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# Disordered Eating, Perfectionism, Stress, and Satisfaction in Honors: A Research Collaborative Investigating a Community Concern

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**Abstract:** Moved by the lived experience of an honors student, authors describe a three-year Honors and Eating Concerns Research Collaborative (2019–2022), which examines the relationship between perfectionism and eating concerns among honors students. Under faculty advisement, first- and second-year honors psychology majors ( $n = 5$ ) participated in the collective, carrying out three empirical studies (producing two honors theses) and gathering data from 413 high-achieving students across the curriculum (54 identifying as honors). In survey research, the instruments used were questionnaires and interviews; measures involved four scales—Almost Perfect Scale-Revised (APSR), Perceived Stress Scale (PSS-10), Three-Factor Eating Questionnaire (TFEQ), and Eating Disorder Examination Questionnaire (EDEQ). Key findings suggest that concerns about eating, weight, and body shape are common among high-achieving students, who also experience elevated levels of perceived stress (women highest). Authors posit this faculty/student engagement collaborative as a viable alternative to the traditional expert/mentee model. A review of literature is provided, and implications for future study and broader appropriation are discussed.

**Keywords:** higher education—honors programs & colleges; psychology of college students; student faculty collaboration; perfectionism (personality trait); University of Maine (ME)—Honors College

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In the summer of 2019, the University of Maine (UMaine) alumni magazine published “A Life-Saving Path: For Aislinn Sarnacki, a Mountain Hike Restored Her Health and Launched Her Career” (Curtis, 2019). The article describes Sarnacki’s hiking her way out of anorexia nervosa as an undergraduate at UMaine and her later becoming a hiking columnist for the local *Bangor Daily News*. Sarnacki had first written about her recovery through hiking in her 2010 honors thesis, “Finding Elevation in the Maine Wilderness.” After advising Sarnacki’s poignant thesis, Mimi Killinger grew concerned that many of the risk factors for eating disorders that Sarnacki laid out in her thesis might be disproportionately prevalent among honors students and, in turn, could mean that honors students are a population especially predisposed to disordered eating. When Sarnacki made her story public through the alumni magazine article and through the announcement of a forthcoming book based upon her personal journey with disordered eating, Killinger decided that the time was right to form an Honors and Eating Concerns Research Collaborative to study eating disorders in honors, with the hope of better understanding risk factors and expanding education and support.

Five first- and second-year honors psychology majors (Jaimie Giguere, Ethan Lowell, Bailey Lewis, Ailin Liebler-Bendix and Natalie Mullin) responded to Killinger’s fall 2019 invitation to join the research collaborative that would be co-advised with UMaine Professor of Psychology Jeffrey E. Hecker. In the spring of 2020, the research collaborative members articulated questions and explored the research literature in search of answers. Over the course of the 2020–2021 and 2021–2022 academic years, the research collaborative carried out three studies, which included two honors theses. What follows is a summary of methods and key findings of these investigations.

## **HONORS AND EATING CONCERNS RESEARCH COLLABORATIVE**

The research collaborative’s extensive literature review covered topics such as body image, eating attitudes, eating disorders, restrained eating, high-achieving students, definitions of honors, risk factor survey measures, and connections between honors and distorted eating. In the process of discussing its findings, perfectionism surfaced as a dominant theme and concern. The collaborative found several studies indicating that academically successful students display higher levels of perfectionism and others suggesting that perfectionism may be a risk factor for a number of psychopathological concerns, including suicidal thoughts, specifically in honors students. Thus, the collaborative refined its

research focus to examine the associations between eating disturbances and perfectionism among honors students at the University of Maine.

Perfectionism is “the tendency to demand of others or of oneself an extremely high or even flawless level of performance, in excess of what is required by the situation” (American Psychological Association, 2022a). Research into perfectionism suggests that this construct might best be understood as consisting of two sub-constructs: self-oriented and socially prescribed perfectionism (Hewitt & Flett, 1991). Intrinsic motivation and self-reward drive the goal-seeking behaviors of self-oriented perfectionism (Locicero & Ashby, 2000). In socially prescribed perfectionism, goal-seeking behavior is driven by external recognition and rewards (Locicero & Ashby, 2000).

