Dear Colleagues:

For more than fifty years, Honors education at the University of Maryland has attracted students of exceptional promise to our campus. From a small General Honors program founded in 1966 to the establishment of the Honors College in 2009, “Maryland Honors” has continued to evolve. Today, under the leadership of its Executive Director, Professor Susan Dwyer, the Honors College provides outstanding undergraduate education to approximately 4,000 students in seven distinct living-learning programs.

I am delighted to announce exciting changes to the oldest and largest of those programs – University Honors. These changes respond to recommendations of the 2017 campus-wide Honors College Strategic Vision Committee, and many prior reports, to transform the academic and co-curricular experience of the nearly 2,000 students in University Honors.

At the heart of the new University Honors program is a rigorous, multidisciplinary curriculum comprised of collaboratively designed, thematically organized courses of contemporary and enduring significance. Consisting of both I-Series courses and small seminars, this curriculum will be developed and delivered by teams of tenure-track and professional-track faculty drawn from across the University’s academic colleges and schools, as well as by subject-experts from the Washington, D.C., area.

The new curriculum preserves the flexibility that has been the hallmark of University Honors, while deepening students’ intellectual experience, strengthening student-faculty engagement, and developing the relationship between the Honors College and departmental and college honors programs. The program will benefit from improved staffing, a rebranding exercise, and a new home in the Varsity Fields residential/dining project. These changes will contribute to a robust co-curricular program that builds community among students and provides meaningful opportunities in and outside of class.

We embark on this transformation of University Honors after nearly two years of close collaboration among the Honors College’s many campus partners, including the academic colleges and schools, the Office of Undergraduate Studies, Resident Life, and many faculty, staff, students, and alumni. I would particularly like to thank the members of the Honors College Strategic Vision Committee, inaugural Executive Director, Professor Bill Dorland (2009-2015), and other former Directors, including Professor Barbara Thorne and Professor Maynard “Sandy” Mack, Jr., for setting us on this path.

Sincerely,

Mary Ann Rankin

Senior Vice President and Provost