Final Report  
Academic Program Review  
Honors Program  

Review Process

The Honors Program prepared a self-study following program review guidelines. An external review team visited the campus, reviewed the self-study documents, interviewed unit personnel and university administrators and submitted an external review report. The Program Review Committee (PRC) read the self-study and the external review, and discussed the Program with the director. This document reflects the PRC’s findings and recommendations.

Self-Study

Overview

The University Honors Program, founded in 1978, offers classes, a variety of enrichment programs and a supportive environment for students who qualify and choose it as an option. It is a holistic program, “built on the assumption that Honors students have emotional and spiritual needs, as well as intellectual ones.”

Students who participate must have a 3.5 or better high-school grade-point average; an ACT Composite Score of 27 or above, or an SAT Composite of 1200 or above; two letters of recommendation; and placement in or exemption from English 112. In order to stay in the Program, students must complete at least fifteen hours of Honors coursework by the end of her/his fourth semester and maintain at least a 3.0 grade-point average. Students in the Program receive priority scheduling.

To graduate with University Honors, students must earn a 3.5 cumulative grade-point average; complete a minimum of 17 semester hours of Honors coursework with a B or better; take at least one interdisciplinary Honors seminar; and complete an interdisciplinary Senior Honors Project. (Note – these requirements changed beginning with the 2000-01 academic year. Students wishing to graduate with Honors must complete 20 semester hours of courses, in addition to the senior project, and must achieve a 3.4 or better in Honors courses.)

Staff and Faculty

The program staff consists of a 3/4 time director, a full-time associate director, a full-time assistant director, a full-time administrative assistant, a 3/4 time secretary and two half-time program assistants (master’s students). It is likely that the secretary will soon be converted to full-time. Honors faculty come from a variety of departments; however, the director has limited say in the staffing of Honors courses. Faculty are generally assigned Honors courses in lieu of other courses in their department; in some instances the department is compensated
monetarily, so that part-time replacements can be hired. In Fall 1999, 70% of those teaching were tenure-line faculty, either active or retired. In Fall 1998 and 1999 two faculty were reassigned to teach fulltime for the Program; they were designated as Honors Affiliated Faculty.

An Honors Advisory Council (composed of seven faculty members from across the University, the Vice Provost for Academic Programs and program staff) and the Student Advisory Board (composed of eight elected student representatives) meet regularly to assess the quality of the Program and to generate ideas for strengthening it. Faculty representatives are chosen by the Honors Director and approved by the Vice Provost. The Program reports to the Vice Provost for Academic Programs. The self-study states that to be truly effective the Honors Advisory Council should play a major role in overseeing and guiding the Program, and this is currently not the case. Likewise the Student Advisory Board needs to have a better sense of what its role is in relation to both the Program and the student body it represents.

The self-study confirms a high degree of student satisfaction with the staff (ratings of 4.70 and 4.46 in a recent two-year period). In general, however, the staff feels “stressed and overworked,” more than likely a result of the numbers of students they serve. Cited as a major weakness is the Program’s effort on behalf of the faculty. Because of their “transient” nature, the faculty feel “minimal allegiance to the Program—and have little interest in participating in idea-sharing activities.”

**Students**

The Honors Program has grown significantly, from a total of 627 students in Fall 1994 to 930 in Fall 1998. Over the past five years, the quality of entering students has been consistent, with an average high-school GPA of 3.82-3.91. Average ACT scores range from 27.63 to 28.19. The percentage of minority students entering the Program is currently around 6%; female students comprise 74.36%. As of Fall 1999, students were distributed throughout the campus as follows: 45% in the College of Arts and Sciences; 20% in the College of Education and Human Development; 11% in the College of Health and Human Services; 11% in the College of Business; 7% in the College of Musical Arts; 2% in the College of Technology; and 4% undecided.

Retention rates for Honors students are reflected in these figures: by August 1999, 56.8% (117 out of 206) of the first-year students admitted in Fall 1995 had graduated from the University (in four years), having maintained good standing in the Program. Of all the first-year Honors students admitted in fall 1998, 92.5% returned to the University in fall 1999. In 1998-99 forty students graduated with University Honors, an all-time high. The increase is attributed to admission of greater numbers of students in the Program and more vigilant advising.

