

INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS REPORT

Name of Program/Department:	FMU Honors Program
Year:	2019-20
Name of Preparer:	Dr. Jon Tuttle

PROGRAM MISSION STATEMENT

FMU Honors exists to provide the university's highest-performing and most motivated students with a unique curriculum and enhanced educational opportunities that reward inquiry, stimulate learning and promote community outreach initiatives. FMU Honors reflects the university's commitment to innovative instruction, a low student-to-faculty ratio, and out-of-classroom service and experience.

There are, at present, 208 students in FMU Honors.

PROGRAM LEARNING OUTCOMES (PLOs)

FMU Honors will:

- PLO 1:** Identify, recruit, retain and graduate high-performing, highly motivated students.
- PLO 2:** Promote opportunities for stimulating service learning and volunteerism.
- PLO 3:** Provide Honors students with opportunities for conference and/or exposition participation.
- PLO 4:** Provide Honors students with non-traditional curricular opportunities and small student: instructor ratios in order to better prepare Honors graduates for professional/graduate schools or career opportunities.
- PLO 5:** Provide Honors students with opportunities for socializing and community building.
- PLO 6:** To provide an environment conducive to personal growth, intellectual inquiry and community.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES (SLOs)

- SLO 1:** FMU Honors students graduating With University Honors will be able to conduct and synthesize sophisticated and applicable research in their disciplines. This SLO falls under PLO #4.
- SLO 2:** FMU Honors students graduating With University Honors will be able to clearly articulate ideas and concepts in writing. This SLO falls under PLO #4.

SLO 3: FMU Honors students graduating With University Honors will be able to clearly articulate ideas and concepts via graphics or visual aids, as applicable. This SLO falls under PLO #4.

SLO 4: FMU Honors students graduating With University Honors will be able to contribute knowledge to their discipline. This SLO falls under PLO #4.

SLO 5: FMU Honors students graduating With University Honors will be able to integrate knowledge and perspectives from different disciplines. This SLO falls under PLO #4.

SLO 6: FMU Honors students graduating With University Honors will be engaged and empowered as critical and creative thinkers. This SLO falls under PLO #4.

PLO METHODS

PLO 1: The Honors director will track and chart enrollment and graduation rates.

PLO 2 will be assessed with an exit survey administered to all graduating Honors students (and not just those graduating With University Honors). The target for the outcome is 80% positive endorsement.

PLO 3 will be assessed with an exit survey administered to all graduating Honors students (and not just those graduating With University Honors). The target for the outcome is 80% positive endorsement.

PLO 4 will be assessed with an exit survey administered to all graduating Honors students (and not just those graduating With University Honors). The target for the outcome is 80% positive endorsement.

PLO 5 will be assessed with an exit survey administered to all graduating Honors students (and not just those graduating With University Honors). The target for the outcome is 80% positive endorsement.

PLO 6 will be assessed with an exit survey administered to all graduating Honors students (and not just those graduating With University Honors). The target for the outcome is 80% positive endorsement.

SLO METHODS

Baselines and Benchmarks are indicated in table #2 below.

SLO 1: be able to conduct and synthesize sophisticated and applicable research in their disciplines. A scoring rubric distributed to faculty readers of Honors theses (typically three per thesis) at the end of each semester will assess the extent to which writers of Honors theses meet this SLO. This is a direct measure. The benchmark for the outcome is 80% positive endorsement (score points 4 or 5 on rubric).

SLO 2: be able to clearly articulate ideas and concepts in writing. A scoring rubric distributed to faculty readers of Honors theses (typically three per thesis) at the end of each semester will assess the extent to which writers of Honors theses meet this SLO. This is a direct measure. The benchmark for the outcome is 80% positive endorsement (score points 4 or 5 on rubric).

