

DRAFT, R. Fisher, 15 November, 2000

**Proposed Academic Enhancement Program for Accomplished Students
(those who are not Honors College members)**

Target population:

The group of freshmen each year with very solid academic records that fall just short of meriting an Honors College invitation is the target. For instance, in fall 1999 there were about 700 freshman with ACT scores of 28 or above and 1,100 with an ACT of 27 or above whom were NOT invited to join Honors College [either because of their standardized test score (generally $ACT < 30$) or high school grades (below the top 10 to 15 percent or so of their class in most cases)]. Students in this are important if MSU is to be successful at improving the overall quality of its undergraduate student body. These students also are often the explicit target group for honors programs at other public universities in the state (including Western, Central, Wayne, and Oakland).

Program concept/goals:

1. Create options for academic enrichment for this group of students.
2. Assist or encourage along a path that could lead to joining Honors College after the first year, at least for some.
3. Provide membership in or association with an academic entity - a named "program" - that conveys some sense of accomplishment and special academic status.
4. Encourage more students in this group to enroll at MSU.

Results of Student Focus Group, Proposed Scholars Program

A group of first- and second-year students were convened to discuss their reactions to the idea of a "scholars program." The students mostly included freshmen whose academic records placed them just below the level that would lead to invitation to Honors College from high school.

These students were unanimously and strongly supportive of the idea for and general concept of a "scholars program." The students were particularly interested in 1) the opportunity for more challenging classes in the first two years, 2) access to smaller classes, 3) the opportunity to begin Honors work sooner, possibly leading eventually to HC membership, 4) the chance be part of a group of similar students, 5) the recognition of being invited to a special academic program that "separates them from the crowd," and 6) the idea that the scholars program would position them better for graduate or professional school.

Regarding Integrative Studies, the students were particularly interested in Honors classes and sections (more challenging and smaller) as well as the opportunity to substitute some specialized classes (more closely related to their interests).

Proposed Academic Scholars Program

DRAFT

Four enhanced class choices in first two years, including at least

- One Honors IS class
- One Honors class (ATL, MTH, STT, major, substitutes)
- Two others (list of approved substitutes for University requirements or H Options or H classes)

(Note that the H class or the H option can be taken in any area of the student's program, including the major area, but the focus is specifically on the requirements)

Potential scholars will be identified based on test scores and GPAs

Prospective scholar students will be offered the opportunity to join the Scholars Program (letter about the beginning of February)

Students will need to accept the offer; for the initial year the Scholars Program will be limited to the first 200 students who accept and enroll

Scholars will have the option of requesting residence on a "scholars floor" (thus will not conflict with Madison, Briggs, or other living-learning alternatives)

The HC staff, augmented by one person, will advise scholars at AOP concerning Scholars Program classes

Scholars will be identified by a separate computer tracking code

Completion of the Scholars Program will be recognized on the student's transcript

The Academic Scholars Program provides

- Opportunity for enhanced work in satisfying University requirements *and* in the student's major
- Increased flexibility in meeting University requirements
- Access to smaller, challenging classes
- Pathway to joining Honors College later, if desired
- Option to reside with other scholars
- Recognition of academic achievement in high school and recognition of the scholars work at MSU