Penn State shield logo with black text and blue shield

Unit Strategic Plan: Schreyer Honors College

2014/2015 through 2018/2019

A more detailed version of this plan can be found at:

<https://www.shc.psu.edu/about/strategic/>



Strategic Plan

*2014-15 to 2018-19*

*In the Schreyer Honors College lives are transformed, friendships are made, experiences create lasting bonds, and ethical, global leaders are shaped.*

## Mission

The mission of the Schreyer Honors College is to promote:

1. Achieving academic excellence with integrity
2. Building a global perspective, and
3. Creating opportunities for leadership and civic engagement

## Vision

1. To educate men and women who will have an important and ethical influence in the world, affecting academic, professional, civic, social, and business outcomes.
2. To improve educational practices and to be recognized as a leading force in honors education nationwide.

## Introduction

The following strategic plan builds upon the eighteen-year success story of the Schreyer Honors College (SHC) and the strong academic foundations of the University Scholars Program that was first established in 1980. As we approach the 20th anniversary of the SHC, it is widely considered [*the* premiere honors college](http://www.examiner.com/article/the-nation-s-top-public-university-honors-programs?CID=examiner_alerts_article) in the nation, serving as a model for others to emulate.

An honors college is only as good as the University that it is a part of and the success of the SHC stems from the fact that Penn State is in the top 1% of all research universities in the world. As a result of this strong foundation and the unique mission and vision of the college, the Schreyer Honors College was recently ranked the nation’s top public honors college, and has been for the last decade. More importantly, we have also seen an increase in the number of our students winning national fellowships and scholarships, growing strength in placement in top graduate and professional schools, and employment rates of our graduates.

For high achieving undergraduate students, the academic reputation of Penn State is defined through their engagement with the SHC through admissions visits, the [SHC website](http://news.psu.edu/story/341860/2015/01/22/academics/less-one-year-after-launch-schreyer-honors-college-wins-website), and ultimately as enrolled Schreyer Scholars.

A guiding principle of the SHC is that an honors college should not be a cloistered environment for just a chosen few. While the number of those selected is of necessity limited, the benefits of the honors college should reverberate throughout the university. This means that honors courses are open to any who wish to challenge themselves, lectures and special events are open to the entire Penn State community, and pedagogical methodologies that may be tested within honors courses and found to be successful and scalable are made available to the entire university.

These basic principles of representing the entire University and being of benefit to the entire community are the basis upon which the following plan has been developed.

## How to Read this Strategy

Past strategic plans and the 2011 report from the University Park Academic Review Coordinating Committee (UPARCC) were consulted. Reference should be made to [our response](https://www.shc.psu.edu/documents/about/strategic-plan/core_council_response.pdf) to the [UPARCC report](https://www.shc.psu.edu/documents/about/strategic-plan/core_council.pdf); throughout this plan their recommendations will be cited, e.g., “(UPARCC 1)”. The [Framework to Foster Diversity](http://equity.psu.edu/framework) has now been incorporated into this strategic plan; the seven challenges will be cited, e.g., “(Challenge 1”). This strategic plan should also be read in consultation with the University Strategic Plan for the same time period.

Ethics and integrity, including developing a diverse and supportive environment, are integral to the mission and vision of the SHC. Thus the reader will find these principles woven into each of our strategies, even when not highlighted.

Finally, where the SHC plan lines up with President Barron’s six initiatives it will be so indicated. Those initiatives are:

1. Excellence

2. Student Engagement

3. Economic Development and Student Career Success

4. Diversity and Demographics

5. Access and Affordability

6. Technology and Curriculum Delivery as foundational principles, along with Sustainability and Global Engagement.

# Strategic Objectives

### Align with the University

The SHC must be integrated with all aspects of the University to fully reflect the Penn State University community.

### Build Diversity

Expand the overall diversity of the college to create and maintain an environment where students are a part of a community that is vibrant and varied in terms of, for example, origin, ethnicity, political views, sexual orientation, and religion.

