

New Brunswick Faculty Council
Curriculum, Teaching, and Honors Committee
Report and Recommendations Concerning the Proposed New Brunswick Honors College
December 2013

Background

One of the initiatives in the Strategic Plan is the development of Honors Colleges on each geographic campus. At the last meeting of the Strategic Plan Steering Committee in late October, President Barchi spoke of plans for the New Brunswick Honors College, to be centered physically in the new honors dormitory under construction on College Avenue. In response to a Faculty Council request to EVPAA Edwards for information about the planning for the Honors College, the Council was given a copy of a very broad-brush proposal for the Honors College written by the Interim Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs in late 2012, apparently for use in fund raising. We were assured, however, that that document, upon which President Barchi's remarks were apparently based, is just a proposal meant to be a starting point in the development of the Honors College. The NBFC Executive Committee, concerned that there had not been appropriate faculty input to the planning process, then issued the following charge to the Council's Curriculum, Teaching, and Honors (CT&H) Committee:

Consider various proposals under consideration for the New Brunswick Honors College. Consult with the current Honors Deans at New Brunswick schools, with Gregory Jackson, the Vice Chancellor for Undergraduate Affairs, and with faculty members engaged in teaching and mentoring current honors students and make recommendations concerning the structure and the curricular and residential requirements of the Honors College.

The CT&H Committee subsequently learned that the Administration expects the honors dormitory to be ready for occupancy in fall 2015 and realized that committee consideration of this charge would have to be greatly accelerated.

Members of the Curriculum, Teaching, and Honors Committee carefully considered the honors proposal, spoke briefly with Vice Chancellor Jackson, and spoke at length with Matt Masuda, the SAS Honors Dean, about the Honors College. The Committee quickly realized that it does not have the resources needed to produce a detailed proposal for the Honors College within the given time frame. Instead we decided to recommend that the Faculty Council urgently ask the Administration to appoint a primarily faculty task force as soon as possible to design a detailed proposal for the Honors College. In addition, we decided to recommend an appropriate composition for the task force, to propose a series of guiding principles to be followed in the design and implementation of the Honors College, and to make a few broad recommendations regarding the structure, requirements, policies, governance, and funding of the Honors College. Our recommendations, given in the next two sections of this report, are divided into two groups: "procedural" recommendations for designing the Honors College and "structural" recommendations, which term encompasses recommendations on the ultimate structure, policies, etc. of the Honors College.

Procedural Recommendations

1. The Faculty Council and the Administration shall jointly appoint a primarily faculty task force before the beginning of the spring 2014 semester charged with producing a detailed proposal for the New Brunswick Honors College.

2. Members of the task force should include representatives of the current school honors programs, representatives of schools currently without honors programs, representatives from the New Brunswick Faculty Council, other appropriate faculty members, current New Brunswick honors students, and representatives from Vice Chancellor Jackson's office, undergraduate admissions, residence life, and student affairs.
3. The task force should obtain extensive input from members of the Rutgers community during its deliberations.
4. The final Honors College proposal should have to be approved by the faculties of all the schools wishing to participate in the Honors College. No school should be forced to participate if its faculty does not wish to do so.
5. The final Honors College proposal should also have to be approved by the New Brunswick Faculty Council, the only elected governance body representing all faculty in New Brunswick.

Structural Recommendations

1. The Honors College shall have some common core requirements which all honors students must fulfill in addition to the requirements of their school's honors program.
2. The initial and ongoing governance structure of the Honors College should insure that the New Brunswick faculties have final legislative responsibility for and oversight of the College's admissions policy, curriculum, scholastic standing requirements, and requirements for the Honors College designation on one's diploma.
3. The initial and ongoing governance structure of the Honors College should also insure that the New Brunswick faculties are full partners with the Administration in designing the residence education programs of the College and in determining the faculty role in those programs and in the Honors Residence Hall.
4. Admission to the Honors College should be made in a manner that produces a very highly qualified and diverse cohort of honors students.
5. Any student who satisfies its admissions requirements should be able to participate in the Honors College even if he or she is a student in a school without a local honors program.
6. The Honors College should be endowed to the maximum possible extent so that increased opportunities and support for honors students are not funded at the expense of other students and their families.

Resolution

Whereas, the New Brunswick Faculty Council believes that the governance structure, curriculum, requirements, and policies of the New Brunswick Honors College should be designed primarily by New Brunswick faculty members; and

Whereas, the Faculty Council Executive Committee therefore charged the Curriculum, Teaching, and Honors Committee with considering proposals under consideration for the New Brunswick Honors College and making recommendations concerning the structure and curricular and residential requirements of the College; and

Whereas, the Curriculum, Teaching, and Honors Committee carefully considered the Honors College proposal written by the Interim Vice Chancellor for Undergraduate Affairs and has formulated (1) a number of recommendations concerning procedures for developing and implementing a detailed proposal for the Honors College and (2) a number of broad recommendations concerning the structure, requirements, policies, governance, and funding of the College; and

Whereas, the New Brunswick Faculty Council has considered the recommendations of the Curriculum, Teaching, and Honors Committee and found them to be sound;

Therefore be it resolved that the New Brunswick Faculty Council endorses the recommendations of the Curriculum, Teaching, and Honors Committee detailed in this report and urges the University Administration to implement all of these recommendations.