

**UNIVERSITY: University of Arizona**

***SPECIAL PROGRAM FEES  
FEE REQUEST***

**College/School: The Honors College**

**Program: Undergraduate Honors education**

**Is this a graduate or an undergraduate program fee?**

UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAM

**Is this a new fee or an increase to an existing fee?**

NEW FEE  Amount requested: \$ 250 per semester for all students in the Honors College

**BACKGROUND:**

**Information concerning the establishment of the fee.**

The University of Arizona Honors program was founded in 1963 and attained college status in 1999. The University of Arizona Honors College is a university-wide academic college that serves nearly 4000 high ability undergraduates by providing a challenging academic experience, advising, and career-related opportunities. Honors students are best served in special courses and seminars that foster student-faculty interaction, allow students to explore material in depth, and may proceed at an accelerated pace. Honors students have special advising needs that take into account their higher level of preparedness and focus on their broad interests, their leadership in community service, and their goals of pursuing graduate and professional school.

In the last five years, some Honors colleges and programs across the country have begun to charge special program fees in order to offer Honors courses and seminars, support orientation and other transition experiences for first-year students, and provide intensive advising. The University of South Carolina has a special program fee of \$600 and the ASU Barrett Honors College's fee currently is \$500 per year.

**References to ABOR policy statement.**

ABOR policy 4-104 specifies that a university may propose a special program fee for students in the Honors colleges and the fee can be imposed on all levels of undergraduates (Freshmen through Seniors). The University of Arizona requests that ABOR approve a fee of \$250 per semester for all undergraduates enrolled in The Honors College.

**Approval Process**

This proposal has been reviewed and approved on campus by the relevant Dean and Provost's office.

**DISCUSSION:**

**Quality of student experience.**

The quality of the educational experience of Honors students will be enhanced with this fee by offering additional Honors courses and increasing advising and educational experiences. Many departments are financially unable to offer special Honor courses or not enough courses to meet student demands. Honors students value Honors courses and would like to see more courses offered so that they can meet their educational goals. The current Honors advisor serves 4000 students exceeding the recommended ratio of

1000:1. Students value Honors advising and rely upon it to build Honors courses into their educational plans, identify study abroad and internship opportunities, and pursue graduate and professional school opportunities. 93% of Honors students continue to a second year and Honors students' graduation rate is twice that of non-Honors students.

**Access and affordability.**

The Honors College values access and diversity. The Honors College reaches out to pre-college to offer a summer program, Summer of Excellence, which enables high school students to live on campus and take a university course. Over half of the participants in this program are first-generation or under-represented students. Thirty-three percent of current Honors students come from under-represented ethnic groups (African American, Native American, Asian American and Hispanic). Eight percent of Honors students are the first in their family to attend college. Most Honors students receive merit scholarships and sixteen percent receive Pell grants. The Honors College is committed to the academic success of all students. The College designed an Honors-specific success course to assist first generation, rural, transfer and younger than average students in their transition to the UA. This course has been shown to impact significantly on the first-year academic achievements.

The Honors College will set aside 17 % of the special fee for students who qualify for need-based aid based on the FAFSA. The Honors College will initiate an appeals process for students who do not qualify under FAFSA but can demonstrate that the fee will cause them undue hardship.

**Cost of delivering Honors instructional program.**

The expense of delivering Honors courses and seminars is greater than other undergraduate courses because of the intensive learning environment. Honors courses foster hands-on approaches that may limit class size, involve field trips and laboratory materials, and bring guest speakers and role models to class. Honors advising requires additional time to attend to students' broad interests and prior achievements, to incorporate career-related experiences throughout the educational plan, and to provide a long-term career frame. Honors students benefit from and are more likely to engage in research opportunities, study abroad, and internships than other UA students. These experiences provide a foundation for success in careers, graduate and professional education, and national scholarship competitions.

Special program costs for The Honors College to be funded by the proposed fee:

First Year Experience

- 2 Day fall orientation program for 900 incoming students
- Honors academic success course, Paladins, serving 300 students
- Honors Passport to Success program for 900 incoming students
- Common Reading program (text and activities) for 900 incoming students
- Additional Honors freshmen colloquia, 6 courses
- New Honors academic success course for second semester freshmen

Building an Honors Education

- Interdisciplinary Honors seminars, 10 courses
- Additional Honors advising to serve 2600 students
- Enhanced Honors computer lab available to all Honors students
- Professional development workshop series—12 sessions per year
- Honors thesis grants—80 offered per year
- Undergraduate research and internship grants—40 offered each year
- Honors study abroad opportunities and scholarships—50 offered each year

Programs and Honors courses will be added or expanded as the fee is fully implemented. The Honors Student Council will provide input as to funding priorities.

### **Market pricing.**

The University of Arizona Honors College has compared tuition, mandatory fees and special Honors fees at peer institutions. The attached table details these comparisons for resident and non-resident students. If the proposed fee is approved, the cost of the UA Honors education will be 13<sup>th</sup> among 17 peer institutions and \$1529 below the average cost for residents.

A survey of Honors programs that belong to the National Collegiate Honors Council yielded seven universities that have Honors fees that are not peers. These fees range from one-time fees for orientation, application, and Honors thesis research to annual fees for Honors residential programs, courses, advising, or program participation.

### **Benefits to the University of Arizona.**

Graduating from The Honors College is the hallmark of academic excellence for undergraduate students. A strong and thriving Honors College is vital to the attraction, retention and graduation of talented students at the UA. The Honors College fosters the success of students from wide-ranging backgrounds, enables talented students to reach the highest levels of excellence, instills a life-long passion for learning, and strengthens the quality of undergraduate education at UA. The Honors College engages students in improving the quality of life and society through research, leadership and community service.

### **Student consultation and support**

The Dean has met twice with the Honors Student Council and once with Honors College Ambassadors to discuss the fee. The Dean will meet again with Honors student groups and open forums in the spring. Students will be surveyed about their priorities for the uses of fee.

### **Increased earning potential of program graduates**

The earning potential of individuals with graduate and professional training is higher than those with a baccalaureate degree. Eighty percent of the students who complete an Honors education (graduate with Honors) plan to attend law school, medical school, graduate or professional school compared to forty percent of Honors students who do not complete their Honors education. Increasing the availability of Honors courses and seminars, advising, internships and research opportunities will increase the number of students who are able to complete their Honors education by providing more classes, research experiences and advising.

### **Accountability**

The funds generated by the proposed fee will fall under the jurisdiction of the Honors College Dean, who will work with and be advised by the Honors Student Council, in setting priorities and preparing a budget for fund expenditures and review actual expenses. Annual surveys of student satisfaction will provide information as to the importance of programs and numbers of students served.

### **Financial Impact of the Request on Revenue**

The **new fee** is expected to generate **\$2,000,000** in revenue next year.

### **RECOMMENDATION:**

We recommend that the Arizona Board of Regents approve a \$250 fee per semester for all students enrolled in the University of Arizona Honors College effective Fall 2010.