of the importance given to clear and structured teaching and to clear criteria (resp. 1.5; 1.5). Otherwise, the top five characteristics preferred by the non-honours students were that the courses fit in 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 are interesting (2.1). Our new data confirm these differences with a relatively strong emphasis that honours students put on the awakening of their curiosity and—as we will see in more detail—non-honours students' demand for clearly structured study tasks.

The five highest scoring items for the honours students had to do with inherent enjoyment and indicated internal motivation. They fit with a learning context focused on relatedness, autonomy, and competence. Our findings largely correspond with Stephens and Eison, who in 1987 reported that honours students showed more intrinsic interest in learning and less in grades. Our study indicated that honours students also were not as concerned that a course be important for their career (3.0 versus 2.4 in the control group of the pilot study and 2.9 versus 2.2 in 2005–2007), and they seemed to care less about study load

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In our research, honours students had 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; the pilot study's control group also scored intrinsic motivation higher than extrinsic motivation but not as markedly as for the honours group.

Our data show that honours students not only seem more curious but also ask more questions during courses than non-honours students (Cramer's V=3.1). Almost half of the honours students in the pilot study claimed to ask questions often during courses while 84% of all non-honours students said that they either never or only occasionally asked questions during courses. On average honours students scored 2.5 on a scale ranging from 1 (never) to 4 (very often) versus 2.1 for non-honours students. Our newer data (2005–2007) confirm this difference: 2.1 for honours versus 1.9 for non-honours students.

Results of the current study seem to agree with claims by Gerrity *et al.* and Robertson 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 tend 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.

TEACHER AND COURSE QUALITIES

The differences between honours students and students in the control groups are also pronounced in how the students value the five qualities that were part of all three data collections. Tables 2, 3, and 4 show that honours students place higher value on having teachers who are demanding, challenging, and inspiring than non-honours students; the effect sizes for "demanding" and "challenging" are around 0.5, which is substantial. Non-honours students have a stronger preference for clarity regarding study tasks and criteria (see Tables 5 and 6). All five differences between honours and non-honours students are visible within all three data collections, i.e. throughout the years and in different educational contexts (types of honours programme, type of university). Further, honours students find it much less important than non-honours students that courses are useful for their profession or career (pilot: 3.1 versus 2.4; 2.8 versus 2.2 in 2005–2007; not in 2010–2011). Honours students put more emphasis on courses raising questions they never thought of before, or bringing new ideas to mind than non-honours students.

Table 2. Mean Scores of Honours Versus Non-Honours Students on 'That They [Teachers] Are Demanding'

	2003–2004	2005–2007	2010–2011
Honours	2.4	2.3	2.4
Non-Honours	2.8	2.8	2.6

(1 = very important, 5 = totally unimportant)

Table 3. Mean Scores of Honours Versus Non-Honours Students on 'That Teachers Challenge Me'.

	2003–2004	2005–2007	2010–2011
Honours	1.6	2.1	1.8
Non-Honours	2.0	2.6	2.1

(1 = very important, 5 = totally unimportant)

Table 4. Mean scores of Scores of Honours Versus Non-Honours Students on 'That They [Teachers] Inspire Me'

	2003–2004	2005–2007	2010–2011
Honours	1.5	1.8	1.6
Non-Honours	2.0	2.0	1.7

(1 = very important, 5 = totally unimportant)

Table 5. Mean Scores of Honours Versus Non-Honours Students on 'That Study Tasks Are Clearly Structured/Explained'

	2003–2004	2005–2007	2010–2011
Honours	2.5	2.3	1.9
Non-Honours	1.9	1.9	1.8

(1 = very important, 5 = totally unimportant)

Table 6. Mean Scores of Honours Versus Non-Honours Students on 'That They Have Clear Criteria for What They Want from Me'

	2003–2004	2005–2007	2010–2011
Honours	1.8	1.9	1.7
Non-Honours	1.6	1.8	1.5

(1 = very important, 5 = totally unimportant)

Our results further indicate that honours students appreciate relatedness. When we asked, "How often did you have social contacts with a teacher/faculty member outside class this last year?," honours students indicated significantly more social contact with teachers than non-honours (Cramer's V=0.326). More than half of the non-honours students (53%) never had social contact with faculty while only 4% often or very often do. Of the honours students, 22% never had social contact with faculty, and 21% had frequent or very frequent social contact (see Figure 1). However, there were also differences between the two honours programmes that might relate to organizational structure. A quarter of the interdisciplinary honours students never had social contacts with faculty versus 10% of the disciplinary honours, findings that confirm Baur's observation that when honours students had seen "one another in more than one class, [they] had more opportunities to form meaningful social ties within the academic sphere than was true of other students" (295).

Inspired by Gerrity's findings in 1993 that honours students are more interested than non-honours students in nonacademic activities, we asked students about their participation level in extracurricular activities organized by the department or university, but we did not find any significant correlation. Our research does not indicate that honours students participate more in extracurricular activities. Maybe the differences between our findings and Gerrity's can be explained by cultural differences and by differences in higher

Figure 1. Frequency of Social Contact with Faculty
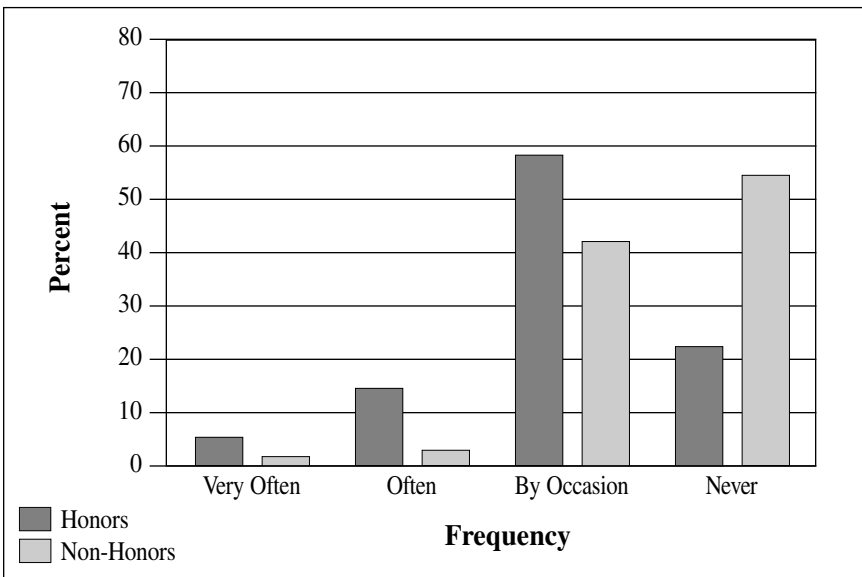
education. More research on cultural differences with regard to gifted students is needed like that of Peters, who found that academic self-concept is more correlated with intelligence in the Netherlands than in a Chinese sample. It would be worthwhile to repeat our research in an American setting, but, since some phenomena may display themselves differently in different cultural environments, we might also need different ways of investigating.

THE CHOICE OF HONOURS

The overall impression derived from our study 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 60% of their responses to why they take part in the honours programme, which include "getting a deeper and broader knowledge and understanding," "learning to think critically," and "having more intellectual challenge." Also, the community of their peer honours students appears to be an important reason for joining an honours programme. External reasons, such as better qualification for graduate school or career, are of little to no importance.

CONCLUSION

Our research indicates differences between honours and non-honours students in the value that they place on specific qualities of teachers and courses. A learning context that is supportive of relatedness, provides freedom, and encourages academic competence seems to fit honours students well. These findings could help us formulate some pedagogical and curricular changes in academic programming. A mentoring relationship with faculty members—thus fostering relationships—could be part of this honours pedagogy. When faculty members are personally involved, they transfer their attitudes and values along with their knowledge. Teachers can then become role models of scholarly leaders who have the courage to synthesize wisdom, intelligence, and creativity. Since honours students appreciate freedom, courses designed to suit their personal interests are advisable. They like demanding teachers and challenging courses that enlarge their competence without promoting competition; external outcomes seem to be irrelevant to them.

We hope to see similar research on students participating in honours programmes in the United States and other countries so that we can join forces in designing honours programmes that engender commitment, effort, wisdom, creativity, and high-quality performance. Such programmes, as described elsewhere in this issue of *JNCHC*, can have strong spin-off effects

on the regular curriculum 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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Setting Them Free:
Students as Co-Producers of
Honors Education

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INTRODUCTION

One of the factors that differentiate honors from regular teaching at the Faculty of Geosciences at Utrecht University, the Netherlands, is the freedom that honors students enjoy, a freedom that evokes excellence because it is focused and targeted. This targeted freedom takes three different shapes in our honors program and comes with specific challenges for both students and teachers. While the attractions and advantages of such freedom are both theoretically and practically significant, our experience has also demonstrated drawbacks that need to be addressed and resolved in creating effective honors education.

Frank Aydelotte, one of the founders of honors education (Swarthmore College Faculty; Pennock; Guzy; Rinn) endorsed the importance of freedom and autonomy in the earliest beginnings of honors programs in the United States, and freedom has remained an important focus in the honors literature ever since. Freedom fosters scholarship in the student's field of interest (Robinson; Vallerand et al.); it supports intrinsic motivation and fosters scholastic excellence (Ryan & Deci; Niemiec & Ryan; Simmons & Page); and it challenges students to develop an open mindset and step "out of the box" in order to make great achievements (Dweck). However, freedom also poses certain challenges to students, teachers, and the faculty in general; these challenges include guarding a program's coherence and quality, marketing the freedom in a clear and effective way, and ensuring that students challenge themselves.

Course evaluations of the honors program of the Faculty of Geosciences at Utrecht University have demonstrated that students value freedom; they believe that it enhances their learning and stimulates creativity. They appreciate the opportunities to discover and follow their own fields of interest as well as to take initiative and responsibility (Wolfensberger, 2008). At the

same time, this freedom comes with a challenge: freedom is not, in fact, free, nor is it easy or optional.

The challenges and struggles as well as the rewards that we have experienced might be familiar to honors educators around the world, but they are also shaped by the particular contexts of our program within the Faculty of Geosciences, within Utrecht University, and within the Netherlands, contexts that we will now introduce.

HONORS COLLEGE GEOSCIENCES AT UTRECHT UNIVERSITY

The Honors College Geosciences accommodates undergraduate students enrolled in undergraduate programs of earth sciences, physical and human geography, planning, environmental sciences, and innovation management within the Faculty of Geoscience. (See Appendix A for a contextual history of the college.) The aim of the honors college is to contribute to four realms of a gifted student's development: a) academic skills, b) geosciences content (both in-depth and across the disciplines), c) the position of students in society, and d) personal growth and leadership (Honours College Geowetenschappen). Students are thus offered opportunities to practice research skills, become involved in the academic community of the faculty, do projects that make a societal contribution, and reflect on their positions as geoscientists in society. Undergraduate research projects and the honors theses offer ample opportunities to gain in-depth knowledge. Other multidisciplinary courses as well as extracurricular offerings like the *geo home* debate evenings offer "broader geo-content." Finally, students learn reflective skills to think about who they are, who they want to be, and how they can use the honors program to reach their aims.

Students enter the honors college either halfway their freshman year or at the start of their second year as undergraduates. Both grades and motivation are important in the selection and admission procedure. After a student with above average grades applies for the program, an intake meeting takes place during which both the honors coordinator and the candidate can assess if the candidate's motivations and ambitions are in line with program; candidates should be open, for instance, to crossing the borders of their geo-discipline. Not all gifted students find their ambitions matched to those of the program. Although students are admitted to the program with the expectation that they will finish it, they have to apply again each year (Honours College Geowetenschappen).

The Honors College Geosciences is a college but does not have its own building or dean. Students follow the majority of their courses in one of the bachelor's degree programmes mentioned above. An honors degree consists

of 210 credits instead of the 180 credits for a regular degree (60 ects is the equivalent of one year in the European credit transfer system), and honors students are expected to finish their undergraduate program in three years, just like regular students. Honors students take 30 credits of honours courses that substitute for regular courses in the different undergraduate programs; they write an honors thesis instead of a regular bachelor's thesis; and they take 30 credits in additional courses such as honors seminars.

The students within the honors college are treated as one community even though they are enrolled in different undergraduate programs. Slightly over a third of the honors credits are spent on courses in which the whole group participates: the weekly honors seminars, the bimonthly "Geohuis" (Geo home) debates, and a multidisciplinary project. The remaining credits are invested in courses that have a disciplinary focus. All honors students write an honors thesis for 15 credits, with requirements determined within their discipline. Honors students see each other regularly, do projects together, and end each academic year with an honors conference where they present the outcomes of their (research) projects. Honors students are thus part of an honors community, and freedom is an integral value within this community.

TARGETED FREEDOM

The honors program of the Faculty of Geosciences at Utrecht University offers its students "targeted freedom" aimed at academic and personal development. This freedom comes in three guises: (1) freedom for students to discover their own field(s) of interest and to follow their passion; (2) freedom to develop their own learning strategies; and (3) freedom to be involved in and responsible for their own education. These three kinds of freedom, each described in detail below, are interrelated and are integral to the honors program but at the same time can deter or undermine the value of the honors experience for both teachers and students and so must be balanced by structured requirements and collaboration between students and faculty.

PASSION

Honors students are invited to explore their fields of interest both inside and outside the geo-sciences and to discover how to combine these interests in their education. Pursuing their passion should evoke excellence because it motivates students to persist in deliberate practice (Ericsson; Vallerand, Blanchard, et al.; Fredericks et al.; Bonneville-Roussy et al.).

The exploration of passions within our honors college is future-oriented, focusing on students' ambitions for their future lives as members of society, researchers, policy makers, consultants, entrepreneurs, or teachers. To learn how to handle this freedom, students learn to reflect on their personal

development. Freedom to follow your passion implies that you know how to choose between many alternatives, and over the years we have noted that choosing does not always come naturally to gifted students. Honors students often find it difficult to focus on one ambition or to set priorities because during their educational careers they have combined many tasks and performed all of them well. Other honors students might not yet have discovered their passions and ambitions or do not connect those to their education. When students are not clear what their fields of interests are or when they still want to pursue the whole field of physical geography or environmental science, they might get into trouble when they have to choose a topic for a research project. They might vacillate between many alternatives or just not find a topic that really excites them. To help students deal with this freedom and discover their passions, ambitions, and strengths, we ask them to write a mission statement.

According to yearly evaluations from 1998 onwards, students especially value this first kind of freedom. In a 2008 survey, alumni explicitly mention this freedom within an existing overall structure as a strength the program should maintain (Sweijen & Wolfensberger). The 2011–2012 evaluation again confirms how important students find this freedom (see Appendix B). The autonomy that the honors program offers students has helped them discover and follow their ambitions. As one example among many, a student used the undergraduate honors program to combine his interest in art with geography, eventually leading to a PhD thesis that he defended in March 2012 (Zebracki). But there are many more stories of students who discovered their drive or their passion within the honors program. A detailed case study and numerous quotations from students and alumni are available in Wolfensberger (2008) as well as Sweijen & Wolfensberger.

In practice, this freedom means that students can choose the topic not just for their honors theses but for some of their courses such as the Creative Challenge Project, an open-ended course where students not only choose the topic of their individual projects but also set the goals, decide on the output, and set their own deadlines. The aim of the course is to stimulate students to step "outside the box" and do projects that do not offer the comfort of regular course work. Finishing a research project for an honors thesis requires an even more substantial amount of time and effort from the students. A well-chosen topic that matches students' fields of interests or ambitions is an important motivator during the process. At the same time, requirements for the thesis place limits on students' freedom that include the rigors of original research and strict deadlines. These rules apply equally to all students writing a thesis and place limitations on their free time as well as free choice. Nevertheless, some honors students are able to do research abroad or in an internship.

Although all honors students support the notion that a well-chosen topic keeps them motivated, they do not all have an easy time coming up with a researchable topic even though they have practice at proposing their own topics in other honors courses. Therefore, we ask them to start their search for a suitable topic early on and brainstorm with teachers about their ideas. Students have also organized peer feedback with each other.

LEARNING STRATEGIES AND BEHAVIOURS

Autonomy in learning strategies and behaviours is important in fostering motivation (Niemiec & Ryan). Honors students are invited to explore which learning strategy suits them best. Although the regular undergraduate program does not prescribe how students must learn, lectures, coursework, and exams do set a framework. We think it is important for honors students not just to be aware of learning strategies and behaviours but also to combine different strategies and behaviours (Hayes).

Honors students are selected based on their motivations and grades. Good grades mean that the students have mastered the way exams and assignments are organized, but these are not necessarily the ways students learn the best or most. Some students might not be aware of their optimal learning strategy as they are not really challenged to learn new things. Students in the honors program, though, are granted the freedom to find out how they learn best both as individuals and within a group. Being able to work with other motivated and gifted students is an opportunity that honors students highly value in the program (Schippers). Unlike group work in regular courses, honors students do not have to drag along unmotivated group members or compensate for work from students who are too easily satisfied. Working with other talented and motivated students on a research project challenges them to figure out how to achieve outstanding outcomes. Collaboration also confronts them with qualities of their own work that they might have taken for granted, for example how they tackle problems or plan projects. They might thus discover their strengths and preferences but also learn to value the input and strategies of their fellow students.

Freedom related to learning strategies and behaviors is visible in the student-led classes where students organize the course and choose what classroom activities match their preferences for learning. Such freedom is built in many other projects within the honors program, and in many courses—such as the multidisciplinary project, learning research, and creative challenge projects—students cooperate in small groups of two to four members.

INVOLVEMENT

Honors students are asked to be involved in their education and in the honors program. This involvement requires leadership: taking responsibility and making deliberate choices. This third freedom is thus strongly related to the other two kinds of freedom because it means that students are trusted to make their own plans and, at least partly, to set their own learning aims. In some courses, such as Creative Challenge Project and Honours Learning Research: Human Geography and Planning, students are free to plan their own schedule and activities with no official start-time or deadline. Students recognize and value this freedom (see Appendix B).

Involvement and responsibility mean more than taking charge of your own learning aims or planning. Typically honors students should be challenged to become more than just (critical) consumers of education. We invite students to become co-producers and co-owners of the honors college. Some honors students thus organize the yearly honors conference; others publish the yearly honors booklet; again others prepare student-led classes or make a presentation at a *Geo home* meeting. Honors students also participate in information meetings of the honors college, and some do research projects on honors education. Students find this involvement an important part of their education. In the 2008–2009 yearly evaluation of the honors program, students stressed that they wanted to have a formal say in the honors college. As a result, the honors educational committee was founded by the students as an advisory board. Besides advising the program leaders, this board organizes mentors for newly arrived honors students and takes the lead in the yearly evaluations.

TARGETED FREEDOM IN PRACTICE

The freedoms we have implemented within the Geosciences Honors College are advantageous to students but often pose challenges for teachers, for instance in the student-led honors classess. These classes take place within the curriculum of honors seminars, which are organized weekly for all undergraduate honors students in the Faculty of Geosciences. The aim of the honors seminars is to make connections between academic skills, "geo-content," the student's position in society, and the student's personal development. These seminars have been part of the honors program from the early beginnings in the late 1990s. Since the fall of 2011, the seminars have been grouped in five subsequent themes: leadership, differences in academic disciplines, writing skills, fieldwork and practice, and entrepreneurship and employment. In 2012 the following themes will be heroes, politics of sciences, writing a research proposal, ethics and choices, and logics and argumentation.

