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## **An introduction to the first issue of the JEHC: Honors Futures**

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The members of the editorial board of the Journal of the European Honors Council (JEHC) wish you a warm welcome to the inaugural issue of this new journal. In this note, we present an introduction to the content of the first issue.

### **1. Honors Futures**

This first issue is dedicated to contributions related to the International Honors Conference that was held in Utrecht (The Netherlands) in June 2016. With the theme ‘Honors Futures’, some 400 participants brought their visions and experiences together in intense discussions about the future of honors programmes in higher education. What are the opportunities and challenges? How to design and evaluate challenging honors programmes? What are the experiences of honors students and teachers in these programmes? How can we make honors trajectories anchored stronger in the institutions of higher education all over Europe?

The programme of the conference involved seven themes:

1. The honors learning experience
2. The honors teacher
3. Honors impact; honors & career honors and society
4. Quality assurance of honors
5. Personal and social growth & honors
6. Sustainable honors
7. Open student forum

A large number of contributions was brought to the conference from around Europe and the United States, providing a wide range of ideas and experiences. At the conference lots of sparkling ideas, experiences and insights were shared with participants in conference sessions. But how to share this knowledge with other interested people? After a conference often most of this highly interesting information will fade away, while other honors educators could benefit from this information.

## **2. Selecting for the Journal**

To keep this knowledge available for everybody, the Research Committee of the European Honors Council (EHC) has taken the initiative to select the most interesting contributions to the conference and ask contributors to develop these into papers and notes. In order to make this available for the participants of the conference and all other persons who are interested in the main issues of the meetings, we took the initiative to provide a platform for these papers and notes from this conference. This resulted in a decision of the board of the EHC to start a new journal and to publish a selected set of papers and notes in the inaugural issue of the JEHC.

The editorial board aims to publish the contributions as soon as they are ready and comply to our quality standards. In this process the editorial board and the reviewers support the authors to publish their work in the best way. The journal is 'open access', so the contributions will be available to a large audience.

In this issue of the JEHC you will find two types of contributions:

1. Peer-reviewed Papers: longer contributions (up to 5000 words) on experiences in honors programmes, development of programmes and courses, research on student and teacher factors and effects, policies (e.g. quality assurance) and good practices.
2. Edited Notes: short contributions about new ideas and developments on the seven themes mentioned above.

## **3. Final preparations**

At the time of writing, most peer-reviewed and edited contributions are already published. Some contributions are still in the process of revision and finalizing. We finish this first issue with contributions from the Utrecht Honors Conference 2016 before the next International Honors Conference at Windesheim University of Applied Sciences in Zwolle in June 2017.

Together, the notes and papers will provide a substantial body of knowledge about teaching, learning and organizing honors programmes. It will provide a good start to share knowledge and good practices regarding talent development in higher education. It will support the aims of the European Honors Council to have a European network of participants of talent development in higher education in Europe.

We are proud about this beginning of a new development and hope that it will inspire students, teachers and administrators of honors programmes in many countries to share their visions and experiences in the forthcoming issues of this journal. Your contributions on your experiences, research and ideas about honors education in higher education are very much welcome!

We wish to thank all organizers of and contributors to the Conference of 2016 and all authors in this journal for their efforts and ambitions to make this first Journal of the European Honors Council possible. We wish honors education and this new journal a bright and enduring future, supporting the continuous development of talent in the dynamical changes of the 21st century.

The editorial board,

Albert Pilot, Pierre van Eijl, Annelies Riteco, Marca Wolfensberger, Astrid Fritz, Maarten Hogenstijn