Self-oriented perfectionism is positively associated with self-efficacy and negatively associated with depression, anxiety, and suicide proneness (Klibert, Langhinrichsen-Rohling, & Saito, 2005); it is positively associated with “willpower,” perceived self-control, and self-esteem (Klibert et al., 2005) as well as academic engagement (Closson & Boutilier, 2017). By contrast, socially prescribed perfectionism has been associated with concern over mistakes, doubts about actions, and neurotic behavioral traits (Smith, Sherry, Vidovic, Saklofske, Stoeber, & Benoit, 2019). Feelings of contentment tend to be more fleeting in socially prescribed rather than self-oriented perfectionists (Closson & Boutilier, 2017). These findings suggest that socially prescribed perfectionists may assign personal importance to subjectively determined domains of life out of fear of failure and criticism (Rice & Dellwo, 2002).

Studies of perfectionism in honors students tend to find high scores on measures of socially prescribed perfectionism (Parker & Adkins, 1995; Rice & Dellwo, 2002). Furthermore, the positive association between academic engagement and self-oriented perfectionism was stronger for non-honors than for honors students (Closson & Boutilier, 2017). Members of the Honors and Eating Concerns Research Collaborative were intrigued by this finding. The honors college at UMaine, like most honors programs and colleges, seeks to foster in students a love of learning for learning’s sake (i.e., intrinsic motivation to pursue academic goals). In other words, the program promotes a self-oriented, as opposed to socially prescribed, orientation toward academic pursuits.

### **Study 1: Honors, Perfectionism, and Eating Concerns**

The research collaborative examined the possible relationship between perfectionism and eating concerns in honors students. Individuals with

eating disorders tend to have unrealistic expectations regarding body image and eating, and they often display high levels of perfectionism (Davies & Hibbard, 2011). Seeking to explore the relationship between perfectionism and eating concerns, the research collaborative carried out a survey study of University of Maine Honors College students. We anticipated that honors students would show high levels of perfectionism, both self-oriented and socially prescribed. Furthermore, we predicted a positive correlation between socially prescribed perfectionism and eating concerns.

### *Method*

The research collaborative created a survey to assess participants' relationship with food, their body self-image, and their levels of perfectionism. The survey included the Multidimensional Perfectionism Scale (MPS) (Hewitt & Flett, 1989), which includes scales of self-oriented perfectionism and socially prescribed perfectionism. In addition, the survey included three eating disorder subscales of the Eating Disorder Examination Questionnaire (EDEQ) (Fairburn & Beglin, 1994)—the drive for thinness, bulimia, and body dissatisfaction subscales—as well as the Three-Factor Eating Questionnaire (TFEQ) (Stunkard & Messick, 1985). The latter scale assesses three areas of eating behavior: cognitive restraint, uncontrolled eating, and emotional eating.

With Human Subjects Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval, the survey was fielded across a two-week period to all 700+ students enrolled in the University of Maine Honors College and received 238 responses, a 32% return rate.

### *Key Findings from Study 1*

The predicted relationship between eating concerns and socially prescribed perfectionism was not found: there were non-significant correlations between the measures of eating concerns and socially prescribed perfectionism. However, as members of the research collaborative, we were interested in a finding that at first appeared anomalous. We found that UMaine honors students, on average, scored very high on the measure of socially prescribed perfectionism relative to the norms originally published for the scale (Hewitt & Flett, 1991). Curiosity about this finding led Ethan Lowell to explore the perfectionism literature in greater depth in search of an explanation. He discovered that levels of perfectionism in college students have been increasing and that this trend is particularly strong for socially prescribed perfectionism.

A longitudinal meta-analysis of over 41,000 American, Canadian, and British college students across 164 samples found that the magnitude of self-oriented and socially prescribed perfectionism linearly increased by 10% and 32% respectively from 1989 to 2016 (Curran & Hill, 2019). The collaborative speculated that the scores observed in UMaine honors students may reflect continuation of the ascension of socially prescribed perfectionism observed by Curran and Hill. The collaborative recognized that the conclusions we might draw from Study 1 were limited by the makeup of the sample studied as well as the lack of a control condition. We could thus not determine if the findings were indicative of UMaine honors students, UMaine high-achieving students, UMaine students generally, or American college students. The inclusion of control conditions in future investigations would help to answer some of these questions.

Four of the honors student research collaborative members presented the findings from Study 1 through a recorded roundtable discussion at the 2020 virtual NCHC Conference and through a recorded submission to the 2021 University of Maine Virtual Student Symposium on Research and Creative Activity. Two of the students, Jaimie Giguere and Ethan Lowell, continued to work with the faculty mentors through the 2021–2022 academic year and developed their honors theses building upon the work carried out by the research collaborative.

