

College of Arts and Sciences 2018-2023 Strategic Plan

Approved by the Governing Faculty

May 17, 2018

Summary

This strategic plan began in the context of the University of Michigan-Flint's own strategic planning process in January 2017. CAS conducted a series of forums and surveys to inform our input into that broader plan. In May of 2017, the College formed a Summer Strategic Planning Committee to lay the ground work for this document. After a September 2017 college-wide strategic planning retreat, the Dean named an advisory CAS Strategic Planning Steering Committee and gave it the following charges:

- Generate strategic priorities for the College.
- Generate “action items” that identify responsible parties for implementation, consider resource needs and measurable outcomes.
- Communicate with diverse constituencies and individuals as transparently and inclusively as possible.

This document represents the Steering Committee's proposal to the CAS governing faculty to fulfill this charge. If adopted, it will be delivered to the Dean.

The first section contains our Strategic Priorities, an overarching set of goals and values to guide activity throughout the College. These priorities were drafted in response to Steering Committee visits to CAS academic departments, standing committees, student forums, staff meetings and an alumni survey. These priorities were also directly connected the [University of Michigan-Flint High Level Strategic Priorities](#), adopted by the UM-Flint governing faculty in May 2017. The priorities in Section One were endorsed by the CAS governing faculty in January 2018.

The second section contains a series of action items to support our priorities. In January 2018, the Steering Committee solicited ideas for action items in a college-wide brainstorm. Through a series of surveys and town halls in the following months, the 248 suggestions collected were voted on and discussed to arrive at the final set of action items presented in this plan.

Following section two are grids identifying measurable outcomes, responsible parties, and a general implementation timeline for each of the nineteen action items in this plan. The Steering Committee will present to the Dean a more detailed set of recommendations for implementation should these action items be endorsed by the CAS governing faculty.

The Steering Committee hopes that the various surveys, town halls, department and committee visits, and discussion across venues throughout the College since January 2017 serve to have met our charge of transparency and inclusivity. We cannot thank enough everyone in CAS who contributed along the way.

Section One: Strategic Priorities

Endorsed by CAS Governing Faculty Vote 1-10-2018

Principle #1—The following priorities are aligned with the University's high level strategic priorities and support the core values of the UM-Flint mission: excellence in teaching, learning and scholarship; student centeredness; engaged citizenship.

Principle #2—These priorities are focused on finding solutions for things CAS can control.

Principle #3—These priorities do not assume new resources from outside CAS will emerge to fund strategic priorities. If we want to fund new initiatives we will need to reallocate existing resources.

Foster a culture in CAS of greater collaboration and trust

CAS will build a culture of greater understanding, recognition and respect. This includes finding ways to ensure greater collaboration and trust between the elements of our large and heterogeneous College, and to ensure that the excellent work already being done is properly recognized and valued.

- We will create a context where competition between departments and disciplines is minimized in the College to enable more unification toward the greater good of CAS.
- We will deepen our commitment to an inclusive and welcoming culture that celebrates our diversity across its various dimensions.
- We will cultivate a college wide understanding of the scope, meaning and importance of a liberal arts education within all disciplines of CAS.
- We will increase awareness of and collaboration between academic departments.
- We will encourage more widespread participation in service, work toward more equitable distribution of service, and better recognize quality service throughout the College, including a deeper focus on professional development for service and leadership roles.

Make CAS visible and vital to others

The vitality of the diverse disciplines within CAS, and the expertise and passion of our faculty, staff and students, are essential to the whole of UM-Flint and to our community. By strengthening ties with partners outside the College, we will become more integrated on campus, in the Flint region, and beyond.

- We will increase partnerships with employers and civic organizations throughout the community, both to lend our expertise to improve life around us and to ensure that our students have meaningful experiences that prepare them to succeed in a changing society.
- We will engage more with the entirety of campus, including effective participation in faculty governance and deeper integration into student affairs, campus life, and University administration.
- CAS will deepen its connections with other educational institutions in our region, including K12 schools, community colleges, and other Universities.
- CAS will further support and recognize the value of engaged scholarship and creative activity for both faculty and students.

Leverage the power of a liberal arts education through
innovative curriculum and pedagogy

As a regional comprehensive university, UM-Flint depends on CAS to provide the core liberal arts education for every student. CAS also provides a wide variety of degree programs that help our students succeed as professionals and as citizens. CAS will deepen its commitment to innovate pedagogies, curricular reform, and support services to facilitate student success through both general education courses and our degree programs.

