

Honors College Task Force February 2009

Executive Summary

The Honors College Task Force (HCTF) was charged with investigating Honors programs at peer institutions, aspirational peers and land grant institutions and reviewing the existing model and structure of Auburn University's Honors College in accordance with Auburn's Strategic Plan Goal 2: "Auburn University will improve and strengthen the Honors College for the future growth of top academic students" and to prepare a report with recommendations to that end.

The seven members of the Task Force met with faculty, administrators, staff and students from across the University gathering information about the challenges faced by the colleges, the experience of the current and former students, insights from the current Honors College staff and the reflections of faculty who teach honors classes, as well as administrators who support these classes. Through benchmarking against thirteen peer institutions we were able to make comparisons with our peers. The Task Force conducted a Strengths Weaknesses Opportunities Threats (SWOT) analysis of the information we gathered and identified eleven areas of focus and ten recommendations. The 11 focus areas encompass the strengths of the current Honors College and elucidate the challenges that face Auburn University Honors. Analysis of the 11 areas of primary focus produced the HCTF's 10 recommendations.

11 Areas of Focus

1. The administration of the Honors College, including advising.
2. The Honors programs and its relationship to the core, Honors students' majors, and the Honors College attrition rate.
3. The inflexibility of the Honors programs' curriculum.
4. A desire to make the Auburn University Honors College unique among its peers.
5. Honors College student dissatisfaction with Honors facilities.
6. Honors College oversight, assessment, and coordination with other colleges.
7. The problems related to the Honors College capacity.
8. The importance of scholarship funding to Honors students.
9. The importance of identifying, encouraging, and preparing Auburn Honors students to apply for prestigious post-baccalaureate opportunities.
10. The Honors College budget.
11. The problems related to the lack of ethnic and racial diversity among Honors College students.

10 Recommendations

1. Retain the current centralized administrative structure and staff of the Honors College with a commitment to strengthen advising capabilities.
2. Collapse the current Junior and Senior Honors programs into a single robust option that provides flexibility for students from all majors and provides incentives for participation through graduation.

3. Develop a stronger central focus for the Honors program that replaces the current emphasis on the core curriculum with special interdisciplinary Honors-only courses and an enhanced menu of flexible study options.
4. Create the Auburn Honors Fast-Track (AHFT), a degree option resulting in an Accelerated Bachelor's and Master's Degree Program to challenge and make effective use of the time and talents of our Honors College students.
5. Provide Honors housing and meeting space in Auburn University's new The Village housing.
6. Create an Honors Advisory Council (HAC) to provide advice in the development and implementation of the new Honors program elements and to develop continuing assessment and evaluation efforts for measuring progress.
7. Address capacity issues by retaining current admissions requirements while raising requirements to remain in the program after the freshman year.
8. Increase scholarship funding to outstanding students who opt for the Honors program.
9. Strengthen the program to identify, encourage, and mentor students to apply for prestigious opportunities such as Rhodes and Fulbright Scholarships.
10. Restructure the current Honors College budget by eliminating the expense of multiple Honors sections each semester and reallocating the funds to support the revised program.

These options should be designed to fulfill critical experiences that Honors students need:

1. Meaningful and sustained mentoring relationships with faculty.
2. Intellectual engagement with the world beyond the classroom.
3. Supervised independent learning opportunities.
4. Study abroad/cultural experiences.
5. Undergraduate research/scholarship.
6. Special Honors-Only Experiences; and
7. Honors Contract Courses.

Report of the Honors College Task Force

February 13, 2009

Introduction

The Honors College Task Force (HCTF) was charged in August 2009 by Provost John Heilman with investigating Honors programs at peer institutions, aspirational peers and land grant institutions and reviewing the existing model and structure of Auburn University's Honors College in accordance with the university's Strategic Plan Goal 2: "Auburn University will improve and strengthen the Honors College for the future growth of top academic students" and prepare a report with recommendations to that end. (See Appendix A.)

The Task Force members:

Bonnie MacEwan, Dean of Libraries, Task Force Chair;
Prathima Agrawal, Samuel Ginn Distinguished Professor of ECE and Director of Wireless Engineering Research and Education Center;
Conner Bailey, Professor, Agriculture;
Jennifer Kerpelman, Professor, Human Sciences;
Curt Lindner, Distinguished University Professor, College of Sciences and Mathematics;
Steve Williams, Professor, College of Architecture, Design and Construction; and
J. Emmett Winn, Professor and Associate Dean, College of Liberal Arts.

Recommendations requiring additional investments are also mentioned throughout the report. They include improvements in advising, the creation of a full time development officer position, improvement of student living and meeting space, and establishing attractive and visible office space for the College. The Committee urges the University to work with the College to make these improvements but believes the main recommendations can be implemented by reallocating funding and targeting resources.

Through its benchmarking and discussions with Honor College stakeholders the HCTF identified 11 main focus areas of primary importance to improving Auburn University's Honors College. The 11 focus areas encompass the strengths of the current Honors College and elucidate the challenges that face Auburn University Honors. Analysis of the 11 areas of primary focus produced the HCTF's 10 recommendations.

Summary of Benchmarking and Fact Finding

The Task Force gathered information about 12 honors programs including:

Arkansas University
Clemson University
Louisiana State University
Michigan State University

Oklahoma State University
Texas A & M University
The Pennsylvania State University
The University of Houston
University of Alabama
University of Alabama – Birmingham
University of Georgia
University of South Carolina

Considered criteria included when the program was established, the number of students enrolled, the admission process, the admission standards, guidelines for admission after enrollment, requirements for remaining in the Honors College, number of dedicated academic advisors, title of the head of the college and the size of the staff, the nature of development efforts, the staff assigned to development, the research and creative opportunities available to the students, and other benefits offered to the students. Most honors colleges offered entering honors students priority enrollment in required classes. Many programs offer a more robust program with higher criteria for continuing students. Many offer options beyond the thesis for an enriched honors program and most have scholarship opportunities linked to continued participation in the program.

A few programs stood out as providing useful approaches. One noteworthy example was the multi-disciplinary core courses offered at UAB. These courses allow students to fulfill the core requirements outside their major area of study while enjoying a rich multi-disciplinary experience designed to challenge and engage a high performing college student. Students often enter an honors program to receive priority registration but those who stay do so for a richer experience that is both engaging and provides opportunities to interact with faculty and prepare for graduate work or a challenging career. Meetings with students confirmed this desire for a rich and varied experience on the part of Auburn's most talented students. None of our benchmark institutions offered a program identical to the Auburn Honors Fast Track outlined in our recommendations but the proposal is consistent with what we learned in benchmarking and through our meetings with students.

SWOT Analysis

In benchmarking, reviewing Auburn University's current Honors College and discussions with the Honors College stakeholders, the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) facing the Honors College emerged. The HCTF analysis of these issues informed the selection of the 11 focus areas and provided the information for the development of the 10 recommendations. This section of the report describes the Task Force's SWOT analysis.

SWOT Strengths

The review of the existing Honors College structure and analysis of discussions with major stakeholders reveals Auburn University's Honors College main strength lies in the skill and dedication of its administrative personnel, students, and faculty.

Honors Administration

All stakeholders interviewed praised the current Honors College administrative staff: James R. Hansen, Director; Paul A. Harris, Associate Director, National Prestigious Scholarships, and Kathie L. Mattox, Student Academic Services. Stakeholders cited the administration's unwavering commitment to the Honors College, their accessibility, their infectious enthusiasm, and their hard work in the face of a daunting task as reasons for praising the Honors College administration. The HCTF agrees with this assessment and feels that these individuals are best qualified to lead, improve, and strengthen Auburn University Honors for future growth.

Honors Students

Our analysis reveals that incoming Honors students are a major strength of Auburn's Honors programs. One of the great pleasures for the HCTF members was meeting and interacting with Honors College students. A brief profile of the 2008 freshmen Honors class reveals their excellence and special achievements:

2008 Honors Freshman Class Profile:

- 539 students (274 females; 265 males) from 27 different states (339 Alabama students)
- Average High School GPA: 4.05 (on a 4.0 scale)
- Average ACT score: 30.83 (1370 SAT)
- 119 Auburn University Presidential Scholars
- 30 National Merit Scholarship finalists
- 52 Valedictorians/First in High School Class
- 31 High School Class Presidents
- 197 High School Student Council Officers
- 39 Athletic Sport State Championship Winners

Honors Faculty

The third area of strength in Auburn University Honors is the Honors Faculty. Students praised the Honors faculty as devoted and inspiring mentors. Honors faculty work tirelessly to design, create, and teach special Honors sections of Auburn Core Curriculum courses primarily in CoSAM and Liberal Arts. Some faculty have been teaching Honors sections for many years and have a length of experience with Auburn Honors that exceeds all other stakeholders. Input from the Honors faculty, in the form of a roundtable discussion and in written statements to the HCTF was invaluable to understanding the Honors curriculum's strengths and challenges.

SWOT Weaknesses

Auburn University Honors also suffers from some debilitating weaknesses. The HCTF's investigations coupled with information provided by the Honors College students, faculty, and administrators as well as other stakeholders including representatives from the various colleges and Undergraduate Studies Student Service personnel indicate that the Honors College major weaknesses are three-fold: problems related to the rapid growth of the program, the very high student attrition rate, and the lack of appealing housing and Honors College Center facilities.

Rapid Growth

At first glance (see Table 1) the rapid growth in enrollment in the Honors College may appear to be a strength of the program. Since 2006, the total population of the Honors College has almost doubled. However, this quick infusion of students has created major problems across the Honors program and in the colleges that teach most of the Honors core curriculum sections, especially the College of Liberal Arts and the College of Sciences and Mathematics.

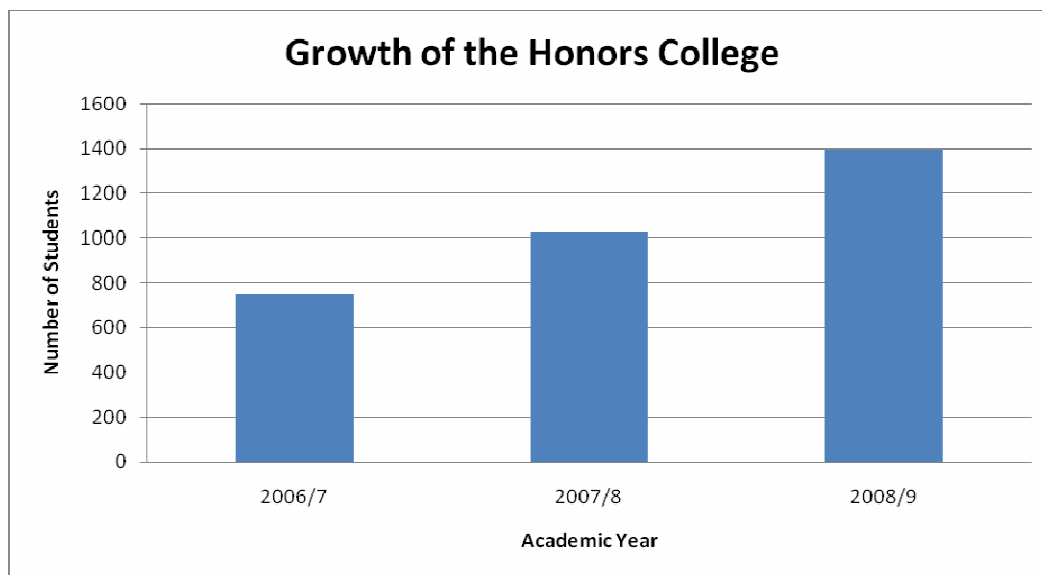
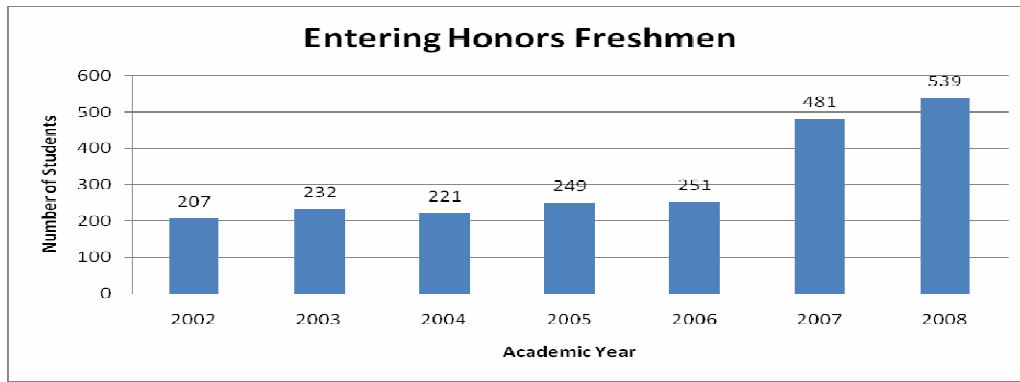


