

M E M O R A N D U M

To: Dr. Thomas Fallo, Dr. Francisco Arce, Dr. Jean Shankweiler

From: Joseph Holliday, Honors Transfer Program Director

Date: July 13, 2009

Subject: Annual Report for 2008-2009 Academic Year

General Information

I. Personnel

Administrators: Dr. Jean Shankweiler, Dean of Natural Science
Director: Joseph Holliday, Professor of Earth Sciences
Secretary: Susan McLeod
Advisory Council Joe Holliday (Director), Jean Shankweiler (Dean), Sue Oda-Omori (Counseling), Angela Simon and Eduardo Munoz (BSS Div.), Connie Fitzsimons and Lucy Alamillo (Fine Arts), Tom Cody and Sue Bachmann (Humanities), Nancy Freeman (NS Div.)

II. Program Purpose. The Honors Transfer Program is the only program at El Camino College designed to assist the highly motivated students who are preparing to transfer to the most academically rigorous universities. Many of these students are first generation college students and most of them are from minority populations, which provides the UC's and private universities much of the diversity that they seek.

III. HTP Requirements. To be eligible for the Honors Transfer Program a student must have a minimum 3.0 GPA, write a two-page essay, be eligible for English 1A. To continue in HTP a student must maintain the minimum 3.0 GPA, take an HTP-designated course every semester, and attend a seminar or counseling appointment every semester. The requirements to complete the HTP are a minimum 3.0 GPA, complete five HTP-designated courses, attend four HTP seminars and have two counseling appointments.

IV. Honors Courses. The HTP has a wide variety of courses, all of which are UC-transferable. The courses are in five divisions and are offered during both semesters, as well as Summer and Winter sessions. The HTP-designated courses offered are Anthropology 1 and 2, Art 6, Astronomy 25, Biology 10, Economics 1, Geography 5, History 1A, 1B and 32, Music 12, Oceanography 10, Philosophy 23, Political Science 1, Political Science 10, Psychology 5, Sociology 101, Speech 3, 4 and 12, and English 1A, 1B, and 1C. The courses that get HTP credit are Biology 1A and 1B, Chemistry 1A and 1B, Physics 1A and 1B, Math 190 and 191, and Computer Science 1.

V. Membership and Completion. The Honors Transfer Program currently has over 550 students, which is a 50% increase during the last few years. Each year there are approximately 200 new members, which include about 150 from high school and 50 as continuing students. Approximately 125 students transfer from the program every year, with about 50% transferring to UCLA and 15% transferring to UC Berkeley.

Honors Transfer Program Update and Statistics

During the 2008-2009 academic year, the Honors Transfer Program (HTP) underwent tremendous growth in both quality and quantity. It is now considered by the Honors Transfer Council of California one of the best honors programs in the state, and a role model for honors programs in other colleges.

I. Growth of the Honors Transfer Program. During the last few years the HTP has grown from a consistent 300 students to more than 550 students. This year it may even reach close to the 600 mark, because this fall it has over 150 students coming in from local high schools and over 60 new members from the sophomore class. This level of participation makes our HTP much larger than the average Honors program, which is approximately 200 in California community colleges. It is now the third largest honors program in the state, surpassed only by Mt. SAC and Santa Monica Colleges.

II. Increased transfers to universities. Over 50 percent of the HTP students transferred to UCLA, whereas 16 percent transferred to UC Berkeley. Most of the remainder transferred to other University of California campuses, with a few going to private universities and CSU campuses. We have a special agreement with UCLA called the Transfer Alliance Program. The number of students who were TAP certified and applied to UCLA increased by 28 percent during the past academic year, which amounted to a record total of 122 students (even with our increased GPA requirement). The number of students accepted to UCLA increased by 22 percent, totaling 106 students. This resulted in our continuing as second largest TAP transfer college in the state! This UCLA admittance rate of about 90 percent is essentially tied for first place among all community colleges. We also had a record number of transfer to UC Berkeley. Thus the quality of the HTP is on par with any other college in the state.

The high quality of the program is due to several factors. Besides a hard-working HTP staff, we had a part-time transfer counselor, Kelsy Iino, dedicated to our students who counseled about 100 HTP students throughout the year. Our new full-time transfer counselor, Rene Lozano, also counseled over 100 HTP students throughout the year, both as individuals and in groups. Workshops throughout the year were held on various topics pertaining to transfer, such as UC application tips, writing personal statements, and the appeals process.

III: Increased opportunities for Honors Transfer Program students. The quality of the HTP has also increased during the past year by offering students increased opportunities for other aspects of their academic careers. In particular, we have been promoting the student research conferences. A record number of our HTP students were

presenters at the Honors Student Research Conference sponsored by the Honors Transfer Council of California (HTCC), which is held at UC Irvine every spring. There were 20 students who gave oral presentations and/or poster presentations during this all-day symposium, which made El Camino the largest delegation attending the conference. A record number of four scholarships (out of a state-wide total of 30 scholarships) were awarded to El Camino students at the HTCC conference.

