EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
This proposal outlines the foundation for establishing a more distinctive and highly competitive honors college at Coastal Carolina University by fall semester of 2019. We have provided a framework for evaluating ideas for future directions in relation to the identified strengths and weaknesses of our current institutional model. Importantly, we believe there is a tremendous opportunity for establishing an innovative and transformational honors experience that would increase the recruitment and retention of our highest caliber students. In addition to new initiatives, a revised curriculum, and increased financial support, it is essential that the dean of the honors college partner with faculty and staff across the institution to ensure that honors students have a high-impact and enhanced experience throughout every step of their undergraduate career.

INTRODUCTION
In February 2017, Provost Ralph Byington charged the Honors Council with the task of developing a proposal that would launch a well-defined and distinctive honors college. Since then, we have conducted extensive reviews of our peer and aspirant institutions, evaluated the status of our honors program, and completed the initial needs analysis for establishing a high-quality honors college. Three major concerns became apparent:

1) We need to build a collective vision for the honors college that serves to inspire incoming students and the campus community. Specifically, we need to foster a better-defined sense of community and pride for our students, but also develop a culture of goodwill and partnership among the faculty and staff. The honors college needs to be embraced as an important contributor and collaborative partner for enriching the educational experiences for everyone across campus.

2) We need to build a sustainable curriculum that creates a flexible and coherent experience for our honors students. Students should be able to integrate their honors experience within the core curriculum throughout all four years and fully maximize opportunities within their majors, and institutionally, we need to reduce our reliance on honors subsections. Additionally, there needs to be more consistency in defining an ‘honors experience’ for all students that establishes oversight in maintaining high quality standards.

3) In addition to maintaining our high second-year retention rate and increasing our four-year graduation rate within honors, we need to ensure that more high-achieving students are recruited into and have the opportunity to join the honors college. Potentially, this might increase our retention rate amongst that cohort of the student body, which has, historically, suffered from a higher rate of attrition. According to our yearly freshman cohort retention reports (2013-2015; CCU Institutional Research), approximately 40% of the first-year students who do not return for their sophomore year earned a 3.0 or higher during their first semester at Coastal.\(^1\) That translates to approximately 300 high-achieving first-year students who choose to leave CCU during or after their first year. Given the impressive retention rates in

\(^1\) See Office of Institutional Research (2017).
the current honors program, it is reasonable to argue that we have the opportunity with the creation of the honors college to improve our retention rate amongst high-achieving students.

Given limited staffing and fiscal resources, the current director of the honors program, Dr. Michael Ruse, has done an excellent job building a flexible honors curriculum, recruiting students into honors, and increasing student retention within the program. From a 2014 population of 360 students, the current student enrollment in the program has grown to 650 students. The second-year retention rate during that same period has ranged from 82%-90%. This is significantly higher than the university-wide second-year retention rate, which has ranged from 65%-69%. Likewise, the four-year graduation rates for the 2010-2012 entering classes have ranged from 55%-64%, compared with university-wide four-year graduation rates for those same entering classes of 26%-27%. With Dr. Ruse’s work over the past four years, we have established a foundation upon which to transition the academic programs within University College into an independent honors college.

The above three issues must be addressed in order to build a thriving honors college that delivers a distinctive academic experience for our students, with the goal of nurturing their curiosity and their passion for inquiry, inspiring a sense of pride in their identity as honors students, and encouraging a lasting commitment to the honors college and the wider Coastal Carolina University community.

**COASTAL HONORS COLLEGE: SCHOLARSHIP THAT BREAKS BOUNDARIES**

A successful honors college will identify and capitalize upon what makes Coastal Carolina University a unique institution, taking into account the mission of the university and its strategic path forward. To this end, we have proposed a vision and curriculum in this white paper that builds upon our current resources and cultivates the unique identity that makes CCU a distinctive university of choice for our students.

The current honors program is located in University College, which also houses university-wide interdisciplinary programs and initiatives. The dean and associate deans of University College have brought together the interdisciplinary faculty within the college to administer and deliver the academic programs offered by the college. This community of interdisciplinary faculty have a unique understanding of scholarship and teaching that spans Coastal Carolina’s academic colleges and programs. From our honors lecturer in biochemistry, who studies the structure of proteins key to regulating cells involved in cancer metastasis, to our assistant professor in honors, whose work on the history and geography of local communities includes an emphasis on social justice and environmental impact, honors students are exposed to ways of learning and knowing that cross traditional academic disciplines and expand the possibilities inherent in breaking disciplinary boundaries. These interdisciplinary academic resources—the dean, the associate dean, the faculty and staff, and the academic programs—will become the foundation upon which we build Coastal Honors College. Our plan is to spend the 2018-2019 academic year preparing to transition University College into the Coastal Honors College and Center for Interdisciplinary Studies, which will launch in fall 2019.

