TITLE: Motion to Change Faculty and Administrative Manual for Composition and Duties of Honors College Committee

With specific changes to the FAM Bylaws:
Article V, Section 3.B.13.a-b.

INTENT: The Honors College Committee, after extensive discussion and with the enthusiastic support of Honors dean, has voted unanimously that we would like to revise the description of the composition and duties of our committee that currently appear in the FAM Article V.3.B.13.a–b. (found on pp. 27–28). The rationale for our requested changes is straightforward. The current composition of the committee is hindering our ability to do our work, especially as the committee description recognizes no need for representation from across the academic schools; in addition, over the years the functions of the committee have changed as the Honors College has grown and the committee description no longer fits the reality of the committee’s work.

Specifically, in 13.a we propose changing the composition of the committee to seven faculty members, with representatives from all schools (and one member each from Humanities and from Social Sciences, in acknowledgement of the massive contribution HSS faculty make to the Honors College and the deep disciplinary differences between the Humanities and the Social Sciences). We wish to increase the size of the committee because it is often difficult to achieve a quorum with the current five members; since the committee also has the task of reading a very large volume of student application essays, a larger membership would spread this heavy burden among more people and make the job more manageable.

More importantly, the committee feels strongly that representation from all schools is essential. Our Honors students are in all disciplines around campus; we need representatives who understand the reality of all students’ academic experience to satisfy the committee’s regulatory and advisory mission. To give a single example of the problems the committee faces, it recently considered a proposal to modify an Honors Chemistry course. If the associate dean (a scientist) had not been there to speak about the problems students are encountering with the evaluation of science credits, the current committee members (a historian, two English professors, a philosopher, and a member of the teacher education program) would have been completely at a loss.

The committee discussed the requirement of 13.a that, among the committee members, “four . . . shall have taught recently in the Honors College” and decided it was better to use the rather vague “recently” instead of specifying a set number of years because of fears that there would not be sufficient candidates for membership on the committee, especially from schools whose faculty members teach Honors courses less frequently.

In 13.b we proposed several changes to clarify and better reflect actual practice. Thus, in 13.b(1), while the committee has an important role to play in the selection of Honors students, the process has become so very large and complex that it does not indeed make the
final decisions.

13.b(4) we proposed deleting “changes in the curriculum, and changes in Honors College regulations and policies” because we thought it redundant to what is written in 13.b(3).

13.b(5)’s addition of “. . . and other matters pertaining to the Honors College” is, as the bylaws committee noted when it reviewed our proposal, vague. We discussed making a list of all possible issues that might come before the committee, but realized the impossibility of being complete as the Honors College continues to grow and adapt to an ever-changing academic environment. At its most basic level, the Honors College Committee is the advisory committee to the Honors Dean. Thus, she may ask the committee’s opinion on matters as diverse as improving diversity recruitment and retention or how to improve the Honors student advising experience.

For each proposed change single strike through text is a deletion, underlined text is new language.

13. Honors College Committee
   a. Composition: Seven faculty members (one representative each from Humanities, Social Sciences, Science and Mathematics, Business, Arts, Languages Cultures and World Affairs, and Education, four of whom shall have taught recently in the Honors College), and two student representatives, one junior and one senior, chosen by the Honors Committee from students nominated by the Honors student body. Five faculty members, three of whom shall be teaching in the Honors College and a student representative and alternate both elected by the Honors Student Association (or any successor student organization recognized by the Honors College). The expectation is that faculty committee members will serve a two-year term; student member terms are one year and they are eligible for re-election. The Dean of the Honors College (or the Dean’s designee) is an ex-officio non-voting member of this committee; the dean may also invite an Honors faculty fellow to participate as an ex-officio non-voting member.
b. Duties:

(1) To review student applications and select students for admission into the Honors College.

(2) To review faculty course proposals and select Honors College courses.

(3) To review and make policy decisions concerning the Honors College curriculum, admission and retention standards, and course selection procedures, and faculty stipends.

(4) To review, receive, and rule on written requests from students, faculty members, schools, or departments for exceptions from Honors College regulations and requirements, changes in the curriculum, and changes in Honors College regulations and policies.

(5) To review information from the Dean of the Honors College concerning Honors College admissions, retention, curriculum, etc., and other matters pertaining to the Honors College.

(Rev. May 2009) (Rev. Pending)