

COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

TASK FORCE

ON

STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

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In Fall 2013, a ten-person Task Force of faculty from across the College initiated an intensive, focused process of strategic planning. The Task Force's charge as articulated by Interim Dean Albert Price was two-fold: Identify targeted initiatives that incorporate the College's mission, and propose priorities that are high-impact and implementable.

Almost immediately, the Task Force developed a College-wide survey with a single query: What should be CAS's most immediate initiatives, and between January 30 and February 7, 2014, the Task Force solicited faculty input. The response rate was low—thirty-three submissions. And many of those comments were not offered as initiatives, but identified as important administrative challenges currently facing CAS, particularly in the areas of budget allocations and priorities, and tenure/promotion policies. But in addition to these critical concerns expressed by respondents (which the Task Force is recommending be addressed by the Dean and Executive Committee) the survey did also generate a number of significant and innovative ideas and initiatives that have the potential to promote the College's efforts to

- Sustain academic quality in the sciences, humanities, and arts
- Responsibly manage student enrollment,
- Support interdisciplinarity and multidisciplinary,
- Promote internationalism,
- Grow student/faculty involvement in community engagement, and
- Facilitate participatory teaching and learning across the College.

The results of the initial survey question yielded the following **six initiatives**:

1. Build signature programs: major/minor in civic engagement and major/minor in research methodology.
2. Develop Interdisciplinary Undergraduate programs that foster integration of knowledge.
3. Establish a "Professorial Assistantship" Program for students in the sciences, social sciences, humanities, and performing arts.
4. Begin a vigorous marketing plan that promotes the CAS brand as small classes and close working relationships with faculty.
5. Create a forum for promoting faculty/student research in the local community and region.
6. Enhance the DEEP Offerings by the College of Arts and Sciences

A follow-up survey, conducted between April 7 and April 17, attempted to gauge levels of support for the proposed initiatives. Roughly 120 faculty responded. Support for individual initiatives ranged from 50.8 percent to 83.2 percent. (See Appendix for detailed results.) Each priority outlined below in rank order (along with its goals, outcomes, ideas for implementation, required resources, and questions that must be resolved) is shaped by a core commitment to student success through meaningful engagement with CAS faculty and with learning communities both in the classroom and beyond.

PROPOSED STRATEGIC INITIATIVES: SUCCESS THROUGH ENGAGEMENT

Mission

An educated citizenry is the foundation of a democratic society. The College of Arts and Sciences stands at the heart of a University of Michigan-Flint education, offering general education and degree programs in the liberal and fine arts, the natural and social sciences, and selected applied fields. Graduate degree programs are designed to meet the needs of the population in our urban and regional service area. The work of the college requires an empowered faculty dedicated to the education of students and the advancement of knowledge, students who actively seek to learn, and a supportive community.

The mission for the College of Arts and Sciences is to create and sustain a community of lifelong learners in an environment that emphasizes literacy, critical thinking, and humanistic and scientific inquiry.

The College will

- Foster excellence in teaching and learning;
- Engage students in learning partnerships with faculty;
- Develop mastery of disciplines and confidence in their application for a future of meaningful and productive work;
- Support students and faculty in traditional and applied research and creative endeavors;
- Engage faculty and students in professionally related service to the University and society;
- Promote and defend academic freedom, diversity, equality and justice.

HIGHEST PRIORITY: Begin a vigorous marketing plan that promotes the CAS brand as small classes and close working relationships with faculty.

Embrace marketing as a core strategic function. Consistently and persistently advertise the value CAS provides by presenting an integrated message of high-quality programs, dedicated faculty, small classes, diversity, and applied learning. Deliver a strong, bold image of the College for more general awareness within the University and region, and for prospective students.

