

Executive Summary

OVERVIEW: At the end of April FutureWorks, LLC. was charged with the task of developing an Honors Program. This charge was given by the co-curricular group and is one of the high impact strategies included in the Lumina Foundation Grant. At the April meeting of academic Vice Chancellors, both Russell Baker (Ft. Wayne) and James Naas (Evansville) volunteered to champion the Honors Program Development Advisory Committee (honors committee). Since that time, Deborah Anderson, Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs in Evansville; Jack Cooney, Humanities Chair, Indianapolis; and Cherry Kay Smith, Executive Director of Academic Policy and Assessment were also appointed to the honors committee.

The honors committee worked diligently on the attached proposal in May through weekly conference calls and email exchanges. On June 4th Parminder Jassal with FutureWorks and the honors committee presented the proposal to Becky Nickoli, Marnia Kennon, and Ben Young. Now this same proposal is being taken back to the original group that charged FutureWorks, LLC. with developing an Honors Program, and will be presented on June 30th.

PROCESS: After the initial learning curve ramp up was completed, the investigative phase of developing the honors process was initiated. It was found that Ivy Tech Community College already has a number of effective honors elements in place or in various stages of development, so it was concluded that instead of just adding an Honors Program to the list of efforts underway – why not cluster these initiatives together and coordinate the efforts to form a unified initiative that currently has allocated resources. That is how the concept of an Honors College for Ivy Tech Community College was born.

PRODUCT: The Honors College is comprised of seven critical foundational elements that are integrated to form the three Honors College Distinctions. The following four foundational elements currently exist in some form at many regions:

- Phi Theta Kappa honor society
- Indiana Campus Compact service learning resource
- Student Leadership Academy
- Traditional academic honors, i.e. “Cum Laude”, “Magna Cum Laude”, “Summa Cum Laude”

In an effort to extend and integrate the benefits of existing elements into a premier Honors College capable of meeting the mission, three elements were created:

- Honors Distinction Agreement (Honors Certificate, Honors Scholar, or Honors Diploma)
- Honors Course Contract (mechanism that allows existing college courses to add an honors dimension)
- Honors College Approved: 1) seminars 2) workshops, and 3) conferences

These honors college elements are fluid and reflect system wide priorities and initiatives. The composition of the honors college elements will be monitored, evaluated, and can be altered under advisement of a system wide advisory committee created specifically to guide the Honors College.

Honors Distinction Agreement: Students have the choice to seek one or more Honors College distinctions: Honors Certificate (page 11), Honors Scholar (page 12), and Honors Diploma (page 13) being the top Honors College Distinction. The graduated distinctions do not compromise rigor and quality; only the “quantity” of requirements increases with

each tier that the student must meet to achieve the experiences explicitly stated in their Honors Distinction Agreement.

To achieve the mission of the Honors College (extracted from page 4) – to develop a holistic undergraduate foundation – the Honors Distinction Agreement will be comprised of integrated experiences from each of the seven foundation elements. In total support of the Honors College mission, through the honors distinction agreement, Ivy Tech agrees to scholarship the honors student for the last six credit hours (or three credit hours for the honors certificate) as stated in the agreement.

Honors Course Contract: Each Honors College Distinction requires higher learning expectations established per an Honors Course Contract. The Honors Course Contract is the mechanism that is used to add an “honors dimension” to any existing college class. In principle, the contract can be designed for almost any college course, whether for vocational enhancement or for transfer. The Honors Course Contract permits honors students to turn a regular college course into an honors course by contracting with the instructor and Honors College to complete extra work and receive honors credit. The Honors Course Contract involves consensus between the honors student, an Ivy Tech faculty member, and the Honors College. The Honors Course Contract is a contract that specifies the honors level objectives and tasks to be completed by the student in addition to those requirements of the regular class. Students should expect to spend approximately 30 additional hours of work during the semester or summer session to complete their Honors Course Contract. All of the terms stated in the Honors Course Contract must be successfully completed by the agreed upon due date in order for the student to receive honors credit for the course and will be duly noted on the transcript.

