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## Honors Student Ambassador Kit

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## *The Process*

It is crucial that Honors Student Ambassadors coordinate with their high schools well in advance. Preferably, during the spring before the semester they plan to present. Essentially, this has to be done by June 1st, as the teachers get very busy at the end of the academic year. Moreover, many teachers will want to have their fall schedules set before they close the academic year in June, so it is crucial to get ahead of this deadline. I also recommend connecting directly with the teachers, and not the counselors, or office staff, as your goal is to present in the classroom. As I learned, teachers have the most control over their classrooms. If there are AP, Honors, or IB classes at your high school, these will be the best students to present to because they will be high caliber, likely college bound students interested in learning, and they will most likely be eligible for Honors.

### *The Presentation*

Make sure the presentation, and the presenter, is relatable to the audience. While presenting, often refer about your high school experience. Show up early to the classroom where you are presenting to possibly be able to talk one on one with some students. This will help develop an initial relationship that will make the students more interested and likely to pay attention.

The following pages, 2-17, detail a template presentation that was utilized in an AP class in a high school on the east side of Michigan. This presentation and video is available on a jump drive in the Honors College Main Office. It is also stored on the L:Drive of the Honors College Administration for access.

**Slide #1:** After many trips to the speech lab and practice runs with friends, family, and my advisor, it was decided the best way to start this presentation is with an activity before fully introducing yourself or explaining the purpose of the presentation to the class. The goal is to create a relationship and spark their interest before explaining content. Class answers to the 3rd and 4th questions should be written “live time” on the whiteboard so that they can be referred to and addressed during the presentation. This also creates opportunities to guide the presentation toward the specific class needs and desires.

## Activity

1. How many of you knew that colleges had Honors Programs?
2. How many of you knew that Grand Valley State University had an Honors program?
3. What are you looking for in a college experience?
4. What is the first thing you think of when you hear “Honors College”



**Slide #2:** Slide 2 is intended as an introduction to the speaker as an Honors student at Grand Valley State University and an explanation that the purpose of the presentation is to inform the class about the Honors College at GVSU.



# Frederik Meijer Honors College

Grand Valley State University

**Slide #3:** Having an overview slide is good presentation etiquette. It gives the audience a clear picture of what to expect and keeps the presentation more organized so the audience can easily follow along. This is the perfect slide to introduce the Honors College motto of “Live. Learn. Lead.”

## Overview

Introduction/Highlights

Stats, Comparisons, Admissions Details, Application Process

Live - Housing Video

Learn

Lead

Next Steps

Personal Assessment

Summary

Questions



**Slide #4:** Side 4 explains many of the benefits of an Honors College experience. It is a great time to make this personal, highlighting what the presenter has taken advantage of. Each bullet point created should be explained to the audience. As an example, most class sizes are 20 students or less, allowing for personalized relationships with the faculty. You can then also explain how many of the faculty and the advisors' offices are right in the same building that the students would be living in. Emphasize how students get the “big school” atmosphere at GVSU while also receiving a more individualized, intimate, and high quality educational experience through Honors. Additionally, most of the high schoolers in the class will not know what networking is, nor its value, so this is an opportunity to explain that. Note that this slide does not require attention on Honors housing; that is done later in the presentation.

If possible, on this slide, refer back to the notes on the whiteboard from the beginning activity. Dispel misconceptions that students might have written or voiced about GVSU Honors, and show them that what they are looking for in a college experience can be found in GVSU Honors.

## Introduction - What is Honors?



### Highlights

- 1 on 1 time with professors and advisors
- Access to Fellowships/Scholarships
- Networking
- Like-minded students
- Best of both worlds
- Really cool dorms



**Slide #5:** Slide 5 is included because many high schools seem to have a disproportionate number of high achieving students whose goal is to attend the University of Michigan. This slide helps to show those students that the type of people who attend U of M are the same type of people attending GVSU Honors. Any matriculating institution can be substituted here. Or, if this does not apply to the high school at which you are presenting, feel free to omit this slide.

## GVSU Honors

vs.

