



### Introduction

On May 31, 2011, FAU's president, Dr. M.J. Saunders, charged the Honors Education Taskforce ("the Taskforce") with developing a proposal that would outline suggestions about **increasing the number of high ability students who choose to attend Florida Atlantic University because of its honors opportunities**. The Taskforce was encouraged to think creatively about potential ideas, study best practices at other institutions, and submit its report by the end of Summer 2011. To that end, the membership of the Taskforce, which was assembled by Interim Provost Diane Alperin, met weekly throughout the summer, continued their discussions outside of formal meetings by means of a Blackboard group dedicated to this project, and consulted with University experts in areas such as marketing and admissions in order to develop a comprehensive approach to this important issue. The Taskforce approved its final report and proposals on August, 18, 2011. (The full membership of the Taskforce appears in Appendix A.)

### Background

Florida Atlantic University currently offers three different types of honors opportunities for students.

1. The Harriet L. Wilkes Honors College in Jupiter, which provides a residential, four-year, honors-immersion experience.
2. The University Honors Program (formerly "The University Scholars Program") on the Boca Raton campus, which allows entering students with strong academic backgrounds to replace several of their Gen Ed courses with honors seminars and/or upper division courses.
3. Upper-Division honors programs (also commonly called "honors-in-the-major" or "honors-in-the-discipline" programs) on multiple campuses, which provide an honors experience in selected academic majors.

The advantage of this approach has been that it has been able to offer students a wide range of choices. The disadvantage has been that it is extremely difficult to speak about honors education at FAU in a focused manner. For this reason, honors education has never really had a clear identity and mission at the University.

In addition, honors education has served an extremely small segment of FAU's student population. Since 2001, fall enrollment at the Wilkes Honors College has varied between a low of 249 (fall 2001) and a high of 387 (fall 2006). (See Appendix B.) Since 2007-2008, the University Honors Program has admitted between 11 (2007-2008) and 40 (2010-2011) students each year. (See Appendix C.) Although both the Wilkes Honors College and the University Honors Program have already enrolled significantly larger entering classes for the fall of 2011, there is still substantial capacity to expand both of these programs. Moreover, the administration of upper-division honors programs has been highly decentralized, making oversight of these programs difficult. Even annual enrollment figures for these programs have not been collected in a systematic manner. Total enrollments for all of FAU's upper-division honors programs are difficult to obtain, but it is safe to assume that fewer than 100 students were usually participating in all of these programs combined at any one time.

Finally, for a university where the research mission is already strong and becoming even more prominent, FAU has traditionally attracted a relatively small class of incoming students with strong academic records. According to information prepared by FAU's Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Analysis, during the last five years an average of only 156 undergraduate students have entered FAU each year with an SAT score of 1800 or higher and a weighted high school GPA of at least 3.33 (2006-07: 167; 2007-08: 162; 2008-09: 147; 2009-10: 166; 2010-11: 136.). The size of this pool has made it extremely difficult for honors programs to grow in the past. By comparison, most honors programs at universities in Florida serve a far larger group of students.

Institution	Students in Honors Programs (intended enrollment)	Total Student Enrollment (headcount fall 2010)
University of Florida	1,800	50,041
Florida State University	2,200	40,838
University of Central Florida	1,500	56,337
Florida International University	1,100	44,010
University of South Florida	1,600	40,429

Thus, while all of FAU's programs together have traditionally served no more than 1.8% of the entire student body (assuming a total honors population of 500 out of an enrollment of 28,000), other programs at large institutions in Florida serve between 2.5% (Florida International University) and 5.4% (Florida State University).

For all of these reasons, the Honors Education Taskforce examined existing best practices at other universities while also thinking creatively to develop strategies that would create a clearer identity for honors education at FAU, increase the University's attractiveness to students with high ability and high motivation, and help make Florida Atlantic University a national leader in honors education.

### General Recommendations

As a way of making honors education at Florida Atlantic University as vibrant as possible, the Taskforce explored three primary strategies. First, that steps be taken to unify honors education throughout the University in theme, curricular standards, and administrative oversight. Second, that additional incentives be provided that would encourage students both to attend Florida Atlantic University for its honors opportunities and to persist in those programs until they graduate. Third, that unnecessary barriers or impediments, which have made many colleges and departments regard honors education as a low priority in times of fiscal constraint, be removed. In several cases the Taskforce is recommending several alternatives, in order that the goal of expanding honors education may be effectively balanced with the realities of the budget. Nevertheless, to achieve its multiple goals, the Taskforce has made a number of specific recommendations, which are outlined below.

### Specific Recommendations

#### I. **Obtaining Greater Unity in Honors Education at FAU**

- A. ***Unity of Theme.*** In keeping with Florida Atlantic University's increasing stature as a research university — and taking full advantage of the institution's recently selected QEP topic, "Integrating and Expanding a 'Culture of Research and Scholarship' at FAU through the Framework of an Honors Program" — the Taskforce recommends that the theme uniting all honors programs throughout the University be:

### **DISTINCTION THROUGH DISCOVERY**

All honors opportunities at Florida Atlantic University will emphasize student engagement in scholarship, research, and creative activities that involve the discovery, integration, and application of knowledge. The Taskforce recognizes that the expression "scholarship, research, and creative activities" at FAU includes such disparate elements as artistic expression, scientific inquiry, the original application of new models of pedagogy or commerce, solving real world problems, and other forms appropriate to the University's broad range of academic programs. In all honors programs, students will have the opportunity to work closely with distinguished faculty members in their areas of expertise and research. A greater amount of programmatic unity can be obtained through several specific recommendations.

1. ***Completely overhaul the University Honors Program (UHP), replacing current interdisciplinary seminars (i.e., current 1930 and 1935 courses) with a new approach.***

Since its inception, the University Honors Program (formerly the University Scholars Program) has allowed students to replace several of their Gen Ed courses with special topics seminars. While these seminars did have the benefit of encouraging a degree of interdisciplinarity and a focus on topical issues, faculty members have often found it burdensome to develop a continuing list of new seminars. Furthermore, some of the topics that were proposed in the past did not seem to resonate with incoming students. For this reason, the UHP program would be completely revamped so that students would meet their UHP requirements in one of the following ways, beginning in the fall of 2012.

