

**Cultivating Minds: Enhancing the Honors Community
at
Union University**

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Executive Summary

The combined influence of a growth in honors-eligible enrollment, an in-house faculty recommendation regarding the existing honors program, a recent review of the core curriculum, and data generated through surveys of faculty and students made Union University aware of the crucial importance of designing and implementing a Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) which would markedly improve the learning environment inhabited by academically talented students. Accordingly, the critical issue addressed in Union's QEP is the transformation of the existing honors program into a thriving Honors Community.

"Cultivating Minds: Enhancing the Honors Community at Union University" is designed to engage academically talented students in conversations across disciplines that highlight the breadth and unity of knowledge while also exposing them to the depth of knowledge within a given discipline. Foundational to this design is the University's commitment to the unity of knowledge within the Christian intellectual tradition. Conversations across disciplines will occur within the context of an Honors Colloquia series; in-depth analyses will occur through strategies within Honors Curricula, primarily the use of Honors Contracts.

With the implementation of "Cultivating Minds" will come a number of benefits, including reinforcement of priorities named in the University's strategic plan, opportunities for faculty development, the enhancement of a variety of co-curricular initiatives, a positive impact on retention, and the potential to energize an important existing academic venture, namely the current Honors Program.