

Annual Report to the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee
The College Honors Program
2015-2016

Enrollment in the College Honors Program remains strong. This year, we introduced over fifty students as freshman into the honors program, and participation at all levels of the program is strong. We have begun to rotate offerings within the first year seminar and connections courses. All of our general education offerings remain very popular, and for this I have to thank the wonderful instructors who are willing to work with these students. Without them, we would not continue to have such a great program.

Thirty-three students will graduate this May with General Education Honors, eleven of whom will also receive College Honors. Thirty-five students successfully completed departmental honors projects. The number of College Honors students and departmental projects grew dramatically this year and continues to be supported by strong faculty mentors who are willing to work with these talented students. The Departmental Honors/Sigma Xi Poster Session teamed up with the Center for Research and Creative Activity (CRCA) for a combined poster session. Student participation and attendance was quite large. The Anne and Bob De Stefano Undergraduate Research Program continues to provide support for these students in need of supplies or help with funding to travel to conferences. This year, 3 students were approved for funding using this program. Despite having personally written to each student and his/her advisor who was working on a departmental or college honors project, I was surprised to find so few students interested in using these funds. I plan to work closely with CRCA to make these funds available to more students who are participating in research or creative activity to allow these under-used funds to be utilized.

In last year's report, I mentioned that the current honors program has three parts that have had an 'a la carte' feel: general education honors, the junior honors colloquium, and the senior honors project. The junior honors colloquium is a seminar course offered to help students discuss their ideas for potential senior projects and guide them through the process of finding a mentor and formulating a viable project. Prior to my tenure as director of the Honors Program, participation in the junior colloquium had been low, and the a la carte feel of the program has led to, I believe, inconsistent numbers of students from one year to the next who elect to participate in the senior honors project. In an effort to make the honors program a more cohesive four-year experience, this incoming freshman class was introduced to the honors program with an advertised expectation that all will participate in every aspect of the three parts mentioned above. For the second straight year, the junior colloquium had strong enrollment numbers. It is my hope that these efforts will continue to pay off with more students finishing the full experience. For those who may not have the time to commit to the full senior-year project experience, Breea Govanar and I are working on ways for seniors to fulfill their senior year project experience working with

CRCA as a student research-navigator. We are in the early stages of this work, but hope to continue to allow students in the College Honors Program a full four-year experience.

I look forward to another successful year in 2016-2017.

Rebecca Sparks

Director, College Honors Program