The Davidson Honors College
Strategic Plan
2014-2020
Approved by the DHC Faculty Advisory Board, April 28, 2014

INTRODUCTION

This strategic plan will advance the mission of the Davidson Honors College within the framework of the University of Montana strategic plan, *UM 2020: Building a University for the Global Century*. The DHC Strategic Plan will be implemented over the period 2014-2020, with annual assessment of progress toward strategic goals. External review of strategic planning outcomes will occur during the next regular program review of the DHC, scheduled in academic year 2017-2018.

MISSION STATEMENT

The Davidson Honors College serves as a center and symbol of the University’s commitment to excellence in undergraduate education. As part of its mission, the DHC:

- offers an enriched program of liberal arts education for outstanding students of all majors;
- fosters intellectual and civic values: inquiry, discovery, knowledge, and imagination, as well as responsibility, community, leadership, and service; and
- provides support for instructional innovation, and for the best possible teaching and learning circumstances for faculty and students.

VISION STATEMENT

The Davidson Honors College aspires to become a program of national distinction, recognized as one of the most comprehensive and innovative Honors programs in the nation.
CORE VALUES

- **Academic Excellence** – We seek excellence in all of our educational endeavors, both inside and outside the classroom.

- **Leadership** – We encourage the development of moral and responsible leadership.

- **Intellectual Freedom** – We recognize and protect full freedom of inquiry, teaching, research, discussion, study, publication, and, for artists, the creation and exhibition of works of art.

- **Integrity** – We adhere to principles of truth and honesty, and we resolve to act in an honorable, ethical, and professional manner.

- **Diversity** – We support diversity, tolerance, and community among students, faculty, and staff.

- **Sustainability** – Our programs and activities promote the conservation of natural resources, social justice, and sustainable development.

- **Civic Engagement** – We strive to serve as citizens of our local, regional, state, national and global communities.

STRATEGIC GOALS

*Note:* Concrete and quantifiable objectives have been provided (wherever possible) for each of the following strategic goals. Unless otherwise stated, the target date for accomplishment of each objective is June 2020, with annual assessment of progress in each area.

1. **Academic Excellence** – The Davidson Honors College will give its students a liberal arts education that enables them to understand the compass and diversity of the world, the gifts and burdens of culture, and the glories and limits of the sciences. We will become a nationally recognized model for academic excellence through student engagement, classroom instruction, and undergraduate research and creative scholarship.

**Objectives:**

a. Recruit and retain well-prepared, highly motivated students. **Strategic Targets:**

   *Increase the number of DHC applicants to 600 per year. Sustain first-year DHC student retention at 90%. Improve five-year DHC student graduation rate to 78%.*

1 These goals for DHC retention and graduation rates are consistent with national norms for highly selective four-year public colleges offering doctoral degrees; see ACT Data on Retention and Graduation Rates for 2013.
b. Expand the DHC program to enroll a greater number of qualified students while maintaining rigorous academic standards. **Strategic Target:** Increase the total number of DHC students to 1,000, or approximately 10% of UM undergraduates enrolled in baccalaureate programs.

c. Recruit and engage with outstanding UM faculty. **Strategic Target:** Seek administrative approval for the creation of additional full-time faculty positions having a 50/50 allocation of effort between their home department and the Davidson Honors College.

d. Enhance the Honors curriculum in consultation with the DHC Faculty Advisory Board and the DHC Student Advisory Council. **Strategic Target:** Continue to develop a comprehensive program of liberal education for Honors students of all majors.

e. Improve the assessment of Honors student engagement and student learning outcomes. **Strategic Target:** In harmony with campus-wide and departmental assessment initiatives, develop qualitative and quantitative assessment procedures for all Honors courses.

f. Provide accessible and effective advising and mentoring for Honors students, and sustain the development of an Honors student peer mentoring program. **Strategic Target:** Improve recruitment and training for student peer mentors in HONR 120 Introduction to Honors.

g. Increase access and provide financial support for internships. **Strategic Target:** In collaboration with Internship Services, the Washington Center for Internships, and IE3 Global Internships, enhance internship opportunities for DHC students and seek private, corporate, and state funding support for internships.

