HONORS COLLEGE RECAP

- Introductions around the room.

- Dr. Jill Granger, Dean of the Honors College
  - “Honors at WCU” – discussion on the future directions of the Honors at WCU
  - The Honors College at WCU has had tremendous success and is a point of distinction and pride for the University. Dr. Granger posed two questions to the group for further discussion:
    - What are the key values of Honors and how do we maintain our distinctiveness while recognizing that we have increasing competition and pressure in higher education?
    - What are the future directions of Honors for serving students in the 21st Century University?

- Group 1:
  - Values = undergraduate research, emphasizing curiosity and discovery as important academic attributes, create unique experiences, utilize technology (distance speakers), distance learning an HC experience, increasing the number of students…but are these points of distinction for WCU?
  - Other considerations: can increasing enrollment (if too high) cause an increase in divisiveness? Could you create a bi-modal distribution (recruiting more heavily at the lower edge of acceptable students) which produces a gap (no “average” middle students) and a two-tiered student body? This could work against the “rising tide” for all. If the gap is too great, the tide won’t rise.
    - what new experiences can increase retention
    - how can technology be used in Honors, ex bringing in international speakers via technology
    - Can you have a distance learning HC experience? If so, this could eliminate geographical limitations
    - Work with community colleges to create articulation agreements that facilitate transfer into HC at WCU. Partner with CC to help move the students here to complete the HC path.

- Group 2:
  - Values = HC center of student achievement, facilitate nationally competitive scholarships, preprofessional programming in HC, help advise students to help them achieve admission into competitive graduate and professional programs
  - Communicating the outcomes? Where do they go and how successful are they?
- Refreshing the Contracts – not just the same old projects, give students more and different responsibility, and accountability.
- HC students should have more leadership and responsibility as campus leaders
- Offer professional development training for HC students.
- We should relook at the Honors Pathway … what is the intentionality of the curriculum?
  - Offering more Honors sections in the curriculum.
- Ask – what can we do for these students; not – what can these students do for us

- **Group 3:**
  - Values = model for other students, mentoring broad-based academic success, encourage faculty to do innovative practice, student involvement across campus.
  - Study Abroad emphasis – need to increase numbers participating. Can emphasize in New Student Orientation. Scholarships help; we need more. Articulate the many values of that experience – too many students see it as an opportunity cost and we need to flip that perception.
  - There may be simple and inexpensive perks that help to recruit and retain students, e.g. study rooms, library checkout privileges, etc.
  - Honors students could be more involved in mentoring other students into the program; mentoring international students
  - They need incentives (scholarships, instructional personalization)
  - HC students could have a Foreign Language requirement, especially tied to travel experience.

- **Group 4:**
  - Values = HC as an intentional holistic collegiate experience (HC students have classes together to push each other harder, work together for shared success, support mechanism); leadership opportunities; UG research as a signature feature; students come in with intentional plans for what they want to do and they want to be intellectually stimulated with the whole of the UG experience supporting their efforts;
  - What about the non-traditional student? Possibly a competency-based entrance point would make sense. Cohort based, with a director and teams of complementary students; create a learning community. Recognize their skills and knowledge and leverage those experiences.
  - Student success needs to be reframed in a new demographic. 2021 # traditional age students declining; 2022 increasing populations of students in the majority. HC can look at 2022 to see how demographic changes are best incorporated into the mission.

- **Group 5:**
  - Values = summer classes and summer learning experiences; concept of value of HC to the institution as models and as path, bar setting for non-HC students.
  - How to balance the exclusivity with need for engagement as a whole? Hard to be a part of and apart from at the same time. Role could be enhanced as engagement with engagement (Bring a Friend)

- **Group 6:**
Values = building curiosity through academic rigor, service learning as community building, standard-bearers for academic integrity and academic integration. Point of distinction in addressing regional specificity.

Future directions – shift in pedagogy. How do we stay ahead in academic preparedness? Students coming to us with more and better preparation, how do we respond?

- Addressing regional values/issues – specificity to WNC.
- Gradually raising standards, progressing responsibly.
- Added value – as academic competition increases, why would they come to WCU honors instead of “ivy league”?
- Increased professional opportunity outside of the classroom – access to academic center both on WCU campus and Abroad.

Group 7:
- Value = increasing caliber of students (helps with recruiting), want WCU students to be as competitive as other applicants for the most competitive graduate programs, greater projects, sense of community/own space, help increase the average ACT score for WCU, creates pool of highest qualified applicants to WCU professional programs (PT, Nursing, etc)
- Integration of HC into more programs across the University. Team with Recruiting to get wider diversity of participation across the University. Get HC students early – middle/high school students (e.g., Aspire Day – grant written to GA by Wesley and April Tallent – get good representation from across colleges and programs); early high school recruitment – get them thinking of honors and all majors.

Other comments:
- Go to Admissions. Fit is so important. Distinctiveness is a part of that. How do we express and market stories of what makes WCU special / different?
- Scholarships: we provide some very good scholarships; point of distinction and difference. We need diversity as to how we’re going across campus. More collaborations to make that happen.
- Non-traditional student perspectives need to be considered more frequently. We need to consider students from recruit to career.

Good News Reports
- Sept 1 – QEP Topics
- Sept 2 – Faculty Led Travel Forum
- Sept 2 – Samaritan’s Feet Event, Manny Ohomne
- Sept 10 – Open Forum on Classrooms, Priority Registration, Grades First
- Sept 26 – Mountain Heritage Day