Davidson Honors College
Academic Year 2017-18 Assessment Report

MISSION STATEMENT
The mission of the Davidson Honors College is to attract the best students from around our state, country, and world to the University of Montana. We develop engaged global citizens and professionals who excel in critical thinking, communication, collaboration, problem solving, ethical reasoning, and civic engagement. We also serve as a hub of intellectual, service, and social activity for students, staff, and faculty across the University of Montana campus.

DEPARTMENT OBJECTIVES and ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC ISSUES
1. Academic Excellence — In addition to serving as the heart and soul of liberal arts education at the University of Montana, the Davidson Honors College pursues curricular innovation and aims to provide exceptional opportunities for our students to benefit from experiential learning and professional development programs. These efforts set us apart — on the national stage — as the top choice for students dedicated to the pursuit of academic, professional, and personal success. Strategic Issue: Engage Students Where They Are, Support Excellence and Innovation in the Curriculum, and Foster Knowledge Creation and Innovation.

2. Leadership Development — The Davidson Honors College encourages the development of moral and responsible leaders through our selection of Honors courses, the Presidential Leadership Scholarship, the DHC QUEST Program, strong DHC representation in the Honors Student Association (HSA) and the Associated Students of the University of Montana (ASUM), UM Athletics, UM Greek Life, and UM Advocates. Strategic Issues: Partner with Place and Engage Students Where They Are.

3. Teaching and Learning “by Doing” — The Davidson Honors College promotes experiential learning through research, creative scholarship, service learning, internships, field study, and education abroad. Strategic Issue: Partner with Place and Foster Knowledge Creation and Innovation.

4. Diversity and Inclusivity — The Davidson Honors College attracts, engages, and supports an ethnically, culturally, and geographically diverse student body and faculty by offering Honors courses and an advising culture that promote empathy, open communication, and a “student-first” attitude among our staff, faculty, and administrators. Strategic Issue: Invest in People and Partner with Place.

5. Civic Engagement, Integrity, and Environmental Awareness — The wide variety of classroom and experiential programs offered through the Davidson Honors College provide opportunities for students to participate in community service, civic discourse, and field-based coursework, implicitly requiring reflection on personal integrity and their relationships with natural settings. Strategic Issue: Engage Students Where They Are and Partner with Place.
STUDENT LEARNING GOALS and MEASUREMENT TOOLS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Learning Goals</th>
<th>Annual Student Self-Report</th>
<th>Course-Embedded Measure</th>
<th>College Learning Assessment (CLA)</th>
<th>Senior Honors Research Project Presentation Evaluations</th>
<th>Graduate Exit Survey</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrate intellectual curiosity.</td>
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<td>Develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills</td>
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<td>Improve oral and written communication skills, along with listening and comprehension ability.</td>
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<td>Exhibit leadership and collaboration in a team setting.</td>
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<td>Develop, execute, and present original research and creative scholarship, regardless of major.</td>
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<td>Foster the development of ethical citizens.</td>
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RESULTS and MODIFICATIONS

LEARNING GOALS, RESULTS, AND MODIFICATIONS MADE TO ENHANCE LEARNING

#1

**Goals:** (1) Demonstrate intellectual curiosity (2) Improve oral and written communication skills, along with listening and comprehension ability.

**Example:** Faculty teaching sections of HONR 120 – Introduction to Honors – are encouraged to ask students to complete an essay addressing the first-year “Griz Read” book. Students are also encouraged to submit this essay to the Griz Read essay contest. Another example is the inaugural DHC Dinner and Dialogue event, which brought 90 community members and ten students to the lounge for conversations on topics ranging from the future of telemedicine to ultra-running. Student participants were encouraged to share their insights into the discussion topics based on their personal experience and academic interests.

**Results:** In 2018, the two Griz Read essay contest winners were DHC students; however, only one DHC course required the essay as an assignment. The Dinner and Dialogue event highlighted the oral communication skills and wide-ranging academic interests and skills of DHC students.
**Modifications:** We are seeking a singular “brand” for the HONR 120 course that launches students into their honors experience. In future years, HONR 120 will work more closely with the Griz Read, and students will spend class time workshopping their essays. In addition, instructors will be strongly encouraged to adopt a course model that focuses on group projects that include written reports and an oral presentation at the end of the semester. (The PLS section of 120 did that in fall 2018 and had the two essay winners. It was one of the most successful sections of HONR 120 to be taught in the past five years.)