The student-led honors classes that are part of the honors seminars are organized five or six times a year by a small group of students. Student-led classes, which are not graded, are included in the program because they involve students in the program, provide practice in organizational skills, and develop their ability to combine their fields of interest with the program. The students are responsible for choosing the topics for these classes, which have ranged from urban development in earthquake-prone areas to electric cars, from fair trade to the geopolitics of the North Pole, from an entrepreneurial game to different academic views on recent developments in Libya.

All three freedoms are involved in these student-led classes. Because students are free to select the topic, they can connect the class to their own fields of interest; because they are free to choose the classroom activities, they can opt for experiences that fit their learning strategies; and because they are responsible for organizing these classes, they learn to take ownership.

The program has a long tradition of these student-led classes, which are highly valued by the students as demonstrated by evaluations as recent as 2008–2009 and as far back as 1998–1999 (Wolfensberger, 2009). More recently, the 2011–2012 evaluations show that 77% of the respondents (highly) value the freedom to organize part of their own education and 78% feel that organizing parts of their own education is an important skill (Schippers). The student-led classes can also be considered a success because, although student-led classes might be organized at the last minute, no students have failed to deliver the class.

Over the years, most of these student-led classes have taken the shape of lectures by one or two guest lecturers either from within and from outside of the faculty. Most of these guest lecturers are enthusiastic and honoured to be invited; they give interesting presentations and leave room for questions and debate. A few student-led classes have taken a very different shape, such as role-playing, debate, fieldtrips, or simulation games. Students acquire organizing skills as they arrange one or several guest lecturers or plan the structure of the meeting. Not all persons they invite as speakers immediately reply or agree, so they have to develop alternatives as well.

At the same time, the student-led classes do not always meet all their aims or live up to the teachers' expectations. Although students value the opportunity to shape part of their education themselves, the learning effect from organizing the student-led classes seems a bit meagre. In the 2011–2012 evaluation, about half of the fifteen respondents to this question felt that they had learned (a lot) from these classes whereas two said they had learned nothing at all (Schippers). This result from the evaluation roughly coincides with teachers' perceptions. Most of the student-led classes have a "traditional" character, resembling ordinary lectures: students sit and listen while a (guest)

teacher speaks. Organizing such a seminar might require little more than inviting speakers, so students may feel they have not learned much from organizing a class because they have given little attention to the possibilities of the topic itself, to possible classroom activities, or to the aims of the meeting. Also, if students are active members of student organizations, as quite a number of them are, they have invited speakers before and will not really be challenged by doing that.

All the targeted freedoms are combined in these student-led classes but do not automatically lead to creativity. We might expect honors students, as critical "consumers" of education, to have clear opinions on education and on what works best for them, so we might expect them to step "out of the box" when they are free to organize their own education. Honors teachers are frequently surprised, therefore, that students choose to organize lectures. Is this the kind of education gifted students prefer? Do they simply enjoy sitting back and listening for two hours when the topic is not part of their core curriculum? How much creative thinking is involved in the organization of such a seminar? Are students using the freedom they are granted to the fullest? And what examples have teachers been setting?

To start off with the last question: if teachers are somewhat disappointed in the students' creativity, then we need to look in the mirror and wonder how creative we are in designing honors seminars or education in general. We hope to be inspired by students, but what they offer might be a reflection of what they "learn" by taking classes and courses at the Faculty. Perhaps, we have to step out of the box ourselves more often and find different classroom activities that fit our aims.

Setting the example ourselves might induce more creativity in students. On the other hand, if we feel that students do not use the freedom offered to the fullest and take the easy road when organizing a seminar, then we have to check whether the aims and requirements are clear. Demanding creativity is far-fetched, but students should learn to think beyond content into aims (what do you want to achieve with the seminar? what do you want your audience to learn?) and into what classroom activities are suited to reach these aims. Experiences over the years have shown that creativity cannot be achieved simply through a list of conditions and requirements, which seem to conflict with freedom, responsibility, and ownership, but we need some such lists to have students move beyond thinking about content.

To the teachers, these student-led classes thus pose a challenge. Students clearly do not fail at organizing a class, but not all classes live up to the expectations. Freedom means handing over responsibility and thus having confidence in the students, not meddling with their strategies or trying to retake charge when students do last-minute work. At the same time, freedom

does not mean total laissez-faire. Students ought to have secure back-up and advice, to know the teacher is involved and cares about the seminar, but over the years few students have come to their teachers for advice, instead perceiving the student-led classes as do-it-yourself events. Some students who did come by with (practical) questions proved to have all sorts of original and creative ideas but perhaps not the experience and confidence to try these ideas out. Teachers need to invite students for consultation and brainstorming, to show they are willing to share their teaching experience with the students, without meddling in their plans. Students can thus take the lead while counting on a teacher to guide and advise them.

CONCLUSION

Many honors programs offer degrees of freedom or autonomy for their students as a necessary condition for the fullest development of the students' talents. Such freedom might come in many guises. The honors program of the Faculty of Geosciences fosters three kinds of freedom: passion, learning strategies and behavior, and involvement. These freedoms are valued by students and have proven effective over the years but are not easy. Our student-led classes are a successful component of the honors program but do not seem to reach their full potential. The targeted freedoms offered in this case often translate into do-it-yourself education and result in traditional lectures. Students seem to focus on content and not on organizing a class in creative ways.

Freedom, it turns out, can only lead to extraordinary achievements when it comes with conditions and requirements. Such requirements have to be clear but also relevant to the students. Freedom thus needs to be scaffolded, especially in honors programs because critical consumers of education do not necessarily know how to organize education. Co-ownership is not the same as co-producership, which asks for a very different role for teachers, who have to step back but still be fully involved; this role takes teachers beyond the classroom and makes them advisors and counsellors as well as teachers. Student-led classes are therefore not more time-efficient for teachers and should not be misinterpreted as a quick fix toward greater teacher efficiency, a topical debate given the shrinking state funding for Dutch universities. We hope we have shown that that freedom should encourage creativity, not simple efficiency, and that, for both students and teachers, it is never cheap or easy but is consistently rewarding.

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APPENDIX A

HONORS EDUCATION AT THE FACULTY OF GEOSCIENCES, UTRECHT UNIVERSITY—A SHORT HISTORY

The Department of Human Geography and Planning first experimented with honors education in 1995 (Harms, L. & Hogenstijn, 2001). From 1997 onwards the department offered a fully fledged honors program (Wolfensberger, 2008). This was one of the early honors initiatives in the Netherlands. From 2003 onwards the Dutch educational field and the State Ministry of Education became more and more aware of the necessity to accommodate talented students with additional challenges and opportunities. In 2003 the government discussed a report titled "Het opschudden van de gelijkheidsdeken," a telling title that was translated into Lifting the blanket of equality by Van der Vaart and Wolfensberger (2004). This report presented a clear breach with a "tradition" of equality thinking in Dutch education in which "extra staff time and effort tends to be spent on weaker students (more tutorial help, making and grading of exam retakes, etc.)" (Van der Vaart and Wolfensberger, 2004: 3). With two national programs Ruim Baan voor Talent (2004–2007) and Sirius (2008–2012) experiments in and developments of honors programs were supported.

Since 2008 talented students of all the undergraduate programs of the faculty of Geosciences have the opportunity to participate in the faculty-wide honors college. The Honors College Geosciences aims to accommodate the 5 to 10% best performing students, but currently accommodates approximately 50 students (5.5%). Because of their longer tradition in honors education and the larger number of students in the department of Human Geography and Planning this groups of students has in the past years outnumbered participants from the other departments. However, the group is becoming more mixed every year.

Although honors education is anchored in Dutch education by now, the current times are exciting times. The State Ministry of Education and Utrecht University have agreed to increase membership of honors colleges from 5% in 2006, to 9% in 2010 and even 12% in 2016 (Bok, Koster and Van der Vaart 2012). Moreover, the University of Utrecht "updates" its educational model for bachelor's level education, and this has consequences for the organization and structure of the honors programs.

APPENDIX B

Student Perceptions of Freedom

The 2011–2012 evaluation of the Honors College Geosciences demonstrate that students recognize and value the targeted freedom. Out of the 58 original participants 27 completed the detailed evaluation form. Of these respondents 96% feels that the honors program grants students more responsibility than the regular program. Students recognize this responsibility for example in making their own planning and setting their own deadlines in certain projects. Making their own planning is seen as important by 96% of the respondents. In their explanations some students indicate that making your own planning makes you more responsible and offers important lessons to be learnt.

All respondents claim that they find it important that they can follow their own passions and 70% of them feels that the honors program offers more freedom to follow their own interests en passions than the regular program. They recognize this freedom in projects where they can choose their own topic.

Source: Analyse jaarevaluatie Honours College Geowetenschappen [Analysis, Annual Evaluation of Geoscience Honors College] 2011–2012

Building a Vibrant Honors Community among Commuter Students

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INTRODUCTION

Research has shown that honors programs often provide active networks of students that contribute to the development of the students' talents (De Boer & van Eijl; van Eijl, Pilot & Wolfensberger). These contact networks are also described as "learning communities" (Wilson et al.) and "honors communities" (van Eijl, Pilot & Wolfensberger). Such communities foster productive interaction among students, teachers, and other professionals during their affiliation with the program and beyond. As a result of such connections, students discover new learning opportunities and gain experience in organizational and leadership skills. In honors programs, in particular, these contacts are an essential component of what defines and separates honors activities as special enhancements of a student's overall educational experience (van Eijl, Wolfensberger & Pilot). Our study focuses on design principles, key characteristics, strategies, and successful examples that characterize the development of honors communities.

We focus particularly on commuter students because they comprise the majority of honors students in the Netherlands. Nearly all universities in the Netherlands are city universities, where students either rent rooms in the neighborhood or live at home. One of the challenges for an honors director is to create a vibrant honors community within this specific context. We make the assumption that for commuter students a more careful and intentional implementation of an honors community is necessary because most students leave campus when classes are finished (Jacoby). And, as Kuh, Gonyea and Palmer found in their research, commuter students are overall less engaged

than students who live on campus. Extra activities have to be organized and strategically timed to suit these students, and the challenge is complicated by competition with numerous other events taking place in the city. Our study analyzes five different honors communities of commuter students in order to suggest some best practices for creating maximum benefits for students.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Our focus on communities in education is supported by constructivist learning theories, which assume that learners construct knowledge in an active manner within an authentic context (Brown & Campione). Socio-constructivist learning theories further suggest that learning is more effective when it occurs in a social context (Wenger) rather than as an individual, isolated activity that usually occurs in a classroom. The learning theory of situated cognition (Greeno) states that learning is embedded in social interactions among people in a specific situation and has a positive effect on personal development. For example, when newcomers join an established community, they develop critical knowledge and practical skills by observing and performing tasks in that community while learning how the group works, thus in time becoming full participants.

McMillan & Chavis consider a community in general as "a feeling that members have of belonging, a feeling that members matter to one another and to the group, and a shared faith that members' needs will be met through their commitment to be together" (9). Cross defines learning communities more specifically as "groups of people engaged in intellectual interaction for the purpose of learning" (4). Cross combines the concept of learning communities with the design of a curriculum and cites the structuring of the program and the frequency of contacts between students as important factors.

Wilson, Ludwig-Hardman, Thornam, and Dunlap also stress the connection with the curriculum by introducing the concept of a "bounded learning community." According to these researchers, a learning community is bounded by a particular course or curriculum. Participating students collaborate with other students and a teacher, working together within a fixed timetable and with an explicit requirement to seek contact with others by communicating and working online; the teacher plays a crucial role in facilitating the creation of such a learning community. Besides factors such as "shared goals of the community" and "safe and supporting conditions," teachers are a critical component of learning communities (Sherin, Mendez & Louis; Shulman & Sherin); their task is to provide the infrastructure for work and interaction, model effective collaboration, monitor and assess learning, provide feedback, troubleshoot and resolve problems, and establish trusting relationships with students (Wilson et al. 8).

The structure and dynamics of learning communities vary depending on the characteristics of the program. Although there are several existing models for the development of a community (Tuckman; Wenger; Wilson et al.), three broad stages can be distinguished. In the case of a bounded learning community, these stages can be termed *initiation*, *participation*, and *closure*. Wilson et al. explain the stages as follows: "Students are asked to engage in a pre-defined sequence where they first learn the ropes, then enter into intensive interaction with peers, then conclude the experience with reflection and some kind of ritualized closure experience" (11). Within such a community, not every member is equally active, creating layers of participation: the core group, active members, and passive members (Hanraets, Potters & Jansen). Another characteristic of the community structure is the existence of significant networks (Roxå & Mårtensson) that take place in both formal and informal situations.

Such communities can enhance learning outcomes (Lankveld & Volman; Tinto & Russo), increase the pace of study (Eggens), raise the level of reflection (Cross; Tinto), improve the attitude of students (Tinto & Russo), and strengthen emotional support among students (Lankveld & Volman). Furthermore, these contact networks can influence the extent to which students interact outside classrooms (Tinto & Russo), support a positive evaluation of the program (Light), and create a "sense of community" (McMillan & Chavis). This latter aspect is a challenge for many honors directors and teachers (Koh, Chaffee & Goodman) because education tailored to high-achieving, motivated, and talented students—particularly those in honors programs—should also take place in an atmosphere of excellence in order to empower the students (van der Valk, Grunefeld & Pilot). This atmosphere or culture of excellence is frequently mentioned as an important characteristic of an honors program (Ford; Mariz; Slavin; van Eijl, Pilot & Wolfensberger).

Previous research has shown that communities are essential to many honors programs (De Boer & van Eijl, 2010), but we know little about the specific factors and mechanisms for success. This knowledge is needed to establish design principles for community development in the context of commuter students in honors. The following research questions served as a guide for our analysis of several case studies:

1. What characterizes honors communities of commuter students?

2. What are the functions of honors communities for commuter students and faculty?

3. What strategies, factors, and design principles promote community building among commuter students in honors programs?

METHOD

In this exploratory study, a mixed methods approach was used for both data collection and data analysis (Creswell & Plano Clark). Within this approach, qualitative and quantitative methods are combined because answering each research question requires a combination of different types of data. To achieve a set of initial design principles for community building among commuter students, we conducted a cross-case analysis in the Netherlands (Bryman). From four universities, the following five cases were selected: Utrecht Law College; Professional School of Arts; Top Class Healthcare; Honors Program in Biology; and Interdisciplinary Honors Program. Our data collection was based on interviews, questionnaires, and document analysis. Furthermore, we interviewed teachers and students from different American honors programs in order to gain insight into (1) the key characteristics and additional qualities of honors communities, (2) their functions, and (3) development strategies. The results of these interviews and insights were arranged to present a basic set of characteristics, functions, and strategies. This framework was used to conduct an interpretative analysis of information on the five Dutch case studies with a member check for confirmation and specific case details.

The yield of the study consists of three tables presenting the extent to which the key characteristics/additional qualities, functions, and strategies to develop communities are recognizable in the Dutch case studies of communities within the population of commuter students. These tables can be found in the appendices. In addition, the characteristics, functions, and strategies are scored for each case study, with each judged on a three-point scale: "+" (fully present), "+/-" (partly present), or "-" (not achieved). We used the criterion "fully" when eighty percent of the students acted according to at least eighty percent of the criteria (Juran). If none or just one or two of the students acted according to the formulated characteristics, functions, and strategies, we used the term "not achieved." The term "partly" refers to outcomes in between "not achieved" and "fully achieved."

RESULTS OF THE INTERVIEWS IN THE U.S.

At the NCHC conferences in Kansas City (2010) and Phoenix (2011), eight interviews were conducted with teachers and eight with students from various honors programs of different American universities. Interviews with NCHC-recommended site visitors at the NCHC conference in Philadelphia (2007) were also included (van Eijl, Wolfensberger & Pilot). The interviews with honors teachers revealed that they considered honors students to be the prime members of the honors community and that they saw themselves as

catalysts for creating a community among honors students. Both teachers and students indicated that developing a sense of community was crucial for the formation of study groups, the stimulation of personal growth, and the development of effective study habits.

The interviews further showed that size, structure, and level of activity and interaction vary among honors communities. Two types of communities can be described as (1) minimal learning communities with little contact among students and (2) living-learning communities where students live together and have intensive contact with each other. Living-learning communities are common because many American universities have campuses where students live in dormitories. Other universities have more commuter students (i.e., students who live a distance from the university) and are thus similar to the Dutch situation in which students rent a room near the university and continue to travel back to the family home.

From the interviews, several characteristics of honors programs emerged that may strengthen the sense of community among students. First, mutual contacts are more easily made if students are in the same class or group. Second, these contacts are enhanced by the use of "linked courses" in which students study together for several courses. Third, these contacts become more intensive if students work closely together on a challenging task in the context of a project.

In addition, honors staffs in U.S. universities regularly organize social and extracurricular activities that deepen the bonding of the community. One example is a sponsored event such as "Pizzas and Profs," where students come together with teachers in an informal way to discuss course topics. Other such efforts to bridge students' learning experiences within and outside the classroom include guest speakers and excursions. The interweaving of social and professional activities helps create a seamless learning environment where students' intellectual, social, and personal lives can come together. Another important factor in promoting community is a permanent place or shared accommodation for students on the university campus.

CASE STUDIES ON HONORS COMMUNITIES WITH COMMUTER STUDENTS

From previous literature and the interviews conducted with American honors teachers and students, the following five key characteristics of honors communities can be posited: a network with frequent contacts, a shared passion for challenge and excellence, a sense of community and shared ownership, a culture of excellence, and a common interaction repertoire (see Table 2 in the Appendices). Accompanying these key characteristics are some additional qualities such as a core group of active students, shared status and

interests, a safe environment for encouraging the development of talents, a physical location for honors students, and the opportunity to live together. In order to meet our definition of a fully developed community, all key characteristics have to be present. The additional qualities provide a more complete picture of the community.

In addition to the key characteristics and associated qualities, the functions of communities and the strategies to build honors communities specifically within the context of commuter students are further arranged within three matrices to match the five Dutch case studies (see Tables 2, 3 and 4). First, we will present a short description of the five cases.

UTRECHT LAW COLLEGE (ULC)

The Utrecht Law College in the research-oriented Utrecht University provides a three-year honors program for a Bachelor of Law. This program focuses on motivated students who are willing to take the initiative to deepen and extend their education. Seventy-five places are available annually, and applications outnumber available places three to one. During the program, students gain experience through internships, extra assignments, research projects, guest lectures, and legal practice courses. Students of the program have formed their own association called Sirius, which organizes an impressive range of social and extra-curricular activities.