### Enhance Academics

Raise the quality of the academic experience of Scholars, honors faculty, and advisers. The exceptional quality of work produced throughout our community helps to consistently set new standards of excellence for Penn State and peer institutions. Over the past two years, the following have been initiated: Thesis support programs, required scholarly presentations for funded research projects and Recording of Academic Research (ROAR).

### Promote Knowledge Creation

Expand opportunities for students to communicate their learning, research, writing, and contributions to knowledge creation. Measure and assess via surveys and tracking of publications and presentations.

### Expand Global Opportunities and Participation

We will support building a global perspective to make sure our students truly have a broad sense of the world by increasing the percentage of Scholars who have an international experience from 45% to 60% participation rate within 5 years. Ensure a strong offering of SHC specific travel opportunities and continue to partner with OGP and other units. Provide a guaranteed travel stipend for each student to use during his or her time as a Schreyer Scholar. Funds will be secured before announcing this initiative.

### Shape Leaders, Launch Careers

Design and offer leadership formation programs that coordinate with other University offerings. Such programs should include training and experience-based opportunities that focus on the importance of ethical leadership. Continue the strong record of preparing Scholars for their chosen careers and fields of research. Nearly 45% of Scholars go directly into graduate/professional school and of the remaining 55% almost all are employed or in volunteer positions upon graduation. In both programs we will continue to draw upon support from our alumni.

### Share the Schreyer Secret

Build national awareness of the SHC among target audiences.

# Strategies to Achieve Objectives

*Strategies may cut across several objectives. Strategic initiatives are critical to the launch of this plan and are either completed or currently in process.*

## Key

* SHC strategic objectives (p. 4) are indicated **by number in** **BLUE**.
* President Barron’s initiatives (p. 3) are indicated **by** **number in** **RED**.

### Create University partnerships (UPARCC 1, 2, 3, 5, 6; Challenges 1, 2, 3, 4, 5)

### With the support of the President and Provost, partner across the University (e.g., the Colleges, Commonwealth campuses, undergraduate admissions, Educational Equity, and financial aid) through proactive communication, formal partnerships, leading coordination efforts and joint appointments to enhance recruiting, diversity, admissions, advising, academics, development, sustainability and complete student health support.

**Objectives supported:**

1, 2, 3

1, 4, 6

**Measures/Metrics:**

Many relationships already exist, such as the Paterno Fellows Program in Liberal Arts and collaboration with the Undergraduate Admissions Office (UAO). Additional and more formal relationships will continue to be established.

**Budget impact:**

In most cases there will be no budgetary impact. Possible joint appointments with UAO and CAPS would require appropriate funds for shared salaries and benefits.

### Promote best practices in honors education (UPARCC 1, 5, 6; Challenges 2, 3, 5) Develop, implement, and promote a “best practices” model for faculty, advisers, and Scholars to enhance honors education across the colleges addressing honors courses, faculty advising, thesis advising, and thesis writing. The model will include training, support, expectations, measures, recognition, and rewards.

In our efforts, we will continue to promote integrity and ethical behavior in all that we do. We will also support and disseminate the work of the newly-formed [University Office of Ethics and Compliance.](http://www.universityethics.psu.edu/) These values include the highest standards of ethics, honesty, and integrity by promoting a culture that encourages ethical conduct and a commitment to compliance with legal and regulatory obligations.

**Objectives supported:**

1, 2, 3, 4, 6

1, 2, 3, 4, 6

**Measures/Metrics:**

This will include the continuation of the annual “Honors Advising and Teaching” (HAT) Conference for faculty and advisors to provide updates, best practices, training and information sharing opportunities. Some work has begun in this area, including the HAT Conference, and the collaboration with colleges and departments to create theses guides that reflect the best research methods practices of each discipline. Within the time-frame of the strategic plan a full model will be developed.

**Budget impact:**

There should be little to no budgetary impact.

### Create an assessment program for Honors Education (UPARCC 1, 5; Challenges 3, 5)

### Lead the nation by creating the first assessment of the honors experience. There does not exist any sort of tool to assess the quality and impact of honors education on a student’s collegiate experience. Such a tool will be developed with Penn State resources such as the Schreyer Institute for Teaching Excellence. This is a major undertaking and is in fulfillment of our vision “to improve educational practices and to be recognized as a leading force in honors education nationwide.”

