

Assessment of Learning Outcomes in the Honors Program, 2003-04

Honors Program Goals

The Honors Program is designed to enhance students' critical thinking skills and teach effective communication. Honors Program seminars provide a forum for discussion as well as intensive practice in analysis, writing, and speaking. Students who complete 21 credits of Honors courses and achieve at least a 3.5 g.p.a. graduate with an Honors degree.

Assessment Methodology

Do Honors Program classes teach students in the Honors Program to think critically and communicate effectively? To answer this question, we have implemented the following assessment technique.

At the completion of each semester, Honors faculty are provided a form from the Honors Program with instructions to rate each student in their Honors class on a five-point scale (excellent, very good, good, average, needs improvement) in the following areas:

- * Performance in developing an argument
- * Performance in revising and polishing an essay into a finished work
- * Participation in intellectual discussion

The Honors Program tallies the results of faculty ratings for graduating seniors. Using Honors 200 ratings as a baseline, an average composite score is tallied for each of the three areas given above. Averages are also tallied in each area from the last Honors course graduating seniors complete. If students improve their critical thinking and communication skills over the course of their time taking Honors Program courses, we would expect graduating seniors to have higher average composite scores in their final Honors course than in Honors 200.