

# University Committee on Honors Programs

## Annual Report to the Steering Committee | Spring 2024

### Actions Taken Throughout the 23-24 Academic Year

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**Report submitted by committee chair:** Robin Silbergleid (Department of English; rep from College of Arts and Letters)

**Regular business:** meetings held on 11/16/23, 12/11/2023, 2/23/24 via zoom. The fourth meeting, planned 3/7/2024 was canceled due to proximity with the previous meeting and conflict on the part of the committee chair and others. Another meeting will be held in May to continue discussion.

#### **Significant areas of conversation:**

- **Strategic Planning Process:** The Dean introduced this topic at the beginning of the first meeting of the year. The aspirational goal is to make MSU the #1 honors college for undergraduate research. Adding sophomore-level research classes is one strategy, as well as changing the on campus recruitment process. Ideally, the Honors College will be a named program via endowment, to expand existing programs including Peer Mentorship and HC Impact.
- **Campbell Hall:** At the second meeting of the year the Dean provided background on the renovation to Campbell Hall; he presented an update at the third meeting, including significant discussion of fundraising and gifts received. The renovation is designed to bring living and academic spaces together. Process to determine priority housing is still unclear, but the hope is that all Honors College students will have key card access to the building regardless of where they live. The anticipated completion date is Fall 2025.
- **Honors Experiences:** Consideration of honors courses, sections, and options was our major point of discussion at our third meeting for the year, which will be continued both at the May meeting and next academic year. Some students have difficulty meeting their requirement for 8 honors experiences, due to lack of adequate offerings in certain colleges. There is greater desire for clarity surrounding honors options on the part of faculty and two general means of providing these experiences, both as planned options within courses and also as more individualized projects. The committee also began to explore some of the structural issues that stand in the way of increasing honors offerings, including uncompensated labor for faculty as well as the College itself not having funding to encourage colleges/departments to offer adequate sections and courses. To

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this point, Dean Long underscored a desire for “tighter partnership with the colleges.”

## Projected Activities for Fall 2024

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Building on discussion taken spring 2024, as well as the university strategic planning process, UCHP anticipates continued discussion around honors options, sections, and courses and strategies to incentivize individual faculty as well as units/departments to expand offerings, in alignment with the Honors College Strategic Plan.

## Requested Support from the Steering Committee and/or the Office of Academic Governance

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It would be useful for this committee to have a standing meeting time that is publicized in advance of elections to the committee, to allow for greater attendance and participation. A standing meeting time was requested in the report submitted by previous committee chair Eric Torng in 2019.