THE PROFESSIONAL SCHOOL OF ARTS UTRECHT (PSAU)

PSAU is a selective, interdisciplinary, one-year master's program organized by Utrecht University (UU) in collaboration with the School of Arts & Technology Utrecht (University of Applied Arts Utrecht, HKU). Approximately ten to fifteen master's students from various BA disciplines can be admitted to the program. This master's program is divided into a profession-oriented semester and a more research-oriented semester. The first semester consists of challenging real-life tasks involving external clients. During this period, PSAU and HKU students with specific knowledge and expertise work together in groups in order to create a computer game or documentary. In the next research-oriented semester, the PSAU students write their thesis, sometimes combined with an internship. In addition, students have many opportunities to take courses at other universities.

TOP CLASS HEALTHCARE

Bachelor students from the Faculty of Healthcare at the University of Applied Sciences Utrecht (HU) attend the Top Class program on top of their regular disciplinary bachelor's program. The objective of the honors program is for students to focus on personal development in relation to their field of

study and to acquire skills beyond their own discipline. The size of the group averages between twenty and twenty-five students, which is about five percent of the total number in the regular program. During this two-and-a-half-year program, students develop skills in leadership, collaboration (by participating in multidisciplinary teams), research, and innovation (by discovering new methods in healthcare). Students who participate in this Top Class are involved in special projects, and they learn to collaborate with students from other disciplines within the Faculty of Healthcare.

Honors Program in Biology

The Honors Program in Biology at Utrecht University is offered in addition to the regular biology curriculum. This program, specially developed for approximately fifteen to twenty motivated and talented biology students, broadly consists of five parts: thematic meetings with discussions, using (popular) academic books and articles; a group assignment in which students perform all (professional) activities necessary to write a book, including writing chapters, peer feedback, editing, lay-out, making illustrations, and presenting the product in a self-organized symposium; an individual or group assignment in which students prepare and perform a challenging educational session in a (first-year) course for their fellow students; performing an individual assignment (honors thesis) focused on research or professional practice; and participation in the interdisciplinary honors program of the Faculty of Science. In 2010, a number of students wrote and published a book on topics that will be of importance within the field of biology in the twenty-first century; in 2011, the theme of the students' book was "Synthetic Eden," focused on various aspects of biotechnology; and in 2012 the theme was "Sustainability."

Interdisciplinary Honors Program

This three-year program at the University of Applied Sciences Leiden is offered in addition to the regular curriculum. Approximately twenty-five students from different disciplines in this university may be admitted to the program. Ambitious students interested in interdisciplinary problems are given real-world assignments by faculty members or external clients, and each student works with students from different disciplines in smaller thematic groups. Examples of program assignments are innovation in a virtual environment, diagnosis of Lyme disease, and new acquisition methods for charities. The students have their own space to work on assignments and engage in informal contact, and they are guided by teachers committed to developing their talents.

CHARACTERISTICS OF HONORS COMMUNITIES WITHIN COMMUTER STUDENT GROUPS

The five cases we have selected for analysis (see Table 2 in Appendix) do not have the same characteristics equally reflected in them, which is a reminder of the complexity of seeking and sustaining community within the context of commuter student populations in honors programs.

The first characteristic of an honors community is its network of frequent contacts among students. Sometimes teachers and professionals also belong to the community and play an encouraging role, but the students are the main owners. A good example of a network with such characteristics is the Utrecht Law College and its student association, Sirius, which reflects the strong identity of this community.

A second characteristic is that the students are usually highly motivated, have a passion for challenge and excellence, and share the same interests. In the case of the Professional School of Arts, however, a variance in interests is reflected in the dual mission of the program: profession-oriented and research-oriented. PSAU students scored only 2.8 on a five-point scale of "shared passions" among students. PSAU, therefore, cannot be considered a full-blown honors community. Passions may also differ according to class levels or interests, as in the Honors Program in Biology, where a group of students harbored the ambition to publish a book that was written as a group assignment and to implement it as educational material in first-year biology programs of different universities, but this goal was not shared by all honors students.

A third characteristic is the sense of community and shared ownership. Working together on a real-world assignment is a strong factor in creating this feeling within the Honors Program in Biology. In the Top Class Healthcare, students develop leadership skills at the start of the program during a kick-off weekend. Students in the Utrecht Law College also described their sense of community as crucial to the success of the program.

A fourth characteristic is an atmosphere or culture of excellence in which students are ambitious and strongly motivated. Students from the Interdisciplinary Honors Program of Leiden were praised for their "high potential" during a recent international seminar in Brussels. A culture of excellence is also reflected in the student association Sirius, which organizes every year what they call Sirius Playground, an opportunity for legal offices, businesses, and governmental institutions to meet the ambitious students of the Utrecht Law College.

A fifth characteristic is the way students interact with each other; this so-called "common interaction repertoire" is clearly evident in each honors

community we examined, as demonstrated in student association meetings, the organization of events, or websites and social media.

In our study, all characteristics are scored to indicate how strongly they are present. Most characteristics are present in each of the cases. Lower scores on the characteristic of "network with frequent contact" and the "common interaction repertoire" occur in the PSAU program and Top Class Healthcare; if a program has only a few set meetings, the intensity of community contact receives a low score. The "culture of excellence" is typically not present at the start of a program; e.g., in the Leiden program it began after the intervention of the international seminar. The "sense of community" was generally not strong in the PSAU group, but it was strong in the project group where students worked with other students outside the program.

The additional characteristics reflect the pluriformity of honors communities. A core group, for instance, was found in four out of the five cases. In the fifth case (PSAU), however, it turned out that nearly all students were involved in a so-called "significant network" working with four other students. Among the other cases the core group of the ULC was remarkable for its honors student union, which organized a series of co-curricular activities during the three years of the bachelor study in law. In the other three cases, committees of honors students were active.

Other specific characteristics of honors programs such as disciplinarity or interdisciplinarity, duration (one year or several years), and the starting point of the program differ between the cases. Students from a broad range of disciplines are involved in the interdisciplinary honors program at Leiden while, in the ULC case of Utrecht, students concentrate on one discipline.

The characteristic of a "safe environment" is less clear. In most cases students report being enthusiastic about working with other motivated students, but sometimes competition and domination create an environment where less assertive students feel insecure and find it hard to prosper.

We addressed the issue of a location for honors students to meet within the university buildings: four out of five programs have rooms for their activities. Having a designated space is important because commuter students typically do not live together.

FUNCTIONS OF HONORS COMMUNITIES

Honors communities fulfill three main functions: (1) they stimulate learning and development; (2) they enhance social and emotional wellbeing; and (3) they stimulate the organization of activities at the university (see Table 3). Based on our interviews with American and Dutch honors teachers and students, we identified cognitive development and personal growth as the key functions of an honors community.

Depending on the mission of the program, cognitive development might occur through a focus on various academic and communication skills. For example, the ULC focuses on developing organizational and debating skills while the PSAU champions the development of more professional, practical, and research skills. In the Honors Program in Biology, the development of writing skills is an important goal.

The second important function is the development within the community of social and emotional values. All the honors communities in these case studies strongly encouraged students to help each other; they stimulate networking with professionals and teamwork to fulfill real-world assignments. In the case of the ULC, the formation of a student association served the function of socialization.

SEVEN STRATEGIES FOR IMPLEMENTING COMMUNITIES

From our study, seven strategies can be distinguished for the development and maintenance of communities within the special population of commuter students in honors programs. Both teachers and students can use these strategies; the teachers are often in the best position to initiate them even though the ultimate goal is that students own their community and take the initiative themselves. The seven strategies are listed in Table 1.

First, the matching of students is important because students need to be informed beforehand about the content and intentions of the program. The

Table 1. Strategies to Stimulate Honors Communities for Commuter Students in Honors Programs

1. Matching students based on willingness and capabilities to cooperate
2. Programming challenging teamwork activities that are student-regulated
3. Facilitating students' initiatives without taking the lead
4. Creating an intense period of interaction to deepen and enhance bonding
5. Organizing a series of interactive activities during the program to stimulate the community
6. Highlighting the performance of a teacher as a role model for development of talent and as a coach for community building
7. Involving community activities in feedback procedures and student evaluations

selection procedure should focus on the extent to which students would like to work actively with other students or interact with teachers and professionals. For example, at the ULC the following criterion played an important role: "students need to contribute to the program, instead of passively follow the program." At the start of the program, arranging the students into groups is important. Depending on the type of assignment, teachers need to encourage interdependence among students by matching students' complementary passions or disciplines in order to fulfill a particular goal. At PSAU, for example, students can design games for real clients only by combining their expertise as game designers, graphic designers, and programmers.

Second, the programming of challenging teamwork activities that are student-regulated focal events, as in the case of PSAU, can enhance collaboration among students. Furthermore, the interaction among students and between students and faculty mentors can be improved by facilitating a personal project space, providing a budget, and supporting the use of social media and communications platforms. Interdependence in producing an actual product is another strategy that promotes teamwork among students, as demonstrated in the Honors Program in Biology, and mutual interaction can be further enhanced by the use of peer feedback. Interviews with American teachers and students showed that "common ground" is an important prerequisite for stimulating student interaction, but the study of the interaction patterns among students of PSAU showed us that not every student is equally active in a group and that this pattern may change during the year.

Third, facilitating student initiatives that fit into the aims of the honors program and its culture can be a powerful way to strengthen student ownership of an honors community, as demonstrated in the cases of ULC and Top Class Healthcare. The staff can encourage such initiatives through contacts with industry, project budgets, or appropriate facilities (including physical spaces) for the honors students.

Fourth, implementing an intense period of interaction in the initial phase of a program is important for creating a sense of community. Some programs start with a workshop or an orientation weekend, as in Top Class Healthcare with its course on leadership skills. The Interdisciplinary Honors Program in Leiden is another example where interaction among students was strengthened after an international seminar in Brussels.

Fifth, organizing a series of interactive activities with formal and informal meetings during the program stimulates community building in honors programs. At ULC, for example, Sirius organizes many activities for the honors students. ULC and PSAU also provide important stimuli to an active community life through fixed groups and regular meetings within the program. A site visitor to an American honors program described this point as follows:

"shared experiences are the key issue." Ideally, a strong sense of community leads to continued mutual contacts after the termination of the program, as in the PSAU program where students continue meeting with each other on a monthly basis.

Sixth, the performance of the teacher as a role model is indispensable. In honors programs, contacts between students and teachers are extremely important. A site visitor highlighted the following: "the interchange between faculty and students is one of the hallmarks of honors." The teacher is expected to give individual attention to the learning process, provide students with the opportunity to posit questions, and challenge students to find new paths. The teacher must involve students in decisions about the content of the program, give students responsibility for specific tasks, emphasize cooperation instead of competition, stimulate presentations to a relevant public, and take initiative in providing feedback to community members. Thus, the teacher functions not only as a regulator but as a catalyst to promote and coach the community. An American honors student described this dimension of a faculty member's role in helping to build community as follows: "The faculty should help to shape the ideas, but not originate the ideas."

Seventh, community activities can be considered as part of the honors diploma. Some programs use honors portfolios and meetings with tutors or coaches to review the involvement of individual students in the program and in community activities.

Finally, these strategies to build a vibrant community should be more than separate interventions; the combination of these strategies is what produces a well-functioning honors community.

CONCLUSION

This study has illustrated the characteristics, functions, and initial design principles of honors communities within the context of the special challenges faced in establishing and sustaining a community for commuter students. Honors communities vary in structure, duration, and program scope, but they share a culture of excellence and passion for challenge. The intensity of interaction, group identity, and discipline are nevertheless different for each community, and such diversity increases in the unique situation of honors programs with commuter students.

Our research and the experiences of many others in the field of honors education underscore that honors communities enhance learning and interaction. Furthermore, they fulfill multiple social and emotional functions for participants, encouraging them to support each other and undertake new initiatives while providing a platform for discussion and collaboration on both academic and social fronts. Depending on the stage of the community's

development, three main factors improve honors education for a given group of students: the honors program itself, the staff, and the resources. This study suggests seven strategies for developing and stimulating an honors community among commuter students (see Table 1). These strategies are formulated on the basis of interviews and experiences in a selection of case studies, and they are supported by a theoretical framework, but empirical research is needed to determine conclusively if they provide the intended results.

We conclude with a discussion of six issues related to developing honors communities.

First, selecting an unambiguous definition of an "honors community" has proved to be difficult. This concept is still being explored in educational literature, and there are minor differences in opinions between the American and European interviewees, making it difficult to provide accurate definitions for characteristics of an honors community. Eventually, we decided to make a distinction between key and additional characteristics.

A second issue is the difficulty in choosing the moment to observe the activities of a community. This study uses general impressions over time rather than quantitative measures at a certain moment. "Community" is such a qualitative, ever-changing, evolving phenomenon that capturing it is a challenge. However, the value of our research study is that it offers some theory, guidelines, objectives, and strategies for replicating good practices and ensuring success.

A third issue concerns the comparability of the Dutch cases. The disciplines, nature, and extent of the communities are different for each case study. The levels of activity and interaction also differ for each group.

A fourth issue relates to the seven strategies for creating a favorable environment. Students, teachers, and instructional designers concerned with the particular needs and expectations of commuter students involved in honors programs should understand that the absence of honors housing means that it is not always possible to organize events, facilitate communication, and provide intensive interactions for honors students. "Pizzas and Profs" or other similar activities that bring students together and form bridges between students and faculty are difficult to arrange for a commuter population because, after finishing their course responsibilities, students usually return home or, as in the prevalent examples of Dutch commuting students, to their rooms in different buildings all over the city and beyond. Some commuter students have lunch at the university, but many of them eat at different establishments.

A fifth point is that the creation of communities in interdisciplinary programs presents an additional challenge because, on most Dutch and European campuses (and in many American institutions, too), students in such programs come from different buildings and faculties and sometimes even

different campuses. Therefore, the shaping of a community for commuter students in honors programs requires exceptional attention and imagination.

The final issue is whether the key characteristics of honors communities can also be found in communities of students in non-honors programs. What makes a learning community of students in honors different or more powerful than communities formed elsewhere across our various institutions? Do honors students have a different propensity for developing strong communities focused on learning because of their presumed higher levels of motivation and talent? Do they subscribe in more dedicated ways to the "culture of excellence" that is a special characteristic of a successful honors community? Can viable models of learning communities be sustained with appropriate modifications to enrich the educational, social, and personal experiences of commuter students? As we see more honors programs explore the benefits of learning community strategies, what else do we need to know about the rewards and challenges of building an honors community to help us serve the diverse populations that compose our honors programs? These and other questions deserve our attention as we continue to explore the value of honors education worldwide.

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APPENDICES

Table 2. Characteristics of Honors Communities of Commuter Students in Dutch Honors Programs

Key Characteristics	Utrecht Law College (UU)	Professional School of Arts (UU/HKU)	Top Class Healthcare (HU)	Honors Program Biology (UU)	Interdisciplinary Honors Program (LU)
Network with Frequent Contact	+ Network enhanced by association of honors students	+ Network, usually in 'significant networks' with four students	+/- Network strong in first period with joint activities, less intensive later with individual projects	+ Network, especially in challenging assignment of book writing in first honors year	+ Intense contacts formed in the first months, later in small group projects
Share a Passion for Challenge and Excellence	+ Highly motivated students, content of their passions varying	+ Passions for profession or research, content of passions varying	+ Passions with different foci in relation to mission of the program	+ Present, strongly influenced by authentic assignment	+ Motivated students cooperating in interdisciplinary groups
Sense of Community and Shared Ownership	+ Indicated as crucial for the program. Students organize many extracurricular activities and their association	+/- Some students have a strong connection with their project groups. Ownership of the community is not clear	+ Especially within group, developed in 'kick-off' weekend and the first common course in leadership skills	+ The authentic group assignment reinforces the interdependence and has strong influence	+ Built in first series of meetings about community building

Explanation of the contents of the table: Qualification: +, fully present; +/-, partly present; -, not achieved / not present
Description: in key concepts

Table 2. Continued

Key Characteristics	Utrecht Law College (UU)	Professional School of Arts (UU/HKU)	Top Class Healthcare (HU)	Honors Program Biology (UU)	Interdisciplinary Honors Program (LU)
Culture of Excellence	+ Students regard their culture of excellence as crucial	+ Students share an ambition to develop their talents	+ Students work on challenging activities and perform to a high level	+ Observable especially in assignment	+ An international seminar they joined sparked their position as 'high potentials'
Common Interaction Repertoire	+ In class meetings, group assignments and student association	+/- Common repertoire in first semester, different in second semester with individual projects	+ Meetings of project group and classes, many informal contacts in social media	+ Interaction repertoire is strongly influenced by type and intensity of activity	+ Own internal organization structure with physical location
Core Group of Active Members	+ Core group as student council and committees with many active members	+/- Not a core group, but significant networks of four students	- Not evident	+ Core group of editorial committee	+ Core group of active students, especially the 'communication committee'

Explanation of the contents of the table: Qualification: +, fully present; +/-, partly present; -, not achieved / not present
Description: in key concepts

Table 2. Continued

Key Characteristics	Utrecht Law College (UU)	Professional School of Arts (UU/HKU)	Top Class Healthcare (HU)	Honors Program Biology (UU)	Interdisciplinary Honors Program (LU)
Duration, Discipline and Number of Students	Start in first year and active in the whole bachelor program. Alumni association	Whole master program, alumni participating in the program	Start in the second year, until the end. Students from different disciplines within health care	Start in second bachelor year, until end of third bachelor year	Start in second year, until fourth year of bachelor program
Safe Environment for Encouraging the Development of Talent	+ Safe environment, some competition	+ Students work with personal learning plans, own initiative is crucial	+ Focus on developing leadership skills and safe environment for talent development	+ Safe environment for initiatives of students	+ In the first meetings, attention for building a safe community
Physical Location of Honors Students	+ Study rooms for students available	+ Project rooms available	- Not present	+ Meeting rooms available within the building	+ Physical location available, intensely used
Living Together	- Not present	- Not present	- Not present	- Not present	- Not present

Explanation of the contents of the table: Qualification: +, fully present; +/-, partly present; -, not achieved / not present
Description: in key concepts

Table 3. Functions of Honors Communities of Commuter Students in Dutch Honors Programs for Students and Faculty

Functions	Utrecht Law College (UU)	Professional School of Arts (UU/HKU)	Top Class Healthcare (HU)	Honors Program Biology (UU)	Interdisciplinary Honors Program (LU)
Learning and Development Function	+ Formal learning takes place mostly in class, but outside class informal learning and extra curricular activities	+ Practical assignments, research courses	+ Professional assignments and leadership course, where students cooperate intensively and learn to initiate and design	+ Professional and writing assignments, intensive communication, reflection by interaction	+ Practical assignments, organizational courses and initiating activities
Social and Emotional Functions	+ They quickly get to know each other, support each other and join in common activities	+ Working in a professional team on an authentic task	+ Working together on personal leadership skills and supporting each other	+ Working in a team on a group task, intensively supporting each other	+ Close cooperation in a team
Functions of the Honors Community for Teachers and Faculty	+ Organization of activities, strengthening of connections with professional organizations	+ Student groups providing the faculty with new contacts and clients	+ Strengthening connection with professions, stimulated by students	+ Providing the faculty a new product (for example a book or a course module)	+ Strengthening connection with professions

Explanation of the contents of the table: Qualification: +, fully present; +/-, partly present; -, not achieved / not present
Description: in key concepts

Table 4. Strategies to Build Honors Communities of Commuter Students in Dutch Honors Programs

Strategies	Utrecht Law College (UU)	Professional School of Arts (UU/HKU)	Top Class Healthcare (HU)	Honors Program Biology (UU)	Interdisciplinary Honors Program (LU)
Matching of Students	+ Based on shared ambitions and previous performances	+/- Based on performance, not necessary sharing the same passion	+/- Mainly based on motivation and performance in the freshman year	+/- Based on willingness and capabilities to cooperate	+/- Based on projects after the "kick-off"
Programming of Challenging Activities with Team Work and Student-Generated Activities	+ Series of class seminars, co-curricular activities and professional activities	+/- First semester with challenging activities	+ Start with challenging project, 'kick-off' weekend and leadership course	+ Challenging project and series of monthly discussion meetings	+ Series of meetings to build a learning community. Later on students work in project groups
Facilitating Students' Initiatives	+ Co-curricular activities mainly initiated by students	+ Students initiate seminars	+ Many activities initiated by students and facilitated by staff	+ Initiatives encouraged by staff	+ Choice of projects is students' initiative supported by staff
Realizing an Intense Period of Interaction	+ International excursion	- 'Kick-off', but no intense period of interaction	+ 'Kick-off' weekend and course in leadership skills	+ International group excursion	+ Group excursion and international seminar

See for explanation of the contents tables 2 and 3.