- We will continue our efforts to improve student retention and graduation at the College and department levels.

- We will review proposed and current degree programs to ensure they are high-quality, innovative, and meets students' needs.

- We will provide leadership in crafting, reviewing, and assessing UM-Flint's general education program, and focus on innovative teaching strategies in how we deliver general education courses.

- We will better articulate the meaning and value of a liberal arts education to prospective and current students, University colleagues, alumni, and community partners.

- We will encourage and further incentivize interdisciplinarity in the CAS curriculum.

- We will reinforce the student centered culture of CAS through greater student/faculty interaction and through more systematic advising.

Align resource allocations with CAS strategic priorities

CAS will ensure that the way we allocate our current resources at every level, including personnel, funding and expertise, is sustainable and aligned with our strategic priorities. While we will continue to advocate for further funding through the annual budget process, the Dean, in consultation with the CAS Executive Committee, may reallocate resources to maximize our positive impact on the constituents we serve. This process will be driven with an eye toward meeting existing commitments and the needs of CAS in the years to come.

- We will facilitate greater fiscal stability at the College level and in departments that enables sustainable long term planning and prudent use of resources.
- We will work toward greater awareness and transparency about how CAS resources are allocated and the processes used to make those decisions.
- We will more effectively utilize staff time and expertise across CAS and work toward better professional development opportunities for staff.
- We will work toward better and more reliable professional development opportunities for all faculty in relation to both teaching and scholarly/creative activity.
- We will explore ways to better prioritize time to allow for increased scholarship and creative activity.

Section Two: Action Items

Over a year long series of discussions and faculty surveys, the College as a whole has chosen to focus on these five groups of action items. While these are not the only actions CAS will take in support of our priorities, these items will be a special focus of the College over the next five years.

Advising and Retention-- We will expand the number of advising contacts for students in all CAS programs and undeclared students, and will hire professional advisors covering all departments in the College. We will expand the leadership of CAS in advising services throughout UM-Flint.

- Hire more CAS professional advisors to cover all students in the college.
- Take on more of the functions of the Student Success Center in advising undecided students.
- Increase CAS leadership by defining and implementing faculty recommendations for student services such as orientation, tutorial/SI services, Promise Scholars, DEEP, etc.
- Provide better access to predictive student data that is needed for improved advising.
- Set college retention goals for all student categories (FTIAC, transfers, continuing, readmits, etc.).

The advising and retention category was the most highly preferred by CAS staff and faculty. It is the top priority of the College in this plan.

Reforming General Education-- We will engage in a systematic review of the UM-Flint general education program. This review will seek to secure for CAS greater ownership of general education and to decrease competition for general education credits between departments. It will also focus on innovative pedagogies that help students develop study and life skills.

- Engage in a systematic review of UM-Flint's general education program from the perspective of CAS.
- Define student preparation and life skills and then develop general education courses toward those skills.
- Require signature assignments in all CAS general education courses and the assembly of e-portfolios for all students taking CAS general education courses.

Supporting Students-- We will increase support structures and programming to help students achieve their educational goals and prepare them for their lives after graduation. CAS will explore more student centered scheduling practices and create ways to develop deeper faculty/student interaction.

- Create a campaign for “minor gifts” to build an endowment supporting student research, travel and other high impact practices.
- Increase CAS leadership by defining and implementing faculty recommendations for career services and internships for liberal arts majors.
- Engage in more student centered course scheduling.
- Create a Student Advisory Committee comprised of students, faculty and staff to provide CAS greater access to student input and concerns.

Marketing & Communication-- We will develop a marketing and communication plan focusing on CAS and the benefits of a liberal arts education to students and our surrounding community. Faculty will contribute significantly to the plan through the formation of a new marketing committee. We will pay special attention to outreach to local high schools and other community partners.

- Create a marketing and communication committee that will work with the CAS Communications Specialist to help plan, facilitate, and report on marketing efforts on behalf of the College.
- Create a CAS marketing and communication campaign that focuses on the power of the liberal arts and the successes of current students and alumni.
- Establish consistent standards for department and program web pages.
- Create a tracking mechanism for the number of intentional contacts with high schools and their students (e.g., faculty visits, teaching for a day, scholarship specific pieces) and significantly improve that number.