## U of M

Average High School GPA: 3.93

Average ACT: 29

Average SAT: 1320

Average High School GPA: 3.88

Average ACT: 31

Average SAT: 1380

**Slide #6:** Slide 6 structures a discussion on admissions requirements for the Honors College at GVSU (update to the incoming requirements of the academic year your audience is considering). These should be explained to the class, but make sure to emphasize that if you lack one of the requirements, you will not be automatically disqualified. You can submit an essay explaining why and how you believe you are still qualified, which will be taken into consideration.

## Admissions Requirements

1. 3.5 high school GPA
2. SAT score of 1300 or ACT score of 28

**\*More important, however, are demonstrations of strong academic motivation and ability to achieve on a high level\***

**Slide #7:** Slide 7 explains the different components of the application process. Because of time constraints, you might be able to only briefly cover this. They can get full information from the GVSU Admissions website so be sure to tell them this, and encourage them to apply. Or you can add more time to the presentation and cover this in more depth.

## Application Process

### Parts of the Application

1. Self-assessment
2. Listing of academic and leadership accomplishments
3. Writing a strong essay addressing a given prompt
4. Submitting a significant analytical or creative paper from high school

Application page: <https://www.gvsu.edu/honor/application-form.htm>

**Slide# 8:** As the Honors College dorms are a notable exception to standard college dorm living as a freshman, AND the experience of living with other Honors students is a central premise of the Honors motto, Slide 8 is where you can spend time showing the class these differences. A draft video is also provided showing what the dorms and the inside of Niemeyer look like, and another is a snapchat video that briefly shows one Honors student's life in the dorms. The snapchat video was used to make the student and the living environment more personal and relatable. There is no need to talk much during the videos. After the videos is a great opportunity to pause, and let students in the class ask some questions. You have provided a lot of information, and they might have some questions that need immediate attention.

Live



**Slide #9:** Slide 9 provides more pictures of a freshman dorm room. You can use your own pictures, or ask to take pictures of a current dorm room and integrate them into your presentation to better tell the Live. Learn. Lead story.

## Live Continued



**Slide #10:** Side 10 provides the opportunity to explain what “interdisciplinary” means, how it is structured, and what the experience feels like in a classroom setting. This is also the time to explain what an Honors College freshman sequence is and the advantage of these over typical “gen eds.” Remember, these are new phrases for high school students, so you will need to take time to explain both the “gen ed” requirement and the Honors difference. After describing the freshman sequence, it is important to describe the end learning goals that Honors has for students and how they manifest through the classes that are required to obtain an Honors certification (freshman sequence, junior seminar, and senior project).

## Learn

Interdisciplinary

Freshman Sequence (knocks out those gen ed requirements in a cool integrated way!)

Study Abroad, Research, Independent Study, Internships, endless Leadership Opportunities!

Junior Seminar

Senior Project



**Slide #11:** Honors students are known and recognized for their leadership skills. Slide 11 provides opportunities to describe different instances in which Honors students could express the leadership skills they have or are developing through the Honors College experience. You must personalize this slide to your leadership experiences and stories.

## Lead

ROTC

Student Senate

In the classroom

Club Basketball, Christian Coalition



**Slide #12:** Per semester, Slide 12 will need to be customized as it explains the deadlines for scholarships. GVSU has rolling admissions, but it needs to be explained that the earlier you are admitted and attend orientation, the better selection of classes and class times are available. This slide also provides opportunities to detail the unique and incredible overnight Honors orientation experience. GVSU Honors is the only College that does this during the “incoming” summer. It really helps create a community, and allows nervous incoming freshman to make friends very early and easily. Honors also has a mentorship program that starts during Welcome Week, which helps acclimate incoming freshman to their new surroundings and alleviate the stress that inevitably comes with such a massive change.

## What's Next?

Deadlines - December 31st for Scholarships

Scholarship Competition - Usually Mid-February

Overnight Orientation - Starts in May

2019 Honors Welcome to Campus/Mentorship Program: August 19th-23rd

**Slide #13:** Slide 13 lists some of the characteristics that apply to Honors College students. You can highlight those that apply to you, and ask the class to find a few that apply to them. Have them share these in class if you have time.

## Personal Assessment

Choose the appropriate rating for each item.