* * *

# 2

**Goal:** (1) Demonstrate intellectual curiosity

**Example:** In the past, students in HONR 121L – Ways of Knowing – were able to learn from campus scholars as part of the Ways of Knowing Plenary Lecture Series (three during the fall semester). More recently, these Plenary Lectures were supplemented with a series of “DHC Salons,” which offered a more intimate atmosphere in which students could connect with each other and the guests who led each Salon session. For the past two years, as part of both the Introduction to Honors class and Ways of Knowing, we facilitated an off-campus excursion called “Night at the Library (2018)”/“Night at the Museum (2017),” which aimed to bring all first-year DHC students together to learn more about a campus or community resource while hearing from a renowned local scholar.

**Results:** Student evaluations for both HONR 120 and HONR 121L demonstrate an increased level of engagement and curiosity among those students taking these two classes.

**Modifications:** Some of the out-of-the-classroom experiences for Ways of Knowing have lapsed or changed in response to student feedback, which overwhelmingly advocates for lectures that tie directly to texts and topics that the students are studying. As a result, the DHC intends to revive the Ways of Knowing Plenary in Spring 2019 as a consistent offering, and is pairing with the Project on American Democracy and Citizenship to fund a roster of speakers who are both the leaders in their fields as well authors whose works all students are reading in a given semester. In addition, the DHC is working with existing Intro to Honors faculty to further enhance the out-of-classroom offerings for Introduction to Honors in the fall.

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# 3

**Goal:** (1) Exhibit Leadership and Collaboration in a Team Setting (2) Develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills (3) Foster the development of ethical citizens.

**Example:** For year 2018-2019, the Davidson Honors College is in its second year of the QUEST program, a student-initiated partnership with the City of Missoula where student teams propose solutions to a pressing community challenge.

**Results:** The DHC QUEST Program was a success in its first year (2017-2018), according to student feedback and outcomes. Two teams (six students) completed the project and all students received some scholarship funding for their efforts. The winning team received a larger scholarship and a six-week internship with the Mayor’s office to continue the work on their project.

**Modifications:** For the second year of the QUEST program, students are working on a challenge related to the City’s Zero By Fifty Plan. In 2018-2019, there are five teams in the challenge. In a change from the first year, students had the option to participate in an optional, content-based practicum course in the fall and are required to participate in a spring practicum focused on professional development, team-building, and crafting a persuasive recommendation. The spring semester culminates with the community presentation. Participants from prior years will serve as peer mentors to the teams. We have
also built in the option for fourth-year students to complete their capstone requirement through the QUEST program. We will continue with this two-semester structure for the third year of the program. Changes will be made based on student feedback at the end of Spring 2019.

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# 4

**Goals:** (1) Exhibit leadership and collaboration in a team setting (2) Develop, execute, and present original research and creative scholarship, regardless of major (3) Develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills

**Example:** To better support research and creative scholarship in a team setting, the DHC is remaining nimble about allowing student group work through the Global Leadership Initiative, QUEST program, and other major capstone courses to fulfill the honors capstone requirement. We require a written reflection from all students completing their honors capstone requirement.

**Results:** Initial results show a slight increase in the number of students who integrate their DHC capstones with major capstones or other group work, while still meeting the specific requirements of each program.

**Modifications:** As the Davidson Honors College curriculum committee assesses the current DHC curriculum and makes recommendations to ASCRC, we are seeking to improve the honors experience for students and provide additional required opportunities for students to engage with the DHC during their second and third years. This is intended to improve graduation outcomes for students in the Davidson Honors College and improve capstone preparedness and completion. We are offering one piece of the curriculum committee’s preliminary recommendation, a course titled The Art of Inquiry, in fall of 2019. This course will offer students the opportunity to learn about the ways in which different disciplines approach inquiry, explore the ethical implications of research, begin to formulate research or creative scholarship questions, identify a mentor for a capstone, and begin to explore options for funding and internships that may enhance their inquiry projects. The aim is that this course will become a core element of the DHC curriculum.

* * *

# 5

**Goals:** (1) Demonstrate Intellectual Curiosity (2) Develop, execute, and present original research and creative scholarship, regardless of major

**Example:** In addition to expanding our program for the annual UM Conference on Undergraduate Research (UMCUR), the DHC sought to increase emphasis on creative scholarship projects at UMCUR. We also continued efforts to highlight DHC students’ work on creative scholarship. In the spring, for the third year, a number of graduating DHC students will read their original poetry, fiction, and nonfiction work at the Senior Arts Showcase.

