A Proposal for a Second Track in the UD Honors Program

Unapproved Draft of October 18, 2018

After a comprehensive review of the Honors Program, the Honors Program Office proposes adding the UD Scholar-Leader track (also referred to as S-L) to the existing departmental Honors track. It is expected that this new Scholar-Leader track will attract new students with a broad range of interests to the University of Delaware and to Honors, students with a wider range of demonstrated skills that will add breadth and diversity to the Honors Program. Scholar-Leader is an interdisciplinary and highly engaged Honors path that develops academic foundations, then puts them into action by each student.

Scholar-Leader track invites students to grow into Honors graduates via a highly engaged program of studies that is both broad across disciplines and cohesive over time. The Scholar-Leader track consists of required curricular and co-curricular elements. This program brings together the best of UD—our distinctive centers, labs, offices, institutes, coalitions, and other points of excellence—to enable these students to achieve outcomes and build products that clearly articulate to employers and graduate schools the enhanced capabilities they have developed via the Honors process. Students who publish, students who research, students who create, among others, are all leaders in the context of this aspect of the Scholar-Leader track.

Background

A 2017 Academic Program Review identified opportunities to further elevate the effectiveness of the Honors program in contributing to educational outcomes and university goals. The report’s authors saw the opportunity for Honors to be an exemplar of UD’s distinctive undergraduate education. Changes to the existing Honors program could provide more opportunity for interdisciplinary academics and research. In response, the Deputy Provost for Academic Affairs charged a Task Force of faculty and Honors staff members to formulate a proposal for an updated Honors Program. After a year of work, the Honors Task Force proposed, in their final report, a major revision of the Honors Program: Scholar-Leader Honors.

The Task Force recognized the important role that Honors plays in the UD experience; the fulfillment faculty receive in teaching Honors sections and working with this group of students; and the impact that Honors has on students as reported by Honors alumni. These alumni talk about the role that the Honors program played in helping them forge their own path through UD. Also, it would be difficult to implement only the Scholar Leader program, as it was proposed, and have as many students as currently do have access to a UD Honors experience. Based upon the Task Force’s vision and the strengths and success of the current Honors program, the addition of a Scholar-Leader track in the Honors program is being proposed.

Changes in the governance of the Honors Program was also proposed in the Task Force’s report and are part of this proposal. It is intended that there will be three new Honors committees to have institutionally-accepted responsibilities and influence on the nature of Honors courses, quality assurance, admissions standards and admissions process. These committees will all be faculty committees, working in conjunction with the Honors Program Directors and Staff. The committees will be Honors Program Oversight, Honors Curriculum and Honors Admissions. These committees are described in Appendix B.
Admission

Entry to the Scholar-Leader track will occur in one of two ways.

Through the current Admissions Process, as entering UD students.

It is proposed that UD Enrollment Management and Honors management shall agree, with the oversight of the Provost and the guidance of the Honors Admissions Committee on criteria for admission of students based on traditional criteria such as SAT scores and GPAs, and also on additional criteria to bring in students with special aptitudes and prospects to excel within the Scholar-Leader model. These criteria would include: Intellectual Curiosity, Academic Promise, Impact, Independence, Passion, Engagement and Perseverance (currently part of Distinguished Scholars evaluations). These elements will likely be evaluated through essay submissions and possibly by interview. The Honors Admissions Committee, will determine, in conjunction with Enrollment Management the final criteria.

Via an on-ramp after enrollment at UD

Students already accepted in the current Honors program may ask for consideration for acceptance in the Scholar-Leaders by application to the Honors Admissions Committee during the fall semester of a student’s first year. Current Honors students will be invited to an interest session and will complete an application to S-L during that fall. This application will include essays, a letter of recommendation from a faculty member the student has been in class with and an interview. During the spring semester, the Honors Program will announce those students selected for the S-L track.

Program Description

The proposed Scholar-Leader Honors educational process has four formal stages, called the Equip, Explore, Engage, and Enact stages, each corresponding to approximately one year of an Honors student’s UD career. Foundations in scholarship are built first, with a focus on skills in qualitative and quantitative analysis, writing, seminar methods, and community building. Later, scholarship supports impactful action.

