

# **Excellence for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century**

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## **STRATEGIC PLAN College of the Liberal Arts April 15, 2015**

### **Introduction**

*“There is no such thing as a favorable wind for those who do not know what direction they are going.” ~ Seneca*

The College of the Liberal Arts has made significant progress during the past decade. Most of our departments can rightfully be placed among the top echelons of their disciplines, and, based on the most recent NRC ranking of doctoral programs, we have posted dramatic gains in national ratings of faculty and student productivity: Anthropology was ranked number one, and seven other programs were in the top 10% of their fields.

Our progress has been broad, deep, and sustained. It is the result of ongoing and critical support from the Central Administration; entrepreneurial revenue enhancement efforts, including philanthropy, external funding and outreach; intellectual and financial collaboration with university-wide institutes; and strong leadership at the unit level, including heads, center directors, and senior faculty, all of whom have helped shape our vision and guide our actions.

Of course we face challenges. Increased competition for top faculty pushes down teaching loads and drives up salaries; tighter federal funding for research and graduate education challenges our ability to support superior faculty and graduate students; Penn State’s high tuition and constrained scholarship resources mean we must work harder to attract students to our excellent degree programs; and enrollment growth at University Park has led us to double our reliance on full-time fixed-term lecturers. As a College offering a significant portion of the General Education curriculum as well as serving our own 6,000 majors, we have been called on to serve an increasing undergraduate population (31,000 in 1993 to 40,000 today) and a freshman class that has expanded from 3,450 in 1993 to 6,200 in 2013. Even so, we remain committed to quality-driven strategic allocations within our existing budget and to expanding that budget through entrepreneurial and philanthropic initiatives.

To continue the transformational changes that will bring most of our departments to national leadership in their disciplines, solidify our position as a premier provider of graduate education in the liberal arts, and position us as leaders in undergraduate education for the 21<sup>st</sup> century, requires a clear-eyed view of where we are today, a compelling vision of where we are headed, and a commitment to strong leadership and the actions needed to get us there.

### **Strategic Priorities for the Next Five Years**

## Research and Graduate Education for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

Great research and graduate education require excellent faculty. Therefore, we must continue to hire and retain faculty who are capable of recruiting, training, and placing the best graduate students. In addition, initiatives associated with a 21<sup>st</sup> century liberal arts research profile must be integrated into our ongoing attempts to achieve and maintain excellence in graduate education at a time when placement opportunities, particularly in the humanities, are severely constrained.

### Strategic Hiring

Over the next five years, we will continue to appoint new faculty to strengthen departments and contribute to college and university strategic interdisciplinary initiatives. More specifically, we plan to hire faculty to support initiatives in global studies, ethics, big data social science, information research in the humanities, and democracy.

**Global Studies.** To support and advance a re-envisioned Global Studies major, with BA and BS options offered in-residence and online (described in more detail below), and to position the College as a leader in Global Liberal Arts, we will hire new faculty in the humanities and social sciences with strengths in areas including global ethics and human rights, global conflict, global information and communication, global health, and global population change.

**Ethics.** We will continue to consolidate a leadership position in ethics, drawing on the success of the Rock Ethics Institute, and working in synergy with the Provost's initiative to co-fund 12 hires in ethics across the university. More specifically, we are committed to strategic hiring in the areas of bioethics, global ethics, industry-sponsored research ethics, and related areas tied to departmental strategic plans.

**Big Data Social Science.** Drawing on our past success with innovative dual-title PhD programs, we will continue to invest strategically in new interdisciplinary dual-title programs. Specifically, we will continue to provide substantial support for our NSF-funded big data social science IGERT graduate training program, which spans several disciplines and colleges. Our proposals for a dual-title PhD program in Social Data Analytics and an undergraduate degree in social data analytics both in-residence and online are in the curriculum process now. We also plan an MPS. Three new faculty will join us in fall 2015 as part of our big data initiative.

