

Committee on Honors and Interdisciplinary Studies
Report to Arts and Sciences, March, 2003

2002-03 Committee members include: Ismail Abdalla, Nicos Chrisochoides, Lisa Grimes, Laurie Koloski, Dennis Manos, Leisa Meyer, Joel Schwartz, Barbette Spaeth, and Laurie Wolf (faculty members); Stephanie Chern, Dan Hodapp, Scott Phelps, and Laura Zahn (student members).

(1) Monroe Scholars

Monroe Scholars who did their projects in summer, 2002, as well as other students with summer 02 research funding from the Charles Center, did presentations at a Presentation Fair on September 18, 2002. Since that time, Committee members have served as primary advisers for 196 Monroe Scholars who submitted proposals in September, 2002 to do their projects in summer, 2003. On the recommendation of Committee members, 20 of these students have been awarded additional funding because of the unusual expense and quality of their projects. In addition, 92 first-year Monroes have submitted proposals to do "freshman Monroe" projects in summer, 2003. This is new, competitive scholarship program funds Monroe Scholars to complete projects in the summer after their freshman year that "follow up" on topics to which they were exposed in first-year courses.

The Charles Center organized 57 lunch seminars for Monroe Scholars in 2002-03. The Open House for prospective Monroes will be held on April 12 and 13, 2003. In addition to other events, 22 faculty have agreed to conduct freshman seminars for these students on Sunday, April 13, and we have created a new web site for prospective students that, among other features, provides them with a chance to "chat" with current Monroe Scholars.

Policy Discussion: The Committee has discussed possible changes to the guidelines that we give Monroe Scholars for summer projects.

(2) Concentration Honors

128 students are currently completing concentration honors projects. This number, about 10% of the graduating class, has been quite stable over the past several years. The breakdown by department, from the most to the least honors projects, is as follows: History (14); Chemistry (11); Psychology (11); Biology (10); English (10); Physics (8); Government (7); American Studies (6); Interdisciplinary (6); Sociology (6); Geology (5); Religion (5); Computer Science (4); Economics (4); Mathematics (4); Public Policy (3); International (3); Anthropology (2); Modern Languages (2); Music (2); Art (1); Art History (1); Kinesiology (1); Philosophy (1); Theatre (1).

36 current honors students did presentations of their in-progress research at the February, 2003 Concentration Honors Symposium.

Policy Discussion: The committee discussed whether departments should be permitted to have just one ("honors") concentration honors designation, instead of 3 ("honors," "high honors," "highest honors"), as has been the practice in the past. The conclusion was that as long as this policy is clearly explained to prospective honors students, there is no need to enforce uniformity on this subject.

(3) Interdisciplinary Concentrations

There are currently a total of 231 students who have declared concentrations that are administered by the Charles Center. In order, from largest to smallest: Neuroscience (113); Literary and Cultural Studies (50: 27 in the basic track; 23 in the film studies track); Linguistics (31); Individual/Self-designed (5); Black Studies (4); Medieval-Renaissance Studies (4).

Policy Discussion: None