

Honors Department
Annual Unit Plan for Academic Year 2017-2018
October 2016

Describe Department/Unit

Mission/Connection to College Mission

Honors Program Mission:

The Honors Program seeks to prepare students for transfer and to heighten students' educational experiences. The Honors Program supports Cerro Coso's mission to provide academic instruction to promote fulfillment of four-year college transfer requirements and encourage degrees. The Honors Program encourages and recognizes students' academic excellence, degree completion, and transfer readiness.

Catalog Description for Honors:

"The Cerro Coso Honors Program is designed to serve highly motivated students who are interested in a challenging and rewarding academic experience, preparing them for transfer to a four-year college. Honors Program students benefit from priority registration at Cerro Coso, scholarship opportunities, priority admissions at many universities, and other advantages through the Honors Program's transfer agreements with many UC, CSU, and private universities."

Phi Theta Kappa Mission:

Phi Theta Kappa is an international honors society for community college students. Its mission is to recognize and encourage academic achievement of community college students and provide development opportunities through participation in leadership, honors, service, and fellowship. Phi Theta Kappa supports Cerro Coso's mission to encourage degree completion. Phi Theta Kappa membership is one of the ways students are recognized for their academic excellence at Cerro Coso. Our chapter also offers students opportunities for chapter leadership and community and college service.

Connection to College Mission:

Both the Honors Program and Phi Theta Kappa support the College's mission to produce and support student success and achievement.

Connection to College's Strategic Plan Goals:

Both the Honors Program and Phi Theta Kappa support the College's third strategic goal, optimize student enrollment and promote Cerro Coso as the higher education option of first choice to potential students throughout our service area, by directly contacting high school students eligible for the Honors Program, offering a \$1000 scholarship to an outstanding incoming student, and showcasing the best Cerro Coso has to offer in a high-end, quality education. The benefits of the Honors Program and Phi Theta Kappa can help draw students to Cerro Coso and make their time here even more advantageous when applying for jobs, scholarships, and transfer.

Report on Improvements Made and Gaps Identified in the Prior Year

Student Equity

Compared to the college (38% male), the Honors Program has fewer males (22%)

Population:

Gender: Male

Analysis and Plan:

As this is the first time we have been able to establish equity data, this year is a baseline for us; however, we can be mindful during our recruitment to see if any of our recruitment strategies favor females or need to be altered so as to be more successful in attracting males. Too many unknown variables here to hazard a guess as to why the percentage of males in the Honors Program is low.

Age 25-39 is 22% (unsure what the college average is for this group)

Population:

Age: 25 to 39 years

Analysis and Plan:

It is difficult to assess the gap here as the age ranges here (20-24, 25-39) do not match the age ranges for which college data is provided (20-29, 30-39). That said, I might guess that we have an age gap in the 30-39 or 25-39 range (but no college data is provided for comparison).

19 and younger = 33% (much higher than college average of 17%)

20-24 = 26% (no college data)

25-39 = 22% (no college data, but 20-39 college average is 63%, so we're lower, only 48% for 20-39 combined)

40 and older = 19% (about same as college average of 20%)

This seems pretty representative to me;

African Americans

Population:

Ethnicity: African American

Analysis and Plan:

As this is the first time we have been able to establish equity data, this year is a baseline for us; however, we can be mindful during our recruitment to see if any of our recruitment strategies need to be altered to attract more African Americans. Too many unknown variables here to hazard a guess as to why the percentage in the Honors Program is low. Perhaps the Equity Director or Peer Mentoring Program might have relevant plans for improvement.

Also, our numbers are low enough that adding or losing just a few students changes are percentages. In short, if we could recruit two African American students, our percentage would be in line with the college's. Since 15% of our Honors Program students selected "two or more," we may actually exceed the college's average, but there is no way to tell if "two or more" includes African American. The Honors Program has three times more students who selected "two or more" (15%) than the college average (5%) so this is not an insignificant number of students for us.

We also have a lower percentage of white students (40%) in the Honors Program compared to the college average (45%). Again, "white" might be part of the "two or more" group. Given the consistently high percentage of white students in the Honors Program, I do not think our 40% is currently cause for improvement strategies.

