Towson University Honors College
Strategic Plan 2020

I. Vision Statement

The Honors College at Towson University aspires to be a premier provider of honors education that is recognized regionally and nationally for academic excellence, as well as for its curricular and co-curricular innovations linking the themes of globalization, leadership, and urbanization.

II. Mission Statement

The mission of the Honors College is to forge a diverse community of students, faculty and staff bound by a shared desire to challenge themselves academically, personally, and professionally. To fulfill this mission the Honors College seeks to provide its students with an innovative and evolving selection of curricular and co-curricular opportunities designed to cultivate and foster the core values on which it is founded.

III. Core Values

- **Academic Excellence**: Students will strive individually and together in groups to explore, connect and understand critical challenges, issues, problems and questions in the arts, business, education, health, humanities, and sciences. They will also gain a significant understanding and excel in at least one major discipline.
- **Global Perspective**: Students will engage in curricular and co-curricular experiences that will equip them with the kinds of experiences, knowledge and skills needed to function as competent citizen leaders in an increasingly global and urbanized world.
- **Leadership**: Students will contribute to the life of the college, the university, and to the larger communities to which they belong, as engaged participants and leaders.
- **Diversity**: Students will embrace diversity of culture, ethnicity, gender and sexual orientation, race and religion as authentic sources of human richness to be appreciated, valued, and celebrated.
- **Creative and Critical Thinking**: Students will develop the ability to analyze and synthesize information, to solve problems creatively, and to communicate clearly and effectively.
- **Lifelong Learning**: Students will regard the pursuit of knowledge and quest for wisdom as a lifelong activity that demands constant commitment and growth – both personally and professionally.
IV. Goals, Strategies and Tactics

Goal 1: Academic Excellence

Strategy 1: Curriculum - Provide a rich and genuinely challenging curriculum that reflects and embodies the core values of the Honors College experience

Tactic 1: Collaborate with the Offices of the Provost and the Registrar to create distinct credentials designed to incentivize students to develop a global perspective, to engage in a study or service abroad experience and to challenge themselves by undertaking an Honors Thesis

Tactic 2: Revise the Honors College curriculum to include a required Capstone Project or Honors Thesis for all graduating students

Tactic 3: Engage with the deans, chairs and faculty to encourage the creation and the regular offering of a broader range of both lower and upper level honors seminars – in particular seminars involving interdisciplinary or experiential learning, as well as those organized around the themes of globalization, leadership and urbanization

Tactic 4: Increase the number of students taking advantage of special offerings such as directed readings, independent study opportunities, and internships

Tactic 5: Create an honors version of the Towson Seminar designed to help develop students’ interest in research at an early stage in their careers and to cultivate a global perspective regarding challenges, issues, and problems facing the contemporary world

Tactic 6: Develop a plan to insure that incoming students complete one honors course during each semester of their first year – the appropriate honors English course and the proposed honors version of the Towson Seminar

Strategy 2: Faculty – Develop and implement a multi-faceted approach to enlist the support of exceptional faculty members in developing and offering new honors courses and seminars on a regular basis and to encourage them to play a larger role in the life of the Honors College

Tactic 1: Create a Presidential Teaching Fellows Program in which, with the approval of the relevant chairperson and dean, the faculty member commits a portion of his or her teaching load to the Honors College for a fixed period of time

Tactic 2: Explore and pursue national and international grant opportunities to attract and support visiting professors and scholars for the Honors College
Tactic 3: Seek to create joint appointments in which select faculty members would have teaching obligations in a specific academic department in addition to the Honors College

Tactic 4: Continue soliciting and collaborating with both experienced and new faculty members to develop and to offer innovative honors courses and seminars

Strategy 3: Research and Scholarship – Develop and implement a multi-faceted approach to encourage honors students to engage in research and scholarship throughout their careers

Tactic 1: Promote a culture of research and scholarship specific to the Honors College by holding an annual Celebration of Learning and Scholarship in the fall semester

Tactic 2: Incentivize research and scholarship within the Honors College by promoting and facilitating opportunities for students to present their work at annual conferences of the Northeast Region Honors Council and the National Collegiate Honors Council

Tactic 3: Promote and facilitate applications from honors students and honors faculty members for the annual Portz Grant administered by the National Collegiate Honors Council

Tactic 4: Create a culture of research and scholarship within the Honors College by promoting research and travel grants available through the Office of Undergraduate Research and opportunities for honors students to present their work at the annual conferences of scholarly organizations such as the Colonial Academic Alliance

Tactic 5: Link opportunities for research and scholarship to plans for developing a global perspective by promoting programs that facilitate research and scholarship abroad

Tactic 6: Promote and encourage submissions of scholarly work by honors students for publication in appropriate undergraduate journals

Goal 2: Student Experience, Engagement and Success

Strategy 1: Co-Curriculum – Develop and implement a wide-ranging program of co-curricular activities and events designed to foster and support core values of the Honors College

Tactic 1: Global Perspective – Create and implement a Global Metro Program designed to help students to gain the experiences, knowledge and skills needed to be successful in an increasingly urban, globalized world

Tactic 2: Global Perspective – Continue to collaborate closely with the Office of Study Abroad to promote study and service abroad opportunities, as well as to incentivize students to take full advantage of these opportunities
Tactic 3: Leadership – Create and implement a new *Leadership Council* designed to give students a greater sense of ownership of the Honors College

Tactic 4: Leadership – Create and pilot a *First-Year Honors Program* in which more experienced honors students mentor small groups of first-year honors students to create a stronger sense of identity and community with in the Honors College

Tactic 5: Diversity – Appoint a staff member to serve on and to function as a liaison with the university’s Diversity Action Committee

Tactic 6: Diversity – Create and implement a Diversity Action Plan for the Honors College

Tactic 7: Living and Learning Community – Continue to build a strong partnership with key staff members in Housing and Residence Life; share the Honors College’s vision and mission with these partners and work with them to identify and collaborate on common goals.