h. Enhance opportunities for Study Abroad, in collaboration with the Office of International Programs. **Strategic Target:** Enhance and diversify financial support for study abroad. Increase participation in study abroad to 25% of DHC students in each graduating cohort.

i. Encourage student participation in undergraduate research and creative activity. **Strategic Target:** Seek enhanced funding for Undergraduate Research Scholarships. Create additional incentives (such as summer faculty development awards) for faculty to serve as mentors for undergraduate research.
j. Assess and improve the Davidson Honors College program completion rate (that is, the percentage of DHC students in each freshman cohort who successfully graduate as University Scholars). **Strategic Target:** Compile reliable data on the DHC program completion rate, time to graduation, and average debt load. Sustain the DHC program completion rate at 50% of DHC students in each freshman cohort.

k. Promote and evaluate student success in post-graduate employment and admission to graduate and professional schools. **Strategic Target:** Compile reliable data on post-graduate employment and graduate/professional school admissions for DHC graduates.

l. Become a Program of National Distinction. **Strategic Target:** Develop benchmark comparisons with aspirational peer institutions to assess progress toward national standards of excellence in Honors education.²

2. Leadership Development – Encourage the development of moral and responsible leadership through Honors courses and applied learning experiences.

**Objectives:**

a. Support development of Honors curriculum in ethics and leadership. **Strategic Target:** Work with UM faculty members to explore the feasibility of a certificate program in Ethics and Public Affairs composed primarily of Honors-designated courses.

b. Enhance leadership development in *Introduction to Honors Seminar* (HONR 120). **Strategic Target:** Provide leadership training for HONR 120 student mentors, and engage HONR 120 faculty in the development of leadership curriculum.

c. Promote student leadership opportunities through the Honors Student Association, the DHC Student Advisory Council, national Honors societies, UM Advocates, ASUM, and other student organizations. **Strategic Target:** Document and assess student participation in leadership activities.

d. Broaden the applicant pool and increase the number of prestigious national scholarships awarded to UM students. **Strategic Target:** In collaboration with university administrators and faculty members, develop more effective ways of recruiting and mentoring applicants for prestigious national scholarships.

² The National Collegiate Honors Council has identified the best practices that are common to successful honors colleges. See **Basic Characteristics of a Fully Developed Honors College**.
e. Include ethical reflection as an essential component of all Honors courses.
   
   **Strategic Target:** In collaboration with faculty members teaching Honors courses, encourage engagement with ethical theory and applied ethics in every Honors course.

3. **Diversity and Access** – Engage an ethnically, culturally, economically, and geographically diverse student body and offer Honors courses that promote cultural awareness and intercultural communication.

   **Objectives:**
   
   a. Recruit and retain ethnically, culturally, and geographically diverse students.
      
      **Strategic Target:** Compile reliable data on diversity of DHC student population; increase diversity of student population through affirmative action and targeted recruitment.
   
   b. Raise private funds (in collaboration with UM Foundation) to create scholarships and awards for students of diverse heritage. **Strategic Target:** Create at least one additional Honors scholarship for students of diverse heritage.
   
   c. Collaborate with the Equal Opportunity & Affirmative Action Office, American Indian Student Services, the Day of Dialogue Committee, and other UM diversity programs.
      
      **Strategic Target:** Enhance DHC commitment to diversity through participation in campus-wide diversity initiatives.
   
   d. Enhance DHC commitment to diversity through student participation in cultural events.
      
      **Strategic Target:** Engage with ASUM student groups in Academics & Honors and Language & Culture to promote intercultural communication.
   
   e. Design facility upgrades to assure that the DHC building is fully ADA-accessible.
      
      **Strategic Target:** Include ADA access as an essential design criterion for all future DHC building projects and facility upgrades.

4. **Sustainability** – Develop programs and activities that promote the conservation of natural resources, social justice, and sustainable economic development.

   **Objectives:**
   
   a. Develop an Honors curriculum that promotes understanding of environmental science, sustainability, and solutions to environmental problems. **Strategic Target:** Develop new Honors courses in the environmental sciences, sustainability, and the Climate Change Studies minor program.
b. Engage DHC students in concrete initiatives to improve energy efficiency in the DHC Building, Knowles Hall, and elsewhere on the UM campus. **Strategic Target:** Collaborate with DHC Student Advisory Council to develop new recycling and energy efficiency initiatives.

c. Provide funding support for DHC students who enroll in internships that promote sustainable solutions to environmental problems. **Strategic Target:** Develop a transparent process for DHC students to apply for funding support for internships that address environmental issues.