The number of first-year students entering the Program in Fall 1999 was 238, down from a high of 277 in 1998. A slight decline in the average ACT and SAT
scores can also be observed. Both can be attributed to the decline in the number of National Merit Scholars coming to the University. These students are being recruited aggressively and are offered considerable financial incentives to attend elsewhere.

Facilities and Housing

The Honors Program offices, located in 104 University Hall, include five private offices, a main office/reception area, two workrooms and a small conference room; it is, however, inadequate for a program of this size. A planned move to Moseley Hall (originally scheduled for 1999 but now postponed until 2004) would provide the extra space needed. The Honors Center, located below the Sundial Restaurant in the Kreischer Quadrangle Hub, is the site of many activities and events, but is in dire need of renovation.

Honors students have the opportunity to be housed in either Darrow or Compton Halls, and over 300 students choose this option. Comfortable study and social lounges are found in both locations. Special programs are offered to students living in Honors housing; these are jointly coordinated by a Programming Board comprised of residence hall staff and Honors Program staff and students. The Program maintains an office in Darrow Hall, and student advising is conveniently provided in both Darrow and Compton Halls. Housing is adequate, but with the presence of so many non-Honors students in Darrow, those living there were prevented from having a genuine Honors housing experience. Beginning in 2000-01 the configuration of Darrow will be changed to eliminate this problem. Despite some weaknesses, students rate the housing experience 4.16 on a 5-point scale (Spring 1999). When asked about a sense of “Honors Community,” however, students responded with a 3.27 rating in 1999.

Curriculum

Honors courses are offered in most academic areas and are scheduled to accommodate both the General Education requirements and the group requirements for A&S degrees. Most of the courses are departmentally based, although special interdisciplinary seminars are also offered. These classes are ordinarily limited to 25 students. In addition any class can be taken as an Honors Tutorial with the approval of the instructor and the Honors Director; usually an independent research or creative project is assigned as extra work. From 1994 to 2000 the number of Fall Honors courses grew from 29 (in 35 sections) to 57 (in 72 sections). Each semester a number of courses are “crosslisted,” so that both Honors and non-Honors students can register. Before registration, the Program distributes a “Coursebook” containing descriptions of the Honors courses to be offered the following semester.

While the Honors Program enjoys a high degree of flexibility in the coursework it offers, it is also plagued with lack of consistency, focus and coherence. Because of this, the Program is advocating the creation of an Honors
Core Curriculum (mainly in Arts and Sciences), so that students will have a common set of experiences. If implemented, 8-10 faculty serving as Honors Affiliated Faculty will be needed.

The Program also hopes to address the problem of small numbers in specific courses for majors in the Colleges of Musical Arts, Business Administration and Education and Human Development. Finally, so that the curriculum can maintain more consistency, departments will be asked to offer specific Honors courses on a regular basis.

**Program Enhancement**

The Honors Program oversees the University’s annual nominations for Goldwater, Truman and Rhodes Scholarships. If efforts in the national scholarship area are to be expanded, the self-study argues, this responsibility should be shifted to a separate University office. Since 1998, two students received the prestigious Goldwater Scholarship, one was a Truman finalist, and two were state finalists in the Rhodes competition.

As part of its offerings to students, the Program sponsors excursions to museums and fine arts events, visits of guest speakers, a Faculty Discussion Series, reading groups and a study abroad program at the University of East Anglia in England. Several awards, scholarships and prizes are available to students in the Program: Mayeux, Bashore, Tuition Raffle, Clark, Becky Hendel “Make a Difference,” Mike Noggle Leadership, Sue Hojnacki Creativity, and Debra Wing Service. The Program intends to examine the application procedures for both the Bashore and Hendel Awards.

Created in 1981, the Honors Student Association, with 260 (1999-00) to 300 (1998-99) members, is one of the largest and most active student groups on campus. Two newsletters, Program Notes and The Communicator, are published by the Program and the students several times a year. Pillars and Ivy, an alumni newsletter, is published every other year. These are largely informational in nature. The Service Learning Committee plans community service programming options for Honors students. In a Spring 1999 questionnaire, students rated the Honors Student Association 3.42 on a 5-point scale, citing cliquishness, female-centered programming, focus on first- and second-year students, unwieldy structure, location and time-commitment to be some of the problems.

**Advising and Recruitment**

Academic advising is provided by the Honors Program staff, as well as the traditional college and departmental offices. During summer Orientation and Registration, special sessions are offered for incoming Honors students. The Associate Director, a licensed professional counselor, also provides short-term mental health counseling. She works closely with the Counseling Center and the Student Health Center and refers students with long-term problems to these offices.
“Fresh Start” is a highly-successful peer mentoring program especially designed for first-year commuters and those not living in Honors housing.