---

2 See National Collegiate Honors Council (1994).
3 This section is the result of a discussion with Martha Hunn, Associate Vice President for University Communication.
Coastal Honors College will offer students the opportunity for an interdisciplinary education that requires them to become experts in a discipline of their choice—their academic major—while also asking them to think beyond the disciplines as a result of the interdisciplinary requirements of the honors curriculum. In order to accomplish this, Coastal Honors College will become a place for faculty from across campus to innovate and experiment—developing unique interdisciplinary courses and experimenting with innovative teaching strategies that both challenge and inspire our students. We envision Coastal Honors College as an incubator for our faculty and students to experiment with new teaching methodologies, new research strategies, and the creation of new and boundary-breaking knowledge. CCU faculty from across the campus, who are affiliated with the honors college, will enhance the work they do in their departments and home disciplines, ensuring that the opportunities available for honors students expand to include all Coastal Carolina students. Coastal Honors College will exemplify CCU’s commitment to high-quality teaching and engaged learning, with an emphasis on collaborative, experiential research and creative opportunities. Coastal Honors College will nurture graduates who seek challenges, cultivate collaborative opportunities, break boundaries and expand possibilities.

**COASTAL HONORS COLLEGE: CURRICULUM**

The honors curriculum ultimately defines the honors program and should reflect both the goals of the college and the overall culture of the institution. The curriculum should be designed so that honors requirements satisfy, as much as possible, general education requirements, major or disciplinary requirements, and/or pre-professional or professional training requirements. The honors curriculum should constitute a substantial portion of the students’ undergraduate work, with a typical honors curriculum comprising 20%-25% of the total course work required for graduation. Finally, an honors curriculum should be distinctive; it should offer students special courses, seminars, and colloquia that emphasize experiential learning and undergraduate research, interdisciplinary study, and other unique learning opportunities. In what follows, we are proposing a 24-credit hour honors curriculum, with the goal of keeping honors students connected to Coastal Honors College throughout all four years of their career at CCU.

**CURRENT HONORS PROGRAM**

Currently, honors students are required to complete a 24-credit hour honors curriculum, which must include the following courses:

- HONR 101 (equivalent of UNIV 110)
- 3 credits of HONR 200- or 300-level coursework
- HONR 498 Honors Capstone Seminar
- HONR 499 Honors Senior Thesis/Project

---

4 See National Collegiate Honors Council (1994) and Spurrier (2008).
Many of CCU’s departments have an equivalent for HONR 498/499 sequence, which honors students in their major can complete, although the honors program can continue to offer sections of HONR 498/499 for those students who are unable to complete this sequence in their major.

As a result of limited honors faculty staffing and because departments have been unable to lend their faculty to teach honors designated coursework within our program, the honors program cannot offer enough sections of HONR courses, taught by honors faculty, for students to complete a full 24 credits through the honors program, despite the requirement. Most students meet this requirement through the use of honors subsections; each subsection is cross-listed with a non-honors course and allows one or more honors students to take that non-honors course for honors credit. The expectation in those honors subsections is that the honors student will complete work that is 20% above and beyond the work required in the non-honors section.

In 2016-2017, the breakdown of HONR sections offered within the honors program, departmental honors-only sections, and honors subsections was as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Fall 2016</th>
<th>Spring 2017</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HONR sections</td>
<td>167 seats</td>
<td>188 seats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Departmental honors sections</td>
<td>129 seats</td>
<td>12 seats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subsections</td>
<td>503 seats</td>
<td>622 seats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>799 seats</td>
<td>822 seats</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is important to note that the 500-600 seats in honors subsections in the above table were spread across approximately 250 different course sections. The problem with so many different honors subsections is that the honors program is not delivering a coherent, consistent curricular experience for its students and cannot effectively bring faculty who are teaching subsections together for professional development. As a result, the honors program has very little control over the consistency of course expectations or the quality of the curriculum being delivered to its students. These are clear barriers to creating a shared sense of community and establishing pride for a recognizable distinction. Finally, it is incredibly difficult to assess the quality and effectiveness of the honors curriculum when almost three-quarters of the seats being offered exist across 250 different honors subsections.

A goal of the proposed curriculum is to significantly reduce reliance on honors subsections. While the need for subsections cannot be eliminated entirely—there will always be small programs who cannot afford to offer courses in their major as honors-only courses—we plan to replace the current subsection model with a more intentional honors contract model. Honors contracts will be limited to no more than six credits of the honors curriculum, initiated by the student in consultation with a faculty member, and require a written plan and registration before the beginning of the semester.5

---

5 See Appendix 3 for a sample honors contract. Honors contract courses would work according to the same institutional model that supports the current subsections. When an honors contract course is approved, the honors director will create an honors subsection that will be cross-listed with the original course.
Another advantage of the proposed curriculum is that it ensures the honors college will not place an undue burden on departments by asking them to cover a significant portion of the honors curriculum through subsections and/or senior thesis courses. Many departments report that they are increasingly overwhelmed as the number of honors students grows. They are being asked to offer more classes, offer more seats within subsections, as well as take on more individualized honors senior thesis projects. In the below proposal, most of the honors curriculum takes place within the interdisciplinary Core Curriculum, with only 3-6 credits of an honors senior project taking place, if possible, in the major. In addition, we plan to broaden the scope of potential senior capstone opportunities within the honors college for those departments who are unable to offer a senior experience through their major.