SLO 3: be able to clearly articulate ideas and concepts vis graphics or visual aids, as applicable. A scoring rubric distributed to faculty readers of Honors theses (typically three per thesis) at the end of each semester will assess the extent to which writers of Honors

theses meet this SLO. This is a direct measure. The benchmark for the outcome is 80% positive endorsement (score points 4 or 5 on rubric).

SLO 4: be able to contribute knowledge to their discipline. A scoring rubric distributed to faculty readers of Honors theses (typically three per thesis) at the end of each semester will assess the extent to which writers of Honors theses meet this SLO. This is a direct measure. The benchmark for the outcome is 80% positive endorsement (score points 4 or 5 on rubric).

SLO 5: be able to integrate knowledge and perspectives from different disciplines. A question on the Honors Senior Exit Survey* will assess graduate's self-perceived ability to meet this SLO. This is an indirect measure. The benchmark for the outcome is 80% Positive Endorsement, as indicated by responses of "agree" or "strongly agree." This is an indirect measure.

SLO 6: be engaged and empowered as critical and creative thinkers. A question on the Honors Senior Exit Survey* will assess graduate's self-perceived ability to meet this SLO. This is an indirect measure. The benchmark for the outcome is 80% Positive Endorsement, as indicated by responses of "agree" or "strongly agree." This is an indirect measure.

**All FMU Honors seniors graduating with or without University Honors are sent the Senior Exit Survey and encouraged to submit it. Typically, about 40-60% of the 25 or so graduating seniors do so.*

PLO RESULTS

PLO I:

- Admission thresholds to FMU Honors remain constant from before fall 2014: test scores of 1100 SAT (re-centered at 1160) or 24 ACT, or other credentials presented by the applicants, including GPA, class rank and extra-curricular involvement.
- The 2014 Honors freshman cohort consisted of 88 students; the 2015 Honors freshman cohort consisted of 79 students; the 2016 Honors freshman cohort consisted of 78 students. The 2017 Honors freshman cohort consisted of 71 students. The 2018 Honors freshman cohort consisted of 65 students. The 2019 Honors freshman cohort consisted of 54 students, though this number excluded, for the first time, those who were accepted but did not enroll at FMU.
- The numbers of Graduates “With University Honors” each semester since Spring, 2015 are as follows:

Spring 2015:	8	Fall 2015:	2
Spring 2016:	10	Fall 2016:	4
Spring 2017:	16	Fall 2017:	3
Spring 2018:	13	Fall 2018:	0
Spring 2019:	9	Fall 2019:	3
Spring 2020:	11		

PLO 2-6:

The exit survey was administered following Fall 2019 and Spring 2020 to graduating Honors seniors. The benchmark for each item is 80% positive endorsement, as indicated by responses of A/Strongly Agree or B/Agree. The results were as follows (questions and rubric are attached in Appendix I).

Of the 9 responses collected in 2019-2020, 7 positive endorsements were necessary to reach the 80% benchmark.

SCORE POINT	A strongly agree	B agree	C no opinion	D disagree	E strongly disagree
PLO 2	2	5	1	1	0
PLO 3	2	3	4	0	0
PLO 4	5	3	0	1	0
PLO 5	4	4	1	0	0
PLO 6	3	5	1	0	0

PLO 2-6 BASELINE AND BENCHMARK PERCENTAGES

PLO	2017 - 2018	2018-2019	BASELINE Avg. 2017 and 2018 Academic years	BENCHMARK 2018-19	LONG TERM TARGET 2023	Results 2019-20
2	92.3%	100%	96.15%	80%	85%	77.7%
3	76.9%	100%	88.45%	80%	85%	55.5%
4	100%	100%	100%	80%	90%	88.8%
5	84.6%	100%	92.3%	80%	90%	88.8%
6	69.2%	100%	84.6%	80%	90%	88.8%

SLO RESULTS

ASSESSMENT RESULTS SLO 1-4

The scoring rubric was administered following Fall, 2019 and Spring, 2020 among readers of Honors theses. The results were as follows (questions and rubric are attached in Appendix II):

SCORE POINT	1 poor	2 minimally acceptable	3 satisfactory	4 good	5 excellent
SLO 1	0	0	6	13	4
SLO 2	0	0	2	12	9
SLO 3	0	0	3	12	8
SLO 4	0	0	8	7	8

Of the 23 responses recorded as of May 19, 2020, 18 positive endorsements (score points of 4 or 5) were necessary to reach the 80% target.

