



NATIONAL COLLEGIATE  
HONORS COUNCIL



**Vision 2028**

## Dear Members of the National Collegiate Honors Council,

Since its founding in 1966, the National Collegiate Honors Council™ (NCHC) has stood as a pillar of support for honors education. Remarkably, for nearly forty years, NCHC operated solely through volunteer leadership, a testament to the dedication that remains at the core of our community. While much has changed in both higher education and NCHC, it is the profound volunteer leadership throughout our organization that makes it such a special community of educators, administrators, professional staff, and students.

Remembering the past while looking to the future, the volunteer leadership of NCHC has been working on a strategic plan to guide our activities for the next three years. This plan arrives during a pivotal time in higher education; as we navigate a rapidly shifting landscape, the same spirit of volunteerism and commitment to excellence drive us forward.

The need to anticipate and adapt to the future in honors education has brought us to this moment. With great enthusiasm and a progressive mentality, we present Vision 2028. Developed through an intensive, collaborative process, this strategic plan reflects NCHC's unique role within higher education. By blending insights from our history with feedback from our members, we have crafted a forward-looking strategy focused on three key areas: Mission Excellence, Organizational Sustainability, and Professional Impact.

This strategic plan positions NCHC to champion a bold vision: by 2028, NCHC will further establish its position as the authoritative leader in honors education discourse, driving mission excellence and organizational sustainability through a cohesive approach to publications, research, and professional development intertwined with our recent document: "NCHC Shared Principles and Practices of Honors Education."

This plan outlines how we will strengthen our foundations, mobilize resources, expand our influence via partnerships, and foster an inclusive culture that positions us to lead with agility and purpose, elevating our professional impact among the honors community.

This vision statement is just the beginning. We invite you to explore our Strategic Planning Workbook, which details our goals, strategies, and action steps. We will continue to provide updates at our annual conference and welcome ongoing input as we navigate the path ahead together.

Our gratitude goes out to the Ad Hoc Strategic Planning Committee, the Board of Directors, the NCHC professional staff, nearly 150 NCHC members, and Catalyst Consulting Services for their contributions to Vision 2028.

In the spirit of growth and future planning, remember: change is inevitable. Let us choose progress and lead for positive change.

Sincerely,

**James N. Zebrowski, Jr., MS** Executive Director, NCHC

**Eddie Weller, PhD** President, NCHC | Director of the Honors Program, San Jacinto College

**Darryl Peterkin, PhD** President Elect, NCHC

## Table of Contents

- 01** Board of Directors and Ad Hoc Strategic Planning Committee
- 02** Executive Summary
- 03** Theory of Change
- 04** Overview
- 05** Conferences and Resources
- 06** Aspirational Statements and Strategy



## 01 Board of Directors and Ad Hoc Strategic Planning Committee

### 2024 Board of Directors

Eddie Weller, San Jacinto Community College – *President*  
 Dan Roberts, Virginia State University – *Vice President*  
 Darryl Peterkin – *President Elect*  
 Susan Dinan, Adelphi University – *Immediate Past President*  
 John Emert, Ball State University – *Treasurer*  
 Carrie Pritchett, Brazosport College – *Secretary*  
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 Anne Dotter, Johnson County Community College  
 Aaron Hanlin  
 Shayan Hosseini,\* University of Nevada-Reno  
 Clay Loper,\* Angelo State University  
 Marcella McCoy-Deh, Thomas Jefferson University  
 Fawn-Amber Montoya, James Madison University  
 Minh Nguyen, Florida Gulf Coast University  
 Jillian Richarz,\* University of Tampa  
 Alannah Rosenberg, Saddleback College  
 Mike Sloane, University of Alabama at Birmingham  
 Patricia Smith, University of Central Arkansas  
 Christopher Syrnyk, Oregon Institute of Technology  
 Katelyn Walker,\* Eastern Kentucky University

