



The UNIVERSITY of OKLAHOMA

College of Arts and Sciences



STRATEGIC PLAN

2017–2020



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Dear Members of the CAS Family:

When I interviewed for the position of your dean almost three years ago, I was asked to present a “vision speech” for the College of Arts and Sciences (CAS). I remember being humbled by the task because it seemed so daunting. Back then, we often referred to CAS as “OU’s oldest, largest, and most diverse college.” That last part (being the most diverse) was my stumbling point. How could anyone develop a unified vision for the future of a college with 30 academic programs (representing the humanities, social sciences, natural/physical sciences, and professional programs), 60+ degrees, over 1,000 faculty and staff members, nearly 9,000 students, and more than 75,000 living alumni?

It didn’t help that we had just adopted a new catch-phrase: One College, Infinite Possibilities!

Undaunted, I focused my vision for the college on sharing with various audiences about what I thought makes our college unique, the current and future challenges we were facing, and the opportunities that laid in front of us. In the end, I laid out some broad goals, suggested that our diversity is our strength, and said that the job of dean was to ensure that our students and staff/faculty members had the resources that they needed to be successful. My mantra was “all students matter, all faculty/staff matter, all research matters.”

But I have always believed in the principle of shared governance and vowed to myself that, once we managed the dean transition phase, the college would collaborate to create our vision – something that at once unifies us and creates a shared path for our shared future. This strategic plan fulfills that vow.

In October 2015, I commissioned Victoria Sturtevant (Associate Dean of Academic Programs), Emily Pierce (Executive Director of CAS Operations), and Alisa Fryar (Associate Professor of Political Science) to steer this strategic planning effort. The broad charge that I gave them was to give voice to all our key constituents (faculty, staff, students, and alumni) and to create a document that outlines our joint mission, the values upon which all CAS decisions should be based, our aspirational goals, and 3-5 signature initiatives that we should work toward accomplishing in the next three years.

The fruit of their incredible labor now lies before you. Hundreds of conversations have resulted in the creation of an exciting three-year plan for our college. The plan purposively emphasizes the importance we place on respecting the diversity within our college. Given our current fiscal climate, it also wisely focuses on “doable” initiatives that build upon our already existing strengths.

Now, the hard work begins. If the plan sits on a shelf for the next three years, we will have failed. This is a plan of action!

To that end, I have assigned oversight responsibility for each objective to a member of the CAS Executive Operations Team. Their first task will be to develop metrics and baseline data that will be used to measure the extent to which the objectives are being met. We will present annual progress reports to the CAS Executive Committee, to our Board of Visitors, and to the President and Provost. We will also share annual summaries of our progress with you (our students, faculty/staff, and alumni).

I am very proud of what has been created here, and I cannot wait to begin checking things off the list!

Let’s do this. Together. We are CAS.

Kelly Damphousse
Dean

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The College of Arts and Sciences (CAS) Strategic Planning process began in October 2015 when Dean Damphousse convened a steering committee and tasked us with developing a process that would elicit input from faculty, staff, students and alumni. After reviewing strategic plans from peer institutions around the country, the committee established a procedure and timeline to produce a finished plan in Fall 2016.

Data Collection

The committee designed and distributed separate surveys to our staff, students, faculty, board of visitors, academic unit chairs and directors, advisors and alumni in February 2016. We received 47 responses from staff, 171 responses from students, 188 responses from faculty and 487 responses from alumni and board members. After carefully reviewing, coding and compiling the data from these surveys, the committee developed a list of 15 topics for further input and study:

- Staff
- Online education
- Diversity
- Non-tenure track faculty
- General education
- Environmental initiatives
- Student recruitment and retention
- Native American initiatives
- Big data
- Space allocation
- Oklahoma initiatives
- Graduate student support
- Student career preparation
- Tulsa campus initiatives
- Research support

In April 2016, we hosted a series of in-person focus groups with key stakeholders on each of these topics, facilitated by discussion leaders with relevant expertise. Fifty-seven members of the faculty and staff ultimately participated in one or more of these discussion groups, generating suggestions and providing feedback on the emerging plan.