Strategy 2: Under-Represented Groups – Develop and implement appropriate outreach and support programs for students other than those entering the Honors College directly from high school

Tactic 1: Solicit input and develop support programs to ensure all transfer students have the opportunity to become fully integrated members of the Honors College community

Tactic 2: Investigate other under-represented groups as possible sources of diversity for the Honors College – international students, home-schooled students, military veterans, etc.

Goal 3: Leadership and Innovation

Strategy 1: Distinguish the Honors College from those at peer institutions by transforming it into a Global Honors College

Tactic 1: Consult with the President, Provost, Deans and other potential stakeholders to gauge the initial level of support for this idea

Tactic 2: Given sufficient initial support, create a steering committee of stakeholders to explore the feasibility of this idea from a range of perspectives such as curriculum, co-curriculum, research and scholarship opportunities, faculty interest, diversity building opportunities, leadership opportunities, as well as the availability of financial and other resources
Tactic 3: Assuming appropriate institutional support, create a planning committee of key stakeholders charged with developing a plan for this transformation and a timetable for its implementation.

Strategy 2: Raise the profile of the Honors College and the university by providing leadership for the pursuit of national and international scholarships and fellowships.

Tactic 1: Designate a staff member to assume a leadership role in gathering and sharing information about major national and international scholarships and fellowships across the Honors College and university communities.

Tactic 2: Register as an institutional member of the National Association of Fellowship Advisors; have the designated staff member for this area attend the biennial conference and share the expertise and information acquired with key stakeholders in the Honors College and across the university.

Tactic 3: Designate a staff member to organize meetings of faculty coordinators to share best practices in the recruitment, grooming, and support of applicants for national and international scholarships and fellowships.

Strategy 3: Raise the profile of the Honors College and the university by having the Dean, staff, faculty and/or students assume leadership roles in the larger world of honors education.

Tactic 1: Pursue leadership opportunities within the Northeast Region Honors Council and/or the National Collegiate Honors Council.

Tactic 2: Encourage and support honors student leaders to pursue leadership roles with the Northeast Region Honors Council and/or the National Collegiate Honors Council.

Goal 4: Partnerships and Resources for Success.

Strategy 1: Identify potential funding sources for the Honors College and collaborate with the Office of Development to create and implement strategies for cultivating these sources.

Tactic 1: Collaborate with the Office of Development to create and launch an annual fund targeting current honors students, faculty, staff, alumni, parents and other donors.

Tactic 2: Collaborate with the Office of Development in seeking individual or corporate donors interested in underwriting named scholarships, programs, or the Honors College itself.

Strategy 2: Identify key constituencies on campus and beyond that can help to advance the mission of the Honors College; develop effective partnerships with these groups.
**Tactic 1: Campus Partners** – Initiate mission-appropriate collaborations with the Career Center, the Center for Students Diversity, the Center for Civic Engagement, Housing and Residence Life and the Study Abroad Office

**Tactic 2: Community Colleges** – Collaborate with local and regional community colleges with Honors Programs to create an appropriate and effective mechanism to assist in the transfer of highly qualified graduates of these programs into the Honors College

**Tactic 3: Parents** – Explore the best models and practices for Parents Advisory Councils within peer honors colleges and create an appropriate Parents Advisory Council for the Honors College

**Tactic 4: Alumni** – Collaborate with the office of Alumni Relations and the Career Center to create opportunities for alumni to connect with current honors students and to stay engaged in the life of the Honors College

**Goal 5: Telling and Selling Our Story**

**Strategy 1:** Optimize the use and impact of electronic media in support of the mission of the Honors College

- **Tactic 1:** Transition from a print-only Honors College magazine to a digital publication taking full advantage of the wide range of creative possibilities that this medium permits

- **Tactic 2:** Explore the feasibility of using e-portfolios as a way of enabling students to track and integrate the various components of their honors experience; utilize the best elements of these e-portfolios as a highly visual way of showcasing the tremendous opportunities the Honors College experience provides for students

- **Tactic 3:** Undertake a systematic review and revision of the Honors College website to make it more streamlined, easier to navigate, more visually compelling, and a “go-to” information resource for key constituencies

- **Tactic 4:** Explore and implement the use of social media platforms to optimize recruiting efforts and to engage more effectively with current honors students and faculty, as well as with alumni and other key constituencies

**Strategy 2:** Enlist the support of and make full use of internal and external resources in telling and selling the story of the Honors College

- **Tactic 1:** Collaborate with University Marketing and Communications to set and achieve goals for branding and marketing the Honors College to appropriate audiences
**Tactic 2**: Enlist the support of chairs and faculty to use the Honors College in recruiting outstanding students

**Tactic 3**: Develop and implement additional strategies for selling the unique advantages that the Honors College makes available to students and faculty