\*Denotes Student Members

### Ad Hoc Strategic Planning Committee

Richard Badenhausen, Westminster University  
 Jim Buss, Ball State University  
 Andrew Cognard-Black, St. Mary's College of Maryland  
 Ryan Diehl, Hutchinson Community College  
 Susan Dinan, Adelphi University – *Ex Officio*  
 Ebonie Hill, Oklahoma State University  
 Amber Klaus, NCHC – *Director of Volunteer Stewardship*  
 Darryl Peterkin  
 Deirdre Ragan, The Citadel  
 Jillian Richarz, University of Tampa  
 Dan Roberts, Virginia State University  
 Patricia Smith, University of Central Arkansas  
 Eddie Weller, San Jacinto College District – *Ex Officio*  
 James Zebrowski, NCHC – *Executive Director*



## 02 Executive Summary

Engaging in the strategic planning process was an opportunity to invest in the future of NCHC. We worked diligently to ensure that the entire process was inclusive and transparent, aimed at advancing the organization’s goals through collective engagement.

The process sought to strengthen NCHC holistically, providing clear and realistic direction for the board and professional staff to build consensus on the organization’s trajectory and improve resource development efforts to support our growth. Rather than using a one-size-fits-all approach, NCHC tailored its strategy to fit the organization’s unique needs by employing the S.M.A.R.T. goals model. This ensured that the strategic plan remained adaptable and actionable. The process included understanding NCHC’s overall mission; setting specific, achievable goals; and establishing a detailed plan with assigned responsibilities and timelines to reach these objectives.

In March of 2024, NCHC formed an Ad Hoc Strategic Planning Committee composed of members representing diverse communities within NCHC and embodying extensive experience with the organization. Meeting monthly, this committee facilitated the participation of key stakeholders and ensured forward momentum. The committee’s role was to guide the process, align actions with NCHC’s mission, and leverage opportunities for in-depth discussions at the June board meeting, with focus groups, and in individual conversations.

In June of 2024, the NCHC Board of Directors and professional staff participated in two strategic planning sessions, synthesizing feedback from a SWOT analysis and other brainstorming discussions. These sessions helped with formulating goals, strategies, and action steps that aligned with the organization’s mission. Board members also contributed to identifying focus groups and additional interviewees to ensure broad representation and incorporate diverse viewpoints into Vision 2028.



In July of 2024, Catalyst Consulting Services conducted focus groups and surveys with presidents, provosts, external partners, students, faculty, staff, committee leaders, and deans and directors. The raw findings of these discussions were shared with the Ad Hoc Strategic Planning Committee—which took steps to ensure the concerns of membership were addressed in the plan. NCHC leadership also met one on one with members who could not attend any of the focus group discussions but should have been a part of the conversation about this plan.

## We focused our questions on 5 areas:

1

How is NCHC perceived by students, faculty, provosts, deans and directors, and our education partners? How can we serve as a valuable resource in honors education?

2

What programmatic opportunities can we leverage or create that would increase our impact within higher education?

3

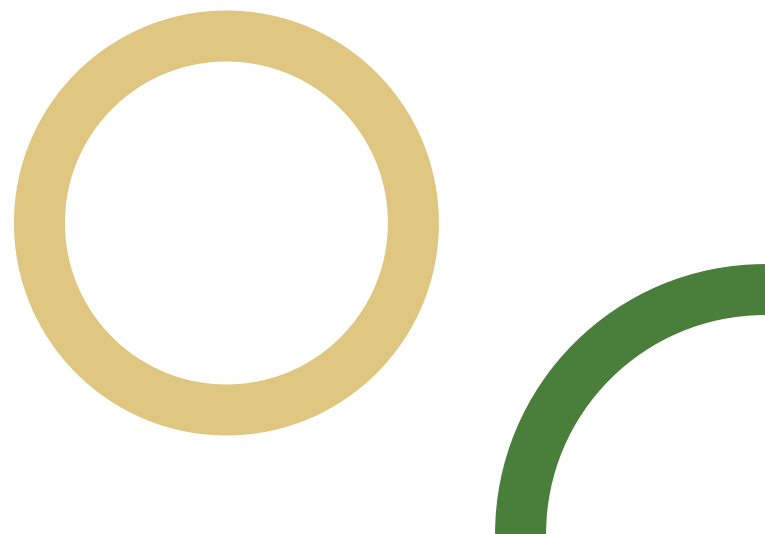
What additional collaborations should we intentionally seek to raise awareness about the mission of NCHC, facilitate fruitful partnerships with two- and four-year institutions, and increase resources for honors students?

