

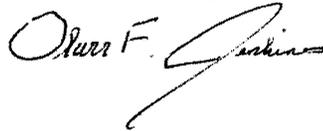
Why Should I Join the Honors College?

An Honors Thesis (HONRS 499)

by

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Thesis Advisor
Dr. Oliver Fred Jenkins

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Oliver F. Jenkins". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Ball State University
Muncie, IN

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Abstract

After speaking with several incoming honors college freshman, I realized that these students were not sure why they were joining the honors college. As I reflected on my life a couple years ago, I quickly decided that I also had lacked much reasoning for joining the honors college. As a high school honors student, it seemed the logical next step in my educational career. In addition, I remember being told the two main perks that every honors college knows: extended library rental periods and priority scheduling. However, because I had completed a lot of time in the honors college, I had come to appreciate all of the other amazing features that the honors college offers its students.

I decided to create a brochure that could be distributed to high school seniors when they come to visit. To collect input, I sent out a survey to honors juniors and seniors, which asked several questions about their experience in the honors college. After receiving the responses, I analyzed the data to look for the most common answers. Honestly, I was surprised with the variety of answers that I obtained, some of which I had never considered. After several sessions of examining all of the data, I was able to create my final project, the brochure.

Acknowledgements

- I want to thank Dr. Jenkins for advising me throughout the course of my project. From helping me construct good survey questions to a final critique of the project, he provided extremely beneficial guidance.
- I would also like to thank all of the honors college students who participated in my survey. Without all of their input, my thesis would not have been a success.

Rationale

After speaking with several Honors College incoming freshman, I realized that many people did not realize all that there was to offer. Instead, they were mostly joining for the fact that they were in an honors program in high school. Many of them had not even thought of it as a decision, but instead, just a stepping stone to continue their "honors path." As I felt that this was not a good reason to join and understood how much there was to offer, I decided to create a brochure, based on input from other upperclassmen, which discusses many of the great aspects that are offered at the Ball State Honors College.

This led to me designing a survey, which was then submitted via email to all Honors College juniors and seniors for response. The first three questions were pretty general. I asked for the student's name, which allowed me to include some direct quotes in my final project. In addition, I asked for their class and major. I had thought that I might see some general trends between people with the same majors. However, after analyzing the data, that was not the case. The fourth question I asked was for a list of the honors courses a student had taken. This allowed me to eliminate a couple of response sets because those students had only taken two honors classes, which I did not feel was enough to make a good judgment on the other answers.

Next, we had the survey questions that were most important to my brochure. These questions discussed which classes the students felt were most and least beneficial and why. I used these questions to compare the answers between students who chose the same classes on opposing questions. I wanted to analyze the difference in their experiences. I saw the most opposition in the answers that I received from students who chose the colloquiums, which makes logical sense because those classes are so diverse.

My final question on the survey asked students to think back to why they had initially joined the Honors College as a freshman. As I expected, these students identified the same reasons that I had heard from the current freshman class. This made me realize that this general trend of not realizing the beauty of the Honors College until spending time as a member was a long time trend. I am hoping that my brochure can be the source, or at least one of many sources, which demonstrate to incoming freshman all that there is to offer at the Ball State Honors College because I believe that there should be more to the decision than just continuing an honors cycle.

Why Should I Join the Honors College?

Junior and Senior Questionnaire

Name _____

Class _____

Major _____

What honors courses have you taken?

Which honors course have you found most beneficial? Why?

Which honors course have you found least beneficial? Why?

What is the one thing you have found most beneficial as a member of the honors college?

If you can remember, why did you join the honors college when you were a freshman?

Why should you join the Honors College?

A Sense of Belonging

Feeling a sense of belonging at the collegiate level can be more challenging than what one experienced in high school. By joining the honors college, you will feel like you have a family right at Ball State. Jennifer Banning said, "You're part of a smaller community within the campus that way, complete with the support system and extra resources the Honors College offers." During your first semester, you will take Honors 100, which is a once a week seminar that will familiarize you with Ball State and Muncie. This will make you feel more at home already. In addition, you will see the same people in your classes that you see at "home" in your dorm. Beginning in the fall of 2009, housing for honors college students will be located on the south end of campus in the newly renovated Dehority Complex.



The Perks

(Because there are more perks than just keeping your library books all year)

A survey of junior and senior members of the Honors College revealed the following as benefits:

- **Priority Scheduling:** As a member of the honors college, your schedule requests take precedence, thus allowing you to get more of the classes that you prefer.
- **Support of Professors:** Students felt they were able to build a closer relationship with their honors college professors. "The professors within the honors college are extremely personable and helpful even outside of class," said Michelle Welage.
- **Smaller Class Sizes:** You will not find yourself in an honors lecture hall. Courses in the honors college are kept small to promote discussion based learning experiences.
- **Advising:** In addition to your freshman advisor and content area advisor, you will be assigned to an honors college advisor. These advisors are very knowledgeable about the honors college and many other aspects of Ball State. Moreover, when they do not have the information you need, they are more than willing to make the connections and figure it out for you. They are always only a phone call, email, or short walk away.

Before long, you will be finishing up your college courses and doing your honors thesis. Enjoy your experience both at Ball State and in the Honors College. It will go by quickly!

Honors College
Carmichael Hall, Room 104
Ball State University
Muncie, IN 47306

Phone: 765-285-1024
Fax: 765-285-2072
E-mail: honors@bsu.edu

Courses

There are several courses that every honors college student takes. Those courses are:

Honors 100—Freshman seminar

Honors 189—Global Studies

Honors 199—Contemporary
Civilization

Honors 201, 202, 203—The
humanities sequence

Honors 296, 297, 298—Science

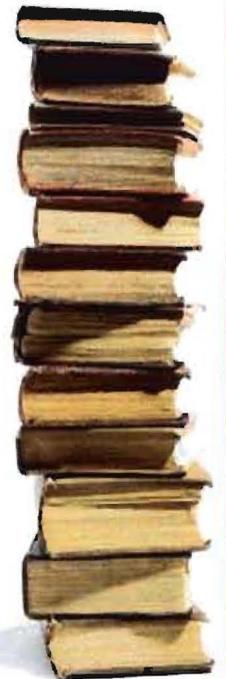
Honors colloquia

Honors 499—Thesis

Many of the University Core Curriculum, or UCC, courses have an honors section. You can expect smaller class sizes and more discussion than you would find in a general section of the same course.

Ball State University Honors College

THE STUDENT PERSPECTIVE



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