ASSESSMENT RESULTS SLO 5-6

The results for 2019-20 were as follows (questions and rubric are attached in Appendix II):

SCORE POINT	A strongly agree	B agree	C no opinion	D disagree	E strongly disagree
SLO 5	5	3	1	0	0

SLO 6 5 3 1 0 0

Of the 9 responses collected in 2019-20, 7 positive endorsements (score points of A/Strongly Agree or B/Agree) were necessary to reach the 80% target.

SLO BASELINE AND BENCHMARK PERCENTAGES

SLO	2017 - 2018	2018- 2019	BASELINE Avg. 2017 and 2018 Academic years	BENCHMARK 2019-20	LONG TERM TARGET 2023	Results 2019-20
1	77.27%	100%	88.63%	80%	90%	73.9%
2	77.27%	100%	88.63%	80%	90%	91.3%
3	72.73%	100%	86.36%	80%	90%	86.9%
4	72.73%	100%	86.36%	80%	90%	65.2%
5	N/A	100%	100%	80%	95%	88.9%
6	N/A	100%	100%	80%	95%	88.9%

ACTION ITEMS

SLO 1 (73.9%): This item fell short of the 80% benchmark and our baseline average from previous years. Several students reported difficulty pursuing/completing Honors theses during spring 2020, owing to the COVID-19 lockdown and transition to remote learning. Anecdotally, the difficulty came not from completing the thesis remotely, but from trying also to complete other classes remotely, which proved more difficult for some. This problem may persist if the university locks down again in Fall 2020.

SLO 2 (91.3%): Faculty readers of theses reported other problems in Honors theses, but clearly articulating ideas and concepts in theses appears not to among them. The average on this item this year exceeded both our previous baseline and benchmark. No action anticipated.

SLO 3 (86.9%) Faculty readers of theses reported only a few problems with this item this year, though the average this year exceeded both our previous baseline and benchmark. No action anticipated.

SLO 4 (65%): This item fell short of the 80% benchmark and our baseline average from previous years. Again, the COVID-19 appears to have negatively affected some students ability to achieve this threshold. Indeed, grades were generally lower for the theses; two students opted for a grade of S (Satisfactory) rather than accepting a C, in order to

graduate With University Honors. (This arrangement was agreed upon only for this unusual semester).

To address these and any future deficiencies, the Honors Director will distribute the SLOs to writers of Honors theses in Honors 391, before they begin their theses, and at the beginning of each school year to the general Honors population.

SLO 5 (88.9): Student responses to the Senior Exit Survey indicated positive endorsement of their ability to integrate knowledge from different disciplines. The average on this item this year exceeded the benchmark. No action anticipated beyond monitoring future responses.

SLO 6 (88.9): Student responses to the Senior Exit Survey indicated positive endorsement of their engagement and empowerment as critical/creative thinkers. The average on this item this year exceeded the benchmark. No action anticipated beyond monitoring future responses.

PLO 1: Each year's cohort size has inclined somewhat downward (from 88 in 2014 to 54 in 2019, though the latter number was calculated differently), while the number of students graduating With University Honors has zig-zagged a bit—for instance, from 0 in fall 2018 to 10 in spring 2020. Measures to address those problems are summarized above, but the program is certainly more robust than before it was overhauled in 2014, when 4-6 students per year graduated With University Honors. To promote future recruitment, Honors brochures have already been updated to feature the new Honors Center and recent curriculum. Acceptance packets were sent to incoming Honors freshmen and included *Honors Handbooks* and window decals. Also, the opening of the new Honors Center in October will continue to attract students, fresh or otherwise. To promote retention/ graduation WUH rates, the *Honors Handbook* was created and published as hard copy and online. Again, the opening of the new Honors Center will likely do much to stimulate retention. Also, fourteen students graduating WUH during 19-20 represents improvement from the previous year (9).