**Humanities and Information.** Recognizing that there are exciting new opportunities for humanities' research in an information age, we have moved aggressively, with the support of the Provost and collaboration with the University Libraries, to create an innovative new Center for Humanities and Information (CHI). The CHI will bring humanistic inquiry to bear on the study of information, focusing on questions concerning the nature of information and its role in shaping culture, education, history, and society in the U.S. and worldwide. We will pursue a strategic cluster hiring strategy supported in part by our own fundraising efforts, which are described more fully below in the section on Expanding our Revenue Base.

**Democracy.** Achieving a vibrant democracy is a challenge facing countries around the world. Transitions to democracy are usually prolonged, uncertain, and often not successful. And there are significant challenges to the smooth functioning of democracy in the U.S. Our McCourtney Institute for Democracy promotes rigorous scholarship and practical innovations to

advance democracy in the United States and abroad. We will enhance our faculty strength and graduate education opportunities with selective appointments in this area, including two faculty who will join us in fall 2015.

**Child Well Being.** Our world-class Child Study Center pursues research and training on issues such as helping prepare children for school, understanding the child’s developing brain; and supporting families at risk. New initiatives include understanding how to promote children’s moral development and how to reduce child maltreatment; we are already recruiting faculty working in these areas.

### **Achieving Excellence in Graduate Education**

Graduate education lies at the intersection of undergraduate education and faculty research. Within the College, graduate students carry about 13 percent of the direct instructional load in undergraduate education—the highest in the University—and also support faculty as graders and discussion section leaders. Thus, attracting top graduate students continues to be critical to our attempts to improve undergraduate education. Moreover, our ability to attract and retain top faculty, who value the opportunity to work with excellent graduate students, depends directly on our ability to make Penn State a “first-choice” institution for the best applicants to graduate school from across the world. Therefore, we must, in addition to building the quality of the faculty, offer attractive financial packages in an increasingly competitive environment, provide financial and cultural support for an increasingly diverse student body, further strengthen our curriculum, attend to the professional development needs of our students, and ensure that our graduate programs are sized according to quality and market demand.

As with faculty, the cost of attracting the best students has soared. Fifteen years ago we typically offered new students tuition plus a \$10,000 stipend. Today, as we compete with the nation’s best institutions, typical packages for top students include tuition plus stipends of \$22,000 to \$24,000 (with \$27,000 the norm for top underrepresented minority students), a first semester release from teaching or TA responsibilities, reduced teaching loads in subsequent semesters, research assistantships in the years when the dissertation is taking shape, and a semester’s release at the end of the program for writing and job hunting. To compete with institutions such as Michigan, Berkeley, and Duke, we have eliminated some graduate positions to raise stipends for others, but even so the College and our departments have had to provide, on average, about \$5,000 per student per year beyond what is available from general funds.

To enhance graduate education we will integrate graduate education into our strategic initiatives associated with global studies, ethics, and digital fluency; prepare graduate students to become effective online course designers and educators; continue to streamline time to degree; and create a graduate internship program aimed at better positioning our students to find successful careers within and in some instances outside the academy.

**Graduate Focused Fundraising.** Of course we will also establish aggressive fundraising goals for the new campaign. Graduate fellowships have been and will continue to be a high priority of our fundraising efforts. We raised nearly \$3 million for graduate education in 2012 and more than \$13 million in the past campaign. Our goal over the next five years is to raise

\$20 million for graduate education, which will provide us with an additional \$1 million a year to enhance graduate offers, provide incentives to apply for external fellowship and grant funding, and support released time to reduce time to degree so that we can continue to recruit, train, and place the best graduate students.

**Online Education and Course Design.** Leveraging our existing strength in online education through the World Campus, we will develop a College wide *Graduate Teaching with Technology Mentoring Program* in which graduate students who are interested in online course design will receive training in this skill while working to update existing online courses. This will provide our graduate students with marketable skills while contributing to the continuous improvement of our online portfolio.

