

Submitted to the NJCU Senate by the Honors Program Committee:

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Since its 2013 relaunch, the New Jersey City University Honors Program has experienced changes in faculty leadership, directorship, and coordination, yet the Honors Program Committee (HPC) has provided consistent faculty oversight. Our HPC was formed in accordance with characteristic 10 of the **National Collegiate Honors Council's** "Basic Characteristics of a Fully Developed Honors Program":

The program has a standing committee or council of faculty members that works with the director or other administrator officer and is involved in honors curriculum, governance, policy, development, and evaluation deliberations. The composition of that group represents the colleges and/or departments served by the program and also elicits support for the program from across the campus.¹

The steps taken by the HPC thus far have helped admitted students thrive academically and experience an engaged education, with most graduating within four years. We have a good number of permanently approved Honors courses already in the NJCU Catalog, but we need more in order to offer a strong curriculum that fosters leadership, professional development, and personal growth among students. As the NJCU Honors Program continues to develop and move toward a Program Review by the [National Collegiate Honors Council \(NCHC\)](https://www.nchconors.org/uploaded/NCHC_FILES/Program_Review/NCHC_Basic_Characteristics.pdf), it will be important to define the place of Honors in the administrative and academic structure of NJCU.² We believe the time has come for our program to mature in alignment with the best practices of the NCHC and to benefit from additional NJCU Senate review and approval. The proposals below outline a pathway for refreshing and expanding the Honors curriculum in accordance with NCHC guidelines, as well as the shared governance and past precedents of the NJCU University Senate. Your faculty colleagues listed above, many of whom have been teaching HON courses for the past few years, respectfully request that the Senate consider the following eight proposals:

¹ Characteristic 10: https://www.nchconors.org/uploaded/NCHC_FILES/Program_Review/NCHC_Basic_Characteristics.pdf

² Characteristic 2: https://www.nchconors.org/uploaded/NCHC_FILES/Program_Review/NCHC_Basic_Characteristics.pdf

Proposal 1: NJCU Honors Program Mission Statement and Learning Outcomes (PLOs)

a. Mission Statement:

The NJCU Honors Program attracts students for its transformative educational experience in the dynamic environment of the New York –New Jersey metropolitan area. We engage students through disciplinary and interdisciplinary learning, a study abroad trip, student-faculty collaboration, research experiences, and professional and community engagement. Our environment bolsters academic achievement because of the unity, cohesion, belonging, and sense of purpose that exists among students. We are cultivating future leaders who will make a positive impact on our urban environment and beyond.

b. We propose the following Program Learning Outcomes. They are carefully mapped to university-wide outcomes and differ only slightly to match our program.

<u>NJCU University-wide Outcomes</u>	<u>Honors Program Outcomes:</u>
Critical Thinking and Problem Solving	By the end of the NJCU Honors Program’s Core Curriculum, an Honors student <u>will have become:</u>
Written communication	... an intellectually agile critical thinker and problem-solver who can demonstrate and apply knowledge across disciplines. (PLO 1)
Oral communication	... a skilled communicator who can clearly discuss what they mean in written communication. (PLO 2)
Information and technology literacy	... a skilled public speaker who can create and construct compelling presentations and spoken arguments. (PLO 3)
Quantitative literacy	... a savvy and technologically literate creator and user of information and technology , who can apply and interpret data. (PLO 4)
Civic engagement and Intercultural knowledge	... a quantitatively literate graduate who can assess data, utilize mathematical language and applications, and apply math concepts to real world problems. (PLO 5)
	... a responsible leader who shows participation in civic engagement and service learning projects, on and off campus. (PLO 6)
	... a globally engaged citizen who can synthesize her or his knowledge of global cultures, politics, and society with that of the United States. (PLO 7)