## **Study 2: Perfectionism, Perceived Stress, and Maladaptive Eating Behaviors**

Giguere was the lead researcher on the second study, which served as her honors thesis. Intrigued by the collaborative's findings regarding perfectionism, she hypothesized that perceived stress might play an important role in the relationship between perfectionism and eating concerns. Furthermore, Jaimie wanted to address the methodological weakness of Study 1 by including an appropriate comparison group.

Stress is an adaptive “biological and psychological response experienced on encountering a threat” (McLeod, 2010). Perceived stress is how the person appraises the stress relationship (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Individuals who have high levels of perceived stress often feel that they have little control over events in their lives. Increased stress can be caused by large changes in one's life or other significant life events. However, the stressor itself is not what impacts an individual's emotional well-being. How a person feels they

are affected by these stressors and how they react to them can have the greatest impact (Phillips, 2013). Although stress is a natural biological response, prolonged stress can lead to anxiety, depression, memory issues, and deterioration of physical health (Mayo Clinic Staff, 2021).

Giguere noted that high levels of perceived stress have been positively correlated with both adaptive and maladaptive perfectionism (Finley, 2020; Rice, Leever, Christopher, & Porter, 2006). Perceived stress is also strongly correlated with the female gender and grade point average as well as with both academic and psychological stressors. Furthermore, Giguere found that some students with high levels of perceived stress displayed lower GPAs (Maykrantz & Houghton, 2018), and a number of studies she cited have shown that perceived stress is associated with disordered eating behaviors. For example, Thurston, Hardin, Kamody, Herbozo, and Kaufman (2018) found that higher levels of perceived stress are significantly and positively associated with severe binge-eating symptoms. In addition, Giguere noted that academic issues have been shown to be a prevalent area of stress among high-achieving high school females with eating disorders (Krafchek & Kronborg, 2018).

Giguere addressed the methodological challenge of identifying an appropriate group against which to compare UMaine Honors College students by first defining high-achieving students as having very high grade-point averages (GPAs) and SAT scores (Bradshaw et al., 2001; Do, 2020), and they tend to be active learners who think for themselves (Upcraft & Gardner, 1989). Giguere posited that UMaine honors students are high-achieving since they must have strong high school GPAs and SAT scores in order to be invited to join honors. She noted that “high-achieving” and “honors” are not synonymous. Cosgrove and Volkwein (2005) found that honors students have higher graduation rates and tend to complete their degrees faster than non-honors high achievers. Furthermore, there is evidence suggesting that honors students have different levels of anxiety, motivation, and perseverance than non-honors high achievers (Upcraft & Gardner, 1989). Non-honors high-achieving students would be the appropriate comparison group for her study.

Growing out of the work of the research collaborative, Giguere’s literature review revealed evidence of a positive association between academic success and perfectionism (Clark, 1983), with females tending to have more perfectionistic qualities than males (Franco-Paredes et al., 2005). She also identified research findings that indicate a significant association between perfectionism and negative eating behaviors (Davies & Hibbard, 2011).

Giguere determined that high achievement has been linked to perfectionism, perceived stress, and maladaptive eating behaviors, yet she found



little research on these factors among honors students, so she designed a study to examine these factors among high-achieving honors and non-honors students at the University of Maine, testing the following hypotheses:

1. High-achieving honors students will present higher levels of perceived stress than their non-honors high-achieving counterparts.
2. High-achieving honors students will present higher levels of perfectionism than their non-honors high-achieving counterparts.
3. High-achieving honors students will display higher levels of maladaptive eating attitudes than their non-honors high-achieving counterparts.

### *Method*

Giguere disseminated a survey to 8,124 UMaine undergraduate students (who were a minimum of 18 years old) and received 1,043 responses, a 13% return rate. In order to determine “high-achieving” among her participants, she used a formula, the *c*-index, created by the UMaine Honors College for admission to the program. The formula uses a student’s GPA and SAT score to assign them a numerical value, ranging from 1–100 [ $(\text{GPA} \times 12.5) + (\text{SAT} \times .03125)$ ]. For the years 2017–2020 (after which honors admissions became test optional), the average *c*-index for freshmen accepted to the honors college was 81.2, so Giguere used a *c*-index of above 81.2 to define “high-achieving” for her study. Data from participants who did not provide high school GPA or an SAT/ACT score were disregarded since a *c*-index could not be calculated.

