

Strategic Plan Overview

2025-2030



UCF

**Burnett Honors
College**

UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA

Community is at the heart of everything we do.

At the Burnett Honors College (BHC), our Scholars are at our core. With a vibrant community of approximately 2,400 students, representing nearly 4% of UCF's undergraduate population, the BHC continues to cultivate a culture of excellence, curiosity, and achievement. Our Scholars consistently distinguish themselves across academic benchmarks, setting a high standard for scholarly engagement and success.

Our Scholars thrive in an environment that sparks enthusiasm, drives ambition, and unleashes their full potential. Intellectual curiosity is nurtured within our small, supportive community, surrounded by the cutting-edge resources at the University of Central Florida, one of the nation's largest and most innovative research universities.

Our Scholars develop creative problem-solving skills to tackle the challenges of tomorrow, and our engaged community offers a perfect balance of academic rigor and vibrant social experiences, fostering lasting friendships and allowing Scholars to reach for the stars and beyond.

Since our last five-year strategic plan (2020-2024), the Burnett Honors College has experienced remarkable achievements. As we launch into the next five years, we share our roadmap for continued success. As you will see, our community is well-positioned to help our Scholars achieve their goals while we help boost UCF's trajectory toward becoming the "University for the Future."

Perhaps most inspiring is our unwavering commitment to excellence and access. Within the BHC, Pell Grant recipients graduate at similar rates as their non-Pell peers, an achievement that reflects our belief in the boundless potential of every Scholar. Every year between 25-35% of our graduates have been on Pell at some point in their academic journey. We remain dedicated to fostering an environment where all students are empowered to thrive, lead, and make meaningful contributions to the world around them.

Our Scholars embody the spirit of academic excellence and innovation, representing a rich tapestry of disciplines across the university. With a strong emphasis on inquiry and discovery, our signature undergraduate research programs continue to flourish, expanding in both scope and impact. Scholars are increasingly engaging in interdisciplinary and creative scholarship, contributing to a growing body of work that is shared and celebrated around the world. The visibility and influence of these scholarly contributions have grown exponentially, and Honors Undergraduate Theses have been accessed over 2.1 million times by scholars across the world.

At the heart of our mission lies a deep commitment to empowering students through career readiness and transformative experiential learning. Through visionary initiatives like TALENT and CARES, the BHC opens doors to meaningful internships, hands-on research, and dynamic professional development pathways. The launch of our Pre-Law Network in 2024, along with strategic partnerships with BNY, Orlando Health and the College of Engineering and Computer Science, have created vibrant pipelines that connect students to real-world, pre-professional experiences. Meanwhile, the Office of Prestigious Awards, proudly housed within the BHC, has doubled its award output over the past five years, helping UCF shine as a national leader in producing Fulbright Scholars and recipients of the NSF Graduate Research Fellowship, Goldwater, and Astronaut Scholarships. Together, these efforts reflect our unwavering dedication to student success and excellence on a global stage.

Community spirit continues to flourish as a cornerstone of the Burnett Honors College experience. Over the past academic year, the BHC has hosted a vibrant array of events from intimate gatherings to large-scale celebrations that have brought together students, families, faculty, and friends in meaningful ways. Signature events such as the Dean’s Welcome, Family Field Day, and Graduation Medallion Conferrals have drawn participants ranging from a few dozen to well over a thousand, reflecting the deep sense of connection and pride that defines our community.

Our philanthropic momentum has also been extraordinary. In recent years, generous supporters have contributed close to \$6 million to advance our mission and enrich the student experience. Notable among these efforts are an estate gift of \$3 million to support STEM scholarships; the Inspire Scholars Endowment, which has received over \$600,000 in support of student opportunity and success; and the creation of the Meditation Garden Endowment, which provides support for the maintenance of the serene and inclusive space designed to nurture wellness, reflection, and belonging.

Together, these initiatives reflect our enduring commitment to cultivating a community where students are not only challenged academically, but also supported holistically, empowered to thrive, and inspired to lead with purpose.

We are especially proud of our remarkable outcomes. The four-year graduation rate for our first-time-in-college students reached an impressive 80.7% in 2025, far surpassing the university-wide average. Equally noteworthy, our second-year retention rate has remained above 95% since 2019, a testament to the strength of our academic community and the support systems we’ve built to ensure student success.

As we look ahead to the 2025–2030 strategic plan, we do so with a renewed sense of purpose and a clear vision aligned with UCF’s aspiration to be the University for the Future. We are excited to build upon our successes, embrace new opportunities, and continue to serve as a model of honors education that champions access, excellence, and impact.

As always, Go Knights. Charge On!



Sheila Amin Gutiérrez de Piñeres, PhD
Dean



Martin Dupuis, PhD
Senior Associate Dean

BHC STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT: UNIVERSITY *FOR THE FUTURE*

The Burnett Honors College (BHC) is one of the key drivers of UCF's success and prominence. We intentionally combine the benefits of a small elite college with the resources of a large metropolitan research university. We diligently build on our strengths, while remaining nimble enough to take advantage of opportunities and overcome challenges to enhance student success outcomes.

During our strategic planning process, we aimed to align our initiatives with the priorities and goals of UCF. Consistent with the UCF President's vision, we will be a model for honors colleges, directly supporting and contributing to The University for the Future. "***Cultivating Talent. Inspiring Excellence.***" is our commitment to all BHC Scholars.

MISSION

The Burnett Honors College (BHC) provides UCF's highly academically talented and motivated students with a challenging and unique scholarly experience, creating a strong foundation for future achievements. The BHC strives to create a learning community that fosters the pursuit of excellence; ethical, social, and civic responsibility; personal growth; and a passion for lifelong learning.

VISION

- ✦ To provide a transformative, vibrant community that fosters academic excellence, interdisciplinary inquiry, and personal growth.
- ✦ To empower creative problem-solvers to use their talent and passion to address dynamic challenges as future global leaders.

GOALS

The Burnett Honors College aspires to be a leader in:

- ✦ **Excellence and Access** to an honors education for high-achieving students recognizing that young people reach their stride at varying times; therefore, entry points need to be available for all who are qualified and interested, when they are ready.
- ✦ Enhancing the value of an honors education by continuously **developing and expanding the Honors curriculum** and encouraging participation in **High-Impact Practices**: undergraduate research, study abroad, internships and experiential learning, and learning communities.
- ✦ Expanding focus on **Student Success** metrics beyond only GPA and test scores to include retention rate, graduation rate, national fellowships, international awards, and job or graduate school placement.
- ✦ Strengthening **Partnerships and Engagement** with industry and community leaders to provide exceptional talent to the workforce, with a renewed focus on building relationships with industry, alumni, parents, and friends of the BHC to create more opportunities for our Scholars through networking and philanthropic support.
- ✦ **National Engagement**: As a founding leader in the Council on Honors Education (CoHE), the BHC is actively shaping national conversations around honors education, sharing best practices, and building a robust network of honors leaders across public universities.

Together, these initiatives position the BHC as a catalyst for institutional excellence and a beacon for honors education nationwide.

Admissions: Excellence & Opportunity

The BHC currently houses about 2,400 students (who we refer to as Scholars) representing almost 4% of the undergraduate population at the University of Central Florida (UCF). The BHC has experienced consistent strength in the quality of its FTIC University Honors cohorts. The average SAT and ACT are in the top 3% of high school students nationally. While the BHC is recognized as one of UCF's 13 colleges, we do not confer degrees. All of our alumni are also graduates of at least one other college. BHC Scholars represent a diverse range of majors in every college, however, similar to UCF's student body, enrollment skews heavily toward STEM majors, currently hovering just under 74%.

