

**Appendix E - UNIVERSITY HONORS PROGRAM
SENIOR PROJECT - APPROVAL**

Name: Keely Madron

College: Communications Department: Public Relations

Faculty Mentor: Dr. Bonnie Riechert

PROJECT TITLE: A closer look at the honors
Seminars

I have reviewed this completed senior honors thesis with this student and certify that it is a project commensurate with honors level undergraduate research in this field.

Signed: Bonnie Riechert, Faculty Mentor

Date: 5-3-01

General Assessment - please provide a short paragraph that highlights the most significant features of the project.

Comments (Optional): See attached

General Assessment

“A Closer Look at the Honors Seminars” Senior Honors Project by J. Keely Madron

Keely's Senior Honors Project looks at the University Honors Program, with a view toward collecting original data from program participants and developing, from that data, constructive suggestions for improving the program. Her project fits the model of practicing professional public relations, beginning with (1) Research, (2) Action Planning, (C) Communication, and (4) Evaluation. She has made an original contribution in that she has collected opinion responses from a number of students participating in the program. She has proposed a number of suggestions based on this input and her analysis. The data may be useful in continued program development. Her leadership in this area may suggest some form of continued (annual?) survey of this target public. Her project contributes a set of useful guidelines for continued development of the University Honors Program.

Signed: Bonnie Riechert, Faculty Mentor

Bonnie P. Riechert, Ph.D.
College of Communications

“A Closer Look at the Honors Seminars”

Keely Madron
Senior Honors Project
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“A Closer Look at the Honors Seminars”

ABSTRACT

This paper takes an in-depth look at the freshman, sophomore and junior seminars required by the Honors Program at the University of Tennessee. Students have complained about these seminars since I have attended the university and this paper looks and the reasons behind their dissatisfaction. The problem is not only with students, but also with the professors presenting the seminar. Most of the problems can be determined to come from either miscommunication resulting in misconceptions or lack of communication. In either case, a clear understanding of the nature, purpose and ideal format on both sides of the classroom is vital to the program's success. Various ideas for improving communication both written and orally should be at least thought about and explored by the administrators of the honors program. Various other problems with the seminars include topics, workload and grading issues.

Situation Analysis

Background of Program

The University Honors Program is a campus-wide program that admits entering UTK students who have been awarded certain merit scholarships. Students may select any major, but must complete four honors-level courses and must take a one-hour seminar every semester in the first three years. The fourth year, a senior project must be completed. In addition to the scholarship, students have priorities in course registration, computing and library use that are designed to facilitate their academic programs. The program was established in 1985 and has grown from around 25 students to nearly 600 students in 2000-2001.

According to the University Honors Program Student Handbook, the seminars are intended to provide exposure to a wide range of academic fields and topics that commonly extend beyond a student's major interests. They provide experience not only in content and approach, but also written and oral expression. High expectations exist among seminar instructors that honors students will become actively engaged in all aspects of their seminars. Faculty from across campus are invited each year to teach honors seminars and students are encouraged to recommend both faculty and seminar topics.

Freshman seminars include introductions to the computing system, international programs, critical thinking and current issues. Grading of freshman seminars is satisfactory/no credit (S/NC). Sophomore and junior seminars reflect a varied

offering of topics presented by faculty from across the campus. A broadly diverse range of topics and viewpoints characterizes these seminars. A student's approach to these seminars may range from selecting topics related to the student's major to selecting an entirely unrelated topic in which the student has interest or desires background. Topical seminars are presented from the standpoint of students having no prior background in the subject. These seminars are graded (A-F) and usually involve in-class discussion and presentations, plus out-of-class work, including assigned readings and papers. (11-12)

S.W.O.T. analysis of seminars

Strengths

- The seminars provide social interaction of students in the program.
 - Students enjoy meeting other students of their academic caliber.
- There is a wide range of possible topics through which students can broaden their knowledge base.
 - The current range of topics is very broad and students from any academic background can find something they are interested in, but may not know as much about.
- Many professors are very enthusiastic and their love of the subject matter spills over into the classroom.
 - Students have better experiences when the professor is enthusiastic about the subject matter.

Weaknesses

- Some topics are not generalized enough.
 - Many professors teach a seminar assuming some prior knowledge of the subject, but some students take a seminar based on its time period and have no prior knowledge, making the class either too difficult or boring.
- Grading in sophomore and junior seminars creates resentment toward the program.
 - Many students in the honors program are involved in extremely difficult academic disciplines and feel that they shouldn't have to worry about maintaining a letter grade in a seminar they are forced to take, but does not count in their major.
- Difficulty of recruiting professors to teach seminars.
 - Once a professor has a bad experience with a seminar, it is very difficult to persuade him or her to teach again. He or she may also tell colleagues of the experience, thus creating a potentially harmful reputation of the seminars.
- Allegiance to the program is low for both professors and students.
 - Students do not understand the reasoning behind requiring the seminars on the forefront and professors generally don't hold a strong loyalty to the program.
- Inconsistency in assigned workload
 - One semester, students may have a discussion-based seminar that only requires short reaction-type papers, but the next seminar may require reading several books and a long paper. Students enjoy the lower workload in some and come to expect it in others. When more is required of them, students begin to resent taking the seminars

- Descriptions on web are sometimes misleading.
 - Some professors give a different description of the topic they are teaching to attract students, but then change the topic before the class actually begins.

Opportunities

- Intellectual capacity of students
 - Honors students are capable of high-level discussion and learning about subjects which may not be possible in the average classroom
- Discussion format
 - Discussion format has the potential to allow students to enjoy the seminars more, while at the same time stretching their minds and broadening ways of thinking. It also allows students to learn from other students, not just professors.
- Willingness of administration to be flexible
 - The willingness of the administration to make changes according to student/professors needs allows for unlimited improvements.
- Topics
 - Generation of exciting, informative, or otherwise suitable topics could potentially create a higher satisfaction in the program.
- Captive pool of recommendations
 - With program administrators meeting with students yearly, there is already a vehicle in place for recommendations for improvement, professor critique and suggestions for future topics.

Threats

- Stress level of students
 - Many honors students are not only highly concerned about other classes within their major, but are highly involved in other areas of campus and do not have much free time, or time to study for seminars.
- False expectations of professors
 - Many professors think that they are getting a class full of geniuses that are going to be highly interested and go above and beyond what is expected of them. This is simply not true on most accounts.

Problem Statement

The honors seminars, however well-intended or purposeful are at this time somewhat detrimental to the program as a whole because of the resentment they create among students and some professors. All seminars need to be designed to satisfy both the needs of the professors as well as providing for the purpose of the seminars as intended – to enrich the academic lives of honors program participants.

Data Analysis

Introduction

A survey has shown that approximately 33% of students are extremely unsatisfied or unsatisfied with the honors seminars. This is a problem because the purpose of the university is to educate. At UT the administration has made it a goal to recruit top students. In order to do so, we must offer them incentives that distinguish us from competing schools. We need to have a program that is attractive to students by offering them a challenge. If by added additional work in a format that is resented by students, we are not sending a very student-friendly message. We must remember that honors students who are currently in the program have friends in high school. The bottom line is that it helps recruiting efforts if current students are happy with the program.