Table 4. Continued

Strategies	Utrecht Law College (UU)	Professional School of Arts (UU/HKU)	Top Class Healthcare (HU)	Honors Program Biology (UU)	Interdisciplinary Honors Program (LU)
Organizing a Series of Interactive Activities During the Program	+ Series of meetings and co-curricular activities	+/- Class meetings in first semester	+/- Series of meetings within the leadership course, later on small group meetings in projects	+ Interactive activities depend on the type of authentic group task	+ Both initiated and led by teaching staff and students
The Performance of the Teacher as a Role Model	+ Interactive pedagogy, coaching and guiding co-curricular activities	+ Coaching of students and guest teachers	+ Active role of the teacher staff in the first period, later on coaching role	+ Teaching staff plays important role in facilitating activities	+ Coordinator and teachers enhance community learning and coaching
Community Activities in Feedback Procedures and Evaluation	+ Portfolio includes community activities	+ Feedback on activities by personal learning plans and coaches	+/- Focus on developing leadership skills. Portfolios discussed with the staff	+ Self-reflection is included in program, initiated by staff	+/- Experiment started with personal learning plans

See for explanation of the contents tables 2 and 3.

Team-Based Learning in Honors Science Education: The Benefit of Complex Writing Assignments

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INTRODUCTION

Cooperative learning and team-based learning have been widely recognized as beneficial strategies to improve all levels of education, including higher education. The benefits have been widely researched and are now well-established (Johnson et al.; Michaelsen, Bauman Knight, et al.; Michaelsen & Sweet; Slavin; Springer et al.). The studies have indicated a positive relationship between cooperative learning and student effort, achievement, persistence, and motivation. Just forming groups, however, does not automatically lead to better learning and motivation; cooperation flourishes only under appropriate conditions (Fink; Gillies; Parmelee et al.). This potential for cooperation and learning is maximal when groups are structured in such a way that students understand what is expected of them and how they are supposed to work together (Johnson, Johnson, & Smith; Michaelsen & Sweet).

High-ability students learn differently than their peers; they are quicker in their thinking, more flexible in their strategies, and better at memorization; they know more and prefer complexity (Freeman; Shore & Kanevsky; Wallace). Furthermore, high-ability students need less structure (Snow & Swanson). Finally, when motivation is an important selection criterion for honors students, as it is in Dutch programs, these high-ability students are more motivated than their peers. Given these differences, high-ability students require different instructional conditions to benefit optimally from assignments based on cooperative learning.

We can provide two examples of student-driven honors courses in which students work in teams on complex assignments. These courses, which are designed based on characteristics of cooperative and team-based learning,

have revealed that team-based learning works best for honors students when (1) courses are student-centered rather than teacher-driven, (2) the teacher's role is to coach and facilitate, and (3) the assignments are complex and challenging.

SOME CHARACTERISTICS OF COOPERATIVE LEARNING AND TEAM-BASED LEARNING

Fink distinguishes between three general uses of small groups in higher education: casual interaction, cooperative (or collaborative) learning (CL), and team-based learning (TBL). An example of casual groups is the "think-pair-share" strategy, where short interactions between students are designed to enrich large-group lectures. After the teacher asks a question, the students discuss possible answers with their neighbors, sharing some of the answers before the teacher continues lecturing.

The distinction between CL and TBL is mainly the level of interaction and interdependency, which is more intense in teams. A team is more cohesive than a group because the students spend a long period of time working together and/or have a higher level of accountability and shared responsibility. Teams have two major advantages over groups in an educational setting: individual team members learn to commit a high level of effort to a project, and learning teams can solve problems beyond the capability of even their most talented members (Fink; Michaelsen, Watson, et al.; Michaelsen, Bauman Knight, et al.). Michaelsen and Sweet describe four essential elements of TBL that transform newly formed student groups into high-performance and cohesive learning teams:

- **Groups** need to be properly formed and managed.
- Students must be **accountable** for the quality of their individual work as well as their group work.
- Students must receive frequent and timely **feedback**.
- **Design of group assignments** must promote both learning and team development

In TBL, small groups are a semester-long instructional strategy in which a sequence of activities is designed and linked so that they accomplish deepening of student learning as well as enhancing the development of team cohesion (Fink; Michaelsen & Sweet). In contrast, CL is often focused on assignments that can be finished in days or weeks, generally too little time to allow formation of cohesive teams.

The two science honors courses we designed at Utrecht University implement TBL in complex, semester-long assignments in which students

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write PhD proposals or a year-long project of writing a popular science book. We also introduced such features as student-driven course design, student leadership roles, teacher-as-facilitator roles, and complex writing assignments. Students in both courses are motivated and eager to create products that surpass the products produced by previous groups, which, according to their teachers, they regularly do.

ASSIGNMENTS AND STUDENT ACTIVITIES IN SCIENCE HONORS COURSES

WRITING A RESEARCH PROPOSAL IN THE ADVANCED MOLECULAR CELL BIOLOGY COURSE AT UNIVERSITY COLLEGE UTRECHT, THE HONORS COLLEGE OF UTRECHT UNIVERSITY

In this course, three small teams of four or five students cooperate intensively during a semester of fifteen weeks to formulate three PhD proposals within an overarching theme. Since the course is student-led, all decisions are made by the students with instructors playing a facilitating role by asking critical questions and providing feedback throughout the course. The instructors refrain from guiding the students in their decisions about the various elements of their research proposals.

This course is designed to have a number of phases and aims (Wiegant et al.). First, students become familiar with background research by not just reading but also presenting and discussing primary papers in the field of their proposals. Next, students identify a gap in knowledge and formulate research questions aimed at getting beyond what is currently known. The third phase, typically the most challenging, is identifying a set of techniques that are most appropriate to answering the research questions; in this phase, students contact experts and visit laboratories to grasp the state-of-the-art advanced research technologies in the field of molecular and cellular biology. Finally, students formulate a research program and design PhD projects that they will present and defend before a jury of experts.

During this fifteen-week course, the student teams cooperate intensively to achieve their goals, producing numerous presentations and discussions on ideas and on the progress of their research projects. A program leader, together with project leaders, is responsible for making the program coherent and preventing overlap between projects. Critical readers provide peer feedback on each other's projects, and a layout team is responsible for printing the research program plus proposals. An important factor in achieving cooperative learning and team coherence is the requirement that all students be

accountable for the content of the project and be able to answer critical questions at every stage of their project. Examples of research proposals written in the Advanced Cell Biology course appear at: <http://www.uu.nl/university/college/EN/studying/advancedcellbiology>.

WRITING A POPULAR SCIENCE BOOK IN THE HONORS PROGRAM OF THE DEPARTMENT OF BIOLOGY, UTRECHT UNIVERSITY

This honors program is offered in addition to the regular biology curriculum and has been developed for fifteen to twenty motivated and talented biology students. An important element of the program is a group assignment in which students perform all the activities necessary to write, edit, and produce a book: selecting a theme and chapter topics, writing the chapters, seeking expert feedback, receiving and providing peer feedback, editing chapters, designing layout, making illustrations, and presenting the product at a self-organized symposium.

Students read primary articles on their topic of choice, invite guest speakers on relevant themes, and contact experts for interviews as well as for feedback on drafts of chapters they write. The student editorial board composes a time-table to which all need to adhere, solves problems, and enforces deadlines. Students assign themselves the tasks that are required to finish the project in time.

In 2010, the biology honor students wrote and published a book on biological topics that they considered important to the twenty-first century (ISBN 978-90-77024-60-7). In 2011, the theme of the book was "Synthetic Eden" <http://urandom.nl/synthetic/bundle.html> and focused on various aspects of biotechnology. In 2012, the students wrote the book *Life Support*, which was inspired by topics in the field of sustainability (ISBN 978-90-77024-65-2).

SUPPORTING TBL IN HONORS EDUCATION

STUDENT-LED COURSE DESIGN AND STUDENT ACCOUNTABILITY

An important element in our honors education is to provide less structure and guidance than is usually offered in regular courses and at the same time to express high expectations for what students have to achieve. In our student-driven environment, students themselves are challenged to create the environment in which they can perform optimally.

The students know from the outset that they are accountable not only for their own team project but also for the coherence of all the projects within the

overarching topic. Students thus must communicate well within their team as well as with other teams and must support other teams when needed. This positive interdependence, which is the main precondition for effective cooperative learning (Johnson & Johnson), is a natural byproduct of the courses' complex writing assignments. Students develop cohesive teamwork when they know that they are individually and collectively accountable for an actual product like a PhD proposal or a book, and they develop a sense of shared ownership that further supports team spirit.

The advisability of assigning roles to increase accountability is controversial in the literature on CL and TBL (Michaelsen, Bauman-Knight, et al.). In CL, teachers usually assign specific rotating roles to allow all students to experience each role, learn the required skills, and contribute equitably to the group process. In TBL, assigning roles is generally unnecessary and sometimes even counterproductive (Fink). In our honors courses, we encourage students to assign themselves specific tasks that are required to achieve a successful product at the end of the course, i.e., being a program leader, project leader, or critical reader in the PhD proposal course. The main aim of having students assign their roles in honors courses is twofold: to develop leadership skills and to allow them to structure the course in such a way that obtaining content knowledge as well as the creative process of writing a complex assignment is most optimally organized. In this way, the students develop a sense of ownership and independence while also facilitating the teacher's communication with the student teams.

THE TEACHER AS COACH AND FACILITATOR IN HONORS COURSES USING TBL

The role of the teacher in CL and TBL is described as facilitative, a term that includes structuring the process, determining the learning objectives, deciding on the cooperative structure, monitoring progress, and assessing students' learning (Johnson & Johnson; Michaelsen, Bauman Knight, et al.; Parmelee et al.). Since students in TBL are more actively engaged in the learning process, teachers often report being more relaxed and experiencing more joy (Michaelsen, Bauman-Knight, et al.; Bauman-Knight). In TBL, the teacher is supposed to provide guidance in the form of well-planned and well-structured activities together with prompt feedback, an important feature to improve student learning. In our honors courses, however, such guidance has been reduced to a minimum so that students can develop activities and initiatives they consider most relevant to their goal; the teacher's role is thus to ask critical questions, to facilitate, and to coach in order to encourage the students to excel and to go beyond their comfort zones.

In a student-centered honors course, emphasizing what the teacher should *not* do is also important. We encourage student-led decisions in shaping the course and thereby their final product, thus enhancing their sense of ownership and their pride in what they have achieved, so teachers should keep some distance from the students' decision-making process. Teachers ask critical questions on ideas and hypotheses that students suggest, and they provide feedback on drafts of texts but refrain from offering their ideas of best solutions or strategies. Even though students expect more direction from their teachers, they have reported learning much more by feeling lost at times but managing to find solutions themselves (Wiegant et al.; Scager et al. [2012 and *in press*]).

CHALLENGING HONORS STUDENTS WITH COMPLEX WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

Honors students need a higher level of complexity to challenge them (Kanevsky and Keighly). Writing assignments such as a PhD research proposal or a popular science book are exceptionally complex for undergraduates. Writing a research proposal, for instance, requires that they read primary texts, find gaps in knowledge where research can go beyond what is currently known, find the best techniques and research strategies to fill the gaps, write a coherent PhD proposal, and defending the proposal in front of a jury of experts. Many of these activities require higher-order cognitive skills including analysis, synthesis, and evaluation (Bloom; Wood). Practicing these skills also supports the development of critical and creative thinking, two of the academic competencies encouraged in honors education.

WHAT IF STUDENTS ARE (OVER)CHALLENGED?

According to Csikszentmihalyi, learning takes place most efficiently when the challenge of assignments is in balance with the skills students have developed. During some phases of our Advanced Cell Biology course, students reported that the challenge was much greater than their skills. Although they reported that this imbalance affected their motivation in a negative way, they nevertheless indicated that they extended their efforts and learned a lot (Scager et al. [2012]), and they were able to come up with high-quality projects that impressed the jury of experts. At the end of the course, students were interviewed using the so-called story-line method (Beijaard et al.); we asked the students to identify the elements of the course that they experienced as challenging in order to analyze how the high level of challenge as well as working in teams affected their learning outcomes.

STUDENT EXPERIENCE

In the first two phases of the course focused on writing a PhD proposal, students experienced a balance between challenge and skills. However, in the third phase, when they needed to identify appropriate techniques, the challenge was much greater than what they thought they could handle. They often felt frustrated and, when looking back, said they missed having guidance from the instructors. Nevertheless, students reported that they continued to learn a lot, that the lack of guidance stimulated their learning, and that finally they were able to produce an excellent and coherent research program that included three PhD proposals. The jury members were without exception impressed by the high quality of what the students produced as well as the mastery of the subject matter they demonstrated during the defense (for more details, see Wiegant et al.). Students also indicated that the group work was mainly what had enabled them cope with all the challenges; they helped each other out of pitfalls and achieved a product they were proud of.

The factors that students have experienced as most challenging in this course include the following:

• The complexities of the task, including the novelty of working with primary research articles, the specialized field of knowledge in cell biology, the dynamics of the process in which a large number of decisions needed to be made, and the conflicting demands of writing a research project that was novel, relevant, and feasible;

• The lack of guidance by the instructors, which was sometimes experienced as too challenging but which students eventually recognized as the best way to learn during the process; and

• The high expectations of the teachers combined with the students' desire to outdo the groups of previous years (Scager et al.[2012 and *in press*]).

We deduce from these reactions the following conclusions:

• Students learn most during the phases when they are over-challenged;

• Temporary frustration does not appear to be detrimental; and

• Less guidance is beneficial for learning.

Team-based learning is probably the explanation for the fact that honors students performed exceptionally well even in situations where challenges and skills were not in balance.

CONCLUSION

Our experience with team-based learning leads us to recommend it as an effective and appropriate strategy for teaching honors students. Complex and challenging assignments in the context of TBL enable undergraduates to

stretch their skill, confidence, and motivation to perform better than they imagined they could. The frustrations they inevitably feel in facing assignments that seem beyond their reach are mitigated by the support of their groups, and, by turning to each other rather than to the teacher for guidance, they experience the world of research as it is experienced by graduate students and professionals in the field, giving them and also their teachers a high level of pride and satisfaction.

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Selecting for Honors Programs: A Matter of Motivational Awareness

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INTRODUCTION

The honors programs at the Universities of Applied Sciences in the Netherlands were almost all initiated around 2008 and thus so far have yielded few data about outcomes, but we have a broad consensus that the honors programs should provide a better-than-average professional for the workplace and should give students a chance to perform to the best of their abilities. With this shared mission, we have had an ongoing discussion during our recruitment process about what criteria to use in the selection process. In January of 2012, there was an online discussion on the NCHC listserv about the role of the GPA in honors recruitment and retention in the U.S. Because Rotterdam University of Applied Sciences does not use grade-based admission requirements, relying instead on a competence profile that is added onto the existing competence profile the discipline uses, we were asked to provide insight into our methods. This request, combined with the NCHC email discussion, provided a reason to analyze the available literature concerning factors that lead to successful completion of an honors degree and that produce excellent and successful professionals. We have reviewed current selection criteria according to three models of excellence in order to determine the best criteria for accomplishing the mission of honors.

BACKGROUND

Rotterdam University of Applied Sciences is a multidisciplinary University of Applied Sciences (UAS) with over 32,000 students in roughly eighty different disciplines divided over eleven educational departments. In 2010, Rotterdam UAS started implementing an honors program after preparations that began in 2008. Two questions were of primary importance to the

design of the program: what profile does Rotterdam UAS want to use for the honors program, and which students will be admitted to the program? The Universities of Applied Sciences had little to no information or experience on honors programs in 2008, so in 2007 Eijl, Wolfensberger, Schreve-Brinkman, & Pilot conducted a survey focused on excellence and honors programs. Based on this survey, Rotterdam UAS, as an institution for vocational education, consulted with its partners in the workplace and its relevant stakeholders to define an "excellent professional" as one who can "actualize innovative solutions with a practical function to the taking in hand of societal relevant problems while working together with others" (HR). The slogan "Surpass Yourself" was already in use at Rotterdam UAS to stimulate students to perform to the best of their abilities and linked up well with our definition of an excellent professional. We then developed our definition by describing five competencies that will be discussed later in this essay.

Initially, "Innovation Labs" were developed for the final year of the honors curriculum. These twenty-week labs are the essence of the honors program, with students performing multidisciplinary research for a real client and eventually offering them a solution or problem-solving approach. We now have two years of experience with these kinds of projects, and in September 2012 the third crop of students will start the labs. The number of students in the honors program is rapidly increasing, so we need to define a more exact recruitment policy that identifies students who fit our profile of an "excellent professional."

Extensive research exists on admission criteria for honors students. The most common criterion is the grade average (GPA in the U.S.) in a student's previous education. However, the survey by Eijl et al. shows that using a different set of criteria—for instance, motivation—also leads to good results and that a causal link between the GPA and success in honors is by no means a given.

Our concern is whether the construction of the current honors program of Rotterdam UAS links up sufficiently with the theoretical framework surrounding it and whether there is enough research available on which to further develop the program, and so our two primary research question is: "Which factors are sufficient for making a reliable prognosis for professional excellence, and how can these factors be used to further develop recruitment for honors programs?" Our assumption in response to our research questions is that sufficient factors for making a reliable prognosis can be found in instruments through which potential honors students are detected early in the process so that they can start their orientation phase early in their education and improve their academic and professional qualities more

effectively. Accordingly, student counselors need to be better equipped to quickly recognize such qualities in all students.