## **A Liberal Arts Undergraduate Education for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century**

Leadership in undergraduate education must be part of national leadership in a research university. We define that leadership as providing a 21<sup>st</sup> century liberal arts education to all our students. This means that, in addition to the traditional liberal arts strengths in communication, analytic thinking, ethical decision making, and appreciation for other cultures and other times, our students must learn to adapt these strengths to a global world in which information is produced, transmitted and stored digitally. And they must be able to transition to a career where these strengths will be essential.

National leaders in undergraduate education attract students with strong academic credentials and create and nurture a serious and challenging intellectual life for them. They provide students with first-year experiences that include engagement with inspiring scholars who invite them to a life of study and intellectual growth. A high proportion of students in leading undergraduate programs study abroad, pursue internships, and engage in faculty-supervised research. Their courses of study are rich and deep and they typically complete double majors and minors. Students of the best programs go on to the nation's top graduate and professional schools and are sought after by top firms and the government. We commit to offering our majors precisely this kind of undergraduate education.

### **Providing a *Liberal Arts Edge***

Creating and nurturing a serious and challenging intellectual life for our undergraduate students requires that we challenge students to pursue research, try out their skills in an internship, and gain global knowledge. Therefore, the College is committed to expanding opportunities for enriched education. We want to give our own majors a *Liberal Arts Edge* and we are committed to expanding and revising our general education portfolio to help students in other colleges to build their global acumen, ethical knowledge, and digital fluency.

**Continuing Support for the Paterno Fellows Program.** Since 2008, the Paterno Fellows Program (PFP) has been offered in partnership with the Schreyer Honors College (SHC). The PFP invites *all* incoming Liberal Arts students to perform their way into an ambitious and enriched educational experience that enables them to graduate with honors in the SHC. As of Spring 2014, when our third Paterno graduating class received their degrees, the program has

graduated 225 students. With the assistance of endowed enrichment funds of \$1500 to \$2500 *per student*, Paterno Fellows gain access to undergraduate research, study abroad, and internships. They work closely with faculty and alumni mentors, and build a portfolio of experiences designed to attract employers, graduate schools, and professional schools. Nearly 75 percent study abroad, more than 25 percent of them in Asia or Africa, and nearly 70 percent have internships, 20 percent of them abroad. For details, see <http://laus.la.psu.edu/current-students/paterno-fellows>.)

**Further Strengthening the Curriculum.** Every department will review its undergraduate curriculum with an eye towards putting in place a curriculum for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Special emphasis will be placed on global experiences, digital innovations, ethics, and communication skills.

**Global Liberal Arts.** An educated person in the 21<sup>st</sup> century must have knowledge of global issues and interconnections. With a focus on global liberal arts, we will be a leader in providing opportunities not only for our own majors but also for students in other disciplines. Our strategies include redesigning the Global Studies major and minor to serve more students; increasing the scope of our international language programs; providing more support for work, research, and study abroad, and better integrating international students into our programs. We anticipate raising significant funding to support our global initiatives. We have created a Development Council Task Force on Global Liberal Arts that is working to create a comprehensive fundraising strategy around curricular, study abroad, language, and other Global Liberal Arts needs.

**Global Studies major and minor.** In the revised Global Studies major, students will be able to choose different “pathways” in the degree, ranging from global conflict and cooperation to global environmental and health issues. Changes to the major are now in the curricular process. The major will offer excellent preparation for many different careers in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. We plan to offer the major on the World Campus as well.

**International languages.** Increasing the scope of our international language programs is a second goal of Global Liberal Arts. We cannot do this by offering sections of Bengali or Fulani or other less and least commonly taught languages, a cost prohibitive activity. Instead, our School of Languages and Literature will match students wishing to learn a language with online and other resources including tutors and language partners, a method used successfully by some peers. We will also explore making the Summer Institute a destination for those from other parts of the country rather than a program serving mostly local students. Using some online CIC course share courses along with our own courses, we are implementing a Korean minor, and we are building capacity in our Chinese language program in preparation for a proposal to the Department of Defense for a Flagship Chinese program.