- a. *Most cost-effective alternative:*** Eliminate required Gen Ed honors coursework from the UHP entirely, replacing it with a faculty mentoring system for the first two years of a student's program.
  - i. Students in the UHP would take existing courses in the Intellectual Foundations curriculum and, if residential, be strongly encouraged to participate in one of the residential Learning Communities.
  - ii. Students would be assigned a faculty mentor (see I.C.1, page 7 below) in the area of their probable major (or at least an area of strong interest) who would work closely with them, discussing possible professional goals and aiding them with learning the methods of scholarship or creative activity appropriate to that discipline.
  - iii. If desired, this relationship could be formalized through a one-credit course taken each semester.
- b. *Most robust alternative:*** Replace current UHP seminars with approved courses in the existing Intellectual Foundations curriculum but in sections that are offered in an honors format (or that include an honors compact).
  - i. The program will consist of 22 credit hours:
    - 1 credit hour of an SLS or Honors Forum course, explicitly designed for the needs of high ability students.
    - 18 credit hours of Intellectual Foundations courses at the honors level, either because the courses are separate **honors sections** or are non-honors sections complemented with an **honors compact** that meets the requirements outlined in the existing *Honors Curriculum Manual*. As much as possible, honors sections and projects satisfying the honors compact would provide exposure to the fundamental methods of research used in that discipline.
    - 3 credits of courses proposed by departments and approved by the University Honors Council as providing significant exposure to the fundamental methods of

research used in that discipline. If a discipline does not offer or wish to develop a research methods course, the department may approve an appropriate substitute course.

- ii. Students who successfully complete this UHP curriculum with a grade point average of 3.0 or higher would be guaranteed admission to complete their upper-division coursework in the Wilkes Honors College, if they so desired, just as students who complete the General Education requirements of the Wilkes Honors College would be given the opportunity to complete their upper-division coursework in any of the other college's honors-in-the-major programs for which they qualify.
- iii. Just as a great deal of responsibility and planning for upper-division honors courses is done at the department or college level, a great deal of responsibility and planning for the University Honors Program should be done at the college level, in close consultation with the Dean of Undergraduate Studies (since Intellectual Foundation requirements are involved in these courses).
- iv. Because many academic programs will be reluctant to replace large sections of lower-division courses (which generate a significant number of SCHs) with smaller honors sections, each department or college offering a course in the new UHP program would receive the same incentives as offered in the current format for UHP: \$5,000 to the college or department; \$2,000 to the faculty member for research and/or travel. These stipends would be phased in.
  - a. **2012-2013**, 100 students, 26 sections X \$7,000 = \$182,000
  - b. **2013-2014**, 125 students, 32 sections X \$7,000 = \$224,000
  - c. **2014-2015**, 125 students, 32 sections X \$7,000 = \$224,000
  - d. **2015-2016**, 150 students, 36 sections X \$7,000 = \$252,000
  - e. **2016-2017**, 200 students, 48 sections X \$7,000 = \$336,000
- i. A one-time fund of \$65,000 would be created to support the development of General Education honors courses and college/department-based lower-division research courses. \$5,000 would be allocated to each of thirteen departments/colleges that develop such courses (eight Intellectual Foundation courses and five non-Gen-Ed research courses).

2. ***Direct the Office of Undergraduate Admissions to develop new recruitment materials — both electronic and hard copy — beginning with the fall class of 2013 that emphasize the research-intensive nature of the Wilkes Honors College, the UHP, and upper-division honors programs. These materials should feature the honors theme “Distinction through Discovery” prominently.***
3. ***Improve the unity of FAU’s honors message on its website.***
  - a. Create a highly visible link to honors education at FAU off the left vertical bar on the University’s homepage.
  - b. Have that link connect to a new page that cleanly and clearly lists FAU’s honors opportunities (the Wilkes Honors College, the University Honors Program, upper-division honors programs).
  - c. Have one link off of the honors page lead to a chart that lists the similarities and differences of the different options side by side (number of credits required, lower- or upper-division, campus where the program is offered, housing requirement, housing availability). For marketing purposes, certain columns — scholarship availability, opportunity to work closely with distinguished faculty, excellent pathway to graduate or professional school — should be filled with “Yes!” across the board.
  - d. Have links off of the honors page lead to further information about each of FAU’s honors opportunities.

**B. *Unity of Curricular Standards.*** In order to ensure that all of FAU’s honors opportunities meet the same high level of curricular standards and emphasis on undergraduate research, the membership of the University Honors Council should be revised as follows.

1. One or more representatives from each college with an undergraduate honors program, with the number proportional to enrollments in the program.
2. The director of the QEP, for as long as that position and the current QEP topic exist.
3. The Dean of the Wilkes Honors College and the Dean of Undergraduate Studies as non-voting, *ex officio* co-chairs.

The University Honors Council would establish a regular schedule of meetings each year with additional *ad hoc* meetings called as necessary.

**C. *Unity of Administrative Oversight.*** In order to establish a “single voice for honors education” at FAU, steps should be taken to provide a greater amount of centralization. Despite extensive discussions, the Taskforce remained divided on the best possible model to accomplish this goal. It is

thus recommending that the upper administration give further study and consideration to the following three alternatives, discussed in greater detail in Appendix E:

- Using the Wilkes Honors College as the umbrella unit for all of FAU's honors programs.
- Creating a new umbrella unit for all of FAU's honors programs (the Wilkes Honors College, the UHP, and upper-division honors programs).
- Modifying existing organizational and reporting relationships in order to achieve greater centralization through other means.

The advantages and disadvantages of each approach are summarized in the appendix. But regardless of which approach is taken, there are also several additional ways in which administrative oversight for all of FAU's honors programs could be strengthened.

