

Making Big Plans: Transitioning Honors Programs Seamlessly and Efficiently

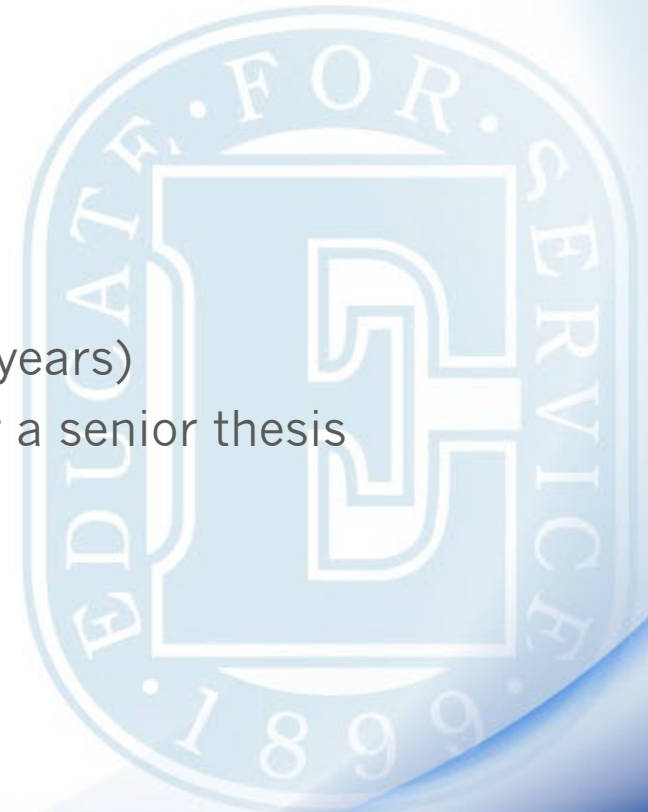
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Elizabethtown College Honors Program



About Elizabethtown College

- Comprehensive liberal arts college
- Elizabethtown, PA
- Student body: ~1,800 undergraduates
- Honors Program:
 - Established in 1999
 - Approximately 175 students (across four years)
 - 24 credits required to graduate, including a senior thesis
 - Required GPA of 3.5 for graduation
- For more information, see:
www.etown.edu/programs/honors



About the Honors Director Role

- 12-month contract, three-course release per year (normally a 3+3 course load)
- Duties include:
 - Serving in a quasi-department chair role
 - Budgeting, scheduling courses, approving course contracts, etc.
 - Teaching within the program
 - Chairing the Honors Committee
 - Advising the Honors Council and the Honors Living Learning Community
 - Providing additional student advising
 - Assessing Honors curricular and co-curricular programs
 - Planning social events for Honors students
 - Assisting with Honors admissions decisions
- Term of Office: Three years, renewable term.



Model 1: One-Semester Transition

- Fall Semester:
 - Advertise for new director (internal hire)
 - Interviews
 - Announcement of new director:
 - New director assumes role effective July 1.
- Spring Semester:
 - Incoming director to work beside outgoing director in the spring semester
 - Incoming director duties:
 - Prepares for summer orientation
 - Learns fine details of administrative protocols
 - Assists with admissions decisions
 - Stipend for incoming director's additional duties



Model 2:

Co-Director, Year-Long Transition

1. Spring Semester:

- Advertise for new director (internal hire)
- Interviews
- Announcement of co-director; new director in place effective July 1

2. Summer:

- Incoming director (co-director) oversees summer orientation
- Stipend for summer work

3. Fall Semester:

- Regular meetings with Honors Co-Directors to discuss transition and policy matters
- Admissions work: Attend open houses, etc.
- Course release for incoming director to work beside outgoing director
 - Current director assumes a 2+2 teaching load for the year, incoming director assumes a 3+2 load.