The Burnett Honors College (BHC) at UCF offers multiple entry points designed to welcome students at various stages of their academic journey. Incoming first-year students may apply for University Honors as part of the fall freshman admissions process. Current UCF students can apply through the second-year entry process, which allows first-year students who began in the previous summer



or fall semester to join based on their academic performance at UCF. Students transferring from a UCF Direct Connect partner with an Honors Associate of Arts (AA) degree also have a dedicated pathway into University Honors. Additionally, the Honors Undergraduate Thesis (HUT) program is available to juniors and seniors across all majors who wish to engage in original research under faculty guidance. Together, these entry points ensure that students can join the Burnett Honors College at nearly any point in their academic path, from their very first semester to the final years of their undergraduate experience.

The BHC believes that serving our communities includes providing high-achieving, at-risk students in Florida with greater access to the opportunities and benefits of an honors education. The Inspire Scholars Program (ISP) is intended to recruit and support high-achieving at-risk students across Florida. Through the ISP and partnership with Take Stock in Children (TSIC), the BHC created an unprecedented opportunity to build on previous successes and support UCF's goal of creating excellence and access by eliminating socio-economic status as a barrier to educational mobility. The BHC expanded the TSIC partnership to its 45 affiliates and welcomed their first state-wide cohort in Fall 2023. The Inspire Scholars Endowment is a cornerstone of the Burnett Honors College's long-term vision to cultivate academic excellence and opportunity. The ISP endowment ensures that high-achieving, at-risk students — many of whom are first-generation — have access to the resources, mentorship, and support systems necessary to thrive. This vision is not just about funding; it is also about investing in futures, expanding access, and ensuring a foundation to lead, innovate, and inspire others.

Robust and Engaging Honors Curriculum

The Burnett Honors College curriculum is the defining characteristic of the exceptional education (classes) offered by some of the best faculty at UCF. The depth and breadth of courses offered enrich the student experience of all majors. Our cornerstone course, Honors Symposium, focuses on

personal and professional development, and builds the Honors community. The small Honors class size allows Scholars to interact with their faculty and peers in an intellectually engaging manner, and Honors courses allow for creative, innovative pedagogies. Scholars can take Honors classes in their major, allowing them to develop mentor relationships with these faculty and to learn about research opportunities. Honors interdisciplinary seminars prompt students to consider cutting-edge topics from a variety of perspectives, and can be team taught by two faculty members from differing disciplines. By collaborating across campus, the BHC offers over 200 Honors courses a year, with new offerings added on a regular basis. Continuing to offer the wide variety of courses that serve and engage students, allowing them to graduate in four years, is key to providing the best Honors education in the state of Florida.

Purposeful Student Development and Advising

At the heart of student success lies the ability to help students recognize and realize their full potential. This begins with showing them what they are capable of by illuminating strengths they may not yet see in themselves. By fostering a culture of encouragement and high expectations, we help students envision endless possibilities for their academic, personal, and professional futures.

However, success also requires grounding that vision in reality. Supporting students means guiding them to adapt to real-world challenges, helping them navigate setbacks, and building resilience. It involves aligning their aspirations with their abilities, interests, and level of commitment, assuring that their goals are both ambitious and attainable.

Advising is not just about course selection; it is a cornerstone of student development and success. At the BHC, advising is deeply rooted in coaching through meaningful connections. Advisors serve as trusted guides who help students navigate academic pathways, align their goals with their strengths and interests, and adapt to the evolving realities of their educational journey.

When students feel genuinely connected to their advisors, they are more likely to reach out for support, ask questions, and engage in proactive planning. This sense of connection fosters confidence, encourages persistence, and empowers students to make informed decisions that reflect both their aspirations and their capacity for growth.

Social Fitness and Community Relationships

Social fitness, the ability to build, maintain, and navigate meaningful interpersonal relationships, is a foundational pillar of student success. Within the Burnett Honors College (BHC), fostering strong community relationships enhances students' sense of belonging, which is directly linked to higher retention and graduation rates. When students feel connected to their peers, faculty, and broader support networks, they are more likely to persist through challenges and remain engaged in their academic journey.



These relationships also serve as critical pathways for emotional and mental well-being. Peer mentorship, collaborative learning, and shared experiences help students manage stress, build resilience, and develop a sense of purpose. Furthermore, community engagement through alumni networks, industry partnerships, and student organizations opens doors to career opportunities, internships, and professional mentorship, strengthening students' post-graduation trajectories.

By embedding social fitness into the academic and co-curricular fabric of the BHC, we not only support students' academic outcomes, but also empower them to thrive personally and professionally in a complex, interconnected world.

Student Programs and Leadership Development

Student programs are essential to the BHC's mission of cultivating scholars who are not only academically accomplished but also socially engaged, professionally prepared, and personally fulfilled. We are actively growing our portfolio of student programs to meet evolving student needs and interests.



The Pre-Law Network connects aspiring legal professionals with alumni panels, judge-led info sessions, in-person advising, and curated campus resources. The Inspire Scholars Program provides monthly meetings and one-on-one coaching for current students, while also extending opportunities to incoming students from the Take Stock initiative.

The BHC Medical Research Scholars Program, launched in Spring 2024, in collaboration with Orlando Health, placed Scholars in clinical research across multiple specialties, offering exceptional hands-on undergraduate research opportunities. As a pilot program, it has enabled the BHC to establish and refine the process for a research partnership from start to finish - from compiling research opportunities, to scholar recruitment and enrollment, to completion and presentation of results. It is our goal to expand the network of health systems across Florida in which we place Honors Scholars to engage in research.

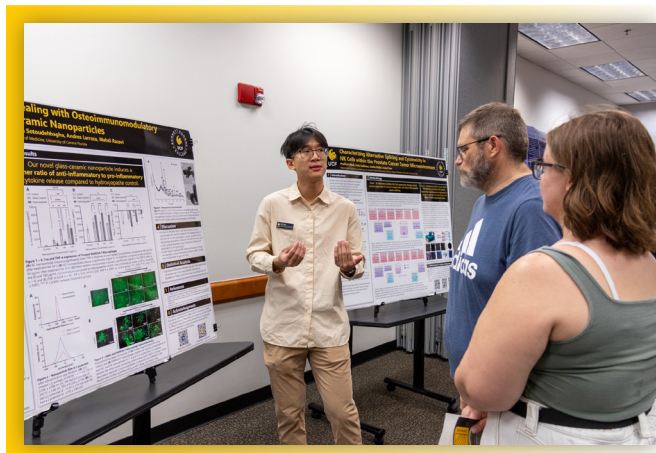
By leveraging strong industry relationships, we are creating a series of skill-based workshops that align with workforce needs and emerging trends. These workshops will provide students with practical, career-relevant experience that enhances their competitive advantage in the job market. In turn, this initiative strengthens the regional talent pipeline by equipping employers with a highly skilled and competitive workforce. To foster a stronger sense of community and leadership, we will launch a Leadership Development Day for all peer mentors and student workers. This initiative will enhance connectivity among student leaders and staff, creating a more cohesive and supportive environment. Exit surveys and historical data will be used to assess program effectiveness and track student outcomes.

Honors Research and Innovation

The Office of Honors Research and Scholarly Engagement is central to the BHC's mission of fostering a culture of inquiry, innovation, and impact. Undergraduate research plays a critical role in shaping post-baccalaureate outcomes by fostering analytical thinking, problem-solving, and hands-on experiences that are highly valued in graduate programs and the workforce. Engaging in research enhances students' academic confidence, deepens subject matter expertise, and often leads to stronger mentorship and professional networks. These experiences not only bolster resumes and graduate



school applications but also prepare students to contribute meaningfully in advanced study and professional environments.



