Proposal for a Transcript Designation for the Ohio State Scholars Program

I. History and Educational Philosophy

The Ohio State Scholars Program (hereafter referred to as Scholars) was created in 1998 under the direction of then President Kirwan as part of the strategic enrollment plan to recruit high-ability students to Ohio State University, moving toward selective admissions for every quarter. Scholars resides within the Office of Academic Affairs and has faculty oversight, under the purview of 1) the Vice Provost for Undergraduate Studies and Dean of Undergraduate Education, and 2) the Associate Provost and Director of the University Honors & Scholars Center.

Scholars exists to enhance student learning through residential learning communities, which is an educational practice that enrolls a common cohort of students around an interdisciplinary theme. Scholars represents an intentional restructuring of students’ time and learning experiences to build community, enhance learning, and foster connections amongst staff, students, faculty and disciplines. Learning communities practice pedagogies of active engagement and reflection, and as residentially-based programs, restructure the residential environment to build community and integrate academic work with out-of-class experiences. Much of the pedagogy behind the Scholars program is drawn from Kolb’s Experiential Learning Model (Kolb, 1984). Kolb’s research indicates that learning is the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience. Knowledge results from the combination of grasping experience and transforming it.

II. Program Structure

Scholars programs are partnerships between the Center and a sponsoring college or unit. Scholars has 17 separate theme-based programs that are open to students in any major. Each program is at least a two year commitment, though many have requirements all four years. Students are required to live together during the first year only (unless commuting). Scholars admits an average class of approximately 1,500 NFYS each fall across all programs, which comprises about 18% of new freshmen. Current total enrollment across all undergraduates is approximately 4,300 students. Each of the 17 Scholars programs range in size from 25 to 150 students. Approximately 1,000 students graduate each year with an active Scholars affiliation.

17 Scholars Programs:

- Advocates for Children and Education
- Architecture, Landscape and City
- Arts
- Biological Sciences
- Business
- Environment and Natural Resources
- Green Engineering
- Health Sciences
- Humanitarian Engineering
- Humanities
- Innovation, Creativity and Entrepreneurship
- International Affairs
- Media, Marketing and Communication
- Mount Leadership Society
- Politics, Society, and Law
- Sport and Wellness
- STEM Exploration and Engagement
Every Scholars program has a Scholars Program Manager, a professional with an advanced degree that takes primary responsibility for the student learning experiences. Each Scholars program supports the larger Scholars program goals, and has an identified set of student learning outcomes which relate specifically to the Scholars program theme and support the G.O.A.L.S. of the University Honors & Scholars Center: Global Awareness, Original Inquiry, Academic Enrichment, Leadership Development and Service Engagement (see Appendix A).

III. Requirements and Expectations

For admission to Scholars, students apply during their senior year of high school on the Common Application for admission to Ohio State. Admission is competitive, applications are reviewed by the Scholars Program Manager, and they make admission decisions to their respective programs. For the NFYS entering fall 2014, the average high school class rank is top 8%; ACT average 29.3.

Scholars requirements are beyond the curriculum that is required by their specific school or college. To maintain their Scholars affiliation, Scholars students are expected to complete the expectations as outlined by their specific Scholars program. Though specific requirements vary by each Scholars program, we have developed minimum requirements for both first- and second-year participation (see Appendix B). Scholars complete an annual assessment with direct and indirect measures to gauge their mastery of the learning outcomes and satisfaction with their Scholars experience. A sample of the Scholars curriculum template each program completes is provided (see Appendix C).

IV. Approval for Transcript Designation

Scholars affiliation (USCH) is monitored on an annual basis on the Student Information System (SIS). Students that do not maintain the Scholars requirements are made “inactive” on SIS by the University Honors & Scholars Center. For the transcript designation process, after completion of the formal Scholars program at the end of the student’s sophomore year, the University Honors & Scholars Center staff will confirm the active Scholars are correct in SIS and should receive the Scholars designation on their transcript. In consultation with the University Registrar, it has been determined that the Scholars designation should be included within the “milestones” function of the transcript. The University Registrar’s Office will create the appropriate codes within SIS (one per program) and the University Honors & Scholars Center will take responsibility for uploading these codes each year. The text that will appear on the transcript will read as follows (using International Affairs Scholars as an example): COMPLETED OHIO STATE SCHOLARS PROGRAM: INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS SCHOLARS PROGRAM THROUGH THE UNIVERSITY HONORS & SCHOLARS CENTER.