4

How can we serve as advocates and innovators as we collectively navigate the significant changes occurring in higher education?

5

What does it look like for NCHC to grow financially in a responsible and sustainable manner to support our mission?



## 03 Theory of Change

Vision 2028 represents a significant evolution from NCHC’s prior strategic plan spanning 2018 to 2021, moving from a foundational focus on organizational structure and support toward a more expansive, community-driven vision that centers on impact, adaptability, and proactive leadership. The prior plan primarily concentrated on operational efficiency and professional development; Vision 2028 is structured around three core pillars—Mission Excellence, Organizational Sustainability, and Professional Impact—each designed to integrate NCHC more deeply into the broader higher education landscape. This shift underscores a commitment to supporting honors programs and leading the discourse about inclusivity and relevance in honors education.

Where the prior plan sought to establish a base of organizational excellence through clear governance and defined member benefits, Vision 2028 emphasizes dynamic growth that is bolstered by a focus on innovative partnerships, expanded advocacy, and a reinforced research agenda. These ambitious goals will broaden NCHC’s influence by leveraging partnerships and creating more responsive professional development opportunities. It moves beyond providing toolkits and resources on the website to fostering an inclusive culture that champions diversity at every level, both within NCHC and across member institutions, to ensure honors education adapts to a changing higher education environment.

The approach outlined in Vision 2028 represents a Theory of Change that recognizes the importance of continuous improvement, particularly through measurable outcomes and targeted initiatives designed to sustain growth and deepen engagement. Building on the previous strategic focus on technology and membership benefits, the new plan prioritizes resilience and inclusivity, aiming to enhance NCHC’s stature as an innovator in higher education that continually redefines and expands the community of honors. This strategy ensures that NCHC remains adaptable, forward-thinking, and equipped to lead in a complex and evolving educational landscape.



## 04 Overview

### NCHC Mission

To support and enhance the community of educational institutions, professionals, and students who participate in collegiate honors education around the world.

NCHC was established in 1966 in response to the growing need for a professional association of honors educators to create a space to share their ideas and provide a strong national voice. NCHC is a catalyst for the honors community, fostering collaboration, sharing ideas, and advocating excellence in higher education. Today, NCHC represents over 60% of all honors programs and colleges in the U.S., impacting over 330,000 honors students. For nearly 60 years, NCHC has provided a platform for communication, professional development, and networking that connect honors educators worldwide while supporting the growth of honors and its tradition of innovative pedagogy.



## 05 Conferences and Resources

NCHC provides professional development opportunities and resources to honors educators and students at nearly 700 colleges and universities annually through a variety of programming and tools.

### Signature Conference Experiences

The largest and most comprehensive honors event of its kind, the NCHC Annual Conference highlights submitted research and creative work from student and faculty participants alongside signature programming and keynote presentations for a global audience. Signature tracks such as Beginning in Honors (BIH), Developing in Honors (DIH), Best Honors Administrative Practices (BHAP), Students in Honors (SIH), and Professional Staff in Honors (PSIH) provide audience-specific topics and solutions to attendees at all levels of honors experience and trajectory.

### Shared Principles and Practices

“NCHC Shared Principles and Practices of Honors Education” seeks to spark generative conversations around how honors education can transform an institution and the students it serves. This document encapsulates the central principles within honors education as they reflect current theories and practices of the academy.

