

Academic Report for 2016-2017
Honors College

Oregon State University

The Honors College (HC) is at the center of the university's mission to bring the most engaged and high-potential students in the state and beyond to Oregon State and provide them with high-impact, transformative experiences in research, coursework, service and global engagement. The HC pursues innovation in undergraduate education, leveraging the university's programmatic strengths. HC students are leaders on campus, and HC graduates are prepared to be leaders in Oregon and around the world.

2016–2017 ACHIEVEMENTS AND OUTCOMES

1. Provide a transformative educational experience for all learners

A core element of the Honors College's mission is the commitment to offer outstanding students of all backgrounds transformative learning experiences, both inside and outside the classroom, that incorporate research, global service and co-curricular activities. This year, the HC launched a number of initiatives designed to improve access to the full honors experience for all learners and increase honors graduation and retention rates, one of the college's primary strategic goals.

- In line with a plan developed last year in consultation with HC students and stakeholders, the differential tuition associated with HC enrollment increased to \$431 per term (in fall, winter, and spring terms) in the 2016–2017 academic year (from \$341). To offset the impact of this change on students with high financial needs and **enhance the learning environment to raise and equalize student success** for all learners, the college created a new honors differential tuition scholarship. A committee of honors students designed the application and review process, and scholarships were primarily funded by donations from Honors College Parent Leadership Circle members. In the initial cycle, 78 students applied for support, and 11 students received scholarships covering half of the differential tuition for the 2016–2017 academic year. In the spring, 112 students applied for 2017–2018 scholarships, and, after a year of fundraising for this purpose, the college awarded 14 half scholarships and 14 full scholarships. Recognizing the high demand for this resource and its importance in ensuring that the college remain accessible to all qualified students, fundraising efforts will continue to prioritize increasing the number of available scholarships.
- The Honors College expanded its peer-mentoring program to include mentorship for new transfer, rural and out-of-state students in the fall of 2016 to **enhance the learning environment to raise and equalize student success** and **make high-impact learning a hallmark of undergraduate education**. These populations face significant academic and social issues during their transition to OSU and the HC, and this program is designed to ease these difficulties by pairing new students with returning honors undergraduates. Of the 50 student pairs that participated, nearly all remained in the Honors College throughout the year. In fall, 2017, the college will expand this program to incoming underrepresented-minority and first-generation students.

- The HC collaborates with units from across the university to offer a rich and diverse set of courses that **make high-impact learning a hallmark of undergraduate education** in the college. In 2016-17, the honors curriculum included 283 honors sections. The HC supports the development of substantial new experiential learning opportunities in honors courses through the Margaret E. and Thomas R. Meehan Experiential Learning Course Development Grants, awarded annually. This year's awards are supporting the development of an honors PAC course on mindful yoga, a course on the geology of Oregon taught entirely in the field, a colloquium in which students will conduct archival research on gender and sexuality, a colloquium on data-driven "enchanted objects" and experiential learning opportunities designed around a printed circuit board fabricator in two honors engineering courses.
- The Honors College collaborated with the social justice minor program to offer students Read for a Better World: Building Community through Literature and Dialogue, with funding provided by the National Collegiate Honors Council Portz Grant. This summer reading experience **makes high-impact learning a hallmark of undergraduate education** by fostering an inclusive sense of community that encourages students to engage with faculty and other students to discuss socialized biases, power and privilege, equity and inclusion and related issues essential to their future roles as world citizens and leaders. Participating second- and third-year students chose from a selection of three books identified by social justice faculty, received a free physical or electronic copy of their chosen book to read over the summer and will meet for an in-depth discussion led by a social justice faculty member in fall term at one of the OSU cultural resource centers.
- As part of our ongoing efforts to **advance learning through course design, assessment and faculty development**, the HC developed and offered a month-long professional learning community focused on implementing honors pedagogy and **high-impact learning practices**. A dozen faculty, representing seven different academic units at both Cascades and Corvallis campuses, participated in interdisciplinary discussions of activities and approaches in honors courses.
- The Honors College, in partnership with Counseling and Psychological Services, presented mental health programming throughout the year to **enhance our comprehensive Healthy Campus Initiative**. One such program, Fears vs. Dreams, involved a night in which students shared and discussed the pressures of higher education and its impact on mental wellness. A clinician from CAPS was available to share mental health resources on campus, as well as other well-being resources.
- 2016-17 was the second year of prestigious scholarships advising at OSU. The OSU advisor for prestigious scholarships developed and promoted services that **expanded strategies to recruit diverse and high-achieving students and advanced student success**. The advisor served 403 individual students,

guiding personal and professional development through the long-term process of preparation and application for nationally-competitive scholarships. Many more students were engaged through outreach, class presentations and group advising sessions. Prestigious scholarships facilitated the nomination of over 100 students for national awards, many of whom were first-generation students, students from underrepresented populations and students with high financial need. Among the many development opportunities enjoyed by these nominees, 26 students were awarded scholarships, one was a national finalist and one received an honorable mention.

