

## Blueprint for Academic Excellence South Carolina Honors College

### AY 2024-2025 Accomplishments

#### ***Goal 1: Maintain/Enhance Curriculum***

- a. Simplified requirements, adding flexibility while keeping rigor.
- b. Increased study-abroad by 35% over three years despite 15% cost increase.
- c. 3 new service-learning + 3 new study-away courses (1 low-cost domestic).
- d. New UNIV 101 module: senior thesis preparation (157 students).
- e. Fundraising targets included Beyond-the-Classroom support: \$4.2m of \$2.4m goal raised to date.

#### ***Goal 2: Cultivate Faculty Involvement***

- a. 12 new Pearce Faculty Fellows (of 24 total), including first from Pharmacy.
- b. 25 new faculty recruited to teach, and to lead study abroad and service learning.
- c. 3 pedagogy workshops for new/returning Honors faculty and Faculty Fellows.
- d. 9 new faculty as mentors for Scholar Programs.

#### ***Goal 3: Evolve Advising and Support***

- a. Implemented Phase 1 of transition to single advisor: 1011 of 2264 students. Fall 2024 survey (26% response rate, n=585) revealed decline in perception of quality: overall “Excellent” ratings decreased from 78% (2023) to 54%. “Fair and Poor” ratings doubled (4% to 8%).
- b. Phase 2 initiated for spring 2025: additional analysis, training, and experience is needed before drawing any conclusions.
- c. Maintained our college wide retention rate of 98%.
- d. Began discussions and exploration of reorganizing Honors staff as Phase 2 unfolds. Key questions: what might be lost in the transition, and what opportunities might emerge to enhance engagement and guidance?

#### ***Goal 4: Advance National Fellowship Advising***

- a. Exceeded FY24 application goal of 300 (347); 83 winners, over \$2.9m.; 11<sup>th</sup> Truman, 32<sup>nd</sup> consecutive year of Goldwater Scholars, e.g.

- b. Thus far in AY25, 281 applications and 4 winners: almost all awards pending.
- c. U201 section on National Fellowships, Spring ‘25.
- d. Engagement up 17%; outreach by 24 Fellowship Ambassadors.
- e. 300% increase in student contacts at Summer Freshmen Orientation Fair.

#### ***Goal 5: Maintain/Enrich Student Engagement***

- a. Year’s first Fireside Chat featured Dawn Staley.
- b. Hosted ~500 families for Family Weekend (replaced Horseshoe Picnic: finances).
- c. Successful search for new Student Engagement Manager.
- d. ~90% of students participated in events; 95 in peer mentor program (mentors + mentees).

#### ***Goal 6: Cultivate Top Scholar Engagement***

- a. 4-year retention rate (~200 students) continued above 99% (100% for class of ‘25).
- b. Scholar involvement in fall programs increased by 4.2% (up 25% for Welcome Back).
- c. Celebrated 10th anniversary of Scholars United (an advisement and enrichment board).
- d. 25 Top Scholar alumni offered advice on career readiness plans.

#### ***Goal 7: Support Inclusive Excellence***

- a. Affinity groups organized monthly events cultivating connections, inclusion, community, and peer engagement (averaged 30–40 students).
- b. Annual Pride event, organized by Honors Q: over 150 students, faculty, staff, and community allies.

#### ***Goal 8: Maintain and Upgrade Facilities***

- a. Optimized classroom use by adjusting seat capacity: Honors courses meet/exceed 60% capacity policy.
- b. Added new Honors classroom in Petigru and new furniture for Flynn 102.
- c. Honors Residence Hall continues to need repair and refreshing.
- d. Major HVAC/structural issues in Harper: renovation October to March. DeSaussure to come.

## **AY 2025-2026 Plans**

### ***Goal 1: Maintain/Enhance Curriculum***

- a. Assess Beyond-the-Classroom to align with new advising structure and DegreeWorks.
- b. Assess new Honors curriculum: courses needed, student satisfaction.
- c. Maintain depth and breadth of courses as budget model changes.

### ***Goal 2: Cultivate Faculty Involvement***

- a. Engage with new leadership in academic units, seeking collaboration and partnership.
- b. Recruit 40 new faculty to serve as senior thesis directors, research mentors, and Honors teachers.
- c. Maintain an impactful and engaged group of Pearce Faculty Fellows (25).
- d. With CAS, develop Beckman Scholars—chemistry, biochemistry, and biological and medical sciences.

### ***Goal 3: Provide Excellent Advising and Support***

- a. Enable all students, single or dual advising, to graduate “with honors” and maximize experience.
- b. Hire staff to replace losses during restructure: maintain/enhance programs that enrich and support academic and co-curricular pursuits--career readiness, pre-professional and beyond-the-classroom.
- c. Create new engagement processes, expanding and, perhaps, adapting Top Scholar strategies for all.

### ***Goal 4: Advance National Fellowship Advising***

- a. Generate > 300 applications: 5% increase.
- b. Increase faculty involvement in Fellowship advising.
- c. Replace STEM Fellowship Coordinator—critically needed to advise growing numbers of students.

### ***Goal 5: Maintain/Enrich Student Engagement***

- a. Refine signature activities, such as Flotilla, Bedtime Stories, Parents Weekend, Honors Gala, etc.

- b. Reinstate events budgetarily curtailed, such as Culture, Art Exhibitions, Lunch and Learn, pre-professional support and activities, etc.
- c. Form student committee to plan events, promoting leadership and involvement.

### ***Goal 6: Cultivate Top Scholar Engagement***

- a. Support Admissions in every way possible to yield 50+ first-year Scholars for fall 2026 entry.
- b. Create a new Carolina Scholar travel fund (cf. McNair, Stamps).
- c. Create Walk-on Top Scholars.
- d. Increase Scholar participation in service activities and serving-learning courses.

### ***Goal 7: Support Community, Belonging, and Achievement***

- a. Continue programs/events promoting wellness, aspiration, and success.
- b. Collaborate with other units to create comprehensive events and leadership experiences.
- c. Encourage student organizations to host events fostering leadership, engagement, and growth.
- d. Host dialogues to connect students with SCHC leadership, community leaders, and alumni.

### ***Goal 8: Upgrade Facilities***

- a. Renovate Harper: HVAC, structure, and cosmetics.
- b. Renovate DeSaussure: HVAC, structure, cosmetics.
- c. Refresh the HRH and develop plans for future Honors housing.

### ***Goals 9: Continue Fundraising Success***

- a. Our FY25 fundraising goal is \$2.4m; to date we have raised \$4,279,074, on pace to exceed \$5m by June 30.
- b. Build on this momentum, pursuing transformative contributions to undergraduate research, course enhancements, Washington Semester Program, and study away.
- c. Pursue a house for the Washington Semester Program (cf. UGA’s Delta House).
- d. Secure a naming gift.