Proposal 2: Honors Program Core Curriculum

- a. We propose for approval the Honors Core Curriculum below, to be required of the classes of 2023 and 2024. It would be the required curriculum for all incoming students as of Fall 2021.
- b. This curriculum includes some courses not required of the classes of 2021 and 2022 when they enrolled, so we propose that the HPC add at most two courses for these classes, and only after consulting with Honors Student Council.
- c. While aiming to preserve the cohort model, we propose that a “flex” track be created for students in credit-intensive majors such as MDT, CHEM, BIO, etc. This track will allow such students to take their Honors Core Curriculum in a modified order and pattern so that HON courses do not conflict with required major courses. We propose that the Chairs of relevant departments work with the Director to develop this track.
- d. We propose the Honors Core Curriculum be made available to both transfer students and students who have started courses at NJCU and excelled. We will also develop a pathway for students in accelerated programs to participate in our Honors Program, in ways determined by their faculty mentors. In partnership with Admissions, we propose that students in these various categories be eligible to apply for the Honors Program if they have earned no more than 24 credits, OR if they have earned the Associates degree. Students who applied and are admitted would be required to take a minimum of 12 credits of HON courses in order to join the Honors Program mid-stream and graduate as an Honors Program student. For those students who took courses at NJCU prior to joining the Honors Program, the HPC will identify equivalencies to the Honors Core so that the students are not overburdened with required courses upon enrollment. The HPC will work with Admissions to determine the number of slots available to transfer and existing students each application cycle, as well as an admissions policy requiring that existing NJCU students and external transfer students get a recommendation letter for admission.
- e. The required Honors Core Curriculum will consist of twelve courses that students take with their cohorts and will be 32 credits.
- f. In light of the Senate vote on April 20th, 2020, we have revised the Honors Core Curriculum to be organized around Honors Program learning outcome groups, identified below. Organized this way, HON courses will have equivalencies that are friendly to transfer students joining the program, existing NJCU students who join the program after one or more semesters, and Honors students leaving the program who need to take General Education.

The outcome model is structured around four Honors Program Learning Outcome groups:

Communication and Critical Thinking (**CCT**): PLO 1, 2 & 3

Information, Technology, and Quantitative Literacy (**ITQ**): PLO 1, 4, & 5

Engagement, Art, Communication, and Critical Thinking (**EACC**): PLO 1, 3, & 6

Global Citizenship, Writing, and Critical Thinking (**GWC**): PLO 1, 2, & 7

To accommodate equivalencies, movement of students between Honors and General Education, and the enrollment of transfer students, the Honors Program learning **outcome groups** align with the General Education Modes as follows:

CCT (Communication and Critical Thinking) (PLO 1, 2 & 3)

→ aligns with LLC (Language, Literary, and Cultural Studies)

ITQC (Information, Technology, Quantitative Literacy, and Critical Thinking) (PLO 1, 4, & 5)

→ aligns with QSI (Quantitative and Scientific Inquiry)

EACC (Engagement, Art, Communication, and Critical Thinking) (PLO 1, 3, & 6)

→ aligns with CPP (Creative Process and Production)

GWC (Global Citizenship, Writing, and Critical Thinking) (PLO 1, 2, & 7)

→ aligns with SHP (Social and Historical Perspectives)

g. For both options, the Honors Core Curriculum shall consist of:

Four 100-level HON courses, one in all four outcome groups,
taken in Freshman year 12 credits

Four 200-level HON courses, one in all four outcome groups,
taken in sophomore and junior years 12 credits

One 300-level HON course, in any outcome group, with an embedded
study abroad program
(OR, for students who cannot travel, an alternate 300-level HON elective) 3 credits

One 400-level HON Capstone course, which will be cover multiple outcomes,
to be taken in Senior Fall or alternate semester on flex track 3 credits

Two 1-credit Professional Development courses featuring resume work,
interviewing, networking, job search strategies, etc. 2 credits

Proposal 3: Honors Core Curriculum Degree Map

Freshman year
<p><u>100-level</u> in HON in CCT outcomes (PLO 1, PLO 2, PLO 3)</p> <p><u>100-level</u> in HON in ITQC outcomes (PLO 1, PLO 4, and PLO 5)</p> <p><u>100-level</u> in HON in EACC outcomes (PLO 1, PLO 3, and PLO 6)</p> <p><u>100-level</u> in HON in GWC outcomes (PLO 1, PLO 2, and PLO 7)</p> <p>100-level course, 1-credit only, in Professional Development (PLO 1, PLO 2, PLO 3)</p>

