College of Arts and Sciences 2014-2015 Blueprint for Academic Excellence

VISION
The College of Arts and Sciences aspires to transform the lives of our students and improve the world they will inhabit by creating and sharing knowledge at the frontiers of inquiry.

GOAL 1: To develop an educated citizenry through excellent programs for all undergraduate students in the University of South Carolina.

The College of Arts and Sciences is the intellectual core of the University, uniquely situated to transform the lives not just of its own students, but of all students at the University. Undergraduate education in the College of Arts and Sciences is grounded in the great tradition of the liberal arts, an education that encourages students to observe accurately, think carefully, communicate clearly and persuasively, and solve complex problems in a rapidly changing world. With broad, foundational study of the human experience and the natural world, our courses and programs prepare students for a lifetime of learning, work, and citizenship.

The first goal of the College of Arts and Sciences expresses our profound commitment to excellence in teaching. Our academic programs serve not only our majors in the arts, humanities, social sciences, natural and mathematical sciences, but all undergraduates at the
University through general education, specialized course work required for professional majors in other Colleges, and minors that enrich and broaden students’ academic experiences. Commitment to teaching has always been and will remain a chief priority of the College, as evidenced by our faculty hiring, our use of College resources to advance teaching and learning, and our leadership in general education reform.

We are keenly aware that the University’s aim to increase the freshman to sophomore retention rate lies largely with the general education courses offered by the College of Arts and Sciences. As the College with the largest undergraduate population and the largest number of baccalaureate degree programs, we are also aware that we play a key part in improving the University’s graduation rate. Excellence in teaching, in concert with vibrant academic programs and key initiatives to improve student retention and graduation, comprise the basis of the College’s plan for undergraduate recruitment, retention, and graduation. A core theme of our plan is that our courses and programs, our commitment to teaching and learning, and our dedication to the education of all University undergraduates are central to the University’s academic mission.

**RECENT PROGRESS and ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

**Recruitment**
- Established BA in Environmental Studies.
- Established Minor in Leadership Studies.
- Completed approval process for name change of Department of Art to School of Visual Art and Design.
- Recruited new undergraduate students through Admissions open houses, scholarship days, personal visits, USC Connect fairs, and departmental outreach and recruiting events.

**Retention**
- Implemented Carolina Core for University-wide general education.
- Developed Carolina Calculus Preparation program to assist new students with concepts and skills necessary for success in calculus.
- Appointed an Associate Dean for Undergraduate Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) Education.
- Offered one-week lab sections in selected science areas in January 2014 and May 2014.
- Completed approval and implementation process for ASTR 101, a new general education science course.
- Added instructional capacity in Biological Sciences.
- Reconceptualized Summer School with improved scheduling and coordinated course offerings.
- Increased study abroad opportunities.
- Established non-tenure track teaching awards and instructor professional development awards.
Graduation

- Added new advisors in College Undergraduate Academic Affairs and Advising office and in Biological Sciences; added new staff positions to focus on internships.
- Revised College of Arts and Sciences general education requirements with Carolina Core as foundation and greater cohesion between BA and BS degrees.
- Examined undergraduate majors at College Retreat on February 1, 2013.
- Streamlined BS degrees in Biological Sciences, Chemistry, and Mathematics and BSC degree in Chemistry from 128 credits to 120 credits. This change aligns the total credits required for these degrees with all BA degrees and with BS degrees in Economics, Geography, Psychology, Sociology, and Statistics.
- Reorganized curriculum for the BFA in Art Studio so that the degree can be completed in 120 credits.

PLANS and INITIATIVES

- Complete approval process for new degree, BA in Chinese Studies.
- Continue streamlining remaining BS degrees, where possible.
- Develop and implement plan for improving science education, including Biology Intensive Orientation for Students (BIOS), a faculty learning community, and speaker series.
- Continue reconceptualization plans for Summer School.
- Continue non-tenure track teaching and professional development awards.
- Continue efforts to increase Arts and Sciences student participation in study abroad.

GOAL 2: To develop the next generation of intellectual leadership through excellent doctoral programs and graduate programs at the master’s and certificate levels.

Integral to the College’s vision of creating and sharing knowledge at the frontiers of inquiry, graduate students are active participants in the University’s pursuit of a vibrant research and scholarship program. These students, especially those in doctoral programs, directly contribute to the discovery, critical examination, integration, preservation and communication of knowledge, wisdom, and values. During their graduate careers, students learn to frame questions in order to extend human knowledge, build new understandings of nature, develop new ideas, and create new images, as well as shape methods and procedures that further these efforts. In their courses of study, graduate students contribute to the research mission of the College.

