

## College of Arts and Sciences Strategic Plan 2013-2018

### Mission and Values

As the Liberal Arts and Sciences came together as a single college in 2012, we achieved consensus on our **college mission**:

*The College of Arts and Sciences fosters excellence in the arts, humanities, and social and natural sciences and provides a foundation for intellectual and creative experiences across Washington State University. We apply diverse perspectives to understand and transform the world, enrich lives, and meet societal needs.*

*Inquiry is central to our work. We address fundamental questions through research, scholarship, and creative activity. Our efforts advance the frontiers of knowledge and artistic expression, as well as the mission and strategic goals of the University.*

*The College is uniquely positioned to pursue liberal, broad-based learning, in which inquiry and teaching proceed in tandem. We challenge our students and ourselves to think rationally, critically, and creatively for life-long engagement in our human and natural worlds.*

*We are committed to outreach that promotes the common good and that empowers local, state, national, and global communities.*

Our mission, and the goals and objectives for achieving it, are guided by **enduring values** that bind us together as scholars, teachers, and university citizens. The foundation of our creative, scholarly, research, and educational efforts is a *spirit of inquiry*. Our inquiries are diverse, reflecting the great span of intellectual and creative interests in the College of Arts and Sciences (CAS), and they all result in products that enhance our world and our understanding of it. Building on the finest traditions of the American public research university, our teaching is informed by our scholarly and creative endeavors, the histories of thought in which they are based, and the challenges of our time. *Service and outreach* that extend beyond the University are central to the land-grant mission of WSU. The faculty, staff, and students of the College apply our scholarly and creative work to benefit local and regional communities as well as the nation and the world. *Human and intellectual diversity* are essential values if the College is to meet its goal of addressing the wide-ranging challenges presented by the contemporary world. The College and its units are committed to the highest standards of ethical behavior and the creation of an equitable environment that promotes the success of all of its members.

### Overarching CAS Goals

- *Enhance disciplinary excellence throughout the CAS and across all campuses.* Strengthening research and creative activity in CAS disciplines is the foundation for the WSU's achievements as a research university. Furthermore, our disciplinary excellence is fundamental to the spirit of inquiry that informs our instructional mission, a mission that is essential to every student of the university.
- *Connect faculty and students across disciplines and campuses to enable them to address problems that transcend disciplinary boundaries.* Disciplinary tools provide essential elements for inquiry and problem solving, but many contemporary challenges require teamwork and contributions from diverse perspectives. Our college will promote efforts by students and faculty to cross traditional boundaries and combine skills in meaningful ways.
- *Promote and deepen our engagement with alumni, and with local and global partners, in order to better serve our students and to play a leading role in the university's effort to address grand challenges.* To fulfill our mission to promote the common good and empower communities from local to global, we will not only cross traditional boundaries within the academy, but also engage partners outside WSU from the perspective that CAS has much to contribute, and much to learn, when we partner with others.

### System-wide Objectives for Meeting Our Goals

1. Recruit, develop, and retain an outstanding and diverse faculty, staff, and student body.
2. Provide an environment that encourages and facilitates interdisciplinary teaching, research, and creative activity where such connections can maximize the impact of faculty and student achievements.
3. Improve the physical infrastructure for research, creative activity, and instruction.
4. Increase the visibility and understanding of the accomplishments of CAS faculty and students through improved internal and external communication and through proactive efforts to enhance faculty and student recognition.

### Strategies for Meeting Our Objectives

#### Objective 1: Recruitment, Development, and Retention

*Strategy 1.1: Identify the most pressing retention, merit, and equity problems in the college and prioritize college resources to address these problems.* Bringing faculty, staff, and graduate assistant salaries in line with peers will require University level action and resources, but CAS will work to establish a fund to proactively address the most urgent salary issues in the college. Annual reports of salaries in CAS units at peer institutions should be developed and departments should have the opportunity to report on their most pressing compression, equity, and retention issues.

*Strategy 1.2: Insure that faculty start-up packages and resources for professional development are competitive.* The college will partner with units and the Research Office to establish predictable mechanisms for funding start-ups and major equipment matching funds. College leaders and faculty will work to establish guidelines for identifying and ranking equipment needs annually.

*Strategy 1.3: Empower faculty and staff to be professionally productive, creative and entrepreneurial within an environment of mutual support, accountability, and respect for diversity.* The general climate of the college and the level of faculty morale are important aspects of attracting and keeping our best colleagues. Faculty and staff that are empowered to make the best use of their abilities and contribute in meaningful ways to shared governance have both high productivity and high morale. A key element of creating an environment that empowers faculty and staff is the opportunity to receive effective mentoring and network with other members of the college and university communities. College leaders, faculty, and staff will collaborate on enhancing networking opportunities and establishing standards for mentoring at different career stages that can be applied to unit-specific needs. In addition, the College will develop guidelines that allow for flexibility in assignments, funding allocations, and service and reporting requirements with a goal of improving morale and productivity while maintaining standards of equity and fairness for faculty and staff.

