

# Beyond the Podium

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## Supporting High Achievers

Discussion Leader: Melissa Johnson

### What Do High Achievers Want?

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- Meaningful interaction with faculty
- Faculty to share their passion
- Tips on how to interact with faculty during office hours
- They are interested in being peer mentors
- They appreciate attention from faculty

### Challenges High Achievers Face

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- They are very focused on education goals
  - Encourage the students to explore courses outside of their comfort zone
  - Generally, these students come to UF with a lot of credits which means they have some flexibility
- They are competitive and need to learn to focus on what they are doing, not what others are doing
  - “Learn to swim in their own lane”
  - There’s no need to increase the competition
  - Help students focus on collaboration rather than competition
- Group Projects can be a challenge
  - It is helpful to include peer assessment each time something is turned in (good group project assignment design includes interim steps)
  - Anonymous feedback provides a level of comfort
  - They like to get an individual grade (this is not limited to high achievers)
- It is helpful when all students are held accountable for doing the work
  - Preliminary quiz/discussion post in Canvas to help ensure that everyone has done the reading or other preparatory work
- They can be frustrated when it isn’t possible to dive deep in discussions (such as in the Good Life course)

### Honors Program Activities

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- Faculty are invited to submit proposals
- “Uncommon Read” courses (1 credit)
- Honors courses are more focused on authentic assessment such as discussion and projects
- They do a Meyers Briggs assessment
  - Honors does a strength assessment

### Strategies

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- Match students to groups through use of a survey “e-Harmony” style
- Speed dating to help determine group assignments

- Provide opportunities for honors students to “stretch”
- Connect students to mentoring resources
- Help students learn to be resilient—life isn’t about always winning
- Foster active learning: missions, discussions, doing activities
- Provide opportunities for peer review (anonymously)
- Group activities that foster collaboration
- Allow students to fail

## Life and Career Skills

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- Just because you are good at something does not mean you should do it
  - Also find your strengths and strengthen them
- Financial implications of career paths discussion
- You can be successful in any field it may not always provide the same level of financial reward
- There are myths and falsehoods about what is required to get into professional schools
  - Encourage students to speak with advisors and mentors in the professional schools directly (this is important!)
- Who you know is more important than what you know
  - Networking is important