

University Honors Program Assessment Plan Summary

Date Submitted: _____ 1 June 2018 _____ For Academic Years 2018 and following _____

Student Learning Outcome Measure description

(direct or indirect?)

Timeline or cycle

SLO1 Students will be able to formulate and develop arguments with sufficient support, including reasoning, evidence, persuasive appeals, and proper attribution. (Critical thinking	Direct measure: Rubrics used to evaluate student senior theses.	2 year cycle: odd academic years
SLO2 Students will be able to integrate knowledge from diverse perspectives, disciplines, and skill sets, both theoretical and applied, and hone them into arguments and/or strategies. (Interdisciplinary learning)	Direct measure: Rubrics used to evaluate 201 final papers	2 year cycle: even academic years
SLO3 Students will be able to apply discipline-specific as well as cross discipline-based knowledge to design, execute, and communicate a specific problem-solving strategy. (Independent research, creativity, and scholarship)	Direct measure: Rubric used to evaluate student senior theses and theses presentations.	Annual review
SLO4 Students will demonstrate ethical behavior in all performance categories, including classroom, extracurricular, community-based service-learning, and independent research areas. (Ethics and social responsibility)	Direct measure: Rubric used to evaluate liaison comments.	2 year cycle even academic years

<p>Expected level of student proficiency (definition and percentage)</p> <p>100% of students completing the Honors minor should be <i>proficient</i> or better in each SLO. Performance criteria for <i>proficiency</i> vary by SLO. See rubrics for details.</p>		

Colorado State University-Pueblo

Academic Program Assessment Plan University Honors Program (minor)¹

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Program Mission

The University Honors Program at Colorado State University-Pueblo provides high-achieving students with enhanced learning opportunities to stimulate their engagement and development, both within an intellectual community of scholars, and as citizens of the wider university community and the world. The Honors minor curriculum provides students with special opportunities for interaction with faculty in thought-provoking seminars and intensive guided research, as well as experiential and service-learning projects.

Relation of Honors Program to the University Mission

The National Collegiate Honors Council notes that: “The central goal of Honors education is academic enrichment; the ways to this goal are defined by the specific institutional context, the faculty teaching in the program, and the needs of the particular students. In general, Honors programs are based on the belief that superior students profit from close contact with faculty, small courses, seminars or one-on-one instruction, course work shared with other gifted students, individual research projects, internships, foreign study, and campus or community service.” Moreover, as a member of the Rocky Mountain Honors Council, our University Honors Program is linked to more than a dozen other programs regionally. We share a common philosophy, commitment, and programmatic emphasis as well as the opportunity to work cooperatively to enhance each other’s programs through the exchange of information as well as an annual student conference where students meet to engage in academic, social, and extracurricular activities.

“Colorado State University-Pueblo is committed to excellence, setting the standard for regional comprehensive universities in teaching, research and service by providing leadership and access for its region while maintaining its commitment to diversity.” To those ends, the Board of Governors adopted a set of values that include excellence in teaching and research, innovation, opportunity and access, and civic responsibility.

The University Honors Program assists in fulfilling the mission of CSU-Pueblo on multiple levels. In terms of curriculum, it provides not only enriched coursework to engage high-

¹ Plan written by David Malet; revised by Marc Pratarelli in May 2013; revised by John O'Connor in May 2016; SLO assessment schedule revised in May 2017 by John O'Connor.

achieving students, but also provides them with extended opportunities to participate with faculty in research projects. This not only gives students a competitive advantage for graduate education but also increases the undergraduate research output of the university. Students also gain professional experience through service opportunities that promote civic responsibility and their ties to the broader Pueblo community, the region and beyond. Furthermore, our upper-level courses employ experiential learning techniques, so the Honors curriculum supports the University's Quality Initiative.

Faculty benefit from student research assistance and also gain more opportunities to supervise student research, teach smaller and more intellectually stimulating seminar classes, and foster interdisciplinary teaching with colleagues in other disciplines.

The University Honors Program also enriches the intellectual and social environment of the institution thereby creating and fostering a culture of excellence associated with the whole university. Most current Honors students are also involved in a number of other curricular and extra-curricular campus activities. Many Honors students live in a theme residence floor on-campus. Many of the off-campus students also participate in events held on and off campus.

Keeping high-achieving students engaged in both their classes and the university community increases the likelihood that they will remain at CSU-Pueblo and also makes it more likely that they will recommend the university as a worthwhile experience to friends still in high school, thereby increasing future enrollments. Having students in interdisciplinary programs that encourage active learning also creates a stronger sense of campus community, and more top students in service or community-based learning means more ambassadors to increase the university presence in positive ways. A highly visible University Honors Program, therefore, should help generate higher enrollments, a higher rate of retention and students who finish their degrees, and ultimately more alumni who can serve as career mentors, donors, and exemplars of the benefits of a CSU-Pueblo public education.

Program Goals

- To provide opportunities for enriched work for high-achieving students.
- To offer small classes that permit challenging study of advanced material and increased interaction with faculty who will serve as academic and pre-professional mentors.
- To provide students with an interdisciplinary approach to academic research through seminars and experiential learning, culminating in individual projects supervised by faculty.