Recruiting aside, it should be a duty for the program to consider students needs when planning the seminars. These are generally students who are over-achievers academically and really, truly want to be exposed to other ideas. Doing away with the seminars would never be a good idea, because it is not actually having to take the seminars that bothers students, but more so the format, topics and other issues involved.

Objective 1

To increase student satisfaction in the honors seminars after the following semester to 90% at least somewhat satisfied.

Strategies for doing so:

A. Make students feel like they benefit from the seminars. Students first and foremost should understand the purpose of the seminars. One way to increase student satisfaction is by appealing to their self-interests. If the student feels as if he/she has benefited in one way or another, the satisfaction level will increase. (See Crosstabs, Appendix C) The most important thing to remember when developing a topic is to tie the topic to the student. Ask the questions: “Why would the average person care about this?” “How does this affect them?” If the topics are too technical, they will not appeal to students and the satisfaction level will never be achieved.

1. Make sure students have a clear understanding of the purpose of the seminars – A clear purpose statement should be written and gone over the first day of class freshman year as well as upon the first meeting a student has with program administrators.

2. Applicable topics- Give the students information that is relevant to his/her experience (how to get into graduate school, personal finance, the stock market, etc.). Many students have concerns that could easily be addressed in the seminar format. We use the freshmen seminars to teach computing and international study, so why not apply that theory to upper-level classes as well? (See Appendix F for a list of topics recommended by students)

3. Topics that broaden the worldview of students- This was the number one reason given when asked the question “what should the purpose of the seminars be?” Topics should provide information that any student could use. No prior experience with a topic should be assumed and it should be geared to someone with a mild interest in the subject. Too often, professors assume that everyone in the class is extremely interested in the subject when in reality, several of the students are in the class because it was the only time they could take the seminar, several people are only mildly interested in the topics, and mainly because it sounded better than the others offered at that time, and a handful will truly be excited and interested in the topic. These topics could either be a shallow, but broad look at a topic (architecture) or it could be a deeper look at a very specific topic as long as it is able to be taught to a general audience (media coverage of the national elections). **The most important thing to remember when selected a topic and the information to be presented to give the students some way to identify with the material.**

4. Lobby colleges to count seminars as humanities or other credit-

Most majors require some amount of humanities credit. Currently, students must petition with the permission of their advisor to have these count as anything other than general elective credit. The registrar’s office cannot force colleges to count the seminars for anything, the colleges have complete control of the curriculum. An appeal should be made to every college to count the seminars toward general elective credit in the area of

study which they were based. For example, public relations majors are required to take nine hours of humanities credit. If a student were to take three humanities-based seminars, he or she should be able to petition without any problem to have these class count for three of those nine hours. Likewise for classes in any other subject area. Many advisors across campus will not count these hours as such. In any case, paperwork would have to be filled out to have them count, but students should not have to plead their case every time.

B. Make sure the students do not feel as if the seminars add stress to already busy schedules

For the most part, honors students take on ambitious workloads. Many are in very difficult majors. Nearly one-third of students in the program are majoring in engineering or science, two of the traditionally more difficult academic disciplines. Additionally, these majors do not require many general electives and the seminars are therefore not counted for any credit toward graduation. These students tend to feel that they need to focus as much time as possible on those classes. To add additional work for a seminar that is required as well as outside of their major creates resentment of the program as a whole as well as negatively affecting the student's attitude in class.

1. Set a standard workload maximum -The average acceptable hours of work outside of class on the survey was 1.3 hours. Any more than this begins to undermine the purpose of the class. On the first survey given,

approximately 80% mentioned without direct solicitation the problem of too much work outside of class.

2. Suggestions for outside work -Outside work could include short readings and writings, preferably personal response papers as opposed to research or information based. Students are generally getting plenty of research practice in other classes and additional research for a class once again that is required and oftentimes not a subject of the student's choosing causes a problem.

C. Make students feel comfortable with the setting and format of the class

As previously stated, many students are under a great deal of stress in addition to the seminars. Making students feel relaxed and comfortable in the seminars would be extremely helpful in changing attitudes toward the seminars.

1. The seminars should be discussion based, with minimal lecture time

- Students responded overwhelmingly (83.3%) that they prefer a discussion based format on a survey asking whether they preferred discussion or lecture-based seminars. Discussion based seminars are much more relaxed in general. This format has the potential to allow students to enjoy the seminars more, while at the same time stretching their minds and broadening ways of thinking. It also allows students to learn from other students, not just professors.

2. The seminars should be S/NC – Students responded overwhelmingly (80.6) that the seminars should be graded pass/fail all three years, not just the first year. Many students hold a 4.0 grade point average and worry

about receiving a “B” in a class that does not even count toward their major. According to the first survey, students resent worrying about a grade for a class they are required to take for which they essentially don’t get any credit.

3. Topics should not resemble upper-level departmental seminars.

They should be intended for a general audience, not geared toward someone with a high level of interest in the topic. That is why departmental seminars are offered. Some professors liken the two, but they are very different in topic, workload and format.

4. Topics should not require any prerequisite knowledge to

understand and do will in the class. Professors should not assume that since the students in the class are honors students, they know more about anything. Honors students are just like every other students, they just tend to test well and catch on quicker. For the most part, they are not absolutely brilliant students who have a vast amount of knowledge in all areas.

5. Review open-ended departmental surveys done at the end of each

semester. Some teachers only give the closed-ended surveys at the end of the semester, but the comment sheets can potentially be more helpful in discerning problems in the program. These should be required of all sections.

II. To increase professor satisfaction in teaching seminars so that all professors would be willing to teach another seminar in the future.

Professor satisfaction is vital in the long-term success of the program. Continued involvement in the program will help the program to improve. Starting over with new professors every year will not help to solve the problems that occur year after year. Professors must be willing to learn from their mistakes. It would be extremely helpful if a core group of professors was formed that felt an allegiance to the program. To keep new topics generating, of course new professors would need to be recruited. This core group could be used in “training” newer professors at the beginning of every semester.

A. Help the professors have an understanding of the type of and mindset of the students they will be teaching – As previously stated, honors students are busy, intelligent students, but they are not superhuman. They are not naturally excited to be in a classroom because it is a place to learn. They need to be stimulated much in the same way other students are. The only difference is that the dialogue will be on a higher level.

1. Have a meeting at the end of every semester – Every professor teaching the following semester should attend. At the meeting, administrators could fully explain how the seminar should be taught. The purpose of the seminars would be reviewed and junior or senior students would be on-hand to answer all questions and give student input.

2. Encourage professors to have a “get to know you” class session – This will help professors understand from what academic background their students are coming from and what the students’ other interests are. It would also be helpful if they asked up front what the reason for taking the class is (interested in material or scheduling problems). This would

alleviate some misconceptions that professors have of the interest level of students.

B. Create open lines of communication to help professors share experiences with each other in a comfortable setting – There are several ways to approach this goal. One way would be to hold a luncheon meeting in August to share plans. The excited and dedicated faculty could inspire others and all could learn about other plans of attack that would be interesting to try. The desired uniformity in the seminars could potentially be achieved this way. By working together, they could really make the seminars better. Currently, without any real dialogue on the subject, the same mistakes are being repeated over and over without any means to correct them or even identify them for that matter. Additionally, students are not involved enough in feedback on the seminars.

1. A forum with professors and students - This could really be beneficial to the program if students and instructors got together to discuss the misconceptions each has about the seminars. It would be nearly impossible for program administrators to do this.

