

**From:** Conrad Shumaker  
**To:** kurtb@uca.edu  
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**Subject:** Honors College

Dear Kurt,

Here's my last-minute response to the Honors College Position Paper.

As someone who has taught in the Honors college for many years, I understand their wish to hire and tenure faculty to teach their classes, participate in recruitment, and do the extra evaluation required. I don't really accept the parallel between the Honors College and a department (Honors doesn't offer a degree and isn't a "discipline"), but I can see how an argument can be made on practical grounds. I think that argument is made reasonably well here, and I'm willing to accept it, with the following reservations:

First, as someone who works quite a bit with Honors faculty, I think they can sometimes feel pretty isolated. It's one thing to interact regularly with a limited group of colleagues who share your discipline and another thing to do the same with a group of colleagues who share membership within a bureaucratic entity. When evaluation depends on satisfying those colleagues (many of whom might not be particularly well equipped to evaluate your performance in your chosen discipline) there might be a premium placed on "loyalty" to the college. I know that at least one faculty member has expressed such feelings to me. I understand the argument that it might be hard to teach in one entity and be evaluated by members of another, but all of us have that happen to an extent when we get to the college level with our applications. Therefore I think it's advisable, not only to have faculty from other disciplines play a role in hiring and the tenure process and have them teach in honors, but also to give honors faculty a chance to teach in disciplines outside the honors college. That way, the faculty who might help evaluate them for promotion and tenure have a chance to see them work. If English department faculty, for example, helped to screen candidates and then had an honors faculty member teach a course now and then in the English department, the tenure and promotion process would have a stronger basis. This would also help ease the resentment I've seen when, for example, I teach in Honors and Honors doesn't do something to help cover the course I don't teach in English. It would also create bonds between honors faculty and colleagues outside McAlister and give both groups a chance to learn from each other.

Second, I like the idea of the Faculty Advisory Committee--it's probably vital to the relationship of Honors to the rest of the university. But it's not spelled out. What would be its composition? What would it do, more specifically? Would it, for example, have members from outside the Honors College who would help to build bridges between honors and other departments? If so, should the director of honors appoint them? I think it really needs to be spelled out more specifically.

As someone who is directly involved in General Education ( as interim director) and would like to see the Honors College's contribution to that enterprise more fully integrated with those of other departments, I'll be very interested in seeing what emerges from this discussion. Please let me know if I can help in any way.

Best,  
Conrad Shumaker