

UNK Honors Program Spring 2019 Engagement Survey

In March 2019, the UNK Honors Program conducted a survey of current Honors Students regarding their engagement and experiences in the program.

Respondents:	131
First Year:	40%
Second Year:	25%
Third Year:	24%
Fourth Year:	10%
Super Seniors:	0

Learning Community

78% of Honors students lived in Men's Hall at least one year.

Of those who lived in Men's Hall, 17% lived there two years, 13% lived there three years, and one percent lived there four years.

67% of Honors Students indicate they have a professor or staff member whom they consider to be a mentor.

42% changed their major at least once. Several changed majors 3 or more times.

Of the subset of Honors students who are not music majors or minors, 10% play in a UNK Music Ensemble.

Honors Students attended an average of 2 music or theater events in Fall of 2018.

Honors Students attended an average of 3 athletic events in Fall of 2018.

Honors Students attended an average of 1.5 HSAB events in Fall of 2018.

89% of students agree or strongly agree that the Honors Program provides clear information about program requirements, resources, and opportunities.

88% of students agree or strongly agree with the statement "I get good advising from the Honors Staff."

86% of students agree or strongly agree with the statement "The Honors Program enriches my college experience."

30% of students interact with Honors Program Staff "rarely" or "never." The rest interact with staff at least a couple times a semester, with 30% reporting they interact "sometimes" or "frequently."

Curriculum

Honors General Studies

97% of instructors in Honors General Studies courses made students aware of the critical thinking element of the course.

88% of Honors Students noticed a difference between their Honors General Studies courses and their non-Honors General Studies courses.

The most common differences were that Honors courses are much more discussion based, and require critical thinking. A third most common reported difference is that classes are taught more at the students' level, with more depth and less busy work. A representative comment was "we are treated more like adults." (See Appendix 1 for full list of comments.)

Honors Option Courses

90% of students say that their H Option projects led to more individual interaction with the instructor.

94% of students report that they produced a quality project for their H Option requirement.

80% of students think that they learned more in the class because of the project.

Four Pillars

Honors students are encouraged to engage in four extracurricular activities, derived from "high impact practices" in higher education. We asked respondents if they are doing, have done, plan to do, or do not plan to do each one:

Undergraduate Research & Creative Activity

Doing or have done: 34%

Plan to do: 46%

Total: 80%

Study Abroad

Doing or have done: 8%

Plan to do: 33%

Total: 41%

Volunteer:

Doing or have done: 72%

Plan to do: 25%

Total: 97%

Leadership:

Doing or have done: 59%

Plan to do: 18%

Total: 79%

Comments

Toward the end of the survey, we asked two open-ended questions; What things should we change about the Honors Program? and What are we doing well? Responses were coded, and the most frequent responses are shown below in raw numbers (not percentages). (See Appendix 2 for full list of comments.)

Things to change	
More Community Activities	15
Changes to Curriculum	10
Access to Men's Hall	6
Honors to organize volunteer activities	5
More information about Pillars	3

Things we are doing well	
Honors Community	22
Curriculum	14
Opportunities	11
Men's Hall	9

Other colleges and universities that respondents considered:

UNL	50
Out of State Research Intensive	25
UNO	16

Post-Graduation

34% of students plan to go to professional school
24% of students plan to go to graduate school
37% of students plan to "start their career" after graduation.
5% of students plan to spend a year travelling, volunteering, serving the Peace Corps, or other "gap" activities.

Overall Experience in the Honors Program

Excellent	44%
Good	38%
Average	16%
Poor	1%
Terrible	0%

Contact

Questions or comments about the survey may be directed to:

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Appendix 1

Student Comments on Honors Courses

Students were asked about the difference between their Honors Courses and their non-Honors Courses. The comments were coded into four categories. The table below indicates how many comments fell into each category. That is followed by the full comments as entered by the students.

Discussion Based class meetings	21
Critical Thinking emphasis	10
Higher Expectations	10
Being Around Other Engaged Students	5

Discussion Based

They emphasized discussion of materials rather than teaching about materials.

