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| SJECCD |
| Honors Institute Program Review |
| **Program Dean: Mark Gonzalez** |
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| **David Hendricks** |
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1. **Name of Program**: The Honors Institute
2. **Honors Institute Mission Statement**

The Honors Institute is designed to bring together students and faculty who share a demonstrated commitment to academic excellence. The Honors Institute is intended to challenge the superior student to produce quality scholarship and to achieve intellectual development within the general education program.

**Evergreen Valley College Mission Statement:**

With equity, opportunity and social justice as our guiding principles, Evergreen Valley College’s mission is to empower and prepare students from diverse backgrounds to succeed academically and to be civically responsible global citizens.

We meet our mission through a wide spectrum of educational experiences, flexible methodologies, and support services for our students.

**3. Program Description**

The Honors Institute provides support and enrichment to high-achieving, academically motivated, socially conscious students. The Honors Program offers an intellectually stimulating environment with curricular enrichment through Honors contracts, community service, leadership opportunities, cultural events, and collaboration with faculty and other Honors students

Student Participation Criteria:  
The Evergreen Valley College Honors Institute serves high achieving students in all majors and interests on our campus. In general, students need a GPA of 3.25 or above. However, students with a GPA between 3.0 and 3.24 can be admitted on a provisional basis. So long as the provisional student demonstrates improvement in their GPA and continues to complete at least one contract per semester, they can remain in the program and enjoy all of its benefits.

STUDENT BENEFITS

Working closely with faculty to custom design their own projects:

The Institute offers Honors credit for academic courses to our students by way of individual class contracts. These contracts are negotiated with, and approved by the instructor to ensure that the projects are discipline appropriate. Students are able to work closely with their instructors to design and execute their projects.

Honors Credit on Transcripts:

Upon completion of their projects, students receive an “H” designation on their transcripts that indicates that the course was taken for Honors credit. Students who accumulate over 15 units of Honors coursework are additionally recognized in the graduation program. The academic challenge provided by the Honors institute helps to “empower and prepare students from diverse backgrounds to succeed academically”.

Priority Registration:

In addition to receiving academic recognition for their participation, students receive Priority Registration so long as they remain active Honors students in good standing with the program. This benefit allows Honors students to get the courses they need in order to complete their general education requirements at EVC and graduate in a timely manner. Honors students also are eligible for the annual scholarships offered by the Institute.

Special Counseling:

Students also have access to specialized counseling. The Honors Institute works with Bev Stewart from the Transfer Center to help keep Honors students on track for graduating and transferring to a four-year college or university. We are hoping to work with at least one and perhaps two more counselors in order to expand the range of counseling expertise available to Honors students.

Leadership and Cooperation Opportunities:

The Honors Institute also offers Honors students opportunities to demonstrate their leadership and cooperation skills. The Institute is supported by the Honors Club, which is comprised primarily of active Honors students who are interested in shaping the program. The Club elects its own President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer, and is active in planning events and activities. Honors students are generally involved in events such as Club Rush, the Spooktacular, Day on the Green, and Night on Caffeine, among others. The Board also is active in fundraising for the Institute’s annual scholarships. Prior to the creation of the Honors Club, Honors students advised the Coordinator through an informal Student Advisory Board.

Volunteer Service:

Beginning in Spring 2011, the Institute, following the recommendation of the Student Advisory Board added a five-hour per semester volunteer hour requirement. The intent of the service hours is to build a more robust campus community and to help foster an ethic of mutual support. By providing leadership and volunteer opportunities, the Institute helps EVC students “to be civically responsible global citizens.” While most Honors students complete their volunteer hours on campus, those who have a difficult time committing the extra time to campus life can request to complete their service hours in the community.

1. **List of Staff and Titles**

Honors Institute Coordinator: David G. Hendricks, Ph.D. (.30 F.T.E. release time)

1. Factors Affecting the Honors Institute

Willingness of faculty to offer contracts. Since the Honors Institute runs on a contract basis, there is a great deal of flexibility for students. However, the downside is that the system relies on the willingness of faculty to sponsor Honors contracts. This requires extra non-compensated work on the part of the instructor above and beyond their contracted work load. While most are willing to do so out of a sense of professional responsibility, students sometimes run into difficulty in finding a willing faculty sponsor for their projects.