The Program’s Assistant Director (hired in July 1999) is largely responsible for coordinating the Program’s recruitment efforts and, consequently, activity has increased. At the Fall Preview Days, the Program has a special table at which prospective students and their parents can get information. On the second (December) Preview Day, the Program hosts a Scholar Reception for National Merit and other scholarship finalists. During the Spring, the Program is represented at the Presidents’ Day Open House and on Bring-A-Scholar-to-Campus Day. In addition the Office of Admissions identifies qualified students who have been accepted to the University and sends out an Honors application packet to each one (approximately 1750 in 1998-99). The Honors brochure is sent to every Ohio high-school counselor. A Student Recruitment Committee (composed of 20-25 current Honors students) is actively involved in many of the Program’s on-campus recruitment efforts.

To address the need for more students of color, the Honors Program was given a grant from the campus Enrollment Network to support some targeted activities. The goal is to increase the percentage of students of color in the entering class from 9.66% in 1999 to 20% by 2002. The Program also intends to address the imbalance between female (74.36%) and male (25.64%) students.

Assessment

At the end of each year an email questionnaire for the purposes of evaluating classes, faculty, staff, programming, housing, and the Honors Student Association is sent out. In Spring 1999, 131 students responded to the questionnaire, a drop from the previous year’s 175 responses. Student evaluation forms, faculty self-evaluation forms, class visits and alumni evaluation forms are also used.

Budgets, Accounts, Fundraising

The operating budget for the Honors Program is currently $39,036. Various yearly subsidies have increased that amount to a recent high of $54,536 (1999-2000). Note, however, that the salary of the part-time secretary ($19,453) is included. If the secretary is converted to full-time, the operating budget will likely be reduced by this amount. The Program has an instructional budget of $22,000 that is used to pay departments for faculty assigned to Honors courses. During the past year, the Office of the Provost added an additional $12,800. The Honors Student Association receives $7000 from the University Student Organization Financial Board; that income is supplemented with dues paid by Honors Student Association members and profits from various fundraising activities. Several thousand dollars and the scholarship endowments are in the University Foundation account.

The self-study stated that it is crucial that the base amounts of both the operating and instructional budgets be adjusted in keeping with the yearly
subsidies that have kept them afloat. Furthermore, the Program is ready to seek more external donors and will be preparing to work with the Office of Development in this regard.

**Major Goals for 2000-2006**

In summary, the self-study sites the following as the major goals for the Honors Program in the coming seven years:

A. Develop an Honors core curriculum to be launched in fall 2001.
B. Create an Honors Faculty Development Program.
C. Create a fund to be used for course enhancement.
D. Work with deans and chairs to regularize the list of Honors course offerings and find ways of increasing Honors course enrollments.
E. Strengthen the Program’s recruitment efforts to attract quality students; enforce admission requirements so as to cap the Program at 1000.
F. Make regular contact with high school counselors and AP teachers.
G. Recruit more students of color; raise the percentage to 20%; involve more faculty of color in the Program.
H. Recruit more male students.
I. Increase the number and size of scholarships to incoming freshmen.
J. Double (to 80) the number of students graduating with University Honors.
K. Increase the operating budget.
L. Work to broaden the perspective of students through the emphasis of multicultural and international issues in courses.
M. Expand role of Honors Advisory Council.
N. Increase the prominence and effectiveness of the Student Advisory Board.
O. Make the Honors living experience truly significant.
P. Restructure the Honors Student Association, so that it can operate more effectively.
Q. Create an Honors Complex on the central campus (probably in Moseley Hall) to make the Program more prominent, enhance community, and recruit new students.
R. Secure external funding.
S. Publicize Program activities for awareness.
T. Expand service learning opportunities.
U. Strengthen the sense of community among students, faculty and staff.

**External Review Team’s Report**

The external review team was favorably impressed with the Honor’s Program at Bowling Green State University, stating that the intent of their observations and comments “is to try to help the Honors Program become even better, recognizing that what is happening now is truly quite good.” They were disappointed that they were not able to meet with the president and noted that institutional commitment is the key to a strong Honors Program.
The reviewers identified the following strengths and weaknesses:

**Strengths**

1) The Program is well-functioning and in recent years has grown in size, quality of students attracted, and successes of those students.