More written assignments, and a deeper discussion over current literature content.

They are much more discussion and class participation based as opposed to a lot of lecture and busy work homework.

Class was based around open discussion and interaction, rather than strictly lecture or retention.

In my Honors classes, the content is usually more complicated and it seems to be designed to provide a more thorough, balanced perspective. Additionally, the professors are more inclined to promote discussion, class-professor interaction (questions), and attempts are made to have the students be more familiar with each other. In my non-Honors classes, there are some professors who teach similarly, but this is not usually the case.

The work load was more in depth, and there was more discussion in class rather than lecturing.

I like how my honors classes were smaller, and there were many more discussions in my honors class than others.

They were more discussion based.

More discussion based different expectations overall different environment in the classroom.

More conversation based learning.

More interactive and discussion based.

Honors classes generally seem to have more conversation between students and the professor, compared to a 100% lecture class.

The class was based around discussion; everyone actively participated and contributed to the class.

Honors classes allow for more discussion-based lectures.

My honors classes are much more discussion based.

Much more discussion and learning with classmates.

I enjoy my honors classes because the professors are focused on fostering in-depth class discussions, rather than assigning "busy work." I have noticed my classmates and I generally learn more from this method than we do from the methods used in other courses.

There was a lot more discussion and critical thinking.

There was more discussion in my honors class and a higher expectation.

The honors class was much more motivated and discussion based.

I felt like the class was very much more based on discussion rather than lectures.

Critical Thinking

The professors expected more, rightfully so. They expected more critical thinking And pushed the students to not be narrow minded.

There's a lot more critical thinking involved and a higher expectation of the students to do well.

I was expected to think for myself rather than spit information back out

It made me think so much more about the content, rather than reading about the content we spent so much time on.

The class focused more on critical thinking. In addition, I learned how to form and express opinions while backing them with references. The critical thinking, debate, and writing in the class was very valuable.

My honors class was a history class that promoted independent thought to draw your own conclusions about historical events

Critical thinking was much more emphasized

Much more in depth and focused more on critical thinking rather than memorization

It required more critical thinking than my other general studies classes

Less busy work and more critical thinking. Topic is more relatable to real life

There was a lot more discussion and critical thinking.

Higher Expectations

More was expected of the class in honors.

Much harder.

My honors class worked at a faster pace, but we didn't always run through things and waste time on things that we already knew.

The material went a step further than a normal class would. It really made us dive deeper into what the meaning behind it all was and how all the material was interrelated to one another.

We were set to a higher expectation of writing.

Held to a higher standard academically.

The honors classes challenged me in a better way than the other classes.

More independence.

Moved a lot faster and graded harder, more in depth material.

You have to write an extra paper on a topic.

More writing is involved in honors courses.

More intelligent class, less busy work.

It was a lot more work.

Faculty have a greater understanding and respect for Honors Students and our willingness to complete creative, challenging assignments.

There was more discussion in my honors class and a higher expectation.

The honors class was much more motivated and discussion based.

More reading and writing.

Reading was more intensive, and different texts were used in the Honors section of PHIL 120 than in other sections of PHIL 120. The differences were both noticeable and effective.

Benefiting from other engaged students

In my Honors class, I could tell that people genuinely cared about learning, and I could tell they cared about getting good grades. It made me want to try harder, whereas my other classes made me want to procrastinate and not try as hard.

There were more Honors students in that class, and they all tended to be more interested in the class and their success in that class.

The Honors classes demand greater effort and provide a better learning environment since they surround me with likeminded peers.

Much more discussion and learning with classmates.

Classmates were more serious about learning.

Other

More hands on and involved.

I took a special topics course, so the blending of English and natural science was very different from anything else I've taken.

More hands on and in depth analysis.

Appendix 2

Student Responses to Open-ended Questions

What is the one thing that we could do to strengthen the Honors Program Experience?

Nothing

I don't have any suggestions.

??

NA

N/A

Nothing I can think of

I think everything is wonderful!

Nothing, it's already good enough.