Finally, the proposed curriculum intends to keep honors students more closely connected with the honors college throughout their four years at Coastal Carolina University. The current curriculum, with its reliance on subsections, tends to place the majority of the junior and senior honors curriculum on the shoulders of the major department, which places an undue burden on some departments and discourages the creation of a strong sense of community amongst honors students. The proposed curriculum creates significant touchpoints within the honors college during each year of the honors curriculum, with the ultimate goal of increasing retention rates amongst our highest caliber students, particularly during their junior and senior years.

**COASTAL HONORS COLLEGE: PROPOSED CURRICULUM**

Currently, the honors program is doubling the number of faculty housed in honors, from two lecturers (AY 15-16) to three tenure-track faculty and one lecturer (AY18-19). A plan needs to be established to make it easier (institutionally) for departments to allow their faculty to teach either honors-only sections within the Core Curriculum or interdisciplinary HONR courses. Increased faculty resources both within honors and from departments across campus will increase academic rigor, better ensure coherence within and consistency across the curriculum, and work toward eliminating the need for honors subsections. Through this curriculum we want to offer faculty from across campus the opportunity to engage in professional development, experiment with new pedagogies, and develop innovative courses, all of which will benefit the honors program, the faculty member’s home department, and the wider university. We must cultivate faculty buy-in across campus to establish a strong community of scholars invested in creating a culture of innovative scholarship and teaching.

In order to implement a revised curriculum and cultivate a collaborative investment, there must be institutional change that assists in the administration of the honors curriculum. Below are four ways this can happen:

**Joint Faculty Hires**

Use faculty lines in the honors college to create joint faculty positions with signature majors, high-demand majors, and/or complex, high-credit degree programs. These faculty would be housed in honors, but would teach one course each semester for their joint department. In addition they would advise and teach honors students who are majors in their field and participate in the creation of curricular tracks for those honors students (i.e., a business track
within the honors program). Members of the joint department would participate in the hiring committee and in the promotion and tenure evaluation of these honors faculty members.

**Weighted Student Credit Hours**
When a department offers an honors-only course that is capped at a lower number than an equivalent course, that honors-only section would generate the same number of (or more) student credit hours as an equivalent, non-honors section. Our hope is that this will incentivize departments and colleges to contribute to the number of honors-only courses offered each semester, while at the same time giving departments the opportunity to recruit honors students into their majors. For example, if the Politics Department offers a section of POLI 201, which is normally capped at 36, as an honors-only section capped at 18, each student credit hour will be doubled for the honors section. The Politics Department would get the same amount of student credit hours for the honors section as they would have received for a non-honors section.

**Teaching Sabbaticals**
Give faculty across campus the opportunity to apply for a teaching sabbatical housed in the honors college. Faculty would get a reduced teaching load in exchange for creating and teaching an interdisciplinary course in the honors college. This would give faculty the time and space to develop an innovative new course or experiment with new pedagogies. It would benefit the honors college by expanding our pool of affiliate faculty and diversifying the faculty resources and courses available to honors students. And, it would benefit the faculty member’s home department by giving the faculty member the opportunity to develop a new course or teaching methodology that could then be brought back to the department after the teaching sabbatical is over.

**Faculty Trades**
Members of the interdisciplinary faculty from the honors college could teach a course in their area of expertise for a semester, while a faculty member from that area exchanges a course (in load) to teach a course in honors. Our intention would be to allow faculty in other departments the ability to develop innovative courses or experiment with new pedagogies within the honors program, while increasing faculty investment in the program across campus.

The honors college curriculum would require, like the current curriculum does, 24 credits of honors-only coursework. A significant portion of this coursework would fulfill Core Curriculum requirements for honors students.

**Freshman/Sophomore Years (12-15 credits)**
Students will take one honors course per semester, choosing between offerings that may include:
- Honors Critical Thinking and Reasoning
- Honors Humanistic Thought

---

6 Our goal is to have an average cap of 18 students per course.
- Honors Human and Social Behavior
- Honors Scientific Concepts
- Honors Artistic Expression
- Honors-only sections offered by departments (i.e. COMM 150H, BIOL 121H)

**Junior Year (6-9 credits)**
- 300-level Junior Seminars that fulfill Core Curriculum areas (3-6 credits)
- Honors Contract courses within their major (no more than 6 credits)

**Senior Year (3-6 credits)**
The honors experiential capstone can take place in either the major or in the honors college, and includes a required public presentation of their work during the annual Coastal Honors College Colloquium. This is intended to be a flexible capstone experience that could include any of the following options:
- Senior Thesis
- Internships
- Study Abroad
- Research Assistantships
- Community Service/Engagement

We can project how many honors-only sections will need to be offered by both the honors program and by the other colleges for the first four years of the honors college curriculum, given the following assumptions regarding enrollment and staffing:

1. current enrollment and persistence rates stay relatively stable during the transition years;
2. honors faculty staffing does not grow during the transition years (i.e., we remain at three tenure-track faculty and one lecturer);
3. an average class cap of 18 students;
4. students take one honors course per semester through their junior year and most departments offer 3-6 credits of honors senior capstone;
5. sophomores under the old curriculum will take one honors only section during their sophomore year; and,
6. students under the old curriculum will continue to get the majority of their seats via honors subsections (which will be slowly phased out over the next four years).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Freshman</th>
<th>Soph.</th>
<th>Juniors</th>
<th>Seniors</th>
<th>Fall Honors-Only Sections</th>
<th>Spring Honors-Only Sections</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fall</td>
<td>Spring</td>
<td>(89%)</td>
<td>(68%)</td>
<td>(63%)</td>
<td>Offered by Honors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 1</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>235</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 2</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>235</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 3</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>235</td>
<td>182</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 4</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>235</td>
<td>182</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For further analysis of faculty staffing needs in the new honors college, please see the ‘Budget/Resource Allocation’ section below.
COASTAL HONORS COLLEGE: BUILDING DISTINCTION, BREAKING BOUNDARIES

In this section we propose a number of ideas that, if implemented, will coalesce into a distinctive honors experience that values academic rigor, interdisciplinary innovation, and collaborative community building. For each opportunity, we have linked it directly to CCU's 2016-2021 Strategic Plan, seeking to ensure high-impact engagement and support the mission and values of the institution through all six key strategies.

1. **Build Summer Programming (Strategy 1: Goals 1.2 - 1.4)**
   - Similar in structure to the CEaL program, incoming, first-year honors students could enroll in summer coursework moving them forward with their peers in targeted honors classes. This has the benefit of establishing a relationship with professors at an earlier point in time with the goal of jumpstarting involvement in undergraduate research/scholarship. Ideally this coursework would consist of at least one experiential course.
   - Similar in structure to the Wall Fellows program, an early ‘Retreat to the Beach’ would be a non-academic adventure week prior to the start of student move-in day. This would help to establish early relationships contributing to a bonded peer cohort and would help familiarizing them with the campus and greater grand strand area. This would be an option for all incoming honors students.
   - Develop a ‘College Leadership Summer Institute’ that would be informative as to the structure of CCU and higher education operations as well as instructive for becoming a distinguished leader on a college campus. Students would apply for acceptance into the program.
   - Provide a summer honors study abroad experience available to all students.

2. **Promote the Appeal of Alternative Degree Offerings (Strategy 2: Goal 2.1)**
   - Emphasize the “Degree in Three” option and highlight ways in which honors courses can be incorporated in this timeframe.
   - Foster interest and support academic planning for earning a “More in Four” or “Master’s in Five,” which will encourage honors students to enroll in CCU graduate programs.
   - Outline plans for facilitating double majors and connecting interdisciplinary honors courses that support the traditional academic majors.

3. **Maximize the Flexibility of the Honors Curriculum (Strategies 1 & 2: Goals 1.1-1.3; Goal 2.1)**
   - Establish a ‘Graduate Gateway’ by developing criteria for allowing undergraduate students to enroll in graduate level coursework in their senior year. These courses could be counted toward their required honors credits.
   - Create a process for initiating interdisciplinary inquiry whereby students intentionally design a project connecting coursework across classes in two distinct disciplines. This would be pre-approved via an honors course contract co-constructed with an advisor or faculty member.
   - Develop a variety of one-credit honors courses that expand possibilities for students and give faculty and staff across campus the opportunity to teach within the honors college. Examples of one-credit courses might include faculty-led reading groups, a workshop series that would help honors students navigate the job search process, or a lab visitation course to introduce honors science students to the research taking place in the various labs across campus.
• Enhance and expand the Senior Capstone Experience. This capstone experience should embrace scholarship more broadly defined. Rather than being defined largely by an undergraduate research project, this capstone could also include internships, study abroad, service learning or community outreach. This would allow departments the flexibility to offer honors experiences tailored to the needs of our students post-graduation.

4. Develop a Strong Sense of Community amongst Honors Students (Strategies 4 & 5: Goals 4.1-4.2; Goals 5.1-5.2)

• Implement an honors curriculum that ensures students have strong academic touchpoints in the honors college throughout their four years as honors students.
• Hire a Coordinator of Programming and Outreach to coordinate student activities and oversee student involvement, with the goals of creating a stronger sense of community, strengthening pride in and increasing students’ identification with the honors program.
• Create an honors student council and peer mentoring program.
• Create an alumni outreach program to connect current students with alumni and to increase alumni interest in and connection to the honors college.
• Work with University Communication and Admissions to create a strong brand for Coastal Honors College.
• Develop our website and establish an e-newsletter to connect students, parents, and alumni.
• Recruit a faculty council composed of individuals who were “in honors” as students. This group would connect faculty and draw upon ideas/experiences from other institutions that could enhance the operations on this campus.