Sophomore Fall
<p><u>200-level</u> in HON: 1st outcomes group*</p> <p><u>200-level</u> in HON: 2nd outcomes group*</p>

Sophomore Spring
<p><u>200-level</u> in HON: 3rd outcomes group*</p> <p><u>300-level Study Abroad course</u> (rotating outcomes but always covering PLO 7)</p>

Junior Fall
<p><u>300-level</u> Community Engagement course (rotating outcomes but always w/PLO 6)</p> <p>100-level course, 1-credit only, in Professional Development (PLO 1, PLO 2, PLO 3)</p>

Junior Spring
<p><u>200-level</u> in HON in 4th outcomes group*</p>

Senior Fall
<p><u>400-level Capstone</u>, in rotating outcomes (Always PLO 1, 2, 3, and other PLOs per the discipline of the instructor)</p>

(*Note: 200-level courses will mirror the PLOs of the 100 level, ensuring that all students work on each outcome at least twice as they move through the Honors Core.)

Proposal 4: Assessment Plan and Curriculum Map

a. Curriculum map (I = Introduce, R = Reinforce, M = Mastery, A = Assessment)

Program Learning Outcome	Required courses in the Honors Core (1-credit professional development courses not assessed in this model)										
	100 Level GWC	100 level ITQC	100 level CCT	100 level EACC	200 level GWC	200 level ITQC	200 level CCT	200 level EACC	300 level study abroad course	300 level community engaged course	400 level Capstone
PLO 1	I	I	I	I	R	R	R	R	M	M, A	M, A
PLO 2	I		I		R		R		M	M, A	M, A
PLO 3			I	I			R	R	M	M, A	M, A
PLO 4		I					R		M (if taught in ITQC)	M (if taught in ITQC) A	M (if taught in ITQC) A
PLO 5		I					R		M (if taught in ITQC)	M (if taught in ITQC) A	M (if taught in ITQC) A
PLO 6				I				R	M (if taught in EACC)	M, A	M (if taught in EACC) A
PLO 7	I				R				M	M (if taught in GWC) A	M (if taught in GWC) A

b. We propose that this Honors Assessment Plan be the responsibility of the HPC (Proposal 7), working in close partnership with NJCU’s PACC.

c. Two of the seven program learning outcomes would be assessed each academic year.

- d. Following the lead of the revised GECAP assessment plan³, the HPC will use revised VALUE rubrics featuring no more than three criteria per learning outcome.
- e. Given the unusually small size of Honors cohorts (average of 40-45 graduating seniors), signature assignments will be requested from all enrolled students in courses indicated in the map below.
- f. Collection of signature assignments would be done by the Office of Institutional Effectiveness (OIE). This would occur at the end of each Fall term, and the OIE and HPC would ensure that assignments are free of identifying information, preserving faculty and student anonymity.
- g. After the assignments are collected, the HPC would use the spring semester to analyze the results using revised VALUE rubrics corresponding the seven PLOs.
- h. By the end of each Spring term, the HPC will finish a report featuring assessment results, analysis of said results, and the action plan for continuous improvement and closing the loop.

Proposal 5: Definition of an Honors course and plan for oversight of this standard

- a. Honors courses at NJCU will have the HON designation and will be challenging and rigorous in alignment with the good practices of the National Collegiate Honors Council. NJCU Honors courses will consistently feature student-centered learning, student-directed projects, immersion learning, and experiential learning. In order to be an Honors course to be approved and run with the HON designation, at least 30% of a student's semester grade must derive from a hands-on, student-directed project(s). In the NJCU course approvals process, both permanent and temporary proposals will require the following: *Please explain in two paragraphs how this course differs as an Honors course, with specific reference to the hands-on, student-directed assignments which must count for at least 30% of the semester grade.*
- b. We propose that HON courses have an additional entry in CIM for the requirement above. Just as Gen.Ed courses have additional entry (#12 Signature assignment), this would only be required of Honors courses.