Table 1

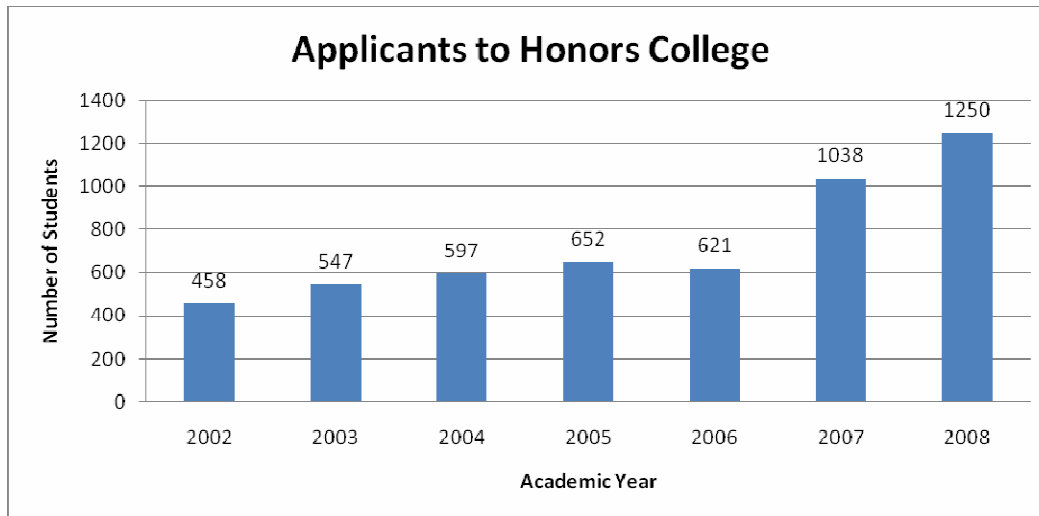
Source: Auburn University Honors College

Table 2 shows that the large growth has occurred in the entering freshman classes with 2007 and 2008 classes that far exceed the fairly stable rate of incoming freshmen from 2002 to 2006. This increase created demands on a system that was not equipped to handle more than double the number of incoming freshmen in just two years time. The Honors College that could expect, plan for, and offer a small number of Honors core sections, quickly became a larger college that didn't have the flexibility in curriculum or the budget needed to cope with a much larger student body.

**Table 2**

Source: Auburn University Honors College

Finally, Table 3 shows that applications to the Honors College are growing rapidly. This is a positive trend since there is a great desire to recruit the best and the brightest freshman to Auburn University but the increased numbers further complicate capacity problems.

**Table 3**

Source: Auburn University Honors College

The Auburn University Honors rapid growth has led to its main weakness. A small stable program suddenly grew to twice its previous size, stressed the entire Honors system, and undermined its effectiveness in all areas. The negative results were clearly expressed by the stakeholders. Stakeholders, especially the students, expressed the need for immediate structural change to intelligently manage the growth and strengthen the program.

Attrition

The second major weakness in the Honors Program is its split-identity between the Junior Honors Program and the Senior Honors Program. The current Honors system allows Honors students to opt out of the Senior Honors Program after they have completed the Junior Honors Program. Completion of the Juniors Honor Program requires a 3.2 unadjusted GPA and fewer academic requirements than the senior program. The junior program requires attendance at two Honors convocations per year and completion of a minimum of 24 credit hours in Honors core courses, which can be completed in the first two years at Auburn resulting in awarding the junior certificate. The senior program requires advanced courses in the students' major and research at the junior and senior level (thesis and non-thesis options). Only students who complete both the junior and senior programs with a minimum 3.4 GPA receive the University Honors Scholar distinction (noted on the diploma and transcript).

The dual nature of the Honors program results in a high attrition rate in the Honors College as the students literally "vote with their feet" and leave the Honors program. Table 4 shows the number of senior certificates awarded has trailed the awarding of junior certificates by more than half for a period from 2002-2006. In 2006, the awarding of College junior certificates jumped substantially while the senior certificates remained level. This growth is partially the result of the increase in underclassmen in the Honors College at this time; therefore, some increase in the number of senior certificates should occur as these students become juniors and seniors. Regardless of enrollment numbers, the majority of Honors students do not complete the senior certificate, and the disparity between junior and senior certificates awarded is increasing.

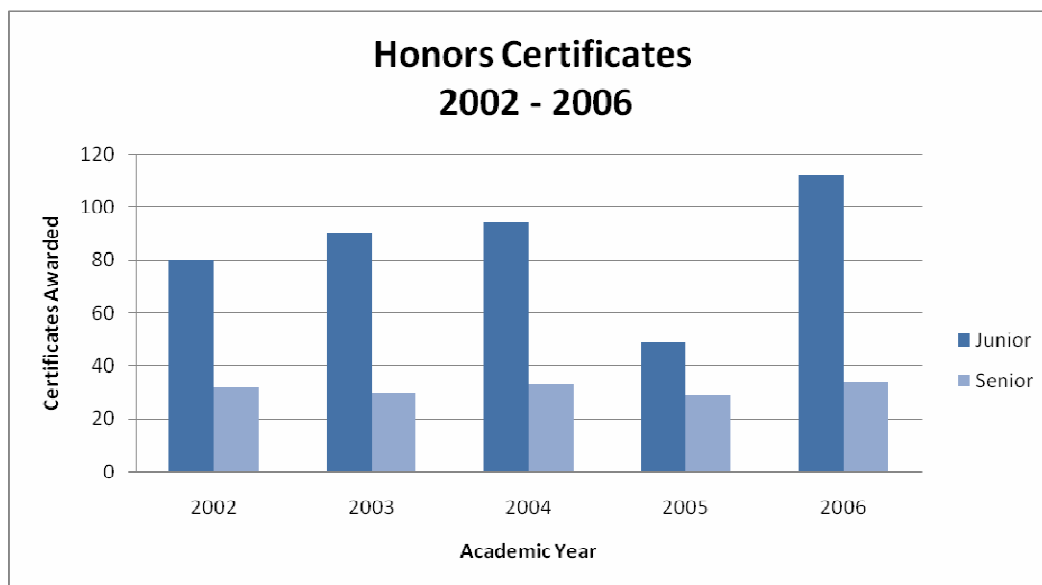


Table 4

Source: Auburn University Honors College

Honors students made it very clear that the senior certificate does not offer sufficient incentives to encourage most of them to continue in the Honors program past the requirements for the junior certificate. Table 5 is a good example of the pattern of attrition experienced by the Honors College as it tracks the incoming Honors class of 2002 as the students applied, enrolled, and earned junior and senior certificates. In 2002, 458 applicants resulted in only 34 of those students earning senior certificates in 2006.

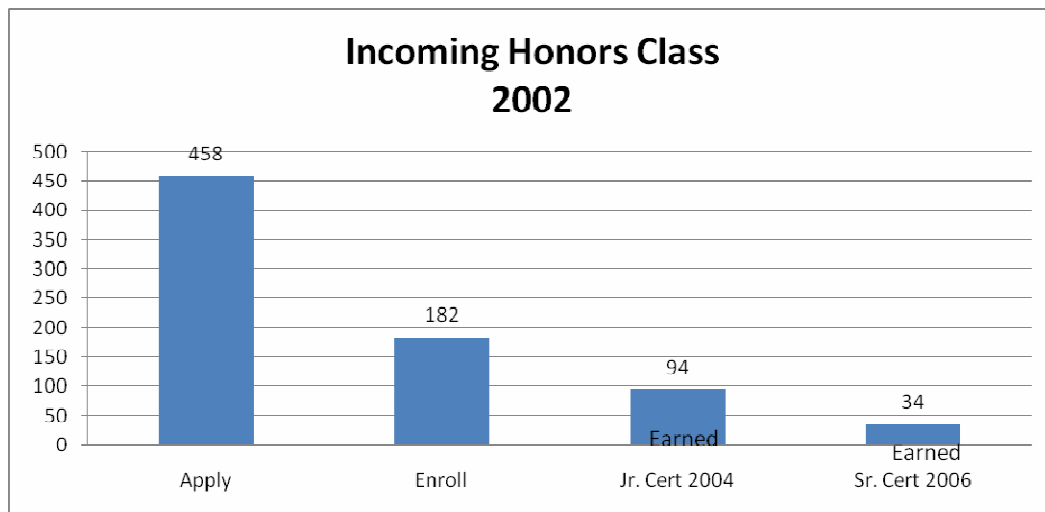
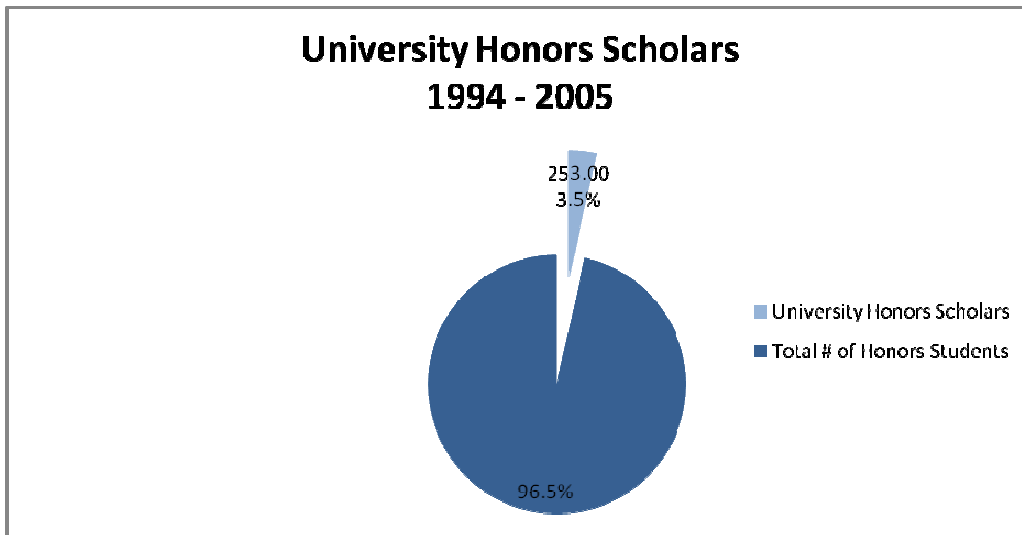


Table 5

Source: Auburn University Honors College

Table 6 shows that far too few honors students complete both the junior and senior certificate programs with the required minimum 3.4 GPA and are awarded the University Honors Scholar distinction. As the graph shows, Auburn produced only 253 University Honors Scholars from 1994 to 2005 (only 3.5% of the total enrollment of Honors students for that period).