4. Spring Semester:

- Incoming director duties:
 - Prepares for summer orientation
 - Oversees admissions decisions
 - Meets with students
 - Writes strategic plan



Model 3:

Hybrid, Year-Long Transition

1. Spring Semester:

- Advertise for new director (internal hire)
- Interviews
- Announcement of co-director; new director in place effective July 1

2. Summer:

- Incoming director oversees summer orientation
- Stipend for summer work

3. Fall Semester:

- Regular meetings with outgoing director and incoming director to discuss transition and policy matters
- Outgoing director still oversees admissions open houses, etc.
- Incoming director remains on a 3+3 course load, outgoing director maintains 2+1 course load.

4. Spring Semester:

- Incoming director duties:
 - Prepares for summer orientation
 - Assists with admissions decisions
 - Meet with students
- Stipend to write a strategic plan



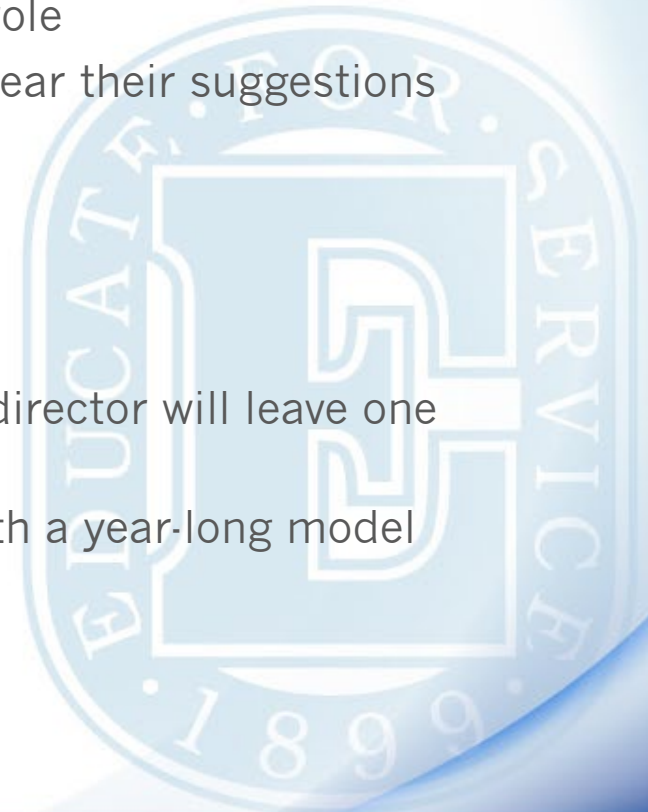
Year-Long Transition Models: Pros and Cons

- Pros:

1. Time to learn new role / responsibilities
2. Attend NCHC as new director before assuming role
3. More opportunities to meet with students and hear their suggestions

- Cons

1. Unlikely for external hire
2. Not always possible to know that the incoming director will leave one year in advance
3. Schedule of incoming director may not align with a year-long model



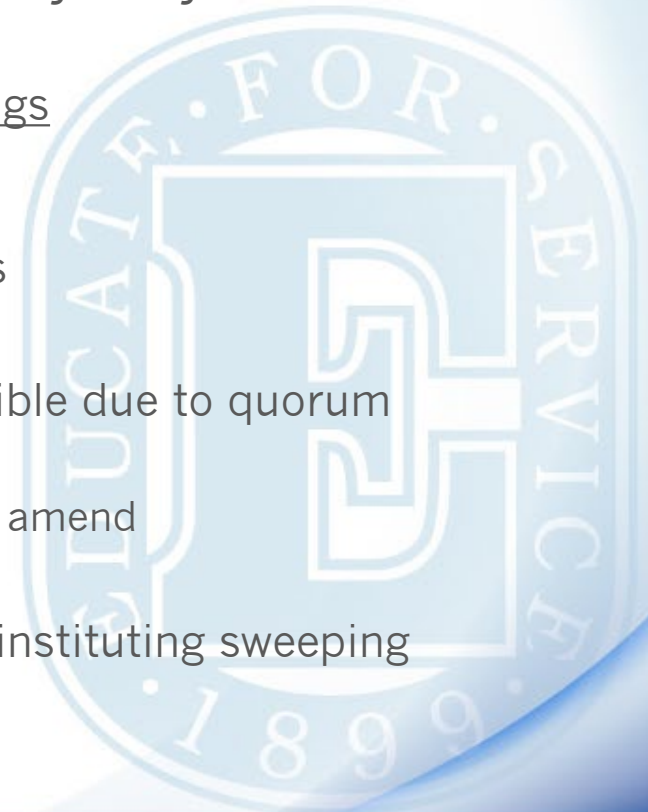
About Student Government: Honors Council