Proposal 6 NJCU Honors Core as a substitution for General Education

In NJCU's *Undergraduate* Catalog, there have been clear policy statements that students fulfilled or met General Studies requirements by taking Honors courses. In past iterations, the Honors curriculum served as a substitution for General Studies, and Honors Program students were not required to complete General Studies. Here are some sample catalog statements:

³ This GECAP revised assessment plan from the 12/6/19 report is available here: https://blackboard.njcu.edu/webapps/blackboard/content/launchLink.jsp?ann_id=129614_1&course_id=31666_1&mode=view

1999-2001 Catalog: “Students enrolled in the program fulfill their General Studies requirements by taking a sequence of interdisciplinary Honors seminars that provide students with opportunities to gain both breadth and depth of knowledge”

2005-2007 and 2007-2010 Catalogs:

“Students in the Honors Program meet their General Studies requirements by taking courses that have been designed by the Honors Program faculty specifically for the program. Based on a seminar format, honors courses are interdisciplinary and emphasize critical approaches to understanding in the humanities, science, the arts, and the social sciences. The program culminates with the junior and senior honors seminars where students engage in individualized advanced-level research/creative projects”

According to past precedent and the academic design of the program, we propose that the current and future versions of the NJCU Honors Program allow for students enrolled to fulfill all of their General Education requirements by taking the Honors Core Curriculum, and that the Honors Core Curriculum function as a substitution for General Education for all Honors Program students.⁴

Proposal 7: Administrative structure

Since its relaunch in 2013, the Honors Program has been overseen by an Honors Program Committee made up of faculty from all four colleges, as well as several Directors/Coordinators. In this time, the NJCU Honors Program has grown to include many of the features identified as best practices by the National Collegiate Honors Council.⁵ Our program offers full-tuition scholarships, differing admissions requirements, a university-supported study abroad experience and free laptops for admitted students, Honors lounges, dedicated advisors, internships, off-campus community engagement, community service, on-campus programming, specialized probation and dismissal policies for the program, conference participation, high school recruitment visits by members of the HPC, and so much more. The ongoing activities of the program require collaboration with Admissions, IT, Student Affairs, Residential Life, International Programs, Global Initiatives, Facilities, University Advisement, Advancement, Marketing, and many other offices. Looking ahead the HPC, Honors Director, and Associate Director/Coordinator will also work on designing and conducting programmatic assessment. Given that so much of the work of the Honors Program is already being done by the HPC, Director, and Coordinator, we propose the continuation of the administrative structure along the following lines:

a. HPC Membership:

The HPC is currently composed of 12 members, all appointed by the Provost/Deans with representation from all four colleges/schools.

⁴ See characteristic 6: https://www.nchchonors.org/uploaded/NCHC_FILES/Program_Review/NCHC_Basic_Characteristics.pdf

⁵ See characteristic 1: https://www.nchchonors.org/uploaded/NCHC_FILES/Program_Review/NCHC_Basic_Characteristics.pdf

- 7 full-time faculty members from the College of Arts and Sciences (including 1 faculty member from the Senate Curriculum and Instruction Committee)
- 2 full-time faculty members from the School of Business
- 1 full-time faculty member from the College of Professional Studies
- 1 full-time faculty member from the College of Education.
- 1 Professional Staff member who works on Honors advising

Our current members have staggered terms of 2 or 3 years so that members do not all cycle off at the same time. We propose the preservation of these staggered terms and basic membership structure, with the following adjustments:

- As members cycle off and new ones are added, we propose that the composition be adjusted so that the committee has 14 members, composed of:
 - 6 diverse members from the College of Arts & Sciences, including a minimum of one faculty member from each of the following areas:
 - The Humanities
 - The Arts
 - The Social Sciences
 - STEM
 - 3 members from the School of Business
 - 2 members from the College of Professional Studies, including:
 - One faculty member from NURS/HLTH
 - One faculty member from the other Prof. Studies disciplines
 - 2 members from the College of Education
 - 1 Professional Staff member, ideally the person who does Honors advising
 - 1 Honors Program student, ideally a leader of the Honors Student Council⁶

b. Responsibilities of the HPC:

This committee will:

1. Set up an approval process for all HON courses which complies with Senate processes, with all HON courses going through the following steps of approval:
 - A. Department Curriculum and Instruction Committee for the faculty member(s) proposing the course
 - B. Department Chair of the faculty member(s) proposing the course
 - C. College Curriculum Committee of the faculty member(s) proposing the course
 - D. Dean(s) of the college(s) from which the course originates
 - E. Senate Curriculum & Instruction Committee
 - F. Provost/Chief Academic Officer

⁶ See characteristic 11: https://www.nchchonors.org/uploaded/NCHC_FILES/Program_Review/NCHC_Basic_Characteristics.pdf

2. Communicate to all faculty the additional paragraphs required of HON course proposals, and ensure that CIM is adjusted to include this prompt, only for Honors courses: *Please explain in two paragraphs how this course differs as an Honors course, with specific reference to the hands-on, student-directed assignments which must count for at least 30% of the semester grade.*
3. Work to ensure that all Honors students are engaging meaningfully in all PLOs as they move through the Honors curriculum (See Proposal 2).
4. Review placement of courses within the four levels of the Honors program (100, 200, 300, 400) and encourage course submissions for those levels needing courses.
5. Encourage the development of an adequate and diverse selection of HON course offerings in many disciplines.
6. Encourage the development of HON course offerings by faculty in all four colleges/schools.
7. The members of the HPC will also partner with the Director and Coordinator/Associate Director in all nine (9) categories below:

Admissions

Budget

Programming

Laptops

Probation/Dismissal

Study Abroad

Fundraising

Scheduling

Marketing and recruitment

- c. Honors Program Director: In alignment with the best practices of the National Collegiate Honors Council, NJCU should have an Honors Program Director, reporting to the Provost and appointed by the Provost/Deans⁷. Released time for this position will be available at the administration's discretion.

Honors Director Responsibilities:

1. Admissions:
 - Lead the HPC efforts to set and publish the Honors Program admissions criteria
 - Monitor and provide timely responses in the njcuhonorsprogram@njcu.edu email
 - Chair the HPC admissions process, in which all applicants will be fairly considered

⁷ According to the NCHC, in a fully developed program the director "reports to the chief academic office of the institution." See characteristic 3: https://www.nchchonors.org/uploaded/NCHC_FILES/Program_Review/NCHC_Basic_Characteristics.pdf

- Partner with Admissions, University Advisement Center, Enrollment Management, and the Transfer Resource Center on a plan for transfer students and currently enrolled NJCU students to apply for and be admitted to the NJCU Honors Program
2. Budget:
 - Plan & submit Honors Program budget, under umbrella of Office of the Provost & Senior Vice President
 - Manage this budget annually so that Honors events succeed and fit within budget
 3. Annual Programming:
 - Schedule, run, and manage annual events and programming within budget, including but not limited to: Honors orientation; freshman retreat; mentoring events for freshman; field trips; National Collegiate Honors Council conferences; professional development events; research symposium; seniors reception.
 4. Laptops:
 - Spearhead purchase of laptops annually, organize distribution
 - facilitate IT repair and software upgrades for laptops under warranty
 - notify dismissed students of duty to return laptops & monitor returns
 5. Probation/Dismissal:
 - Audit grades for F's in HON course (dismissal), notify students
 - Organize HPC appeal hearings for students who request them
 - Work w/ Financial Aid on enrollment implications of dismissals
 - Audit GPA's for any below 3.2 cumulative (probation), notify students
 6. Study abroad:
 - Recruit faculty from all 4 colleges/schools for HON courses to write or revise HON courses with an embedded study abroad component
 - Partner with International Programs to schedule Spring semester HON study abroad
 - Partner with IP and GI to manage dedicated Honors Study Abroad budget
 - Partner with IP and the HPC to create domestic travel experiences for students whose immigration status, religious beliefs, medical conditions, or other personal situations prevent them from traveling internationally
 7. Fundraising:
 - Partner with Advancement to build relationships with donors and secure gifts
 - Lead Honors Program students in innovative, entrepreneurial fundraising activities
 8. Scheduling:
 - Partner with Dept. Chairs and Deans to find diverse faculty to teach in Honors, and ensure that departments with faculty teaching HON are approached well in advance
 - Partner with Deans and Office of the Provost and Senior Vice President to ensure that all HON courses are properly budgeted within the overall supplemental budget
 9. Marketing and recruitment:

- Attend and lead presentations at all NJCU Open House events
- Create, manage, and update website content featuring the Honors Program
- Collaborate with Marketing office on brochures, postcards, social media, etc.

d. Honors Program Associate Director/Coordinator

In alignment with the best practices of the National Collegiate Honors Council, NJCU should have an Honors Program Associate Director/Coordinator, appointed by the Provost/Deans. Released time for this position will be available at the administration's discretion. This individual will support the Director and the HPC in our work in all [nine \(9\)](#) categories below.

1. Admissions
2. Budget
3. Programming
4. Laptops
5. Probation/Dismissal
6. Study Abroad
7. Fundraising
8. Scheduling
9. Marketing and recruitment

Proposal 8: Budgetary impact of the NJCU Honors Program

As is the custom for programs going before the Senate, the proposal below outlines budgetary impact. This information, organized according to nine areas of responsibility of the HPC, Director, and Associate Director/Coordinator, corresponds to past practice as well as what is desired for a fully developed program. Such a program, according to the NCHC, "avoids dependence on the good will and energy of particular faculty members or administrators for survival."⁸

8a. Admissions - Per past practice, the HPC would be able to lean on the existing budgets provided to the NJCU Office of Admissions.

8b. Programming – Each year there is an Honors programming budget for a rich array of educational and co-curricular experiences. Details of this programming budget appear in the appendix below.

8c. Laptops – The university has committed to providing laptops, funded by the IT department. Each Honors student will be assigned a laptop, and information about costs is included in the budget appendix below.

8d. Probation/Dismissal - Although the workload of probation and dismissal falls on the HPC, Director, and Associate Director according to these proposals, this work has no budgetary impact for which we have not yet accounted.

⁸ See characteristic 2: https://www.nchchonors.org/uploaded/NCHC_FILES/Program_Review/NCHC_Basic_Characteristics.pdf

8e. Study Abroad - Honors study abroad has had a past budgetary impact on International Programs, but moving forward it will be revenue neutral because of funds made available by the NJCU Foundation. In 2019, the previous Honors Director, International Programs, and NJCU Foundation worked together to form a sustainable and separated budget. Honors Study Abroad now has its own project account, funded by private scholarships from the Foundation, and co-managed by the Director of Honors and Director of International Programs. This account is separate from the Academic Affairs budget, any Honors programming budget, and non-Honors study abroad. Using this plan, Honors study abroad will no longer have any adverse budgetary impact on other units, offices or divisions, and will be revenue neutral.

8f. Fundraising – The Honors Program Committee, Director, and Associate Director will participate in fundraising in partnership with the NJCU Foundation, for the purpose of minimizing the budgetary burden of the Honors Program.

8g. Scheduling – In order to schedule HON courses properly, Honors should have a dedicated budget for supplemental instruction. In the same way that colleges, schools, and departments have budgets to schedule sections, the Honors should have its own budget to run HON sections.

8h. Marketing and recruitment – Although the HPC, Director, and Associate Director will partner with the Marketing office to recruit students from high schools and maintain a strong brand for the NJCU Honors Program, we do not anticipate that this would have a budgetary impact.

Proposal 8 Appendix: Budget data

	*Non-salary / programming	Laptops	Honors study abroad
2019-2020	\$17,499.00	\$46,633.20 (for 60 laptops)	\$90,000 (\$1500 x 60 students)
2020-2021 (requested)	\$17,149.02	\$50,519.30 (for 65 laptops)	\$97,500 (\$1500 x 65 students)
2021-2022 (anticipated)	\$20,000.00 (projected growth)	\$54,405.40 (for 70 laptops)	\$105,000 (\$1500 x 70 students)

*Non-salary / programming budget historically paid for an August Honors retreat for freshman, student travel for presentations at the National Collegiate Honors Council Conference, on-campus events for Honors students, co-sponsorships of on-campus events, co-curricular events off campus, and end-of-semester receptions or graduation receptions.