

**Proposal to Restructure the University Honors Program**  
**submitted to the A&S Common Curriculum Committee**  
**10/18/04**

The University Honors Program (UHP) at Loyola University New Orleans was founded in 1980 to serve the needs of the Presidential Scholars by providing them with their own customized version of the Common Curriculum. Even though the program is no longer tied to scholarships, this structure persists such that the UHP curriculum is mostly a course-for-course substitution for the regular Common Curriculum with Honors Program offerings.

The fact that the Program includes 48 credit hours causes difficulties in scheduling for many students, particularly music and science students whose schedules include blocks of time for major requirements such as labs. These conflicts create the need for many students to arrange for a special contract option to fill certain requirements. Monitoring these contracts, and communicating their existence to the appropriate college, creates difficulties in some cases. In addition, students who enter the program after they begin their freshman year are hard-pressed to fit in more than two Honors courses per semester and would be repeating some of their coursework, although as an Honors version, if they attempted to do so. These students generally have at least two, often as many as four, Honors course requirements waived with the regular Common Curriculum course counting in its place. The fact that Common Curriculum requirements, and therefore the Honors Program requirements, vary across colleges creates inconsistencies as well.

In order to address these concerns, as well as to promote more flexibility with greater choice and more options for our highly talented, highly motivated students and to make our program more consistent with, and more competitive with, the vast majority of “distribution requirement” honors programs nationwide, we propose the following:

**The University Honors Program should be restructured to include one Honors course in each of the following eight areas:**

**Behavioral/social sciences, English, history, humanities/arts, mathematics, philosophy, natural sciences, and religious studies.**

In addition, the full Honors Program will include a requirement for an original, independent senior project. An **orientation course** to assist students as they prepare to undertake this project will be required for **one credit P/F** in the semester preceding the actual execution of the **senior project**. The project itself will count for **two credit hours** with a letter grade.

**Therefore, this proposal would reduce the total required credit hours for the University Honors Program to 27.**

Please note that the remainder of each student’s Common Curriculum requirements would still exist. That is, in the College of Arts & Sciences, s/he would still be required to take one additional Common Curriculum course in English, history, and the sciences as well as two additional courses in philosophy or religious studies, etc. S/he could opt to take additional

Honors courses in order to fulfill the Common Curriculum requirements but s/he would no longer be required to do so. The Senior Project would substitute for an upper level Common Curriculum elective.

A ubiquitous complaint from current University Honors Program students is that AP credit for English and History counts only as general elective credit. The changes proposed herein would allow AP credit to be counted for Honors Program students in the same way that it counts for all other students. It would also eliminate the confusion when students switch from one status to the other.

It is our hope that these changes would also allow increasing numbers of students, particularly music and science majors, to complete the program successfully. There are currently 177 students in the program with 65 of those in their first year. If every first-year student were to make it through to graduation in the Honors Program, and if our incoming class size were to remain constant, we would have 260 students in the program by 2008. That estimated change would correspond to a 47% increase in the size of the program from fall 2004 to fall 2008. Of course the incoming class size might increase as well. Then the Program could grow even more.

Finally, looking at the graph on the following page we can see immediately that our current program has the highest number of credit hours of any of the 279 schools included in our nationwide survey (detailed data available upon request). While this fact is not sufficient in itself to justify restructuring the Program, it certainly shows that our UHP requirements are very unusual. It seems to be time to consider a change.

This proposal has been approved by the University Honors Advisory Board, the Dean of the College of Arts & Sciences, and Provost Harris. It is being submitted to Deans Kvet and O'Brien for their review as well.

Respectfully submitted,

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## Distribution of Total Credit Hour Requirements for Honors Programs Nationwide

