For faculty members considering mentoring an honors thesis:

1. Mentoring an honors thesis can be a very positive experience. You may wind up getting much satisfaction from the student-mentor relationship, and if the project is well done you could wind up with a publication and/or presentation!

2. Before you agree to serve as a mentor of an honors thesis, it will be important to insure that:
    a. You have the time available in your schedule to take on the student
    b. The student has been able to articulate a sensible research project
    c. The student's project topic is of interest to you and may have some benefits for you
    d. The project that the student wants to do is feasible within the very short time frame
    e. The student has the needed time in his/her schedule to do the thesis and meet with you on a frequent basis

3. Keep in mind that you are under no obligation to take on honors students, and furthermore, if the student is not adequately progressing or meeting expectations you may terminate your work with the student.

4. While the undergraduate honors thesis needs to be an original piece of work, it does not need to be complicated, and statistics used should be understandable to the student and appropriate to answer the research questions. The expectation is that the student will do the analyses on his/her own, so will need to have an understanding of what to do. Given that most of our students don't get much in the way of research methods, or get that later in their major coursework, simpler statistics are usually most appropriate. Advanced statistics will require a lot of additional work from the mentor in teaching the student, and are most likely unnecessary for a good undergraduate thesis. If a research question requires advanced statistics, you may want to consider whether it is possible to change the question so that it could instead be answered with simpler statistics. If this is not possible, or if the advanced statistics are necessary for a publishable article, then prepare to spend a lot of time tutoring the student, or insist on a different project.

5. Given the short time frame and the lack of advanced training, it is often helpful for students to choose research that is a piece of an existing project, an adjunct to an existing project, or a new analysis of existing data. It is certainly possible to do something more independent or extensive, but it will be important to make sure that there is easy access to such populations, and that the project will be doable within a very short time frame. Remember that many projects will require IRB approval, which can be time-consuming.

6. It is HIGHLY recommended that you read the "Honors Theses in Family, Youth and Community Sciences" paperwork AND develop a contract with the student. There is a sample contract available that you may alter as desired in order to best suit your needs and work style, but having a contract can help articulate expectations early on, and gives faculty members a sense

of comfort in terminating the work with the student if needed. You should also consult the suggested timeline for honors theses (see #9 below).

7. Note: if a student you are mentoring applies and is accepted into the University Scholars program, this could result in funds for the student (which may or may not be used for the research), and potentially a small honorarium to you for providing mentorship. Usually students must be in their sophomore or junior year to apply for this program.

8. It is a good idea to make sure that you have the most up-to-date information regarding departmental and college requirements. Contact the undergraduate honors coordinator (currently Heidi Radunovich) if you have questions.

9. Below is an example of a suggested student timeline for a spring graduation:

Spring of junior year: Begin formulating ideas for a thesis and seeking a faculty mentor

Summer before senior year: Work on literature review and creating a proposal

Early fall of senior year: Proposals completed and submitted, any IRB paperwork submitted

Middle to late fall semester: Conduct research and analyses (Note: students tend not to get much done after Thanksgiving because they then move into finals, and then leave for the holidays)

January of spring semester: Write up research results and discussion sections

February of spring semester: Work with faculty mentor to finalize the thesis through revisions

Middle March of spring semester: Finalized thesis, approved by mentor, is due to departmental committee for review and vote. Must be submitted via faculty mentor.

Late March/early April of spring semester: Any needed revisions are made and the approved thesis is submitted to the college office for first review

Middle April of spring semester: Any needed revisions are made and final submission is provided to the college by the deadline