**Current Program: The Honors Institute**

**Program Description**

The MCC Honors Studies program began in 1988 and has successfully organized and offered honors courses for hundreds of students each year. Those students who successfully completed the basic requirements were awarded an “Honors Concentration” diploma. During this early period, MCC was able to offer high quality courses and personalized advising to primarily liberal arts students.

First proposed in 2006 and implemented in fall 2007, the MCC Honors Institute attempts to create a specialized learning environment for academically talented and highly motivated students. In an effort to persuade “students with choice” to attend MCC, the Honors Institute imagined five distinct characteristics:

•exceptional course-based study;

•unique extra- and co-curricular activities;

•collaborative learning opportunities;

•service-learning projects;

•innovative “knowledge track” programs.

Students admitted into the Honors Institute matriculate into a Certificate in Advanced Studies – a “stand alone” certificate requiring 24 credit hours to complete. This certificate provides students the benefit of earning a state-registered award. More importantly, the curriculum prepares students for transfer to some of the nation’s finest colleges and universities.

To recruit this higher achieving cohort, the Honors Institute aggressively markets a seminar-model for all classes, personal mentoring with the opportunity to develop mentor/mentee relationships more typical of a four-year liberal arts college, award-winning, imaginative faculty, priority registration, and scholarship opportunities.

The Damon City Campus “Honors Community” is an interdisciplinary program designed specifically for honors students studying at the Damon City Campus. By taking advantage of its dynamic urban location, the Damon Honors Community converts the City of Rochester into a rich learning laboratory, blending course-based critical thinking with experiential learning.

**Admission Criteria**

New students:

•85 or better GPA or

•top 15% class rank.

Current MCC students:

•MCC GPA of 3.5 or

•a letter of recommendation from a professor.

Transfer students:

•transfer of any honors designated class from an accredited institution.

**Scholarships**

Currently, the number of students who are prepared to enter the Honors Institute and who cannot afford to attend MCC is relatively small. In its marketing material, the Honors Institute highlights two available scholarship opportunities:

•The MCC Presidential Endowed Scholarship

*Supported through the William and Sheila Konar Foundation*

The Presidential Endowed Scholarship supports outstanding students with up to full tuition. Students must be enrolled full time in an MCC degree program. The scholarship is renewable for the sophomore year.

Eligibility

Full scholarship: 95 average, top 5% of your high school class, and 1300 SAT score\*

Half scholarship: 92 average, top 10% of your high school class, and 1200 SAT score\*

Quarter scholarship: 88 average, top 20% of your high school class, and 1120 SAT score\*

*\*Critical reading and math exams*

To continue to be eligible for a Presidential Scholarship, students must complete a minimum of 12 credit hours each semester, and maintain the following GPAs at MCC:

Full scholarship: 3.5

Half scholarship: 3.2

Quarter scholarship: 3.0

•MCC Scholars Program

The Monroe Community College Scholars Program supports high school students who have demonstrated both academic excellence and a high level of achievement in extracurricular and/or community activities. Scholarships are available for all MCC degree programs.

Separate scholarships are available for students in 2+2 programs or studying at the Damon City Campus. Recipients are awarded $500 per semester for up to four consecutive semesters.

Eligibility

• Must be a graduating high school senior

• Academic average of 85 or above by the beginning of your senior year

• Academic rank in the top 20% of your high school class, and/or

• Demonstrated participation and achievement in extracurricular and/or community activities

• Admitted as a full-time student to Monroe Community College

*To continue to receive an MCC Scholars award, students must maintain a*

*GPA of 3.0 or higher and complete a minimum of 12 credit hours for each semester.*

**Curricular Vision**

In order to graduate with a Certificate in Advanced Studies from the Honors Institute, a student must

•complete ENG 200: Advanced Composition;

•complete four honors courses, one of which must be IDC 195: Seminar in Critical Analysis;

•complete a service-learning elective;

•maintain a GPA of 3.5 or higher.

At present, the Honors Institute offers both a number of standard courses converted into an honors section (for example, ENG 105, ENG 214, PHL 101, PHY 121, PSY 101, and SOC 101) and a series of honors seminars (IDC 195, HMN 295: Seminar in the Humanities, SCI 295: Seminar in the Natural Sciences, SBS 295: Seminar in the Social and Behavioral Sciences, and IDC 295: Interdisciplinary Honors Seminar).

The Honors Institute has not yet initiated the proposed themed cohorts, or “knowledge tracks,” associated with the original Institute proposal. This cohort model would have allowed for students of a common interest to study with a pair or small team of faculty members and community leaders. Each of the Honors course experiences would be a uniquely designed course exploring a topic with a depth and richness difficult to achieve in the traditional classroom. This cohort of students and faculty would remain together through four semesters, building connections and enriching each other throughout their academic programs – even though the individual students may matriculate into different degree programs.

**Unique Curricular and Co-Curricular Activities**

During the current academic year, honors students have had the opportunity to participate in a range of co-curricular activities. A number of these events are open to all MCC students while others are reserved for honors students only. These events and activities have included an opening picnic, a series of Institute-sponsored lectures, a transfer lunch, a writing workshop, an evening at the Little Theatre, and a workshop with a visiting poet.

**Student Incentives**

At present, any “perks” associated with the Honors Institute are both modest and not readily visible. The program itself offers smaller and more challenging courses, promotes individual mentoring and enhanced faculty relationships, fosters a sense of engagement and community, allows for priority registration, and provides support for transfer to top-tier institutions.

**Staffing**

The Honors Institute consists of one coordinator, a faculty member receiving 6FCH release time each fall and spring semester, and one half-time secretary (reporting to the dean of Liberal Arts). The coordinator is advised by an Honors Advisory Committee, composed of faculty and staff who have taught in the program.

**Space**

In the strictest sense, the Honors Institute has one dedicated space: the Honors Institute office. Located on the fifth floor of Building 5, the office is staffed by the Institute secretary and functions as an administrative hub and as a point of contact for students. Unfortunately, the coordinator is located in Building 8 and there is no facility for an honors cohort to meet outside of classes.

**Assessment**

An annual report by the coordinator provides the following statistical information: number of students registered in one or more honors courses; the number of seats filled in honors courses; the number of sections offered; the number of students matriculated into the program; the number of students completing the requirements for the Certificate.

No long-term, transfer, or scholarship data currently exists.

**Budget Development**

The dean of Liberal Arts provides $4000 a year for the Honors Institute, covers the institutional membership fee for the NCHC, and supports the half-time secretary. Additionally, the dean (or others) may provide funds for one or more special events.