2. Professors luncheons – Professors should ideally meet at the beginning of the semester, during the semester and afterwards to reflect on mistakes, victories, etc.

C. Find professors students generally get along with to begin with – Naturally, professors with whom students get along with and enjoy in other classes are going to be more well-liked in seminars.

III. To make the recruitment of professors easier

A major problem mentioned by program administrators was that it is difficult to recruit new, quality professors. By taking the stress out of finding professors, the administration can focus on correcting problems within the seminars and generating new, fresh ideas.

A. Use student input- Students are a valuable resource for information on which professors tend to be the most student-friendly.

1. Ask at yearly meetings -One key way to generate a list of professors whom students like is to ask the students every year in the meetings they have with administrators. Students could fill out a survey in order to mark the progress of improvements to the program as a whole, and as a part of the survey, students could offer at least one recommendation of a professor.

2. End-of-the-year class surveys – These should be looked at very closely and investigated if responses were negative.

B. Create better incentives for professors – If the university administration wants more students in the program, part of that includes keeping current students happy. If it costs more to have the top professors teaching seminars, they should be willing to increase the department's budget to allow for it.

1. Pay them more.

2. Ask for suggestions at professor meetings and forums.

Conclusions

After having surveyed more than 140 students and interviewing administration and several seminar instructors, some logical conclusions can be drawn. First, there are significant communication problems between students and faculty that create misconceptions and false expectations among both parties. This is the main cause of unsatisfactory experiences for students and professors. It seems that generally students expect too little and professors expect too much. A “happy medium” could be found if the two parties simply opened a dialogue previous to the time when grades come out. Ideally, issues would be worked out at a large forum that included students and professors, thus creating some uniformity within the various sections and a format which should be adhered to in most cases.

As mentioned several times, it is not that students are lazy or apathetic to learning, but that they are over-committed as far as time is concerned and sometimes fail to see the value of the seminars because they are so focused on their own majors. Defining the purpose of the seminars and ingraining this purpose in the students’ minds on the first day of class is the first step in creating a better attitude toward the seminars.

For the professors, a clear understanding of the type of students they will be encountering and a complete grasp of the desired format and appropriate subject matter is essential. This should be done through multiple communication paths such as an informative letter upon initial agreement to teach, forums and luncheons with other professors. Also, discussing class expectations in a negotiable way on the first day of class would be beneficial in helping the two groups come to a mutually acceptable agreement.

References

University Honors Program Student Handbook. July 1999.

Appendix A

Copies of surveys sent to students

Date: Tue, 19 Sep 2000 12:27:41 -0400 (EDT)
From: E Michelle Blackwell <mblackwe@utkux.utcc.utk.edu>
To: Undisclosed recipients: ;
Subject: Alert: Honors Seminars

Honors Students,

Please take a few minutes to complete the following survey. The survey itself is part of Keely's senior honors project, but it also is designed to look for areas of improvement in the honors seminar program.

TB

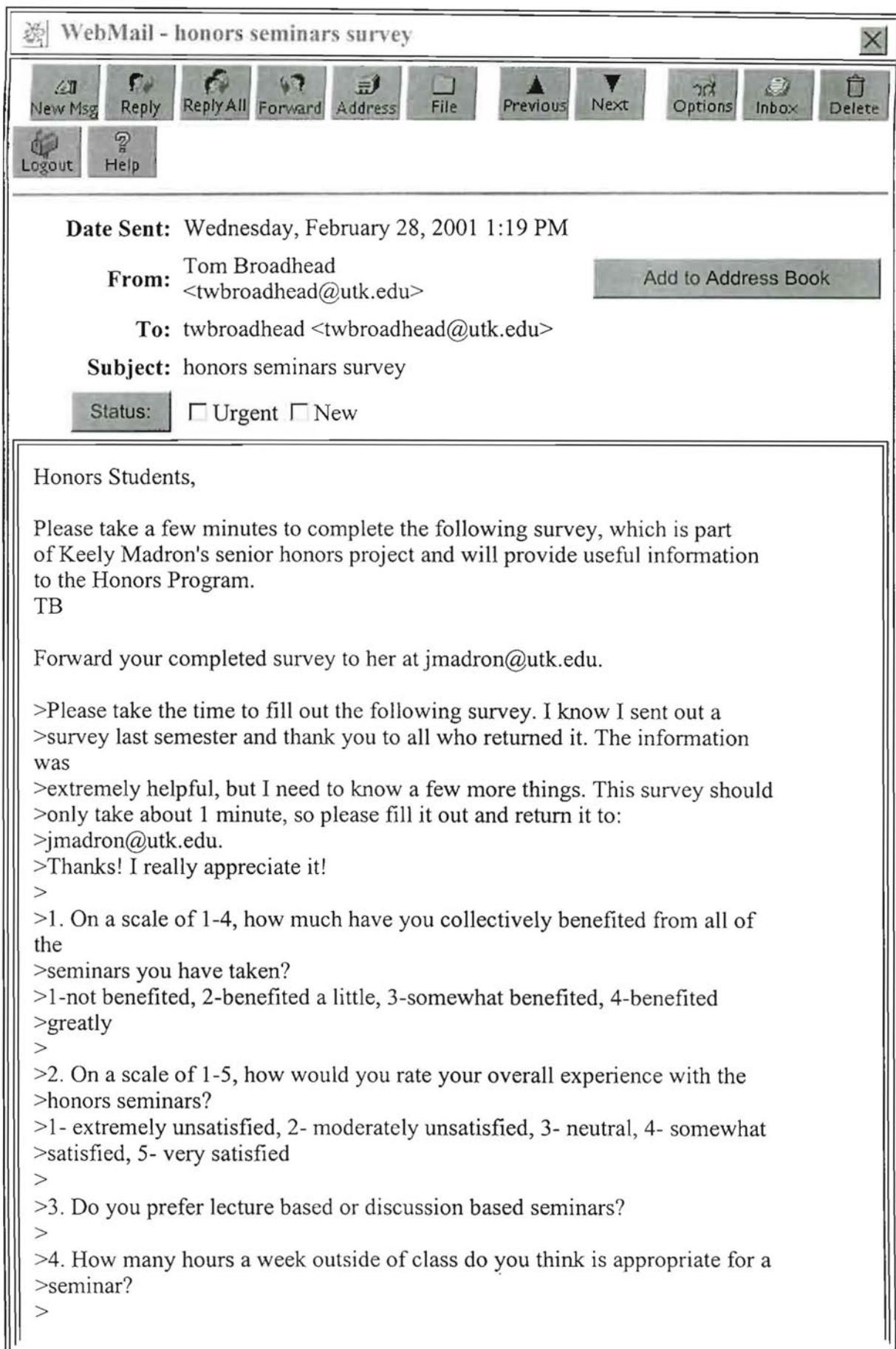
>===== Original Message From jmadron <jmadron@utkux.utcc.utk.edu> =====
Sophomores, juniors and seniors only: I am currently doing my senior honors project, looking at the current honors seminars and the benefits and problems with them. Please fill out the following survey. The information you give me could very well impact the seminars in the future. If you would like to be a part of a more in depth look at the seminars, please contact me at 595-6025 or let me know in your reply.

