

## **Mission and Vision of the Wilkes Honors College of Florida Atlantic University**

The mission of the Wilkes Honors College is to educate students to the highest intellectual, experiential, and ethical levels, preparing them to thrive and contribute wisely to the general welfare of human society and the planet. Our vision is to be widely recognized as the nation's premier, public honors college with a diverse and flourishing student body of 800-1000 students involved in interdisciplinary cutting-edge research, community service, and intellectual engagement across the liberal arts and sciences.

## **Strategic Goals and Action Plans**

**Goal 1: To increase the national and local visibility of the Wilkes Honors College of Florida Atlantic University (WHC).** We are poised to raise the profile of the college, campus, and the university in the coming years by participating in a branding of the campus as a center of excellence known for its pathway from a STEM high school (Max Planck Academy) to an all-honors curriculum at the lower division, and first-hand experience with interdisciplinary research, neuroscience, and data science at the upper division and graduate levels. The campaign will include enhancing our social media presence, pursuing new advertising in local media including a video advertising campaign and public radio spots, having our students showcase their research at CUR and other conferences, hosting the upcoming Florida Collegiate Honors Council Conference in 2020, and leveraging our alumni network to recruit out of state students. We will also expand our student attendance at conferences aimed at serving diverse students, including Society for Advancement of Chicanos/Hispanics and Native Americans in Science (SACNAS) and Annual Biomedical Research Conference for Minority Students (ABRCMS). Our goal is to make the *Wilkes Honors College of Florida Atlantic University* synonymous with the multiple and unique research partnerships, interdisciplinary curriculum, faculty mentoring, community engagement, and experiential learning opportunities available to our students here in Jupiter.

**Goal 2: To double our 2017/2018 baseline extramural funding by 2023 by continuing to make targeted hires with pillars and other units** while simultaneously servicing 800 students (including 50 entering annually from the Max Planck Academy) in our interdisciplinary curriculum. At 800 students, the college will reach critical mass for a healthy balance between research-intensive faculty and instructors with primary teaching responsibilities as well as balanced disciplinary representation across the sciences, humanities, and social sciences. We will also coordinate course offerings and cross-list select courses with other units to broaden curricular options.

**Goal 3: To develop and pursue a curriculum and integration plan for Max Planck Academy students on campus in collaboration with other stakeholders.** We have initiated monthly standing meetings with the CoS and MPA staff to discuss integration of the students into student life, research internships, and other co-curricular activities and to create flight plans for the MPA students in the premedical track in neuroscience and biology as well as plans for psychology and data science. We submitted a data science minor and a data analytics concentration through the UUPC to service both WHC and MPA students and will make

strategic hires in this area as the concentration grows. We are also planning curricular innovation to meet the needs of both the MPA students and our incoming freshman. A new initiative will include offering a minimum of four one-credit interdisciplinary co-taught classes during the 2020/2021 academic year and each year thereafter to provide an early experience with interdisciplinary problem solving and approaches to these first-year students. MPA students will also join WHC students during their first semester in the Honors College Forum, to introduce them to faculty and research opportunities on campus. We will continue to work together with Henderson High School, College of Science, Max Planck Florida, University Advising Services, and Student Affairs to develop a campus-wide curricular, research training, and student support plan to meet the needs of the incoming Max Planck Academy students. **An MOU outlining these collaborations between FAU High School, the Wilkes Honors College, the College of Science, and Office of the Provost was signed 8/8/2019.**