**Global experience.** In the next five years, we seek to increase participation in study abroad to 700 students per year, and to secure participation in either internship abroad or study abroad experiences by at least three-quarters of our 2000 graduates. To do this we are increasing financial support for global experiences, since cost is the main barrier preventing students from participating; implementing a global liberal arts fundraising strategy with our Alumni Society Board and Development Council; coordinating with academic advisors on outreach to pre-major

students, the fastest growing segment of our study abroad population in recent years; providing targeted logistical and financial support for embedded courses with overseas travel; and developing new marketing materials focused on selecting programs to enhance career objectives. We are also planning to hire a coordinator of global experiences in the Career Enrichment Network who will facilitate global experiences for our undergraduates both on campus and abroad.

**Ethics.** The medical and bioethics undergraduate minor remains small and the dual title bioethics PhD is new. During the next five years, we will work with partner colleges to advertise both better. To better diffuse ethical training in other units of the College, we also plan to make ethics one of our priority hiring areas in several departments, working in partnership with the Rock.

**Digital fluency.** We must also help our students and faculty to lead the transition into the digital and information age taking advantage of the unique perspectives provided by the liberal arts. We intend to do this by supporting faculty and students in their efforts to integrate digital approaches into research and teaching in the humanities, expanding our big data initiatives in the social sciences, growing our World Campus presence, and integrating more technology into resident instruction courses.

**Integrating digital perspectives into research and teaching in the humanities.** Our Humanities in a Digital Age and Digital Pedagogy initiatives will integrate digital humanities research into the undergraduate curriculum. A number of departments have successfully integrated digital humanities research into their undergraduate courses by using digital mapping and curation technologies to enable students to create digital scholarly projects. In an example of digital pedagogy, students studying Arabic use videoconference technology to have conversation partnerships with students in Tunisia or Morocco. Adopting these examples on a broader scale, providing faculty and graduate students with professional development in digital scholarship and pedagogy, and partnering with the College of Arts and Architecture and IST, will enable us to attract new undergraduates to our humanities majors and provide them with technical skills that will make them more competitive on the job market.

**Expanding big data initiatives in social science.** We plan to expand our “big data” initiatives by building on our NSF-supported IGERT training grant, currently finishing its second year, to include undergraduate, professional master’s and dual title PhD degrees in social data analytics. The bachelor and master’s degrees will be offered in-residence and on-line and include partners from appropriate other units. The dual title degree will be housed in political science and offered to any department at UP that wants their students trained in this area.

**Increasing our World Campus presence.** The World Campus has aspired to enroll as many as 45,000 students within the next decade, and Liberal Arts intends to play a significant role in this effort. Consequently, a number of Liberal Arts departments will develop new World Campus program offerings in the next three years. Our approach will be strategically to increase both our masters’ and bachelors’ portfolios. We will improve the quality of our programs even as we expand them. This will require an even greater commitment to faculty development, effective evaluation, and better integration into departments. We have begun a series of workshops for the department coordinators of online teaching and learning and are working

with the World Campus to offer faculty development workshops and mentoring. Our talented corps of instructional designers are supporting faculty in course design. These steps, along with the Graduate Teaching with Technology Mentoring program (described above) will enable the College to build its academic reputation, enhance the prospects for World Campus growth, and most importantly, provide outstanding opportunities for students to learn, complete their degrees, and advance their careers.

**Engagement and Professional Development.** To make the *Liberal Arts Edge* a reality for our students, we will expand study/work abroad and internship abroad participation to 700 per year and we plan to substantially increase the proportion of our students pursuing supervised research projects. We will accomplish these goals by deploying funds provided by our alumni-supported Career Enrichment Network. Our goal in this planning cycle is to build an \$80M endowment to provide each of our undergraduates with at least \$2500 to participate in an approved study abroad, undergraduate research, or internship, experiences. We will also begin a more systematic assessment of career placements for our undergraduates, giving particular attention to the role of the CEN in facilitating job placement.