Paperwork completion and submission by faculty. Another consequence of the contract system is that individual instructors need to confirm that a student project has been completed before the student receives Honors recognition for the course on their transcript. While most faculty are diligent about reporting contract completions, there is always a number of contracts that remain in limbo until the Coordinator can get confirmation from the faculty. Most of the time, faculty who do not report the completion status of a contract neglect to do so since the student failed to complete the contract. However, there are also cases in which the faculty member became busy and neglected to report. The Coordinator generally spends a portion of the beginning of each semester accounting for contracts from the prior semester for which the completion status is uncertain.

Continued support for offset time for Coordinator. Currently, the only faculty member compensated for working with the Honors Institute is the Honors Coordinator. The Coordinator traditionally was provided with 40% reassign time plus a part-time administrative assistant who worked a limited amount of hours, ranging from 10-15 per week. Currently, there is no administrative assistant specifically dedicated to Honors, and the reassign time was reduced to 30% in Fall 2008. As a result, the Coordinator is the primary employee responsible for all of the Institute’s administrative and academic functions. While some students have complained about the limited number of hours that the Coordinator is available, most have accommodated to the limitation. With limited support and dedicated hours, most of the Coordinator’s time is taken up with administrative tasks, including processing program applications, updating e-mail lists, maintaining communication with Honors students, recruitment, running meetings with the Honors Club,, helping with special events, evaluating scholarship application files, creating Honors student files, overseeing contract submission, monitoring contract completion, working with Administration and Records to establish a priority registration list each semester, reviewing the list of graduates each year to ensure that eligible students receive proper recognition in the graduation program, contacting faculty to verify completed contracts, and other day-to-day tasks. In most weeks, the number of hours dedicated to Honors by the Coordinator exceeds the number of hours allotted in the offset time. As a consequence of these conditions, the success of the program is very heavily dependent on the performance of the Honors Coordinator.

Support for administrative assistance. Since the Honors Institute currently receives no formal support, the Honors Coordinator is responsible for most administrative functions. In the past 3 years, the Administrative Assistants for Language Arts and Social Sciences Humanities and Physical Education have both been very supportive and have provided students with basic program information and forms. The Language Arts Administrative Assistant also has been willing to conduct grade verification for student applications. While this has been very helpful to the success of the program, students would be better served if there were a part time assistant who could be in the office for at least a few hours per week.

Professional development/conference funds. There currently is no budget for professional development, conference, or association fees. It would be helpful to develop the skills of the Coordinator if they could receive support to go to Honors-based conferences, sponsored by such organizations as the Honors Transfer Council of California, the Western Honors Regional Council, or Phi Theta Kappa. There also should be funds available to maintain memberships in HTCC and WHRC.

Professional affiliations. Related to the necessity for better professional development, it would be helpful to have annual funds available to maintain memberships in the Honors Transfer Council of California and the Western Honors Regional Council. Each membership costs less than $100 per year.

Willingness of students to support the Honors Institute through student organizations. In Fall 2008, the Honors Coordinator created a Student Advisory Board to help plan and execute fund raising events and participation in campus activities. Over the past four years, student volunteers have been invaluable in keeping the program active on campus. They have been the driving force behind participation in such events as the annual Club Rush, the Spooktacular, Day on the Green, and the Tutoring Center’s Night on Caffeine. They have sponsored or co-sponsored campus speakers and events that have highlighted such issues as the use of child-soldiers in Uganda, the economic and political challenges facing Haiti, Constitution Day, and most recently, a mock Presidential Debate. They also have been active in fundraisers, such as the annual Garage Sale, a Rootbeer float sale ,and Hot Chocolate sales. In Spring 2012, the students petitioned the Associated Students to create an Honors Club, which would in part help advise the Honors Institute. The Institute has been fortunate that so many of its members have been interested in volunteering to keep the program active. However, there is always the potential for a decline in student interest, which would result in less participation in or sponsoring of campus events.

Limited electronic resources. Currently the Honors Institute has a computer for the Coordinator and three other computers that are intended for student use. However, the computers are several years old (at least eight years), and have limited speed and processing power. As a result, students rarely use the computers to study.

1. Student Learning Outcomes
2. Student will be able to work with instructor to develop an academic project

This measure will be assessed through data collected by the contracts submitted each semester. Each semester’s performance will be compared to historical data from earlier semesters.

1. Student will be able to complete the work for their academic project

This measure will be assessed using data on completion rates for contracts submitted by students. An annual review will establish trends in completion rates and identify areas for improvement.

1. Student will develop a commitment to service through regular volunteer service hours

This measure will be assessed by gathering data on student completion of volunteer hours each semester.