Examples of experiences appropriate for an Honors Course Contract include: working in an apprentice-like role for a research project; additional reading, discussion, and synthesis on a topic of mutual interest to both the student and instructor; researching a topic and writing a research or policy paper; or even a service or leadership initiative or internship related to the course focus. Some specific course examples that an Honors Course Contract can be established are as follows:

- Language: prepare a translation of a new author or dramatist.
- Music: prepare a lecture or recital about a musician you admire.
- Writing: prepare a portfolio of creative writing.
- Technology: creation or evaluation of software
- Teaching: develop a teaching tool

Honors College approved seminars/workshops/conferences: The third new foundational element includes events that have been evaluated and pre-approved to meet the minimum Honors College standards for rigor, quality and experience. Seminars (2-4 hour sessions), workshops (1-2 day sessions), and conferences (organized by third parties) will have to be submitted for evaluation and pre-approved for students to qualify their experience as an Honors College acceptable event. The Honors College approval may require additional tasks and objectives beyond simple participation in the event such as discussing best practices learned or researching a particular topic further.

Once a student meets the requirements of Honors Distinction Agreement, he/she will be recognized by the highest level of Honors College Distinction achieved. The Honors College Distinction will be noted as: Honors Certificate or Honors Scholar or Honors Diploma on the transcript and verbally recognized at commencement. Should the

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student complete more than one Honors College Distinction, only the highest Honors College Distinction will be noted on the transcript and recognized at the commencement. In addition, each of the individual courses completed with Honors will also be so denoted on the transcript.

ADMINISTRATION: The administrative requirements of the Honors College are minimal with a Director of Honors College at the Ivy Tech system office, and Honors College Directors at the region. Both at the system and regional levels, Honors College Advisory Committees will need to be formed with the goal of holding the Honors College to the highest standards. The advantage of this model is that current resources being used to coordinate and direct the activities of Phi Theta Kappa, Student Leadership Academy, Indiana Campus Compact, and miscellaneous seminars/workshops can be consolidated into one program AND one coordinating person – a statewide Honors College Director and directors at each region. Once Ivy Tech evolves to the Ivy Tech Honors College framework, matching grants in lieu of seeding grants can be acquired.

CHALLENGES: There are some challenges that need to be seriously considered to launch an effective and sustainable Honors College. These challenges can be classified into four categories: general, system wide, region specific, and faculty related. Though faculty related challenges could have been classified under one of the other categories, purposely it is highlighted as a separate category to recognize the criticality to the mission of the Honors College. At its most basic level, the Honors College is student driven and faculty dependent, thus elevating the need for faculty related issues to be effectively resolved.

CONCLUSION: The goal of the Honors College is explicitly stated in its mission: to challenge and retain students who are both academically talented and self-motivated and provide them with a holistic lasting undergraduate foundation. The new Honors College at Ivy Tech Community College will bring internal order to the various initiatives and programs currently existent at the college, while enhancing the college's image statewide. By focusing simultaneously on both "internal" and "external" image, Ivy Tech will be able to allocate resources and internally promote the Honors College (including all of the honors college foundation elements) and also focus on externally raising the public image of Ivy Tech to the business leaders, community leaders, residents, other higher education institutions and the State.

The Honors College will quickly evolve into a flagship college for Ivy Tech in years to come.

Terminology Defined

Honors College - the entity under which related existing programs, initiatives and scholarly activities beyond regular coursework are integrated to create a holistic undergraduate foundation for highly achieving and self-motivated students.

Honors College Distinctions – recognition awarded to eligible students who complete a more intensive, enhanced academic experience. There are three Honors College Distinctions that can be earned by an eligible student: Honors Certificate, Honors Scholar, and/or Honors Diploma.

Honors Course Contract – mechanism used to add an "honors dimension" to any existing college class. The Honors Course Contract is a contract that specifies the honors level objectives and tasks to be completed by the student beyond the requirements of regular class coursework.

Honors College Elements – various programs and initiatives that are integrated together forming the foundation of the Honors College Distinctions.

Honors College Approved Seminars/Workshops/Conferences – Events that have been evaluated and pre-approved to meet minimum standard for honors level rigor and quality.