5. Create an Honors Academic Commons (Strategy 6: Goal 6.3)

• To support the functioning of the honors college and foster the development of an honors community (which would be consistent with many other institutions), it is important for students to have an academic common space. This academic commons should be located in a building central to campus in a high-traffic, high-visibility area. In the space, we envision offices housing honors staff, faculty and advisors, computer work stations, and a lounge area/gathering space for students to congregate in between classes. It is important for honors students to be connected to resources they need, as well as have a space available for college-wide meetings, orientations, advising sessions, and social/cultural events throughout the year.

6. Define a ‘Distinguished Faculty’ Selection Process (Strategy 3: Goals 3.1, 3.2)

• Establish a selection process and professional incentives to motivate our best professors to teach honors only sections. This process should rotate faculty on a reasonable schedule that is sensitive to the faculty member’s time investment in course development and implementation, but would also allow for the flexibility and diversity needed in honors faculty membership.
• Provide better guidelines and resources for assisting faculty in the establishment of more consistent, and higher impact, expectations for the honors experiences. We want to define and support the development of student learning with measurable outcomes that are a culmination of a series of honors experiences. Several conversations across campus (and
amongst the honors council members) have suggested that faculty could use more preparation, guidance, and support for enhancing their honors course offerings.

- Create an endowed chair position: “Provost Faculty Fellow.” This individual would be nominated out of the Provost’s office and would be funded to develop an innovative honors course while teaching in the honors college. This would be highly valued in the promotion and tenure process.

7. Expand the Tenure-Track Honors College Faculty (Strategy 3: Goals 3.1, 3.2)
   - Continue to hire honors faculty on the tenure-track. This faculty should develop innovative high-impact classroom experiences. They will be charged to develop unique interdisciplinary topics courses that will appeal to a wide array of students and seek to connect interesting themes with bigger, real-world issues.

8. Extend the Study Abroad Opportunities (Strategy 2: Goals 2.1 & 2.4)
   - Establish a funding mechanism (or reallocate resources) whereby all honors students have the opportunity to study abroad. This is consistent with the university’s mission to develop healthy citizenship with a global perspective.

9. Establish a Scholarship and Grants Coordinator (Strategies 2 & 5: Goal 2.1; Goal 5.2)
   - In our conversations with other honors deans, and strongly emphasized by the CCU Honors Council, there is a need for a coordinator position that would assist students in the process of finding and compiling applications for competitive national awards, grants, and scholarship opportunities. This advisor would also assist with graduate school applications and professional guidance. This position provides an opportunity to better support our students as they find ways to academically distinguish themselves earlier in their career and increase their competitive advantage for these recognized opportunities.

10. Continue Current Incentives (Strategy 2)
    - Honors orientation during New Student Week for incoming students
    - Priority registration/academic advising
    - Smaller class sizes
    - Laptop/technological device

COASTAL HONORS COLLEGE: BUDGET/RESOURCE ALLOCATION

FACULTY AND STAFFING RESOURCES

In order to run a well-developed honors college, we envision the following staff configuration for the honors college, much of which can be drawn from the current staff in University College:

Dean
Associate Dean
Faculty Director
Administrative Assistant
Programming and Outreach Coordinator/Advisor
Scholarships and Major Grants Coordinator/Advisor
Academic Advisor
The number of faculty that the honors college will need will depend largely on the size of the honors student body and the number of honors-only sections that other colleges and departments on campus are capable of offering.

The National Collegiate Honors Council (NCHC) recommends that honors programs recruit 10% of the first-year class, with the goal of retaining enough students in honors that the total honors student population is approximately 6% of the total student body. In AY17-18, the first-year incoming class at Coastal Carolina University was 2400 students. That means the honors program should be recruiting approximately 240 first-year students into the honors program.

In actuality, the honors program has exceeded this goal. In AY17-18, 165 students joined the honors program during the fall semester. The program anticipates recruiting an additional 100 first-year students during the spring semester, for a total of 265 first-year honors students.

In addition, the retention rates in our current honors program tend to be higher than what NCHC assumes when it makes the recommendation that the total honors student population equal 6% of the total student population. Using the retention rates from the last three years and the 10% recruiting goal for the first year class, the total size of the honors program will be approximately 7.6% of the total student population at CCU. If the honors program continues to meet the 10% recruiting target and maintains its high retention rates, we can anticipate that in four years the honors college will have a total honors population of 812 students.

In 2018-2019, the honors program will have three full-time, tenure-track faculty and one lecturer, which will allow the program to staff fifteen sections of honors courses each semester. By the time the curriculum proposed in this white paper is fully implemented, the staffing needs of the honors program will be as follows:

### With 3 FTTT faculty and 1 Lecturer:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Fall Honors-Only Sections</th>
<th>Spring Honors-Only Sections</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Offered by Honors</td>
<td>Offered by Colleges</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018-19</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019-20</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020-21</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2021-22</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If we increase the number of faculty housed in honors, the honors college becomes less reliant on the availability of faculty from other colleges. Conversations across campus have indicated that many of our academic departments do not have faculty resources available to contribute to the honors college curriculum.