2) The Program has an “intimacy” and family atmosphere.

3) The staff is greatly admired by students (also mentioned as a problem).

4) Faculty enthusiasm is high.

5) Privileges are accorded to students (e.g., priority scheduling, residence halls, and activities).

6) Offices are reasonably good; lack of a student lounge nearby is seen as a detriment.

7) A number of students are achieving at a very high level (e.g., Goldwater national scholarship winners, and student member of Board of Trustees).

**Problems – General Areas (important concerns)**

1) Mission confusion – the external reviewers perceived a high level of confusion as to what the Honors Program is, the purposes it serves for the University, how it is structured and administered, and how it is valued and supported by central administration.

2) Divergent attitudes about the Honors Program – perceptions differ noticeably at every level (administration, staff, students) with regard to what the Program is supposed to do. Is it primarily an educational unit or a place to foster good citizenship and self-actualization?

3) Perceived lack of commitment from higher administration – other programs, like Chapman, seem to receive more commitment.

4) The requirement for an interdisciplinary approach to the final project could create “a barrier to completion of the degree.” Fewer than half of the students are estimated to complete the thesis (statistics unavailable).

**Problems – Specific Areas (smaller concerns)**

1) Cross-listed courses and teaching assignments – 40% of classes offered are actually mixed Honors and non-Honors students; 30% are taught by non-tenure track faculty (including a fair number of graduate students); faculty believe
departments do not value their teaching in the Honors Program; and there are only a limited number of classes that fit into students’ schedules.

2) Admissions policies – the required essay is perceived as a hurdle; the University has no target number for Honors admissions in relation to current resources; the self-study’s color/minority admission goal is 20%, but neither the University’s overall enrollment or the state population comes close to this; recruiting is delayed compared to other universities; there is “almost no” scholarship money; the Program is not listed in national guides.

3) Upper division difficulties – students lose touch after the second year; the tally of students appears to be skewed by including many upper division students who are no longer pursuing Honors curriculum.

4) Insularity – the Program has no presence in regional or national organizations.

5) Student life and activities – the self-study notes 300 members of HSA, but not all are active participants; students give mixed reactions on residence hall life.

6) Faculty involvement – the Faculty Advisory Board is picked by the Director, which could mean that academic units have “little or no stake” in the Program; the person to whom the Program reports sits on the Board; the evaluation form for classes assesses all but course content (the Honors program took immediate action to correct this).

7) Gender ratio – the external reviewers did not believe the ratio of women to men was a problem, considering the University’s ratio and the national average of Honors Program participants.

Recommendations of the External Team

Primary (need immediate attention)

1) Determine mission and how it will be pursued – involve various constituencies of the University to develop a mission statement; stress the importance of the Honors Program within the “big picture” of BGSU; the mission must be formally approved by the Provost; develop a clear set of policies and procedures that are approved at appropriate institutional levels.

2) Clarify and come to agreement on perception of “what constitutes Honors education” at BGSU; adopt a more academic orientation; clarify the concept of interdisciplinary study, so that all at the University know what is intended.

Secondary

1) Increase participation in regional and national Honors activities.
2) Examine recruiting procedures – begin earlier; link to summer programs/camps at BGSU.

3) Implement special library privileges for Honors students (e.g., extended borrowing).

4) Evaluate the orientation experience – change the schedule so the English placement essay need not be completed ahead of time.

5) Carefully assess who is teaching Honors classes.

6) Establish stronger relationship with study abroad programs.

7) Publicize student and Program achievements more vigorously.

8) Maintain and capitalize on the Program’s community emphasis within a more academic framework.

9) Carefully examine the budget, with respect to the following:
   a) As the mission is resolved, consider the manner in which classes are staffed and who “pays” for them. In place of the “tin cup” policy the Director must now use, consider the possibility of putting “buy-out” money in the Honors budget, or allocating FTE to each college that must be used to staff Honors courses.
   b) Director’s position should be fulltime for the fiscal year to make the Director’s salary competitive.
   c) Carefully review the assignment of graduate student assistants to administrative responsibilities.
   d) Find scholarship money.
   e) Make the Honors Program one of the foci of the Office of Development.
   f) Establish a better budget for recruiting.

10) Decide on whether to be an Honors Program or Honors College – not a recommendation, but something to be aware of as national trend.