We envision a strategic expansion that emphasizes data-driven insight, faculty collaboration, and a broader recognition of research outcomes. We will collect and analyze key metrics such as student participation, publication and presentation outcomes, and faculty feedback. These data will inform continuous improvement and help articulate the value of undergraduate research. Additionally, these data will increase collaboration with the Office of Prestigious Awards as it continues to expand the pool of highly qualified applicants

We will document and showcase the full spectrum of student research outputs, including articles, conference presentations, posters, and creative works. Faculty mentors will be engaged through regular feedback loops to co-create strategies for scaling research opportunities.

The Office of Honors Research and Scholarly Engagement will broaden its focus on scholarly research to move beyond just the honors thesis to include all aspects of research by BHC Scholars. By strengthening partnerships and creating structured pathways for early research engagement, we aim to build a robust ecosystem where research is a transformative experience that prepares students for graduate study, professional success, and civic leadership.

National Prominence

Prestigious graduate scholarships and fellowships are more than accolades; they are gateways to opportunity and platforms for transformation. These awards recognize not only academic excellence but also leadership, vision, and the potential to make meaningful contributions to society. For students, they represent a powerful affirmation of their capabilities and aspirations.

Prestigious scholarships open doors to world-class institutions, global networks, and life-changing experiences. They provide financial freedom and institutional support that allow students to pursue advanced study, research, and service without compromise.

These awards link students to a legacy of scholars and changemakers, fostering a sense of belonging to a broader intellectual and professional community. They encourage recipients to think beyond immediate goals and imagine their long-term impact — locally, nationally, and globally.

To increase both the volume and caliber of applicants, the BHC adopts a data-informed, student-centered approach that leverages technology, storytelling, and mentorship. By analyzing past applicant data and compiling narratives of past recipients, we can inspire and guide future applicants, ensuring that we are reaching and supporting the most qualified and motivated students.

Alumni, Industry, and Community Engagement

Alumni, industry, and community engagement are foundational to the success and sustainability of the Burnett Honors College. A vibrant alumni network fosters a culture of mentorship, philanthropy, and pride, offering current students access to real-world insights and professional pathways. Alumni engagement through events, panels, and outreach initiatives strengthens institutional identity and creates a dynamic support system that extends beyond graduation.

Corporate partnerships and industry visits further enrich the student experience by bridging academic learning with practical application. These engagements not only enhance career readiness but also help students secure internships and employment, while simultaneously supporting workforce needs.

At the heart of these efforts are the deans, who play a pivotal role in cultivating and sustaining these relationships. Through strategic outreach, personalized engagement, and visionary leadership, the deans serve as ambassadors of the college's mission. Their ability to connect with alumni, industry leaders, and community stakeholders ensures that the BHC remains responsive to evolving opportunities and challenges, while reinforcing its reputation as a hub of excellence and innovation.

Together, these relationships form a powerful ecosystem that supports student success, institutional advancement, and long-term impact.

National Leader in Honors Education

The Council on Honors Education (CoHE), co-founded by BHC Dean Sheila Amin and Lynda Coon (University of Arkansas), is a national group affiliated with the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU). It serves as a strategic platform for honors deans and directors from over 130 institutions to collaborate, share best practices, and elevate the profile of honors education across the country. CoHE's strength lies in its robust virtual presence, hosting monthly all-access meetings for faculty and staff, as well as quarterly leadership sessions focused on strategic planning and innovation. This structure fosters a vibrant national network that encourages the exchange of ideas and supports the advancement of honors education at public research universities.

As a founding leader in CoHE, the Burnett Honors College is uniquely positioned to spearhead the development of a national honors student engagement platform. Such a platform would leverage CoHE's existing infrastructure to connect honors students across institutions, enabling collaborative research, shared experiential learning opportunities, and leadership development. By integrating digital tools and cross-institutional programming, the BHC can help create a scalable model that not only enhances student engagement but also reinforces the role of honors education in shaping future global leaders. This initiative aligns with the BHC's strategic vision to be a national leader in access, excellence, and innovation in honors education.



CONTRIBUTIONS TO PREEMINENCE

BHC Scholars are significant contributors to UCF's goals by reaching and exceeding Florida's preeminence benchmarks. Key areas have seen a steady increase and BHC Scholars continue to outpace their non-Honors peers.

FTIC Summer & Fall Full Time Cohort Second Year Retention		
FTIC Year	University Honors	Non-Honors
2019-2020	97.1%	91.8%
2020-2021	98.1%	91.4%
2021-2022	97.9%	92.6%
2022-2023	95.6%	91.9%
2023-2024	97%	92%
2024-2025	97.6%	93%
As per AIP report 1127, 11-21-25		

FTIC Summer & Fall Cohort Graduation Rate				
	4-Year		6-Year	
FTIC Year	University Honors	Non-Honors	University Honors	Non-Honors
2016-2017	75.6%	45.2%	90.9%	74.2%
2017-2018	72.8%	48.1%	91.4%	73.8%
2018-2019	73.7%	53.3%	88.9%	77.1%
2019-2020	78.3%	52.3%	92.3%	76.7%
2020-2021	77.2%	57.3%	N/A	N/A
2021-2022	80.7%	62.4%	N/A	N/A
As per AIP report 1127, 11-21-25				

The BHC is dedicated to access to excellence and is focused on the importance of socioeconomic mobility. Pell recipients are considered one of the most socioeconomically disadvantaged student groups. More than a quarter of all BHC Scholars have been Pell eligible at some point during their academic journey.

Bachelors Awarded by Whether the Student has ever Received Pell		
	All Honors	Non-Honors
2020-2021	34%	51%
2021-2022	33%	50%
2022-2023	26%	49%
2023-2024	28%	47%
2024-2025	27%	49%
As per AIP report 1127, 11-21-25		





Strategic Plan & Tactics

PROGRAMS & HISTORY

MILESTONES

1982: UCF Honors program created

1989: Honors in the Major program created (name later changed to Honors Undergraduate Thesis)

1998: College status granted by UCF Board of Trustees

2002: BHC building completed through a generous donation by Al and Nancy Burnett

2019: Second Year Entry admissions program established

2020: Inspire Scholars Program established

The Burnett Honors College offers two honors program tracks:

- ✦ **University Honors (UH)**
- ✦ **Honors Undergraduate Thesis (HUT)**

University Honors provides an enhanced course of study for four types of admitted Scholars:

- ✦ **FTIC (First Time in College):** incoming first-year UCF students
- ✦ **Second Year Entry:** students who apply during their first UCF spring semester for subsequent fall admission
- ✦ **AA Transfer:** students who earn an honors AA degree from one of UCF's four partner state colleges
- ✦ **Inspire Scholars:** high-achieving, at-risk students who are accepted through our statewide partnership with Take Stock in Children

The **Honors Undergraduate Thesis** program is an opportunity for high-achieving UCF juniors and seniors, including a sizable number of transfer students, to join the BHC by completing an original research project or creative project under faculty supervision. Many UH Scholars also participate in the HUT program.



ADMISSIONS: EXCELLENCE & ACCESS

The BHC currently houses about 2,400 students (whom we refer to as Scholars) representing almost 4% of the undergraduate population at the University of Central Florida (UCF).

The BHC has experienced consistent strength in the quality of its FTIC University Honors cohorts.

FTIC Summer & Fall Cohort				
	High School GPA (Average)		SAT Score (Average)	
FTIC Year	BHC	UCF	BHC	UCF
2021	4.51	4.13	1466	1246
2022	4.54	4.17	1472	1266
2023	4.52	4.16	1469	1265
2024	4.52	4.14	1467	1267
2025	4.53	4.17	1466	1277
As per AIP report 1127, 11-21-25				

While the BHC is recognized as one of UCF's 12 colleges, we do not confer degrees – all of our alumni are also graduates of at least one other college. BHC Scholars represent a diverse range of majors in every college, however, similar to UCF's student body, enrollment skews heavily toward STEM majors currently hovering just under 74%.