**Results:** Davidson Honors College students continue to be a sizeable percentage of presenters at UMCUR and other conferences. In March 2019, six DHC students (mostly seniors) will be presenting their original research at the Western Regional Honors Council conference in the March 2019. We will highlight student scholarship in the spring, as well. In spring 2018, ten students presented to a sizeable crowd at the Senior Arts Showcase.

**Modifications:** In spring 2019, we will highlight creative scholarship again in the DHC through multiple Creative Scholarship Events in the spring, and also through a special award category at the 2019 UMCUR. I would also like to include additional community members in the presentations to further share the exemplary work of our students.
# 6

**Goal:** (1) Appreciate the importance of public service and civic engagement

**Example:** In the past 18 months, the DHC has worked to embed community service activities into our curriculum and student organizations. We have done this through the QUEST program and by strongly encouraging each HONR 120 (“Introduction to Honors”) section to plan and execute a community service project, by continuing to emphasize Honors Student Association (HSA) service projects like “Trick or Treat So Missoula Eats” and Valentine’s Day Service Project and by introducing engaging events that promote civil discourse (e.g. “Milkshake Mondays”).

**Results:** DHC student continue to engage in community service projects through honors courses and the HSA’s annual “Trick or Treat So Missoula Eats” event captured over 2000 pounds of canned food for Missoula. Milkshake Mondays are still popular. The QUEST program is driving growing interest.

**Modifications:** In fall 2018, the Introduction to Honors course for Presidential Scholars included the creation of small group leadership projects around campus and the community. We plan to implement this component regularly into the Introduction to Honors section for students receiving the PLS (which the dean traditionally instructs) and to encourage the adoption of the project model by other Introduction to Honors instructors.

* * *

# 7

**Goals:** (1) Develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills (2) Foster the development of ethical citizens.

**Example:** This goal is met through the DHC capstone requirement, which for many students culminates in presentations at the University of Montana Conference on Undergraduate Research (UMCUR). Students develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills throughout the course of developing and conducting their research. We are working to improve their learning through the presentation component by sharing with the students the feedback from judges. Based on reactions from previous UMCUR events, we know that student presenters were not given substantive feedback on their presentations. A new judging rubric and feedback form was designed for UMCUR 2017, as was a new judging system that will provide additional feedback to student presenters. Particular attention is given to judging criteria and feedback that will identify successes and areas for improvement with respect to critical thinking and problem solving skills.

**Results:** We will assess results from the most recent and past years.

**Modifications:** For UMCUR 2019, we will have an option for students to indicate whether they are in the Davidson Honors College, which makes up the majority of UMCUR presenters due to our capstone requirement. This should provide a benchmark for increasing engagement in future years and growing the number of students who are exposed to opportunities to develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Other changes will depend on the results of systems implemented. We have also added a requirement (Art of Inquiry course) for third-year students in the Davidson Honors College which is intended to help students prepare for the critical thinking and problem-solving required to complete capstone requirement.

**FUTURE PLANS FOR CONTINUED ASSESSMENT**

This assessment included a reflection of recent changes within the DHC and relied upon previous years’ comprehensive student surveys, course roundtable discussions, the Provost-convened DHC Task Force, and formal course reviews. Additionally, we are seeking to improve our own data collection efforts in an effort to better ascertain student retention and graduation rates. We seek to improve our student participation annual surveys to improve our data around the honors student experience. We also
plan to administer improved Annual Self-Report and Senior Graduation Surveys, and conduct thorough assessment of our two core seminars (HONR 120 – Introduction to Honors and HONR 121L – Ways of Knowing).

In Academic Year 2019-2020, we will continue our rolling review of our departmental honors courses, with the goal of offering honors courses that more closely match the learning objectives and needs of students in the Davidson Honors College.

APPENDICES

1. Davidson Honors College Mission, Vision, and Values (Updated December 2018)
2. Honors Course Curriculum Request (for faculty)
3. UMCUR Judging Rubric
4. Davidson Honors College Curriculum (Required Experiences and Electives)

APPENDIX #1: Davidson Honors College Mission, Vision, and Values

MISSION

The mission of the Davidson Honors College is to attract the best students from around our state, country, and world to the University of Montana. We develop engaged global citizens and professionals who excel in critical thinking, communication, collaboration, problem solving, ethical reasoning, and civic engagement. We also serve as a hub of intellectual, service, and social activity for students, staff, and faculty across the University of Montana campus.

