

Assessment Report for Academic Year 2024-2025 Honors College

- 1) **Name(s) of all program(s) and degree type(s) assessed** (Major, Minor, Graduate, or Non-Degree): Honors College (HONC), non-degree, undergraduate
- 2) **Names and contact information of the faculty coordinating the assessment of each program and report**

HONC Co-Director:

- Evelyn Ho eyho@usfca.edu

HONC Faculty Steering Committee Member and HONC Assessment Committee Members:

- Liat Berdugo lbergdugo@usfca.edu
- Kim Cox kccox@usfca.edu

- 3) **Mission Statement**

No changes since last report

The Honors College at the University of San Francisco is a scholarly community grounded in a culture of collaborative inquiry and the Jesuit educational mission of social justice, global perspective, and *cura personalis*. Our mission is to inspire and prepare future leaders to think critically and foster an interdisciplinary understanding of the world around them and the tools to effect change. The mission of the Honors College comprises four pillars:

- I. **Liberal Arts:** The Honors College provides a well-rounded liberal arts education as the cornerstone of the student experience, with an emphasis on diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- II. **Global Education:** The Honors College emphasizes global education to build cross-cultural awareness, a diverse array of perspectives, and an understanding of the impacts and importance of the global-local connection.
- III. **Interdisciplinary Inquiry:** The Honors College recognizes the importance of building an understanding of a diverse array of approaches, and methods across disciplines to address challenges affecting our communities in innovative ways.
- IV. **Experiential Engagement:** The Honors College encourages an experiential educational experience that connects academic learning to the broader community – locally, nationally, and globally – in the pursuit of social justice and effective engagement as persons for others.

The Honors College strives to provide members of the USF community with a transformative and innovative education. Through small seminars, interdisciplinary inquiry, and engagement with communities on-campus, in San Francisco, and around the world, students will broaden their intellectual perspectives and develop a sense of ethical responsibility as global citizens. In keeping with USF's mission, the Honors College offers students a holistic learning experience and prepares them to address the challenges of the 21st century.

- 4) **PLOs**

No change

- PLO1: Ask critical questions relevant to an interdisciplinary liberal arts education, with an emphasis on the role of the global humanities and historical perspectives.
 PLO2: Apply global and cross-cultural perspectives to scholarly inquiry.
 PLO3: Analyze liberal arts content using diverse approaches and methodologies.
 PLO4: Utilize a diverse array of theoretical and practical tools to engage with mission-driven issues and work with communities.

5) Curriculum & Curricular Map (24 Units)

No changes except additional classes

- 2 unit required introductory course – the Honors College Gateway (required in the first year)
- 2 unit required Senior Seminar (Capstone) course (students are able to sub in a capstone or thesis in their major)
- 4 units Liberal Arts Foundations (1 course)
- 4 units of Global Perspectives (1 course)
- 4 units of Experiential Education (1 course)
- 8 units of Honors College Exploration (2-4 courses)

I = Introduction to PLOs

D = Developing competence in PLOs

M = Mastery of PLOs

For the ‘D’ (development of competence), all four-unit courses offered in the Honors College must contribute to development of at least two of the four PLOs in the following manner:

- Liberal Arts Foundations courses must develop at least PLOs 1 and 3.
- Global Perspectives courses must develop PLO 2 and at least one other PLO.
- Experiential Engagement courses must develop PLO 4 and at least one other PLO.
- Exploration courses may develop two PLOs from PLO2, PLO3, and PLO4.
- The Gateway and Senior Seminar classes are bookends to the HONC curriculum. In each of these classes, students will be exposed to all four PLOS and these are the classes that will be used for assessment of an introduction to the learning outcomes and mastery of the learning outcomes.

	PLO1	PLO2	PLO3	PLO4
Honors College Gateway Course	I	I	I	I
Liberal Arts Foundations Courses	D		D	
Global Perspectives Courses		D		
Experiential Education Courses				D
Honors College Exploration Courses				D
Senior Seminar	M	M	M	M

We continue to revise our [Curriculum Map](#) of all courses mapped onto these HONC types.

6) Assessment Schedule

Every year we also review syllabi for PLO alignment.

- 2021-2022: Gateway
- 2022-2023: Organizing ourselves and setting up multi-year plan, notifying Global perspectives instructors to identify assignments and save copies of student work products
- 2023-2024: Direct Assessment: PLO2 Developing
- **2024-2025: PLO4 Part 1**
 - **Indirect assessment on the experiential component to better build rubrics for what we *want* experiential to mean in HONC and what developing vs. mastery might look like.**
- 2025-2026: PLO4 Part 2
 - **Direct Assessment of PLO4 classes which include: Experiential Education Courses and Exploration Courses (Forum courses)**
- 2026-2027: PLO3 Developing
- 2027-2028: PLO1 Developing
- 2028-2029: PLOs 2, 4 Mastery: Senior Seminar
- 2029-2030: PLOs 1, 3 Mastery: Senior Seminar

7) Assessment Methodology

We did indirect assessment this year focused on receiving self-report feedback from faculty in HONC who teach PLO4 classes and with students around “experiential” and what it means to them. All Faculty who teach a HONC class with PLO4 in AY 24-25 and Fall ‘25 were asked:

This (past) year we focused our assessment on indirect assessment of PLO 4 which is focused on experiential learning in the HONC curriculum. Our Forum classes are classes that address this most directly. Can you please write back to me 1-2 sentences about what experiential learning means to you as it relates to your course? All responses will be anonymized and there are no right or wrong answers. I repeat...there’s no wrong answers here.