**Table 6**

Source: Auburn University Honors College

The data clearly indicate that the current junior/senior certificate split-identity of the Honors program does not encourage the best and the brightest of Auburn's students to pursue a comprehensive 4 year Honors College experience. The practical result of the current system for most students is a 2 year Honors core curriculum experience.

Housing and Offices

The third major weakness of the Honors program concerns space issues. The Honors students are very dissatisfied with the Honors Residence Hall and the current Honors College Center. Additionally, the Honors College administration has indicated the need for additional space. The Task Force's benchmarking indicates strong Honors Colleges are housed in space that is easily recognizable. Such a clear identity is useful for recruiting and provides a focus for current students.

The need for appealing Honors housing was stressed by both students and parents. Although the students enjoy living in the Upper Quad for its convenient location, high school students being recruited by Auburn (and their parents) are not impressed with the living accommodations in Broun Hall (which are an old-style "dorm" room sharing situation). Other universities, including the University of Alabama, have much more appealing residences built in a contemporary design much like Auburn's new The Village residence halls. Student recruits and their parents prefer living accommodations in The Village to the current Honors living accommodations in Broun Hall. As a result the current Honors Residence Hall is not an effective recruitment tool. Moreover, Broun Hall is not limited to only Honors College students.

The current Honors College Center (HCC) is also located in the Broun Hall (#2 Upper Quad) in its basement space and is shared with all of the residents of Broun Hall (including the non-Honors College residents). The HCTF toured the current HCC and found the following problems: (See Appendix B for photographs.)

1. The current Honors College Center space is too small for Honors College meetings.
2. The HCC has a very small number of reference books and these are practically useless (e.g. a 1964 encyclopedia set).
3. The HCC is shared with all residents of the Residence Hall thus removing the benefit of a unique social environment for Honors students.
4. The HCC has only 3 computers for use even though the current Honors enrollment is more than 1400.
5. The HCC has a severe lack of badly needed recreational equipment (e.g. the students built their own ping pong table).
6. There is minimal signage for the Honors College at the Residence Hall thus diminishing its identity as the Honors Residence Hall.
7. The HCC kitchen is well used but lacks needed equipment such as a vent to remove the heat, smoke, and odors produced when cooking.
8. The HCC does not have wireless access.

The Honors College administration feels and the Task Force agrees that moving their offices out of Draughon Library and into a more visible area on campus would increase the value of those offices as a recruitment tool since other schools have impressive Honors buildings (such as LSU's the "French House"). Although the Honors students placed more emphasis on the importance of appealing spaces for residence life and the Honors College Center they did agree that moving the Honors College administrative offices out of Draughon Library would be a positive recruiting measure because the offices do seem to be "lost in the library."

SWOT Opportunities

Analysis of the HCTF's benchmarking and discussions with Honors students and other stakeholders shows that the strengths and weaknesses of the current Auburn University Honors College combine to present Auburn with the opportunity to transform the Honors program in two major ways:

- Replacing the dual-certificate split-identity of the current Honors program (comprised of a rigid and core focused curriculum) with a single robust 4-year program that is based on flexible menu options (reflecting the newest ideas and concepts in Honors education) that will allow Honors students to tailor their Honors experience to their needs.
- Creating the Auburn Honors Fast-Track (AHFT): a degree option resulting in an Accelerated Bachelor's and Master's Degree Program to challenge and make effective use of the time and talents of our Honors College students.

A New Single Robust 4-Year Honors Program

Transforming Auburn University's Honors into a new single robust 4-year Honors program will address three significant problems with the current Honors system:

- The attrition resulting from the dual certification program;
- The outdated "core focused" curriculum that is too expensive and too unwieldy for the current and growing Honors population of more than 1400 students; and
- The lack of the newest and most innovative ideas and concepts practiced by the best Honors colleges at our peer institutions.

The new program would be based on a menu of opportunities that allow Honors students to choose, with qualified advising help, the options that serve them best in their pursuit of academic excellence. The menu options should include:

- The development of large interdisciplinary Honors only courses that create unique learning experiences for honors students and benefit from the participation of qualified faculty from across the university (See Appendix C for syllabus being used at University of Alabama Birmingham. Additional course syllabi may be found at www.lib.auburn.edu/honorscollege).
- Honors-Only Study Abroad opportunities (summer mini-semester, full semester, and entire Academic Year options) developed in association with Office of International Education via Auburn Abroad staff (e.g. Junior Year in France for the development of language and cultural knowledge).
- Special Honors-Only Trips/Cultural Tours for special cultural, scientific, business, research or academic experiences (e.g. Spring Break in Washington, DC).
- Honors Service Learning/Civic Engagement courses and extracurricular opportunities developed in conjunction with other Auburn University offices and academic units.
- Flexible capstone projects that fit the needs of students such as internships, portfolios, field experience, senior thesis, research opportunities, public research presentation opportunities (e.g. poster sessions), and natural extensions to current major capstone requirements such as the Engineering Senior Design Project.

These options should be designed to fulfill critical experiences that Honors students need:

1. Meaningful and sustained mentoring relationships with faculty;
2. Intellectual engagement with the world beyond the classroom;
3. Supervised independent learning opportunities;
4. Study abroad/cultural experiences;
5. Undergraduate research/scholarship;
6. Special Honors-Only Experiences; and
7. Honors Contract Courses.

The result for all Honors students who complete the new unified program will be the awarding of the University Honors Scholar designation on their diplomas and transcripts.

The Auburn Honors Fast-Track (AHFT): an Accelerated Bachelor's and Master's Degree Program

All stakeholders and the HCTF members expressed a desire to find a way to make Auburn's Honors program unique among Honors institutions. The Auburn University Graduate School has put forth a proposal that may provide an opportunity to put Auburn's Honors program at the innovative forefront of honors colleges. The Auburn Honors Fast-Track (AHFT) combines coursework at the undergraduate and graduate levels in such a way as to allow AHFT enrolled students to complete both a Bachelor's and Master's degree in approximately the same time that it takes for non-HCTF students to complete a Bachelor's degree. This special option should be available to students who are enrolled in approved AHFT programs. AHFT will draw high achieving and highly motivated students who wish to fast-track their educational experience for a variety of reasons including the desire for a challenging academic experience, shortening the time and lowering the expense of receiving the traditional bachelor's and master's degrees, enhancing their marketability in fields that require the master's degree, and giving them special recognition that may help in obtaining high demand entry level jobs in a challenging employment environment.

SWOT Threats

An analysis of Honors strengths and weaknesses reveals both internal and external threats to Honors at Auburn, and both endanger the recruitment of new students.

Internal Threat: A Downward Trend?

The combined problems of the Honors program include an outdated and expensive curriculum, high attrition rates, and unappealing facilities. Parents have voiced concerns about the program. These problems combine to form a significant internal threat to Honors at Auburn. If these problems are left unresolved the quality of Auburn University Honors could experience a downward trend that would seriously hurt Honors ability to recruit the best high school students. If Auburn Honors students' dissatisfaction is not addressed then eventually the prospective Honors student "grapevine" may broadcast that dissatisfaction and top-notch students may be lost to other programs.

Internal Threat: Ethnic Diversity

Data provided by the Office of Institutional Research and assessment in Table 7 demonstrate the Honor's College ethnic make-up is far from diverse. The Honors College staff reports they have been working diligently to improve this situation but the Task Force members are compelled to mention our concern about issues of ethnic diversity in the Honors student population. Table 7 shows the breakdown of Honors College enrollment by class in terms of ethnicity for fall 2007. As the table demonstrates, the Honors College's ethnic make-up is far from diverse with 940 of 1004 students identified as Caucasian American. Given the general attrition rate for Honors students, it is not surprising to see that the largest number of non-Caucasian American students is in the freshman and sophomore classes (highlighting the importance of recruitment to increasing the ethnic diversity of the Honors College, as well as the general Auburn University student body). Therefore HCTF recommendation 6, the creation of an Honors Advisory Council (HAC),

includes a recommendation to charge that group to monitor and assess the efforts of the Honors College to attract and retain Honors students with diverse ethnic backgrounds.

Honors College Enrollment by Term Auburn University						
Fall 2007						
		Freshman	Sophomore	Junior	Senior	Total
African American	Male	2				2
	Female	4	2			6
Hispanic American	Male	3	2	1		6
	Female	3	2		2	7
Native American	Male		1			1
	Female	3				3
Asian American	Male	3	2	1	4	10
	Female	1	3	4	2	10
Caucasian American	Male	224	93	78	69	464
	Female	224	89	80	83	476
Unknown	Male	8	1		1	10
	Female	2	3	1	2	8
Non-resident Alien	Male					
	Female				1	
Total	Male	240	99	80	74	493
	Female	237	99	85	90	511
Grand Total		477	198	165	164	1004

OIRA: 11/15/2008

Table 7

Source: Auburn University Office of Institutional Research and Assessment

External Threat: Institutional Competition

The Honors program is a highly competitive area driven by students and parents who know what is available and want every possible advantage in all aspects of the academic experience from scholarships to innovative curriculum options that will give students more and better credentials, better applications for distinguished awards, improved chances at getting into the best graduate or professional schools, and/or the “leg-up” into the best employment positions. Since universities want to recruit the best and brightest students, Honors is a powerful recruitment tool. HCTF benchmarking illustrates the fact the Auburn University Honors curriculum is not as innovative as many of our institutional competitors including the University of Alabama. Therefore our peer institutions’ Honors programs are a key external threat to Auburn’s ability to recruit top students.

SWOT Summary

The analysis of the Honors College strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats yields 11 major areas of focus for the development of recommendations for the improvement of the Auburn University Honors College:

1. Administration of the Honors College including advising
2. The Honors programs and their relationship to the core, Honors students' majors, and the Honors College attrition rate.
3. The inflexibility of the Honors Programs' curriculum
4. A desire to make the Auburn University Honors College unique among its peers
5. Honors College student dissatisfaction with Honors facilities
6. Honors College oversight, assessment, and coordination with other colleges
7. The problems related to the Honors College capacity
8. The importance of scholarship funding to Honors students
9. The importance of identifying, encouraging, and preparing Auburn University Honors students to apply for prestigious post-baccalaureate opportunities
10. The Honors College budget
11. The problems related to the lack of ethnic and racial diversity among Honors College students.

The HCTF believes this comprehensive list addresses the major areas related to the structure and function of Auburn University Honors and logically leads to a set of 10 recommendations that will address the current weaknesses, bolster current strengths, and provide guidance for innovation. The combined results of these recommendations will position Auburn University Honors where it can successfully compete against its institutional peers and thus diminish internal and external threats.

Discussion of Recommendations

1) Retain the current centralized administration of the Honors College with a commitment to strengthened advising capabilities.