- The HC continued to recruit and admit international students through direct application and by partnering with INTO OSU to **enhance and ensure the success of international students**. In January, 2017, HC admissions and advising staff offered INTO pathways students who qualified for honors admission an information session about the college. Seven international students, including four INTO pathways students, were admitted to the HC for the 2017–2018 academic year. Five of the seven, including three INTO pathways students, accepted HC admission and enrolled for fall term. We continue to explore improvement to the mechanism for receiving and processing international student applications to the HC to increase the representation of this population within our community.
- In 2016–2017, the Honors College opened admission to students applying to Oregon State University–Cascades. The first cohort of eight Honors College Cascades students will begin studies in fall term, 2017. Honors College and Cascades faculty and staff worked in close collaboration throughout the 2016–2017 year to develop an honors experience at Cascades for high-achieving students who may have otherwise left the region to go to college elsewhere, **expanding strategies to recruit diverse and high-achieving students**. Three honors courses will be taught by OSU–Cascades faculty in this first academic year, and HC Cascades students will also have a designated residence hall area and resources specific for honors students, such as free printing and study spaces.
- In the 2016–2017 academic year, in a continued effort to expand strategies **to recruit diverse and high-achieving students**, the Honors College accepted applications from targeted groups outside of the regular application cycle. This allowed the HC to admit several students from underrepresented colleges and other underrepresented groups, such as first-generation college students, during winter term, 2017. In addition, the HC continued to match each admitted Honors College student with an honors student ambassador to provide a single, familiar point of contact. Where possible, matches were based on similar backgrounds, majors or interests, and ambassadors initiated contact with all admitted students.
- In an effort to **advance student success in other ways** and build connections with external partners, the college expanded its popular “Dean and Friends”

lunch series in the 2016–2017 academic year, offering fourteen opportunities for small groups of current students to have lunch with alumni and other friends to discuss their professional paths and interests.

2. Demonstrate leadership in research, scholarship and creativity while enhancing preeminence in the three signature areas of distinction

The Honors College is committed to providing faculty with unique opportunities to develop and implement innovative pedagogy and form mentorship and research relationships with outstanding undergraduate students. Honors students often become valuable members of research teams throughout campus, contributing significantly to publishable research, which allows faculty members to maximize campus resources.

- The opportunity to develop and teach honors courses in the HC can be a key factor in **attracting and retaining high-quality faculty**. In the 2016–17 academic year, approximately 130 faculty members from units across campus taught honors courses. To help the college ensure a diverse set of courses that provide teaching opportunities to a breadth of faculty members, the HC has memoranda of understanding or agreements with the College of Engineering; the College of Science; the College of Business; the Department of Mathematics; the School of History, Philosophy and Religion; the School of Writing, Literature and Film and the School of Language, Culture and Society. These arrangements outline the number and type of honors courses offered in each discipline during the year.
- The HC has worked to **expand and increase high-profile programs in the arts and humanities** by increasing honors students' exposure to the arts and humanities through a variety of experiential programs. In the 2016–17 academic year, students were able to participate in groups that read Louise Edrich's book *La Rose* or Siddhartha Mukherjee's book *The Emperor of All Maladies: A Biography of Cancer*, discuss the book with an OSU faculty member and attend a lecture by the author in Portland.
- In the 2016–17 academic year, the Honors College partnered with the Colleges of Education, Liberal Arts and Science, as well as OSU Libraries and Press and the Division of Outreach and Engagement, to create SPARK, a yearlong initiative promoting arts and science activity on campus, **expanding and promoting transdisciplinary research and in other ways advancing leadership in research, scholarship and creativity**. Throughout campus, Corvallis and the state, SPARK hosted over 60 events during the 2016–2017 academic year.
- Each year, Honors College students are given the opportunity to nominate an Honors faculty member who has demonstrated excellence in helping students learn and succeed in the classroom, an acknowledgement that helps **attract and retain high-quality faculty**. In the 2016–2017 academic year, the Honors College Students Association selected Professor Gilad Elbom from the School of Writing, Literature and Film as the 2017 HC Outstanding Professor. The college

also recognizes two Eminent Professors and an Eminent Mentor each year. David Hurwitz, of the School of Civil and Construction Engineering, was named the 2017 HC Eminent Mentor, and Patti Duncan from the Women, Gender and Sexuality Studies program and Kevin Ahern from the Department of Biochemistry and Biophysics were named 2017 HC Eminent Professors.

