Honors Advisory Council Meeting (HAC)
January 16, 2011
Sisler Room, MSAB

Present: Mary Ailes, Mikayla Brune (HSAB), Jane Christensen, Gary Davis, Beverly Frickel, Chris Knoell, Jan Moore, Victoria Goro-Rapaport, Dusty Newton, Ron Tuttle, Paul Twigg
Absent: Aaron Dimock

Minutes for the December 1, 2010 meeting were reviewed and approved.

Mikayla Brune, Honors Student Advisory Board representative, reported that there were 160 Honors students in attendance at the annual Pancake Feed prior to finals week last semester. Plans to order more Honors mugs are underway, and the fund-raiser will again be offered to the parents of UNK Honors students to purchase a mug(s) for their son(s) or daughter(s). The annual Honors Dance is slated for March 11, 2011. A barbeque is scheduled for Thursday, April 28, and will tentatively be held in Harmon Park. As a gesture of welcome, a gift is planned for incoming fall 2011 Honors freshmen, perhaps an Honors Lanyard.

Gary Davis shared the day’s itinerary for the Omaha World Herald/Kearney Hub (WHH) scholarship interviews, which took place on the mornings of Tuesday, January 25 and Wednesday, January 26, 2011, followed by a luncheon hosted by the Chancellor, and also attended by Vice Chancellors, Deans, and current recipients of the WHH full-ride scholarships.

Statistics concerning the applications for the WHH, 2011: a total of 63 applications were received; from these the selection committee (Gary Davis, Director-Honors, Jane Christensen, Associate Director-Honors, Dusty Newton, Director-Admissions, and Mary Sommers, Director-Financial Aid), chose 30 top candidates who were then invited for an interview. 27 of the 30 invitations were returned in the affirmative. Of the 27 total candidates the average scores were as follows: average ACT: 31.6; average GPA: over 4.0; average class rank: top 2%; majority ranked #1 in high school class. three winners have been chosen, and award letters will go out as soon as possible to the winners, the alternates, and the other candidates to whom additional scholarships may be awarded in the form of room waivers or endowed scholarships in addition to their Regents scholarships.

Davis also reported on applications for the 2011-2012 Honors class: as of 01/26/11, the Honors Program has received a total of 136 applications for membership in the UNK Honors Program (the deadline is February 1, so more are expected). As of August 2010, the Program had received a grand total of 246 applications, with acceptance/enrollment of 166 Honors freshmen. February 1st is also the deadline for scholarship consideration at the University level: Regents, Chancellors, etc.

Dusty Newton reported on the upcoming Senior Day planned for Monday, February 7, 2011. It is a “large group” visitation day, focused on large groups of students categorized by major interests, yet individual academic appointments/tours will be available. 50 high school seniors are registered as of 1/26/11. Estimates are that there may be a total of 150 seniors who will visit UNK Monday, Feb. 7, 2011.

Newton also described Scholar Recognition Day, which, until last March 2010, had routinely been held on the first Monday in October, but has since been changed to the spring date. Last year was a tremendous success, so plans continued for the spring event in 2011. 750 UNK scholarship recipients for
the fall 2011 freshmen class are invited to be recognized as Scholars (including their parents/family). This is also an occasion to recognize the three newest Omaha World Herald/Kearney Hub scholars. The top 10% of Nebraska high school juniors are also invited to attend.

Jane Christensen proposed specific input from the HAC for the February meeting concerning Honors Options/Honors Senior Studies. Each fall, Christensen sends pertinent Honors documents (much of which reflect the information found on the Honors web pages) to all departmental secretaries whose faculty either teach Honors general studies or who mentor Honors Options. This is to ensure that new faculty is aware of Honors Program policies and procedures, and current faculty is updated each fall semester.

The main issue is to elicit input from the collegiate representatives on HAC to determine if more structured guidelines may be necessary to ensure further quality Honors Options and Honors Senior Studies. Moore suggested that the Honors Directors be a part of New Faculty Orientation, as she would have appreciated more knowledge about the Honors Program before she was approached by upper-division students in CDIS, college of Education, asking to complete Honors coursework in Honors Options. Frickel further suggested that there be a re-evaluation of the mentorship of Honors Options/Senior Studies, especially in the form of internships, in her college of B & T. Knoell added that Education internships (student teaching) need more oversight by knowledgeable faculty, especially if done as the Honors Senior Study, to ensure more quality outcomes, usually teaching portfolios.

Discussion of ideas brought to the table about this issue will take place at the February HAC meeting.

Adjournment at 4:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted: Jane E. Christensen, Associate Director, UNK Honors Program