

To: Members of the Western Illinois University Board of Trustees
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From: Joe Rives, Vice President, Quad Cities and Planning

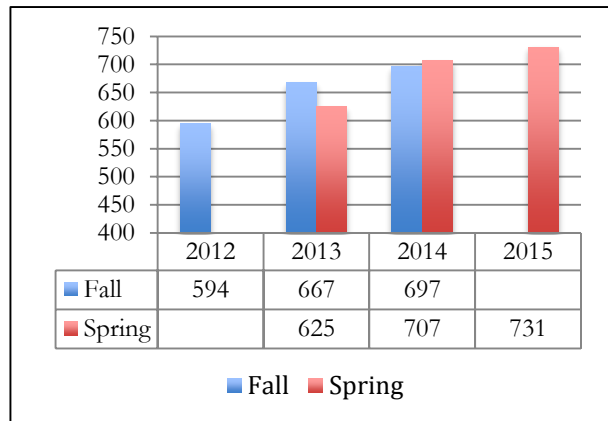
Date: July 14, 2015

Re: July 2015 Strategic Plan Update

Higher Values in Higher Education 2012-2022 contains priorities to increase Honors student enrollment on both campuses. Using examples from academic year 2014-2015, this month's *Strategic Plan Update* provides examples of university-wide efforts to recruit Honors students for academic year 2015-2016. This *Update* also demonstrates how staff from Centennial Honors College work with students, faculty and staff members from across the University to successfully increase honors student participation and achievement.

Background

Since implementation of *Higher Values in Higher Education 2012-2022*, and consistent with the core value of academic excellence, fall Honors student enrollment at Western Illinois University increased by 103 students (17.3%), from 594 students in fall 2012 to 697 students in fall 2014. Spring Honors enrollment increased by 106 students (17.0%), from 576 in Spring 2013 to 731 in Spring 2015. Over 19% of Honors College enrollments are minority students, and the Honors College is quickly approaching its goal to serve 800 students. University-wide and campus specific efforts contribute to the recruitment and retention of diverse and high-achieving students.



University Wide Efforts to Recruit Honors Students:

Centennial Honors College provides academically talented and motivated undergraduate students an enriched academic curriculum and opportunities for leadership, professional development, and service learning. The program includes 44 academic majors or areas of study from four colleges, as well as special pre-professional honors options such as the Pre-Law Honors minor and Pre- Engineering. Within General Education, honors students are provided a curriculum of special General Honors tutorials, colloquia, seminars, and independent research. Within departments, students are offered in-course honors experiences, seminars, recitals, and internship opportunities.

To increase opportunities for help high achieving students:

- Staff from Centennial Honors College attended 12 community college recruitment fairs.
- The University adjusted eligibility criteria for Centennial Honors Scholarships (CHS) for new freshmen to include a ACT requirement of 30 and a high school grade point average 3.0. As a result, the number of new CHS recipients increased from 45 in fall 2013 to 55 in fall 2014. CHS covers the cost of tuition and fees, and is annually renewable for four years.
- The University signed an *Honors Transfer Articulation Agreement* with Carl Sandburg College to help retain high achieving students in the Western Illinois University service region.

- Faculty and staff supported high levels of Honors student engagement.
 - Thirteen Honors students were nominated for prestigious national scholarships.
 - Three hundred and sixty-nine students completed in-course honors projects and 31 students completed Honors Theses.
 - The number of students graduating as Honors Scholars increased by 31 students (30%), from 105 in academic year 2013-2014 to 136 in academic year 2014-2015.

Macomb Initiatives:

- Centennial Honors College and Student Services hosted Western's Scholarship Day on October 12, 2014. High school seniors with 30+ ACT scores and 3.00+ grade point averages competed for Western's Presidential Scholarships. Over 30 faculty and staff interviewed 59 prospective students. The event concluded with a dinner, speeches by the Provost and President, and a Centennial Scholarship award ceremony.
- Following the Scholarship Day interviews, five students were offered the President's Scholarship for academic year 2015-2016. These are full-ride scholarships that are annually renewable for four years.
- Centennial Honors College provided 31 Honors courses and five Honors First Year Experience classes.
- Additionally:
 - The Honors College Mentors Program used seven Honors students to help recruit future Honors students.
 - Twenty-one academic departments have Honors Departmental Coordinators, who serve as a resource for all current and prospective Honors students.
 - The University Honors Council approved eight new Honors courses, representing a wide range of subject matter. Many of the new courses include opportunities for domestic and/or international travel.
 - Students have access to many national honor societies, including Phi Eta Sigma (national freshman honorary), Golden Key (international honorary), Phi Theta Kappa Alumni Association (community college transfer honorary), and Tau Sigma Honorary (for transfer students).
 - The Honors College promoted student participation in Mortar Board, the National Society of Collegiate Scholars, Blue Key, Who's Who Among American College Students, and other honors organizations.
 - Twenty-two Bachelors of General Studies students participated in Alpha Sigma Lambda, a national honor society for non-traditional students.
 - The second annual Honors College Awards of Excellence were presented at Undergraduate Research Day on April 16, 2014. Dr. Christopher Pynes, Professor of Philosophy, received the award for mentoring, and Dr. Margaret Sinex, Professor of English, received the award for teaching. These awards are based on student nominations.

Quad Cities Initiatives:

- The Honors College closed the Quad Cities portfolio honors program and returned to a curriculum that mirrors the Macomb program. This change resulted in a marked increase in student enrollment, from roughly one or two students per year to 25 students in academic year 2014-2015.

- Staff from Centennial Honors College and the Office of the Vice President for Quad Cities and Planning hosted the second annual dinner for prospective and new Honors students and their families. All 11 students in attendance joined the Honors College.
- The Quad Cities Freshman Honors Cohort grew from seven new students in fall 2012 to 16 new students in fall 2014.
- Additionally:
 - The Honors College is developing a series of GH 299 courses and an Honors curriculum for students majoring in Engineering.
 - Students have access to five national honor societies: Beta Alpha Psi (for finance majors), Blue Key Honor Society (recognizes excellence in scholarship, leadership, and service), Chi Sigma Iota (for counseling majors), Golden Key International (for all undergraduate and graduate students), and Kappa Delta Pi (for education majors).
 - Centennial Honors College supported the first Student Research Conference, student speaker at the Quad Cities Honors Convocation, and faculty appointment to the University Honors Council. Dr. Rene Noppe, Assistant Professor of Educational Leadership, serves in this capacity.

Should you have any questions about the materials presented in this month's *Strategic Plan Update*, and/or feedback for the continued successful advancement of *Higher Values in Higher Education*, please contact me.

cc: President Thomas	CSEC Pres. Mattson	Associate Provost Parsons
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