V. Letters of support

- Wayne Carlson, Vice Provost for Undergraduate Studies and Dean of Undergraduate Education, Professor of Design Technology
- Linn Van Woerkom, Associate Provost and Director, University Honors & Scholars Center and Professor of Physics
- John Brooke, Professor of History, Chair, Honors & Scholars Faculty Advisory Committee
Ohio State Scholars Program Goals
First-Year students in the Ohio State Scholars Program will be able to:
1. Engage in experiential learning opportunities related to their Scholars program theme within the H&S G.O.A.L.S. framework
2. Explain how their participation in the program has increased their sense of community and belonging
3. Identify a network of staff, faculty, advisors and alumni that can assist them in their undergraduate experience
4. Locate important resources at Ohio State and the greater Columbus community

Second-Year students in the Ohio State Scholars Program will be able to:
1. Develop and execute an individualized plan that allows them to structure their participation in the Scholars program around the H&S G.O.A.L.S. framework
2. Reflect upon their Scholars program experience as it relates to their academic and career interests
3. Explore their network of staff, faculty, advisors and alumni for opportunities to engage within their academic and career interests
4. Produce an initial resume or portfolio documenting their Scholars involvement within Ohio State and the greater community

Individual Scholars Program Learning Outcomes
1. Based on Scholars program theme; 17 distinct sets for first- and second-year students
2. Used H&S G.O.A.L.S. to specify experiential learning opportunities (program goal #1)
APPENDIX B

Individual Scholars Program Participation Requirements
1. Scholars are expected to complete the following expectations during their first and second year:
   o First Year Requirements:
     ▪ GPA
       a. Minimum of a 3.0 cumulative GPA (checked end of the year)
     ▪ Courses
       a. Scholar 1100 or equivalent
       b. Clustered courses (optional)
     ▪ Participation
       a. Engage in at least 8 learning experiences per semester
          • Examples included under “Strategies and Assessment” below
       b. Engage in at least 4 community development initiatives per semester
       c. Live in the residence hall with the scholars community
   o Second Year Requirements:
     ▪ GPA
       a. Minimum of a 3.0 cumulative GPA (checked end of the year)
     ▪ Participation
       a. Engage in at least 4 learning experiences per semester
          • Examples included under “Strategies and Assessment” below
       b. Complete their Scholars Capstone experience
          • Examples include:
            o Culminating experience where students select a specific topic or theme that they wish to explore independently or in groups and present what they’ve learned
            o Incorporate learning experience such as internships, study abroad, research, service learning, teaching assistantships, etc. into an independent study with a reflective component
       c. Engage in at least 2 community development initiatives per semester

Individual Scholars Program Strategies and Assessment
1. Specific learning experiences and community development opportunities each semester
   a. Incorporates direct and indirect assessment measures
   b. Scholars programs generally offer the following types of educational experiences:

   • Career Exploration
   • Case Studies
   • Cultural Events
   • Clustered Courses
   • Debates
   • Excursions
   • Group Discussion
   • Group Presentations
   • Group Projects
   • Internships
   • Lab Visits
   • Leadership Development
   • Networking and Mentorship
   • Presentations/Lectures
   • Reflective Journaling
   • Service Learning
   • Study Abroad
   • Undergraduate Research
APPENDIX C

Scholars Curriculum Template:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Individual Scholars Program Participation Requirements</th>
<th>Individual Scholars Program Strategies</th>
<th>Learning Outcome #1</th>
<th>Learning Outcome #2</th>
<th>Learning Outcome #3</th>
<th>Learning Outcome #4</th>
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<td>Seminar</td>
<td>Learning Experience</td>
<td>Community Development</td>
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</table>
Professor James F. Rathman, Chair  
OSU Council on Academic Affairs  

December 17, 2014:  

Dear Professor Rathman:  

I write in my capacity as Chair of the University Honors & Scholars Faculty Advisory Committee to endorse the proposal from Honors and Scholars (H&S) that the university add a transcript designation for successful completion of the Ohio State Scholars Program. The vote of the committee on this proposal (October 22) was unanimous.  

