

January 24, 2019

Richard Hughey, Vice Provost and Dean of Undergraduate Education  
Chancellor's Office

**Re: College Scholars Program**

Dear Richard,

The Committee on Educational Policy (CEP) recently discussed the College Scholars Program (CSP) at UCSC, our version of an undergraduate honors program, and how it could be strengthened. A strong honors program serves two important functions. First, by their participation in the academic activities of the university, high-achieving students serve as examples that other students will strive to emulate; student expectations are often set by what they see from their peers. Historically, UCSC has had a problem bringing in and retaining such students, and a well-designed honors program is a strong attraction. Second, when these students come here, it provides them with appropriate educational opportunities to keep them engaged. To the extent that our resources allow, it is our responsibility to have academic programs that meet every student at their level.

One of the difficulties that many universities face is ensuring sufficient diversity among the students in their honors program, i.e. how to ensure that students' potential for achievement is not obscured by academic preparedness at the time of matriculation, which can have many causes. By selecting students for the program at the time of admission to UCSC based on their holistic score, and having a second pathway into the program during their freshman year, the CSP has done very well in this regard. CEP commends this achievement, and makes suggestions later in this letter to extend this further.

Despite our relative success on this front, the CSP has a fairly limited set of features compared to honors programs at universities we would like to compete with.<sup>1</sup> Many universities have a separate Honors College and/or designated study space. Almost all of them incorporate research experience. Special honors courses and small seminars, and honors option for non-honors courses, are quite common; these extend over the entire four years of a student's time at the university. Programs that have such a range of features often have significant requirements for their honors students, sometimes formalized as a 'Honors Contract.' While it is unnecessary to copy all the features from other universities, it is important to strengthen the CSP from what we have at present in order to attract these students. We have divided our recommendations into those for the central administration, those for CSP, and those for the Senate and the faculty:

*Recommendations for the central administration:*

1. The most important recommendation is to provide financial stability for the College Scholars Program by **providing central funds to support the seminar courses** that

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<sup>1</sup> The CEP subcommittee has surveyed a large number of universities we might hope to be comparable with: Arizona State University, City University of New York, Clemson University, New Jersey Institute of Technology, Ohio University, Penn State University, Purdue University, Temple University, University of Connecticut, University of Delaware, University of Georgia, University of Illinois, University of Kansas, University of Maryland, U Mass Amherst, University of North Carolina Chapel Hill, University of Oregon, and the University of South Carolina. The individual features are in an appendix to this letter.

run in the fall quarter of the sophomore year. At present these are mainly supported with funds from the Koret Foundation. This makes it very difficult to plan for the long term, or to expand the program (our third recommendation). Based on information provided by the CSP Director Matt O'Hara, this should cost approximately \$250,000 a year<sup>2</sup>. While this is not an insignificant sum, it is for a program that is very important for the quality of the undergraduate academic experience. Accordingly, we are requesting that you include this item in your response to the resource call from CPEVC Tromp that was issued recently. External grant funding can then be used to allow the program to explore additional directions, as detailed below.

2. We also reiterate the recommendation from CEP last year that the CSP be provided with **space in a central campus location** that will enable CSP students and 'alumni' — the program ends in a student's fourth term, which is early in their career — to meet and organize events and strengthen their sense of community. Because of the space constraints at UCSC, we limited our request to space being provided at certain times each week instead of dedicated space for the program. The central location, and appropriate size, is important if the space is to be truly useful. One possibility would be the Science and Engineering Library.
3. With reliable central funding, it should be possible to **include all ten colleges in the fall-start** part of the CSP (students entering the program when they matriculate at UCSC). At present, the fall-start part of the program only exists in four colleges. Ensuring that all the colleges participate fully in all aspects of the program will increase its impact considerably. With 20-25 students admitted per year in each college, the size of each CSP cohort (including fall-start and spring-start students) will increase from approximately 400 to 500, which is not a big increase. If this is not feasible, smaller groups in each college could be considered.