METHODS

We did research in the literature of educational sciences research to find factors that produce a reliable prognosis of student success in their education. Based on the factors we found, we devised a system focused on subject and place as primary factors in educational success. With this system as a model, our goal was to offer a point of reference for teachers to use in the efficient and sufficient recruitment of students for the honors program. Because the honors programs at the Universities of Applied Sciences are still in their early years and have yielded few data on recruitment, we looked at recruitment criteria for regular education, where a lot more evidence was available. Among the multiplicity of literature surveys examining success in education from different angles, we focused on which recruitment methods were effective for the intended further education. Although most of the surveys we examined were administered to non-honors students, they were useful because they focused on personal qualities of students that were relevant to the honors program.

THEORY

A major question in the literature is the role of GPA in a prognosis for academic success. The results vary from "no prognosis possible" to "some prognosis possible" and "partial prognosis possible" (Harackiewicz et al. [2002]; Leverett-Main; McClelland; Robbins et al.; Scager et al.). Few of these surveys indicate the kind of the education in which the GPA was acquired or the further education for which it serves as recruitment criterion. A Dutch study on enrollment in two separate bachelor's programs (van den Berg, Hofman, & Stoppelenburg) states that students with a fairly average GPA (7–7.5 on a 10-point scale) are more inclined to enroll in a second bachelor's program, thus voluntarily increasing their workload, than students with a high GPA (8–8.5). The implication here is that a high GPA is not necessarily a prognosis for success but might indicate instead a linkup between high grades and "coursing through" an easier curriculum, possibly indicating decreased persistence.

A factor other than GPA that has been studied as a predictor of success in education is motivation (Van der Hulst & Jansen; Linnenbrink & Pintrich; Nuland), with different forms of motivation investigated along with their effects on educational success. Goals that students set themselves (Harackiewicz et al. [2000]; Linnenbrink & Pintrich; Pekrun, Elliot, & Maier) contribute in different ways to educational success. The goal theory defines

and analyzes both short- and long-term performance goals (Harackiewicz et al. [1997]). Further, curriculum characteristics like the number of courses to be followed simultaneously or the attractiveness of courses to students contribute to educational success (Van der Hulst & Jansen); this survey, incidentally, finds a possible prognosis for educational success in technical education by using the average grades for mathematics and physics in previous education. A final and altogether different factor is the student himself. For instance, Finn and Rock found resilience to be a factor in educational success while Leverett-Main focused on having or developing analytical, creative, and practical skills.

From these different surveys, three separate factors can be deduced that together have an influence on a student's educational success: personal characteristics, motivation, and study environment.

CASE STUDY:
ROTTERDAM UAS

Rotterdam UAS has, based on the standards of the national incentives program Sirius, chosen the development of "professional excellence" as a central theme for its honors program, in which learning to innovate is the essence of professional excellence in five separate competencies (Drenth & Veltman). These competencies together form the profile Learning to Innovate and can be described as followed:

1. **Innovation-Driven Competence**
   To be able to contribute to the development of an innovative and professional production, the student will show an inquisitive attitude and will see and use, in a creative way, possibilities and opportunities to create innovation in the workplace.

2. **Question-Driven Competence**
   To be able to act from an innovative point of view, the student will show awareness of his study environment, in which he will function as a professional and will see opportunities and possibilities to actualize innovation in the workplace.

3. **Competence for Collaborative Learning**
   To be able to participate in innovative processes, the student will behave as a team player, showing that he is able to use communicational, cooperative, and networking skills that lead to his being able to effectively and efficiently contribute to product-oriented cooperation with all the professionals involved in the innovation.

4. **Competence for Interactive Learning**

   To be able to guide his own permanent development, the student will acknowledge the necessity of lifelong learning and will work to gain the study skills required for this process.

5. **Knowledge-Creation Competence**

   To be able to keep developing, improving, and updating his own knowledge, the student will learn not only within formal contexts (like school) but also in the workplace.

Generally these competencies as defined here are not a part of the regular bachelor's studies, are evaluated at a different and lower level, or are not featured simultaneously as one coherent evaluative profile. The competencies have been made into quantifiable criteria by formulating characteristics of attitude and behavior and by defining products as results in as concrete a way as possible (McClelland). A cumulative portfolio should demonstrate that a student has a thorough command of these competencies in as real a work situation as possible. In a criterion-referenced assessment interview, the student is interviewed by two different assessors.

The current layout of the honors curriculum is divided into two parts and is composed of additional program courses parallel to or partially embedded in the bachelor's program: a voluntary and optional part in the first two and a half years and an obligatory part in the last year and a half (figure 1).

The "recruiting & promotion" part of the program offers students a chance to discover their field of interest within their future profession. Each project in this period results in a product and is evaluated and assessed by means of the Learning to Innovate profile. Counseling and formative evaluation are centered in personal conversations to make the students comfortable with the competence profile and to give them practice negotiating the evidence supporting their own development toward becoming an "excellent professional." Selection is carried out in this semester based on motivation and progress; students should be active participants in this process and be able to show development or a desire to develop. Freedom of opportunity is the basis for this semester: if you prove yourself, you may proceed. This freedom makes "recruiting & promotion" attractive in that it offers the freedom to study multiple subjects or themes. The attractiveness of the program is important as students ask, "What's in it for me?" (Freyman). We need to discover at this stage in what ways students were not stimulated enough in their previous education and how they can be activated to work on challenging projects (Derriks & Vergeer): how can we help student counselors recognize student potential in as early a stage as possible, and how can we optimally motivate prospective honors students? Since the Dutch educational situation involves almost no competition between students or competition to be

admitted into a discipline (a selection process before admission is customary only in a few specific disciplines such as art or music), student counselors need instruments at their disposal that can contribute to recognizing potential in individual students interested in the honors program (Leverett-Main).

The "research & innovation" part of the program focuses on the innovative side of vocational practice in order to accentuate the necessity of continuous improvement in one's practices and knowledge within the domain of work (OECD; Stelsel). Between the fifth and sixth semesters, a selection procedure is carried out based on a motivational letter, a recommendation from a teacher, and an interview. Until now, the procedure has been an experiment; we have no proof of the effectiveness of our selection process, and there is a continuous PDCA (plan – do – check – act) program in place to develop and test our procedure.

In the sixth semester, an additional project (or task within an existing project) and an additional course are required; in the seventh semester, students

Figure 1. Set-Up of the Rotterdam UAS Honors Program

Year of Studies	Semester	Part of the Program	Obligatory Part of Curriculum Bachelor's and Honors Program	Additional Parts of the Honors Curriculum
1	1	recruiting & promotion (voluntary)		add. project
	2			add. project
2	3			add. project
	4			add. project
3	5		internship (end of semester: last possibility to enter into honors program)	additional research assignment
	6	research & innovation (obligatory)	add. theory and project	*when starting here:* program for late-bloomers
4	7		Innovation Lab	
	8		bachelor's thesis	research with Knowledge Center

participate in an Innovation Lab; and in the eighth semester, students graduate within their discipline but with an enhanced degree and with additional counseling from a lector involved with one of six Knowledge Centers. Especially in the last phase, linkage with research programs in the Knowledge Centers or research outside of the university is essential. The Knowledge Centers provide for projects and research subjects; they have a large network of clients or contacts at their disposal; and they have a feel for current developments in the vocational practice(s) of their domain. Since the Knowledge Centers have extraordinary expertise in the field of theoretical and practice-based research, they can provide lectors and researchers who are effective in counseling and evaluating students. In this period, the use of Knowledge Centers within the educational program is especially focused on deepening research questions and methods within the student's discipline. Cooperation with partners from the workplace itself is also a key educational ingredient.

The design of our honors curriculum has come about through the tight cooperation of a teacher-development team that includes a teacher from each educational department. These teachers are top-of-the-line when it comes to innovation and improvement of their own curricula or quality of education within their own departments. Their knowledge and experience have been pooled together to develop our program. Practical challenges concerning this cooperation mostly relate to the different time schedules of teaching and researching, the exchange of teachers and researchers, and the additional workload of involvement in the honors program. Solving these problems can seem hopeless, but we are trying to reach optimal cooperation with the Knowledge Centers and with the exchange of lectors, researchers, teachers, and students between the Knowledge Centers and disciplines.

Dividing the program into an optional and an obligatory part enables late-bloomers—students who only during their internship discover their passion for the discipline—to partake in the honors program. At the transition from "recruiting & promotion" to "research & innovation," an exploratory student assessment is made that becomes part of the admission process; the purpose of the assessment to determine the student's motivation, goals, and development in relation to the five competencies. In line with Freyman's recommendations, the teacher considers the student's breadth of interests, curiosity, primary learning questions, and ability as well as willingness to invest study time. "Learning for living, not just for making a living," according to Freyman, is an important motivation for honors students, and the questions our teachers have formulated are practically the same as Freyman's list even though they did not do a preliminary literature search or survey but formulated questions from their work experience.

As soon as students are official participants in some part of the program, active involvement in and contribution to the honors community are mandatory. The honors communities are partly Communities of Learning, partly Communities of Practice, and, above all, strategies for creating internal and external effectiveness. These communities feature issues from the students' professional fields, on which the students work together with the Knowledge Center. Not only teachers but also lectors, researchers, professionals, and experts are important in the community. The communities also form a home base for the students and facilitate individual meetings in which counseling and feedback are given.

RECENT SURVEYS

Because "excellence" has been on the political agenda in the Netherlands for a couple of years now, several recent surveys have been developed and implemented to provide a coherent model and point of reference. Three such surveys and their results are discussed below.

THE SCHUURMAN MODEL

The model of excellence described by Schuurman, van den Berg, & Baeten concerns a survey conducted among young people, aged twelve to twenty-five, in different school systems; the survey focuses on their drive and motivation to perform or succeed. The survey is especially focused on the way to enhance students' success in their current or future education.

Because "excellence" is not a popular word among this group of young people, the term "exceptional" is mostly used, meaning being better at something than other people. The survey focuses on two types of motivation: (1) intrinsic and extrinsic motivation and (2) performance and mastery motivation. Nuland clarifies that intrinsic and extrinsic motivation differ with the study environment of the student and that there is not one obvious way to stimulate behavior. Linnenbrink and Pintrich focus on goal theory to gain insight into performance and mastery motivation. Performance motivation mostly concerns the short term and is often seen in the first few years of studying. Mastery motivation, on the other hand, focuses on the long term and can be perceived in the final years of study (Harackiewicz et al. [1997, 2002]). Other indicators involved in the survey include doing "just enough," being aware of one's future, social checking, and experiencing educational challenge. From interviews, four different types of young people can be deduced: the Self-Conscious Generalist, the For-Convenience's-Sake Enjoyer of Life, the Acquiescent Follower, and the Status-Focused Future Thinker. Ordering these four types by educational type and gender, along with a profile illustrated by an individual example, constructs an image of

where the different students can be found and how they can be optimally motivated.

This model of excellence can be used to recognize and identify students in groups or as individuals; it also offers concrete recommendations for each type of student so that student counselors can intervene to enhance the student's learning process and motivate the student to excel. The survey thus offers student counselors points of reference to interpret visible behaviors and attitudes, adapting counseling to these findings. The report closes with concrete recommendations to educational institutes on how to enhance excellence in students and what to do in the near future.

In terms of our research question, this survey offers insights about why the honors program might be interesting to students. The survey also covers a possible reason for educational success among some students and failure among others: when a student is fully able to state his own learning motivation, he has a better chance at educational success. The same insight can also be found in goal theory.

THE WOLFENSBERGER MODEL

In her model of excellence, Wolfensberger, without specifying a socioeconomic context, she links two aspects of education: "education and meetings" and "student and student life." "Education and meetings" centers on the contact between teacher and student, specifying three important conditions: learning and actualizing academic and professional competencies; creating a passionate community; and offering freedom within bounds. "Student and student life" defines four criteria that can potentially cause the student to excel: motivation and passion; analytical, creative, and practical cleverness; perseverance; and leadership. Students who meet these conditions and criteria are potentially able to achieve excellence. This model offers a point of reference for designing education, for creating an educational context, and for stimulating students. It is also possible to design a selection procedure within the framework of this model so that student counselors are better equipped to recruit and challenge students to participate in the honors program: students can be assessed for admission on the basis of the four criteria and the three conditions.

In the framework of our research question, this model allows us to look at students and the educational environment in a coherent way but does not offer enough insight into how students should be selected and counseled to facilitate full development. Within this model, a student should be or become interested in performance—in development of self and development in the workplace—which is a mastery goal, but how a student reaches this kind of performance is not considered in the model. The model nevertheless provides

important recommendations for teachers and institutions on how to enhance the education of potentially excellent students.

THE SCAGER MODEL

The third and last model was constructed by Scager and has as a point of departure the three-ring model by Renzulli. The three-ring model offers a possibility for sorting out indicators of "excellent professionals," a concept about which little other research is available. Scager replaces "above average ability" in Renzulli's model with "general intelligence" and replaces "task commitment" with "motivation" but continues to use the term "creativity." Scager uses earlier research to delineate and define the three indicators, at the same time adopting six characteristics (in the article called "talent factors") that are also available in the original model: intelligence, creative thinking, openness to experience, desire to learn, drive to excel, and persistence. Based on these talent factors, a questionnaire was constructed and distributed among 1,122 honors students. The results show that honors students, with the exception of "persistence," scored higher than non-honors students on all talent factors as well as on the entire profile. The most significant differences were found in "desire to learn," "drive to excel," and "creative thinking." "Intelligence" showed the least significant difference (which could make one wonder about using the GPA as an excluding criterion in selection). A striking difference with the U.S. is that in the Netherlands "desire to learn" scored higher than "drive to excel" (Scager) while in the U.S. it scored lower.

In the framework of our research question, this model refines the talent factors that can be configured for students. By naming and describing six indicators, thoroughly supported by models from the educational sciences, this model gives us more specific grounds on which to evaluate the students regardless of academic discipline. It is still unclear, though, whether the resulting profile of the excellent professional will be valid in the workplace. This model will require that teachers, based on their experience in the workplace, determine whether the six indicators form a basis for educational and professional success. The manner of developing the required types and levels of skills is not yet clear, and perhaps looking at the educational process from a long-term as well as short-term student perspective is a solution here.

Each of the three models offers insight into the concept of excellence and ways to implement it in education. The three models are completely different in focus, though: Schuurman et al. consider previous education and student personality; Wolfensberger emphasizes students and their study environment; and Scager stresses excellence in education and professionalism in the workplace. The models nevertheless overlap in several respects: the Wolfensberger

model presents the complexity of the links between the study environment, teacher, and student; the Schuurman model of excellence presents four types of students that fit partly into Wolfensberger's "student and student life" and thus offers an opportunity to be more exact in the selection and counseling of students interested in joining the honors program. Moving from the model "excellence in education" to the "excellent professional," Scager provides an important model of talent factors, about which a lot of theoretical as well as practical literature is available, but additional research will be required to validate the significance of these talent factors in the workplace. The Scager and Schuurman models enable us to enhance the Wolfensberger model into one that provides wide opportunities for selection of students and for feedback from the workplace.

CONCLUSION

Our research question was: "Which factors are sufficient for making a reliable prognosis for professional excellence, and how can these factors be used to further develop recruitment for honors programs?" We can now indicate that three factors—personal characteristics, motivation, and study environment—are probably the most important indicators for professional excellence. Personal characteristics are defined by the six talent factors Scager identified: intelligence, creative thinking, openness to experience, desire to learn, drive to excel and persistence. Criterion for admission to the honors program would be evidence of these talent factors, in a specific and high-scoring manner, depending on the student's discipline. Motivation should be considered from a long-term point of view; students setting mastery goals for themselves eventually have a better chance of educational success than students setting performance goals. The combination of personal characteristics and motivation requires an environment that stimulates students to excel by leading them from performance to mastery goals and from learning for the sake of grades to learning for the sake of the process while practicing and learning from feedback. In the Communities of Learning and Communities of Practice lie the best opportunities to give meaning to the students' education. They offer an environment in which student and teacher can confront each other and in which learning in education and learning in the workplace meet each other.

For the second part of the research question, the model for excellence by Schuurman offers a good point of departure in refining our recruitment and selection process as do Wolfensberger's discussion of "student and student life" and Scager's focus on motivation and talent factors. Within this context, GPA is less important because any causality between GPA and educational success has not been substantially proved. Research needs to focus more on

motivation, goal theory, the starting points the Schuurman model offers for exceptional students, and the six talent factors defined by Scager. Most curricula focus on competencies specific to their intended profession, such as knowledge, skills, and the development of a professional attitude whereas the honors programs at the Universities of Applied Sciences focus especially on professional attitude, making knowledge and skills development the students' responsibility and thus following the life-long-learning principle. Thus, there is a strong difference in focus between honors programs and the regular disciplines in Universities of Applied Sciences.

What skills then should teachers have at their disposal when looking to improve the recruitment and selection process and its linkage to "education and meetings"? The simplicity and clarity of Jay Freyman's remarks—along with Schuurman's models, Wolfensbergers's coherence, Scager's talent factors, and the lived experience of our teachers—can allow us to design courses that help teachers select and counsel students. However, we still need further investigation of which indicators, in what relationship to each other, predict and produce success in the workplace. Universities of Applied Sciences claim to educate "excellent professionals" through student profiles, and we need to support these profiles with sufficient data.

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The Reflective Professional Honours Programme of the Dutch Saxion Universities

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INTRODUCTION

The Reflective Professional Honours Programme of the Saxion Universities of Applied Sciences in the Netherlands centers on a profile of what graduates of the program should have accomplished in addition to their regular bachelor's degree program. The development team for our programme first investigated what the profile should be, interviewing roughly three hundred business representatives to discover what they considered an excellent honours student profile. All the interview information was transformed into a concept profile. An Honours Council evaluated the concept, and the project team adapted it. Then the steering committee evaluated and approved it after further adaption. Finally the president of the University Board approved the profile.

Each academy within the Saxion Universities can start a programme on a four-year experimental basis. The areas of experiment are entrance selection, programme contents, programme didactics, coaching characteristics, student profile, and honours community characteristics. The aim is to experiment and share the best practices. All in all, sixteen programmes have been started. The programmes run alongside the regular university programmes, and no study credits are given; students proceed after positive assessments. Some programmes are within an academy, and some are independent. Programmes are assessed in the third year of the four-year experiment. Some are validated and gain the title Reflective Professional Honours Programme. Others are characterised as exceptional.

The student profile has been the key element in the development, implementation, and success of the Reflective Professional Honours Programme, and its six characteristics are the foundation of this unique honours programme.

THE REFLECTIVE PROFESSIONAL:
SAXION DEFINITIONS

Successful graduates of an honours programme at the Saxion Universities of Applied Sciences in the Netherlands, after completing their bachelor's degree, have distinguished themselves with six characteristics that provide a unique profile as they enter the labour market. The ingredients of this profile (source: <http://www.saxion.nl/buitengewoon>) involves ingredients that are never all present to the same extent but, in some combination, mark the graduates as reflective professionals.

1. Breadth and Depth of Knowledge
   On the one hand, reflective professionals are specialised and, on the other hand, have a broad outlook. They have a wide mental framework and the ability to creatively combine knowledge with complex systems and important issues of professional practice. They search for challenging issues in knowledge centres or reputable companies. They can make regional and international comparisons, knowing that almost all professions have an international component.