3. Strengthen impact and reach throughout Oregon and beyond

The Honors College creates unique opportunities and programs designed to attract the very best students in our region and beyond to Oregon State University and produce graduates prepared to assume leadership roles in their fields and communities. This is the most significant impact of the college on Oregon, keeping outstanding students in the state and attracting those from out of the state to the university and to the Pacific Northwest. The college, though, has also initiated a number of programs to increase outreach and engagement with external partners and supporters.

- In an effort to **position OSU's outreach and engagement programs as learning laboratories that promote high-impact learning and effectively utilize university research and drive economic development**, the college partnered with a member of its external advisory board to present information about the Honors College to Rotary Club members in the Salem area. College leaders and students met with clubs in Silverton and South Salem to both discuss the program and begin development of connections that might lead to internships for honors students. Presentations resulted in one "Dean and Friends" lunch highlighting careers in politics and lobbying. In addition, the college continued to work with partners to expand honors-specific internships at such sites as the University of Michigan and Oregon Health and Science University.
- In the 2016-17 academic year, the HC worked to **increase study abroad** options by offering a new short-term program in London that was open to incoming as well as continuing students. Faculty from English, physics and earthquake engineering designed hands-on learning activities in locations near and around London, such as the British Library, the Greenwich Observatory and the Millennium Bridge. A second London program and a new France program, as well as an international service learning trip with Habitat for Humanity in Vietnam, were developed for summer, 2017, with 50 students scheduled to participate.
- For the second year, the college held a reception for scholarship donors and recipients to expand **alumni and external partner engagement** opportunities. This year, Presidential Scholarship donors and recipients were invited, in addition to HC scholarship donors and recipients. Twenty donors attended and over forty students.
- The Honors College launched a new Alumni Leadership Circle in the 2016-2017 academic year, which, alongside ongoing efforts to build the HC Parent

Leadership Circle (a development and engagement group for parents of current students) and Board of Regents (the college's development leadership and advisory group), furthered **alumni and external engagement** opportunities. By the end of the 2016–2017 year, membership in the Board of Regents had grown from 11 to 13, membership in the Parent Leadership Circle grew to 12 families from 10 and the Alumni Leadership Circle launched with 11 members. These groups provide both valuable guidance in the college's engagement activities and gift revenue supporting HC scholarships and activities.

4. **Commitment to three essential features of OSU**

The Honors College is committed to enrolling a diverse student body and creating opportunities that maximize success for all learners. As interest and enrollment in the college has grown, HC leadership has worked to develop admissions processes that encourage a diverse set of applicants with wide-ranging interests and backgrounds. In addition, in order to expand the opportunities and programs the HC can offer our students, the college has increased its focus on fund development and the creation of new efficiencies in its operations.

- As part of its commitment to **increasing the diversity of faculty**, the HC worked with OSU Search Advocate Program Director Anne Gillies to assess the population of HC teachers and mentors in comparison with the university as a whole. The college will use this data to make changes in its recruitment and outreach practices, guided in part by suggestions developed by the HC Curriculum Committee.
- At the beginning of the 2016–2017 academic year, the HC incorporated expectations for all staff to work toward promoting the university's equity and inclusion priorities in position descriptions, as a part of efforts to **enhance diversity**. In order to provide opportunities to develop skills and awareness in this area, all staff attended a two-part social training run by Jane Waite from OSU's search advocacy and social justice office.
- In spring, 2017, the HC participated in the annual Junto's Family Day for the first time to **increase the diversity of students**. More than 1,150 people, from 23 communities across the state attended the event, which offers Latino families the opportunity to visit OSU for a day of information sessions and activities. The HC hosted an afternoon presentation and activity that brought in approximately 50 attendees. HC student ambassadors talked about HC student life and led an ice-cream-making session. In addition, the HC helped sponsor Mi Familia again this year and hosted a table at the event.
- According to OSU Foundation records, gifts and pledges to the Honors College totaled \$262,442 in the 2017 fiscal year, an increase of approximately \$30,000 over 2016, as the college continues to focus on **enhancing resources through private philanthropy**. In order to build fundraising partnerships and success, HC Dean Toni Doolen went on 106 visits during the fiscal year and the college's OSU Foundation development officer, Michael Reza, made 117 visits, again according to OSU Foundation records.

