

## FAQs

The following are questions that have been raised by constituents as Honors prepared this proposal, during the Faculty Senate Open Hearing, and as the proposal has been reviewed, discussed, and voted upon by various Faculty Senate committees.

Most frequently asked question (several variations of essentially the same question are below)

*Q – Why can't the objectives of an Honors College be accomplished by the existing Honors Program?*

*Q—Since the Honors Program is doing such good work with current students (i.e. things are working well), why change it? Why can't we accomplish the stated goals of the Honors College with the current Program model? Why create an additional layer of Administration?*

*Q – It is clear that resources given to Honors are limited. Why can't we just give the program the resources it needs? Why does it have to become a college to get these resources?*

A – While it is true that the Honors Program has achieved a great deal since its inception in 1976, there is so much more that Honors can accomplish if the significant opportunities associated with being an Honors College are made available to it. Taking Honors to the next level means that student engagement will be enriched, faculty engagement will be expanded, support of faculty contributing to Honors will be enhanced, more high-achieving students will be recruited (both directly from high school and by in-streaming student from within the institution), the number of Honors students from diverse backgrounds will be expanded, and a greater number of UD students, both Honors and non-Honors will be served.

To achieve these ambitious goals, additional resources are needed. The creation of an Honors College will present an excellent opportunity to generate the needed resources through development (including the naming of the College). However, achieving the many goals will require much more than just an increase in resources. Structural changes to allow Honors to work more effectively with colleges across campus are needed. Changes to allow Honors to be engaged more closely with campus leaders, and to be engaged more directly in campus-wide discussions, are needed. Changes in the level of prominence that the institution places on Honors, and the way Honors is represented to both internal and external constituents, are needed.

Becoming a college has long been discussed within Honors. With the introduction of the Graduate College, the creation of an Honors College would represent an analogous elevation of campus-wide undergraduate education. Such a change would provide the catalyst needed to elevate Honors to the next level of excellence.

### Rationales for becoming an Honors College

*Q – What are the primary rationales and benefits of creating an honors college?*

A – Becoming an Honors College will take UD Honors to the next level thereby allowing Honors to better engage UD students, more effectively support UD faculty, and further enhance the profile and prestige of the University of Delaware. More specifically, it will:

1. Enable Honors to better serve UD's most intellectually driven students and to achieve key strategic initiatives necessary to strengthen Honors overall;

2. Enhance recruitment and retention of intellectually driven students;
3. Raise the stature of Honors on campus, increasing visibility and expanding student and faculty participation;
4. Enable Honors to be included in University-wide leadership conversations;
5. Provide a significant development opportunity to generate needed resources; and
6. Put Honors on the same level as our competitor and aspirational institutions.

*Q – How will becoming an Honors College enable Honors to better engage UD’s most intellectually driven students?*

A – Having access to increased resources and having more direct lines of communication with leadership throughout campus will be very helpful in achieving the following education and program-based initiatives:

- Increase engagement opportunities for sophomores and juniors
- Enable and encourage in-stream admission of talented non-honors students
- Create cross-college seminars (annual RFP solicitation for new courses)
- Create cross-college Honors Bachelors of Philosophy (BPhil) degree
- Introduce signature products (broader than a thesis)
- Serve as an incubator for innovative academic programs
- Develop student/faculty mentoring program
- Create graduate/professional school preparatory program
- Establish Teaching and Research fellows program (extension of Writing fellows program)
- Create seminar class for UG students conducting research
- Develop and sponsor workshops to prepare students for post-graduate education
- Establish a guest speaker series
- Start an alumni mentoring program
- Create a scholarship office

*Q – How will becoming an Honors College enhance recruitment, retention, and quality of our students?*

A – Our Vice President for Enrollment Management, Rodney Morrison, who comes most recently from an institution that has an Honors College (Stony Brook), has said that not being an Honors College puts us at a disadvantage when recruiting top students (especially since many of our local competitors have Honors Colleges). Vice President Morrison is our local expert on this subject, and he has seen the effects on recruiting of being, and not being, an Honors College. Vice President Morrison believes we will be able to recruit better students if we have an Honors College. In fact, many of our most significant regional competitors including Penn State, Rutgers, Maryland, Virginia Tech, Stony Brook have Honors Colleges. Surveys of Honors Colleges by the NCHC showed that 100% of the colleges indicated that “recruiting stronger students” was a motivation for them to become an honors college.