1. ***Advising in all honors programs at FAU should be done through honors mentoring, rather than, or in addition to, making use of the University's traditional methods of academic course selection (i.e., advising centers and staff advisors).*** As the Taskforce perceives this concept, an honors mentor would be a ***faculty member*** who is ***assigned to students as soon as they enter the program*** and who ***meets regularly and individually*** with each student in order to discuss ***long-term personal and professional plans***. Honors students would have enhanced access either in-person or electronically to their honors mentor, and group activities — such as an occasional dinner in the Dining Hall with the mentor and his or her advisees or a group outing to a campus play or movie — would be encouraged. Many aspects of this approach already exist for the Wilkes Honors College (though not the use of the term “honors mentoring”), but these should now be expanded to the University Honors Program (with one honors mentor for each four or five students) and upper-division honors programs. Stipends will need to be paid to those faculty members who do not perform this assignment in load. Each honors mentor should be assigned no more than five advisees when possible, except in the Wilkes Honors College, so as to maximize the time that the mentor has to work with the student. To the extent possible, honors mentors should be tenured faculty members. Some or all of following incentives should be provided to each honors mentor:
  - \$100 per advisee per year in additional research or travel funding
  - the opportunity to be nominated for a number of annual awards, including Excellence in Undergraduate Advising, Distinguished Mentor of the Year, and Distinguished Honors Faculty Member of the Year

- participation in an annual mentors' dinner, provided at the Faculty Club and featuring the University's president and provost, as well as the Dean of the Wilkes Honors College and the Dean of Undergraduate Studies
  - the same "technology bonus" given to each student in an honors program — i.e., the latest "must have" item of technology (currently the iPad) — as described below in II.A.7 on page 11, provided that the mentor works with at least four advisees during that academic year
  - the opportunity to apply for travel funding of up to \$1,500 to attend the annual meeting of the National Collegiate Honors Council or participate in faculty development initiatives related to the improvement of teaching and learning in an honors setting
  - reduced cost or free membership in the Faculty Club for one year after mentoring a set number of honors students (perhaps 20 students)
2. ***Website updates for FAU's new honors education website (proposed), the Wilkes Honors College, and the University Honors Program would be routed through a single clearinghouse.*** Having a single point of responsibility for these websites makes it easier for people to know where to send current information when details need to be updated.
  3. ***Regular channels of communication (including email lists and meetings) should be maintained by all administrators and mentors involved in honors education in order to encourage a high level of student service, share best practices, and preserve unity of the institution's honors mission.***
  4. ***Academic departments should be encouraged to offer courtesy appointments or joint appointments to members of the Wilkes Honors College who share their discipline.*** The Wilkes Honors College should offer courtesy appointments to faculty in other colleges who regularly teach in the Honors College.
  5. ***In order to provide a more consistent and visual presence for honors education on the Boca Raton campus, a full-time associate dean for honors education, reporting to the Dean of Undergraduate Studies, should be appointed.*** This associate dean would have the following duties:
    - a. Meeting with potential students who may be interested in any of FAU's honors opportunities.

- b. Meeting with current FAU students who may benefit from any of FAU's honors opportunities.
- c. Serving as a liaison to academic departments to promote the creation of additional upper-division honors programs and to provide expertise on such matters as how to propose an honors course/program, best practices in teaching honors courses, resources available to faculty members involved in honors education, and the like.
- d. Representing FAU's honors opportunities at Open House events, campus visit days, orientation sessions, certain awards ceremonies, and the like.

## II. Incentives for Students

While many students will regard participating in an honors program as its own reward, FAU will be unlikely to obtain a rapid increase its percentage of students participating in honors education unless it provides additional incentives. These incentives fall into three categories: **financial**, **prestige-oriented**, and **community-oriented incentives**.

### A. *Financial Incentives.*

1. All students who qualify for Florida's Bright Futures Program should receive a "tuition gap" scholarship as long as they remain in good standing with an approved honors program. This scholarship would be used to cover the difference between their Bright Futures stipend and the university's tuition rate.
  - a. **Most cost-effective alternative:** A flat \$1,000 scholarship per student per year.
  - b. **Most robust alternative:** Since FAU will be competing with a number of other Florida universities with large honors programs, it may be desirable to attract highly desirable students by covering the "tuition gap" completely. Most of the in-state students who qualify for FAU's honors programs students will meet the Florida Medallion Scholar (FMS) requirements and receive \$76 per credit. This status results in a gap of \$101.67 per credit hour based on a tuition rate of \$177.67 per credit hour. The top award, Florida Academic Scholars (FAS), receives \$101 per credit, which leaves a gap of \$76.67.

On this basis, FAU's "Honors Tuition Gap Scholarship" would amount to the following, for each qualifying student:

**12 Credits**

FMS = \$1,220.64

FAS = \$920.04

**24 Credits**

FMS = \$2,441.28

FAS = \$1,840.08

The total cost for this initiative can be estimated as follows. First, suppose that FAU's total enrollment grows to 40,000. Second, assume that FAU increases its honors student population from 1.8% to 3% of the student body (roughly the SUS average). This results in a total honors student population of about 1,200. Of these students, approximately 600 are likely to qualify for FMS, 300 for FAS, and 300 would not qualify at all (either because they are out-of-state students or because they do not meet all the program's requirements). In this scenario, the total cost for this incentive would be \$2,016,912.

It should also be remembered that many honors students take more than 12 credit hours per semester, so the actual cost of this initiative would either be higher, or it would not cover the entire "tuition gap." Because of the very high cost of this incentive, several variations may also be considered:

- i. Varying the size of the scholarship based on the student's academic record. For instance, perhaps only National Merit Finalists would receive the full "tuition gap" scholarship, with other students receiving lower amounts. **[NOTE: A grid outlining this type of tiered scholarship support is currently in use at the Wilkes Honors College.]**
  - ii. Phasing this program in very slowly as budgetary conditions improve.
2. All out-of-state students who remain in good standing with an approved honors program should receive out-of-state tuition waivers.
3. All students who elect to live in an FAU residence hall, either in Boca or Jupiter, should receive a \$1,000 discount each year (i.e., \$500 per semester, summers not included) on their housing charge as long as they remain in good standing with an approved honors program.
4. All students who are members in good standing of an approved honors program and who either engage in a study abroad program, participate in an internship more than 100 miles away from their home and/or their home campus, or complete another enrichment activity appropriate to their upper-division honors program should receive a \$1,000 scholarship towards this activity. In order to make this opportunity part of FAU's recruitment strategy, this funding would be available to an honors student *at any time* during his or her

undergraduate program; there would thus be no requirement for a student to wait until his or her junior or senior year to request this scholarship, an opportunity that would make FAU's program truly distinctive and desirable. *This scholarship may only be received by a student once.*

