



THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

HONORS & SCHOLARS

Supporting High-Ability Students in the First Year

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Program Outline

- I. Introductions and learning outcomes
- II. Profile of high-ability students at OSU
- III. Honors & Scholars Center
- IV. Working with high-ability students
 - I. Student characteristics
 - II. Student transition challenges
 - III. Best practices for support
- V. Conclusion



Learning Outcomes

1. Participants will explore characteristics and typical challenges of first year high-ability students.
2. Participants will learn about strategies and best practices that support high-ability students' transition to college.
3. Participants will learn how the Honors & Scholars Center can support and partner with various campus offices and colleges to offer a successful transition plan for first year high-ability students.



Student Profile: 2014-15 Class

OSU 2014-15 Class

- 7,024 students
- Average ACT: 28.8
- Class Rank: 61% are in the top 10% of their high school class

HONORS:

- 1,037 students
- Average ACT: 32.7
- Class Rank: 98% are in the top 10% of their high school class

SCHOLARS:

- 1,534 students
- Average ACT: 29.3
- Class Rank: 92% are in the top 10% of their high school class



Our Mission

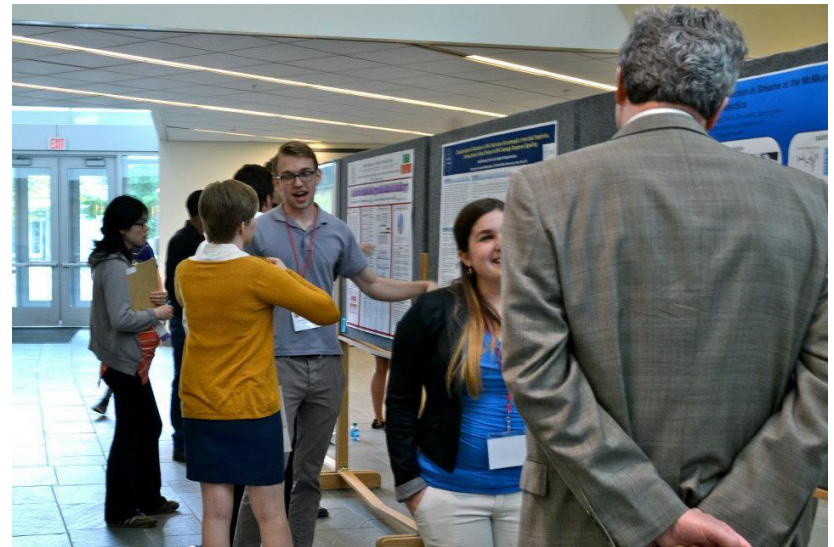
The University Honors & Scholars Center at The Ohio State University serves high-ability, motivated undergraduate students. While embracing diversity in both ideas and people, the Center fosters purposeful learning communities that enhance students' academic and social experiences. The Center facilitates impactful, rigorous, and unique opportunities that further student success and involvement in our G.O.A.L.S.:

- Global Awareness
- Original Inquiry
- Academic Engagement
- Leadership Development
- Service Engagement



What is Honors?

- ❖ Enriched courses
- ❖ Faculty connections
- ❖ Research-oriented
- ❖ Community among peers



What is Scholars?

- ❖ 17 distinct residential learning communities, tailored to engage peers with common interest on a particular theme
- ❖ Co-curricular programming
- ❖ Building networks
- ❖ Academic opportunities





Choices

Honors Students:

- Desire to pursue a more rigorous curriculum
- Have a strong interest in research

Scholars Students:

- Desire a small, close-knit community
- Are passionate about the program's theme

**It's All About Finding
The Right Fit**



H&S Initiatives for First Year Students

- Dinner with the Deans
- Learning Communities
- London Honors
- H&S Launch
- Honors & Scholars Programming Board
- Honors & Scholars Ambassadors
- Semester of Service
- FYE Success Series Workshop



Working with High-Ability Students

- **Characteristics**
- **Transitional Issues**
- **Challenges**
- **Strategy**



High-Ability Student Characteristic: **Focus on Academics**

- History of Academic Success
 - Have always done well in classes and are motivated to continue trend of success
- High Academic Self-Concept (Rinn, 2005)
 - Students have high perceptions of their academic abilities
- Active Learners
 - Students truly engage with curriculum



Transition From High School to College: **Shift in Academics**

“I realize that due to the sheer size of the campus, there are many different classes with teachers that can teach in very different ways. It is best to attempt to gain a sense of how to best work with your circumstances.”

~First Year Honors Student

“In high school everyone was at the top of their class (for most honors students), and some like me did not really have to try that hard to get good grades. Coming to college is different because one has to adapt the changing scenery, pace, and volume of work. I learned that I need to study more and use time outside of class to learn the material. I need to develop good time management skills and learn how to study effectively.”