*Strategy 1.4: Collaborate across departments and with the graduate school to share best practices and enhance resources for graduate recruitment and mentoring.* By exploring opportunities to partner with CAS departments and with the Graduate School, the College will enhance recruitment materials, websites, and visitation opportunities for graduate recruitment. The College will annually review data collected by units as part of program evaluation and discuss in regular meetings with program directors the practices that lead to graduate student success.

## Objective 2: Interdisciplinary Teaching, Research, and Creative Activity

*Strategy 2.1: Improve faculty research networking opportunities.* Through workshops and designated internal funding mechanisms the College will facilitate faculty and student collaborations outside their home departments, and across campuses.

*Strategy 2.2: Review and update tenure and promotion, annual review, and budgeting policies in order to facilitate team teaching, interdisciplinary program development, and research collaboration.* Interdisciplinary work often involves bridging disciplines across departments, while in other cases interdisciplinary scholarship can take place within a unit. College leaders and faculty will identify policy barriers to impactful interdisciplinary activity and develop metrics for defining and rewarding successful interdisciplinary scholarship and teaching throughout the WSU system.

*Strategy 2.3: Encourage and facilitate coordination of hiring to create an environment that promotes interdisciplinary team development in research, creative activity, and instruction.*

College leaders and faculty will collaborate within the college and with other colleges to create hiring plans that lead to clusters of complementary faculty expertise. These clusters will add to existing strengths of CAS and WSU so that we can address challenges that transcend disciplinary boundaries.

### Objective 3: Physical Infrastructure

*Strategy 3.1: Coordinate facility assessment and planning across CAS to establish priorities for facilities needs and communicate the priorities centrally.* A facilities coordinator for the college should be designated who will work with unit leaders to advise the Dean on priorities for facility renovation and maintenance and serve as a liaison to facilities services. A goal of such coordination should be to optimize the effective use of facilities and anticipate the need for new facilities system wide.

*Strategy 3.2: Establish processes for anticipating major equipment needs and improving coordination of applications to fund instrumentation and equipment.* Units within CAS should be consulted at least annually on equipment needs and timelines for acquisitions to enable college-level coordination and support for investigators to produce the most competitive applications possible.

*Strategy 3.3: Develop a technology recapitalization plan.* The strategic planning committee will work with our IT personnel to establish goals for recapitalization of faculty and staff computers and technology necessary for teaching and research in college classrooms and labs. The committee will develop recommendations for a CAS recapitalization funding policy.

### Objective 4: Visibility and Communication

*Strategy 4.1: Review and revise CAS internal communication practices and develop a comprehensive approach to achieving mutual understanding of our goals, procedures, accomplishments, and challenges.* To facilitate the college's effort to speak with a coherent voice, the strategic planning committee will work with our communications specialists, college leadership, faculty, and staff across campuses to assess the effectiveness of current practices and develop processes for enhanced sharing of information within the college.

*Strategy 4.2: Assess college-wide needs for information technology (IT) and communication support and insure all units have access to adequate IT and communications resources.* The ability to update websites, provide newsletters, and student recruitment materials varies widely across units and campuses, and inadequate staffing is a major impediment for many units. IT and communications staff and college leaders should work with Chairs and Directors to conduct a formal assessment of college-wide needs and recommend cost-effective strategies for meeting our communication goals.

*Strategy 4.3: Establish a more formalized system for nominating people for internal and external awards.* The college awards committee should be configured in size and representation to serve

as a source of award nominations of outstanding faculty, staff, and students throughout the WSU system. In addition, the committee could help identify nominees for prestigious external awards and assist in the development of the application materials.

*Strategy 4.4: Develop a coordinated approach to external relations.* Our communications specialists, development professionals, and faculty are all critical in assisting the Dean and other college leaders in improving external visibility and fostering partnership opportunities with other universities and the private sector. The strategic planning committee will meet with development and communications experts in the college to formulate recommendations for developing coordinated processes that will increase external awareness of CAS accomplishments and open doors to new opportunities with external partners.

#### **Plan Implementation and Ongoing Assessment of Progress**

This plan lays out goals and strategies to guide CAS for years to come, but the details of implementation and metrics for determining success will require a year or more to complete. The CAS Strategic Planning Committee should be formalized as a permanent college committee with diverse representation of faculty and staff. Terms of service will be staggered to insure diverse input as well as some continuity from year to year. In the coming years, the committee will:

- Develop specific proposals for implementing each of the strategies in this plan and metrics for measuring success in achieving our goals.
- Vet these proposals through discussions at department meetings and meetings of the Dean with Chairs and Directors. Feedback from all levels will be sought by the strategic planning committee.
- Provide an annual assessment of progress towards our College goals using a combination of institutional research data, surveys of faculty and administrators, and other data deemed appropriate. The progress report will be submitted to the Dean and made available to all CAS faculty and staff.