Goals

1. Strengthen the visibility of what is happening in classes and departments in CAS/UM-Flint – across campus and in local, regional, and national communities.
2. Vigorously showcase what makes CAS/UM-Flint extraordinary and exciting, twelve months of the year.
3. Emphasize small classes, close working relationships with faculty and engagement as core qualities of our brand.
4. Showcase extraordinary opportunities available for students to learn in innovative and engaged ways in a city that is making a comeback.
5. Establish and maintain strong and accurate communication with UREL, Outreach, TCLT, and Development offices to share resources and prevent duplication.

Outcomes

1. Enrollment numbers will rise.
2. Retention and graduation numbers will rise.
3. Interdisciplinary research and pedagogy could be enhanced as faculty and students are more aware of the exciting work going on outside of their own departments and classes.
4. UM-Flint develops an identity and brand as an *exciting, urban, diverse, innovative place of engaged learning and opportunity*.
5. The new positive narrative of Flint as a thriving and safe place to learn and live diminishes fear, apathy, and other negative assumptions about Flint, which can contribute to decreased enrollment, lack of student success, and transfer/dropout rates. A positive narrative also promotes civic pride in the residents of Genesee County as the home of an exciting learning institution.
6. There could be a marked increase in research funds, grants, fellowships, and other support for faculty and student learning and engagement, due to the elevated energy that celebrates CAS achievements.

Implementation

1. Beginning in Spring 2014, the new CAS marketing director should meet with departments to get to know their programs, faculty, staff, students, and current research/outreach endeavors. She should ask each department what it would like to make visible.
2. Beginning in Spring 2014, marketing director should devise a form to be used by faculty, staff, and students for sharing information about research, classes, community and other activities.
3. Marketing director develops a strong rapport with MLive reporter(s), insuring our news gets into the MLive media (which covers most of Southern Michigan).
4. Marketing director creates a student promotion/marketing advisory group—a “think-tank” to brainstorm ideas, graphics, and language. Participating students might volunteer or be recommended by faculty and staff.
5. Marketing director meets regularly with UREL, Outreach, TCLT, and Development offices to foster strong communication, generate ideas, and share resources.

6. Marketing director identifies audiences, such as current and prospective students, current and prospective faculty and staff, philanthropic organizations, local government, other institutions of higher learning, and residents of Genesee and nearby counties.
7. Marketing director expands the scope and range of showcasing what makes the College exciting and extraordinary with relevant examples of high-quality programs, student-centeredness, applied learning, dedicated faculty, small classes, and civic engagement via photos/video/audio, social media, print media, billboards, and other media.

Resources

1. A representative from each academic department as contact for CAS marketing director;
2. Social media (Facebook, Instagram, other), You Tube videos, recorded video testimonials of students and faculty in action, billboards, postcards, high school recruitment fairs, and other technologies that promote CAS's work;
3. Student participants, especially a student marketing group in touch with students' needs, thoughts, questions, so that marketing initiatives maintain a vitality and rigor that is informed by students as well as others.

Questions to be resolved

1. What are the strategies already in place – what does the new CAS marketing director want to do?
2. How might new marketing efforts coordinate with and not contradict existing marketing work?
3. Is the CAS marketing budget sufficient?
4. Does the CAS marketing director have adequate administrative support?

SECOND HIGHEST PRIORITY: Create a forum for promoting student/faculty research in the local community and region.

UM Flint professors, assisted by their students, publish important research, and such endeavors must be vigorously advertised. Indeed, a faculty member who has published interesting work should be routinely interviewed and his or her work disseminated to local, regional, and national media outlets that might further distribute the story. The point is to place a media spotlight on accomplishments and contributions by the College of Arts and Sciences and its faculty. This promotional mechanism is underutilized by UM-Flint and the College. Annual reports about achievements often miss the all-important and ephemeral media news cycle. National reporters generally shy away from stories about research published months earlier. CAS, therefore, should work with public and media relations to promote recently published faculty-student research to local, regional, and national media outlets. Additionally, faculty-student research should be presented to area residents via community forums in which faculty and their students share findings and contributions.

