

Reassigned Time Report, Fall 2014

I am submitting this annual report, as is my habit, to detail work of the Office of University Honors Initiatives, which I directed, during academic year 2014-15. I received 2 units of reassigned time for this work during Fall, 2014. At the end of that semester my position was converted into a 12 month administrative position (Director, Honors College) and my status as a full-time faculty member ended (and, along with it, my reassigned time units). Since reassigned time I received last year was during the fall semester only, the report below concentrates on that semester.

Fall, 2014 was another banner year for the Office. To highlight:

1. The **Fort Hays Honor Society**, which I launched 8 years ago, reached an enrollment of approximately **120** students this semester. About 50% of these were on-campus and 50% are virtual. These numbers were down that semester from previous semesters due to a trial balloon policy of requiring membership dues from all members (previously these were assessed only at the initial point of invitation). Fortunately, numbers surged again in Spring, 15, once the trial dues policy was rescinded- by February, 2015, FHHS had 233 members, an all time high.
2. The FHHS was successful in securing **\$30000 in donations**, due to an exceptional and continuing relationship with Tim Chapman from the Foundation. The FHHS president and other relevant student officers meet with Tim monthly throughout the year to identify donor prospects, solidify relationships, and strategize in general. Beyond just achieving financial independence from SGA, the Office of the Provost, or other university entities, this effort has had the added benefit of forming direct relationships between Foundation officials and high-achieving students, a relationship which I hope will yield dividends as these students graduate and become alumni and potential future donors themselves.
3. The **FHHS activity agenda** included these highlights:
 - a. a strategic planning retreat
 - b. An etiquette dinner
 - c. GRE prep seminars
 - d. Scholarships for members
 - e. A development fund for members to help offset travel and academic supply costs
 - f. Sending 2 students to become Certified Student Leaders at the National Center for Student Leadership Conference
 - g. Participating in peer reading for local elementary school students
 - h. Maintaining and improving an exceptional website

- i. Once-a-semester evaluation surveys sent to members to ensure continuous quality improvement

Given that these are exceptionally busy and involved students, I find it remarkable and laudable that these events, which benefit a variety of cohorts and constituencies, could all have been successfully implemented. Our donor fundraising effort has been a key to this expanded programming as well. The group continues to mature, expand in scope and impact, and grow each year. I never could have imagined 8 years ago when the group first started that it would evolve into the force it has. Beyond just the tangible activity results, however, it has provided a safe haven and sanctuary for high-achieving students at FHSU that has made their university experience richer.

4. The **Distinguished Scholars Program** continued to grow and evolve as well. The DSP welcomed its 4th (and final) cohort of high-achieving students that semester. Designed to capture, retain, and develop incoming high school students from the very beginning of their college careers, the DSP had great success in taking some of the best high school seniors in the region and making them leaders. Tangible evidence includes the following:
 - a. Over 50% of the students in the program had perfect 4.0 cumulative GPAs.
 - b. Virtually all of the members held at least one titled leadership position in a FHSU campus organization, and many had multiple leadership roles.
 - c. All of these students continued to develop by presenting about leadership issues to their peers and serving as mentors or mentees to each.
 - d. Of all students selected for this program, only 5 have left due to time constraints or other issues and every student selected, save one, was retained at FHSU.
 - e. The lowest cumulative GPA of any DSP member was a 3.3.
5. Due to much-appreciated funding by the Office of the Provost, I was able to **hire student workers**. The Associate Coordinator of the DSP (student) and the president of the FHHS were paid small amounts for their work. The majority of the student labor allocation went to a new student **Administrative Assistant** (approx. 13 hrs per week), who was absolutely critical in handling the burgeoning workload associated with the explosive growth of the programs I supervise.
6. Last Fall also saw the increased involvement in two faculty colleagues, Dr. Darrell Hamlin and Dr. Joe Romance. Joe served as an advisor for students interested in pursuing nationally competitive scholarships and Darrell provided life/leadership coaching sessions to DSP members.

Of course, things changed dramatically once President Martin announced that a new Honors College would be created and she asked if I would serve as the inaugural director. Services for high-achieving students took a quantum leap forward with that one stroke. However, the efforts centered around that event are outside the purview of this report, so I will save review entities from the narrative of that thrilling chapter. I only conclude by saying that I could not be happier for the current welfare and support for high-achieving students at FHSU and am so thrilled for what has come to pass.

Sincerely,
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