- The HC is collaborating with OSU faculty researchers in economics to study the impact of honors education on student success to **share relevant information to make effective decisions**. In 2016, the college negotiated a data-use agreement with the Office of the Registrar, the Office of Financial Aid, the Institutional Review Board, the Office of Institutional Research and the Chief Information Security Officer to obtain de-identified data in order to conduct a longitudinal study to determine the effects of the Honors College on student success and identify which components of the honors experience are associated with those outcomes.
- In spring, 2016, the Honors College had an external program review for the first time since the early days of the college. The review report resulted in the creation of a variety of action items designed to address areas for improvement in the college, including **increasing diversity** and **enhancing the quality of service**. Throughout the 2016–2017 year, staff worked on these action items, providing quarterly progress updates.
- During the 2016–2017 academic year, the HC made several efforts to use **technology as a strategic asset** that advanced our efforts to build the honors community, both internally and externally, and **enhanced the quality of service in administrative processes**. The HC Student Media Assistant concentrated particularly on the development of an Instagram presence, creating a very popular student-to-student channel where authentic, consistently-voiced messages were posted at regular intervals. Engagement on the HC Instagram channel has grown 250% this year. In addition, the college created a new student employee videographer position to produce video clips for the HC web site and social media channels.

For the past several years, the college has been developing a Salesforce.com student management system that tracks students from admissions through their post-graduate careers. In 2016, the HC transitioned the support of this system from the Center for Applied Systems and Software to Enrollment Management Information Technology (EMIT). This change will allow the HC to increase and enhance current functionality, as well as integrate honors data with other university information stored through the campus-wide Salesforce collaborative.

- The college added several new staff positions in 2016–2017 to **enhance the quality of service**. A new classified staff member was hired to oversee student lifecycle data and assist the HC associate dean in management of the college’s curriculum, and an advising office coordinator was brought in to support the college’s three advisors, the OSU advisor for prestigious scholarships, and the assistant to the deans and directors.

Two new graduate positions were also created in 2016–2017. In a new partnership with the School of Writing, Literature and Film, the Honors College

hired a graduate assistant to create written content for online and print publications. This resulted in the development of regular new content and the relaunch of a print magazine at the end of the year. And a new graduate assistant for the OSU advisor for prestigious scholarships facilitated an expansion in the campus presence of that service, which, while housed in the Honors College, is for all university students.

5. Performance on college-level metrics

- Fall enrollment in the Honors College grew for the seventh consecutive year, reaching 1057 students according to Office of Institutional Research data. This 3.6% growth in the population slightly outpaced university growth (2.9%), a difference that reflects recent trends: the Honors College's three-year growth of 6.8% compares to the university's 6% growth during that same time period. However, the 432 new students who entered the college in fall, 2016 represented the largest incoming cohort in the HC's history by a considerable margin, and, with another large class joining the college in fall, 2017 and continued focus on raising college retention rates, the overall population should continue to grow, pushing the representation of honors students in the OSU undergraduate community beyond the 4.2% mark it reached in 2016-2017 (which was a small increase over the previous year).
- First-year retention rates and six-year graduation rates remain high at 95.2% and 88.8% respectively. These are in-line with the five-year average percentages of 96.8% and 88.6%. The positive differences of 11.8% and 25.5% between HC retention and graduation rates and overall university rates are also consistent with the five-year averages of 12.9% and 26%.
- The percentage of US minority students in the Honors College was 27.1% in 2016-2017, representing a small decrease from the previous year. However, the HC continues to draw a higher percentage of minority students than represented in the overall undergraduate population. Despite efforts to increase the number of international students in the college, the overall percentage remains low, with a very modest increase over past years.
- Applications increased by almost 12% in 2015-2016, after a modest decrease the previous year. As a part of efforts to continue modest growth in the overall student population, 61.2% of applicants were admitted, the highest admit rate since 2011-2012. The yield rate of 44.6% represented a small increase over the previous year, ending what had been a five-year trend of lower yields.