The centralized Auburn University Honors administration is a major strength of the Honors College and should be retained. Although the Task Force discussed a decentralized model it is clear the centralized nature of the Honors College is in keeping with institutional peers and, more importantly, provides a structure for a common Honors experience that is important to building an Honors community among the students and for future development of interdisciplinary Honors courses and unique Honors experiences and opportunities.

The area that is most lacking in the central administrative structure of the Honors College is advising. Students and parents have commented that they do not completely understand Honors requirements and opportunities. Certainly the rapid growth in the Honors population over the last two years has stretched the advising abilities of the administrative staff to its breaking point.

Therefore, the HCTF recommends that at least one full-time qualified academic advisor be hired for the Honors College. If the Director of the Honors College determines a greater need and funding is available then one advisor for the sciences, one for arts and humanities and one for engineering should be considered. The new advisor(s) should spend a reasonable time period, as determined by the Associate Provost for Undergraduate Studies, in training with professional academic advisors in CoSAM, CLA, and The Cater Center to be familiarized with academic advising practices and services on campus. Furthermore, interaction with other advisors on campus via participation in NACADA and the Advisors Caucus will encourage the exchange of professional ideas and practices and support a synergistic relationship between the Honors College and the Student Services sections of Auburn's other colleges. The advising hire will be accomplished with savings that will be generated in the reformulation of the Honors curriculum as suggested in recommendation 10 below.

Actions

1.1 Using savings from the Honors College program budget suggested in recommendation 10 hire and train one or more professional advisor(s) for the Honors program. If possible, use bridge money to begin this process immediately.

2) Collapse the current Junior and Senior honors programs into a single robust option that will provide flexibility for students from all majors and provide incentives for completion.

As the HCTF's weakness assessment elucidates, the current division of the Honors programs into Junior and Senior certificates is too focused on the core curriculum, too expensive for a large Honors College student population, too taxing on the Honors faculty, and encourages widespread

attrition. Consequently, the HCTF recommends the elimination of the Junior and Senior certificates and the retooling of the curriculum into a single robust 4-year program that culminates with awarding the University Honors Scholar designation on the diploma and transcript. Recommendation 3 below outlines the type of structure that could constitute the new 4-year degree.

In light of data reflected in Table 5, The HCTF recommends that the Office of Undergraduate Studies and the Honors College administration, in conjunction with the appropriate campus offices, consider implementing the following incentives for continued recruitment of incoming freshmen and improved retention of sophomore, junior, and senior students for the completion of the program.

1. The designation of University Honors Scholar on the diploma and transcript for students who complete the new 4-year Honors program (currently available to all Honors students who complete both the Junior and Senior certificates with a minimum 3.4 GPA).
2. Access to Honors College faculty mentoring via a new mentoring program developed by the Honors College utilizing Honors faculty.
3. Priority access to Career Development services for Honors students in their junior and senior years (in conjunction with the Career Development office).
4. Continuation of priority registration privileges for all members of the Honor's College.
5. Access to the Auburn Honors Fast-Track degree programs (see recommendation 4 below).
6. Access to Honors specific scholarships endowed through the Development Office for the Honors College.
7. Priority placement for residence in a new Honors Residence Hall in The Village.
8. Access to Honors-only study abroad and special trips/cultural tours.
9. Access to Honors-only civic engagement/service learning opportunities.
10. Access to special Honors only enrichment experiences such as internships and undergraduate research programs.
11. Other incentives developed through continuing assessment and feedback from Honors faculty and students.

Actions

2.1 The Honors College administration will develop a comprehensive proposal for the creation of a single 4-year Honors program under the auspices and guidance of the Office of Undergraduate Studies with advice and oversight from the Honors Advisory Council (see recommendation 6 below) and seek approval from all appropriate University Senate committees (e.g. Academic Program Review, Academic Standards, and the University Curriculum Committee). Note: the completion of this recommendation will be tied to recommendation 3 below.

2.2 The Honors College administration will investigate and develop an appropriate list of incentives for completion and have that list vetted by the appropriate campus offices and enacted according to relevant policies and approvals.

3) Develop a stronger central focus for the Honors program that replaces the current emphasis on the core curriculum with special interdisciplinary Honors-only courses and an enhanced menu of flexible study options.

The new 4-year Honors program will be based on a menu of options that allow honors students to choose, with qualified advising help, the options that serve them best in their pursuit of academic excellence. The menu options should include:

1. The development of large interdisciplinary Honors-only courses that create unique learning experiences for honors students and benefit from the participation of qualified faculty from across the university (See Appendix C for syllabus being used at University of Alabama at Birmingham. Additional course syllabi may be found at www.lib.auburn.edu/honorscollege).
2. Honors-Only Study Abroad opportunities (summer mini-semester, full semester, and entire academic year options) developed in association with Office of International Education via Auburn Abroad staff (e.g. Junior Year in France for the development of language and cultural knowledge).
3. Special Honors-Only Experiences: Cultural Tours, Laboratories, Field Trips, etc. for special cultural, scientific, business, research and/or academic experiences (e.g. Honors Biology Labs, Spring Break Trip to Washington DC);
4. Honors Service Learning/Civic Engagement courses and extracurricular opportunities developed in conjunction with other Auburn University offices and academic units.
5. Flexible capstone projects that fit the needs of students such as internships, portfolios, field experience, senior thesis, research opportunities, public research presentation opportunities (e.g. poster sessions), and natural extensions to current major capstone requirements such as the Engineering Senior Design Project.

In order to provide for the awarding of course credit for some of the above options (e.g. large interdisciplinary Honors courses, certain Study Abroad experiences, and capstone projects) the current core focused Honors curriculum must be dramatically revised so that the Honors student is not using credit hours to complete requirements for an Honors core that is tied to the general core. The HCTF recommends that new large interdisciplinary courses be developed and approved for use as core requirements for Honors students and that ways to maximize AP/IB credit be utilized to remove the need for Honors students to complete as many core requirements as is academically sound. The Task Force further recommends the requirements of honors students in their area(s) of major study be left up to the faculty of those colleges. The Task Force expects that many colleges will require honors students take the core studies courses in their major. The interdisciplinary course and how credit is assigned should be designed with this in mind.

Prescribing the details of the new curriculum is beyond the charge of the HCTF. Issues related to program changes, academic standards, and curriculum modifications are the purview of the faculty and are subject to review and approval by the relevant University Senate committees (e.g. Academic Standards, Academic Program Review, and the University Curriculum Committee). The details of the new curriculum should be developed by the administration of the Honors College under the auspices and direction of the Office of Undergraduate Studies with advice

from the Honors Advisory Council (see recommendation 6 below). However, the HCTF notes that having new interdisciplinary Honors courses that count for core credit for Honors students will require the approval of these courses to count as core at Auburn University and special care should be taken to insure that the courses will be transferable as specific core requirements according to the Alabama state articulation agreement.

Actions

3.1 The Honors College Administration will develop a strong centrally focused curriculum for the Honors program that replaces the current emphasis on the Honors core with special interdisciplinary Honors-only courses and an enhanced menu of flexible options such as laboratories, travel abroad, service learning, thesis, undergraduate research projects, and intense focused work in a subject area under the auspices and direction of the Office of Undergraduate Studies and seek approval from all appropriate University Senate committees (e.g. Academic Program Review, Academic Standards, and the University Curriculum Committee). Note: the completion of this recommendation will be tied to recommendation 2 above.

3.2 The Honors College Administration will develop an implementation process and timeline for the new curriculum that allows Honors students under the old system to complete the program.

4) Create the Auburn Honors Fast-Track (AHFT), a degree option resulting in an Accelerated Bachelor's and Master's Degree Program to challenge and make effective use of the time and talents of our Honors College students.

The HCTF endorses the Graduate School proposal to develop a Auburn Honors Fast-Track degree option (AHFT) that will combine coursework at the undergraduate and graduate levels in such a way as to allow AHFT students to complete both a Bachelor's and Master's degree in approximately the same time that it takes for non-HCTF students to complete a Bachelor's degree.

This idea is an opportunity to put Auburn's Honors program at the innovative forefront of Honors Colleges. AHFT could draw high achieving and highly motivated students who wish to fast-track their educational experience for a variety of reasons including the desire for a challenging academic experience, shortening the time and lowering the expense of receiving the traditional bachelor's and master's degrees, enhancing their marketability in fields that require the Master's degree, and giving them special recognition that may help in obtaining high demand entry level jobs in a challenging employment environment.

It is beyond the scope of the HCTF to determine curriculum and program requirements. Curriculum is the purview of the faculty and requires the approval of a variety of University Senate Committees (e.g. Academic Program Review, Academic Standards, the Graduate Council, and the University Curriculum Committee).

The Dean of the Graduate School and the Director of the Honors College have submitted a Proposal for an Accelerated Bachelor's/Master's Degree Program (see Appendix D) that the HCTF endorses with the following suggestions for change:

1. Limit enrollment to Honors students only as an incentive for students to remain in the Honors program to graduation.
2. Add the designation of University Honors Scholar to the Bachelor's degree diploma and transcript.
3. Name the program the Auburn Honors Fast-Track (AHFT).

Actions

4.1 The Honors College and the Office of Undergraduate Studies will coordinate with the Graduate School in the development and approval process for the Accelerated Program.

4.2 Begin work with the appropriate department, college and university committees to identify and develop specific programs at the bachelor's and master's levels for inclusion in the accelerated program.

<p>5) Provide Honors housing and meeting space in Auburn University's new The Village housing.</p>

Given the concerns expressed by students and parents about the importance of appealing housing for Honors recruits, the HCTF endorses the plan to have a specifically designated Honors Residence Hall with space for the Honors College Center located in the new The Village residences currently under construction in addition to maintaining the current allocation of space in the upper quad.

The HCTF further suggests that:

1. Honors College students have priority access to the residence hall
2. The Honors College Center space is reconfigured to match the Sorority Chapter Room designs in The Village.
3. The University work with the Honors College to plan for the renovation of the older residence hall space allocated to Honors students.

Additionally, the HCTF recommends that the Honors College administration contact the Provost's office and investigate the possibility of having its administrative offices moved from Draughon Library to a more prominent location on campus such as the Old Foy Union.

Actions

5.1 The Honors College administration should contact the Provost's office concerning the designation of an Honors Residence Hall in the new The Village residence housing and work for the construction of an Honors College Center based on the model of a Sorority chapter room.

5.2 The Honors College administration contact the Provost's office and investigate the possibility of having its administrative offices moved from Draughon Library to other on campus space such as the Old Foy Union or, if vacated, the current Honors College Center space in Broun Hall.

6) Create an Honors Advisory Council (HAC) to provide advice in the development and implementation of the new Honors program elements and help drive continuing assessment and evaluation efforts for measuring progress.

The very nature of the Honors College requires that it coordinate efforts with a variety of other academic units and offices on campus. The HCTF's investigation suggests that the Honors College administration would benefit from a new advisory council made up of faculty and administrators from across campus that could provide advice in the development and implementation of the new Honors program elements. Furthermore, the lack of assessment and evaluation of the current Honors programs suggests that an Honors Advisory Council (HAC) could be very valuable in providing objective external views and advice on a comprehensive assessment and evaluation program for measuring progress. Therefore, the HCTF recommends that the Honors College develop an advisory council to be known as the Honors Advisory Council (HAC).