Honors College at Ivy Tech Community College

Mission

The Honors College seeks to challenge and retain students who are both academically talented and self-motivated with a holistic undergraduate foundation that nurtures and promotes students' capacities to think competently, understand deeply, and act ethically in a rapidly changing and culturally diverse society. The Honors College is committed to promoting, through expanded opportunities, in its honorable students the development of the following ideals in the pursuit of excellence:

- Scholarship/pursuit of lifelong learning
- Character and citizenship
- Community leadership
- Cultural enrichment

Honors College

The Honors College makes available three honors distinctions:

- 1) Honors Certificate resulting in the designation of "Honors Certificate" on the transcript.
- 2) Honors Scholar resulting in the designation of "Honors Scholar" on the transcript; and
- 3) Honors Diploma resulting in the designation of "Honors Diploma" on the transcript.

***Only the highest designation achieved by the student will be denoted on the transcript.*

Each of the Colleges will specifically recognize their Honors College graduates at commencement. In addition, Ivy Tech Central Office will host an annual reception/ceremony/dinner recognizing these graduates as well.

General Characteristics

Characteristics of all three Honors College distinctions include: open entry into any of the honors programs; use of honors programs as a recruiting, retention, and recognition tool with the focal point on higher learning and development; flexibility to allow students to explore and develop their interests; and to continuously motivate students to achieve higher learning. Each tier builds upon the previous tier culminating in the most robust experience in the 2 year program (i.e. the requirements for certificate are less in "quantity" only, not a reduction in quality and rigor).

General Entry Criteria

This is a tiered honors program with three honors distinctions. Each program distinction offers open entry/open exit - this does not mean that quality and rigor are compromised in any way or form; only the *quantity* of requirements is increased as the student progress to a higher level within the Honors College. For each distinction, an explicit Honors Distinction Agreement modularizes the requirements that the student must meet to earn that level of honors recognition. Both the entry criteria and the quantity of program requirements increase as the student achieves to a higher level within the Honors College distinctions. Each tier builds upon the previous tier culminating in the most robust, lengthy and difficult experience for the Honors Diploma designation. Since the program is tiered, it is possible to travel from the certificate to the scholar to the diploma distinction as long as each distinction's exit requirements are met by the student.

Distinction Specific Entry Criteria

Honors Certificate

- 1) Degree seeking
- 2) Program ready
- 3) Cumulative high school of GPA 3.0+ OR college cumulative GPA of 3.0+
- 4) Signed *Honors Certificate Agreement* that sets expectations (requirements, etc) for both the student and the Honors College/ITCC.

Honors Scholar

- 1) Degree seeking
- 2) Program ready
- 3) Cumulative high school of GPA 3.25+ OR college cumulative GPA of 3.25+
- 4) Signed *Honors Scholar Agreement* that sets expectations (requirements, etc) for both the student and the Honors College/ITCC.

Honors Diploma

- 1) Degree seeking
- 2) Program ready
- 3) Cumulative high school of GPA 3.5+ OR college cumulative GPA of 3.5+
- 4) Signed *Honors Diploma Agreement* that sets expectations (requirements, etc) for both the student and the Honors College/ITCC.

Honors College Elements

- Honors Distinction Agreement (Certificate, Scholar, or Diploma)
- Honors Course Contracts (mechanism that allows existing college courses to add an honors dimension)
- Phi Theta Kappa (honor society – 3.5+, minimum 12 college credit hours)
- Indiana Campus Compact (Service learning resource)
- Student Leadership Academy
- Honors College Approved: 1) seminars 2) workshops 3) conferences
- Traditional academic honors, i.e. “Cum Laude”, “Magna Cum Laude”, “Summa Cum Laude”

Metrics of Success

Initially, the Honors College success will be gauged by participation figures with the goal of 5% of each year’s graduating students graduating with one of the Honors College distinctions. In addition, retention will be assessed in comparison to the general student population.

More importantly, as the Honors College matures, the focus will not only continue to be on participation, but also on program satisfaction by participants, retention of students, completion numbers, and student transfer trends.

Each of the honors college foundation elements will have their own metrics of success (i.e. PTK – 2% of system wide student population).

Evaluation

360° evaluation will be required to keep this program effective. Regular feedback from students, faculty, advisors, mentors, and others (community, employers, etc) that touch this program must be conducted on a semester by semester basis.

In addition, continual tracking of: the number of participants, their characteristics, retention rates of Honors College students versus general student population, credential completion rates, transfer rates, and job placement rates will be critical to the effectiveness of the Honors College.

An assessment of the community awareness and “prestige” of the program will also need to be completed, at a minimum, on an annual basis.