PLO4: Utilize a diverse array of theoretical and practical tools to engage with mission-driven issues and work with communities.

To collect student self report feedback, we hosted the following:

1. Spring 25: Feedback discussion in Senior Seminar Course HONC 498:02. This was done fairly informally but we took notes.
2. Fall 25: Focus Group discussions in Senior Seminar Course HONC 498:01. This was done more formally with the following prompt:

Every year faculty assess/measure whether what we think we are teaching is actually being taught successful through our classes.

In HONC you take “experiential courses” – we’re interested in knowing what this means to faculty and to students

- What does experiential mean to you (in an ideal world?)
- Did your HONC experiential courses do this?

- Can you think of a specific example from a class that stands out to you?
- What do you think is missing in terms of experiential learning in the HONC curriculum?

b) Other Work

1. Continued reviewing all syllabi from existing HONC courses to ensure they include CLOs, our new PLO1, and assignments that align with assessment. Fall 2024 classes were reviewed with 2 syllabi with incorrect PLOs (mostly the new PLO1 change) that have now all been edited. Spring 2025 classes were reviewed with 2 syllabi with incorrect PLOs (mostly the new PLO1 change) that have now all been edited.
2. Having discussions about the “buckets” (Liberal Arts, Global Perspectives, Experiential Education) because we fear these might not be serving the purposes of learning that we hope. The FSC began these conversations in Spring 2025 in anticipation of future assessment of these classes along with the PLOs assigned to them.
3. Having conversations about HONC and the new Core Curriculum and where we might need to change/align.

8) Rubrics

We will develop a Rubric for PLO4 in AY 25-26. We will use our results and findings from #9 below as part of this rubric development.

9) Results/Findings

From Spring 2025 (HONC 498:02) - very informal class discussion about “experiential learning.” Students reported the following:

- Out of class learning
- Not your typical book learning
- Doing or application or “real world” vs. “classroom”
- They identified certain classes as really experiential including the Global Jumpstarts and those that went off campus.
- They did not know that all Forum classes were supposed to be “experiential”

From Fall 2025 (HONC 498:01) - ran two focus groups with students:

- Not lecture - they want less lecture
 - Discussion, activities count - Being active in the learning process
 - Talking to real people (interviews)
- Having student choice on assignments or class time spent
- Application
 - Application to job/career

- Application to everyday life
- Outside the classroom
 - Can be done on own time, especially learning about SF
 - Connections outside the classroom (if you can't go)
- Assessment of experiential
 - Positive
 - Stays with them longer
 - Correlating experiential with 'better' and less stressful, less strict deadlines
 - Students like and also want more of this
- Outside your major
- Global Jumpstart, but cost

From Fall 2025, Faculty responses point to these six elements of Experiential Education:

- **Direct community engagement** - Moving beyond campus to interact with real communities, organizations, and stakeholders
- **Making connections (theory to practice):** Translating theory and academic work into practice through making, doing, and producing tangible outputs, presenting work to real audiences beyond the instructor, active learning, mindful and reflective exercises, real-world immersive practice and experiences
 - This can be done in levels of immersion: theory to practice doing in the real-world vs. theory to practice as a simulated practice
- **Reflection & integration** - Processing experiences to connect embodied learning with intellectual content
- **Multi-step, sustained processes** - Long-term projects vs. one-time assignments
- **Engaging in different 'ways of knowing' and learning** beyond empirical or strictly theoretical/academic knowledge. This may mean focusing on sensory modalities, creative arts synthesis, doing/making alongside or instead of writing/speaking
- **Sharing** (including any plans for future improvement or assessment of your program indicated by the results)

At a high level, faculty and students align with their understandings of experiential learning regarding 'out of classroom' learning, putting academic learning to practice, and immersive learning. Students perceived experiential learning experiences as very positive and the most memorable and sustained aspects of their HONC learning. And these positive feelings bleed beyond what the faculty reported as experiential learning, for example, they also find flexibility, being outside of the major, and student choice as positive and included these as examples in their discussions about experiential. Students were conscientious about the financial cost of experiential learning recognizing that HONC is lucky to have these and also not everyone can do signature programs like Global Jumpstart.

Faculty responses reported a more nuanced understanding of experiential learning. While many 'assignments' may have been seen by students in similar light (e.g. 'go to the DeYoung Museum'), faculty had a number of learning goals for these assignments related to the six bullet points reported above.

Some faculty responses, such as engaging in different ways of knowing may actually be aligned with student reports of experiential being 'outside your major,' meaning that students may associate interdisciplinary and non-traditional forms of learning and knowledge-making as outside the bounds of their traditional forms of study.

Our plans for assessment next year are to deepen this assessment of PLO4 via direct assessment of work products from classes in our curriculum that map to PLO4. We have collected work products Fall '25 and will collect Spring '26 work products so that we can do this assessment next year.

We will also report these findings back to the HONC Faculty Steering Committee in AY '25-26 for further discussion and decide what to share with the larger HONC faculty teaching these courses.

10) Response to Feedback

Thanks for the positive feedback! We will continue our work on assessment!