

Honors College Research Executive Summary

Source: A NCHC Survey of existing Honors Colleges (Surveyed 68; Responses 38) in *The Honors College Phenomenon* (Sederberg, 2008)

Motives for Establishing a College

Recruit stronger students:	100.0%
Improve overall campus quality:	91.4%
Improve the quality of honors educational opportunities:	88.6%
Raise the profile of honors within the institution:	85.7%

Institutional Status

The administrative head of a college is a dean:	77.1%
The academic rank of the head is full professor:	91.2%
The head reports to the provost/academic VP:	82.8%
The head is a member of the Council of Academic Deans:	82.8%
The head is a 12-month appointment:	82.8%

Other Attributes/Components of Colleges

Faculty oversight committees	88.6%
National scholarship competition programs	74.3%
Alumni organization	57.1%
Development officer (full or part time)	48.6%
Undergraduate research programs	48.6%
Major campus scholarship programs	37.1%
Service Learning	31.4%
Honors student lounge/reading room	45.7%
Honors IT center	40.0%
Honors class/seminar rooms	37.1%

Endowment sizes:

Under \$500,000:	8
\$500,000 to \$1 million:	5
\$1 million to \$5 million:	4
\$5 million to \$10 million:	2
\$10 million to \$25 million:	2
Above \$25 million:	2

“Average per capita budget \$596 per student with range of \$83 to \$1,855. Half were below \$500 per student. Only four colleges had a per capita budget of over \$1,000; 8 had budgets of between \$500 and \$1,000; and the remaining 11 were below \$500.”

- Minimum GPA ranged from 3.0 to 3.5; 72.7% required 3.25 or above
- Required 21 to 30 honors credits
- Recommended 20-25% of the work be in honors.

Twenty one colleges reported compensating departments offering honors courses, at a rate ranging from \$800 to \$7000.

Consequences of creating a college:

- Enhanced stature for the head of the college: 85.7%
- Enhanced stature among the faculty: 85.7%
- Enhanced organizational position in the university: 82.8%
- Enhanced recruitment: 77.1%
- Improved facilities: 77.1%
- Increased budget: 74.3%
- Enhanced academic programs and opportunities: 74.3%
- Enhanced standards of admission and retention: 60.0%
- Increased size of student body: 57.1%
- Enhanced scholarship opportunities: 45.7%

Non Survey Notions from Monograph

- Plan for enrollment growth, including admission process and standards. Note that publicity surrounding inauguration of college may overwhelm admission resources.
- Make sure the college is not in competition with other colleges in the institution, but works as an enhancement. Honors colleges may be seen as autonomous units. They need to be seen as important, integral parts of a university, and therefore worthy of support by all units on campus. Thus....most coursework should not be in honors college but should influence the academic tone of the university.
- Honors colleges can advocate particular educational projects or reform (e.g. service learning, multi-disciplinary learning & scholarship, liberal learning)
- Honors offerings should include lecture series, special field based programs, serving as umbrella for national fellowships

Important goals

- 1) An honors college should be a bastion of academic excellence
- 2) An honors college should be politically acceptable to all corners of the university.

Steps

- Leadership at the highest levels of the central administration must support the project
 - Mobilize the most varied constituencies possible and involve them in the design and establishment process
 - Hire a dean or another authoritative individual responsible for leading the process
 - Make sure this dean has sufficient resources at her or his disposal to assure the other deans and faculty that the honors college will pay its way
- The college must aggressively recruit the very best faculty to teach, and resources must be available to provide incentives to individual faculty and departments or colleges for freeing these faculty members to participate.*