Compensation and Course Loads-- We will better align current CAS policies on faculty compensation and course reassignments to meet our strategic priorities. We will work toward a more nuanced approach to the merit pay program, with the goal of better recognizing outstanding effort. The College will also determine how more high impact teaching practices can count toward a faculty member's course load.

- Create a pool of CAS funds, distinct from the current merit pay or "cost of living" system, to reward exceptional performance by faculty and staff members in a given year.
- Review current policies on course reassignments throughout CAS to better align with the College's strategic priorities.
- Create a compensation structure (course loads, stipends, reassignments) to incorporate high impact teaching practices, such as independent studies, team teaching, and civically engaged classes.

Reforming compensation and course loads to better recognize meritorious effort and catalyze innovative teaching is complicated and, if the program is to have a transformative impact, it will be expensive. The action items will need to be implemented over the long term and while still funding other priorities in the College. Particularly, implementation of these ideas should be carried out in a manner that does not impact implementation of the advising and retention action items in this plan, which were voted as the highest priority by the College.

Advising and Retention-- We will expand the number of advising contacts for students in all CAS programs and undeclared students, and will hire professional advisors covering all departments in the College. We will expand the leadership of CAS in advising services throughout UM-Flint.

| Action Items | Measurable Outcomes | Responsible Parties | Resources | Timeline |
|--|--|--|--|--------------|
| 1. Take on more of the functions of the Student Success Center in advising undecided students. | 1. Higher rates of retention. 2. Increased advising contact hours in CAS departments. 3. CAS becomes the primary advising contact for undeclared majors. | Dean's Office Academic Departments Council of Chairs | Low (reallocation of existing resources) | Long |
| 2. Increase CAS leadership by defining and implementing faculty recommendations for student services such as orientation, tutorial/SI services, Promise Scholars, DEEP, etc. | 1.The ad hoc committee makes contact with appropriate administrators. 2.Define a charge for a new CAS standing committee. * Cross-apply with Student Support #2 (same committee) | Ad hoc committee A new CAS standing committee (pending) | Low | Medium |
| 2. Hire more CAS professional advisors to cover all students in the college. | 1.100% of students have at least one individual contact annually with a professional advisor. 2.Six advisors are hired. | Dean's Office Council of Chairs | High | Long |
| 3. Provide better access to predictive student data that is needed for improved advising. | 1.Faculty access to predictive software. 2 Increased retention. | Dean's office | Medium | Medium |
| 4. Set college retention goals for all student categories (FTIAC, transfers, continuing, readmits, etc.). | 1.Goals are set and are widely communicated. | Ad hoc committee including the professional advisors | Low | Short/Medium |

Marketing & Communication-- We will develop a marketing and communication plan focusing on CAS and the benefits of a liberal arts education to students and our surrounding community. Faculty will contribute significantly to the plan through the formation of a new marketing committee. We will pay special attention to outreach to local high schools and other community partners.

| Action Items | Measurable Outcome | Responsible Parties | Resources | Timeline |
|---|--|---|--|----------|
| 1. Create a marketing and communication committee that will work with the CAS Communications Specialist to help plan, facilitate, and report on marketing efforts on behalf of the College. | 1. CAS code is changed to create a new faculty committee on marketing and communication | Governing Faculty | Low | Short |
| 2. Create a CAS marketing and communication campaign that focuses on the power of the liberal arts and the successes of current students and alumni. | 1. Ongoing creation of pieces/posts that represent the breadth of disciplines within the College and contain liberal arts messaging | Communications Specialist CAS Marketing Committee | Low (stories / social) to Medium (printed pieces, paid social) | Long |
| 3. Establish consistent standards for department and program web pages. | 1. A standard for CAS web pages is established. 2. Departments edit their websites to meet this standard. | Communications Specialist Marketing Committee Departments | Low | Medium |
| 4. Create a tracking mechanism for the number of intentional contacts with high schools and their students (e.g., faculty visits, teaching for a day, scholarship specific pieces) and significantly improve that number. | 1. A tracking mechanism is created. 2. Establish a benchmark for current contacts with high schools and improve that number by an appropriate amount. | Faculty Marketing Committee Communications Specialist | Low | Long |

Reform General Education-- We will engage in a systematic review of the UM-Flint general education program. This review will seek to secure for CAS greater ownership of general education and to decrease competition for general education credits between departments. It will also focus on innovative pedagogies that help students develop study and life skills.