PLO 2: One reason this PLO was improved upon (from 70% to 77%) thanks primarily to the spring 2020 pilot Honors 203 Service Symposium and, presumably, a visit to a local children's foster home, a food drive, a toy drive and a visit to the Florence Area Humane Society. The 203 Symposium was popular and will be offered again in spring 2021 and will we hope form the centerpiece of our service initiative, and the other activities will remain part of the program.

PLO 3: This year, owing to lack of REAL grant funding, Honors was unable to send students to the SRHC conference in Birmingham; also the RED exposition day was cancelled due to COVID 19. Those were our two primary outlets for exhibiting data, although some Honors students exhibited at or attended discipline-specific conferences.

PLO's 4, 5 and 6 all surpassed benchmarks, though in one case (PLO 6) did not meet the previous baseline. No action anticipated beyond monitoring future responses.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Generally, the data suggest that FMU Honors continues to fulfill its mission. Students again report that participating in FMU Honors has prepared them for professional or graduate education, enhanced their awareness of the value of their education beyond own career path, and provided them with significant research opportunities. It has also presented opportunities for socializing and community building and provided a physical and intellectual environment conducive to personal growth, safety and intellectual inquiry.

One area of concern is cohort size, which shrinks a bit each year even as university-wide freshman enrollment holds steady or even climbs. Another is the need for a great emphasis on service, but again, this should be ameliorated by offering our new Honors 203/Service Symposium and incorporating more service activities as we can.

COVID-19 looms still, of course, over the fall semester, and this may affect our ability to program social/service events and may affect overall enrollment.

APPENDICES

I: Honors Graduate exit survey

II: Rubric for Honors thesis committee

APPENDIX I: PROGRAM LEARNING OUTCOMES

FMU HONORS EXIT SURVEY 7.17

Congratulations, Honors graduate! Please complete the survey below by circling the answer you think most appropriate, and return this form to Dr. Jon Tuttle at your earliest convenience; it is important to our (required) Institutional Effectiveness reports. You may bring it in person (FH 146), email it as a PDF to jtuttle@fmarion.edu, or mail it to the address above.

NAME: _____ DATE OF GRADUATION _____

1: SERVICE LEARNING & VOLUNTEERISM: to what extent do you agree that participating in FMU Honors has enhanced the value of your education as it impacts the community and culture beyond your own career path?

A: *strongly agree* B: *agree* C: *no opinion* D: *disagree* E: *strongly disagree*

2: EXPOSITION OPPORTUNITIES: to what extent do you agree that participating in FMU Honors has provided you with research opportunities such as participating/presenting in local, regional or national conferences?

A: *strongly agree* B: *agree* C: *no opinion* D: *disagree* E: *strongly disagree*

3: CURRICULAR OPPORTUNITIES: to what extent do you agree that FMU Honors has provided you with non-traditional curricular opportunities and smaller student/instructor ratios in order to better prepare you for professional/graduate schools or career opportunities?

A: *strongly agree* B: *agree* C: *no opinion* D: *disagree* E: *strongly disagree*

4 EXTRA-CURRICULAR OPPORTUNITIES: to what extent do you agree that the number and variety of social or cultural events sponsored by Honors was appropriate to its goals of community-building?

A: *strongly agree* B: *agree* C: *no opinion* D: *disagree* E: *strongly disagree*

5 ENVIRONMENT: to what extent do you agree that FMU Honors has provided you with an environment conducive to personal growth, safety, intellectual inquiry and community? You may include, in your answer, considerations of student housing/living space, the Honors room and other classrooms.