**Assessment.** Our assessment activities are aimed at ensuring that a liberal arts education at Penn State remains on the cutting edge of each discipline. And while outside the classroom activities are important, the core of an outstanding education takes place in the courses that outstanding faculty offer to students as part of their degree programs. Liberal Arts fields are already respected for the rigor of their academic programs and the outstanding teaching of many award-winning faculty. To ensure that Liberal Arts receive the highest quality education possible, the College is committed to cultivating a culture of continuing assessment of how fully our students are achieving the particular learning outcomes identified within each program of study in the College. For the past three years, our academic units have participated in the ongoing, cyclical assessment process implemented by the University Assessment Coordinating Committee.

We will leverage the ongoing assessment process to ask departments to assess our success in cultivating global acumen and digital fluency in our students. The Associate Dean for Graduate and Undergraduate Education will work with departments to identify specific artifacts of student learning that demonstrate the ability of students to understand the histories and ideas of cultures other than their own. Specific assessment plans will be developed for the new Global Studies major that document our progress in this area. With regard to digital literacies, we will focus specifically on the learning outcomes associated with ENGL/CAS 137/138: *Rhetoric and Civic Life* to determine how effectively we are cultivating in students across the university an ability to leverage digital media to effectively advocate for and deliberate about important issues of wider public concern.

## **The Revenue Base for National Leadership in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century**

Increasing revenue will be the most important determinant of our progress over the next five to ten years. Thus, we plan to realize new revenues in four ways: external funding, development, summer revenue, and the World Campus. And we intend to continue to reallocate funds toward units that have strong strategic plans.

**External Funding.** Since 2007-08, external funding has increased by 36%, going from \$22 to \$30 million in 2013-14. During the past several years, however, fiscal constraints at the national level have led to increasingly competitive grant awarding at many federal agencies. Since a good chunk of the funding for our social science graduate programs now comes from grants awarded to faculty, we must continue to find ways to expand our external funding opportunities, as well as increase involvement in external funding activity among our faculty. Our plans include continuing to invest in our Future Funded Faculty grant-mentoring program and further infusing expectations for grant activity into departmental cultures, promotion and tenure, and measures of faculty success. We also will continue to improve the pre- and post-award services provided by our grants and contracts office.

**World Campus.** Over the past ten years, we have become financially dependent on the success of the World Campus and this has challenged us to be both creative and disciplined in initiating new curricula and programs. Although our World Campus strategy began as an entrepreneurial attempt to generate revenue to support the residential mission of the College, enhancing our academic profile in online learning has become a strategic priority of its own.

Over the next five years, we aim to establish ourselves as *the world leader* in liberal arts education online. To do this, we will need to develop online programs that enhance our in-residence programs and dovetail with our graduate programs. Bringing the Global Studies BA and BS online is a good example of how we can establish ourselves as a leader in online education in a specific area even as we advance college level academic priorities.

To be a world leader in liberal arts education online, however, we will also need to balance our portfolio, which is now almost entirely an undergraduate social science one (twelve undergraduate degrees and two masters' degrees; only one of these degrees, albeit a popular one, is in the humanities). We plan to bring a liberal studies undergraduate degree on line with concentrations in history, literature, or philosophy, and are exploring a degree in professional communication. We are working closely with the World Campus marketing group and our faculty on these and other initiatives.

We will also need to rebalance by adding graduate degrees and certificates. Our psychology of leadership MPS and a post-graduate philanthropy certificate will be launched this summer. Plans to develop MPS degrees in criminal justice (in conjunction with Harrisburg), demography, and social data analytics are in the pipeline.

To be a world leader in liberal arts education online, we will also need to develop academically responsible opportunities to earn credit by prior learning assessment. Drawing on the enormous success of our online Letters, Arts, and Sciences degree, we are in the early stage of developing an applied social science degree to enable adult learners with a significant number of earned credits to complete a Penn State degree.

**Revenue Sharing.** As the university continues to provide new opportunities for entrepreneurial colleges to generate revenue through revenue sharing programs, the College will strategically position itself to leverage these programs to increase funding for its strategic priorities. Over the past four years, with a new revenue sharing model in place for summer programs, the College, already the largest provider of summer student credit hours with a target of over 26,000 SCH per year, has increased its production of SCH from 26,800 to 28,000 in the past two years, bringing our summer revenue to \$4.2 million. We will continue to provide incentives to departments to develop new summer programs consistent with our strategic priorities.