1. The Honors Advisory Council (HAC) should be charged to monitor and assess the efforts of the Honors College to attract and retain Honors students with diverse ethnic backgrounds.
2. One or more members from the current HCTF should serve as member(s) of HAC.
3. The Director and a member of the Honors Administration personnel should serve in an ex-officio capacity on the HAC.
4. The HAC membership should include willing members from the following:
 - a) Representation from CoSAM and CLA Deans offices
 - b) Representation from the Cater Center
 - c) Representation from the Graduate School
 - d) Representation from the Honors Student Congress
 - e) Representation from the Office of the Registrar
 - f) Representation from the Admissions' office
 - g) Representation from the Advisors' Caucus
 - h) At least 4 representatives from the Honors faculty from various colleges; the Provost shall ask one of the faculty to serve as Chair

Actions

6.1 The Honors College establishes an Honors Advisory Council (HAC) and establishes a regular calendar of quarterly meetings.

6.2 The Honors College works with Office of Institutional Research and Assessment, the Registrars Office and other appropriate offices to begin the immediate coding of Honors students in the Banner system so that assessment reports can be produced in a reasonable manner.

6.3 The Honors College with advice from the HAC develops a plan for ongoing assessment and evaluation for the Honors College programs.

7) Address capacity issues by retaining current admissions requirements while raising requirements to remain in the program after the freshman year.

As the SWOT analysis describes, the current size of the Honors College is the source of many of its problems:

- If Auburn continues to recruit large numbers of high quality freshmen because of their interest in the Honors College, limited support for the program will continue to lead to high rates of attrition and could result in deterioration of the quality of the program.
- If admission and retention standards are raised, allowing the Honors College to balance smaller Honors student numbers with limited existing resources, recruiting could be negatively impacted.
- If a high number of quality students are recruited to the Honors College and retained for a robust four year experience significant additional resources will be required.

Deleted:

The HCTF understands the importance of the Honors College to recruiting the best high school students to attend Auburn and does not want to hamper that process. However, all stakeholders must understand that the Honors College cannot continue to function at the current student population levels without large increases in resources being committed to the Honors College.

Given the budgetary restraints and in recognition of what we learned through benchmarking and internal discussions we are recommending a program that allows admission to the Honors College to all qualified applicants. It is our expectation that this large group will include many students who do not achieve the required GPA to remain in Honors or determine their own academic goals do not include continuing in the program. This will achieve a balance between the need to provide this opportunity to the many graduating high school seniors who want to explore the opportunities an Honors College may provide with the need to provide a robust Honors College experience with limited funding. We also suggest that an opportunity be provided for students who realize an interest in honors at the beginning of their second year to join Honors.

Therefore the HCTF recommends that the GPA requirements to remain in the Honors College after the freshman year be raised from 3.2 in order to maintain a manageable student population with the current resources available to the Honors College. It is beyond the purview of the HCTF to set academic standards for the Honors College; such issues are the responsibility of the Honors administration and subject to relevant Auburn University policy. However, the HCTF suggests a minimum unadjusted 3.4 GPA as one reasonable requirement based on the fact that

the 3.4 GPA is currently required for the awarding of the University Honors Scholar designation. In addition the Honors College may want to create a program that admits a broad number of students but allows them to self-select through their GPA and assessment of their personal goals to leave the program during their first year allowing the College to focus on smaller number of students beyond the first two semesters.

Actions

7.1 The Honors College develops a mechanism to recruit qualified Auburn students into the Honors program in accordance with capacity issues.

7.2 The Honors College develops a mechanism to allow matriculated students to join Honors at the beginning of their second year.

Deleted:

8) Increase scholarship funding to outstanding students who opt for honors.

There is no doubt that scholarships are very important to Honors recruits, matriculated students, and parents. For example, the Honors College benefited from Auburn's \$2 million scholarship increase for 2007-2008 to help attract the top high school students. However, the Honors College was not included in Auburn's very successful recent Capital Campaign and has very limited scholarship dollars for matriculated students. Honors College students are aware that other universities offer more and a wider variety of scholarships than Auburn and are enthusiastic in pointing out this fact.

The Development office has begun a program to target donations for the Honors College but it will take some time before scholarship funding for Honors increases as the result of gifts. The HCTF recommends that the University fund a dedicated Development officer for the Honors College.

Actions

8.1 A dedicated development officer will be provided for the Honors College.

9) Strengthen the program to identify, encourage, and mentor students to apply for prestigious opportunities such as Rhodes and Fulbright .

The HCTF was very impressed with the work of Dr. Paul A. Harris, Associate Director, National Prestigious Scholarships and applauds his efforts. Therefore, the HCTF recommends that his program continue the important work of identifying, encouraging, and mentoring students to apply for prestigious scholarships.

Actions

9.1 The Office of Undergraduate Studies identifies ways to strengthen the program via benchmarking with the top programs in the United States.

10) Restructure the current Honors College budget by eliminating the expense of multiple Honors sections each semester and reallocating the funds to support the revised programs.

The current focus of the Honors Junior certificate program requires that large amounts of the Honors College budget be spent on paying for ever increasing numbers of sections of special Honors core classes. It is the intent of recommendations 2 & 3 above to eliminate the need for these expensive core sections and therefore free-up a large part of the current Honors College budget for use in a new flexible 4-year curriculum. Therefore, the HCTF recommends that the current Honors College budget be restructured by eliminating the expense of multiple Honors sections each semester and reallocating the funds to support the revised programs.

Since the ability to accomplish the restructuring of the budget is based on the success of recommendations 2 & 3 above, this recommendation must necessarily be put on hold pending curriculum and program revisions.

Actions

10.1 The Honors College administration should develop a plan for the restructuring of its budget based on the results of recommendations 2 & 3.

Conclusion

The challenges facing the Honors College in 2009 are complex and daunting and call for a comprehensive plan of restructuring and assessment. The 10 recommendations suggested by this report outline a solid plan and approach to systematically address the improvement and future growth of the Honors College. Hopefully, this report will help all stakeholders understand the importance of working together while recognizing the special nature and problems that exist for Auburn Honors College.

APPENDICES

Appendix A Honors College Task Force Charge

I. **Strategic Plan Goal 2**- “AU will improve and strengthen the Honors College for the future growth of top academic students.”

II. **Measurement/ assessment; progress expected in 1st year**- “New Honors College model agreed upon with initial implementation by 2009.”

III. **Committee Membership**

Bonnie MacEwan, Chair Library

Conner Bailey	Agricultural Economics & Rural Sociology
Steve Williams	Building Science
Charles Lindner	Mathematics & Statistics
Prathima Agrawal	Electrical & Computer Engineering
Jennifer Kerpelman	Human Development & Family Studies
Emmett Winn	Liberal Arts

IV. **Committee Charge**

A. Review the existing model and structure of AU’s Honors College;

B. Look at models used at other peer institutions, aspirational peers, and land grant institutions;

C. The ultimate goal is that 5% of each graduating class completes the Honors program. Think outside the box – currently, there is a problem because only 1 or 2 students stand at graduation indicating that they are graduating having completed the requirements of the Honors College;

D. Two possible models and another idea have been mentioned:

- (1) Model 1- Decentralize the program so that colleges/ departments are really the Honors program (give each unit ownership);
- (2) Model 2- Develop a stronger central focus of the Honors program with courses that are only for Honors students. Then, add “enhancements” that are required for Honors, i.e. Certain GPA and certain selected activities such as study abroad, service learning, research project, cultural tours, etc.
- (3) Idea- Develop a structure to allow Honors students to complete a bachelors degree and a masters degree in 4 or 4 ½ years.

E. Prepare a report, with recommendations, to the Provost by March 2009, which identifies alternatives and the task force’s recommendations. We would then like to have the discussion with the Senate.

Appendix B

Photographs of the Honors College Student Center





Appendix C

"It's About Time"

Fall 2005 Interdisciplinary Course

University Honors Program

UAB

HON 101, 201, 301, 401 (English)

HON 102, 202, 302, 402 (Literature)

HON 103, 203, 303, 403 (Music)

HON 104, 204, 304, 404 (Psychology)

HON 105, 205, 305, 405 (Geology)

HON 106, 206, 306, 406 (Economics)

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Guest Lecturers

Fr. Greg Bittner, priest and lawyer for the Catholic Diocese of Birmingham.
Alison Chapman, Assistant Professor, Dept. of English, UAB.
Robert Corley, Director, Center for Urban Affairs, UAB.
Ven. Tenzin Deshek, Buddhist monk and teacher, Birmingham.
Rev. J.R. Finney, Pastor, Metropolitan Covenant Community Church, Birmingham.
Michele Forman, Filmmaker, Center for Urban Affairs, UAB.
Perry Geralcines, Assistant Professor, Dept. of Physics, UAB.
Bill Hutchings, Professor, Dept. of English, UAB.
Dr. Santosh Khare, retired neonatologist, member of the Hindu Temple, Birmingham.
Alan Lightman, Adjunct Professor of Humanities at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.
Deborah Marshall, Clinical Psychologist, Donaldson Correctional Facility.
Carolyn McKinstry, Children's Defense Fund and Board of Trustees, Birmingham Civil Rights Institute.
Rosie O'Beirne, Center for Urban Affairs, UAB.
Mary Whall, Instructor, Dept. of Philosophy, UAB.
Odessa Woolfolk, Founding Director, Birmingham Civil Rights Institute.

Texts

The following texts are available at the UAB Bookstore and Snoozy's. If you buy—or already own—editions of the texts that are different from the ones ordered for the class, you may have trouble following references to page numbers during the lectures.

Davies, Paul. *About Time: Einstein's Unfinished Revolution* (Touchstone, 1996 pbk, ISBN 0684818221)
Faulkner, William, *The Sound and the Fury* (Vintage, Reissue ed., Jan 1991, ISBN 0679732241)
Hejinian, Lyn. *My Life* (Green Integer, May 2002, ISBN 1931243336)
Levine, Robert. *A Geography of Time* (Basic Books, 1997, ISBN 0465026427)
Levitt, Steven, & Dubner, Stephen, *Freakonomics* (Harper Collins, 2005, ISBN 006073132X)
Lightman, Alan. *Einstein's Dreams* (Vintage/Random House; 1994, ISBN 140007780X)
Morrison, Toni. *Beloved* (Vintage, June 2004, ISBN 1400033411)
Pinter, Harold. *Betrayal* (Grove Press, May 1979, ISBN 0802130801)
Thoreau, Henry David. *Walden* (Dover Publications; Unabridged, April 1995, ISBN 048628456)
Woolf, Virginia. *Mrs. Dalloway* (Harvest Books, 1st Harvest/HBJ ed., Sept. 1990, ISBN 0156628708)

Summer Reading Assignment

During the summer you should read Henry David Thoreau's *Walden*, William Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury*, and Toni Morrison's *Beloved*. These three books will be the subject of lectures in the first week of class and will also serve as the basis for your first written assignment, the literary analysis.

Reading Requirements

Reading assignments marked with an asterisk in the syllabus should be read before that class period. In addition to the texts listed above, you will need to buy a packet of additional readings that will be available the first day of class. Included with the packet of additional readings will be a CD created especially for this course. The CD will contain musical compositions for required listening.