1. Student will learn to develop a capacity for independent learning

This measure will be assessed by analyzing data on number of contracts initiated and completed by students by the time they graduate.

1. Student will develop leadership skills.

This measure will be assessed through a student satisfaction survey through a tool such as Survey Monkey to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the program.

Note for preparer🡪 you have enough assessment data included in the chart below (item 6) to document assessment results/analysis from SLO #1 & 2. You can include a summary under each of these listed SLOs above using the data table below. For SLO #3 & 4, indicate a timeline for when you will have sufficient data to determine assessment of these. For SLO# 5, your survey data, listed in section 7 should feed into this SLO assessment/analysis.

Once you add in your assessment results and analysis for SLOs 1, 2 & 5 to this document, please update your student services matrix with the same data: <http://www.evc.edu/slo/in_progress/student_services/HONORS.pdf>

1. Review Available Data and Baselines

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Semester | Active Students | Contracts | Completed Contracts | Acceptances | Conditional Acceptances |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Fall2011 | 33 | 40 |  | 19 | 1 |
| Spring 2011 | 51 | 61 | 49 | 29 | 8 |
| Fall 2010 | 47 | 59 | 50 | 25 | 3 |
| Spring 2010 | 40 | 56 | 49 | 37 | 3 |
| Fall 2009 | 33 | 54 | 42 | 24 | 1 |
| Spring 2009 | 39 | 53 | 49 | 20 | 2 |
| Fall 2008 |  |  |  |  |  |
| Spring 2008 | 30 | 28 |  |  |  |
| Fall 2007 | 26 | 25 |  |  |  |
| Spring 2007 | 37 | 30 |  |  |  |
| Fall 2006 | 33 | 46 |  |  |  |
| Spring 2006 | 40 | 47 |  |  |  |
| Fall 2005 | 34 | 26 |  |  |  |
| Spring 2005 | 42 | 51 |  |  |  |

As it stands, there is very little consistent data available to examine the Honors Institute’s performance. Since Spring 2009, the Coordinator has made an effort to collect and maintain limited data related to the Institute’s performance. However, reconstructing comparable data from earlier semesters has been a challenge.

There is a high level of turnover among active Honors students. While there is generally a core of students who are around for 3-4 semesters, thus ensuring some consistency, there also is a great deal of turnover of students who join for only one or two semesters. In general there are roughly 40- 50 active Honors students in any given semester. An active Honors student is defined as someone who is enrolled in the program and has at least one active contract for the current semester. In general, the program accepts between 20-30 students per semester, most of whom become active members for at least one semester. There also are about 20-30 students per semester that become inactive. While some students inform the Coordinator of their intention to withdraw from the Institute or graduate, the vast majority simply fail to contact the Coordinator and disappear, leaving the Coordinator to deduce their intentions. As a result, there often are far more students on the e-mail distribution list and who have files on record than are active in any given semester. As a result, while the composition of students is in flux, the number of active students has been fairly consistent over the past 6 semesters.

1. Student Satisfaction Opinion Survey results

In Fall 2011, the Coordinator conducted a survey (through Survey Monkey) of active Honors students to asses their views about the performance of the Honors Institute. There were five multiple choice response questions and five that allowed commentary. For the multiple choice questions, students were asked about their view of the Institute’s performance and were given the choices of: Very Satisfied (VS), Satisfied (S), Neutral (N); Unsatisfied (U); and Very Unsatisfied). There were 22 overall responses, representing roughly 50% of the active students.

The multiple choice questions were:

1. How Satisfied are you with the Honors Institute? Responses were: VS: 59%; S: 31%; N: 4%; U: 4%; VU 0%
2. How Satisfied are you with the variety of classes available to Honors students? Responses were: VS: 55%; S: 32%; N: 13%; U: 0%; VU: 0%
3. How Satisfied are you with the administration of the Honors Institute? Responses were: VS: 64%; S: 32%; N: 4%; U: 0%; VU: 0%
4. How Satisfied are you with the faculty who sponsor honors contracts? Responses were: VS: 68%; S: 23%; N: 9%; U: 0%; VU:0%
5. How satisfied are you with the resources dedicated to the Honors Institute? Responses were: VS: 27%; S: 41%: N: 23%; U: 9%; VU: 0%

In general, the survey reveals that students are happy with the overall performance and administration of the program, with 90% either Satisfied or Very Satisfied with the Honors Institute, and 96% Satisfied or Very Satisfied with the administration of the Institute. They seem to believe that the variety of courses and instructors that are available to Honors students is more that adequate with an overall approval rate of 87% Satisfied or Very Satisfied. There is a high level of satisfaction with the Institute in general. The only area where students express an interest in improving the Institute regards funding for resources, with only 68% responding that they are Satisfied or Very Satisfied with the current resources dedicated to the Institute.

