

## UCC Program Review Committee Summary of Review

**Program:** Honors Tutorial College

**Date of last review:** N/A

**Date of this review:** AY 2021-2022

The program offers the following degrees, minors, and certificates:

- Advanced Computing - BS1949
- Anthropology – BA1934
- Art History – BA1935
- Astrophysics – BS1931
- Business Administration – BB1926
- Chemistry – BS1904
- Classics – BA1932
- Communication Sciences & Disorders – BS1941
- Communication Studies – BC1918
- Dance – BF1906
- Economics – BS1910
- Engineering/Physics – BS1925
- English – BA1916
- Environmental & Plant Biology – BS1901
- Environmental Studies – BA1942
- Film – BF1924
- Geography – BA1944
- Geological Sciences – BS1948
- History – BA1909
- Journalism – BJ1923
- Mathematics – BS1903
- Media Arts & Studies – BC1920
- Music – BA1938
- Neuroscience – BS1937
- Philosophy – BA1917
- Physics – BS1905
- Political Science – BA1908
- Social Work – BA1930
- Sociology – BA1912
- Studio Art – BF or BFA 1940
- Theater – BF or BFA 1913
- Translational Health – BS 1946 or S 1947

**Recommendation:** This program is found to be viable.

See report for commendations, concerns, and recommendations.

The report was forwarded to the college dean. His response is attached.

## **Internal Program Review for the Honors Tutorial College (HTC) February 2022**

### *Summary*

The internal reviewers for this evaluation, Dr. David Brown (Associate Professor of Instruction, College of Business, Athens) and Dr. Hayley Mitchell Haugen (Professor of English, Ohio University Southern), conducted a virtual site visit of the Honors Tutorial College on February 4, 2022, with additional virtual interviews conducted on February 11, 2022. The interviews covered a range of constituents, including program leadership (Dean, Associate Deans), faculty Directors of Study representing a range of disciplines, affiliated University personnel, administrative staff, and students. There were no external reviewers for this evaluation.

Based on our evaluation of HTC's self-study and our interviews with stakeholders, we conclude that the college is viable. Overall, we noted that the HTC represents a unique and valued piece of undergraduate education at Ohio University—one that distinguishes OU from other institutions in the state and region in its efforts to attract and retain high-achieving students. We identified a number of strengths and opportunities for improvement, as detailed in the sections to follow.

### *Merits & Commendations*

Across our interviews with individuals associated with the Honors Tutorial College, we noted several positives that should be highlighted:

1. There is a broad consensus that the organizational culture within the College is strong. Consistently, interviewees attributed this to the leadership of Dean Donal Skinner. Specifically, they cited the sense of collegiality, support, and empowerment fostered by Dean Skinner. Asked to comment on the vision and long-term trajectory of the College under Dean Skinner's leadership, both faculty and staff expressed confidence and optimism in navigating current challenges and in the College's ability to prosper in the coming years. Morale among those working in the College and in its constituent programs is high.
2. An initiative that enjoys broad support under Dean Skinner's leadership is HTC's focus on the mental health and emotional wellbeing of its students. Through the HTC's partnership with the Ohio University Psychology and Social Work Clinic, HTC students have access to ten hours of mental health services that supplement services offered by Ohio University Counseling and Psychological Services—an especially important resource given the challenges and pressures that high-achieving students face in higher education. Several individuals pointed to the value of these mental health services in contributing to student success, as well as retention. The HTC students interviewed were emphatic in their appreciation of the College's awareness of their mental health needs and its provision of resources in support of them. Interestingly, HTC students are also supporting the research of graduate students who work in the clinic, offering them the unique opportunity to engage in research with a sub-set of university students (the high achiever) whose mental health needs may not be being met by standard counseling.

3. Involvement in HTC tutorials continues to be a source of pride and passion for faculty members who participate. Despite some challenges related to compensation (detailed below), the faculty who serve in the Director of Study (DOS) roles in their respective disciplines report high levels of satisfaction and engagement in their work with HTC students. Faculty are invested in and enthusiastic about the initiative, creativity, and determination of the HTC students with whom they have worked.
4. The Honors Tutorial College and the opportunities it represents are important factors when high-achieving high school students are making enrollment decisions. HTC represents a competitive advantage for OU when applicants—many of whom have offers from multiple institutions—are deciding where to matriculate. Nationwide, there are no comparable models of undergraduate instruction that offer the same high-touch, student-focused approach that HTC's one-on-one instruction provides. For many high-ability students, participation in the Honors Tutorial College is *the* deciding factor in their enrollment at OU. From the institutional side, this uniqueness promotes a pool of high-achieving candidates and prompts interest from students who might otherwise not consider Ohio University.
5. Students who do enroll in HTC enjoy a high level of success at the university and beyond. Data reflect that 88% of HTC students who later apply to medical school are accepted. Students across a range of disciplines go on to graduate study at acclaimed programs within their respective fields. Additionally, students are well-positioned and competitive for prestigious national scholarships such as Fulbrights due in part to the efforts of the Office of Nationally Competitive Awards (ONCA).
6. In light of the number of first-generation college students that Ohio University serves, support for these students is critical. The Honors Tutorial College is doing its part in this regard, as graduation rates for first-generation students are high; currently, the graduation rate for first-generation students in the HTC is higher than non-first-generation students.