~First Year Honors Student



Challenges for High-Ability First Year Students:

Academic Effort vs. Performance

- Quality vs. Quantity of Work
 - Change in expectations from high school to college
- Development of Missing Study Skills
 - Some students did not need to study in high school, but now without studying they are not able to succeed
- Navigating Academic Self-Concept
 - If high-ability students feel that they are not doing well in classes, their identity is greatly impacted



Strategy to Address Challenging Transition: **Establishing Connections**

- Connecting High-Ability Students with Upperclassmen
 - More likely to take high level classes earlier
- Connecting High-Ability Students with Resources
 - Resources that teach college-level study skills are crucial for academic success
- Honors & Scholars Center Strategy
 - Residential Communities
 - FYE Success Series Workshops



High-Ability Student Characteristic:

High Confidence

- Competitive
 - Confidence in academic abilities leads to seeing other students as competition
- Highly Involved
 - High-ability students have a long history of involvement
- High Aspirations
 - Majority of incoming high-ability students have aspiration to go on to graduate school (Katchadourian & Boli, 1985; Perrone & Dow, 1993)



Transition From High School to College: New Environment and Loss of Security

“...how to manage and make decisions on the numerous options to get involved on campus. This is important to first year students in Honors because being in Honors at a huge university like Ohio State can be a little intimidating and confusing at times.”

~First Year Honors Student

“As someone who is smart, I can be competitive and I learned that I probably need to learn how to see my peers as a resource, not as competition. I also realized that even in the first semester there is an overwhelming amount of change that has caused me a lot of stress.”

~First Year Honors Student



Challenges for High-Ability First Year Students:

Lack of Balance

- Over-Commitment
 - Some high-ability students will enter college thinking they can do it all
- Autonomy (Gottsdanker, 1968; Rinn, 2005)
 - Some high-ability students will enter college thinking they don't need any help
- Self-Worth Based on Ability
 - Ability is a central piece of students' identity



Strategy to Address Challenging Transition: **Reaching Out for Support**

- Appreciative Advising Model (Bloom, Hutson, & He, 2008)
 - Phases: Discover, Dream, and Design
- Encouraging Reflection
 - Students cannot do it all, so what is most important?
- Honors & Scholars Center Strategy
 - Building supportive non-competitive community
 - H&S Launch, H&S Student Organizations



High-Ability Student Characteristic: High Emotional Intelligence

- More Mature than Peers
 - Able to perceive and manage emotions better than peers (Edman & Edman, 2004)
- Better able to channel negative feelings into adaptive behaviors
 - Adaptive behavior is more likely to lead to better academic performance (Castro-Johnson & Wang, 2003)



Transition From High School to College: **Mental Health Concerns**

“Because being in high school, I was always the one to help others. Asking for help is something that is very difficult. For the first time, I am beginning to struggle with my classes. But I learned that seeking for help is not something to look bad upon.”

~First Year Honors Student

“Finally, I realize that sometimes I need to take a deep breath and a step back. Classes can be stressful and it is hard to do everything the right way. However, stopping and taking a break, can often be much more beneficial than forcing things to get done.”

~First Year Honors Student



Challenges for High-Ability First Year Students: **Stress and Incongruence with Environment**

- Being an Introvert at a Large University
 - High-ability students are more likely to be introverted (Randall and Copeland, 1986-1987)
- Perfectionism and Mental Health
 - High-ability are likely to be perfectionistic and therefore have increased anxiety (Neumeister, 2004)
- Students Not Willing to Ask for Help
 - High-ability students do not perceive that they need to ask for help (Gerrity, Lawrence, & Sedlacek, 1993)

Strategy to Address Challenging Transition: **Healthy Coping & Sense of Belonging**

- Appreciative Advising Model (Bloom, Hutson, & He, 2008)
 - All phases applicable
- Solution-Based Helping (Harper, Wilson, & Associates, 2010)
 - Counseling theory focuses on addressing solutions instead of dwelling on problems
- Normalizing Experience
 - Ensuring that students feel comfortable asking for help
- Honors & Scholars Center Strategy
 - FYE Success Series



“ All of these topics are relevant to my life and I think applicable to almost every honors student at OSU. The topics in this Success Series are important to honors students, because usually no one addresses the problems honors students face or tells us how to deal with them. As an honor student, I sometimes face different problems like over-committing myself to extra-curricular activities or not knowing how to ask for help when I need it. This Success Series taught me how to deal with problems like these. I learned that I need to focus more on studying efficiently rather than studying for long periods of time. I also learned that I should choose one or two activities to get involved in at OSU, and fully commit myself to those activities instead of trying to get involved in ten different activities. Finally, I learned about several resources on campus to help me succeed during my time here such as offices like the College Career Office and the Dennis Learning Center. Overall, I will use the information I learned in this Success Series as a guide in how to adjust to being an honors student in college. During my first year, I will make the most out of my time by finding a few activities I want to commit myself to, talking to my advisors regularly, and using the different resources OSU has to offer.”

~First Year Honors Student



Questions?



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