Updates on Events and Progress Since the Strategic Planning Process of 2013

The five years since the adoption of the 2013 College of Arts and Sciences Strategic plan have seen important progress in a number of targeted areas. With leadership changes likely to delay a comprehensive reassessment, this brief update is intended to make note of a few central points of observation regarding the implementation of the 2013 plan. Items are organized under the general framework created by the four main areas of the 2013 plan.

1. Improve student success in undergraduate and graduate education.

Investments have enhanced student advising, course design, curricular innovation, and engaged learning opportunities for all OHIO students.

- The First-year-student probation rate has dropped from well over 20% to approximately 10%.
- Participation in the Student Advising Survey has doubled to a nearly 50% response rate and the survey shows across the board improvements. Student agreement with the statement “My advisor is a helpful, effective advisor who I would recommend to other students,” for example, moved from a 3.7 to a 4.2 on a 5 point disagree/agree scale.
- CAS freshman-sophomore retention moved from 76% to 79% from 2012 to 2016, but preliminary 2017 data shows a drop back to 77%.
- In pathbreaking collaborations, the college has developed ways to open previously inaccessible online courses to enrollments by students from eCampus and regional campuses. These programs have dramatically expanded course access for thousands of students.
- Professional advisors have been added in the areas of career planning and biological sciences/pre-med.
- STEMstart was launched as a late summer, high intensity onboarding program for incoming STEM freshmen; the program’s goal is to introduce new students to the rigors of our chemistry and biology programs as well as the support services that are here to help students succeed.
- The College worked with the University Registrar to add electronic wait-listing which is now used to shape class scheduling to more effectively meet student needs.

In 2017, the Wayne National Forest worked with 6 paid A&S interns and one graduate student, working on the Baileys Project. The program has grown to 10 paid A&S interns, with 3 senior level advisors involving students with prior WNF experience.
2. Strengthen College support for faculty and student research and creative activity.

There has been major progress on upgrading a long-neglected infrastructure, finding adequate funds for research activities, and enhancing the visibility of academic research and creative activity.

- **Facilities.** Substantial and important progress continues on providing state-of-the-art facilities to house faculty and student research and creative activity.
  - Construction is underway on the new 66,000 sq. ft. Chemistry building. This is Phase One of a four phase investment in our research infrastructure. Subsequent phases involve a deep renovation of the 200,000 sq. ft. Clippinger Laboratories, which house Physics and Astronomy, Chemistry and Biochemistry, Geological Sciences, and the Department of Geography.
  - We have completed new laboratory facilities for Anatomy instruction and developed a new Anthropological Sciences Laboratory.
  - The comprehensive renovation of Ellis Hall was completed in the Fall of 2018. The 53,000 sq.ft. building houses the departments of English, Philosophy, and Classic & World Religions.

- **Research Travel Funding.** A 2014 analysis of research travel funding throughout the college identified major vacuums and inequities in our ability to support travel to present at professional conferences and engage in other research events. After assessing need, the college infused new funds into departmental travel funds with the goal of assuring a minimum of $1500 per Group I faculty and made smaller equitable distributions of support for the professional development activities of teaching faculty and administrative staff. Additionally, the College created a fund explicitly targeting graduate student research travel.

- **Graduate Student Research.** In 2017, the college created the Graduate Student Research Fund. This is a competitive small grant-in-aid program that has two cycles per year and an annual $20k budget. A committee of graduate student peers evaluates proposals, ranks them, and makes ten $1000 awards per cycle to support graduate student research supplies, computational needs, travel, etc.

- **Visibility.** In 2013, the College tasked the newly hired Director of Communications with increasing the visibility of our faculty and student research. Since then, we’ve seen the creation and expanded use of the Arts and Sciences Forum, enhanced web-presence, and live-streaming of lectures. Forum now features roughly 1600 articles per year and website page views are nearing 1.5 million.

CAS is the only college to create a solution for faculty lab/research pages that makes them accessibility-compliant, search-engine-friendly and mobile-responsive. Research sites will be further enhanced after the move to the new web CMS in 2018.
3. Build a relevant liberal arts curriculum by sustaining our foundations while investing in innovative academic programs and student experiences.