BHC UH Scholars by College Enrollment 2023-2024	
College	% of Scholars
College of Engineering and Computer Science	45.4%
College of Sciences	18.0%
College of Medicine	14.5%
College of Business Administration	6.1%
College of Health Professions and Sciences	5.5%
College of Arts and Humanities	4.7%
College of Community Innovation and Education	1.1%
College of Hospitality Management	1.2%
College of Nursing	1.1%
College of Undergraduate Studies	1.0%
College of Optics and Photonics	1.2%
Chart represents college distribution prior to restructuring to 12 colleges.	

Second Year Entry (2UH)

Our commitment to attracting and developing inclusive excellence is exemplified by our most recent pathway to University Honors, which accepted its first cohort in Fall 2019. The BHC recognizes that there are highly talented students at UCF who have the potential to be a part of the University Honors program but were either unaware of the program or did not reach their stride until later. The BHC developed a highly competitive program for current UCF first year students to enter the BHC University Honors program in their second year. For Fall 2025, the incoming honors class was 518 FTIC Scholars and 18 2UH Scholars, which is 3.4% of the class. **Our goal is to have 2UH represent 5% of the incoming university honors class.**

Inspire Scholars Program (ISP)

The BHC believes that serving our communities includes providing high achieving at-risk students in Florida with greater access to the opportunities and benefits of an honors education. The program began in Fall 2020 with two Elevation Scholars from Title 1 high schools in Orange County.

In order to expand our reach across Florida, ISP partnered with Take Stock in Children (TSIC), a state leader in serving thousands of high-achieving, at-risk, economically challenged students. The TSIC partnership was piloted in Fall 2021 with TSIC Seminole County and two TSIC students enrolled as BHC Scholars in Fall 2022. Combining traditional BHC admission standards and modeling TSIC's selection criteria for their fellowship program, ISP will continue to admit high-achieving at-risk students and provide individual mentoring and tools to enhance their learning experience at UCF, ensuring a path to success with the BHC.

Through the ISP and partnership with TSIC, the BHC created an unprecedented opportunity to build on previous successes and support UCF's goal of creating **excellence and access** by eliminating socio-economic status as a barrier to educational mobility. The BHC expanded the TSIC partnership to its 45 affiliates and welcomed their first state-wide cohort in Fall 2023. However, **our goal is to raise a \$7.5M endowment** to produce the \$222,500 needed annually to **grow the program** and maintain a **total enrollment of 40 ISP Scholars**.



SCHOLAR SUCCESS & WELL-BEING

Office of Honors Advising

The Office of Honors Advising (OOHA) actively supports Scholars while teaching them to advocate for themselves. In addition to guiding students throughout their undergraduate career, primarily focusing on their progression through the University Honors program, our academic advisors help them become well-rounded graduates who are prepared for any academic or professional endeavor they pursue.

The BHC's impact on UCF's retention and graduation rates is rooted in our robust advising strategy focused on personal and academic well-being. OOHA manages several programs to encourage engagement and further assist Scholars through their undergraduate academic journey.

- ✦ **Peer Advisors:** combine in-person and virtual drop-in peer-to-peer advising hours as well as informational videos shared on BHC social media
- ✦ **Honors Orientation Ambassadors:** help onboard first-year Scholars during summer orientation

Data is key to helping us focus on areas for improvement while maintaining our success. We have expanded our access to Scholar progress data from campus departments including Institutional Knowledge Management, Undergraduate Admissions, Housing and Residence Life, and others. Our goal is to improve the way we use available data to help improve student success.



The BHC has implemented targeted advising and programs to identify and decrease obstacles to graduation. Working with the colleges and OHRSE, the BHC will continue to develop solutions that allow students to move through their degree programs on schedule without sacrificing participation in High Impact Practice opportunities.

DEAN'S OFFICE

Much of the Burnett Honors College's commitment to Scholar well-being is rooted in the leadership and vision of the Dean's Office. We take great pride in fostering a vibrant environment where every Scholar has the opportunity to find their place and flourish. Through a variety of thoughtfully designed initiatives, we aim to support not only academic success but also the holistic development of our students.

A key pillar of this approach is the cultivation of social fitness, the ability to build meaningful relationships, engage confidently in multi-dimensional communities, and navigate the social dimensions of college life with resilience and empathy. We recognize that well-being extends beyond the classroom, and that a strong sense of belonging is essential to thriving both personally and academically. By creating spaces for connection, collaboration, and celebration, we empower our Scholars to grow into well-rounded individuals prepared to lead with purpose and compassion.

- ✦ **Team Leaders:** Scholars who facilitate small-group reflection and discussion in conjunction with the required first-year Honors Symposium curricula and are integral to retention.
- ✦ **Dean's Leadership Council:** Modeled after UCF's President's Leadership Council, these Scholars represent the best of the BHC and serve as ambassadors for the college at events and in the community.
- ✦ **Scholarships:** We believe there should never be a financial barrier to attaining all the advantages of an honors education, therefore we offer donor-funded scholarships that allow Scholars to study abroad, conduct research, and/or gain experience through internships.

Events

The BHC hosts a variety of events to connect Scholars with each other and with the BHC professional staff. Our goal is to provide at least one event per month. These events vary in size and scope. Events centered around holidays and celebrations, like Frito Pie Friday at the beginning of the fall and spring semesters, are typically large and primarily social in nature. Smaller events, like Chatting over Chai and Kicking Back with Koi, allow Scholars to interact with the Deans and other staff members in casual group conversations.



BHC Reoccurring Events	
Event Name	Attendance
Dean's Welcome: Frito Pie Friday	230-250 students
BHC Family Weekend Reception	350-400 students & guests
Study Abroad Showcase	50-75 students
Kicking Back with Koi (Once per Semester)	15-25 students
Etiquette Luncheon (Once per Semester)	16-20 students
BHC Faculty Appreciation Reception	60-80 faculty and staff
BHC X Opera Orlando Panel	20-30 students & community partners
BHC Alumni and Friends Homecoming Celebration	60-80 alumni
BHC Trick or Treat	180-200 students
Chatting Over Chai (Once per Semester)	30-40 students
BHC Winter Holiday Celebration	230-250 students
BHC Graduation Medallion Conferral - Fall	300-350 students and guests
Dean's Welcome: Walking Taco Wednesday	230-250 students
BHC Family Field Day	350-400 students and guests
Palentine's Day Social	180-200 students
Scholars Day Open House	400-450 prospective students and guests
BHC Spring BBQ	230-250 students
BHC Graduation Medallion Conferral- Spring	1,100-1,200 students and guests

RESOURCES

We offer Scholars dedicated resources including a robust curriculum, a special Honors Orientation, priority registration, Honors Congress (official registered student organization), Learning Labs, and Meditation Garden. Tower 3, the Honors LLC, houses approximately 470 Honors students and provides a hub for Honors specific residential activities.