Sincerely,
Keely Madron

Please reply to jmadron@utk.edu

Please give your year in school and major:

1. What has been your best experience with an honors seminar? Why?
2. What has been your worst experience with an honors seminar? Why?
3. Out of all of the seminars you have taken, how many would you say you have benefited from?
4. What, in your mind, should the purpose of the seminars be?
5. Do they currently serve this purpose?
6. Would you take the seminars if they weren't required? Why or why not?
7. Are you getting any other credit other than general elective credit?
8. What are some ideas you have for the seminars?
9. Any additional comments:





>5. Should the seminars be graded?

>

>6. Have you ever seriously considered dropping out of the program because of
>the seminars?

>

>7. Do you know someone who has?

>

>8. How often do you choose a seminar solely based on the time it is offered?

>1- never, 2- rarely, 3- sometimes, 4- often, 5- always

>

>9. What is your major?

>

>10. What year are you?

>

>

>

>Please return to jmadron@utk.edu

>Thanks!

>

>Keely Madron

>825 Volunteer Blvd.

>#218

>Knoxville, TN 37916

>(865) 595-6025



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Appendix B
Breakdown of Majors in honors program
year

Major	Freshman	Sophomore	Junior	Senior	TOTALS
Agriculture	4/2%	2/2%	2/2%	1/1%	9/1.87%
architecture	5/3%	2/2%		1/1%	8/1.6%
business	9/5%	15/14%	14/12%	19/24%	57/12%
child development		1/1%	1/1%		2/4%
college scholars		4/4%	20/17%	9/11%	33/6.8%
communications	5/3%	1/1%	9/7%	4/5%	19/4%
computer science	6/3%	2/2%	5/4%	3/4%	16/3.3%
Education	8/5%		1/1%	2/3%	11/2%
Engineering	25/15%	16/14%	21/17%	15/19%	77/16%
English	7/4%	5/5%	6/5%	5/6%	23/4.7%
exercise science	1/5%	1/1%			2/4%
fine arts	2/1%	8/7%	4/3%	1/1%	15/3%
foreign language	3/2%	3/3%	3/2%	2/3%	11/2%
history	4/2%	3/3%			7/1.4%
International studies	2/1%				2/4%
math	3/2%	4/4%	2/3%	2/3%	11/2%
nursing	1/5%	3/3%	2/2%	2/3%	8/1.6%
nutrition				1/1%	1/2%
philosophy				1/1%	1/2%
Political Science	3/2%	2/2%	6/5%		11/2%
pre-law	3/2%				3/6%
pre-med	15/9%	2/2%	1/1%		18/4%
psychology/sociology	2/1%	4/4%	2/2%	3/4%	11/2%
recreation/tourism			1/1%		1/2%
religious studies		1/1%			1/2%
science	40/23%	7/7%	14/11%	7/9%	68/14%
speech pathology	1/5%		1/1%		2/4%
sports management	1/5%				1/2%
undecided	15/8%	24/22%	6/5%	1/1%	46/9%
urban studies				1/1%	1/2%
total students	172	110	121	78	481

Appendix C

Master data from Survey 2

Key:

Column 1: On a scale of 1-4, how much have you collectively benefited from all of the seminars you have taken?

- 1-not benefited
- 2-benefited a little
- 3-somewhat benefited
- 4-benefited greatly

Column 2: On a scale of 1-5, how would you rate your overall experience with the honors seminars?

- 1-extremely unsatisfied
- 2-moderately unsatisfied
- 3-neutral
- 4-somewhat satisfied
- 5-very satisfied

Column 3: Do you prefer lecture based or discussion based seminars?

- 1-lecture
- 2-discussion
- 3-either or other

Column 4: How many hours a week outside of class do you think is appropriate for a seminar?

Column 5: Should the seminars be graded?

- 1-yes
- 2-no
- 3-not sure/don't care

Column 6: Have you ever considered dropping out of the program because of the seminars?

- 1-yes
- 2-no

Column 7: Do you know someone who has?

- 1-yes
- 2-no

Column 8: How often do you choose a seminar solely based on the time it is offered?

- 1-never
- 2-rarely
- 3-sometimes
- 4-often
- 5-always

Column 9: What is your major?

- 1-undecided
- 2-business
- 3-science
- 4-foreign language
- 5-college scholars
- 6-engineering
- 7-English
- 8-social science
- 9-communications
- 10-math
- 11-history
- 12-urban studies
- 13-nutrition
- 14-speech pathology
- 15-education
- 16-family and consumer sciences education
- 17-computer science
- 18-agriculture
- 19-nursing
- 20-fine arts
- 21-exercise science
- 22-recreational therapy
- 23-pre-law

Column 10: What year are you?

- 1-freshman
- 2-sophomore
- 3-junior
- 4-senior

survey2.sav

	benefit	overall	format	homewo	grading	leave	friend	timebase	major	year
1	2	2	3	1.50	3	2	2	4	1	1
2	2	3	2	1.00	2	2	2	2	2	1
3	3	4	2	1.00	2	2	2	4	3	1
4	4	4	2	2.00	1	2	2	1	4	2
5	3	4	2	1.00	2	2	1	2	5	4
6	3	4	1	1.50	2	2	2	5	6	1
7	3	4	2	1.50	2	2	2	2	7	1
8	3	4	2	1.00	2	2	1	5	2	1
9	3	4	2	3.50	2	2	2	1	1	1
10	2	1	2	1.00	2	1	3	4	8	3
11	1	4	2	.00	2	1	2	4	11	3
12	3	4	2	1.50	2	2	2	3	1	1
13	2	3	2	1.50	2	2	2	3	7	3
14	3	3	2	1.50	2	1	1	2	9	2
15	1	1	2	1.00	2	2	1	3	6	3
16	3	4	2	1.00	2	1	1	3	6	4
17	3	4	2	1.00	2	2	1	3	1	1
18	2	1	2	.50	2	1	1	4	10	2
19	3	4	3	1.50	2	2	2	3	11	4
20	1	1	2	.00	1	1	1	3	1	1
21	3	3	1	1.00	2	2	2	3	12	4
22	3	4	3	1.00	1	2	2	3	13	4
23	2	3	3	1.00	2	2	2	3	14	3
24	1	2	2	.00	2	2	1	5	6	1
25	2	4	1	3.50	1	1	1	3	10	4
26	2	2	2	1.00	2	1	2	4	3	2
27	.	2	2	.50	2	1	2	5	15	1
28	2	2	2	.00	2	2	2	5	2	2
29	4	5	2	1.00	2	2	2	3	7	1
30	2	2	2	1.00	1	1	2	3	5	3
31	3	3	2	.50	2	2	1	2	8	2
32	4	5	2	1.50	2	2	2	3	1	1
33	3	4	2	1.50	2	1	2	3	6	4
34	3	4	2	1.00	2	1	2	3	16	3
35	1	1	2	1.00	2	1	2	4	10	2
36	3	4	2	1.00	2	2	2	3	15	2
37	3	3	2	1.00	2	2	1	3	3	2

