

University of California, Irvine Campuswide Honors Program Overview

Introduction

UC Irvine's Campuswide Honors Program (CHP), offered to top students in all majors from the freshman through senior years, was founded by the Academic Senate 1986 to attract and retain a greater number of students from the very top tier of those eligible for admission to the University of California. An immediate goal was the University's desire to enroll more of the state's most highly talented high school graduates and to offer them a substantial and exciting undergraduate experience that would prepare them for professional or graduate study. A Ford Foundation Grant proposal, written by UCI faculty, was successful and funded the start of the program. The CHP's first class of 88 was admitted in the fall of 1988.



CHP freshmen and peer mentors at fall orientation

The program's founding vision was to complement the myriad advantages of a major research university with the kind of faculty mentorship and personal attention one finds at the best liberal arts colleges. The combination image of small college/large university has guided the CHP in forming honors-level curricula, student advising, and extra-curricular programming. Twenty-five years after the arrival of its first class, the program serves approximately 700 students in all schools and majors. The academic qualifications of these students place them at the top of UC Irvine's entering class each year.

The presence of CHP students on campus has a positive impact on the campus population as a whole. CHP students become academic leaders in their majors and raise the bar for all students. Faculty enjoy teaching and mentoring these outstanding students, which affects faculty job satisfaction and retention. CHP students also become some of UC Irvine's most successful alumni. The vast majority, 85%, plan to attend graduate or professional school either immediately after graduation (33%) or in the future (52%), and are admitted to some of the most prestigious institutions in the country. Many apply for and receive prestigious scholarships and fellowships, such as the Rhodes Scholarship, the Fulbright Fellowship, the Goldwater Scholarship and NSF graduate fellowships. CHP students, who constitute approximately 3% of the UC Irvine population, receive more than 48% of such awards garnered by UC Irvine undergraduates.

Structure

The Campuswide Honors Program is headed by a faculty Director, who reports to the Dean of the Division of Undergraduate Education, Dean Sharon Salinger. The Division of Undergraduate Education delivers a wide variety of academic programs and services that support undergraduate teaching and learning.

The Program's Academic Senate Charter Document, stipulates that the policy-making body of the Program "will be an elected Academic Senate committee." This board, the Honors Program Board, consists of Senate-appointed faculty, one member from each of the Schools at UC Irvine with undergraduate degree programs. The responsibilities are:

- To determine admission to the Program, and to determine the policies of admission within guidelines;
- To certify graduation from the Program, and to determine policies relating to graduation
- To approve courses and instructors for lower-division courses in the Honors Program curriculum, and to determine the policies for same, within adopted guidelines;
- To advise the chief administrator of the Honors Program concerning the academic advising of students in the Program or enrolled in its courses, recruitment of such students, extracurricular opportunities and academic prerequisites for Honors Program students.

The staffing of the CHP is as follows:

Director, Ted Wright, Professor of Cognitive Sciences (2012-present)

Associate Director, Lisa Roetzel, Ph.D. (2005-present)

Senior Honors Academic Advisor, Mary Gillis, M.A. (2009-present) Honors

Advisor, Christina Treble, B.A. (2012-present)

Office Manager (Provides program and administrative support. Currently hiring for this position.)

Previous faculty directors within the 10-year review period:
Roger McWilliams, Professor of Physics and Astronomy (Founding Director from 1987-2009)
Gail Hart, Professor of European Languages and Studies (CHP Director from 2009-2012)

Staff reduction within the review period:
Programmer Analyst, ½ position centralized to Office of Information Technology in 2012

Curriculum

The Campuswide Honors Program provides a central core of academic courses designed to challenge students by exposing them to some of UCI's best and most exciting faculty, while introducing important topics, issues and methods of inquiry across disciplines. The CHP core course sequences are interdisciplinary in nature and often team-taught. The required core constitute approximately 25-30% of a student's total course work of a minimum of 180 quarter units, in line with the best practices outlined by the National Collegiate Honors Council, the nation's professional organization for honors programs and honors colleges.

Breadth and Depth

Rather than allowing students to choose courses freely from a menu of honors course, the CHP has chosen to provide a common curriculum of three, year-long course sequences in order to create a community of learners. CHP students from majors throughout the campus come together for the CHP core courses, bringing multiple perspectives to their studies. These courses provide breadth of study that complements the depth that students experience in the major and in undergraduate research. CHP courses fulfill most of the General Education requirements for UCI students so that students will not be delayed in progress toward degree. In the 3rd and 4th year, students engage in the capstone project of faculty mentored research, culminating in a senior thesis or creative project.

