

An Update on Honors ADEI Work (2/22/23)

Preface

The Honors College strives to strike the appropriate balance between the demands of our students and the demands of our administration and culture, in which we make steady progress on the vision for the College expressed to us by all our students (and faculty) within the often-frustrating limitations imposed on us by the institutional and systemic framework within which we must function. The table below is meant to document some of the work we have undertaken associated with some of the demands we face daily.

Acknowledgement

This list of 10 demands was presented by Honors Students of Color (HSOC) leaders to Dr. Linneman, Honors Director, in February 2022 and discussed with Dr. Linneman at an HSOC meeting within a week of their delivery. Because the demands document alleged harm, Linneman immediately arranged for a meeting of HSOC leaders with the Director of the CRTC, Daniel Record-Galbraith. WWU President Randhawa and Provost Carbajal also acknowledged them via email (2/8/22). Dr. Linneman also met with 3 different reporters (2 from WF) acknowledging the demands and describing the work outlined below.

| Demand | Actions Taken and Work Ongoing |
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| Ending the usage of the N word by non-Black students, staff, faculty, and administration in the Honors. There must be repercussions for those who violate this. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Linneman met with 2 Assistant Attorney Generals and the Executive Director of Student Life to discuss this request. • M. Sledge met with Honors Advisory Board on 2/22/23 to explain the legal complexity of this issue. • In short, involuntary repercussions that deprive a student of any privilege would be considered a “taking” for which due process must be followed as outlined in Washington State (and Federal) law. |
| Hiring another staff member that HSOC can go to who deals specifically with DEI and student of color retention in the program with a paid student assistant (who has experience in DEI). The hiring committee must include HSOC members and mentors. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A student life coordinator position was included in our 2022 funding request. While not fully funded, we received permission to hire as a temp. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Conversations with WWU’s new Chief Diversity Officer convinced us to ask again for permanent funding to improve the recruiting pool. • Position was included again in our ‘23 funding request. • The Honors Peer Mentor program was moved to permanent funding in FY2022 in our budget. We have a great group of paid mentors (n=7) in this ever-improving program. |
| More faculty and staff of color (who teach classes about race, not white professors). The hiring and/or selection committee must include HSOC members and mentors. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This remains a priority for the Honors College. • Included in our 2022 funding request. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Asked for several additional Faculty Fellows (shared TT positions). • In 2022-23 Dr. Christie Scollon became an Honors Faculty Fellow, but funding for additional Fellows was not provided. • Included again in our 2023 funding request. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Asked for 4 additional Faculty Fellows as our top priority. |
| Financial reparations: Annual scholarships for Honors students of color, more HSOC | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See Washington State Civil Rights Act |

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| <p>funding, and DEI development and community building retreats akin to Honors Prologue.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The university must follow state and federal law as to the use of race/ethnicity in the awarding of scholarships. Therefore, the Honors College is unable to create a scholarship exclusively for students of color within the program, while we continue to look for opportunities to support students from historically marginalized backgrounds. • HSOC club activities continue to be funded by the Honors College. |
| <p>Honors student of color affinity housing in Edens Hall.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Honors staff have facilitated more than a dozen meetings with HSOC leaders and University Residences to explore options since Feb'22. • UR stated that appropriate funding and staffing for an affinity program must be in place to allow it to happen. • In Feb'22 there was not enough time to institute changes for 22-23 academic year (affinity programs need minimum of a year for planning according to UR). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ So, Honors set up "Roommate Socials" on Zoom and a Discord to facilitate roommate connections. ○ Within the Honors Decision Form (admissions) we are asking 2023-2024 admits if they would like to opt-in to a Discord group to help facilitate connections with BIPOC students (based on advising from the AAG). • March'23 - To gauge interest in BIPOC affinity housing, EH/EN residents will be surveyed through Qualtrics. |
| <p>A racial and accessibility Honors Program climate survey in consultation with HSOC.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survey completed June'22. • Built on the work of students in Dr. Villicana's Honors Seminar, a climate survey was offered to Honors students via the WELS survey (1st year and grads) and a Qualtrics survey (2nd and 3rd years) by Dr. Hilary Schwandt. • Dr. Schwandt analyzed the data and reported the survey results to the Honors Advisory Board in Nov'22. These baseline results will be compared to future (annual) sub-surveys in the WELS because of the significantly higher return rate than email solicitations from the College. |
| <p>Public access to retention and dropout rates for students of color in the program.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Office of Institutional Effectiveness provided retention data and brief report to HSOC leaders. • As of Spring'21, Honors staff use a form to collect quarter-by-quarter Honors drops, including reasoning. Results are shared with the Director quarterly and the Honors Advisory Board annually. |
| <p>Curriculum reform: An analysis of the first-year sequence's efficacy in terms of cultural sensitivity and student satisfaction with an emphasis on Black and Indigenous student of color experiences. In addition, updating the Honors curriculum (with BIPOC authors) from less racist/Eurocentric to more anti-racist content that challenges white narratives.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Honors First-Year Sequence faculty met with HSOC leaders to discuss HNRS101-106 in Spring'22. • A complete revision of HNRS101 was piloted in Fall'22. This 1-cr class focused on 3 questions and featured several student and faculty panels. • Two Honors students of color, familiar with the demands, and having vocal misgivings about the previous structure of HNRS101 in Fall'21, attended every class session in 2022 and reported that BIPOC |

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| | <p>students' voices were elevated significantly, even in a room of 250 students, and that the especially disconcerting curricular structure from Fall'21 had been meaningfully addressed in the new format.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The 4 Honors students on the Honors Advisory Board have a strong voice in recruiting and ranking Honors Seminar Proposals. |
| <p>Designated permanent student of color positions on Honors Board (at least 2).</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completed in Fall'21 • Thanks to the HSOC students for serving. |
| <p>A reporting system in Honors for students of color experiencing microaggressions and racism. There must be ways in place for them to not take a certain professor, move out of a roommate situation, change an advisor, or any other actions they need immediately if something does happen (while working on longer term goals).</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completed Summer'22 • View Honors Equity and Inclusion page |