Serving in a variety of instructional roles, graduate students also directly contribute to undergraduate education, particularly at the level of general education. As teaching and
instructional assistants in our classrooms, laboratories, and studios, graduate students further our goal of providing excellent instruction for all undergraduates at the University.

The quality and productivity of our doctoral programs are key indicators of success not only for the College, but for the University as a whole. Graduate education, especially doctoral education, continues to emerge as one of the chief priorities and deep commitments of the College. Since 2005, the College has pursued strategic objectives to realize this goal. We have been largely successful at building strong graduate programs, especially at the doctoral level, and the National Research Council rankings released in September 2010 are external validation of this achievement.

Funding for graduate students lies at the center of successful graduate programs. Since 2005, the College has established stable, systematic, and sustainable plans for graduate student support. We have committed our own resources and leveraged resources from the Office of the Provost to increase graduate student stipends and provide significant fellowship support for outstanding students.

**RECENT PROGRESS and ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

- *Increased full-time, College-funded assistantships.*
- *Continued Presidential Teaching Fellowships in Social Advocacy and Ethical Life.*
- *Continued College of Arts and Sciences Dean’s Doctoral Dissertation and MFA Fellowships; awarded 50 since 2011.*
- *Established Directors of Graduate Studies (DGS) as a formal leadership group; in 2013-2014, DGS have focused on graduate student recruitment, placement, and instructional assistantship training.*
- *Increased number of assistantships in chemistry, political science, and psychology.*

**PLANS and INITIATIVES**

- *Continue above.*
- *Reopen admissions to MA in Art History.*

**GOAL 3:** To foster research, scholarship, and creative activity by supporting, retaining, and recruiting faculty members who are or will become nationally and internationally known as leaders in their fields.

The transformation of the lives of our students begins with those who discover, create, apply, and share knowledge at the frontiers of their disciplines, the faculty of the College. The
excellence, breadth, and diversity of our faculty are vital to the University as a whole. The College’s efforts in supporting, retaining, and recruiting the best scholars from around the globe ensure a vibrant intellectual community now and in the years to come.

A strong faculty is the cornerstone on which all of the College’s successes are built. The College has devoted considerable energy and resources to recruiting new faculty and retaining and supporting faculty throughout their careers. The size, strength, and composition of the faculty ensure excellence in undergraduate and graduate education, prominence in research on both the national and international levels, and leadership in service to South Carolina’s citizens, the University of South Carolina, higher education, and the disciplines. As the largest College in the University with responsibility for undergraduate general education, as well as a broad range of undergraduate majors and graduate programs, Arts and Sciences plays a central role in the University’s pursuit of objectives to increase the size and quality of the undergraduate student body, improve undergraduate retention and graduation rates, decrease the student to faculty ratio, increase research expenditures and faculty productivity, and spur the number of doctoral degrees awarded. A strong faculty is of necessity the first consideration in sustaining both the College’s and the University’s growth and quality.

Since 2005, the College has pursued strategic objectives and priorities to realize this goal. We have been largely successful at supporting, retaining, and recruiting a strong faculty. Since 2005, the College has aggressively seized on opportunities to build the faculty, leveraging University-level initiatives, grant funds, and College resources to hire nearly 300 new faculty members from elite graduate schools in this country and abroad. Our faculty have garnered $393 M in sponsored funding, produced 4716 scientific articles and published 174 scholarly books, 111 edited volumes, and 34 creative works. The 2010 National Research Council rankings have publicly validated what we have known internally for some time---our faculty are national players in the quality and quantity of their research and consequently our reputation within the scholarly community is growing.

RECENT PROGRESS and ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Successfully concluded 67 searches in 2012-2013 and 2013-2014, including 51 assistant professors, 5 associate professors, 9 full professors, and 2 research/clinical faculty.
- Established Institute for Mind and Brain.
- Garnered $33.3 M in external research funding in FY 2013.
- Revised tenure and promotion criteria/procedures for all departments.
- Developed formal guidelines for appointment, review, and promotion of research faculty, clinical faculty, instructors, and jointly appointed faculty.
- Overhauled salary structure for full-time instructors.
- Named inaugural class of four McCausland Fellows; these fellowships support faculty in innovative teaching and research.
- Completed site visit for Department of Psychology external review.
- Completed approval process for name change of Department of Art to School of Visual Art and Design.
PLANS and INITIATIVES

- Review state of faculty following several years of aggressive hiring; plan for long-range future using the annual strategic hiring plan exercise and specific meetings with unit heads.
- Monitor reduced levels of available federal research funding; aggressively pursue finding opportunities at the federal level as well as in other arenas.
- Complete recommendations following external review of Department of Psychology.
- Conduct accelerated external reviews of Department of Geography and Women’s and Gender Studies Program.