A: *strongly agree* B: *agree* C: *no opinion* D: *disagree* E: *strongly disagree*

6: CROSS-DISCIPLINE LEARNING: To what extent do you agree that participating Honors has enhanced your ability to integrate knowledge and perspectives from different disciplines?

A: *strongly agree* B: *agree* C: *no opinion* D: *disagree* E: *strongly disagree*

7: CRITICAL/CREATIVE THINKING: To what extent do you agree that participating in Honors has engaged and empowered you as critical and creative thinker?

A: *strongly agree* B: *agree* C: *no opinion* D: *disagree* E: *strongly disagree*

APPENDIX II: RUBRIC FOR HONORS THESIS COMMITTEE

HONORS INDEPENDENT STUDY THESIS ASSESSMENT RUBRIC

Thank you for serving as study director or secondary reader on an Honors Independent Study thesis. Please complete the following rubric, which will be used for Honors program assessment as one measure of program effectiveness after having removed any personal information (your name, the student's name) from the final assessment report. Please return this rubric to Jon Tuttle (FH 146/ jtuttle@fmarion.edu) as soon as convenient. Check the boxes that correspond with your assessment below.

STUDENT'S NAME _____

SEMESTER _____

YOUR NAME _____

Category	Excellent (5)	Very Good (4)	Satisfactory (3)	Minimally Acceptable (2)	Poor (1)
Ability to conduct and synthesize sophisticated and applicable research in discipline	Writer performs thorough, perhaps exhaustive research, incorporates authoritative sources meaningfully and gracefully; bibliographical format is perfect.	Research component is impressive and clearly demonstrates aptitude for conciliating various reliable sources; bibliographical format is almost perfect.	Research component demonstrates diligence and competence; integration of sources is occasionally problematic but not prohibitively so; format is acceptable.	Research component exists, but seems cursory or rushed; ability to conciliate/integrate sources is spotty at best; bibliographical format includes some errors.	Research component is unimpressive, even lazy; sources are integrated clumsily or are underutilized; format is marred by thoughtless errors.
Ability to clearly articulate ideas and concepts in writing	Writing is elegant, incisive, economical, and conveys content in professional manner; writer understands appropriate tone and ethos.	Writing is clear and almost never impedes conveyance of content; most sentences are perfectly comprehensible on the first read.	The writing is adequate to the task of conveying sometimes complex material; the writer seems only rarely to struggle with clarity or concision.	Extracting meaning from the writing sometimes proves problematic; writer sometimes struggles for clarity or commits distracting grammatical errors.	Writing actually impedes content and impacts writer's credibility; grammatical errors or clarity problems recur throughout.
Ability to clearly articulate ideas and concepts via graphics or visual aids, as applicable	Presentation is aided significantly by appropriate reliance on graphics/visual aids; writer is very adept at reinforcing ideas/content with graphics.	Presentation is reasonably aided by well-presented graphics/visual aids, as applicable.	Presentation under-utilizes graphics/visual aids, or they facilitate only minimally the conveyance of content.	Utilization of graphics/visual aids is either so minimal or unhelpful as to be unnecessary or it neither impedes nor contributes to conveyance of content.	Presentation is actually marred by under or over-utilization of visual aids; they contribute nothing of substance and even occasionally detract.
Extent to which thesis contributes to knowledge in discipline	Thesis ably joins conversation in applicable discipline and meaningfully contributes original knowledge or ideas.	Thesis synthesizes relevant ideas in useful manner and contributes somewhat to the conversation in the discipline.	Thesis evinces an awareness of relevant issues in discipline and makes an attempt to address those issues through synthesis or original analysis.	Thesis evinces only some awareness of issues/ developments in discipline and makes only a meager attempt to contribute original ideas or knowledge.	Thesis makes no attempt to contribute original ideas or knowledge to discipline.