Plan Development

At the end of the data collection phase, the committee summarized its findings for the Dean and worked with senior college staff to organize the emerging plan into a cogent mission, values and goals. Over the course of the process, we presented survey results, plan timelines and early drafts of the plan at college chairs and directors meetings throughout the Spring 2016 semester, taking useful feedback from departmental leadership. An outline of the strategic plan was presented to the dean's office executive staff in July 2016 and each member of the college leadership began the process of building out the goals and objectives most closely aligned with their own expertise.

The committee compiled the input from the executive staff into a first draft, which was distributed at the August 2016 chairs and directors retreat. During the retreat, chairs and directors participated in a two-hour discussion, which provided the steering committee with final feedback to revise the working draft into a more final document.

Plan Distribution and Implementation

Starting in November 2016, the Dean began the process of visiting faculty meetings in each academic unit to give all faculty a preview of the mission, values, goals and signature initiatives. The next steps will include creating an implementation document that allows us to track and measure progress towards our goals.

The purpose of this strategic planning process was never to produce a glossy document that will sit idly on a shelf. The success of this plan will be measured by how each member of the CAS community finds recognition, meaning and direction laid out in these pages. The committee has treasured the opportunity to learn from the remarkable community of CAS faculty, staff, students and alumni, and we hope that the wide-ranging and fruitful conversations that went into the development of this document will give momentum and purpose to our shared work over the next three years.

CAS Strategic Planning Committee

Victoria Sturtevant, *Associate Dean for Academic Programs*
Emily Pierce, *Executive Director of Operations*
Alisa Hicklin Fryar, *Associate Professor of Political Science*

UNIVERSITY MISSION

To provide the best possible educational opportunity for our students through excellence in teaching, research and creative activity, and service to the state and society.

COLLEGE MISSION

As the intellectual core of the university, the College of Arts and Sciences supports the discovery and transmission of knowledge across a wide range of disciplines in the liberal arts and sciences to address the challenges of a changing global community. We prepare students for lives of professional accomplishment, civic engagement, personal fulfillment and lifelong learning.

VALUES

- Inclusion and fairness
- Inquiry and academic freedom
- Integrity and accountability
- Service and community engagement

GOALS

In recognition of our values, we have established the following enduring goals, which give structure to our core operations and daily decision-making.

Cultivate a community of inclusion

The College of Arts and Sciences is built upon diversity—diversity of backgrounds, of ideas, of disciplines and of identities. Our inclusive community is our greatest strength. The college’s policies, procedures and programs seek to affirm and advance this strength through a continually renewing commitment to inclusive excellence.

Support faculty and student research

We aspire to advance human knowledge across a broad range of disciplines in the humanities, social sciences, natural and physical sciences, and professional fields. The college supports research and creative activity of the highest quality, originality and integrity, which can only flourish in an institutional context committed to academic freedom.

Promote Student Success Through High-Impact Teaching

We commit to provide every student with opportunities for intellectual inquiry, faculty mentorship, individualized advising and preparation to apply the knowledge and skills gained at OU in further professional, personal and educational contexts.

Advance liberal arts and sciences education

We affirm our commitment to generating and sharing knowledge across a broad range of disciplines. Study of the liberal arts and sciences develops the deep reserves of curiosity, critical thinking, rigorous reasoning, creativity, ethical engagement and civil communication that are required to solve the complex problems of an ever-changing world.

Foster a culture of excellence and integrity

We commit to building on the foundation of excellence that comes from being the oldest and largest college at the heart of the state’s flagship university. Our goal is to empower our faculty, staff and students to do their best work by providing clear communication, recognition of merit, high-quality facilities and equipment, and responsive governance structures to nurture an organizational culture of excellence and integrity.

SIGNATURE INITIATIVES

The following signature initiatives represent strategic opportunities for the college, based on current strengths. We will build capacity in these areas by leveraging existing resources across multiple divisions of the college, seeking new funding opportunities, and developing broader constituencies of interest across the university and the state.