### With 5 FTTT faculty and 2 Lecturers:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Fall Honors-Only Sections</th>
<th>Spring Honors-Only Sections</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Offered by Honors</td>
<td>Offered by Colleges</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018-19</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
With 7 FTTT faculty and 3 Lecturers:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Freshman</th>
<th>Soph. (89%)</th>
<th>Juniors (68%)</th>
<th>Seniors (63%)</th>
<th>Fall Honors-Only Sections</th>
<th>Spring Honors-Only Sections</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Fall</td>
<td>Spring</td>
<td></td>
<td>Offered by Honors</td>
<td>Offered by Colleges</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018-19</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>235</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019-20</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>235</td>
<td>182</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020-21</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>235</td>
<td>182</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2021-22</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>235</td>
<td>182</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In order to give the honors college the most flexibility and ensure that it has complete autonomy over its own curriculum, as recommended by the National Collegiate Honors Council, it is critical that seven full-time, tenure-track faculty slots and three lecturer slots are placed in the honors college by fall semester of 2020.

**BUDGET**

It should be noted that the honors program has grown significantly in the past three years—from 360 students in fall 2014 to 660 in fall 2017. This growth in the number of students has not been reflected in the recurring operating budget for the program, which was $23,700 in 2014-25 and is only $27,310 in 2017-18. Instead of increasing the operating budget to reflect growth in the program, the current operating budget is supplemented on a year-to-year basis from a number of other sources, including the University College operating budget, the centralized Research Fellows Fund, and a variety of funds from the Provost’s Office.  

Because this kind of supplemental funding is uncertain each year, the honors program has not been able to institute any kind of meaningful, long-term programming for honors students (e.g., undergraduate research grants, student conference travel funds, or study abroad scholarships). Instead, the program cobbles together what it can for its students, based on whatever funding is available that particular year. In addition, this has prevented the development and implementation of the kind of initiatives mentioned in the above 'Building Distinction, Breaking Boundaries' section.

It is clear that the budget for the honors college will need to be significantly increased in order to continue supporting growth in both student enrollment and in program and university prestige. The institution can look to a variety of sources to achieve this increase in funding: continued growth of the honors student body (from the current enrollment of 660 to the anticipated enrollment of 812 students) may attract students who would otherwise not attend CCU; increased retention of our most successful, first-year students, who currently comprise 40% of students who choose to leave.

---

7 The honors program does receive a significant sum of money from technology funds to support the purchase of laptop computers for incoming honors students. This money is earmarked for this purpose and cannot be redirected toward other kinds of spending. We are one of the only honors programs amongst our peer and aspirant institutions to offer a laptop to honors students. Discussions are underway to determine if the laptop perk is worthwhile, or if students would be more interested in undergraduate research and student travel support.
Coastal during or immediately after their first year\(^8\); centralized funds that could get distributed out to the honors college (research fellow funding, experiential learning funding, student achievement funding, etc.); philanthropy\(^9\); student fees\(^{10}\); and, the possible reorganization of University College resources.

---

\(^8\) See Office of Institutional Research (2017).
\(^9\) Once a proposal for the Coastal Honors College is approved, the dean of University College will be working closely with the Office of Philanthropy to establish a plan for building and increasing philanthropic interest in the honors college, including seeking funding for a named honors college and an endowed chair.
\(^{10}\) See Seltzer (2017) for a lengthy discussion about the viability of student fees for honors colleges.
COASTAL HONORS COLLEGE: TIMELINE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

FALL 2017
- Submit white paper.
- Begin curriculum revision discussions with honors faculty and with the honors advisory council.
- Volunteer the honors program for program review, with the goal of bringing external reviewers to campus in fall 2018.

SPRING 2018
- Submit revised honors curriculum.
- Develop strategic plan with faculty and honors advisory council.
- Work with part-time programming and outreach coordinator to develop honors orientation and fall 2018 semester programming.
- Hire two new faculty.
- Advocate for new staff positions (programming and outreach coordinator and academic advisor) and new faculty lines.
- Work with Institutional Research to collect data for program review.
- Visit the honors colleges at Appalachian State, Clemson, and UNC-Wilmington.
- Develop new admissions process with Admissions Office.
- Develop and write marketing/recruiting materials for admissions/recruiting.

SUMMER 2018
- Write honors program self-study.

FALL 2018
- Continue recruiting 10% of incoming class.
- Implement new curriculum.
- Write strategic plan with faculty and honors advisory council.
- Develop and implement holistic admissions process.
- Host external reviewers from the National Collegiate Honors Council.

SPRING 2019
- Advocate for new staff position (scholarship and major grants coordinator/advisor) and new faculty lines.
- Finalize strategic plan based on results of the program review.

FALL 2019
- Launch Coastal Honors College.
REFERENCES


Conversation with Dr. James Buss, Dean of the Honors College, Salisbury University, September 28, 2017.

Conversation with Dr. Clay Motley, Director of the Honors College, Florida Gulf Coast University, September 26, 2017.

Conversation with Martha Hunn, Associate Vice President of University Communication, Coastal Carolina University, October 20, 2017.