*Recommendations for the CSP Director*

(These have been discussed with CSP Director Matt O'Hara)

1. Ensuring that our program celebrates and fosters diversity, equity and inclusion has been a goal and was a driving factor in developing the Challenge Program that was folded into the CSP. A multifaceted diversity of the program, that ensures that we recruit the best students rather than those who happen to have had more advantages before coming to UCSC will bring added value to the program for all involved. We suggest that the CSP continue to seek ways to increase their diversity through **intensive, highly focused and multi-channel recruiting** to both applicants and potential applicants, possibly with mentoring partnerships with high schools in San Jose and Oakland. It should be possible to obtain external funding for these efforts. The

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<sup>2</sup> It would be worth considering if allowing ladder rank faculty instructors the choice between a course relief from departmental teaching obligations, research funds, and graduate support — similar to Senate service compensation — might result in greater participation by them.

admissions process to the program should also be sensitive to the many forms that academic promise can assume.

2. Providing **faculty mentoring** to CSP students would be very desirable, but it is impractical to hope to provide one-on-one mentoring to 400-500 students each year. It may be possible to organize group mentoring, perhaps during activities such as dinners.
3. Many universities have their Honors Program start in the summer before students enter the university in the fall. We have not looked into this in detail, but we suggest that the CSP Director could consider if adding such a component to the CSP would make a significant difference.
4. Our understanding is that the campus has a grant writer who can help all high-achieving students — including CSP students. It would be helpful if CSP could ensure that this is publicized more widely.

*Recommendations for the Senate and faculty*

(These will be sent to departments after their work on program statements for the General Catalog is complete.)

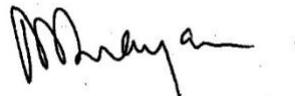
1. The CSP ends after students' fourth quarter at UCSC. By contrast, many honors programs at other universities extend over a full four years. A key component of these extended programs is the **engagement of students in research**. Even without a four-year CSP, UCSC should aim to provide a senior thesis capstone option in every undergraduate academic program for those students who are interested and capable of pursuing research, and whose interests align with the faculty. With widely varying student to faculty ratios in our academic programs, CEP can only recommend this to the faculty instead of making it a requirement. However, we believe that the inability to provide such a research experience because of resource constraints is an indicator that a program is overstretched and needs more resources (or fewer students).
2. Going further, we would welcome departments being able to offer some kind of research experience to CSP and other advanced students in their junior year, to serve as a bridge between the current program which ends in the sophomore year and the senior thesis.
3. Another common feature of many honors programs is the existence of special honors courses and seminars distributed throughout a student's four years. We will recommend to departments that they consider whether it would be advisable and feasible in some of their courses — especially high-enrollment courses — for instructors to teach a 'honors' discussion section (if they want to). We acknowledge that this may not be suitable for all courses, that departments may already provide other options for their best students to excel, and that some departments are too over-extended to do this.

Nevertheless, it would be worth considering this possibility where appropriate.

4. Many universities allow students in their honors' program to borrow books from the University Library for a longer duration. We think that this is a good idea, and have recommended to the Committee on the Library and Scholarly Communications that they consider introducing this to UCSC.
5. Many universities have special honors seminars emphasizing critical reading and thinking skills. As a result of the recent reform of the core course -- now called College 1 -- in the colleges, this has become the focus of the course. Unlike past practice, CSP students are no longer placed in separate honors sections of the course, but are merged with all the other students. As the College 1 courses are reviewed, we will see if the new model is providing a positive learning experience for students with various levels of preparation, or if changes are needed.

A strong honors' program is an essential part of providing a high quality undergraduate education for both the students in the program and other students at a university. The UCSC College Scholars' Program has to be competitive with the programs at our peer institutions. We will work with departments and our faculty colleagues, but we hope that you will support the recommendations for the central administration given above, and that they will be implemented.

Sincerely,



Onuttom Narayan, Chair  
Committee on Educational Policy

Enclosure: Appendix

cc: Marlene Tromp, Campus Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor  
Matt O'Hara, Director, College Scholars Program  
Alan Christy, Chair, Council of Provosts  
Rita Mehta, Chair, Committee on Admissions and Financial Aid

## **Appendix**

Summary of features of honors programs at other universities. Where there is an honors college or equivalent, it is mentioned in parentheses.

