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May 14, 2026

Dear Associate Provost Banes-Berceli and the Senate Steering Committee,

I am writing in my role as co-Chair of the Senate Academic Honors Committee (AHC) to provide an annual report of the Committee's activities. I am currently serving as co-Chair of the AHC with Hong Qian, who was on sabbatical for the Winter 2026 semester. Other committee members include: Neil Baumgartner, Elizabeth (Beth) Delorme-Axford (standing in for David Kidger who was on sabbatical during Winter 2026 semester), Emily Lunger, Amany Tawfik, and Jason Wu.

The Committee met twice this AY 25-26, in October, 2025 and March 2026. The detailed meeting minutes are attached at the end of this report. Below I listed the main topics covered:

1. Reviewed committee charges
2. Reviewed UDAA nominations
 - a. Notify winner and other nominees of committee decision
 - b. Write and provide citation for Provost Office
3. Reviewed nomination process, eligibility, format, criteria, evaluation template, timeline
4. Reviewed and discussed distribution channels for nominations
5. Discussed concerns about arts and humanities students being at a disadvantage, which may discourage nominations from these fields (see 2026 March Meeting Agenda/Minutes below for detailed notes). The committee reached out to Amy Banes-Berceli to ask about the option to offer a second award specifically for arts and humanities. Before making any decisions, the committee would need to put forward a formal proposal with data on how many awards have gone to each discipline. The committee reviewed the last three years of data on applicants and awards, which did not include any applicants from arts and humanities. The committee ultimately decided that there is a need for more data and feedback from faculty about evaluation criteria language that could include something around "social impact" or activities that bring "distinction to student and OU" to capture single events with a large impact or value. Additionally, since there are few nominations at this time, it may be that there is no need to offer a second award.

I am happy to discuss any of the information provided here, upon request.

Thank you for your time and support,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Laurel Stevenson". The script is cursive and fluid, with the first letter of each word being capitalized and larger than the others.

Laurel D Stevenson

2025 Meeting Minutes October 10

Attendees: Neil Baumgartner, David Kidger, (Emily Lunger), Hong Qian, (Laurel Stevenson), (Amany Tawfik), Jason Wu

1. Review UDAA nominations

Evaluation template: 5 points to each criterion

- a. Originality
- b. Extent of effort
- c. Scholarly significance or Artistic merit/significance

Check any supporting documents needed - no

2. Things to do after selecting the winner

- Hong drafts letters to winner and other nominees, and citation for the Committee to review
- Notify winners and other nominees
- Provide citation for Provost Office

3. Discuss future distribution channels and ways to promote:

- Provost Office
- UCM newsletter
- an all-faculty email sent through EMMA from the Provost Office?
- Get some support from the Deans' assistants to announce within each college/school
 - One in April, One in September by committee members
- Present at University Senate
- Present at Student Congress in April and September
- Neil suggested communicating with Honor's College – send email to the Dean for announcement (new)

4. David shared concerns about humanity and arts students not able to stand out because of lack of resources, which might have discouraged nominations from those fields. Hong suggested including in the annual report about this concern, and checked with Provost Office again to see if it is possible to have a separate award so as to encourage the faculty from humanity and arts fields to apply and submit nominations.

2026 March Meeting Agenda/Minutes

Attendees: Neil Baumgartner, Elizabeth (Beth) Delorme-Axford, (Emily Lunger), Laurel Stevenson, (Amany Tawfik), Jason Wu, Hong Qian

On sabbatical: David Kidger, Hong Qian

UDAA Award: \$500 (has been split in past if we have two we want to award)

1. Review Nomination letter:

- eligibility
- format
- Criteria
- Link to form for 2026: <https://forms.gle/dTdayeUVxxzd97oJA>

Link to call:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1Moc7wZDQvKXsKccamYeQ4oQBhv_d59IEZLcyRARAR_w/edit?usp=sharing

2. Review Evaluation template: 5 points to each criterion

- a. Originality
- b. Extent of effort
- c. Scholarly significance or Artistic merit/significance

3. Distribution channels: - updated

- Provost Forward Together - Tuesdays - Send to Patti Georgevich (CC Neil)
- UCM newsletter - David Groves
- an all-faculty email sent through EMMA from the Provost Office
- Honors College
- University Senate - Neil will announce in good and welfare and in information piece in Senate e-space/agenda
- Present at Student Congress in April and September - need to check with Emily Lunger on dates
- Get some support from the Deans' assistants to announce within each college/school (new), and department Chairs, advisors from each school, professional advisors counsel (PAC)
 - o One in April, one in September by committee members

4. Discuss the nomination call process and timeline - in fall - Hong will follow up on dates with new committee members in the fall

- Proposed dates:
 - o Friday, October 9, 11-12pm
 - o Friday, October 16, 11-12pm (there is a Board of Trustees meeting this day, may need to move meeting to afternoon)

5. Other- In October, 2025 meeting there was some discussion about if there was an option to offer a second award specifically for arts and humanities

Email from Amy Banes Berceli to Laurel Stevenson stated: a) need to identify additional funding before we can make a second award, b) need a list of which disciplines would fall into each award, a determination of names for the awards, criteria for each award/grading rubrics etc. c) it would help to make the case if the committee were willing to put forward a formal proposal with some data on how many awards have gone to each discipline → need to show data that the arts/humanities are being disadvantaged.

2023- Chemistry *winner, 3 applicants from Computer Science, Chemistry, Human Movement Sciences (?)

2024- Biochemistry *winner, 1 applicants

2025- 3 applicants from Chemistry, School of Medicine Foundational Medical Studies, Departments of Biological Sciences and Bioengineering

Some conversation around criteria and encouraging students from all disciplines, also some discussion about including faculty from other arts and humanities on this committee to encourage additional perspective. The lack of applicants from the arts and humanities may be a function of several things (perception of the award and perceived competitiveness, models of research, mentorship and/or training undergraduates do not exist in a particular program, advertising methods)

- Evaluation Criteria could include something around “social impact”, or activities that bring “distinction to student and OU” to capture single events with a large impact or value
- Action item: Committee members should discuss with faculty and ask them about criteria that students would qualify and be competitive - please email us with follow-up about your conversation

Ultimately, the committee needs to collect more data and information about who is applying and general feedback on offering a second award. Since there are few applicants at this time, it may be that there is no need to offer a second award.

6. Other - any changes to committee charges? None at this time. (Kathy Dailey and [Amy Banes-Berceli](#))

OTHER NOTES/REMINDERS:

Charge:

1. To review, propose, and implement university policies concerning University Honors and report to the Senate
2. To review petitions from students regarding granting of University Honors
3. To promote and manage the awarding of the Undergraduate Distinguished Achievement Award

Committee Members

2024-2026 Faculty Appointments

Laurel Stevenson (SHS) CO-CHAIR 2025-2026
Jason Wu (SECS)

2024-2027 Faculty Appointments

David Kidger (CAS) Winter 2026 Sabbatical
Elizabeth Delorme-Axford (CAS) Winter 2026 for David Kidger (CAS) Sabbatical
Amany Tawfik (ERI)

2025-2028 Faculty Appointments

Hong Qian (SBA) CO-CHAIR 2025-2026

Student & Ex-Officio Appointments

Emily Lunger, OUSC Representative 2025-2026
Neil Baumgartner (EVPAA Designee)