While we currently do various surveys to determine, e.g., students’ experiences in the SHC relating to coursework, advising, study abroad, and cultural climate, there does not exist a systematic and unified program of analysis. We will create a full program that will begin with baseline assessment of incoming first-year and Gateway students and culminate with senior surveys to not only gather the data we currently acquire, but to truly *evaluate* their honors experience in relation to the mission and vision of the SHC.

**Objectives supported:**

1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7

1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6

**Measures/Metrics:**

This does not yet exist either here or at any other university. The goal at this stage is simply to create such a tool, then we will be able to set metrics based upon those factors assessed.

**Budget impact:**

Utilizing University resources, there should be little to no budgetary impact.

### Build an engaged community (UPARCC 1, 3, 4, 6; Challenges 2, 3, 4, 6, 7)

Engage Scholar alumni, current and past scholar parents, and donors and friends to support the college in recruitment, education and development, mentoring and career placement.

The SHC already has a very robust program for engaging alumni and parents, e.g., over 500 alumni who interview prospective students and the first college at Penn State to have a Parents Council. We need to build upon these relationships for the further support of our students and particularly with regards to building a more diverse community.

Additional goals include:

* Further develop alumni mentoring program with specific focus on recruitment of Under Represented Minority (URM) students at both the first year and Gateway admissions and further support of the same community. (See next objective.)
* Define an alumni contact tracking process and establish systems support as available.
* Consider creating a future alumni ambassador program within each Scholar class to assist with recruitment of senior Scholars.

**Objectives supported:**

1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7

1, 2, 4, 5, 6

**Measures/Metrics:**

The number of alumni, parents, and friends of the college engaged serve as one set of data. The students engaged another. Reference to data developed through the assessment program (see above) will ultimately provide detailed metrics.

**Budget impact:**

Resources, primarily staff time, within the development office, career development office, and technology will need to be allocated.

### Expand and enhance SHC diversity (UPARCC 1, 4, 5, 6; Challenges 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7)

Draw upon faculty, students, staff, and alumni to create and foster a diverse and inclusive educational experience. The SHC has long been committed to developing and supporting a diverse community, in terms of faculty, staff, and students. Yet current tactics have yielded little change specifically in the diversity of the SHC student body.

Tactics to achieve this goal (see Appendix 2) will include, but not be limited to collaboration with UAO, campuses, and colleges in order to recruit students of underrepresented populations, specifically African American, Hispanic American, and Native American. We will engage our alumni from these communities to assist us in recruitment.

The SHC Diversity committee will also be revitalized with new appointments of both faculty and students. We will seek their advice and guidance for all levels of diversity concerns from admissions to advising to programming.

Finally, we will continue to work with our HR support in the President’s office, following the University’s best practices, to advertise and recruit applicants for all job vacancies.

**Objectives supported:**

1, 2, 6, 7

1, 2, 4, 5

**Measures/Metrics:**

Student Goal: Increase URM representation to 10%; non-PA representation to 30% in 5 years. Demonstrate efforts to diversify staff through appropriate hiring processes.

**Budget impact:**

Any additional scholarship funds will need to be raised, but most other expenses are simply a matter of allocating existing resources.

### Deliver digital content (UPARCC 1, 5, 6; Challenges 2, 3, 5) Parents and prospective students use the internet to research schools while current students take courses and receive news and updates through Penn State services. We will build upon current online webinars for admissions and explore using digital delivery systems to expand the reach of honors courses and programs.

Examples of efforts will include piloting digital delivery of leadership events/programs to provide access to more Scholars including those at other campuses and non-traditional Scholars. The pilot may partner with Penn State World Campus and leverage established delivery systems.

**Objectives supported:**

1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7

1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6

**Measures/Metrics:**

Analytics from current admissions offerings will be compared with future efforts. Other programs will be first-time offerings and analytics will be collected and analyzed accordingly.

**Budget impact:**

Marginal and will need to be allocated within relevant budget.