The goals of the foundational stage, Equip, are to: (a) develop community, (b) establish excellent academic habits, (c) encourage the development of writing and analytical skills, and (d) nurture the commitment to becoming a Scholar-Leader. This year has strong overlap with the existing Honors program. It includes the Honors Living-Learning Community, Honors ENGL 110 and the current Honors Colloquia (HONR 290, 291 or 292). Scholar-Leaders will take one additional colloquium, HONR 293 (proposed), the quantitative colloquium. Depending on their individual program, this may be taken in the freshman or sophomore year.

Via coursework during students’ second year, the Explore stage of Scholar-Leader Honors informs students about (a) the opportunities for a personal education available via UD faculty, labs, institutes, centers, and other units of our University, (b) a broad interdisciplinary subject area, and (c) a disciplinary subject area of interest to the individual student. During this year, students work closely with Honors advisors and faculty to develop an Honors plan for the remaining two years of the program. This Honors plan would be developed in stages via individual or small group meetings. Planning would begin with the student expressing their broad areas of interest for the Engage and Enact stages. They would then be connected to
appropriate “best of UD” resources and faculty which support their interest areas. The student and advisor would begin to outline possible activities and outcomes which could shape the engagement activities in the junior year and likely, but not necessarily, connect to the signature product in the senior year. This plan would be documented in their e-portfolio. Completion of the plan would be recorded in UDSIS as a milestone record.

The goals of the Engage stage are to: (a) put the student’s Honors plan into action and (b) to prepare for the upcoming Enact stage during which the student will create a signature product. The one credit Engagement Seminar provides opportunities for ongoing reports and discussion during their engagement process. The co-curricular engagement program is expected to be the equivalent of about 6 credits of effort (roughly 200 hours). The focus of this engagement activity is as varied and individual as the student and their interests. Possible activities include academic research, community service or work that moves beyond the boundaries of their majors. There are a number of activities at UD which could serve as excellent engagement activities. The work of Engineers Without Borders, mentoring programs for elementary and high school students, work the areas of public health, response to disasters via the Disaster Research Center, the UDance program could all provide the type of impactful engagement that is envisioned for scholar leaders. Participation in the activities above is not the standard for completing this requirement. The Honors student must become an impactful leader, in the sense of being central to producing an outcome that reaches beyond the student. It is also intended that these activities are the groundwork for their signature product.

The work is driven by the passions of the student and guided by a faculty member and Honors advisor. The work would be documented in the e-portfolio with appropriate reflections from the student and reviewed by the faculty and Honors advisor. Completion of the co-curricular activity would again be documented in UDSIS. It is expected that these activities would be completed before the start of the senior year.

The fourth stage of Scholar-Leader Honors supports the student in the development and completion of a personal signature product. The signature product is defined as a student-created product that is weighty, academic, and tangible. The purposes of the Enact stage are a) to guide the student into leadership-level intellectual productivity; and b) to provide the student with an outcome useful in articulating the importance of Scholar-Leader Honors as a developmental experience to employers or graduate schools. Many product forms are acceptable – theses; research portfolios; creative works and digital works. This is not considered to be an all-inclusive list, but only a few examples. The academic advisor will work with the student and the Honors program to provide the specifics. It is also recognized all research produces new knowledge, however, that knowledge might not support the research hypothesis, but it can all be documented and presented as a signature product.

The requirement that the signature product be academic means, in this context, that the work should have potential to create intellectual value, human edification, or potential application beyond the specific situation. Scholarly research and creative works inherently have this capacity.

The signature product could include up to 3 credits of the program’s capstone course, provided the course activity guides the student in the appropriate early stages of developing a personal
signature product. Use of the capstone would be approved by the Honors Program and documented in UDSIS. The remaining three credits would need to be curricular credits and could be classified as independent study, research, etc. whatever is the typical practice in the department. This would also be documented in UDSIS as a part of the signature product. Each student would be graded on their work. There is also an intention of showcasing all signature products in a University Symposium, a celebration for the completion of the Scholar Leader track.