Summary of Assignments

Attendance and Participation	5%	Midterm Exam	20%
Literary Analysis	15%	Research Term Paper	15%
Library Assignment (required)	0%	Arrington Project	10%
Short Assignment #1	5%	Course Evaluation (required)	0%
Short Assignment #2	5%	Final Exam	25%

Assignment	Due Date	Assignment	Due Date
Attendance and Participation	Daily	Term Paper Proposal	Oct. 20th
Literary Analysis	Sept. 8th	Short Assignment #2	Nov. 8th
Library Assignment	Sept. 22nd	Research Paper	Dec 1st
Short Assignment# 1	Sept. 27th	Arrington Project	Nov. 22nd
Final revision of Lit. Analysis	Sept. 29th	Course evaluation (Required)	Dec. 6th
Midterm Exam	Oct 13th	Final Exam	Dec 8th

Brief Explanation of Assignments

Attendance and Participation

You must sign in by initialing the attendance sheet for each lecture. Unexcused absences beyond a total of three for the entire term will result in a deduction from your grade. Participation in classroom discussion is strongly encouraged and will have a positive effect on your grade.

Literary Analysis

The literary analysis will be based on the three books assigned for summer reading. Since this assignment is the first one due and since lectures on these books will be presented in the first week of class, it is imperative that these books be carefully read prior to the beginning of term. The five teaching assistants (TAs) will be available to help with the literary analysis assignment. They will set up appointment schedules for individual sessions. In addition, faculty will be available during the weekly review sessions (see below) for advice on the literary analysis and other assignments. A detailed handout explaining the nuts and bolts of this assignment will be distributed in hard copy at the start of the term AND available on the course website. Please refer to it for specific instructions and additional information about this assignment.

Library Assignment

This assignment is designed to familiarize you with aspects of library use relevant to the fall course. There will be sign-up sheets for the group orientation sessions. At those sessions you will receive the actual assignment that must be turned in by the due date. These assignments will be different for first and second year students.

Short Assignment #1

This assignment is to write a short essay (600 words) comparing two different treatments of a single idea or theme from the course. The assignment is designed to encourage you to think and write specifically about a very narrowly defined question or topic in a limited amount of space. Your integration of material from different lectures and other sources will help you develop the kind of thinking and writing required on the midterm and final exams. A detailed handout explaining the nuts and bolts of this assignment will be distributed in hard copy AND available on the course website. Please refer to it for specific instructions and additional information about this assignment.

Short Assignment #2

This assignment is to write at least 14 lines of conventionally metered verse about some element of the course material NOT related to poetry and a 600 word *process piece* in prose that explains the methodology that guided your verse composition. A detailed handout explaining the nuts and bolts of this assignment will be distributed in hard copy AND available on the course website. Please refer to it for specific instructions and additional information about this assignment.

Arrington Project

The Arrington Partnership Project pairs UAB Honors Program students with 7th grade students from Arrington Elementary School. Rosie O' Beirne is the Arrington Project Coordinator, and she will provide you with a detailed handout explaining the nuts and bolts of the project and its several assignments. This (and other related) information will also be available on the course website.

Term Paper

For this assignment you will write a research paper based on a topic of your own devising related to the course theme and connected to specific material covered in the course. Required length (not including bibliographies and endnotes) is 10-15 pages for first-year students, 15-20 pages for second-year students, and 20-25 pages for third-year students. You are strongly urged to formulate your topic as early as possible and to run it by one of the course faculty members to make sure what you've chosen is appropriate and manageable. Students with topics more or less intact by September 22 will be able to coordinate their library assignments with at least the beginnings of their term paper needs. On October 20, you will turn in a 2-page proposal that describes your topic and its connection to the materials of the course, presents your thesis position, and lists ten reference sources. Based on your proposed topic, you will be paired with the course faculty advisor whose discipline is most closely related to your chosen subject matter; an additional, *external* faculty advisor will be recommended to you for guidance as well. A detailed handout explaining the nuts and bolts of this assignment will be distributed in hard copy AND available on the course website. Please refer to it for specific instructions and additional information about this assignment.

Midterm & Final Examinations

The midterm examination will take place from 9 am to 6 pm on Thursday, Oct. 13th. The final examination will take place from 9 am - 6 pm on Thursday, Dec. 8th. The Midterm Examination is worth 20% of your final course grade and the Final Examination is worth 25% of your course grade. Both examinations are open-book. For each exam students write 4 essays in response to 2 (chosen from 6) disciplinary questions and 2 (chosen from 6) interdisciplinary questions. Students are provided with sample questions a week prior to the exam. Students may use computers to type their essays but not to access internet sources. Students are responsible for printing out their essays prior to the 6 pm deadline. There will be a sign-up procedure for house computers a week prior to the exam.

Course Website

There will be a designated course website for the fall interdisciplinary course on which faculty will be posting announcements, readings, and lecture-related material. You will be given a complete set of instructions for accessing and navigating the course website. You are required to register on this site.

Weekly Review Sessions (Optional)

Program faculty will meet with all interested students on Thursday mornings from 8:30 to 9:15. Early in the term the sessions will be devoted primarily to the literary analysis and the first short essay assignment. Later sessions will focus on exam preparation, the second short essay assignment, and any other topics of student interest.

Films (Optional)

Course-related films will be shown on Tuesday evenings at 7:00 pm in the main lecture room of the Spencer Honors House (check the course syllabus for film titles). Alternate screenings will be held on Thursdays at 3.30 pm in the same location. Attendance is optional but highly recommended since students will be given opportunities to write about one or more of the films on their exams. "Participation in Honors" credit is given for attendance.

First Thursday Lecture Series (Optional)

The First Thursday Lecture Series is a monthly public event sponsored by the UAB Honors Program. Lecture topics during the fall are closely related to the theme of the interdisciplinary course (check the course syllabus for lecture titles). Attendance is optional but highly recommended since students will be given opportunities to write about one or more of the lectures on their exams. "Participation in Honors" credit is given for attendance.

The Beginning

Thursday, August 18

- 9:30am Policies & Procedures
- 11:00am Student & Faculty Introductions
- 2:00pm "A Walk Through Time" (Sloane)

Tuesday, August 23

- 9:30am "It's About Time to Read *Walden*" Part I (Frost)
*Henry David Thoreau, *Walden*
- 11:00am "It's About Time to Read *Walden*" Part II (Frost)
- 2:00pm "Breaking the Space - BANG! or What was that?" (Angell)
*Excerpt from *The Heart is a Lonely Hunter* by Carson McCullers
* CD Excerpts: Beethoven *Symphony #3* First movement (CD Track 1)
Beethoven *Symphony #9* First Movement (CD Track 2)
Tchaikovsky *Symphony #6* First Movement (CD Track 3)
Wagner *Das Rheingold Prelude* (CD Track **4**)
- 7:00pm Film: *Wild Strawberries* (Director, Ingmar Bergman, 1957)

Thursday, August 25

- 9:30am "The Difficult Presence of the Past in William Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury*"
Part I (Rushton)
*William Faulkner, *The Sound and the Fury*
- 11:00am "The Difficult Presence of the Past in William Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury*"
Part II (Rushton)

- 2:00pm "The Scarcity of Time: Why Economics is the Study of Choice" (Culver)
 *Todd G. Buchholz, "The Plight of the Economist" (from *New Ideas from Dead Economists*, Penguin 1990)
 *Steven Levitt, *Freakonomics* (Chapter One)
- 3:30pm Film (alt. screening): *Wild Strawberries* (Director, Ingmar Bergman, 1957)

Tuesday, August 30

- 9:30am "When Time Matters in Science" (Neilson)
 *Thomas Henry Huxley (1880), "The Method of Zadig: Retrospective Prophecy as a Function of Science" (PDF also in Neilson course folder)
- 11:00am "Time in Physics: Why Everything Doesn't Happen All At Once" (Perry Gerakines)
 *Paul Davies, *About Time* (Chapters 1-4)
- 2:00pm Class Discussion of Toni Morrison's *Beloved*
- 7:00pm Film: *Daughters of the Dust* (Director, Juli Dash, 1991)
 Film: *Powers of Ten* (Directors, Charles & Ray Eames, 1977)

Thursday, September 1

- 9:30am "Contingencies, Universals, and Literary Meaning over Time" (Rushton)
 *T. S. Eliot, "Tradition and the Individual Talent"
- 11:00am "Time and Philosophy" (Mary Whall)
- 2:00pm "Time and Consciousness" (Sloane)
 *B. Libet, "Do We Have Free Will?" (from Journal of Consciousness Studies 6)
 * B. Libet, "The Delay in Our Conscious Sensory Awareness" (from *Mind Time: the Temporal Factor in Consciousness*)
- 3:30pm Film (alt. screening): *Daughters of the Dust* (Director, Juli Dash, 1991)
 Film (alt. screening): *Powers of Ten* (Directors, Charles & Ray Eames, 1977)
- 7.00 pm **First Thursday Lecture**
 Alison Chapman (Dept. of English)
 "Reforming Time: Protestantism and Calendars in the Sixteenth Century"

Tuesday, September 6

- 9:30am "The Politics of Time, Deep Time, and Periodicity in American Literary Study" (Frost)
 *Wai Chee Dimock, "Deep Time: American Literature and World History"
 *Toth Morrison, *Beloved*
 *Henry David Thoreau, *Walden*

Section B: The Measurement of Time

- 11:00am "Deep Time: Radiometric Dating and the Age of the Earth" (Neilson)
Background reading on atoms, isotopes and radioactive decay:
<http://users.rcn.com/jkimball.ma.ultranet/BiologyPages/E/Elements.html>
[http://library.thinkquest.org/3471/radiation types body.html](http://library.thinkquest.org/3471/radiation/types/body.html)
<http://www.walter-fendt.de/ph14e/lawdecay.htm>
Read if very interested in dating techniques:
<http://www.asa3.org/ASA/resources/Wiens.html> (PDF file in folder)
- 2:00pm "Of Clocks and Calendars: History of Time Measurement" (Sloane)
* "A Walk Through Time: The Evolution of Time Measurement through the Ages" (from <http://physics.nist.gov/GenInt/Time/time.html>)
* Robert Levine, "A Brief History of Clock Time" (*A Geography of Time*, 31-80)
- 7:00pm Film: *Rivers and Tides* (Director, Thomas Riedelsheimer, 2001)

Thursday, September 8

- 9:30am "Moving Toward Equilibriums: A Double Oral Auction Trading Game" Part I (Culver)
* Steven Levitt, *Freakonomics* (Chapter Two)
* Todd G. Buchholz, "The Second Coming of Adam Smith" (from *New Ideas...*)
"The Market for Used Text Books: Supply and Demand" (handout in class)
- 11:00am "Moving Toward Equilibriums: A Double Oral Auction Trading Game" Part H (Culver)
- 2:00pm "Time in Music: Pulse, Meter, Rhythm" (Angell)
* Roger Sessions, *The Musical Experience of Composer, Performer, Listener* (Ch 1)
* CD Excerpt: Stravinsky, *The Rite of Spring* (CD Track 5)
- 3:30pm Film (alt. screening): *Rivers and Tides* (Director, Thomas Riedelsheimer, 2001)

