

The Honors College at West Virginia University

Strategic Plan – Alignment with the 2010 Plan

The Honors College at West Virginia University was created from the Honors Program in 2006 expressly to meet Goal 1 of the 2010 Plan. It is a non-degree granting College with no faculty.

Relationship to the University’s Mission and 2010 Plan

Given its specific function as a non-degree granting College with no faculty the University Honors College supports the 2010 Plan and the University’s mission by specifically addressing the following mission items.

“West Virginia University's special responsibility is to seek out, challenge, educate, and help create opportunities for those West Virginia citizens who can benefit from its programs, especially those who have demonstrated high achievement, or who possess excellent potential.”

2010 Plan

Goal 1: Recruit, retain and graduate high-quality students.

Goal 3: Enhance the Educational Environment for Student Learning.

Goal 4: Promote Discovery and Exchange of Knowledge and Ideas

Goal 5: Improve West Virginia’s Health, Economy, and Quality of Life

Vision Statement

The Honors College will provide a high quality learning environment that will attract academically talented students to West Virginia University. It will provide these students with intellectually challenging courses and encourage their personal development in service and leadership providing them with the skills needed to fulfill their potential as leaders in the University community, and ultimately the state and the nation.

Mission Statement

- The College is committed to giving students a high quality, enhanced intellectual experience.
- The College is committed to the social and personal welfare of its students as well as to their intellectual development.
- The College should foster a strong sense of community in its members.

- One of the fundamental reasons for the existence of the Honors College is to act as a recruiting unit to bring students with high academic ability and potential to the University.
- The Honors College will be at the cutting edge of educational reform.

Guiding Principles

- The College will promote its core values, which are, academic excellence, service to the community and leadership.
- The College will be open to individual and cultural differences and create a learning and working environment that is conducive to the expression of multi-cultural values.
- Profound intellectual experiences are not confined to the traditional classroom.
- The Honors College must be flexible and respond to the needs of its students; by extension a one size fits all program is inappropriate.
- Research experience (defined in its broadest sense) is one of the most important ways in which one can develop academically and personally irrespective of discipline.
- Programs developed initially for the Honors College should, where appropriate and resources permit, be extended to the entire university community.

Strategic Goals

(Numbered after the 2010 Plan)

Goal 1 Attract and Graduate High Quality Students

- 1.1 Increase the number of students in the College to meet planned enrolment goals while increasing the overall quality.

The College will be an active partner in University recruitment activities.

Review, continually, existing recruitment materials and activities and modify as appropriate.

Review existing College entrance requirements and modify or replace them if necessary.

Provide a high quality living-learning environment that emphasizes academic excellence, personal integrity, service and community.

Run Summer Schools and Governor's Schools for High School and Middle School students to provide outstanding students the opportunity to experience the University.

- 1.2 Ensure successful placement of students on graduation

The University, and Colleges provide many services in this area; the Honors College will compliment these services by providing services, through the Office of Fellowship and Graduate Studies Advising, directed specifically to all students (irrespective of membership of the Honors College) who aspire to attend graduate and professional school.

Provide mentoring for current students with the assistance members of the Williams E. Collins Honors Alumni Society.

- 1.3 Increase the scope of access to Nationally Competitive Scholarships.

Through the Office of Fellowship and Graduate Studies Advising identify early, and then mentor students who have the potential to be competitive applicants for national scholarships. (e.g. Rhodes, Truman Goldwater etc)

Identify, publicize and recruit potential applicants for National Scholarships beyond those currently applied for by West Virginia University students.

Goal 3: Enhance the Educational Environment for Student Learning.

- 3.1 Increase program flexibility to enhance the student experience and to reduce attrition.

Increase diversity of courses offered and provide new models for the completion of honors requirements.

Enter collaborations with other units (e.g. Service Learning, International Programs) to offer greater diversity of courses and more non-traditional learning opportunities.

Increase undergraduate research opportunities that will not only provide a high degree of program flexibility but also be the cornerstone to increased individual success.

- 3.2 Increase services offered to students in the College.

Continue to review existing pre-professional and pre-graduate school advising and look for ways to improve services available.

Continue to facilitate and expand student/alumni mentor program.

- 3.3 The College will provide a test bed for educational innovation.

Encourage faculty to use Honors Courses to test and refine innovative pedagogical approaches that can then be transferred to regular sections.

Provide the opportunity for appropriately qualified community members to bring specialized course to the Honor audience.

Goal 4: Promote Discovery and Exchange of Knowledge and Ideas

- 4.1 Increased undergraduate research opportunities.

Undergraduate research is one of the most important elements of the Honors College. Independent study and the undergraduate thesis options will be stressed for all students.

Organize (in collaboration with other Universities and Colleges) a Statewide undergraduate research symposium.

Encourage and support students to attend regional national meetings to present their research. (e.g. Council on Undergraduate Research, National Collegiate Honors Council)

Act as managing unit and academic support unit for Campus-wide Summer Undergraduate Research experiences.

Act as Facilitator to bring together researchers to put together REU proposals to be submitted to federal granting bodies.

Goal 5: Improve West Virginia's Health, Economy, and Quality of Life

- 5.1 Service is a key component of the Honors College and will be encouraged and supported through service learning courses and the student activities committee.

In the long-term the College will integrate a service component into the requirement for Honors Graduation.

Support and encourage student led public service initiatives through the Academic and Community Student Ambassadors.