survey2.sav

	benefit	overall	format	homewo	grading	leave	friend	timebase	major	year
38	3	4	2	2.00	2	2	1	4	6	4
39	3	5	2	1.00	2	2	2	.	1	1
40	2	1	2	1.00	1	1	2	3	8	1
41	3	4	2	1.50	1	2	2	3	2	4
42	2	3	2	2.00	1	2	2	3	11	1
43	2	3	2	1.50	2	2	2	3	17	3
44	3	4	2	.00	2	1	2	4	6	3
45	1	2	2	1.00	3	1	2	4	2	2
46	3	3	2	1.50	2	2	1	3	2	2
47	1	2	1	.00	2	2	2	4	2	4
48	2	2	1	1.00	2	1	2	5	2	3
49	2	2	2	.00	2	1	1	4	2	3
50	3	2	2	1.00	2	2	1	4	3	2
51	2	2	2	.50	2	2	2	4	3	1
52	3	3	.	1.00	1	1	1	5	3	2
53	2	3	2	1.00	2	2	2	4	3	2
54	2	2	2	1.00	2	1	1	4	8	3
55	2	3	2	1.00	2	1	2	5	10	4
56	2	3	2	1.50	2	2	2	4	2	4
57	1	2	2	1.00	2	1	1	4	7	3
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64	2	3	2	1.00	2	2	2	4	3	4
65	2	2	2	1.50	2	1	1	3	4	3
66	1	1	2	.00	2	1	1	5	3	2
67	3	4	2	1.50	1	2	2	4	18	2
68	2	2	2	1.50	0	1	1	4	10	1
69	2	4	1	1.00	2	2	2	5	6	1
70	4	5	2	1.00	2	2	2	1	18	1
71	2	2	1	1.00	2	1	1	5	19	3
72	3	5	2	2.00	2	2	2	1	8	2
73	1	1	2	1.00	2	2	1	5	6	1
74	3	3	3	2.00	2	1	2	4	6	4

	benefit	overall	format	homewo	grading	leave	friend	timebase	major	year
75	3	4	1	2.00	2	2	1	3	3	2
76	2	2	2	2.00	2	2	1	5	6	2
77	2	2	2	2.00	2	2	1	3	3	2
78	3	3	2	2.00	2	2	2	3	7	4
79	3	4	1	3.00	2	2	1	2	6	3
80	3	2	2	1.50	1	2	2	3	5	1
81	2	2	2	.00	2	1	2	3	20	3
82	4	4	1	1.50	2	2	2	3	17	4
83	2	3	2	2.00	2	2	2	4	1	1
84	2	3	1	2.00	2	1	2	1	3	1
85	3	3	2	1.00	2	2	2	4	6	3
86	2	3	2	1.00	2	2	1	3	3	2
87	3	3	2	2.00	2	2	1	5	3	1
88	2	3	2	1.00	2	2	2	3	3	1
89	3	3	2	1.00	1	2	1	4	21	2
90	2	2	2	.50	2	1	2	5	8	3
91	4	5	2	1.00	2	2	2	1	17	1
92	3	4	2	1.25	1	2	1	2	6	2
93	3	5	2	2.50	3	2	2	3	3	1
94	2	2	2	1.50	2	2	1	3	2	2
95	2	2	2	1.00	1	1	1	4	2	3
96	3	5	2	1.50	1	2	1	3	9	3
97	1	2	2	.50	2	1	2	4	3	1
98	2	2	2	.75	2	1	1	2	4	4
99	1	2	2	.00	2	2	1	4	22	3
100	1	2	2	.50	2	2	1	5	6	3
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102	2	3	2	1.00	2	2	2	3	2	2
103	3	4	2	1.00	2	2	2	3	15	2
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106	3	4	3	1.50	2	2	2	4	5	2
107	2	4	2	1.00	1	2	2	4	6	2
108	1	1	1	1.00	2	1	1	4	7	3
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110	3	4	2	2.50	2	2	2	3	1	1
111	3	4	2	1.00	2	2	1	4	3	3

survey2.sav

	benefit	overall	format	homewo	grading	leave	friend	timebase	major	year
112	2	4	2	1.00	2	2	2	2	4	2
113	3	4	2	2.00	2	2	2	1	4	4
114	2	2	2	1.00	2	1	1	3	5	2
115	3	4	2	1.50	2	2	2	4	2	3
116	2	3	3	2.00	2	2	2	5	3	3
117	4	4	2	1.00	2	2	2	3	7	2
118	4	5	2	5.50	1	2	2	2	4	2
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131	3	4	2	2.50	2	2	1	2	8	4
132	4	5	2	1.00	1	2	1	3	2	4
133	1	2	2	1.00	2	2	2	4	6	1
134	3	4	2	1.00	2	2	1	1	4	1
135	3	4	2	1.00	1	2	2	4	20	4
136	3	3	2	2.00	2	2	2	2	9	1
137	3	4	2	1.00	2	2	1	2	2	4
138	3	4	2	1.00	1	2	1	1	.	2
139	3	4	2	2.00	1	2	2	4	7	3

Frequencies

Statistics

benefited from

N	Valid	138
	Missing	1

benefited from

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	not benefited	18	12.9	13.0	13.0
	benefited a little	49	35.3	35.5	48.6
	somewhat benefited	61	43.9	44.2	92.8
	benefited greatly	10	7.2	7.2	100.0
	Total	138	99.3	100.0	
Missing	System	1	.7		
Total		139	100.0		

Crosstabs

Case Processing Summary

	Cases					
	Valid		Missing		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
benefited from * year	138	99.3%	1	.7%	139	100.0%

benefited from * year Crosstabulation

Count

		year				Total
		freshman	sophomore	junior	senior	
benefited from	not benefited	6	4	7	1	18
	benefited a little	15	13	16	5	49
	somewhat benefited	21	16	10	14	61
	benefited greatly	4	3	1	2	10
Total		46	36	34	22	138

Crosstabs

Case Processing Summary

	Cases					
	Valid		Missing		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
overall experience * year	139	100.0%	0	.0%	139	100.0%

Frequencies

Statistics

major

N	Valid	136
	Missing	0

major

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 1.00	13	9.6	9.6	9.6
2.00	16	11.8	11.8	21.3
3.00	23	16.9	16.9	38.2
4.00	7	5.1	5.1	43.4
5.00	6	4.4	4.4	47.8
6.00	21	15.4	15.4	63.2
7.00	10	7.4	7.4	70.6
8.00	7	5.1	5.1	75.7
9.00	3	2.2	2.2	77.9
10.00	6	4.4	4.4	82.4
11.00	3	2.2	2.2	84.6
12.00	1	.7	.7	85.3
13.00	1	.7	.7	86.0
14.00	2	1.5	1.5	87.5
15.00	3	2.2	2.2	89.7
16.00	1	.7	.7	90.4
17.00	3	2.2	2.2	92.6
18.00	3	2.2	2.2	94.9
19.00	1	.7	.7	95.6
20.00	3	2.2	2.2	97.8
21.00	1	.7	.7	98.5
22.00	1	.7	.7	99.3
23.00	1	.7	.7	100.0
Total	136	100.0	100.0	

Frequencies

Statistics

benefited from

N	Valid	135
	Missing	1

benefited from

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1.00	18	13.2	13.3	13.3
	2.00	49	36.0	36.3	49.6
	3.00	58	42.6	43.0	92.6
	4.00	10	7.4	7.4	100.0
	Total	135	99.3	100.0	
Missing	System	1	.7		
Total		136	100.0		

overall experience * year Crosstabulation

Count

		year				Total
		freshman	sophomore	junior	senior	
overall experience	extremely unsatisfied	5	3	3		11
	moderately unsatisfied	11	9	13	2	35
	neutral	10	9	6	6	31
	somewhat satisfied	14	13	11	13	51
	very satisfied	7	2	1	1	11
Total		47	36	34	22	139