Two of the CHP's Student Learning Outcomes speak to the importance of balancing a facility with thinking across disciplines with depth of study:

- Students who participate in the CHP will broaden their knowledge and see the importance of other disciplinary experience by taking honors level curriculum in a variety of fields.
- Graduates of the CHP have deepened their knowledge by engaging in different stages of undergraduate research, with the culmination of an honors thesis or creative project.

CHP Core Courses

CHP Core Courses are designed to help students develop and sharpen their reading, writing, mathematical, analytical, and communication skills.

1) Honors Humanities Core (Humanities H1A-H1B-H1C). This year-long sequence is team-taught by faculty from the various Humanities disciplines (English and Comparative Literature, History, and Philosophy, for example), and is organized around major themes, which change every 3 years. The current theme is "War" which looks at ways in which people have represented, rationalized, propagandized, memorialized, evaluated, or understood for themselves or others, the human activity of war. Throughout the year the course explores various sub-themes and concepts, while teaching college writing skills. By the end of the course students write their first major college-level research paper. Honors discussion sections are taught by faculty and lecturers (not teaching assistants). (8 units/quarter)

2) Honors Social Science Core (Critical Issues in the Social Sciences). Offered as Social Sciences H1G-H1F-H1E. This year-long sequence is team-taught by professors from the Schools of Social Science and Social Ecology. The topics presented in this sequence are studied from the perspectives of various social science disciplines, including anthropology, cognitive sciences, economics, epistemology, international studies, urban studies, linguistics, political science, psychology, sociology and urban studies. Sample topics have included authority, (dis)obedience and human society; decisions, compromises, and their rewards and penalties; the view of human knowledge as an ongoing process of belief revision and problem solving; human vision/perception, learning and memory; human language - how do we learn it and what is its effect on our acquisition of knowledge; and exotic societies (including our own). (6 units/quarter)

Honors Science Core (The Idiom and Practice of Science). Offered as Biology, Chemistry, Earth System Sciences, Mathematics, or Physics H90. This year-long sequence gives students an understanding of the role science plays in addressing socially significant problems. Students develop the ability to understand scientific models and to judge the content, merit, and limitations of many issues of science in the modern world. Emphasis is placed upon the development of analytical and writing skills. Topics have included ozone depletion/global warming, earthquakes, biodiversity/conservation, genetic plant engineering, calculus and partial differential equations, evolution/aging, radiation/diseases, the mathematics of power, and the physics of music. (4 units/quarter)

OR

Honors General Chemistry

(for CHP science majors who are required by their major to take three quarters of general chemistry, plus labs; usually taken freshman year)

This sequence covers similar topics to the non-honors equivalent (Chemistry 1A-1B-1C, plus labs), but offers smaller class sizes, provides opportunities for increased interaction with faculty, and covers material in greater depth. This sequence is required of all CHP students who have majors in Biological Sciences, Public Health Science, Pharmaceutical Sciences, Chemistry, certain other fields in the Physical Sciences (Earth & Environmental Sciences and Earth & Environmental Studies), and certain fields in Engineering, etc. (6 units/quarter)

3) The Research/Thesis or Creative Project requirement: In addition to the required honors core courses, CHP students participate in a minimum of two quarters of research under the direction of a faculty mentor. This experience culminates in the production of an honors thesis, creative project, or publication-quality paper. Most students actually end up spending three or more quarters on their research/thesis experience. How much time will depend upon the discipline in which a student elects to do their research, the arrangements they make with their faculty mentors, and often, the nature of the project itself. All CHP students are encouraged to present their finding at the campus' annual Undergraduate Research Symposium.

Upper Division Honors Research Seminars (added in 2010). These seminars, taught by a faculty research scholar, engage a small number of students (20-22 or fewer) in a serious and multi-faceted examination of a topic of the instructor's choosing. This topic reflects the instructor's ongoing research and may encompass several disciplines or sub-disciplines. By modeling research methodologies and the intricacies of formulating and addressing research questions, the research seminars can serve as preparation for the honors thesis. Research seminars completed with a grade of C or better may be substituted for one quarter of the CHP core course sequence. (4 units/quarter)

The CHP encourages students to participate in their school or major upper-division honors program, which generally focus on research and thesis. The thesis that is produced through these programs is accepted as the CHP thesis. For those students unable to participate in a school or major honors program, CHP Director Ted Wright is piloting a new 2-credit, 2-quarter course this year called **CHP Honors Thesis** intended to support students in the thesis process. (This is in addition to the guidance they are receiving from their faculty mentor.)