New programs and opportunities have expanded engaged learning opportunities on campus and delivered new opportunities to off-campus learners.

New Programs. The following online educational program investments will be launching in the Summer and Fall of 2018:

- The Genders, Sexualities and Health certificate program educates medical practitioners on patient needs related to gender and sexual identity.
- The master’s degree in Law, Justice & Culture provides advanced studies centering on law and the institutions of justice from an empirically oriented liberal arts perspective.
- The bachelor’s degree completion program in Psychology creates an opportunity for online students with the associate’s degree to complete all of the requirements of the BA.
- The TEFL/TESOL certificate program credentials students seeking careers in English Language Instruction.
- The Master of Science in Chemistry opens the opportunity for graduate study to those working in the educational or industrial setting.
- The GIS & Cartography certificate program trains students in the use of advanced mapping technologies.
- The Data Analysis certificate program brings non-specialists into proficiency with the logic and techniques of data science.

These programs join recently developed offerings such as the the Master of Arts in English and the Master of Social Sciences to represent a college-wide investment involving dozens of faculty and staff working with the invaluable support of our partners in the Office of Instructional Innovation, the Graduate College, University Admissions, and Enrollment Management.

Themes The Dean’s office sponsored the creation of several interdisciplinary themes designed to reframe early career general education in a way the conveyed the best of the liberal arts traditions with a meaningful engagement with the world around us. Hundreds of students have now participated in the Themes and the related courses and engagement activities. [https://www.ohio.edu/cas/undergrad/themes/] (link)

Engaged Learning: Opportunities for student research, engaged learning, and internships have dramatically expanded as staff, faculty, and external partners work together to strengthen this critical dimension of effective education.

Faculty Learning Communities have been sponsored each academic year since 2014-15. These interdisciplinary faculty groups have engaged in collaborative initiatives on topics including integrating feminist pedagogy in online classes; evaluating student evaluations of teaching; incorporating team-based learning into the classroom; developing resources for graduate teaching assistants, and more. [https://www.ohio.edu/cas/about/assessment/faculty-communities.cfm] (link)
4. Support our core missions with an accountable and transparent organization characterized by a culture of regular planning, evaluation and communication.

A large and decentralized college with limited capacity for effective communication and professionalized administration is now positioned to effectively manage a complex and rapidly changing environment.

- In 2015, all departments completed comprehensive rewrites of workload policies under the requirements that they create a transparent and equitable plan for managing research and teaching while establishing protocols for the assignment of variable teaching loads.
- In 2013, the College began holding end-of-semester meetings for all faculty and staff to gather for information sharing on a variety of key subjects.
- Promotion and tenure dossier workshops have been held each year since 2014. Between 22 and 43 Group I and Group II faculty have participated in these workshops in a given year.
- The College developed a Diversity Strategic Plan and led diversity workshops for each department. Since 2015, every search committee has received training in how to best undertake a hiring process that minimizes possibilities for unconscious bias and discrimination.
- From 2012 to date, the College has institutionalized regular planning meetings with leaders and administrative staff from each department at which participants review budget planning, enrollment trends, staffing initiatives and other issues that arise.
- The College has institutionalized monthly meetings involving college staff and all administrative staff leads from academic departments.
- We have enhanced organizational operations and expanded career development possibilities for staff by recognizing a new tier of administrative leaders for several very large and complex programs and streamlined reporting and accountability by placing some smaller programs under the leadership of senior personnel.
- In order to effectively operate the college in the context of a rapidly changing fiscal and regulatory environment, the College added a Director of Administration; promoted the existing Budget Unit Manager to CFAO; and added an Associate Dean with primary responsibility for Operations, Finance and Administration. Two staff positions were dropped with related duties picked up by either the new positions or more effective partnerships with other units.
- To promote a number of the key strategic goals identified in the strategic planning process, the College added a Director of Communications (focusing on marketing, visibility, and digital strategies).
- The College recruited a Director of External Relations to work on building an Alumni Relations capacity and cultivating external partners for the support of student internships and job placement.