5. Travel supplements should be provided to support student research travel funding so that students participating in approved honors programs can present the results of their scholarly and creative activity at appropriate conferences. Additional supplements could also be provided to reduce the cost for students who have a paper accepted for presentation at either the Florida Collegiate Honors Council or the National Collegiate Honors Council. These same supplements could be provided to students who serve as officers in these organizations.
6. A broader range of guaranteed admission programs into FAU graduate programs should be developed for students who complete an approved honors program. (These programs would be similar to the Medical Scholars Program established by the Charles E. Schmidt College of Medicine.) These programs could be either "fast track" programs (which allow the student to complete his or her undergraduate and graduate degrees in less time than would ordinarily be required) or simple guaranteed admission programs.
7. The Office of Undergraduate Admissions has suggested that the best way to create a rapid increase in students entering FAU for its honors programs is to give each new student who enters either the Wilkes Honors College or the UHP the latest "must have" item of technology (currently the iPad). Professors in these programs would be encouraged to use this technology for pedagogical and research purposes with honors students. For this reason, one privilege of faculty participation in honors education at FAU will be that all honors mentors and all faculty members teaching at least three credits of coursework in any FAU honors program that year will also receive this item of technology.

**B. Prestige-oriented Incentives.**

1. The regalia distinctions described in the *Honors Administrative Manual* (cords for students who complete a lower-division honors program; shoulder braids for students who complete a upper-division honors program; and white honors stoles for students who complete honors programs at both the lower- and upper-divisions) should be publicized more widely to the university community through the University Honors Council. The office of the Dean of the Wilkes Honors College shall have the responsibility of stocking these items and providing them — at cost — to the honors programs throughout the university.

2. Each honors program may also develop its own additional regalia distinctions, such as the Wilkes Honors College does through inscribed medallions.
3. A student's honors status should be clearly indicated on both the diploma and transcript.
4. Students who are in good standing in an approved honors program should receive special support and assistance, through the honors mentoring program, for applications to prestige post-graduate scholarships (Rhodes, Truman, Goldwater, Fulbright, and so on).

**C. Community-oriented Incentives.**

1. On each campus where there is an approved honors program, honors students should have special access to:
  - a. An honors student lounge or activity center.
  - b. Dedicated honors housing.
  - c. Distinguished speakers, either through a private reception with the speaker at a public event or a separate event just for honors students.
  - d. Social activities designed especially for honors students.
  - e. Opportunities to interact with honors students in other programs or on other campuses.
2. An Honors Student Council should be established with representation from all of FAU's honors programs. The council would promote interchange among programs, provide the administration with ideas relevant to the needs and desires of honors students, assist with recruiting new students, and generally serve as the student voice of honors at FAU.
3. Joint cultural, co-curricular, and extra-curricular activities should be developed that are shared among all of FAU's honors opportunities regardless of their location.
4. Establish an Honors Student Mentor Program in which upper-division honors students can be paired with lower-division honors students to discuss opportunities for research, personal growth, and goals after college.

**III. Removal of Barriers or Impediments**

- A. FTE or SCH Production.** While FAU as a whole needs to be concerned about the production of student credit hours, because of the added tuition that results from higher enrollments, honors education necessarily requires smaller, more intimate courses and thus lower SCH production. Some departments and colleges have expressed concern about the impact to their "productivity" if they create or expand honors programs. To help alleviate this concern, FAU should adopt, for internal purposes only, a multiplier that

could be used in crediting colleges and departments with those SCHs that are produced by an approved honors program. In other words, since certain disciplines are reluctant to replace a 125-seat section with a 25-seat honors section, FAU could decide that — for its own procedures in calculating productivity and efficiency — 1 student credit hour generated by an honors course carries the weight of 6 student credit hours generated by a non-honors course. In this way, the choice becomes, not replacing a 125-student section with a 25-student section, but improving productivity by replacing a 125-student section with a “150-student” section.

- B. *Resistance to Change.*** In order to send a clear message that expanding honors education at FAU is an institutional priority, it would be useful for the president and provost to mandate that each of FAU’s colleges with an undergraduate program must offer at least one active honors program.
- C. *Distance between Campuses.*** One of the reasons why it is difficult for honors students on one campus to participate in the opportunities on another campus is the sheer physical distance that is involved. This impediment should be addressed by providing regular transportation among FAU’s campuses. This initiative would give Boca honors students greater access to research opportunities at Scripps, Max Planck, and Harbor Branch, while also making it easier for them to take courses offered by the Honors College in Jupiter. Similarly, it would give Jupiter honors students access to academic and extracurricular resources available only in Boca, while also making it easier for them to take courses offered by other colleges.
- D. *Difficulty of Identifying Honors Courses in the Course Schedule.*** Honors courses are currently scattered in the course schedule. Wilkes Honors College courses appear in their own listing. UHP courses and upper-division courses appear under the discipline offering the course. To make it easier for students to find courses, the Taskforce recommends that:

  - a. All Wilkes Honors College courses also be cross-listed under the appropriate discipline.
  - b. All lower- and upper-division honors courses offered in Boca (or on any other campus) also be cross-listed under the Wilkes Honors College.
  - c. A new section of the course listings be created for the University Honors Program so that students can see all current UHP courses at once.

**IV. Other Recommendations.** While certain recommendations made by the Taskforce do not fit easily into the above three categories, they were deemed significant enough to the goal of providing a robust, vibrant honors experience to larger number of students that they are included below.