Nothing that I can think of. It's pretty good how it is.

Men's Hall

Have activities and ways to connect students who are not living in Men's

Give access to men's hall to all honors students.

Access to Men's Hall for honors students who do not live there

Involve people that don't live in mens hall more

Make sure all Honors freshmen get the opportunity live in men's.

Have more meetings outside of men's hall for those who are not residents and cannot get in with key card.

Provide more events for those of us who don't live in Men's to hang out with those who do without the need for us to be inside Men's Hall. If we don't get access to the building like other Honors students, how are we supposed to get in without asking someone to stop what they're doing, come down to the lounge, and let us in?

Put more emphasis on living in Men's Hall if one is an honors student. A lot of students overlook living in Men's, but I think the experience is once-in-a-lifetime that many students may look back on and regret.

It is difficult to stay involved with the honor's program when not living in Men's Hall, since the events are often very come and go, which is awesome, but also makes it so you almost just go with people you hang out with all the time or you don't go. Some infrequent large group activity of some kind might be helpful in fostering new relationships or even just making involvement possible for upperclassmen living outside of Men's Hall.

Have more interaction in the honors community outside of Men's Hall so that people who don't live there or live off campus have more of an opportunity to bond with other honors students

It would be nice to have more opportunities for Honors Program students to get to know each other, especially for those who don't live in Men's Hall. As a non-Men's resident, it can be challenging to connect with other Honors students and I usually feel like I am out of the loop when it comes to events and shared experiences. It might be beneficial to have monthly social events, have more frequent mentor group meetings, or something like that.

I wish we did more activities as a dorm. I feel like we don't really get involved and don't really know a lot of people in the program.

Curriculum

Honors general studies don't always help with requirements

I would like more honors courses to be offered, particularly portals and capstones.

More Honors Class Options

more potential H-options

Having more Honors classes each semester.

Offer a wider variety of general studies courses

Better options for honor capstones

I would also like some of our upper level classes to be all honors students like our generals.

Encourage cross-curriculum, relevant experiences

It is hard to see the benefit of the honors program when we take honors classes that drop our GPA when our scholarships are GPA dependent and getting into professional school is GPA dependent. It is also frustrating when we have to take general studies courses that we don't need just to fill the honors requirement. I think adjusting the honors program by major could be beneficial. Additionally, planning out honors classes earlier in advance so they can know which honors classes they are taking for the next 4 years. Most students make their academic plan early their freshmen year.

Provide honors study groups

Pillars

I have heard from faculty that the University is considering making independent and original undergraduate research a requirement for all students. As it is, research has been an important and wonderful part of my undergraduate experience. If it was required coming in freshman year, I may not have discovered the wonderful relationship I currently have with my mentor and I would not have read the key text I am using in my research. As it is the Honors Program Experience is wonderful, and I'm not sure I could tell you anything you could change for the better...but I will say that making research mandatory for all students diminishes the value it currently holds as a voluntary part of the Honors Program. I recommend not changing the current role of Undergraduate Research.

Offer clearer directions when it comes to logistical things such as completing training for UGR.

We could have more volunteer events the honors program sets up and has members join in with.

More volunteer projects

For freshman, and only freshman (due to credit hour/class restraints of upperclassmen courses) require 1-5 service hours a month. This would allow for freshman to develop volunteer contacts and set them up to continue volunteering should they so choose. I feel this would take the most difficult part of volunteering out of the equation. If the honors program were to create contacts within the community and simply have freshman sign up for a timeslot with a preestablish contact then they could start a tradition of volunteering with their friends more easily also. This would also be something freshman could put on their e portfolio so it isn't empty their freshman year - as it is fairly common currently.

Adding information on the webpage or to newsletters about volunteer opportunities in the area and on campus

take away H-option classes and focus on more out of school activities

More flexibility, different types of activities

Community

Possibly more activities for students to get involved in with the whole program like I only remember one event at honor students went to and that was to meet their mentors or explain other ways to do the portfolio or get rid of big categories like Study Abroad because not everyone will do that and it leaves a big blank spot in the portfolio. Also grade checks like Greek life does.