Giguere used four scales in her survey: the Almost Perfect Scale-Revised (APS-R) (Slaney et al., 2001), the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS-10) (Cohen et al., 1983), the Three-Factor Eating Questionnaire (TFEQ) (Stunkard & Messick, 1985), and the Eating Disorder Examination Questionnaire (EDEQ) (Fairburn & Beglin, 1994). The standards, order, and discrepancy subscales of the APSR were used to assess perfectionism and to specify adaptive and maladaptive perfectionism. The PSS-10 was used to measure the degree to which situations in an individual’s life are perceived as stressful. The TFEQ was used to measure the extent to which participants experience maladaptive eating behaviors. Finally, the EDEQ measured aspects of maladaptive eating behavior through the subscales of restraint, eating concern, shape concern, and weight concern.

Data from 413 high-achieving students (with a c-index at or above 81.2) were selected for analysis: 143 were male; 253 were female; 17 indicated a different gender (13 non-binary/third gender, 2 preferred not to say, 2 other). Because of the small sample size, these 17 students were excluded from analyses of gender differences. Fifty-four students indicated that they were part of the UMaine Honors College while 358 indicated that they were not. One student did not answer this question. Twenty-nine students were enrolled in the College of Education and Human Development; 99 in the College of Engineering; 114 in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences; 25 in the Maine Business School; and 145 in the College of Natural Sciences, Forestry, and Agriculture.

### *Key Findings from Study 2*

Giguere's hypothesis that high-achieving honors students would show higher levels of perceived stress than their non-honors high-achieving peers was not supported. The survey did reveal, however, that high levels of perceived stress were common among high-achieving students. Fully 73% of the sample scored at a level indicative of high stress on the Perceived Stress Scale. About 81% of females scored in the high stress range compared to 56% of males. Non-honors students from the College of Engineering showed particularly high levels of perceived stress, significantly higher than students from the other colleges.

With respect to perfectionism, Giguere found that 57% of the sample met criteria as perfectionists and 44% as maladaptive perfectionists. There was no difference between honors and non-honors students with respect to perfectionism. Female students were found to have higher levels of maladaptive perfectionism than their male peers, 50% versus 32%.

On the measures of eating concerns, Giguere found levels of cognitive restraint and uncontrolled eating, as measured by the Three-Factor Eating Questionnaire, to be significantly higher among honors college high achievers. She found no significant difference between groups on the EDEQ restraint or shape concern scales, but non-honors high achievers had higher levels of eating concern, weight concern, and overall global scoring of maladaptive eating. The findings with respect to honors versus non-honors high-achieving students on measures of eating concern, therefore, were mixed.

Post-hoc analyses examining gender differences on the measures of eating concerns revealed similarly mixed findings. High-achieving males enrolled in the honors college displayed significantly higher EDEQ cognitive restraint

scores than their non-honors counterparts. Furthermore, non-honors male high achievers reported significantly higher EDEQ eating concern, shape concern, weight concern, and global scores than honors high achievers.

### **Study 3: Self-Oriented and Socially Prescribed Perfectionism and Satisfaction with the Honors College Experience**

Ethan Lowell's honors thesis investigated the relationship between perfectionism and students' perceived importance of, and satisfaction with, various components of the honors college experience. As a comparison condition, he also looked at UMaine Honors College students' perception of the importance of, and satisfaction with, their majors.

Lowell's literature review revealed that maladaptive perfectionism is positively associated with perceived stress while adaptive perfectionism is negatively correlated with perceived stress (Ashby, Noble, & Gnilka, 2012), and that perceived stress is a strong predictor of pathological depression and low life satisfaction (Stoeber & Stoeber, 2009; Wang, Yuen, & Slaney, 2008).

Lowell argued that maladaptive perfectionism relies more on obsessive suppression and validation, which are negatively associated with well-being and life satisfaction (Richardson, Rice, & Devine, 2014). He noted that maladaptive perfectionism is strongly associated with obsessive-compulsive activities such as persistent self-checking, overt cleanliness, and procrastination (Wu & Cortesi, 2009). Lowell contended that, cognitively, both adaptive and maladaptive perfectionism are associated with consistent intrusive, automatic, and critical thoughts related to achievement of goals derived from extreme sensitivity to personal imperfections and faults although this sensitivity is more prevalent in maladaptive perfectionism (Hewitt, Flett, Turnbull-Donovan, & Mikail, 1991).