### Grow scholarship opportunities (UPARCC 2, 4, 6; Challenges 2, 3, 7)

Broaden the types and sources of scholarships through ongoing creative engagement with the Provost, the University Admissions Office, other Penn State colleges, and donors, or by reallocating funding.

Complete the annual development plan that will include increased use of social media and will be focused on scholarship funding.

**Objectives supported:**

1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7,

1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6

**Measures/Metrics:**

Goals for development will soon be set for the next Penn State campaign.

**Budget impact:**

Management of current donors is vital and we have recently, with the Provost’s support, added a Stewardship Coordinator to our development staff.

### Provide support for holistic well-being (UPARCC 1, 4, 6; Challenges 2, 3)

In the face of the growing demands facing high-achieving students, and requests from our students, we are committed to teaching our scholars coping mechanisms that will lead to their overall success, not just intellectually, but in their physical and mental health and well being. Scholars face the usual challenges of all college students: stress, social adjustments, sexual identity, substance abuse, sexual assault and others. In shaping leaders who shape the world, we must also equip our students with the knowledge of how to cope with life’s non-academic challenges.

**Objectives supported:**

1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7

1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6

**Measures/Metrics:**

Surveys used in the new assessment plan (see Strategy 2, above) will include as appropriate questions to gain some baseline understanding of students’ needs. Exit surveys will gather data regarding whether they feel their needs have been met.

**Budget impact:**

It is not expected that the SHC would add any new staff, rather we would build partnerships with CAPS. Still some funds for programming and events will need to be allocated from existing budgets.

### Support Global Initiatives (UPARCC 1, 2, 6; Challenges 1, 2, 3, 4, 5)

As the second point in our mission, the SHC has supported international experiences for our students since the foundation of the college in 1997. Nearly 45% of all Scholars study abroad. In the next five years we will seek to achieve 60%. Known challenges include funding, domestic curricular commitments within majors, and internship needs.

“Building a global perspective” is also not limited to actually travelling abroad. We will continue to host international scholars and guests, offer various events, and course offerings that provide students with a truly global perspective.

**Objectives supported:**

1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7

1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6

**Measures/Metrics:**

Current baseline at graduation is close to 45%. Incoming student surveys (see Strategy 2) will help us understand their “perspective” on the world and not just where they have traveled.

**Budget impact:**

The Schreyer Ambassador Travel Grant pool must be greatly expanded and will be a major goal of the next capital campaign.

### Develop an integrated communications and marketing program (UPARCC 1, 4, 6; Challenges 1, 2, 3, 4)

Develop an integrated communications and marketing program to build awareness and engagement. Develop and deploy an integrated annual communications, marketing and recruiting plan that focuses on a manageable set of clearly defined target audiences. (See Appendix 2) The following audiences will be targeted: potential Scholars and their families, high school guidance counselors, underrepresented communities, Scholars, Scholar parents, faculty and staff, Scholar alumni, donors and friends, and corporate recruiters

**Objectives supported:**

1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7

1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6

**Measures/Metrics:**

Increase in news citations, web impressions, and other analytics.

**Budget impact:**

Communications already has a significant budget, this will be done within the current allocation.

### Explore possible growth of freshmen gate (UPARCC 1, 2, 4, 5, 6; Challenges 2, 3, 7) The Provost has directed the SHC to undertake a feasibility study to incrementally grow the freshman gate by up to 25% in the next five years while maintaining the quality of the Scholars admitted. Findings will be reported to the Provost for final decision regarding such an expansion. (See Appendix 1) Included will be first pass estimates of the sequence of the build-out and funding needed in these areas:

Faculty

Advising

Facilities

Scholarships

Processes and systems

Admissions marketing and recruitment

Administration

Student programs

Career services

Campuses and colleges impact, roles and responsibilities

Evaluate partnering with academic colleges to expand sophomore and junior gate programs to increase Scholar class size

**Objectives supported:**

1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7

1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6

**Measures/Metrics:**

See Appendix 1

**Budget impact:**

See Appendix 1

# Tactics

Appendices containing the detailed tactics for accomplishing the above Strategic Objectives can be found on our site <http://shc.psu.edu/strategic/> along with a matrix detailing responsible parties.