- ✦ **Honors Curriculum:** The Honors College offers approximately 220 classes each year. Honors Symposium is taken by all new Honors students in their first semester, creating the Honors community and introducing our theme of “Cultivating Talent. Inspiring Excellence.” At the lower level, students can meet some of the General Education Program requirements with Honors Classes. The distinguishing feature of the Honors College are the wide variety of courses offered at the upper level, especially in a student’s major, and our interdisciplinary seminars.
- ✦ **Honors Orientation** takes place each summer to welcome and onboard new University Honors FTIC students and their families. Prior to orientation, each student participates in a one-on-one Zoom meeting with an Honors Orientation Ambassador (HOA). HOAs are current Honors scholars who are trained to help incoming students determine which Honors classes to enroll in at orientation and answer any questions that students have. This allows the incoming students to attend orientation with confidence about their academic plans and enthusiasm in being a BHC student, making the orientation process go smoothly. HOAs also co-host a Meet & Greet event in the BHC building with Honors staff to welcome new students and their families. Finally, HOA’s assist Honors advising staff and academic colleges with the class scheduling and registration process.
- ✦ **Priority Registration:** Current Honors students benefit from priority registration, allowing them to plan their coursework around Honors requirements and experiential learning opportunities.
- ✦ **Honors Congress** is the BHC’s registered student organization, providing Scholars with both community service and social engagement activities. The Scholar-run organization also provides valuable leadership opportunities for those who serve as officers.



BHC Learning Lab Facilities

Main Lab (BHC Building):

The Burnett Honors College Learning Lab provides academic support, offering students access to essential technology and learning resources in a flexible and collaborative environment.

- ✦ The lab is equipped with desktop computers featuring specialized academic software, high-speed scanning stations, and a wide array of printing services—including 3D printing, color printing, and large-format poster printing.

- ✦ Designed to accommodate both individual and group study, the space includes whiteboards, flexible seating, and designated collaboration zones to promote active learning and productivity.
- ✦ A dedicated lab monitor is available during operating hours to assist students with technical support and oversee the check-out of various equipment, such as loaner laptops, graphing calculators, mobile device chargers, and digital projectors.
- ✦ Additionally, the lab provides access to a statistics consultant who offers expert guidance on data analysis for research projects, theses, and coursework.

By integrating advanced technology with personalized academic support, the BHC Learning Lab plays a vital role in helping students excel academically and supports high-impact scholarly work.

Tower 3 Learning Lab:

Located in the Honors Living Community, this lab extends access to computing and printing resources for residential students.

Community & Silent Study Spaces:

A dedicated silent study space in BHC 126 opened in Fall 2025. This space expanded student study capacity and provides a quiet, focused environment for deep work. It is part of a broader initiative to modernize BHC's academic infrastructure, which also includes:

- ✦ Renovation of BHC classrooms
- ✦ Expansion of the student technology checkout program
- ✦ Installation of new AV equipment and display monitors for events and announcements
- ✦ Replacement of Reading Room furniture to support collaborative work

Meditation Garden

The Meditation Garden at BHC has undergone a significant transformation, becoming a serene and inclusive space that supports student wellness and reflection. Key enhancements include:

Accessibility & Comfort:

- ✦ All new seating areas, including those outside the Reading Room, are ADA-compliant.
- ✦ Existing furniture has been replaced to improve comfort and usability.

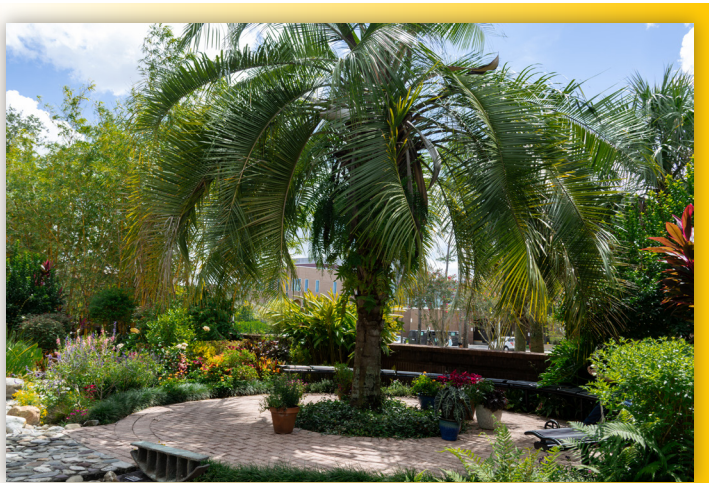
Aesthetic & Educational Features:

- ✦ A full refresh of the garden's plant material has revitalized the space.
- ✦ A new plant guide and dedicated webpage provide educational context for visitors.
- ✦ Lighting has been installed around the koi pond area to enhance evening ambiance and safety.

Community Engagement:

- ✦ A student volunteer program has been established to help maintain the garden and foster a sense of ownership.
- ✦ The original garden gate has been restored, preserving the space's historical charm.

These improvements were made possible through the creation of a donor-funded \$400,000 endowment and reflect the BHC's commitment to holistic student development, balancing academic rigor with mental and emotional well-being.



OFFICE OF HONORS RESEARCH & SCHOLARLY ENGAGEMENT

The Office of Honors Research and Scholarly Engagement (OHRSE) provides BHC Scholars with opportunities to obtain meaningful research experience and other types of scholarly engagement. From the time students arrive as freshmen to the time they graduate, through OHRSE, students have access to various types of support related to undergraduate research: connection to faculty and other researchers to get involved in research; participation in programs that cater to specific majors or careers; exploration of ideas through scholarly engagement; and experiences that build on UCF's unique characteristics and strengths, such as its connections with the space industry.

OHRSE is also responsible for the Inspire Scholars program, which is BHC's commitment to access to excellence. Additionally, OHRSE manages the BHC's semesterly engagement survey of current scholars. This survey is a key instrument to identifying outcomes and assisting other units in identifying applicants for TALENT, CARES, and OPA opportunities.

Honors Undergraduate Thesis (HUT)

The Honors Undergraduate Thesis (HUT) program provides one of two tracks by which students can earn the Honors distinction at UCF from the Burnett Honors College.

Established in 1989 as Honors in the Major, HUT provides juniors and seniors across all disciplines the opportunity to engage in original and independent research or creative activity as principal investigators and independent Scholars. Over the course of two to four semesters, HUT Scholars work closely with a faculty committee to research, write, defend, and publish an original thesis that serves as an honors capstone product of their undergraduate career.



Recruitment occurs through general information sessions open to all UCF students as well as targeted ones organized in collaboration with specific colleges, departments, or student offices (e.g., Transfer Center), as well as faculty inviting their top students to consider the program. Between 2018 and 2025, HUT participation increased 26% and reached a new steady state of over 550 students annually. HUT has improved disciplinary diversity by attracting Scholars from every UCF campus and online. Additionally, Scholars from every academic college have participated in the HUT program since 2019.

Maintaining the quality of the Honors Undergraduate Theses is a priority. Consequently, starting Fall 2025, admission to HUT will require a 3.5 UCF GPA (up from the current 3.4 UCF or overall GPA) to be in line with UH transfer requirements as well as peer institutions across the state university system.

Additional support introduced to HUT Scholars in recent years includes the services of a statistics consultant, who assists with research design and methodology, literature reviews, data collection

and analysis; a formatting reviewer, who helps HUT scholars ensure that their theses meet UCF formatting guidelines and digital accessibility; and IRB assistance through the services of an IRB ambassador provided by the College of Graduate Studies.

The establishment of the Interdisciplinary Thesis in Spring 2019 expanded the range of disciplines in which students can choose to conduct research and widened the pool of potential faculty with whom they can work. This new track now accounts for over 25% of all UCF undergraduate theses.

We now offer Scholars in the arts and humanities the opportunity to submit a creative project (such as a novella, poetry collection, translation, or graphic design) and a critical analysis of the project. The two products, submitted together, constitute the Creative Thesis.

The continued strengthening of relationships with campus partner offices such as the Office of Undergraduate Research, Academic Advancement Programs, and Tau Sigma transfer student honor society, have led to rich synergies.



STARS: Map showing the cumulative number of downloads of UCF Honors Undergraduate Theses as of October 8, 2025

The number of thesis downloads from the UCF HUT Collection in STARS has surpassed two million, an especially impressive milestone considering the collection was posted online relatively recently — 2015. The average monthly number of downloads has more than doubled in the last five years from 14,042 in 2018-19 to nearly 30,000 in 2024-25. The map above shows the worldwide locations where HUT theses have been downloaded.