Advising

The CHP "advising system" was designed to provide a comprehensive support system for all students in the program, from freshman year to graduation. Additional goals are to provide the level of support and personal attention which normally would be found at a small liberal arts college, and to make sure that students are notified of and encouraged to take advantage of opportunities on a timely basis. These opportunities include prestigious scholarships, internships, and education abroad, as well as work and/or research opportunities.

The CHP has two full time honors advisors, a Senior Academic Advisor, and an Academic Advisor, who serve approximately 700 active CHP students annually. Four student Peer Academic Advisors assist the professional Advisors by providing advising on routine matters and helping plan events. For major or school specific advising, each academic unit on campus (there are nine schools with undergraduates, as well as the Division of Undergraduate Education, and the majors related to Health Sciences) has a designated "honors" advisor, with whom the CHP advising office coordinates advising efforts.

The Senior Honors Advisor oversees the CHP advising staff, and plans the annual advising calendar that is followed by CHP advising staff. There is an advising calendar for students entering as freshmen and a separate one for transfer students. Current UCI students who enter by application are integrated into the advising plan/calendar. Students receive special advising about the CHP and its requirements during the campus' Summer Orientation (SPOP). During Welcome Week in the fall, CHP Peer Advisors assist with small-group advising for incoming freshmen, and all new students attend a required group CHP Orientation (separate orientations for new freshmen and new transfer students). One-on-one advising, group advising, and workshops take place throughout the academic year. Walk-in advising is available daily. In addition to providing advising services, the CHP sends out a weekly electronic newsletter, CHP News, which informs students about important opportunities and deadlines, both internal to the CHP, and for the greater campus, including the Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program, the Scholarship Opportunities Program, Study Abroad, UCDC and UC Sacramento.

CHP students are required to submit a course plan through graduation during their first year in the honors program. Having a course plan encourages students to think broadly about their education and plan ahead to avoid scheduling bottlenecks, especially if they are considering study abroad or a double major. These plans must be approved by the "honors" advisor in the student's school or major.

In addition to providing academic advising, CHP academic advisors mentor CHP student leaders such as officers of the Campuswide Honors Student Council and the Resident Assistants in honors housing. They also monitor student progress, maintain student records, and follow up with the student regarding any problems.

Academic advisors and other CHP staff communicate regularly with students, either in-person, by phone or electronically. They visit honors housing and attend many of the CHP student events that take place each year. The CHP staff have set up several Facebook groups for CHP students and alumni, and a blog on leadership development has been developed for the leadership of the Campuswide Honors Student Council. The Peer Academic Advisors have developed their own blog of advice for students. The CHP website contains further information including the CHP Student Handbook and the CHP

Research/Thesis Handbook. These documents contain useful information about the CHP and its requirements and policies, CHP and other on-campus resources, programs, and opportunities, and other important procedures and guidelines.

Student Life

Active learning and participatory education are considered best practices in honors education by the National Collegiate Honors Council, the national professional organization for honors colleges and honors programs. In the Campuswide Honors Program, co-curricular and extra-curricular activities help build a community of scholars and enhance the learning experience.

Among the CHP's Student Learning Outcomes is one related to acquiring leadership experience:

- Students who participate in CHP extra-curricular activities learn how to organize, work, and lead in teams, and recognize the benefits of complementing academic studies with those activities.

An important feature of student life in the CHP is that older students mentor students new to the program. A system has been developed whereby students begin as freshmen with less complex duties and are mentored by older students to grow into positions of leadership.

The Campuswide Honors Student Council (CHSC) is one vehicle for students to get involved and gain valuable organizational and leadership experience that translates into their schoolwork and their future careers. The CHSC is the CHP's student-run organization that plans many of the approximately 80 events and programs that take place each year. Ideas for events and programs are generated by CHP students, which leads to a high level of participation and buy-in. The CHSC leadership are advised by the Honors Advisor, who attends meetings and events and mentors student leaders in one-on-one meetings, group meetings, and through a CHP leaders blog.

