May 5, 2008

TO: Joseph Kelly, Speaker of the Faculty
FR: Zeff Bjerken, Chair, Honors Committee Chair
RE: Annual Honors Committee Report, 2007-08

The Honors Committee met regularly two or three times a month during the 2007-08 academic year. The primary duties of the Committee include soliciting proposals and choosing Special Topics Honors courses for the following academic year and reading and evaluating student applications for the Honors Program. This year the Committee also reviewed student petitions for exceptions to established rules for graduating in the Honors program, and it approved a proposal from the School of Business and Economics to offer Freshman Advising for their Honors Program.

There are eight new Special Topics Honors courses that will be offered in the 2008-09 academic year. In the Fall of 2008 there will be four Special Topic courses: “Apocalypse Now: Rhetorical Visions and Nightmares;” “Mathematics in Fiction;” “Seminar on Terror, Terrorism, and Responses to Terror;” and “Race and Violence in Africa.” In the Spring of 2009, four new Honors Courses will be offered: “Latin American Film and Literature;” “Mathematics in Music;” “The British Empire: Colonial and Postcolonial Voices;” and “Grrls Gone Wild: Third World Feminism.” In addition to this exciting array of new special topics courses, there are many other continuing Honors Courses that will be offered in 2008-09.

The Honors Program received 821 applications during the Fall and Spring of 2007-08, which is exactly the same number (821) as last year. As of April 28, 528 students had been accepted, 242 were rejected, 26 were wait listed, and 25 applications were still to be processed and evaluated. At least 210 students have secured their place at the college with a financial deposit and intend to enroll in the program next Fall. The average SAT score of these students is 1330, average ACT is 29, and they rank in the top 6% of their graduating classes. Applications are read and evaluated by at least three members of the Committee (John Newell, Dean, and Jill Conway, Assistant Director, are included in the pool of readers). The reading of applications takes up the bulk of the Committee’s work between November and April.

In April, the Committee convened with some of the newly elected members of the Honors Committee for the 2008-09 academic year, and I was elected to serve as the new Committee Chair, largely because I was the only returning committee member from 2007-08.

Respectfully submitted,

Zeff Bjerken, Chair, 2007-08