- 5 - Strongly agree
- 4 - Agree
- 3 - Indifferent or can't decide
- 2 - Disagree
- 1 - Strongly disagree

I enjoy reading for fun.
I always completed assigned reading in high school.
I like to write.
I enjoy other forms of self-expression, such as music and art.
I find discussing ideas with other people exciting.
I enjoy solving problems.
I am curious about the world.
I am interested in a wide range of subjects.
I try to look at issues from a variety of perspectives.
I like to express my opinions.
I like a good challenge and would prefer to take classes that challenge me.
I enjoy learning things that are not required, purely for the sake of increasing my own knowledge.
I am goal-oriented and hate to be distracted from achieving what I have set my sights on.
My strongest motivations are intrinsic. Some things are worth doing for their own sake.
I enjoy being creative in my work, finding ways to go above and beyond what is expected of me.
I tend to set high expectations for myself.
I think a good course is one that is an adventure in thinking and that tackles big issues.
I pay attention to news, current events.
I enjoyed the classes in high school that required the most participation.
I work well independently, completing projects and research on my own.
I am a self starter. I don't need others to tell me I should get to work.
I am comfortable with assignments that don't tell me EXACTLY what to do and how to do it. I like to find my own way to accomplish the objective.
I am very good at scheduling my own time to accomplish my goals.
I expect to meet interesting people and be exposed to new ideas in college.
Even though I expect to make friends and participate in extracurricular activities, my top priority in college is learning.
I enjoy discussing books, films, and current events with friends.
I enjoy listening to what others have to say on a topic, even if their opinions differ from my own.
I like to test and develop my ideas by sharing them with others.
I like to collaborate with others because my peers often help me to see things in new ways.
When I do group projects, I take responsibility for my share of the workload.
I would like to be a part of a living/learning community supportive of my academic endeavors.

**Interpreting Your Score:** Students who share many of these characteristics benefit the most from Grand Valley's Honors College. We offer a challenging liberal arts education that explores subjects from a variety of interdisciplinary perspectives. Faculty engage students in discussion and learning activities that emphasize individual responsibility and accomplishment. If you rated most characteristics with a 4 or 5, you will undoubtedly enjoy being a part of our living and learning community.

**Slide #14:** Summary slide 14 provides the “bookend” to the presentation, It reminds the audience of everything they just heard, and potentially helps them to further grasp what was just discussed.

## Summary

**Introduction**

**Explanation of Honors** - Stats, Comparison to U of M, Admissions Requirements, Application Process

**Live** - Housing Video

**Learn**

**Lead**

**Next Steps**

**Personal Assessment**

**Slide #15:** Slide 15 stages time for questions. However, it is a good idea to let the class know at the very beginning of the presentation that they can ask questions at any point during the presentation. As long as you are a presenter that is comfortable with interruptions!



**Slide #16:** Because every presentation affords the opportunity to improve, the final Slide 16 stages a presentation debrief. Each student in the class should be asked to write quick answers to these questions. You should prepare a paper template with the questions to hand out to the class. If you have enough time, go through the debrief answers with the class, as this would provide you opportunity to immediately answer questions that they might have, but were afraid to ask during the presentation.

## Debrief

What was the most compelling part of the presentation?

What could be improved in the presentation?

Do you think you are going to apply to an Honors College after hearing this presentation?

What other questions would you like answered about the Honors College?

### *The Video*

The Honors dorms are traditionally one of the most appealing draws to the Honors College. Extensive research in the fall 2017 Honors Junior Seminar Design Thinking found that many students join the Honors College because of the dorms. The challenge is that there are very few pictures available of the Honors dorms. Therefore, to confront this challenge, a prototype video was prepared (link below). The creator of the video believes this is an awesome starting point, however, feedback from the class at which the video was presented suggests a more detailed video of the inside of the dorm rooms would be extremely beneficial.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1fS4Gvjx6QE&feature=youtu.be>

### *Future Iterations*

Make sure to have at least 30 minutes set aside for this presentation. There is a lot of information to deliver, and if done well, there will be many questions from the high school class. To help think ahead, some questions to be prepared for include: the need to maintain certain grades in order to stay in the Honors College, tuition rates, the relationship between living/learning in the building and the rest of Grand Valley, the percentage of people who are accepted into Honors, majors, and the types of classes offered in Honors. The students also want more personal stories. This is a wonderful time to share your experience and get students fired up about taking the next step and applying to the GVSU Honors College!