The HTP also has begun to participate in activities that help our students who want to transfer to UC Berkeley. The HTP has continued its cooperation with the Transfer Center by nominating students for the UC Berkeley TAP (Transfer Alliance Project) for disadvantaged students. An HTP student participated in the second annual Bay Honors Consortium (BHC) student research conference which was held at Stanford University in April.

The Honors Transfer Club has been very active during the past year. This club gives honors students an opportunity to accomplish goals that enrich their academic lives. For instance, they published the HTP newsletters, sold HTP T-shirts, and organized various service learning opportunities.

The Honors Transfer Program has transfer agreements, through the Honors Transfer Council of California, with several academically rigorous universities. HTP students are all eligible for the UCLA Transfer Alliance Program. We also have agreements with UC Irvine, UC Riverside and UC Sta. Cruz, as well as admission consideration to UC Berkeley. Other universities include CSULB, CSUF, STSU, Chapman University, La Sierra University, Pitzer College, Occidental College, Pomona College, Azusa Pacific University, and Whitman College. The newest universities with agreements are Cal Poly Pomona, Loyola Marymount University, and Mills College.

Accomplished Goals of 2008-2009 Academic Year

During the past academic year, the HTP has strived to accomplish everything that the HTP Advisory Council has talked about over the years. We believe that all of the goals unrelated to inadequate staffing have been accomplished.

The HTP offered winter session courses for the second time, with three HTP-designated courses. Students have requested this ever since ECC instituted winter sessions. This is particularly important for sophomores who were trying to finish the HTP in one year. This summer session the HTP has offered several courses for the second time, which is also highly popular with students trying to finish their five-course requirement before transfer.

This year, the college began adding a student transcript designation for each honors course completed by the student. This designation was long overdue, since ECC was one of only two colleges in California known to be omitting it. The new transcripts have a "T" next to every HTP course a student has successfully completed, which enables transfer universities to use the data without getting individual letters from the HTP office for each student.

The new full-time transfer counselor worked in the Transfer Center, which finally fulfilled the number one hiring priority in the Counseling Division priority for years. Unfortunately, the counselor was designated as 100% Transfer Center counselor instead of the 50% Honors counselor for which the position was prioritized, advertised, and hired. As a result, our only designated Honors counselor was a part-time (only seven hours per week) counselor, paid from the Special Fund, who handled the enormous volume of students requesting transfer specialist information during the previous year. The meager budget for this counselor should not be cut during this year of severe budget cuts.

The HTP worked very closely with Robin Dreizler, Director of Outreach and School Relations, to have a part-time outreach counselor for the HTP. Else Reinertsen visited approximately twelve local high schools and participated at Senior Day and other orientations. In addition to being very successful, this freed up many hours of time for the overworked director.

HTP director Joe Holliday was Past-President of Honors Transfer Council of California and co-chair of their conference for the past year, which gave ECC a lot of publicity across the state. This was particularly important during the HTCC student research conference at UCI and the BHC at Stanford University, as well as meetings at UCLA, LMU, Mills College, and other colleges.

Future Goals and Current Issues

During the coming academic year the HTP will continue to operate for the benefit of the students. During the coming year, the HTP will try continue to offer a high-quality environment for the honors students, although this will be contingent on adequate funding. The recent cooperation with transfer and outreach counselors is expected to continue as long as the funding is approved. The HTP director will continue to communicate with the HTP Advisory Council as the HTP works with the dean, Dr. Jean Shankweiler of Natural Sciences Division. There will be a new director, Darrel Thompson, who will come on as a co-director in Fall, 2009, and assume full duties in Spring, 2010.

The biggest issue facing the HTP is the lack of a permanent funding for clerical help (secretary). Although the program is getting by with half-time secretary Susan McLeod, the 170-day limit on temporary employees is the single worst problem facing the HTP. During the past three years, there has been no progress toward solving this chronic problem. The budget crisis during the coming year is sure to exacerbate this problem, with probable dire consequences of reduced funding for clerical help. Already this summer, the secretarial help has been reduced from eight weeks to only one week, which resulted in the HTP office being closed almost all summer. Given the 50 percent increase in the number of HTP students over the last few years, the HTP really needs both the secretary and the program assistant every month of the year.

The other budgetary and administrative limitation facing the HTP is the need to increase the HTP director release time back to the 80 percent level it was during the 1990s. Given

the 50 percent increase in HTP students during the last few years, the workload has increased proportionally. The current 60 percent release time is inadequate and has made finding a replacement director very difficult. This is particularly noticeable when compared to the other two large honors programs in the state. Santa Monica College has equivalent to 250 percent release time for their director and counselors, whereas Mt. SAC has 150 percent. If El Camino College wants to sustain the quality, quantity, and integrity of the program, it must commit more resources to the program. Most importantly, it is imperative that the current release time for the director not be reduced this year, even in the face of unprecedented budget cuts.

cc: Dr. Jeanie Nishime
Dr. Regina Smith