*Q – How will becoming an Honors College raise the stature of Honors on campus, increasing visibility and expanding student and faculty participation?*

A – Becoming a college would heighten the stature and visibility on UD’s campus to both students and faculty. Colleges are the top academic entities on campus. As a college, Honors would be organizationally recognized as an equal. Faculty may see close affiliation with a college as being more beneficial than association with a program. Colleges also have their own communications staff which allows for promotion both on campus and in recruitment efforts (including the recruitment of high-achieving current UD students). Increasing the on-campus visibility will help Honors generate greater levels of participation from both students and faculty.

*Q – How will becoming an Honors College enable Honors to be included in University-wide leadership conversations?*

A – Like the Graduate College, which engages graduate students from all colleges across campus, Honors already engages undergraduate students from all colleges across campus. As such, it is imperative for Honors to be functioning at the college level and reporting to the Provost. NCHC strongly recommends this, as did the 2017 Honors Program APR report. The current Honors Program director, Michael Chajes, served as a dean at UD in the past. Since assuming the position in July, he has seen on numerous occasions why being part of University-wide leadership conversations and being a part of University-wide events is critical to Honors.

*Q – How will becoming an Honors College provide a significant development opportunity to generate more resources?*

A – Virtually all the areas in which Honors wants to improve will require additional resources. Becoming an Honors College creates the most realistic opportunity for acquiring the needed resources – via development. Donors are more likely to donate to a “college” than to a “program.” The reason is that a “college” denotes prestige and permanence and the highest status within a university. A “program” denotes none of these. There is a national trend towards donors choosing to name Honors Colleges, and indications from our colleagues in development are that setting a mid-seven-figure endowment goal, which would include several key naming opportunities, is quite reasonable.

*Q – How will becoming an Honors College put UD on the same level with our competitor and aspirational institutions?*

A – The rationale for the “Department of Music” becoming the “School of Music,” or years ago for “Civil Engineering” becoming “Civil and Environmental Engineering,” was that those had both become the national norm for naming. Likewise, “Honors College” has become the national norm for top flight honors entities. This change has been documented by the National Collegiate Honors Council (NHCH) and the proposal presents national and regional data to support this.

#### Impact of forming an Honors College

*Q – Is an Honors College somewhat parallel to the recently established Graduate College?*

A – Yes, like the Graduate College will serve and support graduate students and faculty from across campus, an Honors College will engage and support undergraduate students and faculty from all colleges across campus. In some ways, Honors already does this, although many important attributed of a college are missing and their absence makes it hard for Honors to continue to reach its true potential and compete with its aspirational peers.

*Q – Will the head of the Honors College be a dean? Who will the head of the Honors College report to?*

A – The head of the Honors College would be a Dean, and that person would report to the Provost. It should be noted that this is consistent with the recommendation of the National Collegiate Honors Council (NHCH) which recommends that “The head of the honors college is a dean reporting directly to the chief academic officer of the institution and serving as a full member of the Council of Deans if one exists.” The complete list of recommendations from NCHC regarding “Basic Characteristics of a Fully Developed Honors College” can be found in Appendix B.

*Q – How will elevating Honors to the college-level help it to function more effectively?*

A – Honors has always depended on the goodwill and support of UD’s colleges and departments. Its recent growth, however, and its desire to increase the diversity of its students and the breadth of its enrichment opportunities will require enlisting further support. Ultimately, it is deans and their colleges who can make that support happen. College standing will give Honors a seat at the table alongside UD’s other college deans and will establish organizationally that Honors is a high priority at the University of Delaware.