Frequencies

Statistics

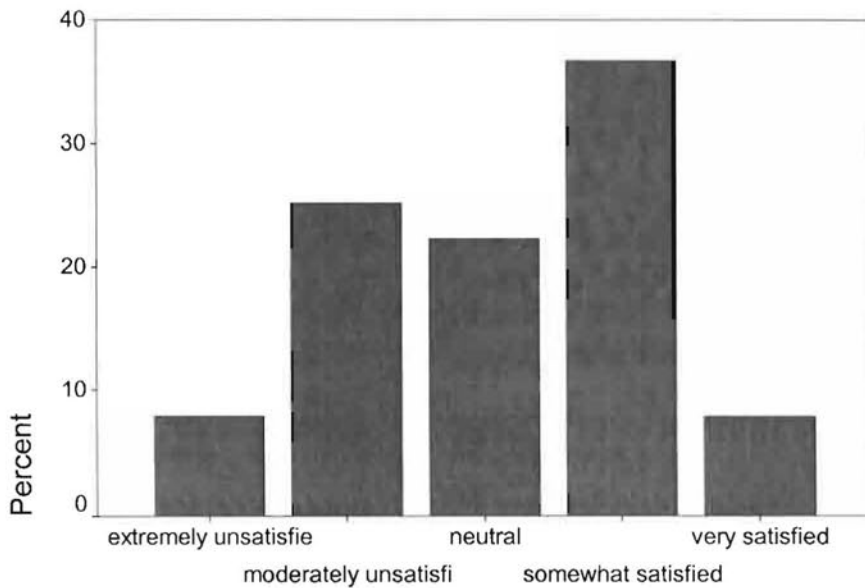
overall experience

N	Valid	139
	Missing	0

overall experience

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	extremely unsatisfied	11	7.9	7.9	7.9
	moderately unsatisfied	35	25.2	25.2	33.1
	neutral	31	22.3	22.3	55.4
	somewhat satisfied	51	36.7	36.7	92.1
	very satisfied	11	7.9	7.9	100.0
Total		139	100.0	100.0	

overall experience



overall experience

Frequencies

Statistics

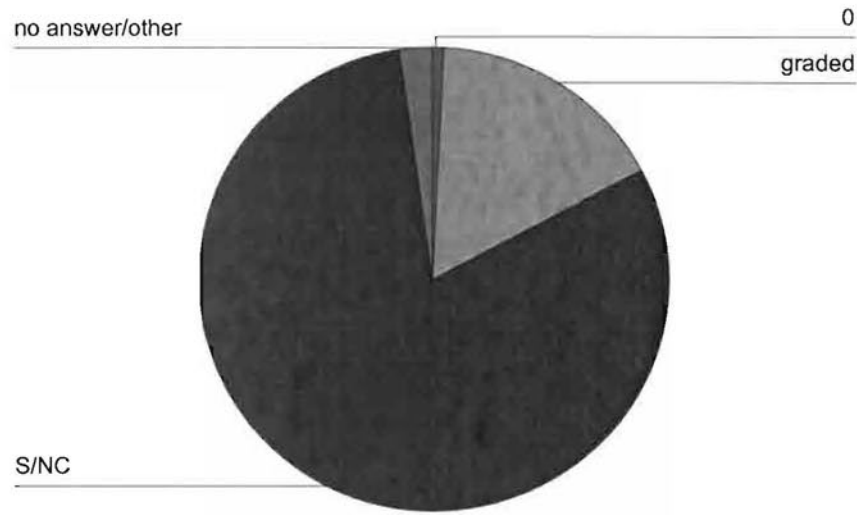
grading

N	Valid	139
	Missing	0

grading

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	0	1	.7	.7	.7
	graded	23	16.5	16.5	17.3
	S/NC	112	80.6	80.6	97.8
	no answer/other	3	2.2	2.2	100.0
	Total	139	100.0	100.0	

grading



Frequencies

Statistics

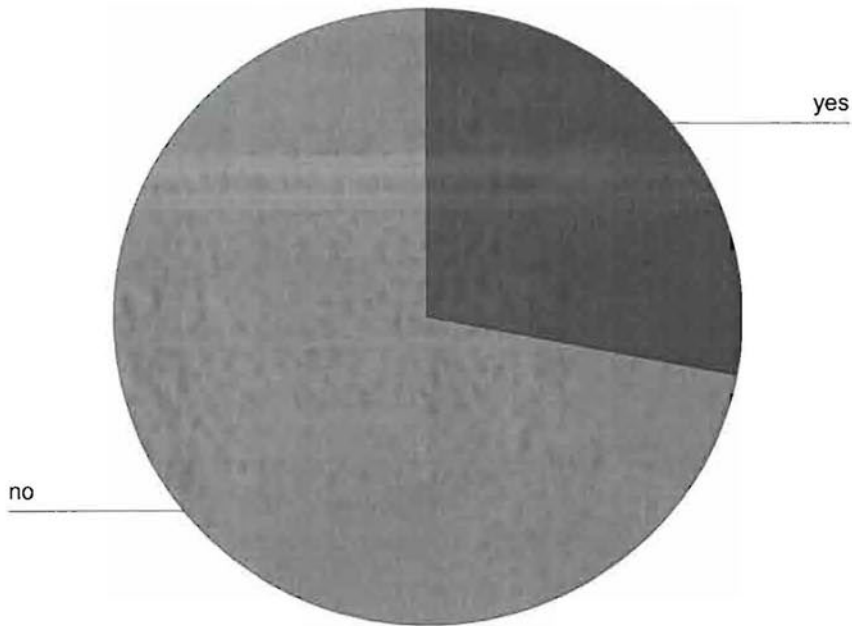
drop out

N	Valid	139
	Missing	0

drop out

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid yes	39	28.1	28.1	28.1
no	100	71.9	71.9	100.0
Total	139	100.0	100.0	

drop out



Frequencies

Statistics

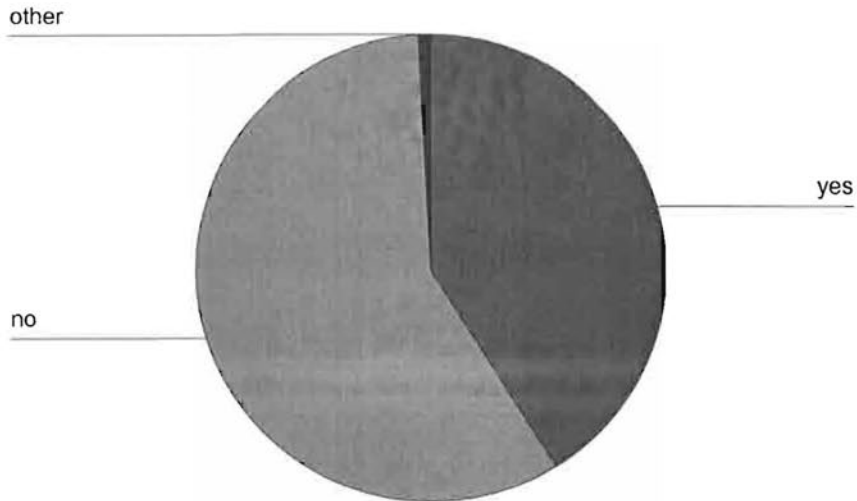
other drop out

N	Valid	139
	Missing	0

other drop out

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid yes	57	41.0	41.0	41.0
no	81	58.3	58.3	99.3
other	1	.7	.7	100.0
Total	139	100.0	100.0	

other drop out



Descriptives

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
benefited from	138	1	4	2.46	.81
Valid N (listwise)	138				