Program Administration

Because this is an Ivy Tech Community College System wide Honors College – the Honors College is proposed to be centrally administered, region customized so that a system wide global honors community is established through recruitment, interaction

(retention), and recognition efforts. This program requires active senior leadership participation to offer students a holistic honors education and experience.

A system wide Honors College Advisory Committee representing all stake holders will be established at the system office with the focus of maintaining minimum standards and collecting and disseminating best practices for the Ivy Tech Honors College. In addition, each region will have their own Honors College Advisory Committee with local representatives from each stake holder population with the objective of customizing the Honors College to their offerings - over and above the minimum standards set by the system wide Honors College Advisory Committee.

Benefits of Participating in the Honors Program

Students who participate in the Honor's College earn the following benefits:

- More likely to complete educational program.
- More likely to pursue higher education.
- Receive public recognition at commencement.
- Mentored by a member of the College faculty, thereby establishing a one-to-one academic relationship with a faculty mentor.
- Participate in scholarly projects with their faculty mentors during their undergraduate careers.
- Participate in community service projects in conjunction with their faculty mentors and other Honors Students and in service-learning activities associated with specific courses.
- Receive priority in registration.
- Offered social networking distinctions to increase reach into higher levels of business, community and education leadership.
- Prioritize career opportunities including internships and jobs.
- Gain access to and use of the facilities and services of the "online" Honors College Community.
- Participate in special faculty/student/scholar seminars and cultural events.
- Participate in an annual Honors Graduate Showcase presentation of Honors graduate projects and students to the public (i.e. businesses and community at large).
- Be encouraged to apply for national and international scholarships (e.g. Fulbright, Rhodes, etc.), and counseled and assisted in their efforts by the Honors College and the Office of Enrollment Services.
- Have opportunities to actively participate in local, regional, national and international conferences with their faculty mentors.
- Receive individualized guidance for transfer into a four-year institution.
- Matriculate into an honors program at the transfer institution.
- Receive an Honors Distinction on their transcript.

Launch Plan

To sustain this program, careful launch and future planning is vital so that the Honors College is not under-resourced yet fulfills its obligations as outlined in the mission. According to the literature, most Honors Colleges are successful in urban and large regions. The literature strongly supports a phased launch schedule for a successful and sustainable system wide Ivy Tech Honors College. An initial pilot is strongly suggested by the committee in those regions that have:

- 1) Active Phi Theta Kappa chapters
- 2) Strong Student Leadership Academy support
- 3) Engaged Indiana Campus Compact programs
- 4) The desire of region leadership to consolidate honors elements into one umbrella - the Honors College.
- 5) The understanding that the region adds the Honors College to their strategic plan.
- 6) The region allocates a budget line item to the Honors College.

Pilot 2009-2010: The recommendation by the committee is that *up to* 4 Honors Colleges be launched for the 2009-2010 academic year that meet the aforementioned requirements. Two of the pilot colleges are Evansville and Ft. Wayne.

Phase I 2010-2011: By 2010, the following 9 regions should have established Honors Colleges – all supporting a student population of approximately 5,000 students: South Bend, Ft. Wayne, Lafayette, Muncie, Terre Haute, Indianapolis, Evansville, Bloomington, and Sellersburg.

Phase II 2011-2012: By the end of the 2012 academic year, all regions should have active and established Honors Colleges.

Potential Challenges

There are some recognized challenges that need to be seriously considered to launch an effective and sustainable Honors College. These challenges can be classified into four categories: general, system wide, region specific, and faculty related. Though faculty related challenges could have been classified under one of the other categories, purposely it has been highlighted as a separate category to recognize its criticality to the mission of the Honors College.

General

- The highest level distinction - Honors Diploma - may take up to 4 academic years to establish. The pilot and controlled launch plan delays the Honor Diploma distinction development to after the pilot evaluation, and possibly after the first phase of the launch. This ensures that the lessons learned and best practices can be appropriately applied to the development of the flagship distinction.

- Difficulty in establishing a “system wide” online honors community. The most prominent complications in establishing the online honors community will most likely come in the form of funding and lead time required to create the platform. To effectively supplement “live” Honors College activities, the online system wide honors community tactic is a substantial project in and of itself.