2. Metacognition
   Reflective professionals are able to understand the development of their profession within a historical and philosophical context. They possess metacognitive skills such as analysing, setting targets, planning, and evaluating—metaprocesses that stimulate the profession to develop further. They both develop and share knowledge within a high-quality network, learning quickly and inspiring fellow professionals to higher levels of development.

3. Professional and Social Awareness
   Reflective professionals are enterprising in pursuit of new solutions with social meaning. Exercising cross- and multi-disciplinary thinking, being able and willing to take responsibility, and being able to communicate convincingly enable them to devise new concepts for professionals, companies, and sectors. Their professional journey is more intriguing as a "dance of change" than as a destination (Senge), and in this context they are aware of their professional position within a team, organization, or society.

4. Methodological Attitude
   In addition to evidence-based thinking and substantiated assessments, reflective professionals continuously evaluate the strategies they use. Fed by a strong analytical-intellectual ability and interest in theoretical depth, they arrive at new professional and social accomplishments.

5. Professional Detachment

   Reflective professionals have the ability to reflect on issues from an extra-ordinary perspective. Professional detachment is a pre-condition for placing issues in an alternative framework that incorporates paradigm shifts. Reflective professionals have the inclination and ability to consider issues based on systematised experience and theoretical models, to see the issues on a micro, meso and macro level, and to take a point of view in this context. They repeatedly create and articulate their own learning questions as well as those of the professional environment. They both seek and create challenges and new paradigms.

6. Differentiated Profile Development

   Reflective professionals usually develop a specific profile within which they function in a high-quality way to distinguish themselves, whether in entrepreneurship, management, or research.

In short, reflective professionals are innovators in professional practice, perceive new trends in society or in the world, take up their positions in a professionally responsible and innovative way, create new knowledge in order to consciously improve the system (double-loop learning), and even change a sector or market (triple-loop learning). They create the dynamics of innovation and see learning as a social challenge for the future.

THE PROCESS OF DEVELOPING AN HONOURS PROGRAMME FOR REFLECTIVE PROFESSIONALS

Various phases defined the evolution of our programme to develop a cadre of reflective professionals in the Saxion Universities. The first phase was the exploration of ways the participating professional universities of applied sciences (*hogescholen*) in the Netherlands had formulated their programmes. The second phase was a survey within Saxion. During the third phase, a research group was set up to carry out specialised research in support of the profile; these surveys are currently in progress. In the fourth phase, international feedback has been requested. The various phases and findings are outlined below.

PHASE 1:
NATIONAL SURVEY AND LITERATURE SEARCH

Our programme team initially made contact with other universities of applied sciences that had initiated such a project either recently or some time ago. The team visited universities of applied sciences such as the Hanzehogeschool in Groningen, attended nationally or regionally organized

conferences, and participated in national research groups. The programme team also studied relevant websites and other publications.

During the Conference on Excellence, Research & Development in September 2010, our team was introduced to important resources. The article "Een goede hbo-er is geen wo-er: het profiel van de excellente professional" (A good higher education institution student is not a university student: the profile of the excellent professional), written by Freddy Veltman-van Vugt and Daphne Hijzen, Hogeschool Rotterdam, made it clear that a successful undergraduate professional student is not automatically comparable to a successful nonprofessional university student. This distinction was an eye-opener. Rotterdam takes the position that undergraduates in professional fields will be working in a context characterised by change, as a result of which they have to be innovative and multidisciplinary.

Another important article was "Wat heeft excellente beroepsbeoefenaars gemaakt tot wie ze zijn?" (What has made excellent professional into what they are?) by Dr Claudia Hoeksema-van Orden of the Hanzehogeschool Groningen, who asserts that personal characteristics to look for are passion, single-mindedness, motivation, perseverance and leadership. These insights supported the multidimensional concept of the original Saxion design, mixing intelligence, learning ability, reflection, curiosity, creativity and motivation.

Our literature search on reflective practices led us to authors such as D. Schon (*The Reflective Practitioner*, 1983) and H.J. Hartman ("Teaching Metacognitively," in *Metacognition in Learning and Instruction*, 1990); these authors provided guidelines for reflection in direct, interactive, and practical situations. Research at Lewis-Clark State College's Division of Education <http://www.lsc.edu/> provided a link with *The Reflective Professional* and a set of reflective standards for the teacher.

PHASE 2:
MEETINGS AND INTERVIEWS
WITH ACADEMICS AND PROFESSIONALS

In order to form a consensus about excellence, we held talks with senior lecturers and educators as well as boards of directors and various academic representatives within Saxion. We interviewed and filmed representatives of the academies who visited national conferences, and we also interviewed students (see Appendices A and B.) The result was a vast database of word images, out of which certain key elements emerged that became the basis for our profile of reflective professionals as described in our six characteristics.

Further confirmation of these elements came from the literature. Argyris, for instance, prompted our identification of several scales or loops relating to

professional individuals, teams, organizations, systems, and sectors. A reflective professional learns, applies knowledge, and innovates with an ever-increasing scope.

PHASE 3:
RESEARCH

During the third phase, a research group was set up to carry out specialised research in support of the profile. These surveys are currently in progress.

PHASE 4:
SURVEY REFLECTIVE PROFESSIONAL:
FEEDBACK FROM NCHC EXPERTS

During the 46th Annual Conference of the National Collegiate Honors Council in Phoenix, Arizona (October 2011), we consulted various experts in the Consultants Center to get feedback on our profile of the reflective professional. (See Acknowledgments a list of these consultants.) We discussed our six distinct characteristics of the reflective professional, and the consultants offered positive appraisals of each of them as well as some additional insights or suggestions. Below are some highlights of their commentary.

1. The six characteristics of the reflective professional add to the seventeen NCHC Basic Characteristics by focusing on interdisciplinarity and risk-taking.

2. The focus on breadth and depth addresses both liberal arts and professional students in a balanced way.

3. Curiosity should be fed and nourished rather than taught.

4. Professionals need a high level of competence within their field but also need to communicate their knowledge to the public and to understand people of different backgrounds.

5. In the United States, service learning is an important component of honours, and students are expected to want to carry out professional activities for the benefit of society. The progress made in this context in Europe is viewed with a certain amount of envy. Americans seem less fully developed as members of society compared with Europeans; they see themselves as individualists and often have a paradigm of us and them, especially in relation to Mexican immigrants.

6. Reflection is an important goal, and ideally students should learn not in a comfortable but in an uncomfortable manner. Peer evaluation is one model

in the U.S. that encourages reflection and often discomfort. Reflection also includes looking ahead to formulate new long-term strategies or policies for a student's discipline.

7. Civic engagement encourages students to later view their jobs with a sense of responsibility to give something back to society.

8. Our differentiated profile is a highly effective strategy that not only explains what skills students will have at the end of the programme but also makes clear to an employer why an honours student is a better candidate than the average graduate. Employers are keen to know exactly what they can expect from a reflective professional and how he or she can help a company advance. It may be possible to communicate these accomplishments more clearly through a certificate or through some kind of check sheet indicating how well an individual student has attained each of the six characteristics.

9. A liberal arts programme that makes use of the world classics might be useful in enhancing all six characteristics of the profile, with the caveat that the classics no longer come solely from the West but also from the Middle East, India, the Far East, and Africa.

OUR PERCEPTIONS ABOUT
U.S. HONOURS PROGRAMMES

Based on our experience at the NCHC conference in Phoenix, we drew several conclusions about American honours programmes that distinguish them from our experience in the Netherlands:

• American programmes have great freedom as far as objectives are concerned, but, driven by accreditation requirements, people are looking for concrete criteria and requirements a student must meet. Our profile of the Saxion reflective professional is an example of a further step in the process of formulating concrete requirements.

• American programmes are often focused on self-cultivation based on the world classics whereas the Saxion profile offers room for excelling in both the liberal arts domains and the transdisciplinary sphere.

• Members of the American programmes are often young people from the well-to-do classes and are protected from the outside world, which may not be the best manner of development for future leadership. On the other hand, honours students are expected to take responsibility during their studies and in their professional lives for contributing to society.

• The American teacher is often a portal to other cultures, standards, and values. For example, an art history teacher had students experience the South

American Day of the Dead as well as Halloween. A teacher of Greek acquainted her students with the Greek philosophers as a stepping stone to world philosophers.

- The educational community in the United States has an unprecedented degree of strategic flexibility and volatility. Rapid changes of provosts, deans, and directors result in the sudden and rapid abolishment or formation of honours programmes, costing a lot of energy and causing instability and fear.

- Honours programmes in the U.S. maintain strong relationships with the parents of honours students, who are often funders of the programmes, but do not develop relationships with disciplinary or professional organizations that monitor the quality of academic content.

- American honours programmes are strongly focused on publicity about extraordinary performance; they adhere to a certain ethos without its being linked to a validated profile. Several speakers introduced themselves by making remarks that they had the best students in terms of, for instance, national test scores or national fellowships or intrinsic intelligence or motivation.

- The developers of U.S. honours programmes are very keen to learn. The participants in the NCHC conference feel a certain solidarity in the shared learning experience during the conference, but few participants appear to exchange contact information.

- City as Text™ is a conference feature that focuses on historical, transdisciplinary, and cultural awareness, or *Bildung*, through urban exploration and through reading a city as if it were a literary text. With maps of the city, students and faculty are sent out to experience cathedrals, cemeteries, museums, parks, and neighbourhoods. Participants might explore, for instance, the way that events such as Katrina had an impact on the development and layout of a city, or, by reading tombstones in the various rich and poor cemeteries, they might learn what kinds of diseases and other causes of death have affected different social classes of a population. Following their explorations, participants—both students and faculty together—present their findings to each other. One objective of this project is community formation.

- The keynote speeches during the conference did not focus on honours education but on topics such as pesticides, music, floods, death, poetry, and art. About 40% of the audience for these general-interest lectures were students accompanying their teachers at the conferences. These lectures were a chance for students and teachers to learn and interact together.

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APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW OF EVA BOONK, SAXION STUDENT IN SOCIAL PEDAGOGIC CARE (SECOND YEAR), HONOURS PROGRAMME: LIBERAL ARTS AND SCIENCE

1. How did you find out about the HP for the RP and how did the selection take place?

Initially there were various advertising campaigns, and after that I attended several introductory lectures and I received a personal invitation letter from the manager of the programme. Via other students I already had some idea of what is was. Then I decided to participate in the programme.

2. What is characteristic for the formats in the HP for the RP?

One characteristic is that you are left free and at the same time are given a clear assignment. The attractive thing is that the assignment can be given shape and developed in a highly personal way. In addition, as a student you get the feeling that you are alongside the teacher instead of occupying a position under the teacher. Also the fact that besides guest teachers there are only a few teachers following you and specifically monitoring your development, makes that you do not feel that you have to start from the bottom again. You build something together. They know you and encourage me in my specific development.

3. What is characteristic for the content of the HP for the RP?

First you have a good look at who you are, how you stand in the world, and then you look at what else there is. My own degree programme also made me look at myself, but now I look at myself and everything I am equipped with through a kind of *Bildung* method. My basic discipline is social work and I have also become acquainted with various ways of critical thinking, a way of thinking intellectually, etc. It is focused on domains of meanings, facts, perception and such. Therefore it more or less exceeds bounds as far as disciplines are concerned.

4. What is characteristic for the teachers of the HP for the RP

My teachers have a broad outlook and a great deal of knowledge. It is a broader kind of programme. They have a certain form of enthusiasm, and there is some degree of equality. There is also room for better feedback, more and differently than in case of a regular programme. There is specific attention for one's own and new ideas, as well my contribution. The

intention in artistic and creative thinking was to challenge one another. My strong point was drama; acting. Language constituted a gap in my skills. Then I was given the opportunity to write a monologue. I was given a challenge of my own, from my strong points and in which context different personalities had to be portrayed; I learnt with steady progress.

5. What is characteristic for the culture or community of the HP for the RP?

It is important that you do not stay put in your comfort zone but that you set yourself a challenge and get ahead. You spend a lot of time on discussions with other students. They might be from a Social Work, Applied Psychology, Nursing, Textiles, Mechanical Engineering or ICT background. This way you learn a lot from other people. For example, someone gave a presentation on nuclear energy. I had my opinions about this, but now my outlook on this subject has been substantially broadened. You learn that by listening to other disciplines, your outlook on things can be broadened and change.

6. Which characteristics of the profile of the RP do you recognise and can you indicate how you receive coaching in this?

Breadth and Depth of Knowledge

- Specialist and/or broad knowledge with respect to subject matter from own and other disciplines.

- The teachers have a broad outlook and there are many guest teachers. It's about philosophy, different ways of thinking.

- There was a lot of reflection involved in my own programme and I did this because it was required. Now I do it in a meaningful way and take aspects from it for my own professional personality. Regular coaching within the Bachelor programme was interesting but the HP brought me further still. In the coaching process I have learnt a lot about the capacity I still have to further develop my professional personality.

Metacognition

- Initially you find yourself in relatively small groups and you are still very much focused on your own development. In the second part you work together more, give one another feedback, learn from each other, and learn in the form of a think tank. Then the assignments are primarily focused on working together. You examine other people's work more intensively and with greater motivation. Regular higher professional education, as it were, teaches you the basic steps and now you learn to concentrate on much more specific points in the products of fellow students.

Professional and Social Awareness

• I think that this very much contributes to me adopting a critical attitude and that I am able to conceive how something could be done differently in my profession. I have learnt to dare say how things can be done differently. I have learnt how to make process descriptions and to reflect on these and to direct myself. When you are involved in a description, you discover new possibilities and new insights. This enables you to direct other people to do new things which you can in turn use in your own work situation. For other people in my environment and for my employer it will be very useful, certainly in the continuously changing working environment of social work, to have employees who are flexible, who dare look at themselves and dare introduce new insights, and dare encourage others to develop new insights.

Methodological Attitude

• We have learnt to adopt a critical way of thinking, based on various methods; in this context we have learnt to go beyond merely slashing arguments. We learnt how to look further than your own abilities, the library, and Picarta. Ordinarily you are restricted to the prescribed literature because this is sufficient.

Professional Detachment

• There is always more involved than simply answering the question. It is about yourself, it requires a broader perspective. As a result you function differently in your environment.

Differentiated Profile Development: creates new knowledge to consciously improve the system (double loop learning) or even change a sector or market (triple loop).

• I have, as it were, hundreds of methods for tackling things. I have a broad outlook and more empathy to understand the motives of other people. I am able to encourage people I know a little better to make the next step, or to broaden their outlook.

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW OF SJOERD WERKHOVEN, SAXION STUDENT IN TECHNICAL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION (2ND YEAR), HONOURS PROGRAMME: TALENT FOR NATURAL LEADERSHIP

1. How did you find out about the Honours Programme for the Reflective Professional and how did the selection take place?

I went after it myself. When my studies turned out to be easy I had a talk with the study career counsellor and was presented with options such as the HP programme and then I tried to find out as much as possible about it.

First I had to write a letter in which I had to explain why I wanted to participate. Then I had to present my passion. I was invited twice for an interview about my motivation and my choice for the specific programme. The first interview didn't go too well but during the second interview I had a better understanding of what I wanted to do.

2. What is characteristic for the formats in the Honours Programme for the Reflective Professional?

The HP is about project management and personal development.

Innovating, interacting, if you don't contribute you will not get anything out of it. The point is what you personally can achieve. There is interaction with students, graduates, and people in the field. For certain assignments you work in groups. The groups are formed at random and all day you work on broadening and acquiring knowledge. The groups also vary all the time. The only binding factor is the project management but everyone has a completely different personality and professional background. I learned the cradle to cradle approach in a project on construction and felt this didn't suit me very much. I also learnt how to manage conflicts, what my attitude was and my and other people's mentality. I recognised my pitfalls and learnt how to actively deal with these. Through methodical analysis of your own personality you also recognise types in others and you learn to deal with these as well.

3. What is characteristic for the content of the Honours Programme for the Reflective Professional?

4. What is characteristic for the teachers of the Honours Programme for the Reflective Professional?

There are teachers but they are practically equals to the group. There is much discussion. Within the "teachers" group there are experts who come up with an idea with which you could do something yourself. It is not really a teacher who teaches you something. During a workshop about the creation spiral you were taught which steps you could take to achieve what you want. You have the step-by-step plan in your head and you have to do something with it yourself. This was also a workshop and that means that you have to put it to work yourself. In addition, there are also theory lessons.

5. What is characteristic for the culture of community of the Honours Programme for the Reflective Professional?

Close and open. I always feel very much at ease. Everyone is very open, helpful, and eager to learn.

6. Which characteristics of the profile of the Reflective Professional do you recognise and can you indicate how you receive coaching in this?

Breadth and Depth of Knowledge

- Specialist and/or broad knowledge with respect to subject matter from own and other disciplines: technical business administration and in this case Prince2.

- Ability to creatively use knowledge in complex systems and issues from the professional practice: we did a practice case at DHL, the transport sector. There was a logistics problem, within business to consumer, whereby often consumers were not at home and the routes were inefficient. We went there together, with students, teachers and graduates. What we did was hold interviews and brainstorm. We heard the stories from the various levels and functions within the company and from there we formulated a solution.

- International outlook: this could be for a placement or minor in an international company.

Metacognition

- Development of networks and purposeful deployment of networks: we do this constantly. All fields are covered in the people who coach me; a young professional and a senior professional. I am surrounded by a network of experts who are all helpful to me and who are all project managers from various disciplines.

- Ability to work together and share knowledge in a multidisciplinary context.

- Ability to inspire colleagues to innovative developments for the profession.

Professional and Social Awareness

- Self-managing learning ability. If you lack motivation it will quickly become apparent that this is unsuitable for you. You want to examine yourself critically and learn from this.

- Effective and convincing communication: I have grown in this and the programme ensures that I am good at it. The project requires that I am able to convince people.

- Environmental awareness: a project took place within DHL in order to improve efficiency. Once a project has been completed, I am still willing to help fellow students. I am being trained to become a strong social personality and not a knowledge gatherer.

Methodological Attitude

- Academic attitude.

- Analytical ability and ability for theoretical depth. Prince2, presentation methods, feedback methods, critical attitude.

- Acquiring and sharing knowledge.

Professional Detachment

- Ability to reflect from an extraordinary perspective.

- Critical detachment with respect to professional issues.

- Development of extraordinary personal learning questions and of extraordinary learning questions of the professional development.

- You are expected to look at yourself and you become a strong and dynamic personality who opts for a specific direction within project management as a discipline of his/her own.

Differentiated Profile Development: creates new knowledge to consciously improve the system (double loop learning) or even change a sector or market (triple loop).

- Own development trajectory and profile.

- Continuous learning process, focused on personal, professional and social development.

- By means of the knowledge of project management I can make a highly valuable contribution towards problem solving by means of a project,

which in principle can benefit any sector. Because you probably do a project every two years and at the end of a project concentrate on what you have learnt in this sector through this project, you always learn something about the sector which you can apply in the next projects. My discipline is so broad as to enable me to call myself transdisciplinary.