Lowell furthermore noted that perfectionism is not evenly applied to all domains of life, citing Stoeber and Stoeber (2009), who found that perfectionists, both self-oriented and socially prescribed, are most perfectionist within work, study, and bodily hygiene domains. Both self-oriented and socially prescribed perfectionists assign similar personal importance to these salient domains although the way they establish the importance of these domains differs. Additionally, as the magnitude of perfectionism increases, the number of perfectionistic domains to which one assigns personal relevance and importance increases. As scores of perfectionism increase, the perceived necessity for control of life domains likewise increases. However,

self-oriented perfectionism is correlated with significantly higher rates of satisfaction in more domains of life than socially prescribed perfectionism, and self-oriented perfectionism is associated with higher levels of contentment and lower levels of anxiety and stress, both of which are hallmarks of general life satisfaction (Stoeber & Stoeber, 2009). Thus, Lowell argued that socially prescribed perfectionistic traits, while maintaining general control of perfectionism across domains, sacrifice satisfaction for an increase in the personal importance assigned to these domains.

Through his literature review, Lowell found maladaptive perfectionistic traits to be comorbid with socially prescribed perfectionism and to appear in higher incidence within rigorous academic institutions that uphold high academic and professional standards, such as honors programs (Parker & Adkins; 1995; Rice & Dellwo, 2002; Smith, Sherry, Vidovic, Saklofske, Stoeber, & Benoit, 2019). Scores seen in the honors population frequently were high enough to be considered pathological, leading Lowell to conclude that socially prescribed perfectionism is likely more dominant in rigorous academic environments than self-oriented perfectionism.

Through his honors thesis, Lowell wanted to better understand how perfectionism relates to the importance honors students place on various aspects of their academic experiences as well as their satisfaction with those experiences. He tested the following four hypotheses:

1. Socially prescribed perfectionism will be positively correlated with rating of importance of the UMaine honors experience.
2. Ratings of satisfaction with the UMaine honors experience will be more strongly correlated with self-oriented perfectionism than with socially prescribed perfectionism.
3. UMaine Honors College students will show higher ratings of personal importance and satisfaction with the UMaine honors experience than with their major experience.
4. Perfectionism will correlate more strongly with ratings of personal importance and satisfaction for the UMaine Honors College experience compared to the major experience.

### *Method*

Lowell surveyed 700+ UMaine Honors College students using the 30-item version of the Multidimensional Perfectionism Scale (MPS) (Hewitt & Flett, 1989), deriving three scores: Self-Oriented Perfectionism (SOP),

Socially Prescribed Perfectionism (SPP) and Total Perfectionism, created by totaling SOP and SPP. Secondly, he developed his own measure: Personal Importance & Satisfaction Inventory for the UMaine Honors College & Major Experience (42 items with 2 ratings of personal importance and personal satisfaction per item) based on interviews with honors college faculty and administrators. During these interviews, he asked questions about the honors college mission and about how faculty ensure that the honors experience is as enriching as possible. Lowell identified recurrent themes across interviews and generated 21 statements derived from these themes. The statements, such as “Deeply passionate intellectual and academic conversations in honors are frequent and enriching,” were rated on two seven-point Likert scales: importance (1 = not at all important; 7 = extremely important; ) and satisfaction (1 = not at all satisfied; 7 = extremely satisfied). Four scales in total were created with these statements: personal importance assigned to components of the honors experience (HI); satisfaction with the honors experience (HS); personal importance assigned to components of the major experience (MI); and satisfaction with their major experience (MS). Survey respondents were also asked to provide their age, grade, gender, and estimated GPA as well as their major(s).

While 151 honors college students responded to the survey, a 21% return rate, data from only 97 participants were analyzed. Fifty-four participants were omitted because demographic information was missing, they were significant GPA outliers (more than four standard deviations from the mean), or there were 10 or more missing data values for either the importance or satisfaction inventories.

### *Key Findings from Study 3*

Lowell did not find support for the research hypotheses that he had developed from his review of the literature. He did not find the expected correlations between perfectionism and students’ ratings of the importance of, or their satisfaction with, components of the honors college experience or their experiences within the major.

He had anticipated that the students would rate characteristics of their experience in the honors college as more important to them than their same kinds of experience in their major. Similarly, he predicted that students would rate their satisfaction with honors more highly than their satisfaction with their major. Neither hypothesis was supported. In fact, just the opposite was found. Students rated components of the major as more important to them

and were more satisfied with their experience in their major than in the honors college (see Table 1). Consistent with the finding from Study 1, Lowell found very high levels of socially prescribed perfectionism among his sample, suggesting that the trend toward increasing levels of perfectionism, first reported by Curran and Hill (2019), has continued.