Goals

1. Vigorously advertise student-faculty research endeavors in the College of Arts and Sciences at UM-Flint;
2. Place media spotlight on the research accomplishments and contributions of CAS faculty and students.

Outcomes

1. For surrounding communities, this initiative will highlight the ways the College of Arts and Sciences affords undergraduate students unique opportunities to work closely with faculty researchers;
2. It will raise the profile of faculty-student research findings, both nationally and internationally.

Implementation

1. CAS should appoint a faculty or student representative to work with public and media relations to promote recently published faculty-student research to local, regional, and national media outlets;
2. Faculty and their students should share research findings and contributions locally via community forums.

Resources

1. Faculty and/or student representatives to assist the CAS marketing director in identifying engaging faculty/student research and scholarship across the College;
2. Sources of funding for community forums.

Questions to be resolved

1. How does the College promote a culture of sharing knowledge not only with academic colleagues but with civic, religious, business, social and other kinds of communities?
2. Is there an appropriate reward structure for encouraging participation in community forums?

THIRD HIGHEST PRIORITY: Develop *interdisciplinary* undergraduate programs that foster integration of knowledge.

The trend in Higher Education is towards increasing the interdisciplinary character of curricula. Therefore, the College of Arts and Sciences recommends pursuing three initiatives: the undergraduate Forensics program that is cited in the STEM Report, an Industrial Design major, and an International and Global Studies major. The first integrates natural sciences with the social sciences; the second combines the arts with engineering; and the third also fosters interdisciplinarity while preparing students for careers in areas such as journalism and Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs), and in government agencies such as the Departments of State and Defense, USAID, World Bank/IMF, Homeland Security, state governments, and non-profit entities.

Goals

1. Attract new populations of students interested in these undergraduate programs;
2. Increase interdisciplinary perspectives within our existing academic programs.

Outcomes

1. The numbers of majors in Forensic Science, Industrial Design, as well as International and Global Studies will increase without corresponding decreases in the numbers of existing majors in related fields (Anthropology, Political Science, Biology, Art, Engineering).
2. The geographical/International draw of interested and enrolling students will expand.

Implementation

1. Form interdisciplinary teams of faculty to investigate curricula of other schools offering Forensics and Industrial Design, formulate curricula, and shepherd the programs through the approval process;
2. Establish an aggressive marketing strategy to launch programs by the Fall 2016.

Resources

1. Support for new program development within the College of Arts and Sciences and from the Associate Provost and Dean of Undergraduate Studies;
2. Grant opportunities for seed money to establish programs and implement marketing strategy.

Questions to be resolved

1. Can the College support these initiatives and rally faculty in the various departments to design curricula?
2. Should the College aim for a Fall 2015 or Fall 2016 Launch?

FOURTH HIGHEST PRIORITY: Establish a “Professorial Assistantship” program for students in the sciences, social sciences, humanities, and performing arts.

Identify high-achieving newly admitted students, and offer them an opportunity to participate in faculty research as Professorial Assistants within the College of Arts and Sciences. These students would be given a descriptive list of current faculty research and asked to select the top three that interests them. Once a student is chosen for one of the three, he or she meets with the appropriate faculty member who, then, incorporates the student into the research project. PAs would receive a two-year appointment with the second year dependent upon maintaining the required GPA and the successful completion of duties during the first year. PA’s would work a

pre-determined number of hours per week and would, in addition to receiving a stipend, benefit from the valuable experience of participating in faculty research. Faculty, of course, would have the pleasure of working with highly motivated students. The PA program would attract talented students to the university and expand the overall number of students involved in research.

Goals

1. Recruit and attract high-achieving students to the College of Arts and Sciences;
2. Increase student- professor research opportunities and collaborations within the College;
3. Foster a College culture of student centeredness in the area of research;
4. Greatly improve students' research experiences in the College.