Finally, if the university moves to a more responsibility based budget model, there will be new opportunities for the college and departments to generate revenue by more efficiently delivering curriculum during fall and spring. We are adjusting our own workload policies to provide incentives for units to become more efficient in this regard.

**Development.** The deans and our development staff will continue to work closely with our Development Council, alumni volunteers, and friends to assure continued success as we move into the new capital campaign. We plan ongoing training of new staff, especially the fundraisers who will be building the pipeline of prospective donors; improving further our already highly regarded stewardship program; and developing meaningful engagement opportunities for alumni. Such engagement must deepen their relationships with Liberal Arts and help current students through mentoring, career counseling, internships, and service learning. As we look ahead to the next campaign, we assume that, absent major turmoil in the financial markets, our efforts will lead to a continued increase in our fundraising capacity.

As this plan has revealed, our needs going forward are great, and so are our opportunities. Our priorities include a \$35 million package of endowed professorships and associated graduate support and \$80 million for student enrichment opportunities, including \$15 million for our Paterno Fellows program. We also aspire to provide at least \$2500 of guaranteed funding to every major in the College. We expect to aim for a \$175 to \$200 million campaign to generate these and other funds we need.

## **From Plan to Action**

At the very heart of a 21<sup>st</sup> century liberal arts education are committed, inspiring, and talented faculty and their apprentices, graduate students, who together challenge undergraduate students to greatness. Our plan is a commitment to move closer to this vision, by strengthening our faculty and furthering our position as national leaders in graduate and undergraduate education; and doing all of this while fostering an ethical environment in which the highest standards for behavior are promoted and upheld.

Our goals, though developed partly independently of those embraced by the provost and president, are very consistent and will be an important part of the University's success in achieving the goals. The provost's "pillars," are academic areas where the University can be an international leader. The president's six imperatives focus less on specific academic areas and more on processes and outcomes. The College's goals intersect significantly with both lists. Excellence and engagement are two centerpieces of our own plans. Student career success (or

what we refer to above as “the *Liberal Arts Edge*”) is the central focus of our Career Enrichment Network. We too are focusing on areas such as digital assets, health and well being, and cultures. (See table below for other points of intersection).

**Table: President’s, Provost’s, and Liberal Arts Priorities**

<b>President’s Priorities</b>	<b>Liberal Arts Plans</b>
Excellence	Overall and fund raising for outstanding faculty and grad students
Student engagement	Liberal Arts Edge; Paterno Fellows Program
Economic development and student career success	Career Enrichment Network; Liberal Arts Edge
Diversity	Continuing attention in faculty and student recruitment
Access and affordability	Liberal Arts Edge support for students; scholarship fundraising; World Campus
Technology	Digital humanities; Big Data (social data analytics); CHI; World Campus leadership
 <b>Provost’s Pillars</b>	
Health and well-being	Global studies health and environment; Child Study Center initiatives
Stewarding resources	Global studies health and environment; sustainability plans
Education and access	Liberal Arts Edge
Digital assets	Expanded World Campus portfolio, digital humanities; social data analytics
Cultures and humanities	Various efforts to strengthen departments; McCourtney Democracy Institute; Rock Ethics Institute

In the end, our path to national leadership requires leadership: in the University that will invest in and support the Liberal Arts; in the dean’s office and in units that will put quality first and make the many tough choices necessary to continue to transform the College; and, on the part of our alumni and friends who, by continuing to invest in the Liberal Arts beyond the close of the *For the Future* campaign, will play the critical role in fueling our strategic advance. Operating with a confidence that is based on the recent accomplishments of our students, faculty, and staff, secure in the support of an improving university more generally, and inspired by the dedication, zeal, and aspiration of our loyal alumni, we dedicate ourselves to reaching for, and achieving, national leadership in research and education.