   In closing the External Review team included as part of its report a brief analysis of the BGSU Honors Program as it relates to the National Collegiate Honors Council’s Basic Characteristics of Fully-developed Honors Programs. Although the Council does not serve as an accrediting body, it conducts site visits. The Council also espouses the philosophy that “no one model of an honors program can be superimposed on all types of institutions.” The sixteen characteristics are summarized below with a brief comment on BGSU’s performance:

   1) The program must identify a student population by a clearly articulated set of criteria. A program with “open admission” should spell out expectations for retention and satisfactory completion.
On the surface BGSU has a clearly articulated set of criteria. However, they are not always used in practice.

2) “The program needs a clear mandate from institutional administration ideally in the form of a mission statement clearly stating the objectives and responsibilities of the program and defining its place in both the administrative and academic structure of the institution… In other words, the program should be fully institutionalized…”

BGSU lacks both a mission and a clear mandate from the institutional administration, as described in the external report’s first recommendation.

3) The honors director should report to chief academic officer.

The Director reports to the Vice Provost for Academic Programs, who does not have the authority to allocate resources.

4) There should be an honors curriculum featuring special courses.

BGSU has some courses. However, there are problems with availability, cross-listing, and commitment of departments.

5) “The program requirements should include a substantial portion of the participants’ undergraduate work, usually in the vicinity of 20 to 25%… and no less than 15%”.

BGSU’s requirements are slightly lower than those recommended.

6) The program should relate effectively to all college work for the degree, including both general education requirements and area of concentration.

“Honors classes appear to do this.” However, the reviewers expressed concern regarding the emphasis on interpersonal skills reflected in expected outcomes of Honors classes.

7) The program should be visible and highly reputed in the institution.

The external reviewers found “…no university-wide mission that supports the Honors Program.” They noted that “Honors education is visible and appreciated in the College of Arts and Sciences, but has very little recognition elsewhere.”

8) “Faculty participating in the program should be fully identified with the aims of the program. They should be carefully selected on the basis of exceptional teaching skills and the ability to provide intellectual leadership.”

BGSU does not appear to meet this criterion.

9) The program should occupy suitable quarters.
Facilities are quite good, although they lack a suitable lounge area. The external team noted difficulties arising from the distance between the Honors office and the Honors residence halls.

10) The director should work closely with the board.

The mechanism is in place at BGSU, although the reviewers question the selection process and the membership of the Vice Provost on the board.

11) The program should have a committee of students to serve as liaison with the board. This committee should be as autonomous as possible and should be included in the program governance.

BGSU has a student advisory council, but the Program staff holds ex officio membership, compromising the autonomy of the council.

12) There should be provisions for academic counseling for uniquely qualified staff.

BGSU has provisions for special academic counseling. However, the external reviewers were critical of the emphasis on mental health counseling and on the limited academic counseling after the second year.

13) The honors program should be a “lab” for faculty to try things; the honors curriculum should be a prototype for other classes.

This criterion is met well at BGSU.

14) “The fully-developed honors program should be open to continuous and critical review and be prepared to change in order to maintain its distinctive position of offering distinguished education to the best students in the institution.”

This appears to be met well at BGSU.

15) The honors program should offer opportunities for students to participate in conferences, community service and other types of experiential education

The external reviewers found mixed support in these areas, but noted that the Program is making an effort to increase participation.

16) A fully-developed honors program will have articulation agreements with two-year colleges.

This is not important at BGSU, but transfer is possible.
Program Review Committee Findings

Overview

The PRC finds that a vigorous Honors Program is essential to the health of BGSU. This finding is foundational to our understanding of and recommendations for the Honors Program. The Honors Program continues to grow and generate interest among a loyal group of students and faculty. The PRC congratulates the staff who are the heart of the Program and who provide the tireless efforts necessary for the Program’s success. The PRC also recognizes the faculty who give of their time and talents and those departments that support the Honors Program on a regular basis. The Program makes a valuable contribution to the students of the University and should be adequately supported.

The Honors Program self-study is a well-written and candid report that addresses the strengths and weaknesses of the Program in a thorough and honest manner. The PRC supports the major goals of the Program, as described in the concluding section of the self-study, but feels that a better timeline for the completion of these goals must be established.

Mission

The PRC notes several areas of concern, many of which were discussed in both the self-study and the external report. Most notable of this is that the Honors Program needs a clear mission statement supported by the President, the Provost and the Council of Deans. Clarity of purpose and administrative support for those purposes are essential for the success of the Honors Program.