On site visit with Dean’s Office staff, South Carolina Honors College: Dr. Stephen Lynn, Dean; Dr. Kay Banks, Assistant Dean for Student Affairs; Mr. Ed Sanchez, Assistant Dean for Academic Affairs and Diversity; and, Ms. Chappell Wilson, Assistant Dean for Administration. August 31, 2017.


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>University</th>
<th>Student Pop.</th>
<th>Program Status</th>
<th>Honors Pop.</th>
<th>Admission Requirements</th>
<th>Benefits</th>
<th>Organizational Chart</th>
<th>General Education/Major Courses</th>
<th>Scholarships</th>
<th>Advisory Board</th>
<th>Undergrad Research Grants</th>
<th>Faculty</th>
<th>Mentoring for National Fellowships</th>
<th>Student Mentors</th>
<th>Honors FYE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Florida Gulf Coast University</td>
<td>14,846</td>
<td>College</td>
<td>750</td>
<td>Current &amp; Transfer Students: Invited to apply with 3.5 GPA in prior coursework plus 12-60 credits.</td>
<td>Priority registration, Honors housing, Honors class size is 15 (avg.), Available funding, Mentor program, Study away programs (subsidized), Honors advising, Honors service opportunities, Honors events and programming.</td>
<td>Program Director, Office Manager, Program Assistant, Undergrad Mentoring Coordinator (works w/multiple programs).</td>
<td>Some honors sections available in both the general education program and in the major (9 upper-level credits required in major, approved by UGS advising).</td>
<td>Honors students are eligible for university-wide merit scholarships.</td>
<td>Yes, faculty advisory board, renewable three-year terms, nomination leading to appointment. Every college has a minimum of one representative.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Yes, two-semester research sequence</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salisbury University</td>
<td>8748</td>
<td>Named Honors College</td>
<td>419</td>
<td>Incoming Students: Automatic admission: 4.0 GPA and 1350 SAT/30 ACT. Application: 3.5 GPA and 1250 SAT/27 ACT.</td>
<td>Small classes (no more than 20 students), Individualized undergrad research, Honors LLCs (4), Priority registration, Honors advising, Available funding, Scholarships.</td>
<td>Dean, Faculty Director, Office Manager.</td>
<td>Honors seminars fulfill some of the general education requirements (no courses in the major, except for a thesis with a faculty mentor—not necessarily in the major, but likely).</td>
<td>1-2 Bellesvance Scholars ($500-$1000 per year)</td>
<td>Yes, five faculty, elected to represent each college and two student members.</td>
<td>$10,000/year set aside to support students</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Not sure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Carolina University</td>
<td>10,800</td>
<td>College</td>
<td>1300</td>
<td>Current &amp; Transfer Students: 3.5 GPA with at least 15 credit hours.</td>
<td>Emphasis on undergrad research, Emphasis on customizing honors via honor contract, Support for study abroad, Live in newest dorms.</td>
<td>Dean, Associate Dean, Advisor and Director of Communications, Director of Honors-Professional and Advisor, Executive Assistant.</td>
<td>Most honors courses parallel the Liberal Studies program. There is an honors contract system, whereby students can identify experiences, projects, or courses that they are interested in pursuing for honors credit.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Yes, CLE Honors Scholars take the FYE class, Honors Forum, with the Dean, who preps them for major fellowships</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coastal Carolina University</td>
<td>10,479</td>
<td>Program</td>
<td>650</td>
<td>Current &amp; Transfer Students: 3.5 GPA.</td>
<td>Enhanced curriculum, Flexible curriculum (custom) via subsections, Mentoring relationships with faculty, Honors housing, Early registration, Laptop computer.</td>
<td>Director, Office Manager.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Yes, Honors Program Council (faculty, administrators, staff).</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Yes: Mentoring; Ambassadors; Student Board of Directors</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**APPENDIX 1: PEER INSTITUTIONS**
### APPENDIX 2: ASPIRANT INSTITUTIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>University</th>
<th>Student Pop.</th>
<th>Program Status</th>
<th>Honors Pop.</th>
<th>Admission Requirements</th>
<th>Benefits</th>
<th>Organizational Chart</th>
<th>General Education/Major Courses</th>
<th>Scholarships</th>
<th>Advisory Board</th>
<th>Undergrad Research Grants</th>
<th>Faculty</th>
<th>Mentoring for National Fellowships</th>
<th>Student Mentors</th>
<th>Honors FYE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>James Madison University</td>
<td>21,227</td>
<td>College</td>
<td>770 (4%)</td>
<td>Incoming Students: 1-2 deep and sustained engagements in leadership positions or service activities. Essays are evaluated for an understanding of the Honors College's purpose. Mostly A's and A's with no more than 2-3 B's. 4-5 AP or dual enrollment classes or participation in an IB program. Typically, 1250 SAT or 28 ACT. Transfer: 3.7 GPA. Current: 3.5 GPA and 24 credit hours.</td>
<td>Honors housing, Priority registration, Student lounge, study area, and lab. Emphasis on faculty mentoring. Optional study abroad. Inter/cross-disciplinary honors seminars. Areas of Emphasis-two linked courses in 2nd year with a practicum in 3rd year.</td>
<td>Link Independent Scholar Major Link Dean Associate Dean Prestigious Scholarships Director Academic Advisor Executive Assistant Administrative Assistant Student Assistant Honors Advising Peer.</td>
<td>Honors sections of regular courses, can satisfy both gen ed and major requirements. Honors Capstone—three consecutive semesters of capstone courses, usually in major, but also interdisciplinary honors capstone courses; involves one-on-one tutoring. Honors option credit Link.</td>
<td>University-wide merit scholarships. Lots of support for national scholarships. Not that I can tell from website.</td>
<td>Hillcrest Scholarships—up to $5000; project-based; post-Jr year; need-based version and entrepreneur version. Yes, full-time position dedicated to preparing students for these applications.</td>
<td>Yes, full-time position dedicated to preparing students for these applications. Yes, although there is an active Student Leadership Council.</td>
<td>Yes, 1 credit Honors First Year Seminar, required for incoming freshmen.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNC—Wilmington</td>
<td>13,914</td>
<td>College</td>
<td>686 (5%)</td>
<td>Incoming students: Essays required 4.2 weighted GPA 28 ACT (1950 old SAT)</td>
<td>Smaller classes (20), Priority Registration, Support for conference travel, Opportunity for undergrad research, Honors housing, Free event tickets, Study abroad opportunities.</td>
<td>Director Associate Director Assistant Director of CSURF Administrative Specialist Administrative Assistant.</td>
<td>Honors courses fulfill 12 credits of gen ed requirements. Additional interdisciplinary honors seminars required. Honors contract courses. Departmental honors required, with optional HON interdisciplinary seminars available.</td>
<td>Honors College merit scholarships ($500/year up to full tuition).</td>
<td>Honors Faculty Advisory Council. Yes, through CSURF. Yes, director of Center for Support of Undergrad Research and Fellowships (CSURF). Yes, Wilmington Fellows.</td>
<td>Ye, HON 110 Freshman Seminar.</td>
<td>No, although there is an active Student Leadership Council.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appalachian State</td>
<td>18,295</td>
<td>College</td>
<td>660 (3.6%)</td>
<td>Incoming students: Competitive application process. Top 10% of class. Strong GPA. 1250+ SAT/29 ACT. Proof of leadership, service, co-curricular, creative, global. Current and transfer students: 3.5 GPA, fewer than 45 credits.</td>
<td>Small, interdisciplinary honors seminars. Mentoring and prof. development from Honors faculty and staff. Required international education experience. Honors housing, Ten full-tuition scholarships, International Ed. Scholarships, Research funding.</td>
<td>Dean Associate Dean Director of Prestigious Scholarships Honors Advising Coordinator Director of Communication Office Manager.</td>
<td>9 hours Honors gen ed courses 9 hours of additional Honors course work. At least 3 hrs of honors course work in the major. At least 3 hours of honors college thesis/project. Honors contract courses allowed (no more than 6 hrs).</td>
<td>Ten full tuition Chancellors Scholarships.</td>
<td>Honors Council. International Study Abroad Scholarships. Some internal funding.</td>
<td>Yes, director-level. Yes, Vanguard.</td>
<td>No, although there is an active Student Leadership Council.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