Students have arranged weekly Coffee Hours, fireside chats with faculty on such topics as "What to expect of your 21st Century Education" or the viewing and interpretation of a film, special tours such as faculty-guided visits to the UCI Arboretum, a workshop a Cognitive Sciences faculty member on study skills, trips to the theater, barbecues, sporting events, dances, and community service opportunities. The CHSC is also responsible for organizing the End of the Year Banquet, which celebrates graduating seniors. The CHP also has a Peer Mentor program, where current students volunteer to mentor an incoming freshman or transfer student. Peer Mentors contact new freshmen/transfer students in the summer prior to matriculation and help answer their questions. They remain in contact with the new students during the year to facilitate their transition to UCI and the CHP.

The Honors Advisor, who regularly attends meetings and events, advises the CHSC

and the CHP Resident Assistants in honors housing, and oversees the Peer Mentor program. Aside from planning various social events, the members of the CHSC are also available to help with recruiting and orientation events. 80-100 CHP students typically volunteer for the program's annual recruitment day for prospective freshmen (Honors Experience Day) as panelists, minglers, registration volunteers, photographers, and more.

Honors Housing

Another important component of CHP student life is honors housing. There are currently two honors residence halls for freshmen, "The Shire" in the Middle Earth Housing complex, and "Loma" in Mesa Court Housing, with the potential to expand into "Arroyo" in years when there is high demand for honors housing (3 out of past 5 years). Upperclassmen have the option of living in CHP houses in Arroyo Vista. The CHP has 4 houses in that complex, down from 6 houses during the years of the previous review. (Additional apartment-style housing added to the campus in recent years is highly popular, and draw some students from honors housing.) Commuter students who would like to become part of a housing community may be "adopted" by a CHP residential community, and are invited to all events and activities. CHP students in housing are mentored by Resident Assistants, who are CHP upperclassmen who have come up through the program. CHP students in good standing are guaranteed a place in campus housing until graduation, as long as they follow the Housing Office's policies and deadlines.

One of the major goals for honors housing is to facilitate the growth and development of a "community of scholars." This unique living/learning environment provides a venue where honors students can live with their peers. Honors housing also serves as the location of many of the CHP's events, which all CHP students are invited to attend. In this environment, students have opportunities for mentoring, tutoring, study groups, and student/faculty and student/staff activities. Honors Housing also has a positive impact on the development of social and interpersonal skills and also on academic and intellectual collaboration with fellow CHP students and faculty within the classroom.

The final component of student life is provided directly by the CHP office staff and the Peer Academic Advisors. Certain major events, such as the fall and spring bonfires at the beach and the annual camping retreat are planned by this group.

Student Selection

Faculty on the Academic Senate's Campuswide Honors Program Board, which is part of the Council on Student Experience of the Irvine Division of the Academic Senate, select the Campuswide Honors Program students. The Board consists of a member of each school that has an undergraduate degree program, plus a representative from the Health Sciences majors. The Dean of Undergraduate Education selects Undecided Undeclared students.

The members of the Honors Program Board for 2013-14 are:

School of the Arts	Professor Cecilia Sun
School of Biological Sciences	Professor Melanie Cocco (Chair)
Merage School of Business	Professor David Hirshleifer
Samueli School of Engineering	Professor R. Jay Jayakrishnan
Health Sciences majors	Professor Andrej Luptak
School of Humanities	Professor Catherine Benamou and Computer
Bren School of ICS	David Kay, Senior Lecturer SOE
School of Physical Sciences	Professor Jack Xin
School of Social Ecology	Professor Jodi Quas
School of Social Sciences	Professor James Weatherall
Undergraduate Student Representative	Daniel Ho, CHP 3rd year student

Students may enter the CHP in three ways:

Incoming freshmen. The majority of CHP students enter as incoming freshmen. The size of the incoming freshman class ranges from 160-200 students. Incoming freshmen are selected by the Honors Program Board in early winter quarter from the pool of applicants to UCI. Students at this level are sought after by many colleges and are difficult to recruit. Admission to the Campuswide Honors Program is a benefit that helps attract top students to UC Irvine.

From the total pool of UC Irvine applicants, a sorting formula that includes SAT scores and high school GPA is used to identify the top 7,000 applicants to UC Irvine. From this pool, each member of the Honors Program Board receives a list of top applicants to their particular school. In addition to these scores, the faculty on the Honors Program Board have within the past 5 years added new data points, including the high school Academic Performance Index (API Score) and the Admissions “read score.” Honors Program Board members are also offered access to the electronic application.