Academics

The PRC believes the Honors Program should provide the best quality academic program available at BGSU. We encourage the Program to challenge its students academically and to provide the supports necessary to allow Honors students to meet rigorous academic standards. There are many possible avenues to achieve this end. In contrast to the external reviewers, the PRC believes that possible means include linking academic training with “real life” applications, integrating academic work with social supports, and increased use of experiential education and service learning. We find, however, that the integration of these various aspects of an Honors education is poorly articulated.

The external reviewers struggled to understand the relationship between the academic goals of the Honors Program on the one hand and the Program’s attention to social supports and interest in developing citizenship on the other. The PRC finds that the relationship between these aspects of the Honors Program could be made clearer and stronger. We disagree with the external reviewers’ recommendation that a sharper distinction needs to be made between high-quality academics and good citizenship. To the contrary, Bowling Green State University is
committed to attending to citizenship and personal development in the context of academic achievement.

The interdisciplinary approach to the Honors thesis may be a barrier to completion of University Honors. In addition, there may be some confusion about the meaning of “interdisciplinary” as applied to the thesis. The requirement for the thesis should be reconsidered and clarified.

Completion Rates

Among the academic goals of the Honors Program that need increased emphasis is the completion rate. The PRC finds that the number of students completing a degree with Honors is far too small, particularly in light of the number that are involved with the Program as freshmen and sophomores. Effort should be directed at increasing the participation of students in their junior and senior year, and to providing academic alternatives that increase the number of students graduating with Honors.

Recruiting

While recruiting procedures have improved over the years, we feel that the Program must continue to invest in strategies for identifying, enrolling and sustaining a high quality Honors population. The PRC supports the self-study’s stated goals of attracting more students with very high GPA’s and ACT scores. We also support the stated cap (goal E) and selective admissions to the Honors Program. Regular contact with high school counselors and teachers in AP courses (goal F) is also a strong recruitment step. We find the diversity goal stated in the self-study (goal G) is too high; a more realistic goal would be benchmarked to the University or state population. The PRC agrees with the external team that gender ratio is not problematic. In examining recruitment goals and practices, the Program also needs to look at application procedures, scholarship money (goal I), completion rates (goal J) and national visibility.

Assessment

The PRC finds that the assessment strategies of the Honors Program should be strengthened. The learning outcomes listed in the self-study are not actually outcomes expected of students, but actions or experiences that the Program will provide (“enhance”, “promote”, “foster”). Similarly, the assessments undertaken so far are not measures of student achievement - course evaluations are not assessments of student learning. There is a significant opportunity for the Honors Program to use assessment to assure itself and the community of its high academic standards; to refine and improve the integration of social supports, experiential learning and academic achievement; and to increase the number of students who complete their undergraduate degree with Honors.
Curriculum

The PRC agrees with both the self-study and the external review that various facets of the curriculum should be examined. It would be fruitful, for instance, to pursue the idea of a core curriculum (goal A). We believe there is a substantial opportunity to connect the Honors Program to junior and senior year study in Departmental Honors. The specific requirements of certain majors (e.g., music) make it difficult to find enough classes to allow for continuance in the Program. We also note that the continual problem in staffing Honors classes has implications for the academic rigor of the curriculum.

Faculty and Staff

Involvement and commitment of faculty are concerns. Because departmental resources are stretched so thinly, it is often difficult to give up a valued faculty member to the Honors Program for any length of time. There is also concern that those who do teach in the Program are not given enough support and credit to do so. Until the issue of personnel resources can be addressed, most likely on the departmental level, this situation will not change. The PRC feels that there are many individuals within the institution who would welcome the involvement in Honors, if the unit could be adequately compensated for the “loan.” For instance, as the external reviewers suggested, the Honors Program would be in much better position to plan its curriculum, to offer courses and to engage students if it had “buy out” money in the Honors Program budget. Alternatively, faculty could be allocated to each college for the specific purpose of staffing Honors courses. Or, temporary lines could be assigned to Honors for reassignment to departments as repayment for faculty commitment to Honors classes. In addition to these budgetary goals, the PRC supports the self-study’s goal to create an effective Honors Faculty Development Program (goal B).