Funding for Phi Theta Kappa Membership Fees

Population:

Socioeconomic Status: Economically Disadvantaged

Analysis and Plan:

More students would join Phi Theta Kappa if not for the one-time membership fee. Since invitations to join Phi Theta Kappa are sent only to students who have already completed all of the requirements (GPA and degree-units), the only hurdle to membership is financial. We already set our local chapter fees to \$0 to keep membership fees as low as possible, but for some students, the remaining fee is simply too high for them to meet.

Progress:

EOPS will reimburse students' membership fees for Phi Theta Kappa and is contacting eligible students to let them know of this amazing benefit.

Potential Plans:

The Cerro Coso Foundation has been asked to fund or offset the membership fees of (still waiting for a recommendation and decision from the Foundation Scholarship Committee).

Alternatively or additionally, a Fund-a-Scholar program could be established through the Foundation.

Outcomes Assessment: Overall Report

Student Learning Outcomes (SLO)

16 honors courses have completed SLOs, and the other 4 honors courses are being offered this year for the first time, so we expect to have 100% of honors SLOs assessed by the start of 2017-18. No identifiable gaps.

Program Learning Outcome (PLO)

We are in the process of implementing the improvements in our program learning outcome (PLO) assessment outlined in our last Annual Unit Plan, so no further improvements have been planned.

To identify potential gaps, the Honors Program Committee has revised its program learning outcome assessment rubric, tracking honors courses/contracts, online/onsite, and types of assignments. We made policy changes so that for the first time, all honors classes will have a uniform rigor, specifically a 2,500-word research project, which matches what we have required in Honors contracts. We are in the process of assessing this. Additionally, our new assessment asks instructors for specific information about the type of assignment, the kinds and amount of research required, details about the assignment objectives. This is unique, perhaps, to honors projects since we assess a variety of disciplines, and while the program learning outcome is the same, the specific aims of research projects may vary from discipline to discipline.

Outcomes Assessment: Gaps Identified in Prior Year's Assessments

All honors courses

Type:

SLO

Target Missed/Gap Detected:

No gaps. Now that 100% of honors courses that have been offered before this semester have been assessed, we can conclude that all SLOs and PLOs are being met or, more often, exceeded. While this might be unusual for most courses, honors students tend to be more than usually successful.

Type of Gap:

Analysis and Plan:

No plans but to continue being awesome.

Progress Made on Program Review

Honors Program

Year of Last Program Review:

2015

Progress in the last year on two-year strategies:

Goal 1: Growth

Sustain program growth by mailings and informational sessions to educate Cerro Coso students about the Honors Program and its benefits and by workshops to educate Cerro Coso faculty (particularly those outside of the Ridgecrest Indian Wells Valley campus) about the Honors Program and how contracts work.

Progress Made Toward Goal:

Good and ongoing as this effort is not a one-time thing. The Honors Program Coordinator runs a report of Cerro Coso students eligible for the Honors Program, emails these students, and follows up with an informational session. Faculty have been contacted via email and workshops will be scheduled during this and the upcoming year.

Goal 2: Rigor

Sustain program rigor on the front end by working with faculty teaching honors classes and supervising honors contracts and on the back end by assessing projects to verify implementation of Honors Program Committee's policies regarding rigor of honors projects, aiming at uniform and appropriate rigor.

Progress Made Toward Goal:

Good and ongoing as this effort is not a one-time thing. Several specific changes have been or are being made:

- **Prerequisites:** Course outlines for honors classes are being revised to include ENGL C070 as a course prerequisite. This consistency across all honors classes has been deemed necessary by the Honors Program Committee. ENGL C070 has long been a prerequisite for admission into the Honors Program, so this course prerequisite only makes sense. The exit skills of ENGL C070 match the minimum skills needed of students attempting to complete the 2500-word research papers required in honors classes. This is the only part of this goal that is not yet 100% completed as a handful of honors classes are not due to be updated, but this prerequisite will be included in all classes as they come through CIC. This is already a requirement for honors contracts and the program.
- **Syllabuses:** The Honors Program Coordinator requests a course syllabus for all honors courses. Consistency in policies and requirements can be checked via the syllabus.
- **Papers:** The Honors Program Coordinator requests a final paper for all honors contracts. Consistency in rigor and requirements can be checked via review of these papers.
- **Single honors project:** All honors courses and contracts now require the same major assignment, a 2500-word research paper. Gone are the days of one class requiring 5000 words and another requiring four 750-word papers. We have achieved consistency as reasonably as we can with this standard, uniform expectation.