Tuesday, September 13

- 9:30am "Rhythm and Duration in Poetry" (Rushton)
- 11:00am "Prosody, American Literature, and You" (Frost)
* Anne Bradstreet, "The Author to Her Book"
* Emily Dickinson, "The Brain—is wider than the Sky--"
* Emily Dickinson, "They shut me up in Prose--"
* Edna St. Vincent Millay, "[I, Being Born a Woman and Distressed]"
* Edna St. Vincent Millay, "[Love Is Not All: It Is Not Meat nor Drink]"
- 2:00pm "The Human Perception of Time & Time Estimation" (Sloane)
* Oliver Sachs, "Speed: Aberrations of Time and Movement" (*New Yorker* 8.23.04)
* Robert Levine, *A Geography of Time* (Chapters 1, 2, & 4)
- 7:00pm Film: *Roger and Me* (Director, Michael Moore, 1989)

Thursday, September 15

- 9:30am "Measuring the Not-So Recent Past: Carbon Dating" (Neilson)
 Background on the method
[*http://www.c14dating.com/int.html](http://www.c14dating.com/int.html)
- 11:00am "Drug Dealers, Auto Workers, and Hollywood Starlets: Measuring Productivity as Output Per Unit Time Up and Down the Corporate Ladder" (Culver)
 *Steven Levitt, *Freakonomics* (Chapter Three)
 "The G8's African Challenge" (from *The Economist*, July 6, 2005)

Section C: Representing Time

- 2:00pm "Time in Memory and Memorable Times" (Sloane)
 *K. Haberlandt, "Autobiographical and Emotional Memories" (from *Human Memory: Exploration and Application*)
 *Robert Levine, *A Geography of Time* (Chapters 6-10)
- 3:30pm Film (alt. screening): *Roger and Me* (Director, Michael Moore, 1989)

Tuesday, September 20

- 9:30am "Time is Money" (Culver)
- 11:00am "Life at 24 Frames Per Second: How Movies Shape Time" (Michele Forman)
 *Mary Ann Doane, "The Afterimage, the Index, and the Accessibility of the Present" (from *The Emergence of Cinematic Time*)
- 2:00pm "Disparities in Education" (Rosie O' Beirne)
- 7:00pm Film: *42 Up* (Director, Michael Apted, 1998)

Thursday, September 22

- 9:30am "Musical Notation Part I: Genesis and Evolution" (Angell)
 Musical score excerpts:
 *Gregorian Chant *Kyrie*
 *J.S. Bach Prelude #1 from *The Well-Tempered Clavier*
- 11:00am "The Arrington Project" (Rosie O'Beirne)
- 2:00pm "Musical Notation Part II" (Angell)
 Musical score excerpts:
 *Michael Angell *Playing the Wheel*
 *George Crumb *Makrokosmos I #8*
- 3:30pm Film (alt. screening): *42 Up* (Director, Michael Apted, 1998)

Tuesday, September 27

- 9:30am "Memory, Meaning, and Health in Wordsworth's *1799 Prelude*" (Rushton)
 *William Wordsworth, *1799 Prelude (Part I)*
- 11:00am "Mrs. Dalloway's Memory" (Frost)
 *Virginia Woolf, *Mrs. Dalloway*
- 2:00pm Arrington Visit #1
- 7:00pm Film: *The Hours* (Director, Stephen Daldry, 2002)

Thursday, September 29

- 9:30am "The Art of Representing History" Part I (panel discussion: Robert Corley, Carolyn McKinstry, and Odessa Woolfolk)
 (Held at the Birmingham Civil Rights Institute)
- 11:00am "The Art of Representing History" Part II (panel discussion, CRI)

Section D: Cycles

- 2:00pm "Sound Perception: It's All About Cycles Per Second" (Sloane)
 *C. Dodge and T.A. Jerse, "The Acoustics and Psychoacoustics of Music" (from *Computer Music: Synthesis, Composition, and Performance*)
- 3:30pm Film (alt. screening): *The Hours* (Director, Stephen Daldry, 2002)

Tuesday, October 4

- 9:30am "Cycling through Lyn Hejinian's *My Lift*"
 *Lyn Hejinian, *My Life*
- 11:00am "Cycles and Our Environment" (Neilson)
 Definitions and Background to systems and equilibrium:
 *<http://www.physicalgeography.net/fundamentals/4b.html>
 *<http://www.physicalgeography.net/fundamentals/4f.html>
- 2:00pm Arrington Visit #2
- 7:00pm Film: *Ararat* (Director, Atom Egoyan, 2002)

Thursday, October 6

- 9:30am "Repetition versus Development: Deja Vu or a Spiral Staircase?" (Angell)
 CD excerpts: *George Crumb *Makrokosmos I* #8 (CD Track 6)
 *Antonin Dvorak *Humoresque #1* (CD Track 7)
 Readings: *Analytical sheet for Dvorak *Humoresque #1*
 **Bagatelle* Op. 126 #1 by Ludwig van Beethoven

- 11:00am "Biological Clocks" (Sloane)
 *J.P.J. Pinel, "Sleep, Dreaming and Circadian Rhythms" (from *Biopsychology*)
 *W.E. Burnley & B.G. Burney, "Molecular Clock Genes in Man & Lower Animals: Possible Implications for Circadian Abnormalities in Depression" (from *Neuropsychopharmacology* 22, 4)
- 2:00pm "Repetition, Pattern, and the Tease of Meaning in Jorge Luis Borges's 'The Garden of Forking Paths' (Rushton)
 *Jorge Luis Borges, "The Garden of Forking Paths"
- 3:30pm Film (alt. screening): *Ararat* (Director, Atom Egoyan, 2002)
- 7:00pm **First Thursday Lecture**
 Yogesh K. Vohra (Department of Physics)
 "Growth of Synthetic Diamonds from Vapor Phase - Industrial and Biomedical Applications"

Tuesday, October 11

- 9:30am "Why Climate Changes: Cycles within Cycles" (Neilson)
 An animated description of the greenhouse effect:
[*http://earthguide.ucsd.edu/earthguide/diagrams/greenhouse/](http://earthguide.ucsd.edu/earthguide/diagrams/greenhouse/)
 Causes of climate change:
[*http://www.physicalgeography.net/fimdamentals/7y.html](http://www.physicalgeography.net/fimdamentals/7y.html)
- 11:00am "What Goes Up Must Come Down *or* Are Business Cycles Dead?" (Culver)
[*http://www.nber.org/cycles/main.html](http://www.nber.org/cycles/main.html)
- 2:00pm "The Case of Minimalism: Repetition as Form" (Angell)
 *CD Excerpts: Phillip Glass, *Einstein on the Beach* (CD Track 8)
 Steve Reich, *Come Out* (CD Track 9)
- 7:00 pm Film: *Vertigo* (Director, Alfred Hitchcock, 1958); no alternative viewing time

Thursday, October 13 Midterm Exam 9.00 am - 6.00 pm at Spencer Honors House

Tuesday, October 18

- 9:30am Visit to Donaldson Correctional Facility *or* Marty's Mondo Mine Hike, Ruffner Mountain
- 11:00am Visit to Donaldson Correctional Facility *or* Marty's Mondo Mine Hike, Ruffner Mountain
- 2:00pm Arrington Visit #3
- 7:00 pm Film: *Thin Blue Line* (Director, Errol Morris, 1988)

Section E: Time's Arrow

Thursday, October 20

- 9:30am "The Beginning of Time" (Perry Gerakines)
*Paul Davies, *About Time* (Chapters 5-10)
- 11:00am "Combo of 'Musical Palindromes' & 'Back & Forth and Upside Down'" (Angell)
*CD Excerpts: Alban Berg, *Lulu*, Act II (CD Track 10)
Arnold Schoenberg, *Variations for Orchestra* theme (CD Track 11)
*Readings: Score excerpt from Schoenberg's *Variations for Orchestra* Op. 31
Analytical excerpt from Schoenberg's *Variations for Orchestra*
Set matrix for Schoenberg's *Variations for Orchestra*
- 2:00pm "Doing Time at Donaldson Correctional Facility" (Deborah Marshall)
- 3:30pm Film (alt. screening): *Thin Blue Line* (Director, Errol Morris, 1988)

Tuesday, October 25

- 9:30am "Time Travel: Are We There Yet?" (Sloane)
*"Sagan on Time Travel" (<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/time/sagan.html>)
*Clifford Pickover, "Traveling Through Time" (from *Time: a Travelers Guide*, Oxford Univ. Press 1998)
*Paul Davies, *About Time* (Chapters 11-14)
- 11:00am "Rhymes Against Time: *Carpe Diem*, *Memento Mori*, & Poetic Preservation" (Rushton)
*Robert Herrick, "To the Virgins to Make Much of Time"
*Andrew Marvell, "To His Coy Mistress"
*George Herbert, "Church Monuments"
*Robert Frost, "Provide! Provide!"
*W. H. Auden, "As I walked out one evening"
*W. Shakespeare, sonnet 18 ("Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?")
*A. R. Ammons, "Love Song (2)"
*David Woo, "Salt"
- 2:00pm Arrington Visit #4
- 7:00pm Film: *Time Machine* (Director, George Pal, 1960)

Thursday, October 27

- 9:30am "The Wealth of Nations—Well, Maybe Not: the Progressing, the Paralyzed, the Paranoid" (Culver)
- 11:00am "Reminiscing" (Angell)
Sterne Library Reserved Listening:
*Jacob Druckman, *Prisms First Movement*
CD Excerpts:
*Alban Berg, *Violin Concerto*, 1st & 2nd Movements (CD Tracks 12 & 13)
*Michael Angell, *Double Reed Derivation* (CD Track 14)

- 2:00pm "Silences, Adultery, and Memory, All in Reversed Time: Harold Pinter's *Betrayal*"
(Bill Hutchings)
*Harold Pinter, *Betrayal*
- 3:30pm Film (alt. screening): *Time Machine* (Director, George Pal, 1960)

Tuesday, November 1

- 9:00am "The Great Extinctions: Time, Life and Death on Earth" (Neilson)
*L.A Alvarez *et al*, "Extraterrestrial Cause of the Cretaceous-Tertiary Extinction"
(from *Science* 208, 1984: PDF in Folder)
- 11:00am "Human Aging: Physical & Cognitive Decline" (Sloane)
*T. Hedden, and J.D.E. Gabrieli, "Insights into the ageing mind: a view from cognitive neuroscience" (in Nature Reviews Neuroscience, Feb 2004, Vol. 5 Issue 2)
- 2:00pm Arrington Visit #5
- 7:00pm Film: *Solaris* (Director, Andrei Tarkovsky, 1972)

Thursday, November 3

- 9:30am "Sorrow, Inscription, and Stone: Paces of Change in A. R. Ammons's 'Tombstones'"
(Rushton)
*A.R. Ammons, "Tombstones"
- 11:00am "World Geography through Time *or* Why Waldseemuller's Map Was Useless in the Paleozoic" (Neilson)
*Earth's interior: <http://pubs.usgs.gov/publications/text/inside.html>
*Plate motions: <http://pubs.usgs.gov/publications/text/understanding.html>
*Scientific revolutions: <http://www.emory.edu/EDUCATION/mfp/kuluisyn.html>
- 2:00pm Term paper & other business (Faculty)
- 3:30pm Film (alt. screening): *Solaris* (Director, Andrei Tarkovsky, 1972)
- 7 .00 pm **First Thursday Lecture (Live concert)**

Friday, November 4 The HP has purchased your ticket for this event at Alys Stephens Center.