Looping Up Professional Reflection in Honours Programmes

Trijntje van Dijk

Saxion Universities of Applied Sciences, The Netherlands

LOOPING UP

Within the Saxion Universities in the Netherlands, a profile of the "Reflective Professional" comprises a number of competencies that the honours programmes are designed to develop and support. The process of developing these competencies involves three loops of learning, characterized by three sets of reflective questions so that, as a whole, they loop up professional reflection. The goal is to inspire students and their coaches to consider the phases of learning with conscious awareness and focus.

BEFORE THE LOOP

In the first year of the traditional four-year bachelor's programme, freshman students experience new ways of thinking and learning within the professions they have chosen. Along with peers who have similar interests and goals, students enter into a preprogrammed, industrially organized setting in which they may feel happy, overwhelmed, or bored. The latter case is the starting point for the Reflective Professional. During the first year of the bachelor's programme, students who are impatient with the regular programme and looking for extra challenges will discover the possibility of choosing from sixteen honours programmes, which begin during the second year of the traditional four-year bachelor's programme, continue for three years, and run alongside but independently from the regular bachelor's programmes.

THE FIRST LOOP

The first year of the honours programme is the first loop in the learning process, triggered by reflective questions like the following:

- Who am I?
- What am I going to be?

- What am I taught to be?

- What do I want to be?

- How do I think?

- How am I taught to think?

- Do I want to think like that?

- How do I want to think?

In the honours programme, students are drawn from their comfort zone and learn how to think critically; they explore new disciplines and professions; they develop their own personal ideas about professional thought and behavior; and they inevitably become curious about the personal and professional identities of their fellow students as well as themselves.

THE SECOND LOOP

The second year of the honours programme is the second loop, when students not just explore but get personally involved in a multidisciplinary professional context. Students share knowledge about their chosen professions and learn about other disciplines to broaden their personal and professional knowledge. Reflection now focuses on new kinds of questions:

- What is the purpose of my profession in this country?

- What are the new developments and big questions within my profession?

- What is the phase of my professional profile?

- What is the purpose of my professional identity in the present setting?

- How can my professionalism be made valuable to my fellow professionals, now my team and later my organization?

- How can I be of professional value to my fellow students from different disciplines and professions?

- What do I need from my fellow professionals from other disciplines and what do I have to offer them?

- Where has my critical thinking brought me, and where do I want it to take me?

In addressing these questions, students build an invigorating network of professionals who tend to inspire each other and to transplant new ideas into each other's professional gardens; the professional student gardener meets with mutually reflective professionals and now experiences gardening as a process that includes management, accounting, learning, literary inspiration, painting, healing, water conservation, architecture, sustainability, safety, and security—incorporating all these new elements into their art of gardening.

THE THIRD LOOP

The final year of the honours programme is the third loop, when students focus on developing the ability to reprogram the profession and create a new enterprise, business formula or profession. Being a reflective professional, the student develops the ability to take a profession to a new phase. A major point for concern is how to build consensus for a new phenomenon in a traditional world. Within the network of creative and inspiring reflective professionals, the major questions are the following:

- What are the questions my profession will have to cope with in the coming generation?
- What will potential scenarios lead to?
- How can other disciplines contribute creatively to the challenges my profession will face?
- If I hear a story from a successful professional in another discipline, how can I understand the thinking behind it and how I can apply it to my profession?
- How will my profession be redefined, and how can this definition be communicated?
- How can I help build consensus for innovation?
- How can I make new ideas feasible and put them in practice?
- How can a new right solution lead to a new and better profession?

Stick to the simple metaphor of the supposed student gardener, let's elaborate upon it and imagine a reflective professional student from the Saxion Universities of Applied Sciences who is situated within a high-tech environment that includes nanotechnology, creative technology, and engineering. Combining the various schools of thinking, the reflective professional gardener might develop a continually-redesign-your-new-garden concept which incorporates the various disciplines into a product that might be natural, virtual, or three-dimensional.

AFTER THE LOOP

The challenge of the reflection coach is to inspire and guide students with careful communication and implementation of new concepts. Models from older schools of thought that focus on the interaction between practitioner and client and improvements in professional interactions are typically of limited use; old schools of thought are helpful when positioning disciplines in their present phase of development but not beyond. What completes the loop

of learning in the development of both individuals and teams reflective professionals is a leap into meta-questions like these:

- What does my team, organization, or profession need?
- What is my professional mission?
- What is new in the school of thought of other disciplines?
- What can be creatively applied or combined into new concepts?
- What new formula for our profession can be co-created with fellow reflective professionals?

Once a potential idea is born, it needs careful nursing and communication. The reflective professional still lives in a traditional world in which refinement of old ideas, all within bounds of the predictable, is graded *cum laude.* New schools of thought may not fit logically into regular systems and thus may not be appreciated.

An extraordinary idea from a reflective professional student, even when supported by her or his reflection coach, may not correspond to traditional paradigms, so reflective professionals cannot be graded by traditional measures. The challenge we face in the honours programmes of the Saxion Universities of Applied Sciences is to design, explain, and implement a new set of measurements that both allow and encourage students to make the leap beyond the loop into new paradigms. The series of graduated questions we ask our students to consider as they progress through their three years in the honours programme prepare them to make such a leap.

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Honors in the Master's:
A New Perspective?

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The honors master's thesis is the first chapter of a future dissertation.

You learn to work together from an interdisciplinary perspective.

This program increases your chances on the U.S. labor market.

With this master's, you become a scientific practitioner.

The successful completion of this program increases your opportunities to win a top internship and career coaching.

—These quotations have been selected from the websites of honors master's programs.

INTRODUCTION

In Europe, there is a growing interest in honors education, not only in the bachelor's but also in the master's degree. The Dutch government, for instance, is actively promoting excellence in both bachelor's and master's degrees through honors programs (Siriusteam). Most Dutch universities have honors programs at the bachelor's level or are developing them. Some universities have also recently introduced honors into their master's programs, stimulated by recent publications (van Eijl, Wolfensberger & Pilot). Because honors master's programs are a new phenomenon in higher education and are still exceptional in the United States of America, we have undertaken a research project to study them (van Ginkel & van Eijl).

In our study, an Internet search showed thirty-four examples of honors master's programs from the U.S., Canada, Australia, Germany, Italy, Ireland

and The Netherlands. All of these cases involved special honors programs within master's curricula, some in addition to the regular master's course of study and others as an integral part of it. Our study focused on forming a better understanding of the characteristics of honors programs in the master's and specifically on the mission of the programs, the selection of students, the content, the educational methods, and the program format. These issues are related to the "Basic Characteristics of a Fully Developed Honors Program," according to the National Collegiate Honors Council. The findings may allow us to view the concepts and key characteristics of honors master's programs from an international perspective.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

In the literature, we found no studies of honors activities in the master's while a considerable number are available about honors programs at the bachelor's level (cf., van Eijl, Pilot, Wolfensberger, & Schreve-Brinkman). The starting point for much of the research on honors education at the bachelor's level in our European context is often Renzulli's 1978 work on giftedness, with talent as a generalized, multi-dimensional concept that is then related to the development of talent specifically in honors programs (Jenkins-Friedman). Using such earlier work on talent and its relationship to honors education, we developed in 2010 an inventory of the characteristics of honors programs, using a three-windows model (van Eijl, Pilot, & Wolfensberger) that is strongly connected to the Basic Characteristics defined by the NCHC.

Based on our experiences and on the results of our inventories and analyses of the bachelor's honors programs, we will focus on the main characteristics of honors master's programs in The Netherlands, the different profiles of these programs, and student interest in supplemental activities when studying for their master's degrees. We will then discuss the results of the inventory from an international perspective.

As a characteristic example of an honors master's program, we provide a description in Box 1 of the Excellence Master's Track (EMT) at the Faculty of Law, Economics and Governance of Utrecht University in The Netherlands.

METHOD

For this exploratory project, a mixed method approach was used (Creswell & Plano-Clark; van Ginkel & van Eijl) in a study that was carried out at the start of the academic year 2009–2010.

First, an Internet search identified Dutch and non-Dutch honors master's programs. The inventory of Dutch programs was intended to be exhaustive, but the goal of the non-Dutch inventory was to collect a variety of examples

Box 1. Excellence Master's Track in Law, Utrecht University (The Netherlands)

The EMT is a program of activities that runs as an add-on to three master's programs: "Dutch Law," "International and European Law," and "Business and Law." The activities are planned in parallel with the regular class meetings and are designed for a select group of students, offering them a stimulating environment in which they can both broaden and deepen their academic skills and knowledge and prepare themselves for a professional career. Of the students who apply, only a small portion is admitted. The important criteria for selection include the results of the student's bachelor's degree, being open to innovative thoughts, and creativity. After selection, a student is assigned a professor as his or her supervisor. Over half of the students come from honors programs in their bachelor's institutions (van Gestel et al.). In 2009, thirty students were enrolled in this one-year program.

In two weekly meetings, the students deepen their understanding of issues related to their specific master's courses. They also participate in an umbrella course that is largely organized by the students of the Excellence Tracks of all three master's programs. This course consists of a number of meetings in which students participate in academic discussions of current issues and topics that are related to professional practice. Organizations of lawyers, the courts, and government are involved in the EMT as partners, contributing to the umbrella course and offering students high-level internships. In their internships, which last three to six months, students spend four or five days a week on special assignments. Students can also organize internships themselves, focusing on their personal learning goals. Members of the staff at the Law Graduate School help the students to reflect on their goals and ambitions. Students also have the opportunity to write a research paper based on their master's thesis, supported by an experienced teacher and a renowned practitioner.

For the faculty, teaching these students is a challenge. The students readily take initiative, focus on their own questions, and participate openly in discussion. For the final assessment of the EMT, students have to write a reflection paper about what they learned, and this plays an important role in the final evaluation. To be eligible for the EMT diploma, students should have a grade point average (GPA) of at least 3.3 in their regular master's program.

from different countries in the world with a member check for confirmation and specific details.

Second, a literature review facilitated a comparison between Dutch honors master's programs and Dutch honors bachelor's programs.

Third, staff members provided insights into the honors master's within the discipline of law at the University of Utrecht. Interviews with teachers revealed specific information about a representative example of Dutch honors master's courses (Box 1).

Fourth, in line with the interviews, a small quantitative survey yielded an impression of the interest of students in supplemental activities included in the master's stage of their study. Thirty-seven master's students from different disciplines completed the survey.

RESULTS: HONORS MASTER'S COURSES IN THE NETHERLANDS

Based on the inventory of honors master's courses in The Netherlands, seventeen honors programs were found at eight research universities and one collaborative program sponsored by different universities and institutions. The results of our analysis of the basic characteristics of the courses include the following: the missions of the programs; method of selecting students; content; educational methods; and program format.

MISSION OF THE PROGRAMS

Dutch honors master's programs are research-focused or profession-oriented. In some of the programs, students can choose between the two perspectives. Research skills are incorporated into almost all of the honors master's courses. In half of the cases, analytical, academic, and oral-presentation skills are part of the program, and some programs include conversational skills, scientific writing, and a variety of practical skills. A few master's courses explicitly focus on multidisciplinary learning and thinking, critical reflection on the subject matter, debating skills, entrepreneurial skills, and cooperation skills.

SELECTION OF STUDENTS

The range of selection criteria for honors programs is presented in Table 1. In most programs, a letter of motivation and a curriculum vitae are requested. Another selection criterion is the GPA of the student's bachelor's degree, and half of the programs require an interview. In research-oriented programs, written assignments or research proposals are criteria, and some programs require a language test, study plan, or test of knowledge.

Usually, a limited number of students are admitted to the program. This number varies from ten to fifty students in the identified programs, with an average of twenty-five.

CONTENT

Honors master's courses are found in the fields of humanities, sciences, social sciences, and biomedical sciences. Some are interdisciplinary. Honors master's programs in the fields of humanities and biomedicine typically focus on research, especially in the field of biomedicine.

In order to strengthen honors master's programs, external partners are often involved. Depending on whether the focus is on research or professional practice, these partners may include research institutes, law firms, accounting firms, government agencies, museums, and banks.

EDUCATIONAL METHODS

In honors master's programs, classes are small and are usually conducted as seminars with small groups of students and intensive individual

Table 1. Selection Criteria for 17 Honors Master's Programs in The Netherlands
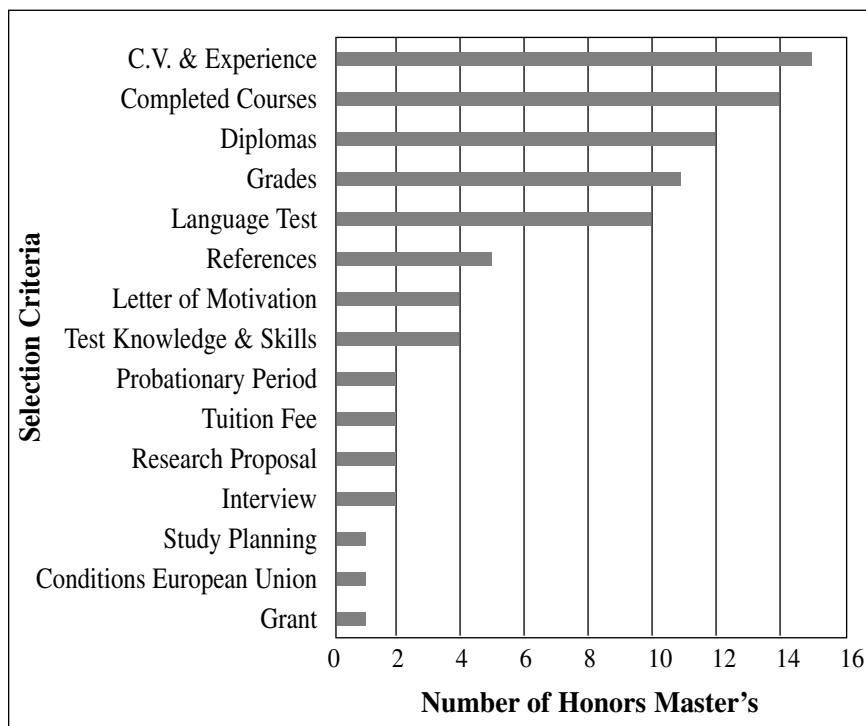
coaching by top researchers, teachers, or other professionals. Usually, the honors master's programs are characterized by a curriculum with some degree of choice within the scope of the research program.

PROGRAM FORMAT

In addition to the regular course of study, the extent of an honors master's program can vary annually from ten European credits (six semester hours in the U.S.) to ninety ECTS credits (European Credit Transfer System hours) or roughly fifty-four U.S. semester hours. Some honors programs continue from the bachelor's course of study into the master's program. In order to write their master's thesis, honors students often have the choice in language between English or Dutch.

THREE PROFILES OF THE HONORS MASTER'S

Based on our inventory of honors master's programs, three types of approaches can be distinguished: research-specific, professional, and interdisciplinary (van Ginkel, van Eijl & Pilot).

THE RESEARCH-SPECIFIC HONORS MASTER'S

This type of honors master's has a clear research focus and is designed for students who aspire to a career in research. In most cases, this type of honors master's program occurs in a biomedical discipline such as medicine or veterinary science. The freedom of choice for a research subject is limited by the research program of the institution. Not surprisingly, the emphasis of such a program lies in developing advanced research skills, with the master's thesis seen as the first stage of a PhD project, and is usually monodisciplinary. Only a few programs extend beyond the (sub)discipline. If collaboration exists during the development and implementation of the program, an external research institute is often involved.

THE PROFESSIONAL HONORS MASTER'S

The aim of a professional honors master's program is that students prepare themselves for a successful career by completing an internship, which is an important component of this type of program. Professional honors master's courses of study are often situated within the humanities and social sciences, and they are organized in collaboration with external partners such as law firms or international banks. Honors students explore the business culture under the supervision of an external coach and participate in honors seminars where the focus is on debating and entrepreneurial skills. This type of honors master's often extends beyond its (sub)discipline or has an interdisciplinary character. As an example, the honors master's program within law at Utrecht

University is accessible to students from such different subdisciplines as Dutch law, international and European law, and business law. This type of program often has a dual mission, preparing the honors student for a career as a scientific practitioner.

THE INTERDISCIPLINARY HONORS MASTER'S

The core of the interdisciplinary honors master's curriculum consists of a series of meetings with a maximum study load of ten ECTS credits (six U.S. semester hours). A good deal of preparation is necessary for these meetings, including active participation and a presentation for the final assignment. The study background of the participants differs substantially from the other kinds of honors master's students. The interdisciplinary seminars are led by outstanding guest teachers from different disciplines and backgrounds. An example of this type of honors master's is the Hendrik-Muller Seminar from the University of Amsterdam, which is organized in cooperation with the National Board of Social Sciences. During the sessions, the students hold debates about themes related to current issues in society. Input from disciplines such as the social sciences, psychiatry, criminology, geography, and anthropology contributes to the discussions.

In general, interdisciplinary honors master's classes are organized by multiple departments and universities; research institutes and other external organizations also play an important role.

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE HONORS MASTER'S AND HONORS BACHELOR'S

Honors master's programs seem to be a follow-up to honors bachelor's programs. Both types of programs are characterized by a select group of students who prefer more challenging and complex activities in their studies. However, there are differences between the two: (1) a focus in the master's on career opportunities within a specific research field or profession; (2) a shorter duration at the master's level (a maximum of two years); and (3) a selection process in the master's with a broader set of criteria. There is nevertheless a strong connection between the honors programs at the bachelor's and master's levels; a substantial number of honors graduates from the bachelor's level go on to a research master's program.

DUTCH HONORS MASTER'S PROGRAMS: RESEARCH OR PROFESSIONAL ORIENTATIONS

Disciplinarity, research focus, and professional orientation vary across the different honors master's programs (see Table 2).

Table 2 shows that about half of the programs have a single disciplinary focus. The other half of the programs are interdisciplinary or cross-(sub)disciplinary. More than half of the programs have a focus on professional practice.

The programs that are research-oriented are mostly monodisciplinary while the programs focused on professional practice usually have an interdisciplinary or cross-(sub)disciplinary character. Only one program is both strongly research-oriented and interdisciplinary: the Exchange Honours Program Master's in Neuroscience. This program has been organized by two universities and a research institute, focusing on various subspecialties (neuroscience, neurophysiology, and neuro-genomics) that fit the central research theme of neuroscience. While working on their studies, research students receive personal guidance. The participants in this program also take courses that are taught by leading international researchers and professors from the partner institutions. The program requires 66–72 ECTS credits, of which at least six should be acquired at each participating university. The selection of students is based on excellent performance in the bachelor's and master's programs, a curriculum vitae, written support from their supervisors, and an interview. An important objective of the program is to select master's students who have the potential to complete a PhD program.

THE INTERNATIONAL INVENTORY OF HONORS IN A MASTER'S CURRICULUM

In addition to the Dutch honors master's programs, a worldwide inventory revealed another seventeen honors master's programs in the U.S.,

Table 2. Disciplinarity, Research Orientation and Professional Orientation in 17 Honors Master's Programs (The Case of The Netherlands)

Canada, Australia, Germany, Italy, and Ireland. The inventory was not exhaustive, but this collection of programs can illustrate the variety found worldwide in this type of program. Short descriptions of an Italian and an American honors master's program are described in Boxes 2 and 3.