Each Honors Program Board member is given a target number of students to select, which is based on the relative size of the school’s student population in relation to the university as a whole. In this way, selected students are distributed throughout the university and are not concentrated in a single major or school. In addition to the schools, a selection is made for Undecided/Undeclared students by the Dean of Undergraduate Education. Students selected for the CHP and admitted to UC Irvine are then given special attention by the CHP staff and the Office of Admissions, including CHP specific letters, brochures, emails, and recruitment events. These recruiting efforts help bring outstanding students to majors throughout the campus.

Incoming transfer students are eligible for a special program called Honors to Honors, which is available to students attending honors programs in 15 partner community

colleges. Students in these colleges who have completed their honors program with a 3.7 GPA or better can be nominated by their community college honors director for Honors to Honors. If admitted to UC Irvine, Honors to Honors students receive automatic admission to the CHP, and are given priority consideration for the Regents' scholarship. This program has resulted in approximately 20-25 outstanding transfer students choosing UCI each year, and has increased the number of transfer students in the CHP. Transfer students who are not eligible for Honors to Honors may apply to the CHP if they have a 3.5 GPA or better, and are allowed to apply in the summer prior to matriculation.

Current UCI Students may apply to join the CHP if they meet the *minimum* requirement of a UCI GPA of 3.5 and a course of study that would accommodate the CHP curricular requirements. The application form is available online, and is accepted throughout the year, including in the summer. Students may apply until the end of the fall quarter of their junior year. Decisions on these applications are made by the Faculty Director and the Associate Director in consultation with the honors advisors.

Scholarships available to incoming students. The Regents' Scholarship, the campus' most prestigious merit scholarship, is administered by the Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships, and students are selected in a separate process from the CHP selection. Due to limited funding for the Regents' Scholarship program, not all incoming CHP students are offered Regents' scholarships. The CHP Director also oversees an endowed scholarship fund, the Distinguished Honors Scholarship that offers one four-year scholarship to an incoming freshman. Students are also eligible to apply for merit based scholarships through the Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships.

Alumni

The CHP has made the development of a strong alumni program one of its central goals. CHP alumni identify with the program, and are very attached to it. In fact, for many, the CHP is their central point of relationship with UC Irvine. Maintaining relationships with those alumni thus benefits both the CHP and the campus.

There are now over 2,700 CHP alumni who can be found throughout the nation and the world. Many are among UC Irvine's most successful graduates, and include creative artists, engineers, entrepreneurs, lawyers, physicians, researchers, teachers, and information technology and other technology professionals. Many attend prestigious graduate and professional schools throughout the world, and win prestigious scholarships. Their lives reflect the final CHP Student Learning Outcome:

- Upon successful completion of the CHP, students are equipped with the skills, knowledge, and experience to set and attain challenging goals.

The CHP office fosters alumni relations through regular contact, and updates alumni

records regularly to ensure that the most accurate contact information possible is available. The program has an alumni chapter in the UCI Alumni Association, and new CHP alumni group in northern California has also recently been formed.

Maintaining relationships with alumni has been beneficial for fundraising, recruitment, and networking. Alumni participate in career panels that inform students about different professional paths, network with students, volunteer to be a point of contact for students applying to graduate school, and participate in fun events that bring them back to the campus.

Within the last 10 years, the CHP alumni and staff set the goal of creating an endowment for the program. Under the leadership of alumni from the early years of the program, this group worked with CHP staff in 2005 to raise funds to create an endowment for the CHP. This goal has been achieved, and for the program's 25th Anniversary year this year, alumni are working to double the endowment to \$50,000. For a program with young alumni (the oldest CHP alumni are in their mid-40s), this is a significant accomplishment.

The CHP office communicates with alumni via the CHP alumni listserv, a CHP alumni Facebook group, a CHP alumni Twitter account, and a biannual newsletter. There is also a special alumni section on the CHP webpage. The newsletter that is mailed in December includes a fundraising appeal, and a letter from the Director and Associate Director. This annual campaign raises funds to help support some of the CHP co-curricular and extra-curricular activities that enhance the educational experience, and which are not supported by state funds. These include the weekly Coffee Hour, visits to plays and concerts, and the annual camping retreat.