Hello, I’m David Metzger, Dean of the Honors College, here at ODU. It’s a pleasure to welcome you to Old Dominion University.

The Honors College provides accomplished students with individualized assistance and academic opportunities from skills development and academic coaching to undergraduate research and honors opportunities that foster academic achievement and encourage graduate school.

Here is a picture of the Honors College for 2013. The Honors College will have almost 800 students, with a variety of majors. Approximately 50% of our students are in the College of Science and the College of Engineering and Technology; 25% in the College of Arts and Letters; the remaining 25% are made up of students with majors in the College of Business and Public Administration, Education, and Health Sciences.

The Honors College recruits both within and without the ODU community. Our first-year recruits typically have at least a 3.8 cumulative GPA from high school, and they score in the upper 15% on nationally exams (such as the SAT and ACT).

That being said, the Honors College also accepts applications from continuing students and transfer students. These students have a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.8, strong recommendations from faculty, and excellent application essays.

In partnership with departments, the Honors College offers special general education courses for its students: sections of English composition, literature, physics, biology, oceanography, music, philosophy, and information literacy, among others. The Honors College also offers its own array of courses focusing on developing our students’ written and oral communication and problem solving skills, as well as their ability to work productively in a group environment.
The Honors College is the home for the Undergraduate Research Program, which provides grants, workshops, and apprenticeship opportunities for all ODU students. The Undergraduate Research Program also sponsors research awards for faculty and students. The Undergraduate Research Program is managed by a university-level advisory committee with representatives from each of the colleges. Dr. Poornima Madhavan, from the Department of Psychology, is our Director of Undergraduate Research.

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The Honors College also partners with departments and coordinates the development of learning communities for Academic Affairs. Learning Communities support student learning related to critical and creative thinking, teamwork and problem solving, civic knowledge and engagement, as well as the opportunity to assist students in the development of their written communication and quantitative literacies. The Learning Communities initiative has the general goal of developing learning opportunities for students supporting these four key areas.

This year, the Honors College has partnered with the department of history and the department of English to offer two Learning Communities, as you see here.

Every department has the opportunity to develop its own honors program. Currently, 17 departments have honors programs. The HC assists departments in the development and administration of these programs. You see on this slide the minimum requirements for these programs—although departments often choose to have additional requirements.

For example, many departments choose to use courses offered by the HC to enhance their departmental offerings. The HNRS Civic Learning Project is one such course.
All departments include HNRS contract courses in their programs. Any ODU student with at least a 3.25 cumulative GPA can transform a 300 or 400-level course into an honors course, with the permission and assistance of the instructor. After students have successfully completed their honors project for the class, the HC will have an HNRS designation for that course placed on the student’s transcript.

What these slides cannot communicate is the HC’s commitment to helping students work with their intellectual passions to develop sustained intellectual engagement with an academic discipline over the course of their time at Old Dominion. For example, a student may come to us with a passion. Let’s, say plants. (It’s been known to happen). And, after three years, this student is identifying and investigating a new species of invasive plant in Brunei—along with the attenuating travel, publications, presentations, and graduate school.

Please contact me if you are interested in speaking more about how to foster our students’ intellectual engagement at Old Dominion: whether it be in creating honors opportunities for students in your major, revising or developing a departmental honors program, undergraduate research, freshman seminars, or learning communities.

Of course, additional information is also available on the Honors College website.

Again, welcome to the University. I look forward to meeting you!