5:00 - 5: 40 pm Pre-concert discussion (attendance optional) on *overtures* in Spencer Honors House (Angell)

- 6.00 pm **Alabama Symphony Orchestra**, David Alan Miller, conductor
Making Overtures
Mozart: Overture to *The Marriage of Figaro*
Rossini: Overture
Verdi: Overture to *La Forza del Destino*
Wagner: Overture to *Die Meistersinger von Nuremberg*
Bizet: Prelude to *Carmen*
Harrison: *Remembering Gatsby*
Beethoven: Leonore Overture No. 3

Section F: Now & Then

Tuesday, November 8

- 9:30am "Using the Past and the Present in Making Decisions About the Future" (Sloane)
*Camerer, Loewenstein, & Prelec, "Neuroeconomics: How Neuroscience Can Inform Economics" (in *Journal of Economic Literature*, Vol. XLIII, Mar. 2005)
*M.W. Matlin, "Deductive Reasoning and Decision Making" (from *Cognition*, John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 5th Ed, 2003)
- 11:00am "Scientific and Pseudoscientific Prediction: Where Do We Draw the Boundary?" (Neilson)
*M. Shermer, from *The Borderlands of Science* (Oxford Univ. Press, 2001)
- 2:00pm Arrington Visit #6
- 7:00pm Film: *Memento* (Director, Christopher Nolan, 2000)

Thursday, November 10

- 9:30am "Oil: Here Today, Gone Tomorrow" Part I (Culver & Neilson)
*Origin of oil: <http://www.leericisu.edu/bgbb/3/origin.html>
*Culver website to browse: <http://vwww.eia.doe.gov>
- 11:00am "Oil: Here Today, Gone Tomorrow" Part II (Culver & Neilson)
*Origin of oil: <http://www.leeric.lsu.edu/bgbb/3/origin.html>
- 2:00pm "Sex, Equity, and Three Tales of the Future" (Frost)
*Charles Brockden Brown, *Alcuin* (excerpt)
*Charlotte Perkins Gilman, *Herland* (excerpt)
*Margaret Atwood, *The Handmaid's Tale* (excerpt)
- 3:30pm Film (alt. screening): *Memento* (Director, Christopher Nolan, 2000)

Tuesday, November 15

- 9:30am "Opera's Journey to Today's *Geitterdeimmerung*" (Angell)
- 11:00am "Poems of Now" (Rushton)
*R. W. Emerson, from "Self-Reliance" ("Life only avails, not the having lived...")
*John Keats, "Ode on a Grecian Urn"
*W. B. Yeats, "A Drinking Song"
*Ezra Pound, "Erat Hora"
*May Swenson, "Four-Word Lines"
*Neil Arditi, "The Last Ride"

Section G: The End

- 2:00pm "And Now, the Geezer Glut: How the Surge of Graying Baby Boomers could Wreak Havoc on the World Economy" (Culver)
 *Martin Feldstein, "Rethinking Social Insurance" (from *American Economic Review*, March 2005)
 *P. G. Gosselin, "Experts Are at a Loss on Investing" (from *L.A. Times* 5.26.05)
- 7:00pm Film: *Heaven Can Wait* (Directors, Warren Beatty & Buck Henry, 1978)

Thursday, November 17

- 9:30am Panel of theologians from diverse religious traditions (Part I)
- 11:00am Panel of theologians from diverse religious traditions (Part II)
- 2:00pm "'Hell Is Other People': Sartre on Eternity" (Frost)
 *Jean-Paul Sartre, *No Exit*
- 3:30pm Film (alt. screening): *Heaven Can Wait* (Directors, Warren Beatty & Buck Henry, 1978)

Tuesday, November 22

- 9:30am Possible visit to Einstein exhibit at McWane Center with Arrington 7th graders
- 11:00am Arrington 7th graders visit Spencer Honors House
- 2:00pm Arrington 7th graders visit Spencer Honors House
- 7:00pm Film: *Time Code* (Director, Mike Figgis, 2000): no alternative viewing time

Tuesday, November 29

- 9:30am "Was Hutton Wrong: Will the Earth and Our Solar System End?" (Neilson)
 *Peter D. Ward and Brownlee Donald, "Prolog" from *The Life and Death of Planet Earth* (Owl Books, 2002)
- 11:00am "Sounding the Endless/Timeless" (Angell)
 Sterne Library Reserve Listening:
 *Gustav Holst, *The Planets*, Final Movement (CD
 Track 15) Course pack score:
 *George Crumb, *Makrokosmos I #12: Spiral Galaxy*
- 2:00 "'Different from What Any One Supposed, and Luckier': Whitman on What Comes After" (Frost)
 *Walt Whitman, from "Song of Myself"

7:00pm Film: *Dr. Strangelove or: How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb* (Director, Stanley Kubrick, 1964)

Thursday, December 1

9:30am "Of Play-Time and Physics in *Einstein's Dreams*" (Rushton)
*Alan Lightman, *Einstein's Dreams*

11:00am "Could There Be an End to Poverty?" (Culver)
*Jeffrey Sachs, from *The End of Poverty: Economic Possibilities for Our Time*

2:00pm Evaluations

3:30pm Film (alt. screening): *Dr. Strangelove or: How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb* (Director, Stanley Kubrick, 1964)

7.00 pm **First Thursday Lecture** (Held at McWane Center)
Alan Lightman, "Time, Physics, and *Einstein's Dreams*"

Thursday December 8 FINAL EXAM 9.00 am - 6.00 pm at Spencer Honors House

Directions to Arrington Middle School

From the Honors House, go **west on 10th Ave. So. to Green Springs Highway**. Turn left and go about a half-mile to **Green Springs Ave** (just past George Ward Park, on the left).

Turn right, **go over the 1-65 viaduct**, and continue as the road becomes **Dennison Ave.** Continue on Dennison Ave, **past the Elmwood Cemetery** grounds on the right, until the road ends (and forks) at Jefferson Ave.

Bear left onto Jefferson Ave and go almost to the large viaduct you see ahead of you. Just past the **3rd traffic light** (counting the one at Dennison and Jefferson), turn **left onto 19th PI SW**. Go one block to the entrance to the Arrington Middle School parking lot on your right. Park in the lot and go in the far right-hand door; the school office is to your immediate left.

Appendix D

Proposal for an Accelerated Bachelor's / Master's Degree Program

George T. Flowers, Dean, Graduate School
Jim Hansen, Director of the Honors College

Overview and Rationale

The Accelerated Bachelor's / Master's Degree Program offers Honors students and other outstanding Auburn students the opportunity to earn both the bachelor's and master's degrees in less time and at less cost than usual. It does so by allowing these exceptional students to count up to nine hours (in a thirty-hour master's program) or twelve hours (in a thirty-six hour master's program) to count towards *both* degrees.

In addition to saving students time and money, the program enhances the marketability of students in fields in which the master's degree is fast becoming a requirement, even for entry-level positions. In other fields, where there is a shortage of workers, students benefit by earning their degrees at a faster rate than in conventional degree programs. Honors students and others who participate also have the opportunity to explore the prospects of graduate study, engage with graduate faculty, and deepen their understanding of their own academic disciplines.

The benefits of the accelerated degree program also accrue to Auburn University. The program encourages exceptional students to apply not only to the Honors College but also to Auburn's graduate programs and it fosters the kind of integration and interaction between undergraduate and graduate programs that is characteristic of the best research institutions. Even though many colleges and universities already offer accelerated degree programs, the Auburn program is distinctive. Unlike other accelerated degree programs, the Auburn model offers students in the Honors College the option of contracting with members of the Graduate Faculty for Honors credit in graduate-level courses. The program thus encourages highly motivated students to graduate with Honors while, at the same time, earning credit towards a master's degree at Auburn University.

Developing an Accelerated Degree Program

Participation in the Accelerated Bachelor's / Master's Degree Program is completely voluntary. In graduate programs in which an accelerated degree program is appropriate, graduate program officers are encouraged to develop application proposals by working with the appropriate undergraduate coordinator/director, the college curriculum committee, the Honors College, the Office of Undergraduate Studies, and the Graduate School. As with all curriculum proposals, the application for an accelerated degree program requires the approval of the department, the college, the Graduate Council, and the University Curriculum Committee. To be considered, each application proposal should include the following:

- A "Request to Add/Change a Graduate Program/Option" form
- A list of courses that may be counted for both undergraduate and graduate credit. No more than nine hours (in a thirty-hour master's program) and no more than twelve hours

(in a 36-hour master's program) may be counted towards the requirements of both degrees.

- A list of admission requirements, if different from those described below.
- A curriculum model, illustrating the time-table for the completion of the requirements for the accelerated master's degree
- A list of courses for which students may *not* receive both undergraduate and graduate credit (usually, any pair of undergraduate and graduate courses with similar content)
- A list of continuation and graduation requirements, if different from those described below

Honors Students

- Honors students are encouraged to seek advice about course selection and scheduling as early as the freshman year.
- Honors students who are admitted to the program may contract with Graduate Faculty for Honors credit in courses that have been identified as counting for both the bachelor's and master's degree.
- Honors students must meet the same requirements for admission (described below).
- Honors students must meet the same requirements for continuation and graduation (described below).
- Honors students who are making satisfactory progress towards completion of the requirements of the Honors College will be given priority consideration for admission to the Graduate School.

Admission Requirements

- Students must have completed at least 60 credit hours and no more than 96 credit hours, including advanced placement credits.
- Transfer students must have completed at least 24 credit hours at Auburn University.
- Honors students must have a cumulative grade point average (CGPA) of 3.2 / 4.0 or higher; all other students must have a CGPA of 3.4 / 4.0 or higher.
- Individual graduate programs may set higher standards or require additional criteria for admission to the accelerated degree program, subject to approval by the normal curriculum review process.

Application Process

- Students must complete an "Application for Admission to the Accelerated Bachelor's / Master's Degree Program."
- Students must work with an Honors and a graduate advisor in the degree-granting department to complete an approved Plan of Study, including: a) a list of the courses that count towards both the undergraduate and graduate degree; and b) the projected dates for the completion of the bachelor's and master's degrees.
- Students must apply for admission to the Graduate School (including submitting the application, paying the application fee, and providing transcripts and standardized test scores, as required) by the prescribed deadline.

Continuation and Graduation Requirements

- No more than nine hours (in a thirty-hour master's program) and no more than twelve hours (in a 36-hour master's program) may be counted towards the requirements of both degrees.
- Students must maintain a cumulative grade point average (CGPA) of 3.2 / 4.0 or higher. If individual graduate programs have set higher standards, students are required to meet those standards.
- Students must earn a grade of B (3.0 / 4.0) or better in all double-counted, graduate-level courses.
- Students must complete the bachelor's degree, be admitted to the Graduate School, and be accepted by the degree program before entering the master's degree program.
- Admission to the Accelerated Degree Program does not guarantee admission to the Graduate School; however, Honors students who are making satisfactory progress towards completion of the requirements of the Honors College will be given priority consideration for admission to the Graduate School. Students may not opt to by-pass the bachelor's degree.
- Students who do not follow the approved Plan of Study may be ineligible to continue in the program.

Individual graduate programs may set higher standards or require additional criteria for continuation and graduation, subject to approval by the normal curriculum review process.

Withdrawal

- Students may withdraw voluntarily from the Accelerated Degree Program at any time.
 - Students must notify, in writing, the graduate program officer and the coordinator/director of undergraduate studies in their respective departments. A copy of the request to withdraw from the program should be sent to the Dean of the Graduate School.
 - Students who withdraw from the program voluntarily or because they do not meet program requirements will not be awarded graduate credit for double-counted courses
-