The academic elements of the S-L program are (course descriptions are provided in Appendix A):

Honors ENGL 110 (3 cr)
New Quantitative Colloquium HONR 293(3 cr)
Current Colloquium (HONR290,291 or 292) (3 cr)
Exploration Seminar (1 cr)
College Seminar (3 cr)
Two Academic Program Honors Courses (existing) (6 cr)
Engagement Seminar (1 cr)
Signature product (6 cr)

Total 26 credits

A typical four-year plan is shown below. This plan is only a suggested schedule. Students may delay taking departmental Honors courses, but this could impact their eligibility for the General Honors Award, earned at the end of the second year.

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<th>STAGE</th>
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| Equip (1st Year) | • Living-Learning Program (cc, year long)  
• Honors ENGL 110 (3 cr)  
• HONR 290,291 or 292 Current Colloquium (3 cr)  
• One major related Honors course (3 cr) | • Students with room in their program could also take HONR 293 in the freshman year. |
| Explore (2nd Year) | • HONR 31X Exploration Seminar (1 cr)  
• HONR 293 Quantitative Colloquium (3 cr)  
• College-wide Seminar (could be HONR or college (CANR,EGGG,ARSC, etc.))(3 cr)  
• Planning Process (0 cr)  
• Departmental Honors course or section (3 cr) | • Student need not take Exploration or College-wide Seminar in home College  
• College-wide seminar could be proposed for University Breadth depending on content and is open to all honors students at least at the college level  
• HONR 293 will be proposed for University Breadth |
| Engage (3rd Year) | • HONR 32X Engagement Seminar (1 cr)  
• Co-curricular engagement process completed by end of junior year |                                                                 |


It is expected that all HONR courses will be experimental for the first offering with permanent numbers requested as soon as practical.

The Honors Program will continue to have minimum GPA requirements as now. Current Honors Program requirements for steady progress through coursework would be modified so that the co-curricular engagement process above registers toward steady progress.

**Degree**

Students completing the Scholar-Leader Program will receive their Bachelor’s of XXX “With University Honors”. They would also be eligible for “With Distinction” if they complete a Senior Thesis.

**Implementation Plan**

The implementation Plan for Scholar-Leader Honors is found in Appendix C.

**Supervision**

The Honors Faculty Review Board, solicited by the Director of the Honors Program and inclusive of faculty from all colleges, has been established and has reviewed and approved this proposal. It is intended to establish the three committees listed in Appendix B by the end of the Fall 2018 semester.

**Staffing and Budget**

Summary of steady-state staffing needs for an intake of 88 S-L students plus on-ramp (over and above staffing for current Honors).
- 2 new Honors Advisors
- Honors Office management for the new program track at the associate director level.
- Honors Deputy Director

In any given year, instructional funding for:
- 4 Quantitative Colloquium sections (3-cr)
- 4 Interdisciplinary Area Seminar section (3-cr)
- 4 Exploration Seminar sections (1-cr)
- 4 Engagement Seminar sections (1-cr)
- Signature product mentoring and supervision for 88 students (6-cr project, of which 3-cr could be linked to a course)
- Some course development dollars needed.
Appendix A
Course Descriptions

HONR 293 Quantitative Colloquia:
An enlargement of our current colloquium program for first-year students, to include a required 3 credit problem-based-learning style course using quantitative and data-based analytical reasoning to address a topic or question of societal interest. Note that a quantitative colloquium is not a course in mathematics or computing per se, but a course that builds students’ skills in evaluating important issues in a data-based or quantitative way.

The colloquia would be designed to meet University breadth requirements. The specific topic of a colloquium would determine which category of breadth requirement it is qualified to satisfy. It is not assumed that quantitative colloquia would necessarily link to the Mathematics, Natural Sciences, and Technology Breadth, though many would do so. Depending upon the topic, a different category could be appropriate.

HONR 31X, Exploration Seminar
A 1-credit exploration seminar in the first semester of the student’s second year, taught by a faculty member with the support of an Honors Program advisor. The role of the Honors advisor would be to present material relating to the Honors planning process, thus economizing on time spent in individual student meetings. This seminar should also include elements where students are introduced to concepts of leadership which will help them shape their role as a Scholar – Leader.