When asked what improvements could be made to the Institute, students responded that they would like:

“more events”

“get involved in more student activities”

“add more scholarships”

“better communication and events”

“more community service options”

“mentoring”

“partnerships with 4-year schools”

When asked about how to improve the variety of offerings and experiences for Honors students, respondents made the following suggestions”

“hold more events”

“the Honors Institute already provides a strong variety of classes”

“one on one counseling”

“more awareness for the general student body”

“none”

“more in-house functions and events to make it a tight-knit group”

“conferences or a yearly social gathering where we can get to meet everyone in the program”

When asked how best to improve the administration of the Institute, students made the following suggestions”

“have a live person, such as a coordinator in the honors office”

“have more teachers involved with the honors program”

“I think it’s fine”

“Good job already”

“the administrator is willing to help you with the program; is very dynamic and flexible”

“nothing”

When askes about how to improve the faculty’s role in sponsoring contracts, students made the following comments:

“none”

“I think it’s fine”

“make it more open and available to all students”

“I would like to see part time faculty be willing to provide honors contracts”

“explain the program in class at the beginning of each semester”

When asked about the type of resources that would improve the program, students made the following suggestions:

“have some free test supplies”

“an Honors Institute personal lab . . . should include both computers and tutors”

“Honors Institute computer lab”

“bigger office to meet in”

“more events and weekly functions”

“tutoring center”

“more money for scholarships”

Program demographics:

There are not very consistent demographic data available on Honors students. By taking the information from the current files, which include students who were admitted to the program between Spring 2009 and Fall 2011, we can get a rough idea of the composition of the students in the program.

**Sex:**

Men: 47

Women: 78

**Race/Ethnicity:**

African American: 4 (3.2%)

American Indian: 1 (0.8%)

Asian: 65 (52%)

Asian Indian: 8 (6.4%)

Arab/Middle Eastern: 2 (1.6%)

Hispanic/Latino: 33 (26%)

White/Caucasian: 11 (8.8%)

Overall, there are far more women than men involved in Honors.

1. Program Weaknesses

Limited counseling. The Institute is in a transitional phase with its relationship with counseling. In the past year, the two counselors that had traditionally worked with Honors (one of whom was instrumental in forming the Honors Institute in the first place) retired. This has left the Institute with no established relationship with the counselors. As a result, the current Coordinator has begun to develop new partnerships with counselors to support the counseling needs of its students. This effort to develop a new relationship is still in its early stages, but should result in a newly developed and robust partnership with Counseling.

Limited access to Coordinator. With the reduction of offset time to 30% the number of hours that the Coordinator is available for office hours is limited, and some of those hours are dedicated to administrative tasks, which reduces the number of hours available to meet with Honors students to discuss their needs. Fortunately, most Honors students need little guidance and can develop and complete their projects with a great deal of autonomy. However, the limited availability of the Coordinator means that there is less ability to develop relationships between the Coordinator and the Honors students.

Limited ability to develop an academic community (no honors sections). In addition to the limited ability to create an Honors community centered in the Honors office, there also is great difficulty in establishing an academic Honors community. With limited ability to recruit, process and retain Honors students, there is not a critical mass of Honors students to justify specific Honors sections of courses. In the past there were such sections, but they have become the victim of budget cuts. One possible solution that would take into account budget limitations would be to create a one unit course that would act as a colloquium that active Honors students could take to help them develop their projects and share their findings with a wider student academic community.

Limited recruitment. Another victim of limited Coordinator hours has been the ability to recruit additional students. In the past, Honors coordinators had the compensated time to go to a number of recruitment events both on and off campus. Without this extra dedicated time, recruitment efforts have been one of the casualties.

Limited ability for students to share their work.

1. Program Goals and Areas for Improvement

Need honors sections

Create an Honors colloquium class

Secure Honors Counselors

1. Actions, Strategies, and Timeline

Establish the actions, strategies, and a timeline for each goal. Each goal may (or may not) have multiple actions and strategies to reach the goal. Also list the reasonable resources needed to meet or exceed to the goal.

Honors Sections: Have at least one Honors section by Fall 2015

Honors Colloquium:: Have an Honors Colloquium course offered by Spring 2014

Honors Counselors: Have associated counselors by Spring 2013