Descriptives

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
overall experience	139	1	5	3.12	1.12
Valid N (listwise)	139				

Frequencies

Statistics

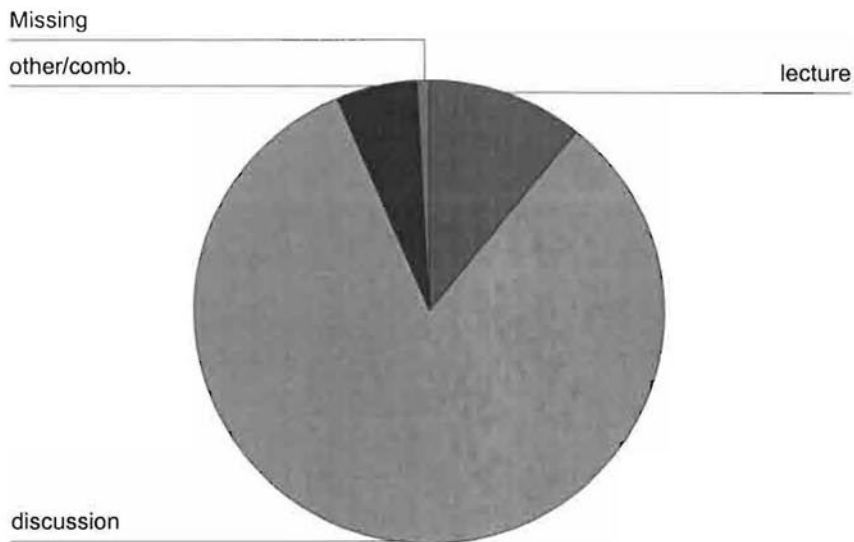
lecture/discussion

N	Valid	138
	Missing	1

lecture/discussion

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	lecture	15	10.8	10.9	10.9
	discussion	115	82.7	83.3	94.2
	other/comb.	8	5.8	5.8	100.0
	Total	138	99.3	100.0	
Missing	System	1	.7		
Total		139	100.0		

lecture/discussion



Descriptives

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
outside work	139	.00	5.50	1.2896	.7410
Valid N (listwise)	139				

Crosstabs

Case Processing Summary

	Cases					
	Valid		Missing		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
drop out * overall experience	139	100.0%	0	.0%	139	100.0%

drop out * overall experience Crosstabulation

Count

		overall experience					Total
		extremely unsatisfied	moderately unsatisfied	neutral	somewhat satisfied	very satisfied	
drop out	yes	8	20	5	6		39
	no	3	15	26	45	11	100
Total		11	35	31	51	11	139

Frequencies

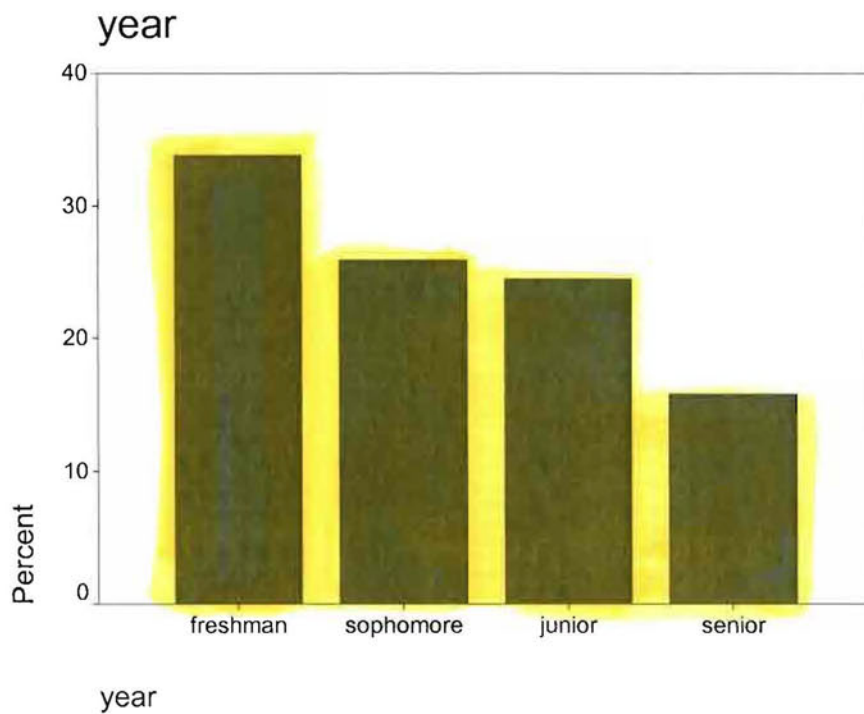
Statistics

year

N	Valid	139
	Missing	0

year

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	freshman	47	33.8	33.8	33.8
	sophomore	36	25.9	25.9	59.7
	junior	34	24.5	24.5	84.2
	senior	22	15.8	15.8	100.0
Total		139	100.0	100.0	



Crosstabs

Case Processing Summary

	Cases					
	Valid		Missing		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
benefited from * overall experience	138	99.3%	1	.7%	139	100.0%

benefited from * overall experience Crosstabulation

Count

		overall experience			
		extremely unsatisfied	moderately unsatisfied	neutral	somewhat satisfied
benefited from	not benefited	7	10		1
	benefited a little	4	21	18	6
	somewhat benefited		3	13	40
	benefited greatly				4
Total		11	34	31	51

benefited from * overall experience Crosstabulation

Count

		overall	Total
		very satisfied	
benefited from	not benefited		18
	benefited a little		49
	somewhat benefited	5	61
	benefited greatly	6	10
Total		11	138

Correlations

Correlations

		benefited from	overall experience
benefited from	Pearson Correlation	1.000	.759**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
	N	138	138
overall experience	Pearson Correlation	.759**	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
	N	138	139

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Appendix D

Edited transcripts of notes from professor interviews

Interview 1: Dr. Arthur (Sandy) Echtenacht

(KM): How have your experiences with teaching an honors seminar been?

(SE): I was very disappointed with the students in my class. We were studying the effects of a global climate change. First of all, there were too many students in my class. I think I had around 22, and that was just too many for what I had planned to do. There was a clear lack of interest by the students. I would not have identified them as honors students. They seemed very annoyed to be there. It seemed like their only concern was the grade they would receive. They did not want my class to jeopardize their G.P.A.

(KM): What was the format?

(SE): Most of the term was lecture based, but we did discuss some, when I could get them to talk. I assigned a term paper of about five pages.

(KM): Were you told the purpose of the seminars? What were you told if so?

(SE): I wasn't really told, but I assume it was to give breadth to the students' academic schedule.

(KM): Do you have any suggestions for the program?

(SE): You should allow for two hours of time. One hour is just not long enough. Also, cap the classes at 15, even though the optimum number would be more like 12. It seems to me that these seminars are a low priority to students. They really have no vested interest in them, and it really showed.

Interview 2: Sky Huck

(KM): What do you feel the purpose and format of the seminars should be?