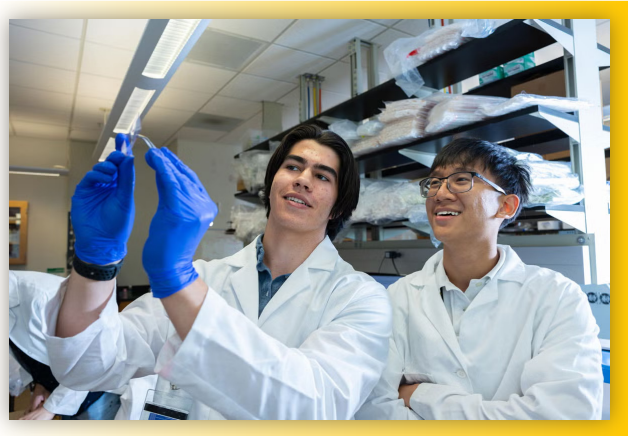
Over the last decade the HUT program also attracted 175 new faculty members to participate as thesis chairs. Faculty from every academic college and campus are represented in this group. New UCF faculty are regularly recruited as thesis chairs through presentations by the director of OHRSE at department meetings, invitations through the Undergraduate Research Council and Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning listserv, and by students seeking them out.

The HUT Thesis Chair Webcourse was created specifically for faculty who supervise the projects and chair the committees of HUT Scholars. There are currently 668 faculty actively enrolled in the Webcourse. Resources such as the Thesis Chair's Quick Guide, a one-page checklist of program requirements, and a PDF introduction to the program are meant to assist faculty to have a smooth experience in the experience. The OHRSE Director is also a direct resource for questions, concerns, or issues.

Research Partnerships for Honors Scholars

In addition to the HUT program, OHRSE works with University Honors students from the time they arrive at UCF to provide them with multiple opportunities to engage in research.

Nearly 50% of the BHC's students belong to the College of Engineering and Computer Science (CECS). Given UCF's strategic turn towards its historic and current strengths in those majors, the BHC has partnered with CECS to place BHC Scholars in CECS faculty's labs as research assistants on an ongoing basis. Faculty with openings contact the



Director of Honors Research and Scholarly Engagement with details of the positions; these are then disseminated to Honors students in a variety of ways, primarily through posting in a Webcourse created specifically for this purpose, in which all Honors Scholars who are CECS majors are added each semester. In future years, this initiative will be extended to other colleges across UCF to allow students from other majors to participate in research as well.

- ✦ **Research Match Day/Week** allows BHC Scholars to meet faculty from across UCF who are interested in recruiting undergraduate researchers and to learn about the opportunities available for them to join existing projects. Originally only one afternoon long, the campuswide Research Match Day is now also hosted in Webcourses over one week. Honors Research Match Week was held asynchronously on Canvas in October 2025; 94 faculty and 225 students registered for the virtual event. In-person events for the College of Engineering and Computer Science still take place once a year to allow for face-to-face contact between faculty and students, which leads to quicker placement. In February 2025, 33 faculty and 100 students registered for Honors Research Match Day, which posted an impressive 60-80% placement rate. This complements the Research Partnerships for Honors Scholars initiative described above.
- ✦ **Honoring the Ocean**, launched in Spring 2023, is a multi-campus interdisciplinary experiential course. Students representing five (six in 2025) Florida State University System institutions learn virtually about ocean-related issues, participate in an overnight at-sea research experience aboard a vessel provided by the Florida Institute of Oceanography (FIO), and design an original project based on what they have learned or experienced. Each Spring semester, BHC Scholars are selected through a competitive application process to participate in this unique experiential learning opportunity, which allows them to interact with 20 peers and discuss the ocean from various humanities approaches, reflecting the expertise of the faculty from the participating SUS institutions.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

TALENT (Transforming Aspiring Leaders through Experience, Networking, and Training)

The TALENT Program at the Burnett Honors College, established in 2019, serves as a cornerstone of the college’s commitment to cultivating high-achieving students through structured career and professional development initiatives. Designed to strengthen the bridge between academic excellence and workforce readiness, the TALENT Program connects students with industry leaders, alumni mentors, and internship opportunities through curated programming. This includes professional networking events, career panels, etiquette workshops, and individualized mentorship experiences.

Central to the TALENT mission is a strong emphasis on internships as a transformative component of undergraduate education. Internships allow students to apply classroom knowledge in real-world settings; develop critical soft skills such as communication, adaptability, and professionalism; and gain firsthand insight into their intended career fields. The program also leverages digital platforms such as LinkedIn and the BHC’s digital job and internship boards to extend its reach and support, ensuring students have continuous access to career-building opportunities. Engaging in experiential learning not only enhances confidence and clarity in career direction, but also significantly improves a student’s marketability post-graduation. Employers consistently value candidates with relevant hands-on experience; and students who complete internships often gain a competitive edge when applying for full-time roles or graduate programs. Ultimately, TALENT advances the BHC’s mission by fostering meaningful connections between students and the professional world, empowering scholars to leave UCF not only with academic honors, but also with the practical experience and professional readiness to lead in their chosen fields.

Salaries of Recent BHC Graduates				
	2025	2024	2023	2022
Median	\$75,000	\$75,000	\$74,000	\$71,648
Average	\$68,977	\$78,641	\$75,890	\$74,750
Max	\$140,000	\$225,000	\$200,000	\$205,000
Source: BHC Exit Survey Data				

In Fall of 2021, we created three **LinkedIn showcase pages**: BHC Jobs, BHC Internships and BHC Research which have each shown a steady increase of traffic and followers. We post opportunities, short video clips of our Scholars, and news on these pages. Scholars are encouraged to visit these pages on a regular basis which also helps them become more comfortable navigating LinkedIn.

Additionally, relationships with community organizations have proven beneficial to securing professional experience for our Scholars. For example, The National Space Club Florida Committee hosts four Scholars at their monthly luncheons. In addition to an incredible networking opportunity, these luncheons feature prominent figures from the nation’s aerospace industry. There have been about a dozen Scholars who have found internships through connections they made at these luncheons. **Our goal is to forge similar relationships with more organizations that can create networking opportunities for our Scholars.**

Recognizing the need to teach “soft skills” to better prepare Scholars for the professional world as an intern, the BHC developed etiquette lunches. In collaboration with the Rosen College, Scholars are taught proper etiquette while walking them through a plated lunch. These popular lunches help Scholars gain the confidence they need to successfully interact with in a professional environment.

CARES (Clinical Activity, Research Experience, and Shadowing)

CARES is designed for Scholars who plan to pursue careers in healthcare. CARES helps Scholars learn more about the application and placement process for shadowing, internships, and volunteering, in addition to creating connections with professionals in the medical field.

Our goals are to expand **collaboration** with major healthcare organizations to streamline opportunities for volunteering, **create a network of healthcare professionals** for Scholars to shadow, and **develop a database of organizations** that can offer professional experience to our Scholars.

The CARES webcourse is specifically designed for our pre-health Scholars pursuing Doctor of Medicine (MD), Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine (DO), Occupational Therapy (OT), Physical Therapy (PT), or Physician Assistant (PA) careers. The webcourse has experienced steady engagement:

- ✦ 628 Scholars enrolled
- ✦ 112 new members since 8/18/2025
- ✦ Anywhere between 74-1,000 pages viewed per week
- ✦ Course Home viewed over 14.3k times
- ✦ Most popular webpage: Course Modules

Workshops and panels with health care organizations and professionals are featured throughout the Webcourse and are held virtually to encourage more participation among Scholars.

