

UCA Honors College  
Strategic Plan  
(Updated December 2010)

Submitted by  
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# UCA Honors College Strategic Plan

## Preface

This document presents an update of the UCA Honors College Strategic Plan, aimed at mapping systematic assessment onto the founding narrative of the UCA Honors College. The mission of the UCA Honors College is more than a quarter century old, the initial assessment plan less than half that old, and the first strategic thinking initiative less than half the age of the latter. The new plan links these elements more tightly than ever.

This first step was undertaken by administrative faculty and professional staff over the summer months of 2009. During the 2009 Fall Semester Honors faculty and staff reviewed the proposal and made modifications, and in the 2010 Spring Semester Honors student representatives are studying this proposal and may modify it further. We are implementing the updated strategic plan for the entering freshman class of Fall, 2010.

There are several reasons for this effort now. First, the decennial accreditation review by the Higher Learning Commission scheduled for this academic year prompts us to take stock of where we have been and where we are headed.

Second, fiscal constraints mean that all good ideas cannot be funded; instead, we must choose among the good ideas, emphasizing what is most important, and this requires a systematic strategy and an annual accounting of the effectiveness of our choices.

The third reason requires a more extensive explanation. Honors colleges differ in two critical ways from disciplinary departments.

(1) Higher education divides undergraduates into interest groups whose members have varying levels of ability. Departments use their curricula to prepare undergraduate students for participation in the profession(s) associated with its discipline(s). Central to the certification of preparedness are standards of accomplishment—a minimum level is established above which students earn degrees. Those with low ability or motivation either improve performance and rise above the minimum level for certification or they are not retained.

Mission statements and resources in departments are therefore structured primarily to promote professional development of faculty, in order to have them contribute to their field and keep abreast of its developments so they can embody its standards of accomplishment as models for undergraduates. Assessment plans aim to measure how effectively faculty development proceeds from year to year. For undergraduate students, it seeks to measure their understanding of disciplinary content transmitted by lecturers, texts, and exercises.

In contrast, honors colleges divide undergraduates into ability groups, admitting those who share characteristics demarcating high ability and motivation but who can vary widely in aspired-to professional interests. Honors colleges develop students' scholarly capacities to

prepare them to lead and participate in communities of residence (civic polities), interest (professional and employment hierarchies), and value (diffuse references groups with shared morals that guide social action). Expectations of accomplishment are both higher (given the aptitudes students bring to honors settings) and more diffuse (given the arenas of participation that are broader than the professional one).

Mission statements and resources in honors colleges are structured primarily to promote student development; development here has two meanings—the curriculum is designed to foster developmental change in student performance and accomplishment from freshman through senior years, and student development also refers to goals for the entire person aimed at growing incrementally capacities in scholarship, leadership, and citizenship. An honors curriculum engages students by having them employ scholarly devices to undertake moral reflection that, in turn, expresses itself in professional leadership and community action. Honors classroom practices are therefore writing- and speaking-intensive; more likely to involve projects, student collaboration, and service learning; and less likely to locate authority solely in the voice of a lecturer whose centrality is justified by disciplinary expertise.

Assessment must begin by measuring the effectiveness of the process by which students come to be in an honors setting, in contrast to most academic departments (that do not recruit or have admissions programs). Next, measures must be defined that assess students' skill sets in scholarship, leadership, and citizenship, apart from knowledge of specific content, since honors colleges are transdisciplinary. Furthermore, if the connection among these three capacities is to be undertaken through student engagement in sites beyond the classroom, assessment must measure programming located in broader living-learning environments.

(2) Disciplinary departments typically devote 80% or more of their budgets to personnel. With few exceptions, most salaries are for faculty since few staff members are needed for out-of-classroom programming. Remaining budget lines that are mission-critical are faculty travel for professional development, office supplies, and office and information technology.