5. **Civic Engagement** – Provide opportunities and encourage student participation in community service.

**Objectives:**

a. Enhance existing programs in the Office for Civic Engagement (OCE). **Strategic Target:** Document and assess the quality of OCE programs, and target additional resources to the development of community service opportunities for all UM students.

b. Support the Service Learning Advisory Board in its mission to develop and implement service learning courses and promote community engagement. **Strategic Target:** Continue to offer at least 40 service learning courses per year.

c. Offer professional development opportunities for UM faculty and staff to become more fully engaged in service learning. **Strategic Target:** Organize and recruit faculty to participate in UM’s Service Learning Colloquium, to be held in 2014, 2017, and 2020.

d. Encourage and recognize DHC student participation in community service. **Strategic Target:** Increase participation in service learning courses to 25% of DHC students in each graduating cohort.

e. Support and encourage student and campus-wide involvement in National Service programs. **Strategic Target:** Compile reliable data on student and departmental participation in the Americorps national service program.

f. Educate and prepare students for careers in the nonprofit sector. **Strategic Target:** In collaboration with the Department of Political Science and SELL, sustain and promote the Nonprofit Management minor, the nonprofit track in the MPA graduate program, and the online professional certificate program in Nonprofit Management.
g. Provide assessment data for service learning and civic engagement to the university administration to support key goals of the UM Strategic Plan. **Strategic Target:** Gather data in support of UM’s recognition through the President’s Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll and the Carnegie Elective Classification for Community Engagement.

6. **Communication and Outreach** – Enhance the visibility and centrality of the Davidson Honors College on the UM campus and publicize the quality of the Davidson Honors College at the local, state, and national levels.

**Objectives:**

a. Become recognized as a leader in the National Collegiate Honors Council (NCHC) and the Western Regional Honors Council (WRHC) through student and faculty conference presentations, committee membership, and service by DHC faculty in peer Honors program review. **Strategic Targets:** At least two student presentations at each annual NCHC and WRHC conference; at least one DHC faculty or staff presentation per year at the NCHC or WRHC conference. The DHC Dean should maintain professional certification as an NCHC-approved site visitor for Honors programs.

b. Publicize the success of the Davidson Honors College and its outstanding students, faculty, and staff through DHC publications and website development. **Strategic Target:** Publish two DHC newsletters per year; develop DHC parents communication network; redesign the DHC website for consistency with UM web templates.

c. Provide timely information for University Relations to create press releases when DHC students earn prestigious scholarships and awards. **Strategic Target:** Notify University Relations within one week of receiving notification of each scholarship and award.

d. Collaborate with Admissions Office to feature the Davidson Honors College in University recruitment materials and outreach events. **Strategic Target:** Develop a comprehensive DHC recruitment strategy involving print and online publications, campus visit days, and social media.

e. Communicate with Davidson Honors College students, faculty, donors, parents, and alumni through DHC newsletters, targeted mailings, e-mail, and website development. **Strategic Target:** Sustain the DHC Director of Development as a full-time position with broad responsibility for communication with external constituents.
7. Development – In collaboration with the UM Administration and the UM Foundation, assure a strong financial foundation for the continued growth and development of the Davidson Honors College.

Objectives:

a. Engage in development activities with the UM Foundation and the DHC External Advisory Board to raise private funds in support of DHC scholarships, programs, and initiatives. Promote the Investing in Student Success campaign priorities for the DHC:

1) Presidential Leadership Scholarships ($6 million target). A major expansion of this premier scholarship program will transform the University. **Strategic Target:**

   *Increase the number of PLS Scholarships awarded to 45 per year.*

2) DHC Program Innovation Funds ($2 million target). These endowments provide flexible discretionary funding for the DHC to realize unique educational opportunities. Current funding priorities include:

   - Faculty Fellowships – provide support for faculty members to teach Honors courses and advise Honors students.
   - Academic Enrichment – provide support for students to engage in study abroad, internships, service learning and undergraduate research.
   - Building Renovation – provide funding for continuous improvement and future expansion of DHC facilities for teaching and learning.