System Wide

- The immediate Identification of 1-2 pilot schools that are fully representative of the Ivy Tech system is critical to keeping the pilot on schedule for 2009-10. Because academic planning cycles for 2009 will begin in late fall (08) / early spring (09), immediate identification is necessary. In order to successfully run a pilot and allow region specific models to evolve, a representative group of campuses will need to be selected that are not only ready, but are willing to participate, and receptive to new ideas for the pilot.
- Striving for system wide consistency, yet allowing for maximum regional flexibility will require constant rebalancing through out the various life stages of the Honors College. This goal, ultimately a challenge, is critical to the Honors College implementation success because each region needs to retain some level of autonomy in meeting the mission of the Honors College. Each of the region's characteristics warrant different strategies and tactics to accommodate their students and faculty.
- Because quality and experience in the Honors College may vary substantially from region to region, it is essential to dedicate personnel at the central office and at the regions. All personnel will be responsible in coordinating student experiences and adhering to the highest standards set by the Honors College Advisory Committees.

Region Specific

- All regions may not be able to “effectively” or efficiently offer all 3 Honor College Distinctions at the outset. This is a recognized challenge because the Honors Diploma will not be created until after the pilot, and because of the tiered launch plan, the Honors College will not be fully embedded within the Ivy Tech system until the end of 2011-2012 academic year.
- The impact of politics and lead time in consolidating honors foundational elements to one staff person is projected to be a time intensive process. To assign one staff person at the regional level as a Director of the Honors College, a reorganization of responsibilities will have be necessary resulting in possible change for current staff.
- Cultural change in the Ivy Tech funding strategy will be key to establishing a robust Honors College. Identifying long-term and sustainable outside funding sources such as specific businesses, community organizations, and foundations can supplement internal resources. The mindset of the central office and regional leadership will have to transition - instead of relying on internal funding, Honors College leadership will have to learn to rely on “outside” funding sources to support a flagship Ivy Tech Honors College. Acquiring business and

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community sponsorships in support of the Honors College to supplement internal funding will require a “new type” of employee that is comfortable with sales and marketing, yet knowledgeable about academia (impacting compensation package).

Faculty Related

Faculty issues are grouped together because the Ivy Tech Honors College is student driven yet requires the full support of both full-time and adjunct faculty. This constraint may be significant if faculty feel overburdened and not compensated for their “extra” investment in their students.

The following list highlights some faculty related concerns:

- Mandatory vs. voluntary faculty participation.
- Buy in required by all/partial full-time AND adjunct faculty.
- Definition of the faculty role in the Honors College.
- Determination of the honor course load for each faculty member (full-time and adjunct).
- Faculty incentives: recognition/downloading/pay.
- The goal is that all courses can potentially be an honors course however; this may not be practically implementable. One alternative is that specific courses can be designated as honor courses. This alternative and other alternatives will need to be considered and tested during the pilot and early launch phase.

Honors College Program Review

The Honors College is open to continuous and critical review and is prepared to change in order to maintain its unique position of offering distinguished education enhancements to select students within the institution.

Proposed Next Steps

- 1) Select up to 2 additional pilot regions – in addition to Evansville and Ft. Wayne.
- 2) Appoint an Honors College Director in the system office.
- 3) Establish a system wide AND regional (only for pilot regions) Honors College Advisory Committee (include representatives from pilot colleges, non pilot colleges, and stake holder group representatives as well).
- 4) **Flesh out the Honors Certificate, Honors Scholar, & Honors Diploma Agreements.
- 5) **Flesh out the “exit” requirements for each Honors College Distinction.
- 6) Finalize the Honors Course Contract – mechanism for adding an “honors dimension” to an existing course
- 7) Establish metrics.
- 8) Design the Application Procedures.
- 9) Design the Acceptance Process.
- 10) Internal kick-off with pilot colleges.
- 11) Establish a communication plan for the Honors College (Student Success Tab).