Box 2. Telecommunications Engineering, University of Trento, Italy

The goal of this honors program is to learn specific research skills, taking into account a future career as a researcher in business or as a student in a PhD program. This program is carried out in cooperation with Scuola Superiore Sant'Anna in Pisa. The master's program consists of a two-year academic master's with a co-curriculum. For the successful completion of the program, the student must obtain at least 132 ECTS credits. The master's is taught entirely in English, and coaching is customized as the research tasks are carried out. At the start of the honors master's, the student proposes a study plan during his or her consultation with the tutor. Six months of this program are reserved for an internship in a company.

Box 3. Graduate Honors Program, George Wythe University, U.S.

This university in Salt Lake City offers a multidisciplinary honors program for both undergraduate and graduate students and professionals in the field during the period from January to May. It is scheduled to parallel the regular program. In 2009, the program was called "Political Economy: Shaping the Modern World." The idea behind the program was that many professionals lack knowledge about the basic principles of the underlying current economic structures and patterns in the world. To become a "successful leader" in the 21st century, students must understand these principles by studying eight "masterpieces" written by academic scholars. During the meetings, participants in the program read about and discuss central themes. In addition, each student or professional receives personal counseling which is offered to help him or her in achieving personal goals. Within the personal study project, specific literature is selected in accordance with personal interests. Different skills are developed during the program to help the participants achieve personal goals such as "learning a language" or "public speaking." The selection for the program is based on answering questions on the registration form.

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN HONORS MASTER'S PROGRAMS WORLDWIDE AND THE NETHERLANDS

Some notable differences between Dutch and non-Dutch honors programs are the following:

- Non-Dutch honors master's programs often have a strong international focus. The policies of the universities are often aimed at attracting talented students from other countries.

- The Dutch honors master's programs are usually taught in English but are less active in terms of recruiting international students;

- Non-Dutch honors master's programs often use a wider range of selection criteria, probably to provide clarity for international students wishing to apply to such a program;

- Some non-Dutch honors master's programs are not programmed in parallel with the regular master's but continue beyond it.

Besides these differences, many similarities exist between Dutch and non-Dutch programs:

- The design and programming of activities are diverse.

- Honors master's students often work with partners from the government, industry, or external research institutes.

- In a number of honors master's courses of study, the value of the honors certificate in terms of a job in research or in industry is explicitly stated.

- The development of advanced academic skills is important.

- Honors master's programs are present in humanities, social sciences, hard sciences, and biomedical sciences.

- Monodisciplinary and subdisciplinary as well as multidisciplinary programs exist, and these programs are research- or practice-oriented or both.

However, no internationally organized honors master's programs were found. One can imagine that such a program, organized by universities in different countries, would be able to create unique opportunities.

WHAT STUDENTS WANT

A small survey at Utrecht University gave an impression of the students' interest in the supplemental activities in their master's course work. Data were collected with a questionnaire, which was administered to thirty-seven master's students from different disciplines. One of the most important findings was that all of the respondents expressed the wish to learn more than

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the information provided in their own master's programs. The students welcomed opportunities to enhance the variety and level of their academic and professional skills.

A second outcome referred to the desire for a "deeper exploration of relevant developments within the discipline" (van Ginkel, van Eijl, & Pilot, 59). The students also asked for more focus on the relation between the current master's programs and their future career opportunities. Finally, when the students were asked about how the extra activities or courses should be programmed within the curriculum, they preferred the integration of the extras into the regular master's program. Almost seventy percent of the students would have chosen an honors program if it was available at the start of their master's.

The students also opted for small-scale lectures/meetings, intensive individual coaching, and teamwork. In addition, seventy percent of the respondents considered "motivation" to be the most important selection criterion for access to an honors master's program. According to the students, the honors program should consist of 7.5 to 15 ECTS credits (4 to 8 semester hours).

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This study had four limitations:

- The information about honors master's courses on universities' websites is limited. In the data collection and the analysis process, this study focused on five basic characteristics: the program's mission, student selection process, content, educational methods, and format. Data about the numbers of students or the teachers or evaluations were not included in the inventory.

- In our Internet search, the following keywords were used: "honors," "honours," "honors program," "master," "master class," "excellence," and "honors track." Some honors master's programs may be missing in our research because of our selected terms.

- Only English and Dutch terms were used for the Internet search.

- The study was carried out at the start of the academic year 2009–2010, and the development of honors master's programs has now gained momentum. Many universities in different countries may have launched new honors master's programs in the meantime. Therefore, this inventory can be considered as an overview of only the programs that existed at the time of the study.

DISCUSSION

The development of honors master's programs is relatively new (van Eijl, Pilot & Wolfensberger). However, from the initial experiences and

discussions in this study, some key questions have been formulated that can be relevant if an honors master's program is introduced at a university.

HONORS MASTER'S PROGRAM OR HONORS DESIGNATION?

The Internet search revealed that a substantial number of universities have a special honors program in addition to or after the regular program, requiring students to complete specified curricular or co-curricular outcomes beyond standard components of the master's degree. Some have an integrated full-time honors master's program. On the basis of information from the Internet, we omitted master's courses of study which are awarded "with honors" only as recognition of particular merit on the diploma rather than designating completion of an organized, programmatic "honors" enhancements to teaching and learning. A more elaborate approach with questionnaires and interviews may reveal more detailed features and differences between the ways the term "honors" is used in master's programs.

WHAT ARE THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE EXISTING HONORS MASTER'S PROGRAMS ACROSS THE WORLD?

Honors master's programs in different countries have some common characteristics. They are programs that exist in addition to the regular master's program, and the expectation is that international exchange and cooperation with external partners will be a valuable component.

DISCIPLINARY OR INTERDISCIPLINARY?

Many honors master's programs are discipline-oriented. Scientific breakthroughs, however, often happen at the interface between different branches of science or between the sciences and other fields of knowledge. An interdisciplinary honors master's program is a better way to educate future innovative professionals and scientists. An emphasis on multidisciplinarity instead of a focus on one specific discipline can add value to these programs.

SELECTION BY ZEAL OR CREATIVITY?

A high GPA and motivation seem to be important criteria for selecting students for an honors master's program. Factors such as creativity and initiative, which are important for productive and creative professionals/scientists (Renzulli; Jenkins-Friedman; Friedman & Jenkins-Friedman), are only occasionally and indirectly addressed. For instance, a demand for extracurricular activities, community service, and publications was not found in the description of criteria. However, many good students are intrinsically motivated and more interested in learning content than in simply achieving high grades.

Do Programs with Strong Relationships with External Partners Interfere with Independent Research in Academia?

Many honors master's programs cooperate with external partners such as banks, insurance companies, and research institutes. This cooperation may be a "window to the world," but to what extent does it lead to researchers' being dependent on their external partners? To what extent can the institution guarantee the supervision of learning activities, the quality of results, and the assessment of students?

What type of community-building?

Community-building was identified as an important characteristic of the honors bachelor's programs (van Eijl, Pilot, & Wolfensberger). Both students and teachers mentioned frequently the importance of community for the main aims of programs, and observations showed productive interactions within communities of students, teachers, and external experts. Will honors master's students form their own honors community, or will they merge with an academic or professional community? What are the main characteristics of a community within the honors master's course? Guidelines and criteria for the successful development of an honors community are important because, in many honors programs, students represent different disciplines and often work with external partners in an international context.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Our search revealed the existence of different kinds of honors master's programs not only in The Netherlands (our primary focus) but also in the U.S., Canada, Australia, Germany, Italy, and Ireland. These honors master's programs are found in the humanities, social sciences, hard sciences, and professional schools. The programs are diverse with respect to content, focus, and scheduling, and they are, as far as we could trace, very new. Several points of discussion are still open and can be used as springboards for further research. The emergence of honors master's programs shows a new focus on promoting excellence in university teaching and learning not only among undergraduates but now also at the master's level.

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Honors Education and Global Citizenship

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INTRODUCTION

An issue of *JNCHC* devoted to "Honors Around the Globe" is an important opportunity to consider the role of honors in creating international awareness and understanding. Honors faculty and administrators have become increasingly active in global cross-communication through, for instance, international involvement in the NCHC and the recent conference on "Evoking Excellence in Higher Education and Beyond" in the Netherlands that attracted participants from numerous countries. As we become more familiar with honors in all its manifestation across the globe, now is a good time to consider the value we provide in preparing students to contribute to our changing world.

As honors administrators and faculty, we know that we must educate our students so that they can discover answers to as yet unknown questions and challenges. We must enable them to find solutions using techniques we can now only dream about. Such techniques will allow the frontiers of human possibility to extend dramatically. Change itself has become systemic. The challenge is to educate in order to shape a sustainable future for all. We have created conflicts and problems that we now need to solve. We need to educate in a way that inspires creative citizenship among people who are humble enough to recognize the powerful potential of collaboration, confident enough to confront tomorrow's problems, proud enough to sparkle with compassion, and ardent enough to make a better world.

Honors programs, which function as laboratories for innovation in regular education, offer educational opportunities for talented, motivated students; we thus have a special responsibility to inspire these students to respect other disciplines, cultures, and nationalities through genuine conversations, interactive learning, and international exchange. Our aim must be to enhance, not compromise, human difference and dignity.

COLLECTIVE CONVERSATION

We should invest in educating critical and creative young people who want to make a difference in society and science. We need graduates with an open view of society, who know intrinsically that we need each other because everyone brings something special to the table. So, in our courses, one of the important questions should be: what makes a life well-lived? The answers have everything to do with moral principles and values that give continuity and dignity to life, linking happiness to education.

The key is to learn, experience, and understand that there are multitudes of different answers and that the differences make life worthwhile and beautiful. The crux of global citizenship is to respect and even enhance these differences, a process that cannot happen without conversation. Genuine conversation is a form of respect for values even though, and perhaps especially when, values differ among the participants. Conversation is the heartbeat of democracy; it is a disciplined act of communicating, making personal views intelligible to someone who does not share them and also listening to the inner world of someone whose views are different. Through conversation, we can create a collective future.

INTERACTIVE LEARNING

In the future, honors students will distinguish themselves from their peers and competitors not by the information they know but by how well they convert that knowledge to wisdom, slowly and deeply internalizing it, and by their acts and behavior. We should coach students in this learning process. We should provide conditions such that students, as described by Vygotsky, can be assisted in pushing the boundaries of their development. Teachers and students need time to interact. The personal working relationships between students and teachers are pivotal. Teachers and students working together on independent studies create an effective learning environment.

Personal involvement is one of the most important elements of honors pedagogy. Such involvement includes participation in, for instance, NCHC-designed experiential programs such as City as Text™; seminars in which students reflect on international exchanges; the service-learning programs that have become a standard part of curricula in U.S. honors education; and programs like the Shriver Center of the University of Maryland Baltimore County, where faculty connect their research and teaching to relevant social needs and students link academic study to professional practice as well as service to the community. Through interactive projects, students learn to transform the world.

CROSS-CULTURAL SETTINGS

Combining analytical and critical thinking with an interdisciplinary and reflective attitude requires a major effort, but this effort is crucial if we aspire to peace because it lets us escape from our prison of self-righteousness. This effort can lead us toward engaging in debate without hoping that the other side loses; it can lead us toward embracing rather than simply tolerating difference. Differences enlarge the sphere of human possibilities, and learning experiences such as studying abroad expand students' ability to compare and reflect on different ideas, values, and points of view.

The rise of social media such as Facebook and Twitter has led to a generation whose world-view is boundaried and, one might say, "narrow-cast." We can use such websites to target those who agree with us and thus screen out the voices of the dissident, which is all the more reason that we should teach students to seek out perspectives unlike their own and to collaborate in cross-cultural, interdisciplinary settings—whether within or between national boundaries. If we want to educate global citizens who can make a difference in science and society, we have to invest in new, forward-thinking learning environments and teaching strategies. Living and learning abroad is one such strategy.

Just as the natural environment depends on biodiversity, so the human environment depends on cultural diversity. No single civilization encompasses all the spiritual, ethical, and artistic expressions of mankind. Each culture has something to contribute to the totality of human wisdom. A Jewish sage said, "Who is wise? One who learns from all men." An African proverb says, "Are you in a hurry? Travel alone. Do you want to reach far? Travel together." Study abroad enables students to experience an interconnected world and to embrace difference rather than being threatened by it; it shows them the collective heritage of mankind. Higher education benefits enormously from international exchanges, international honors classes, and study abroad (Paige et al.). As careers increasingly require employees to travel, students need to be preparing for cross-cultural interactions for their professional as well as educational, social, and moral development.

GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP AND HONORS PROGRAMS

Investment in education is the most important way society offers the world a future, yet this investment is still far too unevenly distributed. In 2000, Unesco reported that, out of the current population of the world's children, 113 million did not go to school, and in 2009 it reported that fewer than 40% of countries provide girls and boys equal access to education (UNESCO Institute; UNESCO). Relatively rich countries, such as the United States or

those in Europe like the Netherlands, should recognize the severity of this deficit in education and the harm it is doing to them as well as to other countries and to the world. Time is of the essence; without major intervention from governments and institutions, large numbers of people will continue to be left behind.

Honors education has an important role to play within this landscape. It needs to generate an environment that allows unfettered thinking and inspires excitement in new possibilities. Honors faculty should teach students that imagining the unimaginable matters as a plan of action as well as education. While transferring knowledge is one of the core responsibilities of universities, society is beyond the point where students can be seen as consumers. Students are participants in, and co-responsible for, their education.

To the extent that colleges and universities are committed to the well-being of society, they must become increasingly proactive in helping more young people attend college, and the same is true for honors programs. We need to recognize the elephant in the room: how do we ensure that the college admissions process is not a revolving door that spins out people of color or people from impoverished backgrounds?

The key question is what resources are required to ensure that intervention programs are effective, given the academic needs and strengths of individual students. In recognizing individual differences, we are contributing to democracy. One of the purposes of democracy is to provide individuals with the opportunities that are best for them. In recognizing individual differences we are paying the truest homage to the worth of all individuals, and part of this homage is recognizing the need for specially designed education for students willing and able to do more than a regular program can offer them. We need to provide education that rewards these students with all the resources and attention they need to succeed.

At the same time, we need to understand that students who participate in special opportunities like honors programs have a special obligation to recognize and appreciate others who are different from them, particularly those who have fewer opportunities. If we provide an education rich in conversation, interactive and reflective learning, and cross-cultural exchanges, then we both enable and encourage these students to honor people who are different from them, to enhance the dignity of all human beings, and to become responsible citizens of the world.

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Beginning in Honors: A Handbook by Samuel Schuman (Fourth Edition, 2006, 80pp). Advice on starting a new honors program. Covers budgets, recruiting students and faculty, physical plant, administrative concerns, curriculum design, and descriptions of some model programs.

Fundrai$ing for Honor$: A Handbook by Larry R. Andrews (2009, 160pp). Offers information and advice on raising money for honors, beginning with easy first steps and progressing to more sophisticated and ambitious fundraising activities.

A Handbook for Honors Administrators by Ada Long (1995, 117pp). Everything an honors administrator needs to know, including a description of some models of honors administration.

A Handbook for Honors Programs at Two-Year Colleges by Theresa James (2006, 136pp). A useful handbook for two-year schools contemplating beginning or redesigning their honors program and for four-year schools doing likewise or wanting to increase awareness about two-year programs and articulation agreements. Contains extensive appendices about honors contracts and a comprehensive bibliography on honors education.

The Honors College Phenomenon edited by Peter C. Sederberg (2008, 172pp). This monograph examines the growth of honors colleges since 1990: historical and descriptive characterizations of the trend, alternative models that include determining whether becoming a college is appropriate, and stories of creation and recreation. Leaders whose institutions are contemplating or taking this step as well as those directing established colleges should find these essays valuable.

Honors Composition: Historical Perspectives and Contemporary Practices by Annmarie Guzy (2003, 182pp). Parallel historical developments in honors and composition studies; contemporary honors writing projects ranging from admission essays to theses as reported by over 300 NCHC members.

Honors Programs at Smaller Colleges by Samuel Schuman (Third Edition, 2011, 80pp). Practical and comprehensive advice on creating and managing honors programs with particular emphasis on colleges with fewer than 4000 students.

Inspiring Exemplary Teaching and Learning: Perspectives on Teaching Academically Talented College Students edited by Larry Clark and John Zubizarreta (2008, 216pp). This rich collection of essays offers valuable insights into innovative teaching and significant learning in the context of academically challenging classrooms and programs. The volume provides theoretical, descriptive, and practical resources, including models of effective instructional practices, examples of successful courses designed for enhanced learning, and a list of online links to teaching and learning centers and educational databases worldwide.

The Other Culture: Science and Mathematics Education in Honors edited by Ellen B. Buckner and Keith Garbutt (2012, 296pp). A collection of essays about teaching science and math in an honors context: topics include science in society, strategies for science and non-science majors, the threat of pseudoscience, chemistry, interdisciplinary science, scientific literacy, philosophy of science, thesis development, calculus, and statistics.

Partners in the Parks: Field Guide to an Experiential Program in the National Parks by Joan Digby with reflective essays on theory and practice by student and faculty participants and National Park Service personnel (2010, 272pp). This monograph explores an experiential-learning program that fosters immersion in and stewardship of the national parks. The topics include program designs, group dynamics, philosophical and political issues, photography, wilderness exploration, and assessment.

Place as Text: Approaches to Active Learning edited by Bernice Braid and Ada Long (Second Edition, 2010, 128pp). Updated theory, information, and advice on experiential pedagogies developed within NCHC during the past 35 years, including Honors Semesters and City as Text™, along with suggested adaptations to multiple educational contexts.

Setting the Table for Diversity edited by Lisa L. Coleman and Jonathan D. Kotinek (2010, 288pp). This collection of essays provides definitions of diversity in honors, explores the challenges and opportunities diversity brings to honors education, and depicts the transformative nature of diversity when coupled with equity and inclusion. These essays discuss African American, Latina/o, international, and first-generation students as well as students with disabilities. Other issues include experiential and service learning, the politics of diversity, and the psychological resistance to it. Appendices relating to NCHC member institutions contain diversity statements and a structural diversity survey.

Shatter the Glassy Stare: Implementing Experiential Learning in Higher Education edited by Peter A. Machonis (2008, 160pp). A companion piece to *Place as Text*, focusing on recent, innovative applications of City as Text™ teaching strategies. Chapters on campus as text, local neighborhoods, study abroad, science courses, writing exercises, and philosophical considerations, with practical materials for instituting this pedagogy.

Teaching and Learning in Honors edited by Cheryl L. Fuiks and Larry Clark (2000, 128pp). Presents a variety of perspectives on teaching and learning useful to anyone developing new or renovating established honors curricula.

Journal of the National Collegiate Honors Council (*JNCHC*) is a semi-annual periodical featuring scholarly articles on honors education. 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.

Honors in Practice (*HIP*) is an annual journal that accommodates the need and desire for articles about nuts-and-bolts practices by featuring practical and descriptive essays on topics such as successful honors courses, suggestions for out-of-class experiences, administrative issues, and other topics of interest to honors administrators, faculty, and students.

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