VISION

Our vision is to be a national model for honors public higher education. We are committed to being an inclusive community grounded in our passion for access, academic innovation, career development, and experiential learning.

VALUES

The students, staff, and faculty of the Davidson Honors College value:

- Demonstrated initiative, intellectual risk-taking, and a desire to learn from diverse perspectives.
- Hands-on, collaborative, cross-disciplinary learning, research, and creative scholarship as effective methods for expanding our ways of knowing and our understanding of the world.
- Fostering connections with partners on campus, in Missoula, and beyond.
- Creating opportunity – listening for possibility, seeking solutions, and gathering information to make informed decisions.

ESSENTIAL LEARNING OUTCOMES

The Davidson Honors College experience is distinguished by our dual commitment to hands-on learning and thoughtful reflection. Davidson Honors College graduates will be able to:

- Think critically. Identify, evaluate, and integrate available information and arguments; develop logical and reasonable positions across a wide range of issues.
- Communicate. Express ideas and arguments through oral and written strategies; develop strong listening skills.
- Collaborate. Contribute to, and lead where necessary, a diverse team in pursuit of a shared goal.
- Solve problems. Employ rigorous quantitative and/or qualitative analysis to identify informed solutions to complex challenges.
- Design and execute an original project. Present original research or creative scholarship in a public arena.
- Act ethically. Make decisions rooted in principles of truth, honesty, and responsibility with awareness of their impact on others.
- Engage as a citizen. Strengthen commitment to meaningful service and community.
APPENDIX #2: Honors Course Curriculum Request

To ensure that Honors courses will differ from non-Honors courses in a variety of ways, we require that proposers complete a form that describes the distinctive Honors features of the course. We are using Submittable for our internal forms.

Instructor Information

Name *

UM ID (790) *

Department *

Instructor Rank *
- Tenure/Tenure-Track
- Lecturer
- Adjunct Instructor

Course Description

Proposed Prefix, Number, and Course Title *

Please list Department Chair and email *

Do you have department chair approval? *
- Yes
- No

Brief Course Description

Brief Course Description *

Describe how the course meets two DHC Learning Objectives

Describe how the course meets two DHC Learning Objectives *

Please provide a brief description of how the course meets at least two DHC learning objectives stated above. You could provide an example of an assignment, lecture, or project.

Syllabus Upload *

Upload a file for the course syllabus, highlighting the coursework that a) meets the DHC Learning Objectives, and b) elevates the offering to an honors course (providing opportunities for students to engage more deeply with the materials and ideas).
## APPENDIX #3: UMCUR Judging Rubric

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Very Poor/Poor</th>
<th>Fair/Good</th>
<th>Very Good/Excellent</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Research Question</strong></td>
<td>not clearly stated, or is obscured by the presentation of the material.</td>
<td>clearly stated, but the analysis or discussion appears to drift from the stated question.</td>
<td>clearly explained in non-technical language, and the analysis consistently addresses the question.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The research question is...</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Significance and Impact:</strong></td>
<td>not clearly explained.</td>
<td>mentioned, but not fully explained.</td>
<td>clearly explained.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The significance of the research question and implications of the findings are...</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Methodology:</strong></td>
<td>not explained or is inappropriate for the project.</td>
<td>not fully explained or is not appropriate for the project.</td>
<td>clearly explained and appropriate for the project.</td>
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<td>The research approach or creative process is...</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Appropriate for a General Audience:</strong></td>
<td>overly technical or detailed and does not provide appropriate context or explanations for a general audience.</td>
<td>non-technical and appropriate for a general audience but missing an important piece such as context or findings.</td>
<td>clear, non-technical and incorporated context and findings in a manner understandable to a general audience.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The presentation is...</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Delivery and Responses to Questions</strong></td>
<td>not well prepared, lacks engagement with the audience, uses visual aids that detract from the presentation, or is organized in a way that detracts significantly from the project’s logic.</td>
<td>clear overall and logically organized, but is somewhat uneven, and may include visual aids that occasionally detract from the presentation.</td>
<td>smooth, organized, articulate, and engaging, uses visual aids that enhance the presentation and clear and logically connected to the research presented.</td>
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<td>The presentation is...</td>
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<td>The responses to questions are...</td>
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<td>not adequately answered.</td>
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APPENDIX #4: DHC Curriculum (2018-2019)*

*This curriculum document does not include the addition of the Art of Inquiry course, which will take the place of one of the five elective options.