



History of Honors Education

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Idea Behind the Honors College

- Place of higher education taught by more experienced professors
- Includes more focused individuals; very specific career goals
- Allow universities to not miss out on more academically progressed students
- Place for students who bring some college credits from high school



THE BEGINNING

- The Oxbridge Tutorial System is earliest form of Honors
 - Small groups, independent research, critical thinking, regular assessment
- Other institutions such as Harvard and Yale recognized need for differentiated instruction as early as late 1800s
 - By 1920, several universities implemented honors programs
- Often informal, and varied widely in structure

Post-World War II Era

- The Servicemen's Readjustment Act (GI Bill) was passed on June 22, 1944
- Provided financial assistance for veterans, particularly for education
- Led to increased competition among institutions to attract high-achieving students
- During the 40s and 50s, the Honors Programs at many universities became formalized
- Programs included dedicated faculty, specialized curriculum, and distinct honors courses



60S AND 70S

- Concept of the honors college began to take hold
- Several universities established separate honors colleges as distinct entities
- Provided a comprehensive approach to education, often featuring a cohesive curriculum and emphasizing research as well as critical thinking
- Honors colleges began to emphasize interdisciplinary studies, encouraging students to make connections across different fields of knowledge

80s and 90s

- **The honors college model gained widespread acceptance**
- **National organizations, such as the National Collegiate Honors Council (NCHC), emerged to support and promote best practices in honors education**
- **Many honors colleges started focusing on community engagement and leadership development**
- **Students encouraged to participate in service projects, internships, and study abroad programs**

2000's

In the 2000s, the number of honors colleges in the United States grew, and institutions used honors programs to continue to attract talented students

Additionally, The NCHC developed a set of agreed-upon characteristics for honors colleges in 2003 to ensure that institutions were providing more than just a name change

A 2008 survey found that over 60% of honors programs had been established since 1994.

2010's

The 2010s saw more change to honors college as a whole, especially since it was during this decade that honors colleges were more prevalent in public universities rather than private universities as it had been in the decades prior

It was also during this decade that honors college saw more diversity as it was slowly but surely getting more inclusive to everyone of all backgrounds

2020's

- **Honors colleges saw the most drastic change in a negative direction in a while, due to the rise of the Covid 19 pandemic.**
- **During the pandemic, many honors colleges were forced to quickly adapt, cutting out many of the extracurriculars that used to happen.**
- **On top of less action from honors colleges, the inclusive nature was lost due to remote class taking place instead of in person classes.**
- **While honors colleges were much less impressive in comparison to the past, recovery is in progress, slowly but surely getting back on track to where they were**