Becoming a nationally recognized leader in research and teaching related to America's Indigenous peoples

Oklahoma is home to 39 tribal nations, more than any other state. In establishing a Native Nations Center, the University of Oklahoma, under the leadership of President David Boren, recognized the critical importance of these tribal nations to the intellectual, cultural and economic health of our state and our nation. The College of Arts and Sciences will give special priority to growing its research and teaching initiatives related to America's Indigenous peoples across all divisions.

Addressing the health needs of our state and our nation

The College of Arts and Sciences will develop and support research initiatives that examine and address the health care needs of our state and our nation. The college currently houses multiple high-quality academic programs designed to prepare students to enter the health care workforce or pursue advanced degrees in health-related disciplines, and we are committing to developing new majors, minors, certificates and courses to help our students explore health topics from a range of disciplinary vantage points.

Establishing a student success center

The college will leverage existing resources and our thriving alumni networks to develop a student success center. The center will assist faculty and advisers in integrating high-impact teaching practices and career development opportunities into departmental curricula, while working directly with students to help them apply the skills they have developed through liberal arts and sciences coursework in new civic and career contexts.

Advancing the study of water, natural resources and the environment

With our robust combination of natural science, humanities and social science disciplines, the College of Arts and Sciences is uniquely positioned to investigate those points where scientific study of the natural world intersects with public policy, culture, economic impacts and other human factors. The college will give special emphasis to developing and supporting collaborative research, teaching and community initiatives related to the environment.

GOAL: CULTIVATE A COMMUNITY OF INCLUSION

The College of Arts and Sciences is built upon diversity—diversity of backgrounds, of ideas, of disciplines and of identities. Our inclusive community is our greatest strength. The college's policies, procedures and programs seek to affirm and advance this strength through a continually renewing commitment to inclusive excellence.

Provide opportunities for faculty, students and staff to engage in programs that support diversity and inclusion.

- Work with the Office of University Community to advance institutional initiatives related to inclusion, equity and community engagement among groups disadvantaged by race, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, spiritual belief, geographic origin, abilities or disabilities, and socioeconomic, first-generation student, and/or veteran status
- Provide resources and training that support diversity and inclusion pedagogy and research methodologies
- Engage alumni in development and outreach efforts relating to diversity and inclusion

Achieve and retain a more diverse faculty and staff at all ranks.

- Develop and implement a comprehensive recruitment and retention plan
- Implement faculty/staff exit surveys to identify issues and ways to improve
- Create leadership development programs for faculty/staff with emphasis on underrepresented minorities and women
- Develop inclusive criteria and diverse selection committees for faculty and staff awards and professorships



Create a supportive and respectful climate.

- Assess faculty/staff feedback on climate for diversity and inclusion
- Create educational and celebratory events to advance an institutional culture of diversity and inclusion for faculty, students and staff
- Seek corporate and foundation support for key pipeline and academic support programs that serve diverse communities

GOAL: SUPPORT FACULTY AND STUDENT RESEARCH

We aspire to advance human knowledge across a broad range of disciplines in the humanities, social sciences, natural and physical sciences, and professional fields. The college supports research and creative activity of the highest quality, originality and integrity, which can only flourish in an institutional context committed to academic freedom.

Continue to grow and improve the research infrastructure.

- Meet the basic needs of researchers across the varied units in the college, including time, travel, equipment, personnel and intellectual resources
- Create and disseminate resources related to data, including, but not limited to, statistics, storage and access, analytics/informatics, and visualization
- Provide guidance and support for faculty and students to communicate the impact of their research and creative activities
- Identify and promote funding and collaboration opportunities for CAS faculty and students

Promote scholarship and creative activities.

- Recognize research accomplishments publicly in a variety of venues, and online platforms
- Build a culture of engagement in the OU and CAS research community, whereby scholars meet and interact with others across units and disciplines
- Increase the number of talks in public venues given by CAS faculty, and develop strategies to recognize and advertise public talks
- Recognize faculty who are actively communicating about research impacts in public venues
- Increase the number of nominations for internal and external awards and recognitions

Engage alumni and donors in the research mission.