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- 12) Build out an online Honors College Community
- 13) Train staff/faculty/other stakeholders.
- 14) Establish "internal" marketing/public relations plan to market to all students with cumulative high school or college GPAs of 3.0+.
- 15) Establish "external" marketing/public relations plan to raise Ivy Tech visibility with various target audiences: business community, higher education, parents, etc.
- 16) Evaluate the pilot.
- 17) Regroup and prepare for Phase I of launch.
- 18) Kick-off for Phase I of the HONORS COLLEGE

****Specific details for each of the Honors College Distinctions will involve input from ad hoc advisory groups composed of student affairs staff, faculty, experienced honors program personnel, representatives from Indiana and surrounding state honor programs for articulation purposes, potential program students**

Distinction 1: Honors Certificate

Entry Criteria

- 1) Degree seeking
- 2) Program ready
- 3) Cumulative high school of GPA 3.0+ OR college cumulative GPA of 3.0+
- 4) Signed *Honors Certificate* Agreement that sets expectations (requirements, etc) for both the student and the Honors College/ITCC.

Goal

The goal of the Honors Certificate distinction is to allow students a chance to sample, and hopefully entice a student to aspire to higher levels of learning. This distinction consists of add-on in-course academic activity outlined by an honors course contract (mechanism for adding an "honors dimension" to a course). Supplemental honors level activity is online thus reducing system wide resource pressures while simultaneously establishing a system wide Honors Community. The "live interaction" component is obtained through the seminars/workshops and community and conference activities that the students will be invited to participate in on a regular basis. The honors project will be a culmination of research, academic application and creativity to further the student's interests.

Agreement Requirements

- 6 credit hours of "honor" designated coursework
- Active participation in on-line Honors Community
- 15 hours documented and approved community service (Indiana Campus Compact)
- Attendance at one Honors College workshop
- Attendance at one Honors College seminar
- Attendance at one local/regional conference
- Meet with mentor 3 times
- Honors Portfolio
- Honors Project (research or practical)

Designation on Transcript

Honors Certificate

Distinction 2: Honors Scholar

Entry Criteria

- 1) Degree seeking
- 2) Program ready
- 3) Cumulative high school of GPA 3.25+ OR college cumulative GPA of 3.25+
- 4) Signed *Honors Scholar* Agreement that sets expectations (requirements, etc) for both the student and the Honors College/ITCC.

Goal

The goal of the Scholar Honors Program is to allow students to become confident with their abilities as a high achiever. The same academic requirements that the Certificate students must accomplish are also a requirement for this program. In addition, substantive in-course requirements that require faculty mentoring and interaction are also required. Live interaction is the focal point of the Scholar program. Interaction with education, business, and community leadership is vital to this program to allow the social graces of higher learning to be impacted and developed. Social networking will motivate students to achieve higher levels of learning allowing them to benefit immediately from their investments in higher education.

Agreement Requirements

(cumulative – includes the requirements of the Honors Certificate)

- 12 credit hours of “honor” designated coursework
- Active participation in on-line Honors Community
- 30 hours documented and approved community service (Indiana Campus Compact)
- Attendance at two Honors College workshops
- Attendance at two Honors College seminars
- Participation in two local/regional conferences
- Meet with mentor 6 times
- Nomination to Student Leadership Academy
- Honors Portfolio
- Honors Project (research or practical)

Designation on Transcript

Honors Scholar

Distinction 3: Honors Diploma

Entry Criteria

- 1) Degree seeking
- 2) Program ready
- 3) Cumulative high school of GPA 3.5+ OR college cumulative GPA of 3.5+
- 4) Signed *Honors Diploma* Agreement that sets expectations (requirements, etc) for both the student and the Honors College/ITCC.

Goal

The majority of transfer students will aspire to this Honors College distinction, though it is not intended to be limited to transfer students only. The goal of the Diploma honors program is to motivate the student to continue their higher education. The requirements of both the certificate and scholar programs will be met, and additionally, many other requirements are added for a full 2 year honors experience that is common to four year colleges/universities. These experiences may include: international travel, attending board meetings, serving on boards/advisory councils, participating in a community leadership program, etc.

Agreement Requirements

(cumulative – includes the requirements of the Honors Certificate and Honors Scholars)

- 18 credit hours of “honor” designated coursework
- Active participation in on-line Honors Community
- 45 hours documented and approved community service (Indiana Campus Compact)
- Attendance at three Honors College workshops
- Attendance at three Honors College seminars
- Participation in three local/regional conference
- Participation in two national conferences
- Completion of Student Leadership Academy
- Active participation in Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society
- Honors Project (research or practical)
- Meet with mentor – 12 times
- Honors Portfolio

Designation on Transcript

Honors Diploma

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