(SH): They should serve as a way to dialogue to improve the ability and enjoyment of academic discourse on the part of students

(KM): What do you feel is the biggest problem with the seminars currently?

(SH): On the faculty side, it is the twisting of the arm of faculty members to serve. The coordination of the faculty is also weak. It is sad and wrong the faculty never got together to share ideas of good and bad in a safe atmosphere.

(KM): What would you suggest to remedy this problem?

(SH): Last spring we had planned to meet in August to share plans. The excited and dedicated faculty could inspire others and we could learn about other plans of attack that would be interesting to try. The desired uniformity was not achieved. We really should all meet at the beginning of the semester, during the semester and afterwards to reflect on mistakes, victories, etc. By working together, we could really make the seminars better. Currently, without any real dialogue on the subject, the same mistakes are being repeated over and over without any means to correct them or even identify them for that matter. I also think we don't involve students enough in feedback on the seminars. A forum with professors and students could really be beneficial to the program.

(KM): Sitting in on your seminar, I saw a glimpse of what you try to do with the freshmen throughout the semester. Could you explain your goals for your choice of format? What do you hope that all your students gain from your seminar?

(SH): In my seminars, students are required to set up positions and the class together breaks down arguments to show logical flaws. I hope to teach critical thinking in this manner.

(Please see Appendix E for a description of Sky Huck's format and student comments on his seminars)

Appendix E

Example format for successful seminar: Sky Huck's freshman seminar (based on the following student comments)

Comments from student surveys regarding Sky Huck's seminars:

Students were asked to respond to the question "What has been your best experience with an honors seminar?"

1. Dr. Huck's seminar was awesome. He encouraged us to listen, challenged us to learn and look at the details, and made us laugh.
2. In my very first honors seminar, the instructor (Sky Huck) encouraged every student to speak and to be involved. That is especially important for freshmen to become with, in my opinion. He made us all feel comfortable . . . like we were having fun and still learning on a serious level—the most effective way of teaching for most people.
3. ...my best experience would be my whole first semester class under Dr. Huck. Excellent teacher, excellent discussions.
4. I loved my first year honor seminar with Sky Huck, it was discussion based and not extra work. We all looked forward to going.
5. My first semester with Sky Huck was amazing just because we studied nonconformity...something very different from all my other classes which was a nice change. He was just an awesome person and realized that being honors students, we had a huge workload, and made his class relaxed and enjoyable yet thought provoking.
6. Freshman year, first seminar, because of the teacher and the style of the class. It was very laid back but definitely encouraged self-growth and learning. Sky Huck was the teacher.
7. My very first seminar with Sky Huck. The theme of that seminar was "going against the grain." We had to do presentations on different books, movies, etc. that displayed that theme. I enjoyed it because Professor Huck really pushed group discussion and debate, which make the class fun and interesting. I also got to know the people in the class really well. That's always a key indication that I've had a good seminar.
8. My best experience was Sky Huck's "going against the grain" freshman year.
9. My freshman seminar was excellent. Dr. Sky Huck led our group. It was structured but open for improvement and very dynamic. We had excellent class discussions, and I also felt like I got to know others in the class.

10. The against the grain seminar was wonderful because we picked issues where a person had taken a stance on an issue deemed controversial and discussed why or why not it was controversial in today's times. I gained a greater perspective on many issues, and the class helped me to focus on the big picture and how all people are affected in decisions.

These responses were taken from 75 surveys which were returned to me. The survey was sent to around 250 sophomore, junior and senior honors students. There were several comments which could have been talking about the seminar, but the comment was not detailed enough for me to tell. There were no negative comments on any survey about the seminar.

Example Format

Students are paired together to present once during the semester. On their day to present, the students must bring in a short reading, video, etc. that represents “going against the grain.” An example would be the communist manifesto. (Longer readings would be handed out the week before so as not to waste class time.)

In addition to the professor in charge of the class, there was also an older honors student who served like a TA would. He or she would aid in discussions. He or she would additionally serve as a role model and as someone students in the class could come to on a student to student level. Freshmen in the class are also less intimidated if they have someone else in the classroom other than the professor.

The class is S/NC and graded on participation level. Students are also required to write short, thoughtful reaction papers every other class meeting.

This type of seminar could be done on every level. Weekly topics could be very much tailored to the subject matter of the class. It would also be important to remember that the topics which students respond the best to would be topics of which they are familiar (e.g. famous or local works of architecture as opposed to the basics of architecture). Students also respond well to topics which they can relate to (e.g. how to get into graduate school, employment law)

Appendix F

Student purposes from survey

To allow students to study a topic not necessarily related to their own field of interest without fear of academic penalization.

To inform

A forum for honors students to freely establish and share their viewpoints about the world with one another, while grasping a greater understanding of that world that exists around them.

focus on a matter not usually encountered

social interaction between honors students

facilitates discussion in a conversational tone

a greater understanding of a narrow subject

serve to expand the breadth of knowledge a student possesses beyond the boundaries of his or her major or even within.

learn from others around us in a relaxed atmosphere

introduce material otherwise not exposed to

meet elite professors

without added stress to an already rigorous schedule

make us better, more well-rounded people

broaden horizons

to make us think critically

a source of general information about a topic, geared to all students

Appendix G

Purpose statement

Old Statement:

Seminars are intended to provide exposure to a wide range of academic fields and topics that commonly extend beyond a student's major interests. They provide experience not only in content and approach, but also in written and oral expression. High expectations exist among seminar instructors that Honors Students will become actively engaged in all aspects of their seminars... These seminars are graded (A-F) and usually involve in-class discussion and presentations, plus out-of-class work, including assigned readings and papers.

New Statement:

The seminars should be a source of general information about a topic a student otherwise may not be exposed to in his or her major, thereby broadening his horizons. They should be in a discussion based format to allow honors students to freely establish and share their viewpoints about the world with one another, while grasping a greater understanding of that world that exists around them. They should be geared to any student in any major, allowing honors students in various majors to interact and learn from each other in a relaxed atmosphere.

Appendix H

Ideas for future seminars (taken from survey)

Acting workshops
Study of music/movies
Student lead- each present something we are an “expert” at
Benefits- health insurance/retirement/etc
Learn about UT
Career exploring
Science fiction
Culture classes- African, Asian, Ethiopian, etc.
Chinese medicine
Appreciation of art (Indian, etc.)
Language perspective
Intro to martial arts along with its history and context
Current world news
Physics: how things work
More business related
Health areas through UT Health Clinic
Hands on art
Theater
Yoga
Spirituality classes
Literary seminars
Ethnicity
Disability
Community service
Community awareness
Generation X: pop culture and music
Morals in today’s society
African-American history or inventions
Native American customs, beliefs and traditions
Impact of mythology on Greek and Roman cultures
Civil War re-enactments
Music of the Civil War
History of Knoxville
The art of storytelling
The art of the mountains
The Cherokees
How to critique a novel
Medical imaging
E-commerce
Web site design
Travel/exotic destinations

How to publish your work/theses
Investing
Political polling
Reading groups (like Oprah's)
Violence in American culture
Homosexual culture
Hands on medicine (surgery observation, etc.)
First Aid
Creation v. Evolution
Grad School Workshop
Photography
Farming/Agriculture
Group Independent Study (in-depth with oversight of professor)