### Institutional Honors Reviews and Consultations

Program reviews by NCHC-trained reviewers are a powerful advocacy tool that identifies the strengths of an honors program, and they provide documentation for much-needed resources. Two reviewers, trained by NCHC’s Assessment and Evaluation Committee in the best practices and nuances of honors administration, visit a campus and learn all about the fine points of an individual honors program or college. Their report provides a mechanism and national voice to advocate for and support students and honors education.

### Awards and Grants

NCHC provides funding and recognition for outstanding honors professionals and students in the form of professional and student awards, grants for classroom innovations, scholarships for event participation, and fellowships. Approximately 100 individuals and programs are recognized annually through NCHC awards.

### NCHC Publications

For more than four decades, NCHC has produced peer-reviewed monographs, academic journals, and reports focused on honors education as well as the broader scholarship of teaching and learning, student engagement, and faculty development. Featuring writing by leading researchers and thinkers in honors education, NCHC publications offer a wealth of resources to build and develop an honors program.

## Experiential Learning Programs

Honors has long embraced the benefits and development of experiential learning methodologies. NCHC celebrates innovative pedagogy through ongoing programming and experiences for students and professionals.

**City as Text™ and Place as Text:** City as Text (CAT) refers to structured explorations of environments and ecosystems. Designed as ongoing laboratories through which small teams investigate complicated areas and issues in urban environments or competing forces in natural ones, these exercises foster critical inquiry and integrative learning across disciplines.

**Partners in the Parks™:** Partners in the Parks (PITP) is an outdoor experiential learning program coordinated by the National Collegiate Honors Council in conjunction with the National Park Service (NPS). PITP projects at national parks across the country offer unique opportunities for collegiate honors students and faculty to visit areas of the American landscape noted for their beauty, significance, and lasting value while incorporating STEM, service learning, and interdisciplinary study.

**Partners in Peace:** Partners in Peace (PiP) exists as a collaboration between NCHC and the Nobel Peace Center (NPC), which is located in Oslo, Norway. Operating within the International Education Committee of NCHC, PiP enables students, faculty, and institutions to study and implement practices utilized by Nobel Peace Laureates in their attempts to achieve harmony and collaboration between individuals.



## 06 Aspirational Statements and Strategy

### Mission Excellence Programs, Research, and Professional Development

By 2028, NCHC will further establish its position as the authoritative leader for honors education discourse. Mission Excellence involves research, professional development, and the implementation of the shared principles and practices of NCHC across the community of honors.

#### Goals:

1. Expand and promote research on honors education.
2. Improve professional development programming to serve our diverse student, faculty, and professional members.
3. Emphasize “NCHC Shared Principles and Practices” throughout the honors community.

### Organizational Sustainability Governance, Operations, and Fundraising

By 2028, NCHC will have fostered a sustainable and dynamic organizational culture promoting growth through strategic fundraising, inclusive governance, and operational excellence. Organizational Sustainability involves increased capacity to mobilize financial resources to meet the growing needs of membership and the community of honors.

#### Goals:

1. Establish a fundraising mechanism for NCHC.
2. Establish an organizational culture in which members feel more represented within NCHC leadership and various communities.
3. Enhance operations to support the needs of membership, increase engagement, and foster community exchange, feedback, and impact.
4. Promote more actively our contributions as leaders in honors discourse and higher education.
5. Establish a culture that encourages proposals from NCHC members as well as input on procedures.

### Professional Impact Membership, Advocacy, Publications, and Partnerships

By 2028, NCHC will have elevated the professional impact of honors education via expanded membership, strategic partnerships, and the visibility of publications to enhance our position among the community of honors.

#### Goals

1. Increase membership through added value and expanded outreach.
2. Engage critical partners to reposition honors education as an inclusive community.
3. Communicate the value of honors education on a broader scale.
4. Increase the impact of honors publications.



We invite you to view the full Strategic Planning Workbook by scanning the QR code. NCHC is actively working to resource the plan, and an interactive dashboard will be available online in Quarter 1 of 2025 to monitor the progress of Vision 2028.