Second year HONR or College specific Interdisciplinary Seminar
A 3-credit Honors interdisciplinary area seminar, a 300-level course to introduce an intellectual area approximately as broad as a college. The course should have significant writing and discussion elements, and ideally should be positioned to fulfill a UD breadth requirement. Colleges that combine efforts to produce a course that links cross-college areas would be encouraged. A college with extreme breadth of disciplines might choose to formulate courses that cover only one subject-area portfolio within the college, or that link a few portfolios. The exact limits as to the definition of an area would be under the joint purview of the Honors Deputy Director, Honors Curriculum Committee and the faculty of the college(s) that develop the courses. Engineering, Business, Social Sciences, and similar college-portfolio level groupings are definitely envisioned to be within the range. Other groupings, such as those that characterize cluster-hire areas or interdisciplinary master degree areas at UD, may become obvious candidates later. Topics for these seminars could include drawing from topics similar to the “Grand Challenges and Great Debates“. These seminars could engage students in discussions of the issues of modern society and how it takes expertise from many disciplines to address the issue. These seminars could also reinforce how leaders are necessary for change to occur.

The interdisciplinary area seminars are survey (broad) courses in the knowledge and methods that span the area. That is, they should cover elements of both the shared state of current knowledge and the ways that knowledge is developed in that area. Philosophically, these courses concern the epistemology of the area. These seminars provide intellectual grounding for the Scholar-Leader Honors student’s later work.
HONR 32X Engagement Seminar
Engagement Seminar: A 1-credit engagement seminar in the second semester of the student’s third year, with ongoing report-out and discussion activities to keep students on-track with their engagement process. As with the exploration seminar, this course is supported by an Honors advisor and is led by a faculty member. Students report and present on the outcome and accomplishments of their engagement process at the end of the course, as a course requirement. An additional requirement for completing the course is that the student’s personal Honors advisor has signed off on completion of the student’s engagement process itself based on the student’s reports in a milestones process as described below.

HONR 41X Signature Product
A student’s signature product must have several key characteristics. The product must be weighty in that the signature product is commensurate with the 6 academic credit hours that will be awarded for it. Three credits of the signature product may come from the department or program’s capstone course, with Honors approval, provided the course activity is appropriate to guide the student on the early stages of personal signature product development. The remaining three credits could be some logical extension of the capstone course. The product must be academic in nature. Many product forms are acceptable—for example, theses, research portfolios, creative works, and digital works. Like a thesis, the product must create new knowledge or ideas, and be of an academic nature.

Each student would, separately, work with a lead faculty mentor on their project. This faculty member would assign the grade on the spring credit, based on completion of the product. Reports on the signature products are shared in a symposium at the end of the spring semester, a celebration marking completion of the product production process.

Precise standards for the signature product would be established by the Honors Curriculum Committee in accord with nature of the signature product as stated above in this proposal. A set of uniformly-applied academic standards and requirements assist in helping students to understanding the academic expectations of signature product and provide the student’s faculty mentor with guidance as to the evaluation standards which should be applied. The signature product requires formal approval by the student’s faculty advisor for the project, and also by her college’s Honors Faculty Chairperson. The Honors program will work with all colleges in securing faculty mentors for Scholar Leader signature products. A department can also offer signature product courses with Honors approval.
Appendix B

Honors Committees

1. The Honors Oversight Committee – This committee will be appointed by the Honors Director and will consist of faculty representatives of all seven colleges. This committee will serve as the Faculty Review Board for program changes and will work to establish and implement the Honors Program vision. The Honors Director and Deputy Director will be members of this committee.

2. Honors Curriculum Committee – This faculty committee will be appointed by the Honors Director, with the recommendations of the Oversight Committee. This committee will establish course policies for both tracks of Honors. Issues the committee might address are establishing guidelines for Honors sections and best practices in scheduling honors sections. This committee may also work with campus units like Academic Technology Services to provide enrichment training for faculty that teach Honors sections. Honors staff will be invited to be members of this committee. Two members of the committee will be current Honors students.

3. Admissions Committee - This faculty committee will be appointed by the Honors Director, with the recommendations of the Oversight Committee. This committee should include a representative of the Associate in Arts program. Issues the committee might address are working with Enrollment Management on shaping the Scholar Leaders admission, participating in the on-ramping process and evaluating all admission processes for the Honors program. Honors staff will be invited to be members of this committee.