- Actively communicate research impacts among alumni and donors through publications and all CAS channels of communication
- Recruit alumni and donors to participate in research projects and partner with alumni and donors who serve as subject matter experts for relevant research projects
- Identify funding opportunities for graduate student fellowships and support packages
- Identify funding opportunities for direct research support

Incentivize local and public impacts in research.

- Provide resources to plan and assess the quality and impact of research
- Create community partnerships and funding mechanisms for mutually beneficial research opportunities that are generalizable yet demonstrate public impact
- Create a Public Impact Research Award (e.g., student scholarship; named chair for faculty)

GOAL: PROMOTE STUDENT SUCCESS THROUGH HIGH-IMPACT TEACHING

We commit to provide every student with opportunities for intellectual inquiry, faculty mentorship, individualized advising and preparation to apply the knowledge and skills gained at OU in further professional, personal and educational contexts.

Encourage high-impact teaching and professional development.

- Support efforts to increase high-impact teaching practices (e.g. study abroad, service learning, internships, undergraduate research, learning communities) across all divisions
- Develop infrastructure to support the goal of every student participating in a high-impact learning experience before degree completion
- Support departmental and college efforts to provide courses that focus on developing applied and professional skills to complement essential liberal arts curriculum

Develop an internship and mentoring program.

- Develop and expand internship, research, mentorship and job shadowing experiences offered to undergraduate and graduate students
- Develop and seek funding to support a CAS communications intern program to support the outreach needs of the college's departments and programs
- Expand the CAS alumni mentorship program to match more alumni with current students

Practice high-impact advising and develop a student leadership model.

- Require Academic Life Coaching training for all college advisers
- Move to an all-professional advising staff, allowing faculty to focus on serving as mentors within departments and programs and shifting all academic advising to professional staff; partner with Associate Provost for Academic Advising on all retention efforts
- Create a four-year model for student leadership and expand the program to reach as many students as possible

Increase emphasis on service learning.

- Hire a director of Community Engagement
- Incorporate service learning in study abroad initiatives
- Support best practice service learning opportunities that have a positive impact on student learning, career development and civic engagement



GOAL: ADVANCE LIBERAL ARTS AND SCIENCES EDUCATION

We affirm our commitment to generating and sharing knowledge across a broad range of disciplines. Study of the Liberal Arts and Sciences develops the deep reserves of curiosity, critical thinking, rigorous reasoning, creativity, ethical engagement and civil communication that are required to solve the complex problems of an ever-changing world.

Support and strengthen OU's general education curriculum.

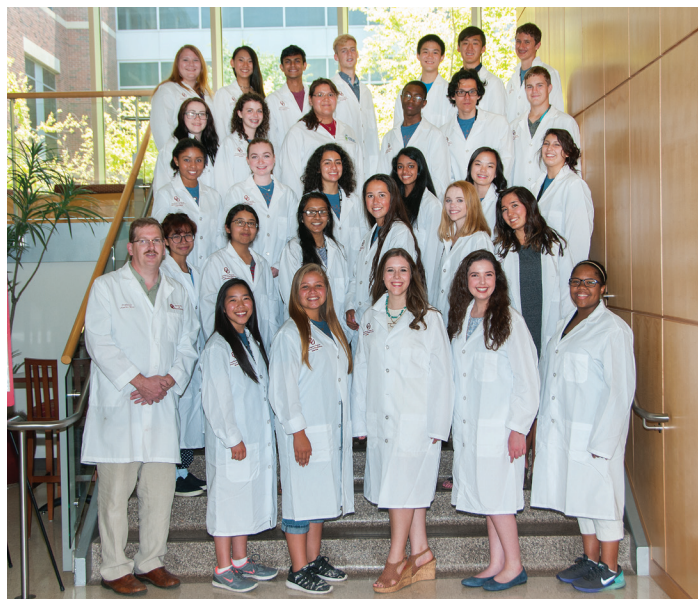
- Support departments in developing greater capacity, rigor and innovation in our general education curriculum
- Maintain data on the quantity and quality of CAS general education requirements, and support departments in acting on that data to improve the educational experience of all students
- Serve as a positive conduit between the college and other colleges/campus entities that rely on the CAS general education curriculum

Recruit and retain students in all majors.

