

Blueprint for Academic Excellence, 2007

South Carolina Honors College
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I. Vision, Mission, Goals

A. Executive Summary

Vision: The South Carolina Honors College will provide the best undergraduate honors education in the United States. South Carolina Honors College—leading learning, driving discovery.

To a considerable degree the South Carolina Honors College has succeeded in fulfilling its vision. A variety of indicators (number of applications, quality of students, richness of academic opportunities, post-graduate success of its students) provide persuasive evidence that the South Carolina Honors College is one of the two or three very best honors colleges in the country. In addition, the Honors College has successfully developed and exported to the broader University innovative approaches to undergraduate education. This is most clearly seen in the creation of the Office of Undergraduate Research, but we are also working on study abroad opportunities, service learning and more prosaic innovations such as on-line student evaluations of classes. But leadership is a moving target, and only through additional innovation will the College continue to lead in the development of undergraduate education.

Mission: The South Carolina Honors College provides a superlative undergraduate education for academically gifted students that combines the intimacy and personal attention of a small liberal arts college with the resources and academic depth of a comprehensive research university. Integral to this mission is developing innovative approaches to undergraduate education that can be exported to the broader University and beyond.

The College supports the broader University it inhabits in many ways. Programmatically, the College has spearheaded work on study abroad, service learning and undergraduate research that is being developed by the University at large. The Honors College provides a venue for University faculty members to try new courses before they implement them in the broader University curriculum. Honors College students frequently take leadership roles in their non-Honors classes and in the University more broadly considered; while Honors College students

make up 7% of USC's undergraduate population, a third of the members of student government are Honors College students.

The Honors College initially was established to staunch the flow of South Carolina's brightest students out of the State. The College has been fully successful in realizing this mission, and now the College is adding to this mission the goal of attracting academically gifted students from out-of-state to USC and to South Carolina. Not merely to retaining South Carolina's best and brightest, the Honors College is now augmenting the State's human capital with future leaders drawn to South Carolina from other states. This past year over 900 of the 1600+ applications to the Honors College came from out-of-state.

Goals:

- (1) Enhance the Honors College curriculum, and where appropriate and possible, promote the export of Honors College innovations to the broader University;
- (2) Establish the South Carolina Honors College as an undergraduate "destination of choice" for academically gifted high school students;
- (3) Expand external support;
- (4) Enhance Honors College living-learning communities;
- (5) Improve the College's administrative facilities;
- (6) Improve Honors College advising;
- (7) Expand and improve the use of information technology for educational support.

These goals carry forward from the previous year. Many of the more specific initiatives also carry forward with appropriate modifications. Some initiatives have been dropped, usually because they have been completed, and some have been added. These changes are indicated initiative by initiative.