Outcomes

1. X student participants will be supported in the first year, leading to a total of 2X students participating at any time.
2. The average ACT score in CAS and Um-Flint will rise by attracting high-performing student applicants.
3. The number of students engaging in their own research after completing professorial assistantships will increase.

Implementation

1. Recruit faculty who are willing to participate;
2. Generate a list of interested faculty and their projects;

Resources

1. A source of funding: potential grants, donors willing to support student and faculty research in the areas of donors' interests;
2. A comprehensive marketing strategy.

Questions to be resolved

1. How many students can be supported?
2. What are the academic and other criteria for the program? Perhaps there can be a link between the PA and Honors Programs.
3. How will the PA Program be different from and perhaps similar to the UROP?
4. How many hours per week will students spend on research? Their hourly rate? Source of funding?

FIFTH HIGHEST PRIORITY: Enhance the DEEP offerings by the College of Arts and Sciences

The recent success of developing the Dual Enrollment Educational Partnership (DEEP) for the Humanities at Powers Catholic High School underscores the potential of establishing more liberal arts programming in our area High Schools. Indeed, the increasingly narrow curriculum

of secondary education means that students enter our college without any knowledge of a majority of disciplines offered within the College of Arts and Sciences. Programs of study in Africana Studies, Anthropology, Economics, Philosophy, Political Science (not Government), Sociology and Women and Gender Studies, are virtually unknown to first-year students. Sadly, visual arts, music, and theatre are also being marginalized in an increasingly homogenized secondary curriculum. However, this troubling state of affairs also presents an opportunity for the College as it works to increase the range and number of DEEP courses offered in Southeast Michigan. Not only will this greatly enhance the familiarity of the University of Michigan-Flint to area students – and consequently increase our enrollment of First Time in Any College students – it will also expand the intellectual horizons of entering students so that they do not have to wait a year or two before “discovering” their passion for, say, Philosophy or Africana Studies.

Goals

1. Engage high school students with a greater array of liberal arts disciplines while they are still in secondary education;
2. Attract greater numbers of area students to the College.

Outcomes

1. The numbers of applicants and FTIAC students in the College of Arts and Sciences at the University of Michigan-Flint will increase.
2. The variety of declared interests or majors in application materials or at orientation will increase;
3. The numbers of majors and graduates in the programs for which the College established DEEP programs will grow.

Implementation

1. Work with the departments to formulate a diverse set of DEEP offerings in existing and new Dual Enrollment Educational Partnerships.
2. Establish an aggressive marketing strategy to publicize the “deeper” DEEP.

Resources

1. Support and continued commitment from the Dean to hire replacement Lecturers in departments with faculty willing to participate in DEEP.

Questions to be resolved

1. What is departmental interest?
2. Given that Fall 2014 and Winter 2015 Schedules are established, would the College want to aim for a Fall 2015 launch?

SIXTH HIGHEST PRIORITY: Build signature programs: major/minor in civic engagement and major/minor in research methodology.

Create signature programs for CAS that embody our mission and address key needs in society and the workforce. A prominent strength of the UM-Flint mission is that students receive personal attention from dedicated faculty. Signature programs that embody this element allow prospective students to experience a unique learning environment. To this end, we propose two new interdisciplinary major/minors: Civic Engagement and Research Methodology. These programs are designed to stand alone as distinct majors, or as minors. Both tracks would create synergistic effects in the overall academic development of students and prepare them for future study or professional work. These synergistic effects arise from the interdisciplinary structure of the program, the comprehensiveness of a curriculum that challenges students to think broadly, write effectively, interact positively with their peers and the community, and use integrative problem-solving methods. The Research Methodology curriculum would require not only a focus on problem solving but also upon hands-on experience doing research with faculty. The Civic Engagement curriculum would further strengthen our commitment to community-based engagement and give students a model for centering their studies on participatory learning. The expertise required to implement both programs at the major and minor levels is available within CAS, and CAS would implement this initiative by initially developing both programs as minors, and then offering the majors as demand dictates.