### [Arizona State University \(Barrett\)](#)

Barrett, Honors College  
Residential (floor)  
Small classes/seminars  
Multidisciplinary team-taught courses & other engaged modes of learning  
Development of critical reading, discussion and writing skills  
Signature courses  
Honors Enrichment Contracts (i.e. way for student to work directly with faculty)

### [City University of New York \(Macaulay\)](#)

Honors college for CUNY, student has a home campus and then comes together at Macaulay for the honors programs)  
Macaulay seminars: required, research, classroom, and hands on focusing on NYC (examples, arts, people and migration, science forward, shaping future of NYC, \$1 laptop, \$1500 fund for tuition or projects,

### [Clemson University \(Calhoun\)](#)

Honors college  
5 week summer program before Freshman year, working with research faculty on a research project  
Special advising for major national fellowships and scholarships  
Cultural and social events  
24-7 study space  
Honors Residential College with Faculty-in-Residence  
Peer mentoring  
Smaller honors sections of standard courses  
Honors seminars  
Priority registration  
Extended checkout times at library  
Grants for their research, travel, conferences, etc.

### [New Jersey Institute of Technology \(Dorman\)](#)

Merit Scholarship packages  
Residential hall  
2 honors colloquia per semester  
Guaranteed on-campus housing  
Individualized learning experience with Honors courses, thesis-level research, professional development, study abroad opportunities  
Campus/community service

### [Ohio University \(Honors Tutorial College\)](#)

One class per term that is one-on-one or small group, discussion driven  
Priority scheduling & housing  
Academic flexibility—not required to do GEs or have prerequisites for courses  
Can enroll in graduate courses  
Funds available for project and travel  
“scholars-only” residence halls—either honors or students with selective academic scholarships

### [Penn State University \(Schreyer\)](#)

Honors courses, exclusive study abroad programs, research placements  
Dedicated housing  
Small honors courses  
Research opportunities  
Honors thesis  
Honors option on non-honors course  
Distinguished Honors Faculty Program (small non-traditional courses extending learning beyond classroom walls)  
Integrated undergraduate/graduate programs, proposed by students

### [Purdue University](#)

Organized by houses  
Residential  
Bridge gap between curricular and extracurricular learning  
Honors courses & honors in non-honors courses  
Has inclusion statement  
Introductory honors class in first year  
Individualized advising  
Scholarship office (also for others who have excellent academic record)

### [Temple University](#)

Small class sizes  
Honors housing  
Priority registration  
Honors lounge  
advising  
honors courses (must take 10)  
honors project (optional?)

### [University of Connecticut](#)

Honors courses, honors core, first-year seminar  
First year residential community  
Research/creative projects  
Honors for non-honors courses

Faculty advisors  
Honors thesis  
Research project between freshmen & sophomore years

### [University of Delaware](#)

Honors courses  
Honors residential programs  
Honors freshman colloquium  
Honors sections

### [University of Georgia](#)

Honors sections/courses  
To graduate with honors/Highest honors, must have Graduate courses, senior thesis or special project  
Encouraged to be involved in research  
Internship placements  
Special study abroad  
Combined bachelor's master's degree  
Advising/priority registration  
Fellowships for research/travel  
Honors "magnet residence hall"—first years

### [University of Illinois \(Campus Honors\)](#)

Admitted as James Scholar/Chancellor's scholar  
Help with scholarship applications  
Honors work in academic departments  
Can enter honors after freshman year

### [University of Kansas](#)

Honors advising  
Helps students find research opportunities with faculty  
Honors Center (non-residential) with events  
Required four enhanced learning experiences  
Small, discussion-based honors classes  
Residence with "preferred" placement for honors students  
Honors classes available to other students with permission

### [University of Maryland](#)

Thematic living-learning programs  
Honors sections of classes (exclusive to honors students)  
Variety of two and four year honors programs  
Departmental honors in their majors

[U Mass Amherst \(Commonwealth College\)](#)

Students reside in Commonwealth College.  
Honors classes have 25 or fewer students.  
Several GE honors courses, Honors Seminar Series.  
Departmental honors programs at upper division level:  
    Special honors courses  
    Honors thesis or project  
    Must maintain a GPA of 3.5 or higher.

[University of North Carolina – Chapel Hill](#)

First year seminars  
Honors courses  
Honors colloquium  
Option to live with other honors students with special programming

[University of Oregon \(Clark\)](#)

Help in applying for scholarships  
Intro course  
Seminar style classes  
Priority registration  
Priority registration for Global Scholars Hall  
Everything focused in Chapman hall

[University of South Carolina](#)

Special campus housing  
Research projects  
Study abroad  
Service learning  
Internships  
Assisting students apply for fellowships  
Senior thesis or project