In contrast, honors colleges typically devote 50%-80% of their budgets to students. The lion's share is w (samrtise) Tj 1 0 0684.72 254.16c -00.004 Tc 0 wainary (that

- Their own faculty, staff and students
- Their university administrations
- Other academic departments and colleges
- Non-academic, administrative units with which they partner (e.g., admissions, housing, scholarships, student affairs, development, alumni affairs)
- Prospective faculty (instructors and thesis advisors)
- Prospective students and their parents
- Alumni and prospective donors

The strategic plan for the UCA Honors College reveals what has become, in its nearly thirty-year history, a complex enterprise, comprised of many programs, practices, and processes. The five central goals, enrollment and membership, engagement, scholarship, leadership, and citizenship, are directly derived from the mission statement. The remaining structure of the plan elaborates the goals and specifies actions to achieve and measure outcomes that lead to periodic assessments in determining whether and how well goals are being met. To aid members of the various audiences bulleted above, a glossary precedes the plan's outline.

### Glossary of terms used in the Strategic Plan below

**Ambassadors:** An organization of current Honors students, selected by application, who aid the recruiting process by contacting applicants, assisting in campus visits and I-Squared Days, and visiting high schools.

**Co-Curricular Events:** The Honors College stages a variety of academic events, including High Tables (an occasional lecture series), Challenge Week (a themed series of public presentations on a current-issues topic, convened periodically), Soapboxes (student presentations), and Free School (faculty-run, short, non-credit courses with voluntary, free enrollment).

**Core faculty:** The Honors College has a faculty of eight with full-time appointments. One (the dean) is a full professor; two are tenured and hold the rank of associate professor; two are assistant professors in the tenure probationary period; one position is vacant (filled by a visiting faculty member); one is a non-tenure track Lecturer II

Honors Program: The first two years of the Honors curriculum, consisting of an interdisciplinary core integrated with the general education program.

Honors College: Students accepted into the Honors Interdisciplinary Studies minor form the Honors College and complete a minor curriculum of seminars, thesis research, and thesis writing.

Honors College Village: Farris and New Halls, along with the courtyard between the two.

Honors Council: Elected representatives of the Honors Center Society.

I-Squared Day: Short for Inform and Interview Day, a full day on-campus orientation and evaluation of high school applicants who have passed the first application screening. Morning sessions orient applicants and their families to Honors values and practices. In the afternoon, students attend a half-hour presentation connected to a text they read and wrote about in their applications; write a response to the presentation; and discuss its ideas and implications in groups of three to five students with a faculty member. Their performance in writing and



the program; secure a commitment from selected students to join our community; orient them to Honors values and practices; guide them through Program and College matriculation

1. Strategies:

1. involve all segments of the Honors College community
2. be highly selective
3. communicate and model Honors College values

2. Objectives

1. Select and admit incoming freshman class through highly selective recruiting processes

ü Measures of success

- A. starting in recruiting year 2011, have contact with eligible high school students at the rate of ten times the number of available openings by December 31
  - o Assessment: count individuals to whom mailings are sent, have ambassadors provide numbers of students seen on visits, count unique visitors to Prospective Students page on website, count student visits to Honors Center, count contacts at college fairs (total on January 5)
  - o



- Programs, processes, and practices impacted
  - I-Squared
  - Correspondence and personal contact to communicate acceptance and verify membership

incoming students who attend new non-SOAR orientation meeting (July 1)

- Programs, processes, and practices impacted
  - new orientation meeting
- C. 95% of Track 1 students continue into second semester, starting with incoming class of 2010
  - Assessment: Track freshman retention between first and second semesters, count and record circumstances for students not retained (11<sup>th</sup> day of class, spring semester)
  - Programs, processes, and practices impacted
    - I-Squared Day
    - new first-semester advising process
    - Honors College Scholarship
    - Gen-Ed integration

D.