GOAL 4: To recognize and support the essential role of staff in fulfilling the College’s mission.

The teaching, research, and service missions of the College require not only an excellent faculty, but a talented and dedicated staff who perform a wide range of functions in student advising, management of student programs, unit administration, budget/human resources management, research and grant support, public information and programming, outreach and engagement with the broader community, information technology management, among others. The contributions of staff in careful management of fiscal and human resources underpin the College’s commitment to undergraduate and graduate education, research, and service.

RECENT PROGRESS and ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Established Classified Staff Advisory Committee.
- Awarded 10 Classified Staff Excellence Awards in 2013-2014.
- Added staff member dedicated to classified staff issues.
- Implemented universal review dates for classified staff.

PLANS and INITIATIVES

- Continue above.

GOAL 5: To encourage positive change through engagement with the broader society.

With expertise in the arts, humanities, and social and natural sciences, the College of Arts and Sciences fosters positive change in the state, the region, and the world. The knowledge that we create, preserve, and disseminate serves a broad range of public concerns: K-12 education, business and industry, government, science, medicine, mental health, and cultural and arts
institutions. Our academic, research, and engagement programs directly impact quality of life for citizens in the broader society.

**RECENT PROGRESS and ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

- Offered professional development opportunities to K-12 teachers (e.g., summer institutes and contract courses) and outreach to K-12 students (e.g., the Science Fair, Physics Day at the Fair, High School Mathematics Contest, Young Artists Workshop, and Split P poetry workshops).
- Completed critical hire in dance education and preparatory steps for accreditation of dance program.
- Completed critical hire in mathematics education.
- Completed successful searches in cancer biology and therapeutics, Native American studies, biomathematics, public administration.
- Completed successful search for clinical faculty position to direct the Psychological Services Center.

**PLANS and INITIATIVES**

- Continue commitment to providing high quality educator preparation programs in art education (BFA, MAT, IMA), dance education (BA), foreign language education (BA, MAT), theatre education (MAT), secondary English education (MAT), secondary mathematics education (MAT), secondary science education (MAT), secondary social studies education (MAT), and teaching English to speakers of other languages (graduate certificate.)
- Continue commitment to doctoral program in School Psychology.
- Continue research, engagement, and outreach activities that serve the state through academic departments and programs as well as centers and institutes (Institute for African American Research, Center for Asian Studies, Belle W. Baruch Institute for Marine and Coastal Sciences, Center for Colon Cancer Research, Confucius Institute, Center for Digital Humanities, Earth Sciences and Resources Institute, Electron Microscopy Center, Center for Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and Remote Sensing, Center of Excellence for Geographic Education, Hazards and Vulnerability Research Institute, Interdisciplinary Mathematics Institute, McCausland Center for Brain Imaging, McKissick Museum, Institute for Mind and Brain, Parenting and Family Research Center, Institute for Public Service and Policy Research, Center for Science Education, Institute for Southern Studies, South Carolina Institute for Archaeology and Anthropology, Walker Institute of International and Area Studies.)
GOAL 6: To ensure the reputation, unity, and stability of the College.

Our strengths in promotion and advancement, community-building, and strategic planning are critical elements that sustain the College in both the present and the future. Our efforts to advance the College support key initiatives in the educational, research, and service missions of the College. Our strong and flexible processes for planning and decision-making enable us to weather downturns and pressures, respond to new opportunities, and move forward toward our goals.

RECENT PROGRESS and ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Raised over $88 M in private philanthropy since 2005.
- Secured major gift for faculty development; named first four McCausland Fellows.
- Redesigned communications strategy with new web site, logo, marketing manual, College video.
- Continued signature engagement activities: Recognition of Excellence Dinner, Alumni and Friends Weekend at the Coast.
- Strategic planning with chairs and directors, Academic Planning Council, directors of graduate studies; undergraduate directors, classified staff.
- Completed move of College administrative offices to newly renovated Petigru College.

PLANS and INITIATIVES

- Continue implementation of McCausland Fellows program.
- Continue to pursue aggressively other major gifts.
- Continue external relations strategies with Board of Visitors, Alumni Council, communications plan.
- Continue development of College identity by association with Petigru College.