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Honors Committee Meeting Minutes, April 22, 2009

Honors Committee

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Minutes of the University Honors Committee

April 22, 2009

Chair Tom Traynor called the meeting to order at 10:00 am in room 243 Millett. Attending were members Donna Miles Curry, Bill Slattery, Paul Hershberger, Leo Finkelstein, Carol Wagner Williams, Susan Carrafiello, and guests Sabrina Sheetz and Alex Wenning. The minutes of the February 4 meeting were approved.

Approximately 50 incoming students have accepted four-year Honors Scholarships. This represents a slight increase from last two years, when the numbers were in the 40s. The continuing scholarship committee will probably make selections, but Honors will not send out award notifications until later in the summer when foundation account balances are expected to be clearer.

The committee approved Evan Osborne's proposal to teach a UH 400 Seminar on the Great Depression. Elliot Gaines proposal to upgrade his course on Semiotics from a UH 201 to a UH 400 was tabled. The members would like more specific information about how this course will work at the 400 level. They would like to see course objectives. There was also some concern that the proposed assignments didn't meet the requirements for a Writing Intensive course. The course revision should include additional information on the final project.

Next the committee considered a revision of the Department of History Honors Program. It was noted that the differences are mostly concern the composition of the thesis committee, the check and balance between the instructor of record and the committee, and the length of the project. The members suggested the addition of the word "typically" to make the first sentence under the heading Description of the Thesis read: "The thesis should typically be a minimum of 40 pages long (8 hours) or 60 pages long (12 hours)." There were two additional questions: 1) Would a public history project be allowed? 2) How much discretion does the committee have in terms of length and content?

The committee unanimously approved the revised Lake Campus Honors Program proposal. It will now go back to the Lake Campus and then through the University approval process.

Susan Carrafiello announced that she was initiating a Director's Advisory Board and that Honors students would be invited to apply this spring. The board will not substitute for what the elected student members of the Honors Committee do. The board will consist of about 10 students and may include alumni members. The Director also reported that work was underway to make the Honors curriculum more flexible and adaptable to the coming semester system.

Alex Wenning reported that he took five students to the Mid East Honors Association meeting in Kalamazoo earlier this spring. They participated in a panel on service learning. Alex was elected Vice President of the organization. SHA elections are underway.

Donna Curry is working with the library to arrange for electronic submission of Honors projects. The Honors Office will assist as needed.

The meeting adjourned at 11:05. The committee will meet one final time in May.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Kenton, Secretary to the Committee

Next Meeting: Wednesday, May 20 at 10:00 am in Honors Conference Room