- Assessment: Track retention into minor year, count and record circumstances for students not retained (11<sup>th</sup> day of fall semester)
- Programs, processes, and practices impacted

- Current advising practice (to be superseded by new process)
  - new set of advising practices as described above
- J. obtain scholarship funding to raise tuition support in Honors College scholarship to 16 credit hours per fall/spring semester by academic year 2012
- Assessment: evaluate success in obtaining said funding (fall 2012)
  - Programs, processes, and practices impacted
    - Honors College Scholarship
    - Partnership with scholarship office
- K. beginning with graduating class of May 2011, 80% of students who seek immediate admission into graduate or professional institutions successfully enroll within one year of graduation
- Assessment: Obtain information about graduate school planning from graduation planning form, track individual student outcomes (May 2012)
  - Programs, processes, and practices impacted
    - new advising processes
    - Letters of o -15.s : Odn

- F. Train faculty to advise students (August 15, 2010)
- G. Obtain appropriate Banner and ARGOS permissions for faculty advisers (August 15, 2010)
- H. Integrate sophomore orientation and lecture into new Introductory Seminar in Interdisciplinary Studies (January 5, 2011)
- I. Develop improved tracking and data collection related to alumni outcomes (May 1, 2011)
- J. Track changes in majors and failure of particular majors to persist to determine if preference needs to be given to particular majors at the time of admission (February 15, 2011)

### 3. Manage enrollment and celebrate community membership

#### ü Measures of success:

- A. Transition to and maintain an enrollment of 235-140 students
  - o Programs, processes, and practices impacted
    -

- Sophomore Orientation Saturday
- new Introd

2. Engagement: integrating students into a living-learning community where enhanced educational opportunities are made available, developing citizen-scholar capacities -- whole student development rather than disciplinary development -- connecting and allowing infiltration of social/personal activities with academic activities, and vice versa (leadership)
  1. Strategies
    1. collaboration with student services and residence life
    2. connecting residential and academic spaces and processes
    3. identification as citizen-scholar
  2. Objectives
    1. Utilize residential space to target engagement activities at specific student populations
      - ü Measures of success:
        - A. promote understanding of diversity through visible endorsement of, sponsorship of, and/or participation in at least one program in the residence halls per semester
          - o Assessment: evaluate success at sponsorship, endorsement, and/or participation in Residential Life diversity programming (Dec. 1, May 1)
          - o Programs, processes, and practices impacted
            - Partnership with housing (RAs)
            - High Tables
            - Soapboxes
            - Free School
            - Mentors
      - ü Action items:
        - A. Obtain RA program schedule and decide on sponsorships (August 1, 2010)
        - B.

- Forum computers

- A. 80% of students attend at least one Honors-sponsored co-curricular event each semester
  - Assessment: take attendance at all co-curricular events, analyze data to determine percentage of students attending
  - Programs, processes, and practices impacted
    - High Tables
    - Challenge Week
    - Soapboxes
    - Mentors
    - Honors Council
    - Issues in the Public Square
    - Co-sponsorship of campus speakers/programs
- B. reinvent Vino as online publication to launch by fall 2010
  - evaluate success at having Vino published online (Dec. 1, 2010)
  - Programs, processes, and practices impacted
    - HCOL/Website
    - new online Vino/publications
- C. each core faculty member supports through his or her attendance at least two events sponsored by Honors held in the residence halls per semester beginning Fall 2010
  - Assessment: take attendance at all co-curricular events, analyze data to measure whether individual faculty members attended at least two residence hall events (Dec. 15, 2010)
  - Programs, processes, and practices impacted
    - Core faculty
    - High Tables
    - Challenge Week
    - Soapboxes
    - Mentors
    - Honors Council
    - Issues in the Public Square

ü Action items:

- A. Hold discussions with stakeholders and acquire technical tools to move Vino to electronic form (May 1, 2010)
- B. Develop sustainable system for tracking student and faculty attendance at events (August 15, 2010)
- C. Devise consistent strategy for scheduling, maintaining calendars, and publicizing events/news from all originators (e.g., Twitter aggregator on HCOL) (August 15, 2010)



2. Objectives:

1. Emphasize progressive development of skills in Honors Program courses, culminating in capstone course that provides transition into minor research.