Encourage getting to know others in the program

Plan events that occur on various places on campus. Honors Program students are spread throughout campus and some would find it more appealing to attend events if they are closer to where they spend a lot of time. Special off-campus events might also entice students! Also, I really enjoyed the "dinner with faculty" I participated in last semester. I would love to see that brought back.

More frequent HSAB events

To strengthen the honors program experience, we could include special events such as an Honors Formal.

Be more specific in the benefits of joining the honors program as well as making it more of a community.

Maybe bonding opportunities to help honors students get to know other honors students (especially those who don't live in Mens).

Add one required event per semester to make it more of a community.

Increase academic and ethnic diversity.

More opportunities to get everyone in the program to come together and meet each other.

More "fun" events and less geared towards the honors aspect.

Have more events off campus

This is more of a compliment than a suggestion, but I think the improvement in HSAB's role within the program has become better. I feel like the board is more in-tune with the students and Men's Hall. I can see the change that has been made, and I think if HSAB continues to play a bigger role within the Hall and the program, there may be more student involvement with it and its events.

Have better community building activities especially at the beginning of the semester to help people get to know each other.

Have a few more freshman activities.

Moving some of the community activities so they're not on a week night.

Start a Honors Program activity that people will be happy to go to.

Make it more of a group, try to get more people involved in activities and meeting people in the program.

More interaction with other honors students.

Other

Do more on campus outreach, events that are aimed more towards non-honors students to show them what the program is about.

make it more known

Be more flexible for students that have work obligations.

Be more clear on what the whole four-year plan is for honors students. Map it out.

Make it more worth it for people to be in the Honors Program. The scholarship is small, and we have to take more/harder classes as a requirement. We should be expected to do more, but the benefits aren't that worth it. A small \$250/\$500 scholarship may not be worth it to most students especially since they have to take honors classes and H-options. I think most students would rather drop the honors program and avoid the H-options and honors classes and lose the scholarship.

Connect us with more faculty and distinguished faculty members (upper level/higher ups). Additionally, connect us with people in our field (have more events with alumni).

Pride - how can you further foster pride in the program? People are happy to be here, but what does the experience mean to them? People should be brought together by a shared passion in their education - as they already are - but I've heard people say that being in the program doesn't mean much.

What is the best thing (or most important thing) that the Honors Program does?

Curriculum

It provides a lot more opportunities and a chance to take more engaging classes.

The Honors classes are the most important thing the Honors Program does. H-options also have value, but I miss taking classes with other program members and would have enjoyed the opportunity to take 4 or 5 honors classes and 1 or 2 H-option courses.

Great classes.

I like taking our general studies classes all together.

Gives me classes that enrich my academics.

Creates a more demanding course load that challenges students.

H option projects are very beneficial.

Provide H Options.

It gives me better educational experiences with honors classes and h-options.

Allows students to choose, through H-Options, something they are passionate about and spend time pouring their hearts out into it in order to fully understand it and help others to do the same.

The Honors Program gives me the opportunity to get the most out of my college courses via H options as well as an academic environment I can thrive in at Men's Hall.

H Option classes--getting a more in depth learning opportunity and working one-on-one with professors helps me a lot. Also the scholarships are really important/helpful.

Provides enriched learning through honors courses.

I enjoy the honors classes and the pace and challenge that is provided, as well as the fact that we get to work with other Honors students who want to do well.

Community

Gives a sense of community.

The honors program community. Meeting other honors students and socializing with them.

Builds a sense of community.

builds community

Builds a strong community

Builds up a learning community.

The Honors Program fosters strong relationships in a wonderful academic community and offers delightful learning experiences that will be advantageous to students who participated in the program after graduation.

Bring students together.

Gets students active in the college community

I love the community that the honors dorm creates.

has a good community

Provides a special sense of community

It provides a community of academically motivated students.

Mens Hall immediately helped me to make friends who also truly value their education and take their studies seriously.

