



NCHC Shared Principles and Practices of Honors Education

Abridged Version

Mission, Vision, Values

Mission Alignment

The honors program or college aligns itself with the mission of the institution, responds to its strategic plan and core values, and embraces student-centered practices while actively welcoming diverse faculty, professional staff, and students into its community.

Strategic Partnership

The honors program or college is part of the institution's strategic planning process.

Inclusive Excellence

The honors program or college provides a locus of visible and highly reputed standards and models of inclusive excellence for students, faculty, and professional staff across the campus. It strives to serve undergraduates drawn from all of the many campus communities and explores practices that allow it to reach the broadest and most diverse populations.

Administration

Administrative Position

Honors programs or colleges are typically situated administratively within Academic Affairs while also being uniquely positioned to build strong partnerships with Student Affairs and other administrative units across campus.

Reporting Line

The honors director or dean typically reports to the chief academic officer of the institution or appropriate designee, though institutional context may dictate variations to this approach.

Recruitment and Admission

A clearly articulated admissions philosophy and transparent admissions process reflect the larger goals and aims of the honors program or college, help identify the targeted diverse student populations, and employ a wide range of [inclusive practices](#) that ensure honors is attracting and supporting diverse student populations and serving students from, as much as possible, all majors and programs.

Retention

The honors program or college employs policies that clearly specify requirements needed for retention and satisfactory completion.

Articulation Agreements

When appropriate, two-year and four-year programs have articulation agreements by which honors graduates from two-year programs who meet previously agreed-upon requirements are accepted into four-year honors programs or colleges, which is another important method of ensuring access to honors education by diverse populations of students.

Faculty Governance

The honors program or college has a standing committee or council of faculty members that works with the dean, director, or other administrative officer (as well as with any standing honors college faculty, if applicable) on issues related to honors curriculum, governance, issues of equity, diversity, and inclusion, policy, development, and evaluation deliberations, among other activities.

Student Governance

A diverse range of honors students are assured a voice in the governance and direction of the student-centered honors program or college.

Teaching & Learning

Curricular Requirements

Given the wide variety of ways students now satisfy university or college curricular requirements, honors programs and colleges benefit from as much curricular flexibility as possible.

Curricular Scope

Given the variety of honors programs and colleges across the world, students connect with honors through a variety of touchpoints, both curricular and co-curricular.

Curricular Modalities

Curricular requirements are satisfied in numerous ways, including stand-alone honors seminars (often interdisciplinary in nature), departmental honors, cross-listed classes, and [honors contracts](#).

Inclusive Pedagogies

Not only are the voices of historically minoritized and underserved populations represented in readings and other course materials, but honors faculty also employ a wide range of inclusive teaching practices.

Departmental Honors

If an institution employs departmental honors offerings, the honors program or college has some coordinating responsibility over those offerings, since those pathways may be difficult for students to navigate without such central oversight.

Laboratory for Innovation

In fostering student-centered practices, the honors program or college serves as a campus laboratory for diverse students and faculty to experiment with pedagogical and curricular innovation.

Honors Faculty

Honors faculty are selected based on their preparation for and commitment to the pedagogy and curriculum of the program or college, their ability to provide intellectual leadership and mentoring for diverse students, and willingness to support the mission of honors. Selection processes help support the hiring of faculty and professional staff who have been historically underrepresented in higher education, as noted in NCHC's [Diversity and Inclusion Statement](#).

Global Orientation

Honors programs or colleges support the growing higher education emphasis on internationalization.

Regular Assessment

The honors program or college regularly assesses and evaluates program goals and learning outcomes as articulated in the NCHC's [Definition of Honors Education](#) and modes of honors learning, and as appropriate to the institution's culture and mission, while also acknowledging that the project at the center of honors education is transforming student lives.

Co-Curriculum

Co-curricular Opportunities

In addition to curricular offerings and programs, honors programs and colleges provide multiple, diverse opportunities for students to participate in civic engagement, leadership, cultural programs, community service, and other extra- and co-curricular activities.

Fellowships

Honors programs and colleges prepare students for additional opportunities—during undergraduate study and beyond—available through nationally competitive fellowships and scholarships, especially students who have been historically underrepresented in higher education.

Honors Community

One of the hallmarks of honors education is the community that emerges from a shared learning experience featuring honors as a potential hub on campus connecting many different units – academic and co-curricular – because honors students tend to be drawn from all majors. As a result, the institution supports this community by providing adequate financial, physical, and personnel resources.

Student Professional Development

Honors programs and colleges provide professional development opportunities for students, thereby supporting a wide array of administrative tasks, raising the visibility of honors, and improving a program or college in ways that remain authentic to students.

Infrastructure & Resources

Personnel and Budgetary Resources

The permanence and stability of honors are ensured through adequate infrastructure and resources, including an appropriate budget as well as appropriate faculty, professional staff, and administrative support when necessary.

Program Fees

While some honors programs or colleges may employ additional fees to participate in honors, such practices limit access and equity.

Honors Advising

In acknowledgment of their need to satisfy requirements for multiple programs, honors students receive honors-related academic advising from qualified faculty and/or professional staff. Additionally, when appropriate to the institutional culture, priority enrollment is provided to active honors students in recognition of the scheduling difficulties caused by the need to satisfy both honors and major program requirements, as is often the case with other distinctive populations like student athletes or student veterans.

Honors Spaces

Like all units on campus, honors programs and colleges best cultivate a distinct identity and serve their diverse populations with appropriate physical spaces. Such designated locations are especially important to honors programs and colleges because their students are drawn from majors across campus and because of the important role they often play in recruiting. As a result, the institution provides adequate, accessible, and inclusive spaces that are welcoming to all honors students, faculty, professional staff, and administration.

Alumni Engagement

Because graduates often have a strong affinity for the honors program or college and its community, honors programs and colleges typically engage in robust alumni outreach through an advisory board and other mechanisms.

An [*unabridged version*](#) of NCHC's *Shared Principles and Practices* is also available.