- Expand and support high-impact advising via a single-tier advising system
- Implement retention priorities as set by the Provost throughout the college
- Establish strong student-college identity through the Student Development and Community Office as well as through summer bridge programs, Leadership Scholars, the Multicultural Center for the Advancement of Students and mentoring programs

Create a communication strategy to promote Liberal Arts and Sciences.

- Develop a series of publication materials and guides to contribute to the national conversation on the value of liberal arts and sciences
- Support and recognize faculty and staff who are engaged in public scholarship and dialogue, especially in high-profile newspapers, blogs and similar outlets, that seeks to improve how we communicate the value and purpose of a broad, multidisciplinary commitment to the liberal arts to policymakers and the public
- Expand outreach to employers to better communicate the value of a liberal arts degree and show how students of the liberal arts can contribute to their organizations



GOAL: FOSTER A CULTURE OF EXCELLENCE AND INTEGRITY

We commit to building on the foundation of excellence that comes from being the oldest and largest college at the heart of the state's flagship university. Our goal is to empower our faculty, staff and students to do their best work by providing clear communication, recognition of merit, high-quality facilities and equipment, and responsive governance structures to nurture an organizational culture of excellence and integrity.

Recruit and retain the best faculty in the world.

- Strategically consider how our faculty can be strengthened and transformed through future hiring opportunities; whenever possible, seek replacement positions at the senior level
- Work collaboratively within the college and across the university to avoid duplication of effort while ensuring wise recruiting and hiring decisions
- Increase communication between the dean's office and hiring units throughout the hiring process
- Ensure that annual evaluations clearly indicate high achievement and opportunities for improvement

Create an effective communication strategy and clear identity.

- Foster a transparent environment where communication flows easily between the college and academic units.
- Ensure that all communication efforts made by the college are in line with its mission and vision as well as the greater university mission
- Continue supporting faculty governance and acknowledging that shared governance is only possible when there is a clear and transparent communication process, especially in a college as large and complex as CAS



Provide departments and programs with quality facilities and equipment.

- Create a maintenance schedule for all facilities to allow for regular renovations and repairs
- Strategize and combine efforts across the college to use space effectively

Increase opportunities to recognize merit.

- Ensure that college leaders consistently seek opportunities to acknowledge outstanding accomplishments of our faculty, students and staff. This effort includes but is not limited to writing nominations for awards, lauding accomplishments through publicity, and personalized recognition
- Continue raising private funding that will create additional merit awards



Develop and value staff.

- Provide continuous training and development opportunities to staff
- Involve staff in major planning projects and seek input as an inclusive effort across the college
- Provide staff with the necessary tools and environment to be successful
- Reduce administrative work when redundant or inefficient; streamline processes to assist staff with workload

Increase transparency throughout internal policies and procedures.

- Ensure that the financial records of our academic units and the college are accurate and comprehensible
- Work openly with the central administration (President's Office, Provost's Office, VPR, etc.) to ensure that CAS upholds the highest standards of good stewardship of our shared resources
- Create self-supporting budget models that allow departments to operate knowing fully what resources are available to them and how those resources are generated
- Implement financial planning processes across the college to anticipate upcoming income and expenses
- Practice efficient and concise communication; disseminate information in a timely manner

Ensure accountability and assessment across the college.

- Establish indicators for goals and objectives identified in the strategic plan
- Evaluate selected programs to measure their impact
- Directly address discord among members of the faculty and staff to ensure that the college maintains an outstanding work environment
- Ensure that inclusive excellence is infused with evidence of diversity and inclusion at every level





COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

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