CARES hosts events on campus that allow Scholars to network with healthcare organizations. In Fall 2022, BHC hosted three of the largest organizations that recruit volunteers: Grace Medical Center, Shepard's Hope, and Orlando Health. These organizations specifically focus on the uninsured. We are committed to creating future healthcare professionals that have a broad understanding of demographic needs. In Fall 2023, we started biannual meetings with UCF College of Medicine to help de-mystify the medical school application process for our students. In Fall 2023 we began to offer medical school mock interviews, to help our students prepare for medical school interviews. In 2024 we coordinated over 50 mock interviews. The CARES Webcourse houses all of the information and forms Scholars need to volunteer, intern, and shadow. The streamlined process has been a success and allowed us to better serve this group of Scholars.

The **BHC Medical Research Scholars program, established in 2024**, allows pre-health students and those in other majors (such as data science) to pursue research on-site at Orlando Health facilities under the guidance of physician researchers and full-time research scientists. In Spring 2024, the program accommodated 23 Scholars, with plans to expand each year into new areas of Orlando Health. Students have joined research teams in the following clinical areas: pediatric gastroenterology; emergency department; maternal fetal medicine; pediatric cardiothoracic surgery; pediatric orthopedics; cardiovascular health; and oncology.

Pre-Law Network

The BHC Pre-Law Network was established in 2024 to help Scholars navigate the rigorous law school application process. Networking opportunities with alumni and access to Pre-Law Weekly are additional benefits of the program.

Study Abroad

Global citizenship and an understanding of the world are valuable attributes for success in all fields. BHC encourages study abroad through scholarships that remove the financial barrier for Scholars to find a program that best fits their needs and passion. Thanks to the generous support of donors, the BHC has supported a number of study abroad experiences, including the interdisciplinary engineering program in Brazil, reforestation projects in Guatemala, and GIS in Belize, among others.

An annual Study Abroad Showcase event is held each year. Scholars who receive a BHC study abroad scholarship are invited to create a poster showcasing their experience to encourage their peers participation and to thank donors who support the scholarships. In addition to student presenters, there are also representatives from UCF's Office of Prestigious Awards and UCF Global.

Our goal is to ensure every Scholar who wants to study abroad can do so. This requires the further development of a **robust fundraising effort** to help defray the costs associated with this experience.



NATIONAL PROMINENCE

Prestigious awards and fellowships are powerful catalysts in UCF's pursuit of national prominence and its aspiration to join the ranks of the Association of American Universities (AAU). These honors not only elevate the academic profile of our students and faculty, but also serve as visible markers of excellence, innovation, and global impact, which are core pillars of the Unleashing Potential strategic plan. By cultivating a culture that actively supports and celebrates high-achieving Scholars, UCF strengthens its reputation as a leading research institution committed to inclusive excellence and talent development. Each Fulbright, Goldwater, NSF GRFP, and Astronaut Scholar represents not just individual achievement, but a collective advancement toward our institutional goals. They amplify UCF's visibility on the national stage and reinforce our role as a destination for top-tier talent and transformative opportunities.

OFFICE OF PRESTIGIOUS AWARDS (OPA)

OPA assists all UCF students, but it is housed within the BHC and reports to the BHC dean. OPA helps Scholars and students find and secure prestigious scholarships, fellowships, and awards that bring acclaim to the student and UCF.

Success for OPA means providing access to and assistance with highly competitive national and international awards to as many UCF students as possible. By assisting students through complex application processes without sacrificing the quality or individualization of the support provided, OPA propels students toward the resources they need to achieve immediate and lasting success. However, the biggest challenge is identifying top talent among a student body of 69,000+. By extending its reach, OPA can ensure that there is balanced representation of UCF's diverse student body. **Our goals are to develop a more robust network of faculty and staff to assist in identifying top talent.**



During the 2024-25 academic year, UCF so far has been recognized with:

- ✦ Six National Science Foundation Graduate Fellows (and 13 honorable mentions)
- ✦ One Boren Fellow, only the third UCF student to receive this honor
- ✦ Two Goldwater Scholars
- ✦ Three Boren Scholars, tied for the highest UCF record of Boren Scholar recipients
- ✦ Three Astronaut Scholars
- ✦ Two Critical Language Scholars, tied for the highest UCF record of CLS recipients
- ✦ One UCF alum as a Florida Gubernatorial Fellow
- ✦ 8 Fulbright Scholars
- ✦ 28 Gilman Scholars from one announced cycle, which is more than in previous years (which have two cycles). We are currently waiting for the 2nd cycle to be announced.

Over the last five years, through the strategic use of resources and planning OPA has significantly increased its reach. **There has been at least a 65% increase in scholarships awarded in the last 5 years compared to the previous 5-year period.**

Year Range	Number of Scholarships in each 5-Year Period
2016-2020	171
2021-2025	283*

Office of Prestigious Awards Winners Honors v. Non-Honors			
Year	Non-Honors	Honors	Total
2018	19	11	30
2019	21	11	32
2020	33	19	52
2021	29	21	50
2022	39	20	59
2023	38	19	57
2024	36	15	51
2025	41*	25*	66*

Office of Prestigious Awards Recipients						
Scholarship	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	Grand Total
Astronaut Scholarship	2	3	3	3	3	14
Boren Fellowship	-	-	-	1	-	1
Boren Scholarship	1	2	3	1	3	10
Critical Language Scholarship	-	2	2	2	2	8
Florida Gubernatorial	-	-	-	1	1	2
Fulbright U.S. Student Grant	3	3	10	11	8	35
Gilman Scholarship	17	33	19	21	28*	118*
Goldwater Scholarship	4	3	-	-	2	9
NSF Graduate Research Fellowship	16	6	10	5	6	43
NSF Graduate Research Fellowship HM	7	5	9	6	13	40
Pickering Fellowship	-	1	-	-	-	1
Rangel Graduate Fellowship	-	1	-	-	-	1
Udall Scholarship	-	-	1	-	-	1
Grand Total	50	59	57	51	66*	283*

*The 2025 figures do not include Gilman Scholarship's 2nd cycle recipients as they have not yet been announced.

Leader in Honors Education Nationally

The BHC represents UCF in several esteemed higher education organizations. This involvement helps raise awareness for the university and the accomplishments of our Scholars.

The Association of Public and Land-Grant Universities (APLU) is a research, policy, and advocacy organization dedicated to strengthening and advancing the work of public universities in the U.S., Canada, and Mexico. In 2021, Dean Lynda Coon (University of Arkansas), and Dean Sheila Amin led a group of honors deans in creating an affiliate group of the APLU titled the Council on Honors Education (CoHE). Membership in this Council is open to deans from the 213 public institutions enrolled in the APLU. The Council currently has 130 institutional members and 241 individual members. (<https://www.cohe-aplu.org/>)

CoHE's strength lies in its virtual presence. There are monthly all-access meetings that cover a range of topics of interest to the honors community. All faculty and staff affiliated with honors are invited. There are quarterly deans/directors meetings to discuss more strategic issues. While the organization is still relatively young and in its formative years, monthly meetings draw between 50-75 participants. The organization has fostered a national networking infrastructure among honors deans/directors encouraging an exchange of ideas and best practices. The partnership with APLU provides opportunities for better understanding and appreciation of honors education by our colleagues outside of the honors community.



PARTNERSHIPS & ENGAGEMENT

At the Burnett Honors College, we are deeply committed to expanding the horizons of possibility for our Scholars by cultivating meaningful partnerships and fostering purposeful engagement. Our vision is to create a dynamic ecosystem where academic excellence meets real-world opportunity empowering students to translate their talents into impactful careers. Through intentional collaboration with industry leaders, community partners, and alumni, we are building bridges that connect our Scholars to a world of professional pathways.