Expected Student Learning Outcomes

Honors Program students should be able to

1. formulate and develop arguments with sufficient support, including reasoning, evidence, persuasive appeals, and proper attribution. (Critical thinking)

2. integrate knowledge from diverse perspectives, disciplines, and skill sets, both theoretical and applied, and hone them into arguments and/or strategies. (Interdisciplinary learning)
3. apply discipline-specific as well as cross-discipline-based knowledge to design, execute, and report on a specific problem-solving strategy. (Independent research, creativity, and scholarship)
4. make substantial leadership contributions to advancing personal and group work. (Leadership)
5. behave ethically as demonstrated in all performance categories, including classroom, extracurricular, community-based service-learning, and independent research areas. (Ethics and social responsibility)

Relation of Curriculum to Expected Student Outcomes

	HONOR 101	HONOR 101-L	HONOR 201	HONOR 310	HONOR 380	HONOR 481
SLO 1: Critical thinking	I	I	E	E		M
SLO 2: Interdisciplinary learning	I	I	E	M	M	
SLO 3: Independent research, creativity, and scholarship		I	E	E		M
SLO 4: Leadership		I	E	E	M	M
SLO 5: Ethics and social responsibility		I	E	E	M	M

I = Relevant skills and content handled at introductory to intermediate level; performance expectations vary accordingly.

E = Relevant skills and content handled may be introduced briefly, however emphasis is on expanding skills at an intermediate to advanced level; performance expectations vary accordingly.

M = Relevant skills and content will be mastered.

Curriculum

The University Honors Program curriculum is intended to provide an enriching and challenging experience to students of diverse interests and backgrounds while minimizing the need to take additional credits or to delay the completion of major degree requirements and professional training programs. It is intended that all Honors students (carrying one major and one minor) will complete their degree requirements within four years. Most program requirements are fulfilled in Honors-only sections.

The purpose of the mini-seminar sequence (101, 101-L, 201) is a shared learning experience for all students in the program regardless of major. Currently, these courses offer an interdisciplinary approach to the question of effective and appropriate scholarship and are intended to assist students in preparing to undertake independent research projects in upper division courses. Seminars will offer guest lectures by diverse faculty across the university, professional and non-professional individuals from the community at large, other professional presentations using available technology, e.g., ‘TED Talks’, together with periodic recitations between speakers. Course content will therefore vary by semester, but each will be organized around a central theme connected in a progressive sequence leading first from the acquisition of knowledge, next to major problems and approaches in diverse fields and how ideas and data should be evaluated, and finally to the creation of appropriate and feasible research agenda.

Upon completion of the Honors seminar sequence, students are responsible for earning two credit hours of service or community-based learning experience prior to graduation. Many university honors programs incorporate these so that students can observe the impact of their academic field upon the wider community, gain valuable hands-on career and leadership experience, and more effectively serve as ambassadors of the university while giving back to their host communities. Students may work jointly with a community-based organization to “learn by doing” in an area relevant to their major to enhance learning and build civic responsibility, or they may select a suitable on-campus project with the approval of the Director. The term community shall be broadly defined.

Honors students must complete a three credit hour thesis project in the area of their major under the supervised direction of a faculty member. Some degree programs at the university require students to complete some form of capstone project relevant to the discipline. Honors students who are already required to complete such a capstone project will not be asked to undertake an additional one as well, but a component of that project must relate specifically to the Honors thesis requirement. This may be accomplished in various ways such as an extended literature review beyond what might be required by the program, additional analyses, etc. Honors students in programs without capstones will be required to complete one under appropriate faculty supervision. The thesis project as well as those from programs that already require a capstone will be presented as an Honors Thesis in an appropriate Honors venue.

Dissemination of Program Goals and Outcomes

To inform the public and the university community at large, written accounts of current program goals, expected student outcomes, and assessment activities are published in the Colorado State University-Pueblo Catalog. They are also posted on the program website.

Program students, parents, faculty and staff receive the Honors Student Handbook, which contains program goals and outcomes, as well as curriculum information and expectations.

Outcomes Assessment Activities

The National Collegiate Honors Council does not provide any type of accreditation standards or specific metrics for identifying the success of Honors programs. The Honors Program assessment therefore applies university-determined best practices for the effective implementation of student learning outcomes. Assessment of SLOs occurs in May of each year following the schedule outlined below. In each case, materials selected from student portfolios will be evaluated against rubrics.

The Honors Steering Committee will meet at least once every fall semester for evaluation of program assessment. The Committee will examine assessment results and the assessment plan itself to determine what if any changes would produce a more effective program, including curriculum design, program and scholarship budgets, and college standards for Honors offerings. Committee reports and curricular materials pertaining to the previous year will be available in the Honors folder on the university commons.

Upon completion of the program, all Honors students are expected to demonstrate proficiency in each learning outcome as measured by the associated rubric.

SLO Assessment Schedule

SLOs 1 and 3 will be evaluated on a biennial cycle by assessing the Honors theses [HONOR 481] completed since the previous assessment of these SLOs. (SLOs 1 and 3 are assessed on even academic years, i.e. 2014-15, 2016-17).

SLOs 2, 3, 4 and 5 will be evaluated on a biennial cycle by examining materials (e.g. liaison reports, student reflections, group project documents) from service learning projects [HONOR 380] and group projects [HONOR 310] completed since the previous assessment of these SLOs. (SLOs 2, 3, 4 and 5 are assessed on odd academic years, i.e. 2015-16, 2017-18)

As deemed necessary in light of assessment results, student progress toward mastery of SLOs may be assessed by appeal to materials collected from courses earlier in the curriculum.