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College of Liberal Arts and Sciences 2012-17 Strategic Plan, Progress Update, Fall 2016

College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

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College of Liberal Arts and Sciences
2012-17 Strategic Plan
Progress Update, Fall 2016

Updates are in *italics*. The complete text of the original plan is online at http://umaine.edu/las/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2013/01/CLAS_Strategic_Plan_final.pdf

Goal: Grow

As the Blue Sky project advances, enrollment in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences will increase by as much as 33 percent. We will proudly help as many as 4,000 undergraduate and graduate students achieve their educational goals. We will achieve this through a multipronged approach: by strategically investing in our faculty, by rewarding pedagogical innovation and teaching excellence, by building communication and research bridges between students, faculty and the community, by growing degree programs, and by increasing funded research.

The incoming class in fall 2016 was 35% larger than in fall 2015. The current headcount is 3005 students, well short of the goal of 4000 but the first increase since fall 2013, when the College saw a five-year high of 3215 students. The fall 2016 figures represent an encouraging reversal of recent downward trends at the undergraduate level, while graduate student totals have yet to recover.

Strategy: Grow the number of faculty and students

Short-Term Action: Develop a model for sustainable growth of students and faculty

- By May 2013, conduct a Capacity Analysis of student enrollment for all college degree programs and foundational courses
- By September 2013, in collaboration with the Provost's Office, develop a plan for faculty growth needed to realize Blue Sky student-enrollment goals

CLAS continues to accept all qualified students. The Visual and Performing Arts Scholarships established by Admissions in fall 2015 reflect capacity analysis and recruitment potential for those programs. Total CLAS faculty (full-time equivalent) numbers have grown in each of the last two years, based on an annual planning process.

Strategy: Provide innovative advising to support recruitment, retention and graduation

Short-Term Action: Create and implement a plan for advising students at risk, including transfer, probationary and undecided students

- By February 2013, implement an Advising Center in conjunction with the Student Services division of the college
- By September 2013, the Coordinator of the Advising Center will develop a plan to coordinate services with other student support services on campus including Disability Services, Career Center, Native American Programs, Multicultural Programs, Residential Life, Counseling Center and others

The Advising Center was merged with Student Services in summer 2015, under the leadership of the former Advising Center director, John Mascetta. Coordination with related student support service entities is ongoing and appears successful. The Advising and Student Services Center now also hosts the Explorations and Foundations programs, previously managed by the Provost's Office.

Strategy: Develop innovative degree programs that take advantage of existing strengths and interdisciplinary opportunities

Action: Support development of new degree programs through strategic allocation of college resources

The Department of Anthropology has established a new major, Human Dimensions of Climate Change (fall 2014), and has filed an intent to plan for a new master's degree mirroring its doctoral program in Anthropology and Environmental Policy. Both are excellent examples of this strategy. Due to limited reinvestment opportunities since the approval of the strategic plan, the College has not forcefully pursued other new degree options. However, new minors in Statistics (fall 2014) and Human Computer Interaction (fall 2016), among others, could pave the way for degree programs in the foreseeable future. The most immediate new program opportunities are probably in the areas of health and criminal justice.

Goal: Create

The faculty of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences are dedicated researchers, scholars and creative artists whose work is recognized by academic peers at home and abroad. Enhancing the research and creative achievement of the faculty is central to success. The college will support and strengthen both disciplinary and interdisciplinary academic work through increased financial support and by increasing opportunities for collaborative research and creative activities.

Strategy: Increase support for the diverse scholarship activities within the college

Short-Term Action: Develop language and rubrics that better measure the broad scholarly, intellectual and creative activity represented in the college

- By February 2013, create a task force to analyze the language and rubrics used to measure scholarly and creative activity represented in the college
- By April 2014, the task force will present language and rubrics to better measure the broad scholarly and creative activity represented in the college

Not completed. Enhancements to the Faculty/Staff Profile (FSP) database along with significantly increased faculty participation in the FSP are improving data collection and reporting.

Short-Term Action: Create and implement programs that foster faculty scholarship activities

- By May 2013, the college's Technology Committee will help develop a pilot program to promote and support faculty in integrating emerging media technologies into their research programs

Due to the centralization of Information Technology at the University of Maine System, the CLAS technology committee has little venue for action and no longer meets; the proposed revision of the College bylaws eliminates this committee.

- By September 2013, inventory and evaluate the current programs that provide support for faculty engagement in research and creative activities

Inventory not formally undertaken. However, a concerted and effective effort has been made to increase use of current programs, especially the faculty travel awards and the pre-tenure fellowship program. The reconfigured position of associate dean for faculty affairs and interdisciplinary programs is intended in part to support faculty development in research, among other areas.