Progress in the last year on five-year strategies:

Goal 1: Growth

Sustain program growth by moving more students through the Honors Program. Every semester, inform Honors Program students of their progress through the Honors Program, with specific GPA and number of honors units completed, outlining any deficiencies and necessary remediation, such as improve GPA within one semester, see counselor for advising and creation of a plan to complete the Honors units, or enroll in honors course.

Progress Made Toward Goal:

The list of students in the Honors Program is not checked once every semester (limited time means it is checked once a year). These updates help students be aware of their progress through the Honors Program, and it means we more quickly wash out students not progressing. This results in lower numbers of students in the Honors Program, but they are all in good standing in the program. Our graduation rates have been consistently high compared to previous years. We have maintained our growth numbers, not increased them.

Goal 2: Consistent Prerequisites

Establish ENGL C070 as a prerequisite for all honors courses. ENGL C070 is the prerequisite for entrance into the Honors Program, so the honors courses must be at the same level.

Progress Made Toward Goal:

70% complete. This goal is not immediately obtainable, but we are making steady progress (up from 59% last AUP). The Honors Program Committee, which includes the CIC Chair, has agreed to make ENGL C070 the prerequisite for all honors courses. These changes will be made as each COR comes through CIC.

These honors courses have the correct ENGL C070 prerequisite:

- ANTH C121H
- ART C106H
- BIOL C105H, C111H, C112H
- ENGL C102H, C221H, C222H, C235H, C245H
- HIST C103H, C104H, C131H, C132H

These honors courses do not yet have the correct prerequisite:

- CHEM C113H, C223H (last updated 2014)
- MATH C121H (last updated 2014)
- MUSC C101H (last updated 2014)
- POLS C101H (last updated 2013)
- PSYC C101H (last updated 2014)

Progress Made on Prior Year Initiatives

Honors Program—Sustain Program Growth

Still working on this. An informational/recruitment session for students eligible for the Honors Program will be held November 1, 2016, with phone and video conference connections to students college-wide. Faculty communications have been done via email and phone. A more concerted effort is needed to reach faculty, especially online and adjunct faculty who have higher turnover rate and may be least likely to know about the Honors Program. Frequently, faculty want to know about Honors only after they are approached by an Honors Program student interested in doing an honors contract, and that is where a series of emails and phone calls works best. However, it would be best if all faculty knew of honors.

Honors Program—Sustain Program Rigor

All honors contract projects are submitted to the Honors Program Coordinator for review, so inconsistencies can be addressed promptly. This system seems to work and will be maintained in the coming years.

Phi Theta Kappa—Participate in College Completion Corps Efforts

Phi Theta Kappa Chapter Presidents meet with the College President for direction in this effort. Phi Theta Kappa officers and members volunteer to greet students the first two days of each semester, not only putting a friendly face on the college but offering assistance in locating classes and navigating the college.

Additionally, Phi Theta Kappa officers and members hold PTK Awareness Days where students sign the Community College Completion Corps pledge to complete college.

College completion statistics are posted on the Phi Theta Kappa Facebook page, reminding members of the benefits of completing their degrees.

These efforts will continue in the following years as we continually have new students who need this information.

Plan Initiatives for Next Year

Initiatives for Next Academic Year

Support growth of Phi Theta Kappa

Action Plan:

In order to support the growth of Phi Theta Kappa, we now need multiple faculty with release time.

Growth: Our chapter has jumped from a 1 star (minimal involvement) to 5 star (maximum involvement) chapter. This has produced more opportunities for students and more rewards; however, it requires significantly more time for the faculty advisor. It is not sustainable for one person to do this work as overload. With multiple events every month, including meetings during summer, ongoing leadership training, and student travel, the small stipend is insufficient and the time demand is too much not to be release time. Additionally, a second faculty advisor is needed.