- A. *Implement as many ideas as possible from the Honors College's self-study Enhancing Honors Education at Florida Atlantic University.*** On April 19, 2011, the faculty and administration of the Wilkes Honors College presented President Saunders and Interim Provost Alperin with the results of their self-study on ways to improve the honors experience at FAU. The report was well received by the upper administration and included a large number of proposals that can be implemented at little or no cost. The Taskforce recommends that the proposals made in this report be implemented as soon as possible.
- B. *Institute a Preparation for Success Program to give honors students the types of resources and opportunities they will need for success after college.*** Honors students attend graduate and professional schools in much higher percentages than the rest of the student body. Those who enter the workforce immediately after college are usually interested in positions of leadership or entrepreneurial opportunities rather than employment alone. As a result, honors students have needs that are different from those of most students. A Preparation for Success Program would give honors students access to:
- Information about and guidance in applying for prestige scholarships
  - Opportunities to practice presentations of research in realistic settings similar to those they will encounter in graduate school and at academic or professional conferences
  - Advice and practice in interviewing and interacting with colleagues in formal social and professional settings
  - Application assistance for REUs and internships
- C. *Develop mechanisms that allow for multiple entry points for students into FAU's honors opportunities.*** The standard entry points for the University Scholars Program and the Wilkes Honors College are when students enroll at FAU as FTICs or as lower-division transfer students. The standard entry points for upper-division honors programs are when students enter their major or final year of study. Nevertheless, with the growing number of non-traditional students and students who reach their full academic potential at various stages of their academic career, it is important for FAU's honors opportunities to be as flexible as possible in offering entry points. Moreover, as FAU's experience with opportunities such as the College of Engineering and Computer Science's Innovation Leadership Honors Program has made clear, it is often impossible to divide honors programs into completely separate lower-division and upper-division segments. For this reason, the University will offer a great deal of flexibility to students who wish to begin an honors experience. These flexible mechanisms will include, but not be limited to:

- Considering any student who enters FAU with an honors associate's degree (e.g., from a state college or community college) and then completes an approved upper-division honors program at FAU as meeting the requirements for a degree with University Honors Distinction as outlined in the *Honors Administrative Manual*.
- Providing students who enter FAU with many of the General Education requirements fulfilled, but who still wish to complete the University Honors Program, with alternative means of fulfilling the 22-hour requirement of that program, if the more robust alternative is selected.
- Facilitating the ease of transfer of students between and among FAU's honors programs to the greatest extent that program requirements will allow.
- Having the Dean of the Wilkes Honors College, the Dean of Undergraduate Studies, and the membership of the University Honors Council actively encourage FAU students with demonstrated academic potential to pursue admission to an honors program.

**D. Create a new format for honors sections of courses.** In order to provide as many honors opportunities as possible within limited resources, students who participate in an **honors discussion section** of a non-honors large lecture course should be considered to have completed the entire course at the honors level. Leaders of these discussion sections will be encouraged to develop appropriately challenging and enriching activities to justify this distinction.

**E. Expand outreach to highly motivated high school students, particularly those in IB, AICE, and AP programs.** As a way of reinforcing the idea that "FAU means honors education," a number of different outreach activities should be made to high school students with extremely strong academic records. These efforts should include:

- Hosting Awards Nights for academically gifted high school students at the FAU campus nearest to them (providing a campus tour and information about honors opportunities in the process)
- Sponsoring high school awards nights at select high schools with strong recruitment possibilities to reinforce the association of FAU with honors education in the minds of students and their parents before college choices are confirmed
- Expanding Honors Summer Institutes throughout more of FAU's disciplines to bring highly motivated high school freshmen through juniors to one of the University's campuses for a rich, enjoyable academic experience

- Hosting “Life in Honors Days” for students who would like to interact with faculty members and try out classes (either actual courses or, where necessary, mock sections) taught in an honors format

**F. Expand outreach to highly motivated high school students by offering Honors Summer Institutes.** Residential or non-residential summer institutes that allow academically gifted high school students to take a college course at the same time that they receive other enrichment (such as advice on how best to complete college admission applications or essays, deal with personal challenges, manage their finances, and so on), as well as extracurricular and co-curricular field trips (Disney, the Kennedy Space Center, the Everglades, and so on) will again reinforce the idea that “FAU means honors education” at a time before academically strong students select their colleges. Enrollment fees should make these programs self-supporting.

**G. Develop new mechanisms to identify high ability/high motivation students already admitted to FAU.** A number of students who could benefit from honors education do not come into their own until later in their academic careers. Their SAT scores and high school GPAs may not have been sufficient to earn them an invitation to an honors program upon matriculation. Those students could be better identified by:

- The adoption of an A+ or A “with distinction” grade that indicates extremely high student performance.
- An easy-to-use web form in which a professor can indicate that a current student is demonstrating exceptional strengths or potential.

These results would go directly to the Dean of the Wilkes Honors College who, in collaboration with the Dean of Undergraduate Studies, the University Honors Council, and the director of the most suitable honors program, could encourage the most capable of these students to apply for an honors opportunity at FAU.

**H. Increase recognition of FAU as a leader in honors education by pursuing accreditation, certification, or endorsement of its honors programs by the National Collegiate Honors Council (NCHC) at the earliest possible date, if cost-effective and economically feasible.** For a number of years, the NCHC has been considering ways of granting a “seal of approval” to those honors programs and honors colleges that meet its criteria. (See <http://www.nchchonors.org/basic honors program characteristics.shtml> and <http://www.nchchonors.org/basic honors college characteristics.shtml>.) In order to keep FAU at the forefront of honors education, the university should seek this type of accreditation, certification, or endorsement as soon as it becomes available.

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- I. *When FAU's target enrollments in its honors programs have been attained and are sustainable, consideration should be given to the idea of a per-credit fee for honors courses in recognition of their high cost per student credit hour generated.*
  - J. *Graduate student support should be provided to colleges or departments with upper-division honors programs that include a capstone experience such as a written thesis.*

**Appendix A**  
**Membership of the Honors Education Taskforce**

Co-Chairs

Jeff Buller, Dean..... Harriet L. Wilkes Honors College  
Ed Pratt, Dean..... Undergraduate Studies

Members

Somnath Bhattacharya .....Associate Dean and Professor, College of Business  
James Capp ..... Communications and Events Coordinator, Office of the Provost  
Donna Chamely-Wiik ... Assistant Scientist/Scholar, Charles E. Schmidt College of Science  
Sharon Dormire.....Assistant Dean and Associate Professor, Christine E. Lynn College of  
Nursing  
Charles Dukes .....Associate Professor, College of Education  
Ana Fiallos..... Education Outreach Coordinator, Max Planck Florida  
Sameer Hinduja ..... Associate Professor, College for Design and Social Inquiry  
David Kian.....Senior Vice President, Strategic Relations and General Counsel  
Paul Kirchman.....Chair and Associate Professor, Harriet L. Wilkes Honors College  
Patricia Kollander .....Chair, Department of History and Professor, Dorothy F. Schmidt  
College of Arts and Letters  
Mihaela Metianu .....Director, International Students  
Monica Orozco .....Assistant Provost, eLearning, Academic Affairs  
Marc Rhorer ..... Assistant Dean for Academic Affairs, College of Business  
Dorothy Russell..... Associate Vice President, Financial Affairs  
Timothy Van Epps.....Director/Instructor, Innovation Leadership Honors Program,  
College of Engineering and Computer Science  
Joshua Voss .....Assistant Research Professor, Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institute