- Through May 2014, continue to support the University of Maine Humanities Initiative and assess progress toward building Humanities Center endowment

The University of Maine Humanities Initiative has become the University of Maine Humanities Center (UMHC). Progress toward building its endowment continues, albeit slowly. Institutional support for the UMHC is strong and community connections have been growing.

Goal: Engage

Students in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences will be active learners who engage in the myriad of opportunities available at a world-class research university. The college will support student engagement in research and creative activities, challenge faculty to innovate pedagogies, and foster new avenues for students to grapple with cultures, perspectives and traditions that are different from their own.

Strategy: Provide rich active learning experiences for all undergraduates

Short-Term Action: Create and implement programs that support students engaged in research and creative activities

- By May 2013, work with the Provost's Office to plan for a sustainable and vibrant Center for Undergraduate Research
- By September 2013, inventory and assess the current programs that provide support for undergraduates engaged in research and creative activities

Rather than create a separate Center for Undergraduate Research in CLAS, the College has developed a closer partnership with the University's Center for Undergraduate Research (CUGR), established in 2012. Starting in fall 2015, CUGR and CLAS combined their undergraduate research project applications and agreed to a sequenced review process that results in more students receiving research fellowship funds. Other support for student research and creative experiences has been mainly ad hoc; planning is now underway for a more formal and regularized award process.

Strategy: Increase collaboration with other units across campus to facilitate interdisciplinary interaction to promote thematic and problem-oriented scholarship and learning

Short-Term Action: Provide leadership for interdisciplinary interactions to work toward common goals

- By October 2013, create a semiannual college forum on thematic, interdisciplinary topics for the broader campus community
- By December 2013, create a program to support working/learning groups on thematic, interdisciplinary topics
- By December 2013, the college's Technology Committee will work with the technology committees from other colleges to advance collaborative efforts and encourage innovation across disciplines

The UMHC sponsors an interdisciplinary topical series of scholarly events each year, drawing both campus and community audiences. The Maine Heritage Lecture, now in its eighth year, is typically interdisciplinary as well. The plan for a college-wide forum and associated working/learning groups has not been pursued. As noted above, the Technology Committee is no longer active. To focus leadership attention on interdisciplinary opportunities, an associate dean position was reconfigured with emphasis on interdisciplinary programs and faculty affairs.

Short-Term Action: Develop mechanisms to support innovative pedagogies

- By May 2013, the college's Technology Committee will help develop a pilot program to promote and support faculty in integrating emerging media technologies into teaching
- By October 2013, in collaboration with the Provost's Office, implement campus-based course management tools that link assessment, tutoring, and identification of at-risk students for high-enrollment undergraduate courses

In retrospect, undertaking these actions at the college level appears not entirely practical. The promotion of technology integration is now part of the mission of the newly established University-wide Center for Innovation in Teaching and Learning. The "campus-based course management tools" remain desperately needed but should be implemented across the university, especially as most of the high-enrollment undergraduate courses in CLAS serve predominantly students majoring in other UMaine colleges.

Strategy: Increase students' understanding of diverse perspectives and the broadly defined human condition through new programs, activities, and curricula

Short-Term Action: Create and implement a plan for increasing students' understanding of diverse perspectives

- By February 2013, re-envision the Women's Studies program to include broader representation of gender and sexuality topics

This program is now Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies (WGS). Enrollment has grown from a low of 4 students in fall 2013 to 14 in fall 2016, with another 18 students minoring in WGS. The program generated over 1800 undergraduate SCHs in 2015-16, mostly in its introductory general education course.

- By May 2013, organize a follow-up meeting of Cultures and Languages Across the Curriculum (CLAC) workshop participants to plan next steps

This effort has not been sustained.

- By May 2013, re-envision the International Affairs program, exploring and including partnerships across campus

A major curricular overhaul was completed in 2014. A new director is in place following the former director's retirement. Discussions about the relationship between the undergraduate International Affairs program and the graduate-only School for Policy and International Affairs continue, and are being expanded to include other possible partners.

- By May 2014, in collaboration with the Provost's Office, develop a curriculum to prepare international students for enrollment in one or more of the college's majors

This plan was not pursued. The Intensive English Institute, an entry point for international students who might seek degrees in CLAS, left the College in summer 2015.

- By August 2014, integrate the Franco-American Centre and the Franco American Studies program into a single unit that includes curricular, research, student development and outreach in its mission

Completed in spring 2015.

- Support the continued integration of the Wabanaki Center and Native American Studies into a single unit (Native American Programs) that encompasses student development, curricula, research and outreach based on the needs and aspirations of the Wabanaki
Essentially complete. In summer 2016, the combined Native American Programs relocated to Corbett Hall, for the first time providing sufficient space for all associated faculty and staff in a single location.