For more information on Phi Theta Kappa Five Star Program, see <https://www.ptk.org/Programs/FiveStarChapterPlan/FiveStarChapterPlanRequirements.aspx>.

Measure of Success:

1. Identify a second Phi Theta Kappa faculty advisor (one has already been found)
2. Obtain adequate release time for both faculty advisors
3. Train new advisor

Person Responsible:

Christine Swiridoff

Other

Two faculty advisors with release time for Phi Theta Kappa will support a successful, growing, student-focused program that provides students opportunities for scholarships, leadership, and connections with Cerro Coso students and our community.

Leadership Course

Action Plan:

Need:

In order to serve the needs of students and better prepare them for leadership positions, the creation of a leadership course (or series of courses, a leadership academy) would be helpful. This would be ideal for Phi Theta Kappa officers, but also other student groups and any students interested in leadership training.

Action Plan:

1. Work with the Director of Outreach and Student Life and other relevant faculty and administrators--create a leadership ad hoc committee--to determine the need for such a course
2. If such a need is determined, submit course outline(s) to CIC.

Measure of Success:

1. Research done on student need for a leadership course (or series of courses)
2. Collaboration with the Director of Outreach and Student Life and other relevant faculty and administrators (create a leadership ad hoc committee)
3. Submission of course outline(s) to CIC

Person Responsible:

Christine Swiridoff

Other

In addition to supporting the aims of the college, leadership training would directly support several strong programs at the college, including Phi Theta Kappa, student government, student ambassadors, peer mentors.

Phi Theta Kappa Involvement

Action Plan:

- Maintain the growth, engagement, and success of our award-winning Phi Theta Kappa chapter by regularly attending the Phi Theta Kappa Nevada/California Regional Conference and the National Convention. This travel would be for two faculty advisors and all actively engaged chapter officers.
- Faculty advisors will determine active engagement of officers.
- Chapter officers must be regularly active in the chapter and its projects prior to conference attendance.
- Officers who attend these conferences must bring something back to share, maybe a lunchtime presentation or workshop for student ambassadors and peer mentors.

Measure of Success:

- Attendance by faculty advisors and chapter officers
- Reporting back by chapter officers

Person Responsible:

Christine Swiridoff

It addresses a program review strategy

Program growth is a key strategy of our Program Review, and this level of involvement has done more than anything to help revitalize and transform our Phi Theta Kappa chapter.

Evaluate Resource Needs

Facilities

None.

Information Technology

None.

Marketing

The marketing efforts currently available--college-wide messages, email, web banner, posters, etc.--are sufficient for our needs.

However, to attract more incoming students, marketing at the high schools throughout our service area would be beneficial. While we mail letters to home to high school seniors eligible for the Honors Program, more could be done to help high school students and their parents realize that Cerro Coso and the Honors Program can help them transfer to their ideal school. More newspaper publications of student success stories throughout our service area is one way to reach these potential students and their parents.

I have tried to meet with our local high school faculty and vice principal to find ways to make better inroads with students and parents and could use some better ideas. Several of our Honors Program and Phi Theta Kappa students are eager to return to Burroughs High School and share their enthusiasm for and experiences at Cerro Coso. This is the kind of thing that can be difficult to coordinate on my own, so any support available would be appreciated.

Professional Development

Conference attendance for Honors Program Coordinator and Counselor (two faculty):

- UCLA Transfer Alliance Program (TAP) meetings (in-state travel)
- Honors Transfer Council of California (HTCC) meetings (in-state travel)
- Honors Transfer Council of California (HTCC) Undergraduate Research Conference (in-state travel)
- National Collegiate Honors Council (NCHC) Conference (out-of-state travel)

Conference attendance for Phi Theta Kappa Faculty Advisors (two faculty):

- Phi Theta Kappa Nevada/California Regional Conference (in- or out-of-state travel)
- Phi Theta Kappa National Convention (out-of-state travel)

Staffing Requests

1000 Category - Certificated Positions

2000 Category - Classified Staff