

Academic Senate Members,

Please accept this letter as my official request to apply for the 2024-27 Honors Chair Faculty Lead position. Below I have outlined for you the duties I have carried out over the last 3 years in this position. I hope this will suffice as evidence of my commitment to this crucial program.

- **Provide guidance and orientation to Honors faculty and work with faculty department chairs to ensure the quality and commitment of honors faculty**

I have had the honor of working closely with all the Honors Faculty each semester offering guidance and answering questions for them. They were all invited each semester to an “Honors Faculty Luncheon” to discuss and share with the other Honors faculty teaching. I also worked with several Chairs in their discipline to add more current Honors courses to the schedule and to help create new Honors courses to help grow the program. I am currently working on STEM courses to be added to the program. We have just added our first Math Honors course.

- **Manage Honors budget**

Working closely with Dean Hector and Vice President Humble, I was able to increase the Honors budget quite significantly and have exercised good fiscal prudence to maintain a budget that will best serve the needs of the Honors Program as a whole. Added to that, with the help of Dean Hector, Dean Cota and Vice President Humble, we were able to increase the hours for the Honors counselor to better meet the needs of the growing Honors Program.

- **Coordinate recruitment of students to the honors program**

Three years ago when I took over the program it had no students in it due to the woes of COVID. Since then the program has grown steadily with the help of everyone who supports the program. Today the program has over 150 students and is still growing, as we have found there is a great interest in this program among our students. I send out an invitation to all students every last day of each month, which has created a buzz among the students and we receive numerous applications each month from that practice. Added to that we have been present at numerous campus activities and had students sign up through that process too.

- **Act as chair of the Honors Committee**

Every month since I was given this position, I have hosted a monthly meeting with a proper agenda and notification. Each month the committee discusses ways to improve the program, events for our program and the spending of money as needed. It has been a great way to hear from our faculty their ideas for the program.

- **Prepare and manage honors information in various media (update print Program brochure at least yearly, update Program web pages as needed, maintain Program Blackboard community, etc.)**

Since taking this position I have worked with many members of the college to increase visibility for the program through forms of advertisement and media. Dean Hector and I saw an immediate need for an Honors tablecloth, banner, backdrop and other items needed when attending recruitment events. Added to that, I worked on the Honors Program website page to be sure it was current post- COVID. I work with District printing to get new glossy fliers and other items for dispensing at events. I worked with Justine Plemmons to have her include Honors Program in her presentations around the region. I am grateful to all who are helping grow the program.

- **Attend meetings of relevant honors organizations, such as UCLA TAP and the Honors Transfer Council of California**

Since given the responsibility of this position I have attended the monthly HTCC “New Directors” meeting each month, the HTCC Directors monthly meetings, hosted two of these meetings virtually at Valley College, attended several National Honors meetings, attended all HTCC Conferences with our students each year, had monthly meetings with CHC Lead Judy Cannon and had weekly and monthly meetings on campus and with the District, including a bi-annual visit to the Board of Trustees with CHC Lead Judy Cannon.

- **Order graduation medallions (or other forms of regalia accessories, if desired)**

Each semester, since taking the position I have worked with a team to host the annual “Honors Signing Event” to celebrate all of our students who are graduating and transferring. At this event all Honors graduates are awarded with a “sweatshirt” with the name of the university they are transferring to, a large wooden frame for their diploma and a series of other small items to commemorate their accomplishments at SBVC. This event is open to all of their friends and families. We also secured “cords” for our graduates so they could be distinguished at the actual SBVC graduation ceremony.

- **Chair Honors Program Scholarship committee, including raising funds for scholarship and chairing the committee to consider applications for scholarship**

This has been the one area fairly difficult to grow. Although we did try three years ago to get this rolling, it has been very slow. The scholarships are given out, but there needs to be a significant amount of time spent in this area to get it to where it should be. If appointed again to this position, I will work to make this a reality.

- **Plan and organize workshops, seminars, informational sessions on topics of interest to Honors students**

Each semester I have hosted the Honors Mini- Conference for all Honors students to present their original research at Valley College. Added to that, we host a series of “practice” sessions for these presenters as they prepare to present at the statewide HTCC conference. There are also sessions prerecorded for those who are unable to attend in person. This coupled with the many hours that the Honors Lounge provides for our students, has opened up a whole new avenue for mentorship among all of our students and all of our Honors faculty. For 20 years the Honors Program had sought out a space for themselves, and finally we were able to secure that space for our program! Included in this new lounge are computers, printers, projector for presentations, microwave, refrigerator, and much more. All for the Honors students.

- **Attend relevant meetings of college groups and committees (department meetings, chair meetings, Curriculum Committee, etc.) for recruitment or curricular matters.**

Over the past 3 years I have been involved in reading and approving different courses as they were sent through Curriculum Committee. This was all new to me, so at first I was not aware that many disciplines were not following the process of forwarding me these courses for review, but now when I get them, I do review and send back comments if needed. Aside from that, I did attend several division and department meetings over these past 3 years in hopes of getting STEM classes on the books. I am still working with Andrea Rodriguez and Vice President Humble in those regards.

Added to the above, I have worked to create a “cohort” among the students in this program. I have helped coordinate nights at the symphony, plays, museums and other fun activities so they feel they are a part of a true program that cares about them as students. I host a once a semester luncheon for the Honors faculty and one for the Honors students too. I hope that someday our program is as large as other colleges in SoCal, so I continue to pour many, many hours into this endeavor and I hope who ever does get the privilege of serving as Lead, continues to serve our students to the best of their ability. Thank you for your consideration.

Edward Gomez

Honors Lead 2021-2024