**Appendix B**  
**Headcount Enrollment at Wilkes Honors College**  
**By Year**

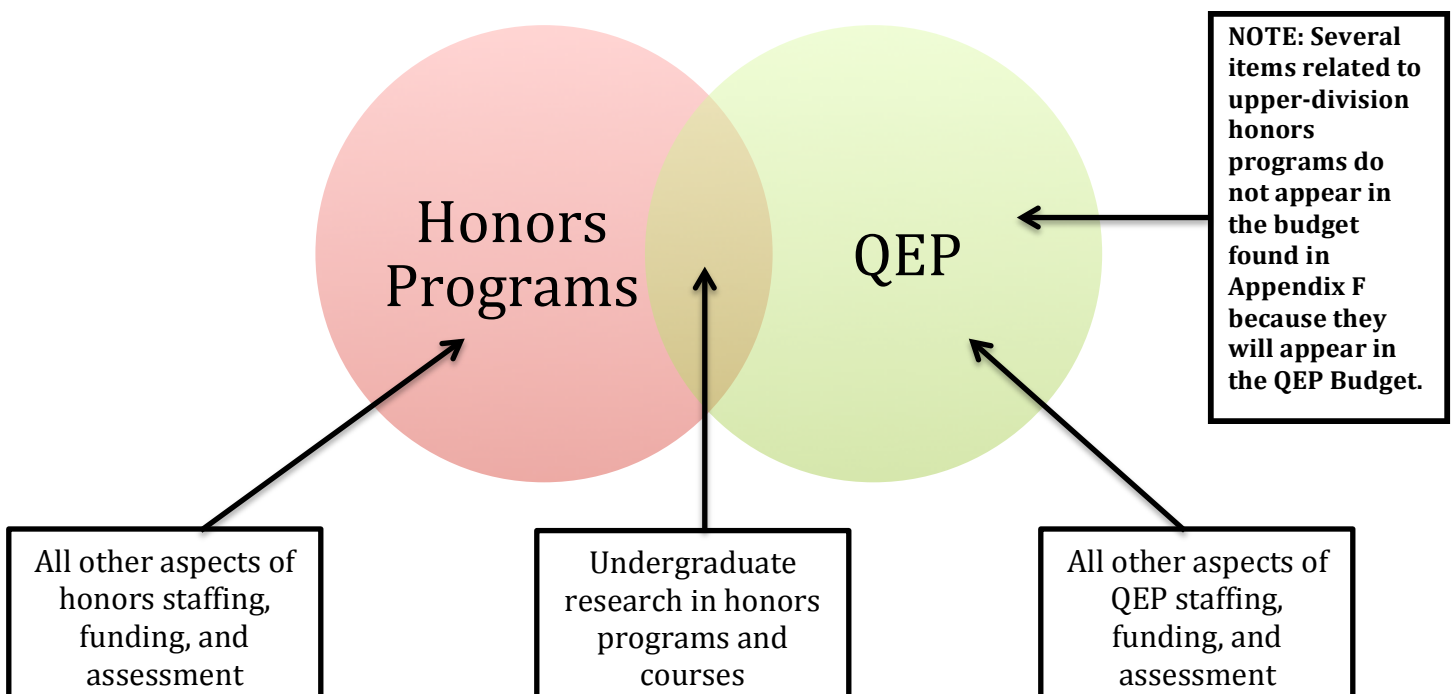
	Total
Fall 1999	74
Spring 2000	74
Summer 2000	25
Fall 2000	151
Spring 2001	141
Summer 2001	51
Fall 2001	249
Spring 2002	221
Summer 2002	73
Fall 2002	269
Spring 2003	253
Summer 2003	91
Fall 2003	338
Spring 2004	305
Summer 2004	107
Fall 2004	363
Spring 2005	343
Summer 2005	110
Fall 2005	363
Spring 2006	340
Summer 2006	115
Fall 2006	387
Spring 2007	358
Summer 2007	78
Fall 2007	364
Spring 2008	335
Summer 2008	93
Fall 2008	321
Spring 2009	306
Summer 2009	122
Fall 2009	325
Spring 2010	301
Summer 2010	78
Fall 2010	297
Spring 2011	276

**Appendix C**  
**Students Entering the University Honors Program**  
**By Year**

2007-2008	11
2008-2009	35
2009-2010	36
2010-2011	40

**Appendix D**  
**Honors Education and the QEP**

Under the accreditation standards established by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS), each institution must develop and implement a Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) that improves student learning. The topic selected for FAU's QEP is "Integrating and Expanding a 'Culture of Research and Scholarship' at FAU through the Framework of an Honors Program." The focus of this plan provides an excellent complement to the goals established by the Taskforce. It is thus possible for the University to use the recommendations of the Taskforce to underscore for SACS the institution-wide importance FAU places on honors education. In other words, the University can leverage its efforts in expanding its honors opportunities by carefully aligning the implementation of the QEP with the recommendations outlined in this report. Nevertheless, the QEP and the goals of this proposal, while overlapping, are not identical, and the following diagram reflects the Taskforce's understanding of this relationship.



## Appendix E Alternatives for a Unified Administrative Structure

After discussing the issue extensively, the Taskforce could not find consensus about the best ways in which to achieve a unified administrative structure for honors education at FAU. It is presenting three possibilities, along with their advantages and disadvantages.

### 1. Use the Wilkes Honors College as the Umbrella Structure.

- a. Students who, until now, have been accepted into either the Wilkes Honors College or the University Honors Program would henceforth be considered to be students of the Wilkes Honors College.
- b. Under this model, all high ability/high motivation students would have access to multiple attractive and distinctive pathways to an honors experience at FAU:

#### At the Lower Division

- i. **The University Honors Program:** a 22-credit honors enrichment experience or mentoring opportunity, offered on FAU's Boca Raton campus.
- ii. **The Wilkes Honors Core:** a 60-credit honors immersion experience, offered on FAU's Jupiter campus.