I love the community that the honors program provides. I was able to meet and become good friends with a lot of students from different majors and backgrounds that without the honors program I don't feel I ever would have gotten to know.

The community culture the Honors Program provides has been what I have enjoyed the most. The connections built through Men's Hall and Honors courses have led me to meeting some of my best friends.

The Honors Program facilitates the congregation of likeminded, academically focused students.

Fostering interaction between like-minded students and providing opportunities for members to meet and connect; challenging students to do more and think deeper about education and material

Builds a community of like minded high achieving individuals.

Having a community of students that are respectful and thoughtful, driven, excited about education, and active in the school and their communities and encourage others to do as well. The Honors Program provides the connection and the opportunity for that to happen.

True sense of community

They help the students get to know one another, and the staff always make sure everyone feels welcome.

Men's Hall

Men's Hall. It is a wonderful community of like-minded people who are dedicated to academic and extracurricular success, who can have a lot of fun in safe, smart ways, and help build each other up.

I like having a place, like Men's Hall where like minded students can easily come together.

Provides the Mens hall living community. It's full of great people doing great things.

Offers housing that surrounds like-minded students who want to work hard.

Getting to live with a better community in Men's Hall.

Men's Hall is great! Having a small community has made my experience better.

Honor's housing community.

Allows a building where a sense of community is built.

Providing a living space that is comprised of people with the same goal. Living in Men's Hall, surrounded by people who are likely in the same classes as you and who care about the same things you do, is DEFINITELY an important part of the Honors Program.

Opportunities

Providing students with opportunities that they may not have otherwise been available to them and encouraging them to take part in activities that will help them grow.

Makes you aware of opportunities.

Undergrad Research Opportunities.

Encourages undergraduate research.

Allows for extra on campus opportunities. (Discussions and enriched classes)

It's very close-knit and gives me a lot of different opportunities.

I think the Honors program is good at providing students with opportunities. Whether it be research, studying abroad, etc., the Honors Program does a great job at getting a student's foot in the door of whatever they desire to be a part of.

Supports students studying abroad, individual projects, scholarships.

I would say that the most important thing the Honors Program(HP) does is enrich a student's education. By being part of the HP, I have the opportunity to take more exclusive classes, do independent studies that I enjoy, and attend educational events promoted by the HP. Of these opportunities, I would have to say the HP classes are pretty important because it allows for increased networking among one's peers as well as a deeper understanding of the material taught in the class.

Connect people together and give them access to exclusive resources.

Connects you with opportunities that allow you to succeed in the future

Advising

Advising

Advising and giving opportunities other clubs don't give us

Great advising and fun activities

encourages involvement on campus

Encourages meeting with Honors Program Staff once a semester to check in and make sure they're on the right path/on course with the Honors Program journey.

Other

Connections!!!! And confidence!!!!

Reaching out to students regularly.

The honor mentors are very helpful.

Being lenient and understanding of student situations. Not being too controlling
Promotes relationship development between faculty and students, and between students.

Gets me involved with my honors classes professors more than I normally would.

Challenges me.

Provides for a tougher, more engaging education.

To limit it to just one aspect is challenging. The Honors Program has multiple aspects that make being part of the Honors Community rewarding. The conversation opportunities with those in various careers of interest to us students is a unique and special event for students to take part in. Also, the privilege of getting priority to register for classes shows us Honors Students that the faculty value our hard work and drive to succeed.

The most important thing about the honors program is the focus on academics first.

Being an honors student requires making connections with professors who can help you kick-start a career or at least offer good tips for present and future classes.

It offers early registration for classes. That is huge for many students because it can greatly affect a student's schedule for the better. I am able to schedule classes on what I want, not on what is available and/or still open.

Provides scholarships.

Early class registration.

Provides a good foundation for both learning and positive relationships with other students.

Class scheduling.

The honors program pushes deeper thinking, which is very appreciated as someone who truly enjoys learning.

Allows for flexibility within students' schedules

Stresses hands-on learning

Offers early registration for classes.

Having honors course and having an Honors Student Advisory Board for students.