- Official Elizabethtown College student organization
- Student government of the Honors Program
- Provides event programming and networking opportunities
- Advises Honors Program in designing policy and raising student concerns
- Foster opportunities for NCHC and NRHC involvement
- Maintains representation on Faculty Honors Committee



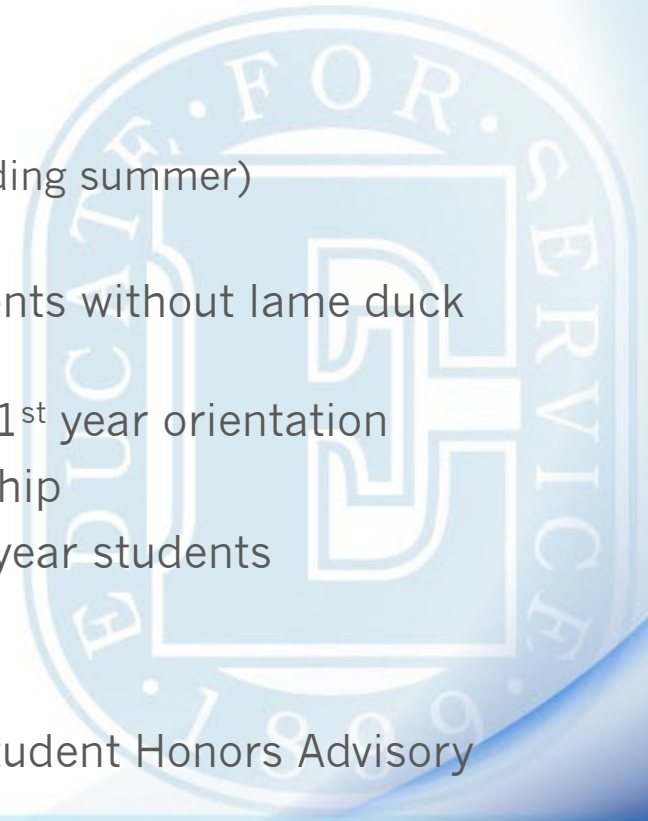
History of Honors Council

- Originated as the Hershey Foods Honors Club
- Period of high activity and involvement followed by 4-5 years of virtually no activity
 - Low turnout rates to proposed events and meetings
- Poor government structure:
 - By default all Honors students were full members
 - Few incentives to pursue leadership roles
 - Modification to the constitution was near impossible due to quorum requirements
 - E.g. 2/3rd of Honors population must be present to amend
- Transitioning directors is a great opportunity for instituting sweeping change for student government



Current Honors Council

- 12 Elected Representatives (4 Cabinet Members)
 - Committee Subdivisions for Events, Service, Policy
- Split Term Periods
 - Cabinet members serve calendar year terms (including summer)
 - Representatives serve academic year terms
- Allows council members to continue planning events without lame duck period
- Allows strong coordination and involvement with 1st year orientation
- Aligns cabinet membership with NCHC membership
- Generates interest in student government for 1st year students
- Based on California University of Pennsylvania Student Honors Advisory Board



Coordinating Dual Transition

- Discussed opportunity for changes with newly announced director, Dr. Kyle Kopko
- President and Vice-President attended NCHC to gather information for Honors Program and Honors Council with Dr. Kopko
- Passed legislation to restructure Honors Council Government in Winter
 - Ceded all positions and began election process for Cabinet and Representative Terms
- Worked closely with Dr. Kopko during Spring to coordinate on strategic plan draft, inform student body of transition, host events for gathering student opinion
- Worked throughout summer to develop Honors Council led 1st-year orientation