#### At the Upper Division

- iii. **Upper-Division Honors Programs:** an honors enrichment experience offered in select majors at FAU, with requirements and structure determined by the department and the academic college offering the degree.
  - iv. **The Wilkes Honors Concentration:** a 60-credit honors experience that leads to an honors degree in the liberal arts and sciences (or, when it is approved, an honors bachelor of science degree).
- c. Any student who completes either (i) or (ii) in good standing would be guaranteed admission to (iii) provided that he or she met all additional standards for admission to that program.
  - d. Any student who completes either (i) or (ii) in good standing would be guaranteed admission to (iv).
  - e. Upon completion of their lower-division honors program, all students would receive a certificate from the Wilkes Honors College.
    - i. Upon completion of their upper-division honors program, all students would receive the distinction developed by the program of their major.
    - ii. Students who complete honors experiences at both the lower- and upper-divisions would qualify for additional distinctions to their graduation regalia, as outlined in the *Honors Administration Manual*.
  - f. Unity of administrative oversight would occur because now all of FAU's honors programs would fall under the responsibility of the Dean of the Wilkes Honors

College who would administer them through the University Honors Council and the program's own curriculum committees. This structure is similar to the way in which the Dean of Undergraduate Studies and the Dean of Graduate Studies administer programs through the UPC or GPC and the curriculum committees of those programs.

- g. The creation of a new associate dean position, as described in I.C.5 on page 8 would be highly desirable —perhaps essential — for this alternative to succeed.

### **ADVANTAGES**

- a. It builds on an established FAU “brand of distinction”: the name of the Harriet L. Wilkes Honors College.
- b. It is easier for prospective students to understand. Rather than being told that they have the option of the Wilkes Honors College in Jupiter or the University Honors Program in Boca, they would be told that, if they meet the requirements, they will be admitted to FAU's highly distinctive Wilkes Honors College, which offers them two unique pathways.

### **DISADVANTAGES**

- a. There is likely to be extremely strong resistance from Boca faculty. When a similar idea was considered by the University Honors Council two years ago, many academic departments rejected the idea that honors students could not simply declare a major in one of them upon entering FAU. Some Boca faculty will also resist their need to report to an increasing number of supervisors: In addition to their own dean and either the Dean of Undergraduate Studies or the Dean of Graduate Studies (or both of the latter), they would now see themselves as being required to “report to” the Dean of the Wilkes Honors College.
- b. There is likely to be extremely strong resistance from Jupiter faculty. Because of the distinction made by the NCHC between honors programs and honors colleges, if there is any reference made to something like a “Wilkes Honors Program” within the Wilkes Honors College, this terminology will be interpreted by faculty members as a “demotion.” Alumni, donors, and members of the Honors College Advisory Board are also likely to bristle at such a term.
- c. The Wilkes Honors College and the University Honors Program currently operate under different General Education requirements. While many of these differences are merely semantic in nature, the Dean of the Wilkes Honors College, the Dean of Undergraduate Studies, and the Curriculum Committee of the Wilkes Honors College will need to develop a more formalized correlation between the two systems for students who transfer back and forth or take courses from both programs.
- d. The Wilkes Honors College has found it extremely important to advertise that “every admitted student is offered an academic scholarship.” (The one year in which this phrase was dropped witnessed a dramatic decrease in applications.) It will thus be necessary to ensure that every University Honors Program student also receives an academic scholarship. With “tuition gap” scholarships for

Florida students and out-of-state tuition waivers for out-of-state students, this goal will be met if the Taskforce's recommendations are fully implemented. But, if these recommendations are phased in, there will need to be attention paid to this issue of scholarship availability.

- e. Some alumni, donors, and other stakeholders at FAU will believe that this expansion "waters down" the distinctiveness of the Wilkes Honors College name.

## 2. Create a New Umbrella Structure.

- a. Whenever a student enters any honors program at FAU, he or she would also enter a new umbrella structure. While the title of this new structure would need to be determined, for the purposes of this document it will be called the Corps of Honors Scholars at Florida Atlantic University (CHS).
- b. Like all graduate students, all honors students would have dual citizenship: as members of CHS and of their academic colleges.
- c. CHS would provide centralized administrative oversight over all honors programs at FAU:
  - i. The Wilkes Honors College.
  - ii. The University Scholars Program.
  - iii. Upper-division honors programs.
- d. Instead of applying for *either* the Wilkes Honors College *or* the University Scholars Program, all high ability/high motivation students would either be invited into or able to apply for one distinctive program: the Corps of Honors Scholars, which offers them two attractive pathways to an honors experience at FAU:
  - i. **The University Honors Program:** a 22-credit honors enrichment experience or mentoring opportunity, offered on FAU's Boca Raton campus.
  - ii. **The Wilkes Honors Core:** a 60-credit honors immersion experience, offered on FAU's Jupiter campus.
- e. Students who enter honors education at the upper division, either by selecting an honors program in their major or by transferring to the Wilkes Honors College, would also be considered members of the Corps of Honors Scholars.
- f. Unity of administrative oversight would occur through the Dean of the Wilkes Honors College, the Dean of Undergraduate Studies, or some other centralized administrator.
- g. The creation of a new associate dean position, as described in I.C.5 on page 8 would be highly desirable —perhaps essential — for this alternative to succeed.

**ADVANTAGES**

- a. Achieves the same goals as the first alternative without incurring the risk of strong pushback from faculty, alumni, donors, and advisory board members that that alternative would produce.
- b. Through the use of a word like “Institute, “Academy, or “Corps” in the title, FAU would gain a marketing advantage (since potential students may regard this distinction as prestigious).
- c. Through the use of a word like “Scholars” in the title, FAU would be paying tribute to the first honors program it developed: the University Scholars Program.

**DISADVANTAGES**

- a. Creates a new administrative layer, which will be a very hard sell during a period of repeated budget cuts.
- b. May not solve the problem of FAU having too many different honors identities but actually exacerbate it by developing yet another name for honors at the University.