Goals

1. Signature programs that attract high-quality students to our College and campus.
2. Expanded intellectual options for our students, while enhancing students' career opportunities.
3. A learning environment in which students establish relationships with professors and/or community partners.

Outcomes

1. Civic engagement for students and faculty in CAS will increase,
2. Students' problem-solving skills will improve,
3. UM-Flint will be identified with distinct academic programming,
4. UM-Flint and CAS will become institutions of first choice for unique programs,
5. Deep learning for our students will be enhanced,
6. Student will experience exceptional satisfaction.

Implementation

1. Form a college sub-committee to develop the program curricula,
2. Proceed with standard program review and attempt to obtain an eighty percent new-programs tuition return to the CAS general fund,
3. Establish a marketing strategy to attract students.

Resources

1. Reassigned faculty time to develop and review curriculum,
2. Community outreach to help with building the Civic Engagement program,
3. Funding from the college or grants to support the program launch.

Questions to be resolved

1. How does the College facilitate inter-departmental cooperation on course loads?
2. What is a realistic launch date?

In **summary**, the Task Force on Strategic Planning recommends these six initiatives to the Dean and Executive Committee for implementation during the 2014-2015 academic year.

Appendix

Faculty Survey of Support

Rather than have each respondent rank order all six items relative to each other, the survey simply asked respondents to rate each item on a 1-9 scale with 1 being “strongly against” and 9 representing “strongly in support.” The committee then aggregated the results to obtain rankings of the six initiatives from the most to least supported.

To be certain that our aggregation procedures did not influence the rankings of initiatives, the Task Force explored three methods. Since there was some variation in the number of items rated by the respondents, the first method calculated the average rank for each item using all valid and available data. The second approach calculated the average rank for only those cases in which the respondent rated all six initiatives. As Table 1 shows, the methodologies produced the same rankings.

Table 1: Ranking of Initiatives Based on Calculating Average Ratings

Initiative Number	Description of Initiative	Handling of “Missing Data”			
		Responses for Individual Items		Responses Rating All Items	
		Average Rank	N of Cases	Average Rank	N of Cases
4	Marketing Plan	7.10	119	7.13	116
5	Promoting research locally	6.46	119	6.49	116
2	Interdisciplinary Programs	6.35	122	6.40	116
3	Professorial Assistantships	6.17	120	6.22	116
6	DEEP Offerings	5.82	121	5.86	116
1	Signature Programs	5.26	120	5.31	116

The third method used simply reported the percentages of respondents who indicated that they were “against,” “neutral” or were in “support.” Those with the higher percentage of respondents in support are ranked higher. Conversely, those initiatives with lower percentages of respondents indicating support are ranked lower. These results are presented in Table 2.

It is reassuring to note that all three methodologies ranked the six initiatives in precisely the same order. Therefore, the Task Force is confident in asserting that the most strongly supported strategic initiative is the development of a marketing plan, followed by the promotion of research by faculty within the college and our community. The third most supported initiative is the development of interdisciplinary programs. The establishment of Professorial Assistantships designed to attract highly qualified students by providing these students with opportunities to

work with faculty on research was ranked as the fourth most important initiative. Relatively speaking, the least amount of support was registered for the development of additional Dual Enrollment Educational Programs followed by the creation of “Signature” programs.

Table 2: Ranking of Initiatives Based on Percentages

Initiative Number	Description of Initiative	N of Cases	Percentage		
			Against	Neutral	Support
4	Marketing Plan	119	11.8	5.0	83.2
5	Promoting research locally	119	17.6	7.6	74.8
2	Interdisciplinary Programs	122	19.7	9.8	70.5
3	Professorial Assistantship	120	21.7	13.3	65.0
6	DEEP Offerings	121	30.6	9.9	59.5
1	Signature Programs	120	33.3	15.8	50.8