Goal: Connect

As the liberal arts and sciences college within the state’s only Land and Sea Grant university, the college has a responsibility to serve the people of Maine. By growing a culture of continuous engagement with community partners, the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences will help to improve the quality of life for Maine citizens and provide students with opportunities to learn through service and civic engagement.

Strategy: Foster community and civic engagement

Short-Term Action: Create mechanisms that support and reward faculty, staff and student community and civic engagement

- By March 2013, identify a faculty member to serve as coordinator for community engagement activities

Claire Sullivan, Associate Professor of Communication, was appointed Associate Dean for Community Engagement, serving a three-year term that ended in summer 2016. Reflecting the fact that much of her work in this capacity served the university broadly and was not specific to the College, she was appointed in fall 2016 as Coordinator for Community Engagement in the Provost’s Office.

- By May 2013, work with the Humanities Initiative to provide incentives for faculty to engage with humanities programs and agencies throughout the state

The University of Maine Humanities Center has been active and effective in this respect. The creation in summer 2016 of a professional position for support of the humanities, shared between the UMHC and the Maine Folklife Center, will continue to enhance community engagement in the humanities.

- By December 2013, the Community Engagement Coordinator and Dean’s Office will work with the Development Office to develop a campaign to support community engagement activities

The College’s philanthropy officer (now with the UMaine Foundation rather than the recently discontinued Development Office) has dedicated a large fraction of her time to support of the UMHC, with particular focus on its community engagement work. At present, the College is not focusing on development activities in support of community engagement overall.

Strategy: Engage students and alumni in accomplishing our mission and vision as part of their lifelong passion

Short-Term Action: Actively participate in campus community and civic engagement opportunities

- By May 2013, develop a publication venue to collect and broadly disseminate student and alumni research and creative works

- By December 2013, the Community Engagement Coordinator will create mechanisms to connect with current community and civic engagement units on campus, such as the Bodwell Center and Career Center

- By May 2014, each department will work in consultation with the Community Engagement Coordinator to assess their activities and develop a plan to increase community engagement and service learning opportunities

A weekly electronic newsletter for internal audiences has been distributed since fall 2014. Broader dissemination relies upon collaboration with the UMaine Division of Marketing and Communication. The anticipated hire of the College's first communication specialist should promote public engagement more effectively than is possible with existing staff. Given the move of the Coordinator for Community Engagement to the Provost's Office, this topic is unlikely to dominate CLAS communications, however.

Strategy: Engage with alumni and the community

Short-Term Action: Inform alumni and the community about faculty and student activities and accomplishments

- By February 2013, create a quarterly CLAS Newsletter for alumni and the community that profiles scholarly activity and invites alumni engagement

An electronic alumni newsletter with primarily student-generated content was distributed semiannually in 2014-15. The newsletter moved to distribution twice each semester in 2015-16, with professionally written content. Further enhancement of the newsletter will be among the responsibilities of the incoming communication specialist.

- By May 2013 convene a statewide summit on the humanities including other colleges and universities as well as public and private humanities agencies

The summit was convened in each of the past four years. It served primarily humanities professionals in central Maine; participation by other institutions of higher education and government agencies was moderate. Both the new UMHC director and some members of the UMHC's advisory board have raised questions about the value of continuing the summit; a firm decision will be made shortly.

- By October 2013, each department will assess its activities and develop a plan for alumni engagement

Some departments have undertaken this work; others have not.

- Continue to produce annual Capstone publication

The Capstone has been discontinued in favor of a less expensive piece intended to be used flexibly for multiple audiences and to be easily updatable.

Strategy: Develop and manage outreach initiatives that connect the skills, proficiencies and professional capacities of faculty and graduates with the demands and needs of commercial, business, government and creative professionals in Maine and beyond

Short-Term Action: Build direct connections between CLAS researchers and community leaders on important subjects of mutual interest

- By January 2014, form a committee to collaborate with the Division of Marketing and Communications to create short, informative talks by researchers and community leaders focused on a particular theme
- Support development of programs that link the college to the community

Short-Term Action: Provide opportunities for faculty and students to experience Maine businesses, organizations and institutions firsthand

- By May 2014, each department will work in consultation with the Community Engagement Coordinator to assess its activities and develop a plan for connecting students to commercial, government, business and/or creative professionals

Short-Term Action: Build relationships with organizations that support the value of “learning that lasts a lifetime”

- By May 2013, engage with Senior Colleges to explore avenues for collaboration

These initiatives have been pursued more ad hoc than systematically.