

March 22, 1988

Report to Undergraduate Council on Honors

In summer 1987, the Provost appointed, in connection with the campus planning process, an Honors Program Task Force to examine the existing Honors Program and to propose ways by which it might be strengthened. The Task Force's work has been completed, and this report constitutes a summary of its document, including the recommendation that UMBC develop an Honors College.

The UMBC General Honors Program was instituted in 1981. In recent years, several campus documents, including the report of the Select Committee on Missions and Goals (1985), the Middle States evaluation (1986), and the report of the Honors Program Task Force (1988), have all mandated that UMBC pay special attention to a program that can be expected to attract and challenge some of our very best undergraduates. The campus' response to date has been the alteration and continued operation of the program in place. The Honors Program has accomplished all that it reasonably can in its present form and with the limited resources at its disposal. We recognize the need to demonstrate a firm commitment to further development of Honors by raising its level of institutional and financial support.

Evolution of the General Honors Program into an Honors College will help the University in many ways. A strong Honors College enhances the perception of UMBC as a center of academic excellence; it demonstrates UMBC's commitment to the belief that excellence in research and in teaching are mutually reinforcing and lead to new knowledge; it increases the likelihood of UMBC's acquiring a chapter of Phi Beta Kappa; it improves UMBC's attractiveness to students who otherwise would contribute to the "brain drain" from Maryland and who will in the future become the producers of new knowledge; it becomes a