4. Student Advisory Committee – A committee representing Honors students will be formed and will report to the Oversight Committee. It is intended that this committee meet at least once per semester.
Appendix C

Implementation Plan

Pilot Programs
The Lerner College of Business and Economics and the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources have both expressed interest in piloting elements of the new Scholar- Leader program in collaboration with the Honors Staff. These pilots will help identify possible implementation issues with the larger program.

Scholar Leader Phase-In

This section provides an outline regarding the phase-in of a Scholar-Leader track within the Honors Program, while also maintaining a traditional track. During the first year of the Scholar – Leader program, it is anticipated that the Honor’s Deputy Director will take on most of the program oversight. It is anticipated that colleges will appoint Honors Liaisons who will serve as program coordinators for the Scholar Leader program, and perhaps serve a role with the larger existing Honors Program.

The phase-in steps below include suggestions for cohort sizes, based on estimates of resources and minimum initial student demand. These could be adjusted based on resources and interest, and are not intended as an artificial limit, e.g., to make the track exclusive or exclusionary.

During 2018-19
• Run the Lerner and CANR pilots which stretches over the next 3 years, involves a few students, and helps develop the path to the signature product. Collect lessons learned in the pilots.
• Put out a call for proposals to get at least one Quantitative Colloquium course developed.
• Honors Admissions Committee, appointed by the Director, will develop specific standards for S-L admits.

During 2019-20
• Continue CANR and Lerner pilots, as applicable
• In the fall, announce the possibility of joining the new track to first-year Honors students, and undertake an application and selection process aimed at a first cohort of about 22 students. Formal admission would be in the spring.
• Advertise the S-L Track as part of our Honors Program, along with the Traditional Track, to UD applicants. Be clear and direct with applicants that Traditional is much more departmental, overlay to a major, and add-on oriented. Be clear that the new track is more interdisciplinary, co-curricular, and does not overlay with a major.
• Consider all Distinguished Scholar candidates for the S-L Track. It is likely an excellent fit for this type of student.
• Honors Admissions Committee directly involved in admit decisions for S-L Track, based on standards and size/distribution of program we can deliver
• Call for proposals and develop three more Quantitative Colloquium courses.
• Plan for an incoming class of 4 cohorts of roughly 22 students each.

During 2020-21
• For 1st year S-L students (88)
Run 4 Qualitative and 4 Quantitative Colloquia sections for first-year S-L students

- For 2nd year S-L students (22)
  - Advise on their Exploration and Honors Plan development. This will need around 1/4 FTE.
  - Run 1 Exploration Seminar section (1-cr)
  - Run 1 Interdisciplinary Area Seminar section (3-cr)
    - Note these will need to be broad and carefully-engineered, as the 22 students will span lots of UD majors and colleges
- Continue CANR pilot, which will yield signature products for a few students during this year
- Run an on-ramp in the spring. Bring in 12-16 additional S-L students, adding to each cohort proportionally. This would result in 100-104 total S-L students rising into their 2nd year.
- Allow for S-L Honors students at end of their first year to off-ramp to Traditional Honors if desired

During 2021-22

- For 1st year S-L students (88)
  - Do same as last year
- For 2nd year S-L students (100)
  - Advise on their Exploration and Honors Plan development. This will need around 1 full FTE.
  - Run 4 Exploration Seminar sections (1-cr)
  - Run 4 Interdisciplinary Area Seminar sections (3-cr)
- For the on-ramped students, run a special Colloquium (3-cr)
- For 3rd year S-L students (22)
  - Advise on, monitor, and certify their engagement processes and outcomes
  - Advise on their continued signature product planning
- Run 4 Engagement Seminars (1-cr)

During 2022-23

- For 1st year S-L students (88)
  - Do same as last year
- For 2nd year S-L students (100)
  - Do same as last year
- For 3rd year S-L students (100)
  - Do same as last year
- For 4th year S-L students (22)
  - Provide faculty support, mentoring, and supervision for signature products for each S-L student

First S-L class graduates.