Budget

The Honors Program budget must be clearly examined. Whereas the Program Director says that resources are adequate, he is not stating strongly enough that the Program is reliant on “soft money.” Yearly allocations from the Office of the Provost almost double the base budget for operations and significantly augment the instructional budget. This dependence on budgetary supplements makes long term planning nearly impossible.

Advisory Boards

The Honors Program has several advisory boards that should serve to guide the Program adequately. The PRC would like the Honors Advisory Council to take a stronger role in the guidance of the Program, perhaps by targeting several items to examine in the coming year. The larger administrative structure should also be re-examined. The question of to whom the Program reports and how this affects
institutional commitment should be addressed. The Vice Provost for Academic Programs should not be an *ex officio* member of the Honors Advisory Council.

**Advising**

The PRC and the external reviewers feel that the Program provides adequate academic advising. Both groups question, however, the role of a mental health counselor in the Program.

**Promotion**

The Honors Program should also reconsider the way it promotes itself (goal S). The Office of Marketing and Communications could help develop plans to heighten the visibility of the Program campus-wide, regionally and nationally. It was noted that in the past the Bowling Green Honors Program was quite active in regional and national organizations, but this is no longer the case. Active involvement in such organizations is of fundamental importance to the success of the Honors Program at BGSU.

**Program Review Committee Recommendations**

The Program Review Committee’s recommendations are founded on the understanding that a vigorous Honors Program is essential to the health of undergraduate programs at BGSU and to our ability to attract top quality students.

1) The Honors Program must draft a mission statement, one that gives priority to the highest quality academic experience, supported by experiential learning and the extracurricular environment. The Program should seek approval and support (both financial and otherwise) of the mission from the President, the Provost and the Deans, by the end of spring semester, 2001.

2) The Honors Program should undertake a study designed to discover why more students are not completing a degree with University Honors (e.g., core curriculum; interdisciplinary thesis). The study should include an examination of successful programs elsewhere, as well as an examination of BGSU students.

3) The PRC suspects that part of the reason for the small number of students completing a degree with Honors lies in the absence of an Honors curriculum extending into the junior and senior years. If this suspicion is borne out by the study (recommendation 2), the Program should create an Honors Core Curriculum extending into the junior and senior years. The Core Curriculum should be designed to increase the number of students who complete their degree with University Honors.

4) In order to be successful, the Program must receive adequate financial support.
   a) The Program should examine the various facets of the budget and do a five-year analysis of past spending practices. Based on that analysis, the new
mission statement, and a clear plan for the realization of the mission, the base budgets for operating and instruction should be adjusted accordingly.
b) Resources for Honors faculty should be included in the budget. The Honors Director should propose a plan, possibly with several alternatives based on suggestions included in the external report or the Findings of this report. The PRC recommends that the Provost and the Vice President for Finance and Administration meet with the Director to discuss the plan.

5) The Provost should consider increasing the position of the Director to fulltime 12-months, allowing for the possibility to teach at least one course.

6) The Program must develop better assessment procedures, beginning with the identification of learning outcomes that represent achievable (and assessable) student outcomes. Work on assessment should be structured so as to contribute to work on other recommendations, notably increasing the involvement of students in the Honors Program in the junior and senior years.

7) The Program should set a realistic goal for the recruitment of underrepresented groups, benchmarked to the University or state population. For all students, the recruitment plan should include contacting potential students in a more timely manner and shortening the lag time from initial inquiry to application to enrollment. Evaluate application procedures, especially with regard to required essay, and revise them as necessary.

8) The Program should revise the composition of the advisory boards. Staff members should not serve on the student advisory board, in keeping with the National Collegiate Honors Council’s Basic Characteristics of Fully-developed Honors Programs. The Vice Provost for Academic Programs should not be a member of the Honors Advisory Council.

9) The Director should re-examine the role of the Advisory Board. The PRC recommends that the Board focus on two or three issues during the coming year and develop action plans on those specific issues.

10) The Program should contact the Office of Marketing and Communications to develop a plan to promote the Honors Program both on and off campus.

11) The Program should work with the Office of Development to produce a long-term strategy for generating scholarship money to recruit students with outstanding academic qualifications.

12) The Program should refer students with mental health issues to the Counseling Center.

13) Program staff and Honors students should attend regional and national meetings of honors programs regularly.
14) Expansion of the space devoted to the Program should be reexamined after other prioritized recommendations are addressed.

The Honors Program should report annually to the Vice Provost for Academic Programs, with a copy to the Provost, on the implementation of these recommendations.