**Notes:**
- "Not necessarily. There is a shared first year seminar, but it is a themed seminar, not an FYE-type experience."
APPENDIX 3: SAMPLE HONORS CONTRACT

HONORS CONTRACT PROPOSAL

Student Name: Click or tap here to enter text.

1. Provide a title for your Honors Contract Project:

2. From the list below, please check all the attributes or expected outcomes that apply to the proposed Honors Contract project that produce a significant Honors experience for the student:

| ☐ Field-based application of course content or concepts | ☐ Performance (research, writing, creativity, and/or synthesis) at an advanced level |
| ☐ Knowledge of IRB or IACUC approval for a research project | ☐ Sharing the project with an audience beyond the class (publication, conference presentation, performance) |
| ☐ Increased depth, scope, and/or rigor of existing course assignments | ☐ Increased interaction between student and instructor |
| ☐ Extensive leadership role in a group project | ☐ Increased interdisciplinarity |
| ☐ Service Learning or civic engagement project | ☐ Other (specify): Click or tap here to enter text. |

3. Describe the additional responsibilities and opportunities the student will have that are not part of the standard course, and directly link them to the attributes identified above. Please be specific as to the nature and purpose of this project, placing it within the context of the larger class, but demonstrating how it goes beyond other course assignments and learning objectives.
4. What will the student learn (learning outcomes) as a result of this Honors Contract?

5. Not including course materials (such as textbooks), what additional resources will be used to complete the project?

6. Create a timeline for the Honors Contract that includes (as applicable) major activities, meetings, travel, deadlines, etc. This plan should include a minimum of three meetings between the instructor and student throughout the semester on the project.

7. Describe the final project, which should be separate and distinct from the course assessments. The result of a successful Contract should be tangible.