

Submitted by:
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The Honors program was previously reviewed in academic year 2014-15 under a previous director and administration in the Provost Office. The current director of the Honors program, Dr. Dan Bedford, took the helm in April 2016. In the academic year 2019-2020, the Honors Director and staff prepared a thoughtful self-study and planned a Program Review Evaluation Team site visit for spring semester 2020. Given the restrictions imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic, the site visit was rescheduled for the Fall 2020 semester and was facilitated virtually in October. The Honors team facilitated this challenging and disrupted process expertly which resulted in a meaningful site visit and a realistic response to the Evaluation Team site visit report with suggestions for taking the Honors program in a new direction that is more inclusive of all students served at Weber State University

The recommendations from the Site Visit team were extensive, well-informed and very helpful for moving the Honors program forward. The team made eighteen recommendations in five broad categories:

- Honors staffing, resources and budget
- Recruitment, admissions and scholarships
- Diversity, equity and inclusion
- Communication and misconception around "Honors"
- Curriculum

My remarks are organized by broad category rather than by specific recommendation.

Recommendation Category #1: Honors Staffing, Resources and Budget.

The Site Visit Team recommends that an additional staff member be added to the team along with dedicated Honors faculty members. The Honors Director's response to the site visit review team report puts a finer point on the particulars of this recommended additional staff position and dedicated Honors faculty. The Honors Director suggests an additional staff position that would have responsibility for and expertise in diversity, equity and inclusion. Additionally, he recommends bringing stability and consistency to the Honors program faculty by developing an Honors Teaching Fellows program. I think both of these suggestions by the Honors program director have merit and I am committed to working toward achieving both of these additional resources for the program. Additionally, the site review team recommended folding the instructional costs into the overall Honors budget rather than asking the Provost to backfill the budget to cover additional instructional costs. This is an area we can and will explore. It is obvious that having a clear understanding of the resources in the budget makes for better planning and implementation.

Recommendation Category #2:

with the Honors Director that the suggested diversity climate survey is something to consider with respect to the most appropriate timing and tailoring it to the Honors program specifically.

Recommendation Category #4: Communication and Misconception around "Honors"

The Site Visit Team recommendations in this category again give some suggestions on things to do to help the Honors program redefine itself and then effectively communicate that to the broader campus community which should in turn effectively recruit new kinds of students to the program. Both scholarships and admissions to the Honors program are actively being considered and will be fleshed out in the "reimagining Honors" conversations occurring spring 2021. This is a welcomed and exciting change for the Honors program. The Provost's Office is committed to helping bring this new vision and definition of Honors to fruition.

Recommendation Category #5: Curriculum

The Site Visit Team recommendations in this category focus on three underlying curricular issues: 1) a very high number of general education courses that does not lend itself to offering a common pedagogy and/or curricular approach in Honors AND require a lot of people power to manage tracking and assessment; 2) the absence of an Honors First-Year Seminar experience to build community and retain students; and 3) the lack of consistency and definition of what it means to achieve departmental Honors. I concur with the Honors director that each of these are important underlying curricular issues that need to be addressed; however, the suggested solutions from the program review site visit team may not end up being the most appropriate next steps. I think the lack of consistency and definition of departmental Honors has been a pressing issue for the Honors program for many years now and would love to see it prioritized as a top curricular concern. I