| Action Items | Measurable Outcomes | Responsible Parties | Resources | Timeline |
|---|---|---|-----------|------------------|
| 1. Engage in a systematic review of UM-Flint's general education program from the perspective of CAS. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Ad hoc committee studies the strengths and weaknesses of the current general education model for CAS. Governing faculty strategizes possible reforms to the general education program that best serve students. Ad hoc committee engages a variety of campus constituents and makes recommendations for general education reforms to the governing faculty. | <p>Ad hoc committee</p> <p>New CAS Standing Committee (pending)</p> | Low | Short/ Medium |
| 2. Define student preparation and life skills and then develop general education courses toward those skills. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> The ad hoc committee engages faculty to determine criteria by which life skills can be incorporated into CAS general education courses. Departments propose course revisions or new courses that provide these skills. | <p>Ad hoc committee</p> <p>Departments and Faculty</p> | Low | Long |
| 3. Require signature assignments in all CAS general education courses and the assembly of e-portfolios for all students taking CAS general education courses. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 100% of students taking general education courses in CAS have an e-portfolio. 100% of CAS general education courses will feature a signature assignment. | <p>Faculty Working Group</p> <p>Ad hoc Committee</p> | Medium | Long |

Student Support--We will increase support structures and programming to help students achieve their educational goals and prepare them for their lives after graduation. CAS will explore more student centered scheduling practices and create ways to develop deeper faculty/student interaction.

| Action items | Measurable Outcomes | Responsible Parties | Resources | Timeline |
|--|--|---|-----------|----------|
| 1. Create a campaign for “minor gifts” to build an endowment supporting student research, travel and other high impact practices. | 1. Increase the current CAS endowment for student support by \$100,000. | Dean’s Office Faculty and Staff | Low | Long |
| 2. Increase CAS leadership by defining and implementing faculty recommendations for career services and internships for liberal arts majors. | 1. The ad hoc committee makes contact with appropriate administrators. 2. Define a charge for a new CAS standing committee. * Cross-apply with Advising and Retention #2 (same committee) | Ad hoc committee A new CAS standing committee (pending) | Low | Medium |
| 3. Engage in more student centered course scheduling. | 1. Study the feasibility of more flexible course calendars and delivery formats based on best practices for enrollment and retention. 2. A report is produced for consideration by the governing faculty. | Ad hoc committee (distinct from the committee in action item #2 above) Governing Faculty | Low | Long |
| 4. Create a Student Advisory Committee comprised of students, faculty and staff to provide CAS greater access to student input and concerns. | 1. A committee is created by amending the CAS faculty code. | Governing faculty | Low | Medium |

Compensation and Course Loads-- We will better align current CAS policies on faculty compensation and course reassignments to meet our strategic priorities. We will work toward a more nuanced approach to the merit pay program, with the goal of better recognizing outstanding effort. The College will also determine how more high impact teaching practices can count toward a faculty member’s course load.

| Action Items | Measurable Outcomes | Responsible Parties | Resources | Timeline |
|--|--|--|---|----------|
| 1. Create a pool of CAS funds, distinct from the current merit pay or “cost of living” system, to reward exceptional performance by faculty and staff members in a given year. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A pool of dedicated one time (non-base) merit funds is made available. 2. Departments set criteria for assigning this new merit pay. 3. Implementation of merit pay using new criteria. | Dean’s Office Departments | High (very high if the merit pay system is to be meaningful) | Medium |
| 2. Review current policies on course reassignments throughout CAS to better align with the College’s strategic priorities. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The review occurs. 2. Course reassignments are reallocated, as necessary, by the outcomes of the review. | Executive Committee Dean’s Office | Low/ Medium (if adding new reassignments to the current number) | Long |
| 3. Create a compensation structure (course loads, stipends, reassignments) to incorporate high impact teaching practices, such as independent studies, team teaching, and civically engaged classes. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A review of current compensation structures occurs. 2. A pool of money is set aside to fund these practices. | Dean’s Office Council of Chairs Academic Departments | Medium/ High | Medium |

Note: If this category is selected by the College, the action items here will likely be the only set of high resource action items in the entire strategic plan. This requires deep reflection of what sacrifices must be made to implement these items. For example, this category would be at the expense of several tenure track faculty lines or several staff positions.