H&S asks that they coordinate with the registrar to add a notation in the comment box indicating that the student has completed her or his obligation of a specific thematic Scholars program. These seventeen Scholars programs have been carefully developed over a number of years, and are the result of careful work by the H&S staff, and continuing oversight by faculty membership of the University H&S Faculty Advisory Committee. These are challenging and rewarding programs that have now an ongoing institutional identity of their own. It is clear that the students get a lot out of these programs, and that they contribute to the attraction of strong applications to the university and to the successful completion of degree. The program has a highly developed system of tracking and assessment.  

The committee simply does not see anything controversial in this request and sees a lot of positive impacts on program and university loyalties deriving from in this small recognition of accomplishment on a student’s transcript.  

I would be happy to discuss any aspect of this proposal if you see the need.  

Sincerely,  

[Signature]  

John L. Brooke  
Chair, University Honors and Scholars Faculty Advisory Committee  
Humanities Distinguished Professor of History, Professor of Anthropology  
Brooke.10@osu.edu
Dear Jim,

This letter serves as a strong endorsement of our proposal to create a transcript designation for the Ohio State Scholars Program in the form of an annotated milestone. This is an appropriate and well-deserved recognition of the work performed by Scholars students above and beyond their core curriculum.

In accord with the recently completed Strategic Enrollment Plan, students in the Honors & Scholars programs account for 35-38% of the incoming class. Furthermore, through selective admissions, the Scholars Program contains ~21% of the freshman class in 17 residentially based learning communities and majors in all colleges. The class of Scholars students admitted for Autumn 2014 posted an impressive average ACT of 29.4 and ranked in the top 8% of their high school class.

As you know the Scholars Program is centered on experiential learning beyond the classroom related to the theme of the individual program. To remain in good standing, students must meet specific requirements and maintain a minimum 3.0 cumulative grade point average. Each program is maintained by a professional staff member who develops learning outcomes for his/her program and executes activities/programs which can be assessed for success. Thus, students participate in impactful, non-trivial opportunities that enhance their collegiate experience. A milestone transcript designation will provide the recognition earned by these hard working students.

As noted in the accompanying letter from the current chair of the Honors & Scholars Faculty Advisory Committee (HSFAC), John Brooke, faculty oversight has been provided at each step of this process. I strongly support our proposal to create a Scholars Transcript Designation in the form of an annotated milestone on the transcript of successful Scholars students. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Linn D. Van Woerkom
Associate Provost & Director
University Honors & Scholar Center

Professor James Rathman, Chair
Council on Academic Affairs

06 January 2015
January 8, 2015

Professor James Rathman, Chair
Council on Academic Affairs

Dear Jim,

I am writing in support of the Scholars Transcript Designation proposal from the University Honors & Scholars Center, which has been approved by the Honors & Scholars Faculty Advisory Committee. The designation will appear as a milestone in the comments section of the transcript.

The Scholars Program has a long established record of attracting and retaining high ability students at Ohio State. The 17 specific programs build strong community and provide students with opportunities in thematic high impact practices. The Honors & Scholars Center provides oversight of the experiential learning process while fostering consistent and deliberate individualized programming through which students fulfill specific requirements.

Awarding a transcript designation to Scholars students who complete the appropriate requirements provides value-added recognition that will help students in pursuing their post graduate goals. I support without reservation this proposal.

Respectfully,

Dr. Wayne Carlson
Vice Provost of Undergraduate Studies and
Dean of Undergraduate Education