*Q – What will the impact of creating an Honors College be on existing bylaws?*

A – The existing bylaws have been adapted to appropriate bylaws for an Honors College. In doing so, the recently created Graduate College bylaws were reviewed and appropriate portions used to inform the Honors College bylaws. The proposed Honors College bylaws were unanimously approved by the Honors Program Faculty Board in February, 2020.

*Q – Are there downsides to creating an Honors College?*

A – In some ways, the Honors Program has already evolved into an honors college. It already has a living-learning community/dorm, it functions campus-wide and degrees are already awarded to students in all colleges. While the upsides of officially calling the program a college, as described herein, are significant, the downsides are minimal. While additional resources and space will be needed to fully reach its ultimate goal of becoming a nationally renowned honors college, those resources will largely be generated through development, and likely attract new sources of funding not otherwise attainable.

#### Impacts of an Honors College on the University

*Q – Given that the Honors Program has grown significantly over the past few decades, is the goal in becoming a College to make Honors even larger?*

A – One goal of an Honors College would be to recruit and educate high quality candidates, and to raise the academic profile of the institution. We would like to increase the total number of Honors students by drawing from the pool of students who excelling academically but did not enter UD as Honors students. We would like to invite those students to join Honors as sophomores or juniors (called in-stream admits). If the number of high-achieving high school applicants increases, an increase in the number of first-year Honors students would be possible. An Honors College is likely to attract a great number of high-achieving, and therefore a growth of first-year Honors students is certainly possible.

*Q – What will the impact of creating an Honors College be on the other colleges?*

A – The Honors Program is currently an asset to the academic colleges in that it helps to recruit and develop high achieving students who in turn become leaders in their respective colleges. Having an Honors College will enable UD to recruit and retain better students for all of the colleges, and will enable Honors to better support faculty across campus.

*Q – How will the addition of a new dean affect the membership of the faculty senate?*

A – The current chair of the Rules Committee (Brian Hanson) has been consulted with, and he is prepared to work with the Rules Committee to decide what changes to the composition of the senate membership will need to be made if an Honors College, headed by a dean, is approved.

#### Impact on current and former students

*Q – Would becoming a college affect the number and quality of students in Honors?*

A – As mentioned earlier, becoming a college will help us recruit better students. This should lead to increased student quality, which in turn may enable future growth. Furthermore, added resources can enable the expansion of course offerings needed to accommodate expansion of Honors allowing us to recruit and admit greater numbers of in-stream students.

*Q – Will having an Honors College help in creating a more diverse and inclusive community?*

A – While becoming an Honors College will, by itself, not contribute to creating a more diverse and inclusive community, the resources that will be generated by the College will enable important advances to be made in recruitment and retention, in outreach to prospective students, in available scholarships, and in better supporting students once they are in the program.

*Q – What will the impact of creating an Honors College be on existing students?*

A – The change moving forward will be that Honors will be better able to support students because an honors college will be more robust than an honors program. There will be little to no immediate impact on students. Students are already in existing colleges, and that will remain the same. Students already get degrees from their respective colleges/departments (e.g. Honors Bachelor of Arts in Psychology), and that will remain the same. Honors already certifies the honors portion of the degrees, and that will remain the same. No changes in Honors advising or Honors housing will occur. And, with increased resources, course offerings will be expanded and greater faculty engagement and therefore student mentoring will occur.

*Q – Would Honors classes change?*

A – The overall structure of honors courses would remain the same. We currently have free-standing honors courses with an average of 25 students per class, and also add-on sections where a smaller subset of Honors students complete honors requirements while meeting with the larger lecture. Faculty teaching Honors College courses would still have the opportunity to challenge students with coursework and develop an honors curriculum for their courses. The creation of an Honors College could bring with it opportunities for additional types of courses as new initiatives are put into place, such as more interdisciplinary coursework as we interact with deans at the college level.

*Q – Would only Honors students be allowed to take courses in the Honors College?*

A – There is no plan at this time to change the current approach to Honors course participation. Our current policy is that any full-time matriculated UD undergraduate not in the Honors Program can take honors coursework on a space available basis as long as they have completed at least 12 credits at UD and have a cumulative GPA of 3.00 or higher.