**Goal 4: To improve retention and graduation rates.** The WHC fall 2017 FTIC retention and progress rates were 84.7% and our fall 2014 four-year graduation was 60.8% (81.8% six-year graduation rate). We seek to improve our retention and progress rates to 90%, our four-year graduation rate to 75%, and our six-year graduation rate to 90% by implementing a variety of retention strategies. Beginning this fall, we will form an enrollment management and retention committee chaired by the associate dean. This committee will initiate standing bi-weekly meetings with key staff members from student affairs, academic affairs, housing, CAPS, and financial aid to track and assist students before they reach a crisis state or consider leaving FAU. The committee will provide recommendations for campus-based initiatives to further improve recruitment and retention. All first-year students will not only receive summer advising from a WHC faculty advisor, they will also have dinner and a one-on-one meeting prior to the first week of classes with their assigned faculty academic advisor. All faculty advisors will receive additional Starfish training to track advisees. In addition, for the first time in Fall 2019, UAS advisors will provide academic success coaching to WHC students and the WCH will pilot test peer advising coaches in conjunction with UAS. We are also revamping the first-year forum course to include mental health and wellness and other college success components and increasing first-year student access to our interdisciplinary co-taught courses. The faculty have also undergone student crisis assistance training and will continue to participate in ongoing professional development workshops aimed at improving faculty support for students. The faculty is also exploring group research projects and capstone experiences (non-thesis options) for students who are not on-track for timely completion of their honors thesis projects. We will also explore a BGS graduation option for the college. Finally, we will begin tracking our social mobility rates via Pell grant graduation rates and incorporate findings into our retention strategies.

**Goal 5: To increase the number of prestige scholarship applications among students on the Jupiter campus.** The WHC will implement an identification system that will incorporate faculty and staff input and student academic and research achievement for early identification of talented students who will be mentored in preparation of prestige scholarship applications. These students will be identified within their first two semesters on campus to allow for the full range of academic, research, and extracurricular development experiences in collaboration with the dean

of undergraduate studies and OURI. Given the WHC's recent success with National Merit Scholar recruitment (with 11 in the incoming 2019 Fall cohort), we anticipate a significant increase in prestige scholarship applications from our students. Our goal is to work closely with the new prestige scholarship committee **to generate a minimum of 25 applications for prestige scholarships from WHC students over the next five years.**

**Goal 6: To promote pedagogical innovations across campus and the university.** The WHC will increase pedagogical innovations while also expanding curricular STEM offerings by partnering with the College of Science in pursuing NSF, NIH, and HHMI funding for high-impact practices such as course-based undergraduate research experiences, learning communities, and a tiered student mentoring system. With increases in enrollment, we will need creative strategies for scaling up teaching and mentoring and conducting ongoing assessment of new strategies. As a small, flexible environment, the WHC offers an ideal environment for beta testing of novel pedagogical strategies. We will also explore the possibility of initiating a Teacher Training Program that would provide pedagogical training and classroom experience for Max Planck trainees who are seeking to build their classroom skills. The training program would offer professional development opportunities for faculty, postdoctoral, graduate and undergraduate students and would be an attractive component for training program grant proposals. As new teaching and training practices are proven in the WHC, they can be disseminated throughout the university in professional development opportunities provided in partnership with the Provost's Office Fellow for Leadership and Professional Development.

**Goal 7: To select and pursue aspirational benchmark institutions.** Our goal is to build upon the key performance indicators that contribute to FAU's overall ranking while growing our numbers to make a greater influence on that ranking. We propose the following models to benchmark our metrics: 1) a very high aspirational private college model (Harvey Mudd College) with an 8 to 1 student to faculty ratio; 2) a high aspirational private college model at a large public/private university (Schreyer College at Pennsylvania State); 3) a SUS peer institution of similar projected size that is currently ranked in the top 100 liberal arts colleges by U.S. News and World Report (New College of Florida) with a 10 to 1 student to faculty ratio. We aspire to raise our retention and graduation rates and our national reputation to the levels of the first two institutions while exceeding the endowment and graduations rates of the third. We will submit a profile again in 2020 for the next round of ratings by *Inside Honors* to maintain or improve upon our status as Florida's top-rated public honors college and one of the top-seven rated honors colleges in the country.

**Goal 8: To implement a comprehensive 5-year hiring plan to meet enrollment growth, programmatic needs, and research productivity.** Sustainable enrollment growth requires investment in additional faculty and staff to build and maintain the low student to faculty ratio necessary for a top-rated honors college (e.g., to maintain our top rating in *Inside Honors*). Modeling enrollment based on this year's incoming class and building to 800 students in fall 2024, we anticipate the need to hire additional tenure-track faculty members, full-time instructors, lab coordinators, and academic support staff members to accommodate growth.