A History of the NCCU Honors Program

The North Carolina Central University Honors Program was established in 1961. Dr. Alfonso Elder (president emeritus) asked Dr. Cecil L. Patterson to develop an Honors Program at North Carolina College at Durham. Dr. Patterson, an associate professor of English, initiated the first Honors section of Freshman English in the 1961-62 academic year. “Honors I” was instituted during the same year, and focused on the development of study skills, the conventions and practices of standard research and specialized reference work, and critical thinking. Under Dr. Patterson’s guidance, four additional courses were added to the Honors Program curriculum, including the first successive opportunities for advanced placement in the Department of Mathematics. Honors English courses were also offered at the sophomore level, and Honors credit was extended to courses in the social sciences.

Three (3) students who were in the first class of Honors students (from 1962) presently teach on the faculty of North Carolina Central University (NCCU): Dr. Edward Irving (Business), Dr. Richard Mizelle (Psychology), and Dr. Laura B. Smith (Mathematics). Dr. Harold Jeffreys, (associate professor of music, Saint Augustine’s College, Raleigh, NC) joined the Honors Program in 1962; all four graduated in 1966.

Over the past forty-five years, through interdisciplinary seminars, special academic conferences, workshops, and career services opportunities, the University Honors Program has continued to serve and address the diverse and advanced needs of students as they prepare for matriculation through graduate/professional school and the demands of the professional workplace upon graduation from NCCU.

Throughout its history, the University Honors Program has had seven directors:

Dr. Cecil Patterson (1961-c.1968)
Mrs. Minnie Pearson Spaulding (c.1968-1972)
Dr. Ernest Mason (1977-1985)
Dr. Eugene Eaves (1972-1977; 1985-1993)
Dr. Patsy Perry (1993-1995)
Dr. Leon Hardy (1995-2006)
Dr. Timothy Holley (2006)

Mrs. Jean Scales served as Associate Director to Mrs. Spaulding; Mrs. Gloria Chambers was hired by Dr. Perry in 1993 as administrative assistant for the University Honors Program, and she serves in that capacity presently.

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2006-2007 Honors Program Students

2007-2008 Honors Program Students

2008-2009 Honors Program Students