*Q – Would becoming an Honors College affect Honors alumni?*

A – Programs, colleges and schools change their statuses, and even their names, over time. The Honors College will communicate with alumni about the changes and will take steps to maintain connections and goodwill. Our alumni advisory council is very excited about becoming a college, and voted unanimously to support this effort. Other alumni who have heard of this initiative are likewise very supportive of it.

#### Impact of an Honors College on faculty

*Q – Which faculty will be eligible to be Honors College faculty?*

A – The faculty of the Honors College shall consist of all full-time faculty members of the University who hold primary appointments in the other colleges, and appointment to the Honors College will be considered secondary.

*Q – What will the impact of creating an Honors College be on faculty?*

A – It will improve the ability of Honors to recruit faculty to teach Honors sections, and to support them in their efforts. While many faculty members enjoy teaching Honors sections and the contact it brings with some of the University's most academically motivated students, some shy away from it because they feel that the effort they devote to teaching Honors is not valued by their colleges and departments. College standing will help establish a culture at UD that views Honors teaching and advising as a high University priority.

*Q – Would creating an Honors College lead to better ways to compensate faculty for add-ons?*

A – One of the goals of an Honors College would be to find ways to better support faculty who teach honors classes and Honors add-on sections. One approach would be to provide an Honors Teaching Fellow to classes with significant numbers of Honors students. We would also hope that teaching an add-on section would count as additional work load. Being a college will elevate the activities of Honors, and we would hope that all colleges would support the idea of counting support of Honors as a significant contribution. As an Honors College, we would hope to have additional resources which we would make available to those teaching Honors students.

#### Impact of an Honors College on budget, resources, staffing, and facilities

*Q – Will creating an Honors College mean Honors will need a larger budget?*

A – A five-year budget has been developed that will enable the Honors College to successfully achieve key strategic initiatives. The budget calls for a 75% increase over the current budget over that five-year period. The bulk of the increased budget will be funded through development.

*Q – Will the Honors College require additional staffing?*

A – The honors program is largely functioning as an honors college already. That said, the number of students is growing and there is a need for additional staff to support those students regardless of whether or not the program becomes a college. Like other colleges, the Honors College would need a Director of Communications and a Director of Development, and could also greatly benefit by having a staff member who specializes in recruitment & retention (with a particular focus on diversity and inclusion). In addition, by providing expanded opportunities for honors students, additional academic program management, and academic advising will be needed. Additional academic program management, and academic advising positions were already planned due to the expansion of the academic program associated with the new track. Positions like recruitment and retention, communications, and development would ideally be accomplished through partnerships with the relevant university-level offices (Admissions, Communications and Marketing, and Development and Alumni Relations).

*Q – What will the impact of creating an Honors College be on space? Will the Honors College need new space (i.e. is Honors looking for/hoping for more space as part of the plan to become a College)?*

A – The Honors Program’s current facility hampers our ability to build community among students, better engage them, and to grow. While the formation of the Honors College would not require a new building, larger and more functional space will be needed in the future to reach our aspirational goals, and to house new staff. Upgraded space will be a game changer as it will foster an environment in which students, faculty, and staff can grow and support each other. If the Honors College is formed, efforts to raise money to support a new space will be a top priority. Furthermore, if the size of the freshman class continues to grow, a second residential space beyond Redding Hall will be needed to house all first-year Honors students in a well-functioning living-learning community.

*Q – The old house that Honors occupies is inadequate. Any new building for an Honors College should be on central campus. Are there any plans to move a department or administrative offices that would create space on central campus? Munroe Hall was created from old rental houses with a connecting building in the rear. I believe UD has other old houses on West Delaware Avenue. Would construction of a facility similar to Munroe Hall be feasible and serve the needs of an Honors College?*

A – Honors being situated on central campus is critical. Honors likes its current location, and there has been some talk of taking the footprint occupied by Honors and UG Research (two older houses), and using it for a new building (e.g. the Munroe Hall example). It might take a lead donor, but that would certainly be an attractive naming opportunity. Being able to join UD’s space conversations as a college would increase Honors chances of becoming a priority in UD’s space plan. To date, we have not been directly represented in these conversations (for either new Honors space or new Honors dorms on central campus).