**3. Modify the Existing Organizational and Reporting Relationships in Order to Achieve Greater Centralization.**

- a. It may also be possible to achieve the intended goal of enhanced centralization without a significant change in organizational structure.
- b. For instance, the dramatic increase in enrollment that both the Wilkes Honors College and the University Honors Program will experience this fall suggests that the real problem was not necessarily with the administrative structure of the programs themselves, but rather with the way in which they were being marketed to prospective students. As soon as changes were made in marketing and recruitment, applications and yields significantly increased.
- c. The University Honors Council, which would be strengthened and expanded through other proposals in this report, already serves as the essential vehicle for unity of standards in all of FAU’s honors programs. Just as the UPC and GPC monitor the standards applied to all of the University’s curriculum proposals, so does the UHC already fulfill this purpose for honors courses and programs.
- d. The charge this Taskforce was given — to increase the number of high ability students who choose to attend Florida Atlantic University because of its honors opportunities — really does not require the onerous, expensive, and painful modifications proposed in the first two alternatives.
- e. Where the University is not providing a consistent message to external constituents about the identity of honors education at FAU, this challenge is best addressed through marketing efforts and more modest changes rather than through large-scale administrative restructuring.
- f. For this reason, the intended goals of the first two alternatives can be met far more inexpensively and directly by:

- i. Adopting a unified theme for honors education at FAU as recommended in I.A on page 3.
- ii. Creating a unified honors identity for prospective students on the University website as recommended in I.A.3 on page 6.
- iii. Expanding the size and responsibility of the University Honors Council as recommended in I.B on page 6.
- iv. Using the office of Undergraduate Studies as a clearinghouse for matters related to honors education on the Boca Raton campus.
- g. The creation of a new associate dean position, as described in I.C.5 on page 8 would be highly desirable —perhaps essential — for this alternative to succeed.

**ADVANTAGES**

- a. Most rapidly implemented with minimal disruption to existing programs.
- b. Highly cost effective during a time of severe fiscal constraint.
- c. Most palatable to stakeholders in both the Wilkes Honors College and University Honors Program.

**DISADVANTAGES**

- a. May not bring about the revolution or transformation in honors education that some hoped might result from the work of the Taskforce.
- b. May not achieve all of the advantages of the first two alternatives.

## Appendix F

### Cost Estimates for New Initiatives

#### Planning Assumptions:

##### *Harriet L. Wilkes Honors College*

<u>Year</u>	<u>New Entering Students</u>	<u>Total HC Enrollment</u>
2011-2012:	144	356
2012-2013:	160	375
2013-2014:	170	400
2014-2015:	175	450
2015-2016:	180	500
2016-2017:	190	550
2017-2018:	200	600

##### *University Honors Program*

<u>Year</u>	<u>New Entering Students</u>	<u>Total UHP Enrollment</u>
2011-2012:	90	130
2012-2013:	100	181
2013-2014:	125	215
2014-2015:	125	238
2015-2016:	150	263
2016-2017:	200	335
2017-2018:	200	380

##### *Upper-Division Honors Programs*

<u>Year</u>	<u>Joining Program</u>	<u>Total Enrollment</u>
2011-2012:	15	30
2012-2013:	30	60
2013-2014:	50	100
2014-2015:	60	120
2015-2016:	75	150
2016-2017:	100	200
2017-2018:	125	250

<b>Appendix F</b>							
<b>Enrollment Projections and Cost Estimates for New Initiatives</b>							
<b>Assumes 6-year Phase-in</b>							
<b>Participation/Enrollment Projections</b>	<b>FY12</b>	<b>FY13</b>	<b>FY14</b>	<b>FY15</b>	<b>FY16</b>	<b>FY17</b>	<b>FY18</b>
Honors College total enrollment	356	375	400	450	500	550	600
New entering students	144	160	170	175	180	190	200
University Honors Program total enrollment	130	181	215	238	263	335	380
New entering students	90	100	125	125	150	200	200
Honors in the Major total enrollment (Jr. and Sr. years)	30	60	100	120	150	200	250
New entering students	15	30	50	60	75	100	125
Mentoring faculty	69	82	95	108	122	145	164
Incremental faculty over previous year	37	13	13	12	14	23	19
Out-of-state enrollments (\$457/sch plus 3% inflation)	52	62	72	81	91	109	123
Housing discounts (\$500 plus 3% inflation)	144	297	297	297	297	297	297
Study abroad or internships	89	94	100	113	125	138	150
Florida Medallion Tuition Scholarships (\$102/sch)	72	188	200	225	250	275	300
Florida Academic Tuition Scholarships (\$77/sch)	36	40	100	113	125	138	150
<b>Revenue</b>							
Tuition generated	679,536	1,520,813	2,082,307	2,965,508	3,699,373	4,577,864	5,628,704
Current University Honors Program redirected	78,311	78,311	78,311	78,311	78,311	78,311	78,311
Additional funding to offset expenses	894,629	981,887	998,174	685,551	595,502	604,365	417,546
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>1,652,476</b>	<b>2,581,012</b>	<b>3,158,793</b>	<b>3,729,370</b>	<b>4,373,186</b>	<b>5,260,540</b>	<b>6,124,561</b>
<b>Expenditures</b>							
Associate Dean position - 1 FTE	155,000	155,000	158,100	161,262	164,487	167,777	171,133
Florida Medallion Tuition Scholarships (gap funds)	220,320	659,813	809,370	1,047,122	1,337,990	1,692,557	2,123,390
Florida Academic Tuition Scholarships (gap funds)	83,160	106,260	305,498	395,237	505,026	638,857	801,476
Out-of-state tuition waivers	707,436	844,536	980,265	1,107,768	1,251,723	1,487,535	1,686,330
Housing discount	144,000	289,000	354,000	450,000	500,000	550,000	600,000
Gen Ed course development and research courses	65,000	65,000	65,000	65,000	65,000	65,000	65,000
Department/Faculty course development/release time		182,000	224,000	224,000	252,000	336,000	336,000
Study Abroad or internship scholarship	89,000	93,750	100,000	112,500	125,000	137,500	150,000
Technology incentives for new enrollees (\$500 each)	72,000	80,000	85,000	87,500	90,000	95,000	100,000
Misc. program incentives/costs	116,560	105,653	77,560	78,980	81,960	90,313	91,233
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>1,652,476</b>	<b>2,581,012</b>	<b>3,158,793</b>	<b>3,729,370</b>	<b>4,373,186</b>	<b>5,260,540</b>	<b>6,124,561</b>