Equally important is our dedication to securing the resources that fuel this mission. By expanding our philanthropic reach, we are investing in the future, ensuring that every Scholar has access to the tools, experiences, and support needed to thrive. Our ultimate goal is to position the BHC as the premier pipeline of exceptional talent for the region, the state, and the nation where opportunity is not only imagined, but realized.

Dean's Advisory Board

The purpose of this group of volunteers is to work collaboratively with the Dean to achieve the college's mission and vision; identify strategic connections and resources; explore ways that the college can maximize community involvement; and assist the BHC in cultivation and solicitation of both public and private financial support. Some of the ideas that were born from this board are our etiquette lunches, study abroad showcase, and encouraging graduating Scholars to donate to a class gift program.

We strive to have diverse representation on the board to bring different perspectives and ideas to the table. Our goal is to have **ongoing engagement** with board members and **recruit and retain members** by creating a rewarding experience for everyone.

Dean's Advisory Board Chair:

Trevor Brewer '97, Partner, Brewer Long PLLC

Members:

Nicholas Abrahams '20MNM, President & CEO, Winter Park Health Foundation

MaryBeth Morgan, Director of Operations, The Glenda G. Morgan Charitable Foundation

Beena Parikh, Ph.D., Practice Administrator, Premier Cardiology & Vascular Associates

Shara Pathak '04, President, Price Chopper Group of Companies

Christine Wydra '93, Chief Advisor, Wydra Advisory Services

Rick Schell, Ph.D., Vice President Emeritus, UCF

Edgar Campa-Palafox, CECD, MEDP, VP of Business Development, Economic Development Commission of Florida's Space Coast

Caroline Schumacher, President & CEO, Give Kids the World

Heather Easter, Global Head of Enterprise Campus Recruitment, BNY

Emeritus Members:

Linh Dang '93, President & CEO, Florida Central Credit Union

Carla DeLoach '96, Principal, DeLoach P.L.

Helen Donegan, Vice President Emerita, UCF Community Relations
Jose Fernandez, Ph.D., Dean Emeritus & Professor Emeritus, UCF
Rizwan Hussain, CEO, Noble Wireless Group/Noble Capital Group
Gil Kemp, Education Philanthropist
Brit Massing '93, President/Owner, The Staffing Resource Group/SRG Life Science
Sanjay Srinivasan '95, President, Global Enterprises/Global Eye Wear

Alumni

The BHC continues to encourage engagement among our alumni, incorporating them into the culture of BHC. Our goal is to show current Scholars that **our supportive community extends beyond graduation.**



The BHC hosts two annual events for alumni. Our **Alumni and Friends Homecoming Celebration** continues to grow. Fall 2025 saw the return of more than 75 alumni. **BHC Family Field Day**, held annually on the first Saturday of February, continues to draw alumni and their families back to campus. More than 350 people attended the 2025 event including alumni and their families, donors, volunteers and Scholars. This event allows casual interaction between alumni and Scholars.

In Fall 2024, we started working closely with UCF Advancement to create consistent flagging of BHC alumni within the Apollo system. It was discovered that the BHC was not a designated college in the database which caused vast inconsistencies when email distribution lists were pulled. Working with the Advancement's IT team, the issue was resolved, and we are closely monitoring delivery and engagement analytics.

The deans continue to hold alumni events throughout the country as they travel to professional events and meetings. Many gatherings have allowed alumni to reconnect in Atlanta, Austin, Dallas, Denver, Houston, Miami, New York, Tampa, Los Angeles, Seattle, and Washington D.C. The goal is to have the deans travel to more places where pockets of BHC alumni live and work. A tour of California is being planned to visit alums in the Silicon Valley area as well as those in Los Angeles.

The national and international reach of BHC alumni is immense and growing. They can be found pursuing advanced degrees, doing cutting-edge research and teaching at the most prestigious universities. And others can be found making their mark at some of the most renowned companies in the world. Still others have answered the call to serve our country in the military or in the government.



Our alumni engagement goals are to continue to fine tune the alumni database, grow attendance at the annual alumni events, and expand the locations where the deans visit in order to engage with more alumni.

Philanthropy

The BHC is focused on engagement and fundraising to create more opportunities for our Scholars. Our priority funds include:

- ✦ **Dean's Excellence Fund:** funds programming and events that serve as a hallmark of our Honors community, building friendships and professional networks.
- ✦ **Scholarship Fund:** removes the financial barriers to a college degree and experiential learning opportunities, providing a transformational education for our Scholars.
- ✦ **Research Fund:** supports world-class undergraduate research opportunities that help prepare Scholars for graduate school or the workforce.
- ✦ **Study Abroad Fund:** provides unique opportunities for Scholars to study outside the U.S., helping them become more successful in a globalized community.
- ✦ **Inspire Scholars Program:** in partnership with Take Stock in Children, our Inspire Scholars Program creates more opportunity an access to a four-year honors education for high-achieving at-risk students from Florida.

We have taken an increasingly active approach to **UCF's Day of Giving**. The strategy includes a robust email campaign, social media posts, customized video messages, in-person events, and Scholar engagement opportunities. In 2024, we introduced the BHC Day of Gaming livestream which gave Scholars the opportunity to play online video games with Dean Sheila to raise awareness for Day of Giving and the ways that donors support the BHC. **Our goal is to increase our philanthropic giving and expand our pool of donors.**

BHC Fundraising History			
Fiscal Year	Fundraising (Not Including DoG)	Day of Giving	Total Fundraising
2025	\$1,414,395	\$38,381 (151)	\$1,452,776
2024	\$97,089	\$62,250 (179)	\$159,339
2023	\$93,583	\$51,666 (192)	\$145,249
2022	\$386,351	43,649 (94)	\$430,000
2021	\$532,160	\$25,145 (48)	\$557,305
2020	\$3,084,061	N/A	\$3,084,061
2019	\$140,798	\$10,245 (52)	\$151,043
Grand Total	\$5,748,437	\$231,336	\$5,979,773
(**) - Number of Day of Giving Donors			

SOCIAL & DIGITAL MEDIA

Our focus for social media is to encourage networking and engagement to foster a deeper sense of community and connections among Scholars and alumni.

Our social media efforts have allowed the BHC to create a strong brand, attracting new followers and increasing engagement. To communicate with current and potential Scholars, we focus primarily on Instagram and share information through entertaining and interactive posts. In addition, the advising office helps produce an ongoing series of videos that feature academic tips for success featuring BHC peer advisors. Since Fall 2020 the BHC Instagram page has seen a 224% increase in followers and has accumulated over 2.4 million Instagram Reel views.

LinkedIn is used to connect with alumni, influential community leaders, and organizations. In addition to sharing updates with external constituents, Scholars are required to create their LinkedIn profiles during Honors Symposium. In addition to our main page, we use three LinkedIn showcase pages to promote research, internship, and job opportunities to our Scholars.

To ensure posts are relatable and maximize the reach of current trends, we employ a team of four Scholars who create and develop content as well as perform other marketing projects: two focused on social media, one who leads our long-form video production, and one who manages our website. This marketing team is managed by a BHC team member.

To create better communication and engagement, our marketing team creates a weekly e-newsletter that is distributed to every Scholar. In addition to written information, the newsletter includes a link to our popular weekly Scholar Spotlight videos that feature a Scholar sharing their story with their BHC peers.

In 2022, this team was responsible for a complete overhaul of the BHC website and continues to ensure the site is updated and compatible with UCF's security and accessibility requirements.

Our marketing goal is to effectively share the BHC's messaging by featuring the achievements of our Scholars and alumni, and to increase BHC's brand awareness and affinity.