### *Areas of Concern*

Across our interviews with individuals associated with the Honors Tutorial College, we noted several areas of concern:

1. The most repeated concern among the constituents at HTC, as also reflected in the program's self-study, is the program's ability to attract and retain faculty tutors, especially as HTC continues to grow at a rapid rate. Faculty compensation for tutorials is currently \$500 per tutorial, a rate that has not increased since the 1980s. As budgets shrink across disciplines, often resulting in increased teaching responsibilities, tutorials become less of a financial incentive for faculty who are, in most cases, not permitted to teach tutorials on load. The Ohio Honors Program also reports unprecedented growth. The program currently maintains two full-time and two half-time faculty members. Additional faculty will be necessary to sustain continued growth.

Due to these faculty retention issues, HTC is no longer accepting students in Advanced Computing, and the program is taking fewer students for Sociology tutorials. Tutorials in Biology and Neuroscience are in threat of closure, for example, and the Department of Modern Languages has already severed most ties with HTC due to a major restructuring of faculty within the department.

2. Honorariums for tutorials are allocated for faculty research. Faculty who do not receive significant funds within their departments to attend conferences or to otherwise support their research report that they rely on their HTC funds to fill in the gaps. Some faculty note, however, that they have had trouble getting these funds released from their department. When faculty know they need to jump through hoops to receive the money they have earned, it makes the prospect of running HTC tutorials less appealing.
3. HTC students are drawn to the program, in part, by funding that allows them to participate in a wide variety of experiences, such as internships and study abroad opportunities. Currently, many HTC students receive \$3000 from endowment funds to engage in these activities. In the past, students have also had the opportunity to engage in summer research through the assistance of URAP funding. Budget cuts have significantly reduced the number of internships on offer through Ohio University, however, raising concerns about HTC's ability to remain competitive with other universities' programming in the future.
4. HTC faculty and staff report an uptick in mental health concerns among HTC students. The COVID pandemic has certainly contributed to these issues, and this generation of students is also more comfortable talking about mental health than past generations, suggesting that while they may not have *more* mental health concerns than past students, they are more eager to seek help for them. As noted above in our commendations section, recent HTC students have relied on the program's partnership with the Ohio University Psychology and Social Work Clinic to support their needs as highly achieving students. This partnership has been supported by HTC's Carry Forward funds which will soon be depleted.

### *Recommendations*

The review committee offers the following recommendations to address the areas of concern:

1. An institutional review should be conducted to discuss a fair rate for faculty compensation for tutorials. While HTC understands that offering an overload rate is unrealistic, doubling the current rate of pay may help incentivize faculty to take part in HTC programs.

This review might also consider giving faculty the choice between receiving an honorarium for tutorials or running tutorials as part of their teaching load (something that some departments already allow). Faculty who teach in struggling programs, such as Modern Languages, often have trouble making load in their own departments; being allowed to run HTC tutorials onload could help solve this problem and prevent programs from being cut from HTC.

Additionally, program growth within HTC and OHP should be monitored and not allowed to extend beyond the capabilities of the current faculty to service students' needs.

2. HTC should review the process through which it pays faculty for tutorials, to examine if a more direct method of payment is possible. At the very least, HTC could offer guidelines to department heads to ensure a speedy allocation of funds to faculty.
3. In order to help HTC remain nationally competitive, it is essential that students continue to receive funding for internships, travel, and summer research. We encourage the university to continue to support and expand URAP and to grow endowment funds for HTC.
4. Accepting that HTC's student population seeks mental health support in addition to what they can receive through Ohio University's Counseling and Psychological Services alone, we encourage the university to support Dean Skinner's efforts to refund HTC's partnership with the Ohio University Psychology and Social Work Clinic.



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March 5, 2022

Dear Barbel,

Thank you for the review report on the Honors Tutorial College. My follow up response is minimal, just to correct small errors and misunderstandings

*Merits*

#6 As no statistics were performed here it would be more accurate to state that "graduation rates for first-generation students are as high as the already very high graduation rate for non-first-generation students."

*Areas of Concern*

#1

- So Advanced computing will not be accepting students from Fall23 -they have agreed to accept students for Fall22.
- There is no concern with Biology but Neuroscience is being phased out.
- It is more accurate to say that the Department of Modern Languages is phasing out its programs in HTC due to a major restructuring of faculty within the department.
- I should note that since the report was submitted it is likely that Geology will need to pause their program.

#3 Actually very few students receive \$3000 as we only offer relatively few internal internships, which is from a mix of Foundation and Operational support. Students engaged in Study away can apply up to a maximum of \$800 in a given year.

*Recommendations*

For #2, any hold up on use of funds is purely at the department/college level. HTC has sought, and the Provost has provided assurances to enable faculty to use these funds unencumbered, so this problem should not exist.

Sincerely

Donal C. Skinner PhD  
Dean  
Honors Tutorial College