1. Freshman

ü Measures of success:

- A. writing assignments occur at least once a week
- B. emphasize self-discovery in at least 25% of writing assignments
- C. introduce library research methods and require their use in at least one writing assignment
- D. at least one major paper of 1000 words or more
- E. incorporate peer review into at least one writing assignment
- F. require revision of at least one major writing assignment
- G. texts and topics will arise from at least two distinct disciplines in the Humanities (Core I) or Behavioral and Social Sciences (Core II)
- H. Core I courses share a common syllabus and feature team-teaching and large-group activities in up to 40% of class time
- I. 60% of in-class activities will involve discussion or experiential learning
- J. student-teacher ratio of 15-1
  - o Assessment: syllabus review to determine whether these elements are present (August 1, January 5), measure student-teacher ratio (5<sup>th</sup> day of each semester, after completion of drop/add), norming review of selected writing across sections of team-taught course (November 15)

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- HCIS
- Mentor writing workshops
- PAs
- Borrowed faculty
- Adjunct faculty
- Core faculty
- Welcome Week Core I meeting
- Fall retreat speaker

ü Action items:

- A. Revise Core I to reflect stand-alone team-taught status (August 1, 2010)
- B. Include seminar-style Core II curriculum guidelines, based on strategic measures of success, in Honors College Faculty Handbook (August 1, 2010)
- C. Explore norming processes for reviewing student writing in Honors Core I (May 1, 2011)

2. Sophomore

ü Measures of success:

- A. writing assignments occur at least once a week
- B. emphasize critical self-reflection in at least 50% of writing assignments
- C. require library research in at least one writing assignment
- D. at least one major paper of 1500 words or more
- E. incorporate peer review into at least one writing assignment
- F. require revision of at least one major writing assignment
- G. texts and topics will arise from at least two distinct disciplines in Behavioral and Social Sciences, Humanities, and World Cultural Traditions (Core III)
- H. at least one assignment requires individual or group presentation
- I. 75% of in-class activities will involve discussion or experiential learning
- J. student-teacher ratio of 15-1
- K. implement capstone course for Honors Program for spring semester of sophomore year focusing on interdisciplinary research in lieu of current Honors Core IV by spring 2012
  - a. each student will revisit and/or revise citizen-scholar goals expressed in

- admissions essay in Introductory Seminar to Interdisciplinary Studies
- b. introduce service learning with at least one required activity in Introductory Seminar to Interdisciplinary Studies
- c. introduce Institutional Review Board purpose and processes, and assess student understanding through testing or written assignment
- d. review and discuss Honors pedagogy and purpose through at least one assignment based on The Challenge and The Lively Experiment
- e. culminate research topic development in Introductory Seminar to Interdisciplinary Studies with Sophomore Lecture
- f. preliminary tutorial contract filed for each matriculating student
- g. preliminary research proposal completed for each matriculating student
- o Assessment: syllabus review to determine whether these elements are present (August 1, January 5), measure student-teacher ratio (5<sup>th</sup> day of each semester, after completion of drop/add), norming review of student writing in ISIS (April 15)
- o Programs, processes, and practices impacted
  - Pedagogy
  - Core III
  - new Introductory Seminar in Interdisciplinary Studies
  - new sophomore advising process
  - Core faculty
  - Traded faculty
  - Adjunct faculty
  - Sophomore lectures
  - PAs
  - old Sophomore orientation process
  - Oxford tutorial (tutorial contract)
  - National scholarship grooming
  - Grants for study abroad
  - Research support grants
  - Tutorial and thesis adviser relationships
  - Service learning

- partnership with Institutional Review Board
- HCOL
- HCIS
- eReader

ü Action items:

- A. Create fourth-semester interdisciplinary research methods course as Program capstone (January 5, 2012)
- B. Clarify coordinator positions and responsibilities for Core I and fourth-semester interdisciplinary research methods course (May 1, 2010)
- C.