*Q – If the honors program grows, would it be feasible to switch from Redding Hall to a larger facility, if one exists? My memory may be incorrect, but at one time weren’t one or more of the dorms on the Green between Main Street and Delaware Avenue used for honors housing?*

A – It is true that Redding Hall, where all of the freshmen Honors students are housed, is at capacity this year. If we bring in larger classes, we will need more space. We believe that using

Gilbert Hall (adjacent to Redding) as a second dormitory is a possible solution. Another approach is to have freshmen Honors students who could be in first-year major-specific living communities (like nursing), live in those communities (to date, if someone is a freshman and a nursing major, they live with the Honors students). As UD thinks about a new dorm, if Honors continues to grow, this will be an issue to address. Creation of a public-private-partnership to address honors housing have also occurred. Honors did, and still does, use dorms on the North Green. Honors is also discussing off-campus, upper-division apartment-style housing, perhaps at the Courtyard apartments which UD has recently taken back. If Honors grows, several options exist to address housing needs.

*Q – How will the Honors College fit into the new budget model, and will Honors take dollars away from colleges?*

A – Either as an Honors Program, or as an Honors College, Honors will be an allocated cost and fall within the budget of the Provost office. The Honors College would be analogous to the Graduate College and treated similarly in terms of budgeting (i.e. would receive a fixed base budget and would not be eligible for incremental revenue sharing). As far as the budget model is concerned, Honors does not have students (i.e. no head count in the budget model), and Honors does not have instructors (i.e. no ICOR). All Honors students are allocated to the colleges that they reside in, and all instructors who teach Honors classes/sections are allocated to the colleges they work for. As such, Honors will not take any budget dollars away from colleges (assuming the current budget remains unchanged). Since increases in the Honors budget will come from development funds, those increases will not take away budget dollars from colleges.

*Q – Would creating an Honors College guarantee that the College will receive a lot of new resources?*

A – There is a very high likelihood that a development campaign for an Honors College would be successful in establishing a healthy endowment. Also, the administration is strongly supportive of an Honors College, and some one-time strategic funds may be allocated to Honors. But, work will need to be done by Honors to raise much of the funds. There is no promise that the College will receive large increases in base budget. If the College expands its programs, and impacts increasing numbers of students, the base budget will go up accordingly.

#### Impact of an Honors College on fundraising for Honors

*Q – The proposed Honors budget projects \$1 million of annual income from an endowment of \$25 million. Is there any endowment to date, and what are the plans to raise the funds to create the endowment?*

A – Honors has been the beneficiary of some generous gifts recently, and our endowment is currently over \$1M. Honors was invited to present the concept of an Honors College to the President's Leadership Council (PLC) in the fall. The PLC are the ambassadors for the Delaware First capital campaign. Following the presentation, the PLC indicated that an Honors College would be an excellent development opportunity, and were very enthusiastic about the prospects of generating a significant endowment for it. Likewise, UD's Development office sees a \$30M development goal as a reachable target. Having been identified as a high development priority by the university, the plan is to leverage the formation of the Honors College as a catalyst to raise funds through a directed campaign.



*Q – If fundraising comes up short, what is plan B for the funding?*

A – The rate that we can build the endowment is certainly unknown. The transition to a college affords us many benefits even as we wait until we are resourced at the level we have indicated as our goal. If the fundraising goes slower than expected, we will implement changes that do not require big dollars, and we will look to partner with colleges, departments, faculty, and administrative offices to support some of the initiatives in the interim. We could also consider student fees (as several Honors Colleges across the country do, and as some of our UD colleges do). While we don't want to do this, a \$125 per semester fee would generate roughly \$0.5M per year. Finally, as UD's budget model progresses, and as student enrollment numbers become clearer, it is possible that a base budget increase is warranted (if honors grows, it would certainly be reasonable, and necessary, to see its base budget grow).