## CONCLUSION

Sparked by the lived experience of an honors college student who struggled to navigate a pathway through her eating disorder, an honors college professor launched an initiative to better understand eating-related issues in honors students. Joining her on the journey of discovery were a psychology professor and a handful of honors college students. Neither the faculty nor the students could profess specialized knowledge of the psychology of eating disorders at the outset of the journey. Together they educated themselves about the prevalence of eating concerns in college students generally and honors students particularly. They considered key psychological constructs related to eating and weight such as restrained eating, abstinence violation, body image disturbance, and eating attitudes. They studied perfectionism, its adaptive and maladaptive forms. Two students developed their honors theses on the foundation laid by this collective learning experience.

Key findings from the three empirical studies carried out by the collaborative include the following:

- Socially prescribed perfectionism is a maladaptive trait that is common in college students generally and honors students in particular.
- The rate of maladaptive perfectionism in college students has been increasing over the past three decades, and that trend appears to be continuing.
- High-achieving college students experience high levels of perceived stress with women showing the highest levels.

**TABLE 1. PAIRED SAMPLE T-TEST FOR HONORS INTEREST (HI) VERSUS MAJOR INTEREST (MI) AND HONORS SATISFACTION (HS) VERSUS MAJOR SATISFACTION (MS)**

Item	Honors Mean (SD)	Major Mean (SD)	t(df)	P (two-tail)
HI vs. MI	111.29 (24.62)	121.28 (19.62)	- 4.27 (77)	< 0.001
HS vs. MS	94.80 (24.16)	108.31 (25.10)	- 4.03 (73)	< 0.001

- Concerns about eating, weight, and body shape are common among high-achieving students.
- The importance students attribute to, and their satisfaction with, characteristics of the honors experience are lower than for their major.

These findings, of course, need to be interpreted in the context of the limitations of the studies reported in this paper. First, all three studies examined responses from voluntary samples of University of Maine undergraduate students. UMaine undergraduates are predominantly Maine residents (63%) and White (83%). Generalizations drawn from our findings, therefore, should be made with caution. Second, there may be selection bias that further limits the generalizability of the findings. The return rates for the three studies were 32%, 13%, and 21% respectively, and the data, therefore, represent a minority of potential respondents. It is possible that some of our findings (e.g., high rates of socially prescribed perfectionism) reflect a greater response among UMaine honors students, who might respond to surveys more than UMaine students generally. Third, all three studies were conducted during various stages of the COVID-19 pandemic, which could have affected our findings. Finally, a limitation to this manuscript is the lack of detailed information such as the psychometric properties of questionnaires, the statistical methods used, and the p-values of significant findings that one might find in a psychology journal. The primary intent of this manuscript is to provide an example of an innovative approach to honors research with the secondary goal of raising awareness about eating concerns and perfectionism in the honors population. We felt that these goals would be best achieved by describing our methods and findings in a less discipline-specific style. The interested reader is directed to the students' honors theses (Giguere, 2022; Lowell, 2022), which are available online and provide more detailed information about methods, analyses, and data.

The study provides a variety of implications for the university honors community. The high prevalence of eating concerns, perfectionism, and perceived stress suggests the need for early intervention. Most universities offer some form of prevention that may include web-based programs, in-class presentations, and/or psychoeducational workshops. In addition, honors programs might consider working with their campus's student services to initiate secondary prevention programs, using screening measures such as those used in our research to identify students who score high on measures of perfectionism, stress, or eating/weight concerns and offer them tailored intervention. A secondary prevention program of this type targeting generalized anxiety



disorder was tested at the University of Maine with encouraging results (Higgins & Hecker, 2008). Increased awareness among honors faculty and staff about risk factors for disordered eating may help them to better support their students through curricular and extracurricular efforts that acknowledge and address these identified risk factors and that respond to honors students' needs in more informed and intentional ways.

The University of Maine's Honors and Eating Concerns Research Collaborative provides a model for faculty/student engagement rooted in scholarly inquiry and shared community concerns. In this approach, the faculty members bring certain skill sets to the table and join with students in identifying gaps in the team's knowledge and skills, working together to fill those gaps. The experiences of the research collaborative described in this paper suggest a fruitful approach with benefits to honors communities that extend beyond this collective's journey. One can easily imagine other areas of inquiry—for example, diversity, equity, and inclusion or identity formation and articulation—that might likewise be explored by honors students and faculty through collective questioning and inquiry.

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