- Assessment: syllabus review to determine whether these elements are present (August 1, January 5), measure student-teacher ratio (5<sup>th</sup> day of each semester, after completion of drop/add), norming review of service learning reflection assignment in Senior Seminar (November 30, April 30)
- Programs, processes, and practices impacted
  - Pedagogy
  - Junior Seminars
  - Senior Seminars
  - new senior advising process
  - Core faculty
  - Borrowed faculty
  - Adjunct faculty
  - HCOL

phase or submit a detailed timeline for completing any remaining research

- E. 90% of students enrolled in Thesis will meet weekly for thesis writing seminar, with those unable to meet fulfilling online requirements
- F. by midterm of Thesis semester, all advisors will certify that students have completed a polished draft of the Senior Thesis Project

presentation of the Senior Thesis Project with peer review

80% of Senior Thesis Projects will be certified complete by the members of the thesis committee

remaining to be certified by the conclusion of the following (fall or spring) semester

75% of students will present their Senior Thesis Project in a publicly convened thesis conference,

- partnership with Institutional Review Board
- Borrowed faculty
- new Introductory Seminar to Interdisciplinary Studies
- new sophomore advising process
- new senior advising process
- HCOL
- HCIS
- eReader

ü Action items:

- A. Create forms/online processes for certifying and tracking tutorial research progress (August 15, 2010)
- B. Devise method of tracking dual (department with Honors addendum) theses in HCIS (August 15, 2010)
- C. Determine certification process for allowing students to enroll in tutorial and thesis, e.g., contract for tutorial, certification of research completion or plan for timely completion of

- F. 5 applicants for national scholarship programs per year
- G. 10 students per year present interdisciplinary work at Honors conferences or undergraduate research conferences

- C. Faculty provide yearly evidence of an active research career, for example: submitted at least one paper for presentation at a scholarly



- Core faculty
  - PAs (Introductory Seminar to Interdisciplinary Studies)
  - TAs (Core III)
  - Traded faculty
- C. 95% of students in minor seminars receive class participation grade of A
- Assessment: calculate percentage of A's received for participation in minor seminars, based on faculty report of student grades (ongoing, beginning Dec. 15, 2010)
  - Programs, processes, and practices impacted
    - Pedagogy
    - HCIS
    - Core faculty
    - Traded faculty
    - TAs

ü Action items:

- A. Measure class participation grades at all levels to establish baseline (May 15, 2011)
- B. Mandate the evaluation of class participation as a characteristic of a fully realized Honors course and include in Honors College Faculty Handbook course guidelines (August 1, 2010)

2. Encourage student self-reflection and discipline through academic and career planning.

ü Measures of success:

- A. by September 2010, develop Honors Program planning form for incoming freshmen to be reviewed in spring of sophomore year or Introductory Seminar to Interdisciplinary Studies
  - Assessment: evaluate success in developing Honors Program planning form (September 1, 2010)
  - Programs, processes, and practices impacted
    - new freshman advising process
    - new Introductory Seminar to Interdisciplinary Studies Course
    - new sophomore advising process
    - HCIS

post-baccalaureate educational goals, for matriculating sophomores, to be reviewed in graduating semester or Senior Seminar

- Assessment: evaluate success in developing Honors College planning form (September 1, 2012)
  - Programs, processes, and practices impacted
    - new sophomore advising process
    - new Introductory Seminar to Interdisciplinary Studies
    - new senior advising process
    - Senior Seminar
    - HCIS
    - Core faculty
    - National scholarship grooming
    - new civic engagement requirement
- C. by September 2014, develop graduation planning form to generate self-reflection and communicate post-baccalaureate plans Programs, processes, and practices impacted
- Assessment: evaluate success in developing graduation planning form (September 1, 2014)
  - Programs, processes, and practices impacted
    - new senior advising process
    - Senior Seminar
    - HCIS
    - Core faculty
    - New civic engagement requirement
- D. develop pre-tutorial artist's or researcher's statement in which students delineate their goals for the thesis project and their hoped-for outcomes (by September 2012)
- Assessment: evaluate success in developing pre-tutorial artist's or researcher's statement (September 1, 2012)
  - Programs, processes, and practices impacted
    - new Introductory Seminar to Interdisciplinary Studies
    - Core faculty
    - HCIS
    - Oxford tutorial
    - Thesis
    - Tutorial/thesis adviser relationships

ü Action items:

- A. Create forms to be filed electronically and tracked in the database (Honors Program planning, Honors College planning, artist/researcher statements, graduation planning), and make them available to appropriate community members (i.e., student, faculty adviser, thesis committee) (rolled out as needed starting August 1, 2010)
  - B. Develop schedules and deadlines for filing planning forms (August 1, 2010)
  - C. Incorporate review of forms into advising requirement (rolled out as needed starting August 1, 2010)
3. Provide leadership opportunities for students in organizations integrated into essential community functions
- ü Measures of success:
    - A. PA applications for each semester total at least 200% of available spots beginning Fall 2010
      - Assessment: count number of PA applications received and calculate whether applications received totaled 200% or higher (Nov. 1, 2010)
      - Programs, processes, and practices impacted
        - Core I
        - new Introductory Seminar to Interdisciplinary Studies
        - PAs
        - Core faculty
        - HCOL (HCIS app?)
        - Minor seminars
    - B. Mentor applications for each year total at least 150% of available spots by Spring 2011
      - Assessment: count number of Mentor applications received and calculate whether applications received totaled 150% or higher (May 1, 2011)
      - Programs, processes, and practices impacted
        - Core I
        - Core II
        - Partnership with Housing
        - Partnership with Undergraduate Studies
        - Mentors
        - HCOL (HCIS app?)
        - Faculty/staff advisor
    - C. Ambassador applications for each year total at least 150%

applications received totaled 150% or higher (May 1, 2011)

- Programs, processes, and practices impacted
  - Partnership with Admissions
  - I-squared process
  - Faculty/staff advisor
  - Outreach to high schools
  - HCOL (HCIS app?)
- D. At least two candidates for every position in each regular Honors Council election beginning Spring 2011
  - Assessment: count number of Honors Council candidates and calculate whether number of candidates is two times the number of available positions (May 1, 2011)
  - Programs, processes, and practices impacted
    - Honors Council
    - HCOL/HCIS
    - Faculty/staff advisor
- E. Fully accommodate student interest in co-curricular presentations to the extent allowable by each semester's schedule (at least 13\* Soapboxes) beginning Fall 2010
  - Assessment: measure number of students who express interest in making co-curricular presentations and evaluate success in accommodating presenters (Dec. 1, 2010)
  - Programs, processes, and practices impacted
    - Soapboxes
    - HCOL
    - Honors College Village
    - Core faculty
- F. create task forces involving faculty and students for planning Challenge Week, High Tables, and Soapboxes in time to plan fall 2010 events
  - Assessment: evaluate success in creating task force with appropriate membership (Sep. 1, 2020)
  - Programs, processes, and practices impacted
    - Honors Council
    - Core faculty
    - Staff
    - HCOL
    - Challenge Week
    - High Tables
    - Soapboxes

- Partnerships with other academic units



2. developmental involvement in civic service

3. "passing on the gift"

2. Objectives:

1. Design a citizenship component for the minor curriculum

ü Measures of success:

A. develop threshold graduation requirement for demonstrated civic engagement for 2010 incoming freshmen, and process for approving and assessing student activity (80% of civic engagement activities for the first graduating class under this requirement will be in secular settings; 60% of civic engagement activities for the first graduating class under this requirement will take place off campus) by Spring 2012

- Assessment: evaluate success in putting graduation requirement in place (May 1, 2012), evaluate process for approving and assessing student activity (December 1, 2012)
- Programs, processes, and practices impacted
  - new civic engagement requirement
  - new Introductory Seminar in Interdisciplinary Studies
  - new sophomore advising process
  - Sophomore lecture as conceptual link between citizenship and education
  - HCIS/HCOL
  - Honors College Village (residence halls separated by program/college)
  - Partnerships with community organizations
  - Partnership with campus volunteerism office

- new senior advising process
  - Partnerships with community organizations
  - Partnership with campus volunteerism office
- C. 85% of matriculating students will have taken senior seminar; those substituting junior seminar or PA for senior seminar add service project to their coursework
- Assessment: count number of graduating students who took Senior Seminar (December 1, May 1), confirm with student and instructor of record that students substituting another course for Senior Seminar are including service project in coursework (December 1, May 1)
  -