



WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY

**College of
Arts and Sciences**

Strategic Plan 2017-2021





Guiding Principles

Our Mission Our mission is to ignite and sustain a passion for learning and discovery in the humanities, social sciences, and sciences, to help students, staff, and faculty succeed in life and contribute to the betterment of our communities, from local to global.

Our Vision Our vision is to achieve excellence in all aspects of learning and discovery across the humanities, social sciences, and sciences while fostering a climate of intellectual freedom, diversity, and inclusion.

Our Core Values

Collaboration We promote an atmosphere in which staff, faculty, students and community collaborate in their discovery, learning, and engagement.

Creativity We cherish intellectual vitality and innovation, driven by curiosity and critical thinking.

Equity We are committed to an inclusive and equitable community comprised of diverse faculty, staff and students.

Integrity We seek to operate in an environment that features accountability, transparency, and respect.

Intellectual Freedom In a spirit of civility, we value intellectual freedom and the open exchange of ideas in our inquiry, discovery, and learning.

Financial Sustainability We work to be financially accountable and viable through sustainable operations, programs, and outcomes.

Student Success We center students' needs in our academic planning, policies, and programs to enable learners to meet their educational goals.



Goal Summary

This goal summary shows that our vision can be achieved if the College of Arts and Sciences executes each strategic goal and its objectives.

Our Mission

Our mission is to ignite and sustain a passion for learning and discovery in the humanities, social sciences, and sciences, to help students, staff and faculty succeed in life and contribute to the betterment of communities, from local to global.

Our Goals

1. Outstanding learning and discovery experiences foster undergraduate and graduate student success at WMU and beyond
2. The College thrives because it is a diverse, inclusive, equitable and globally-engaged community of scholars, learners and leaders
3. Excellence and accountability define faculty, staff, and administrative actions
4. Resource development and allocation practices ensure financial sustainability
5. Innovation permeates learning and discovery

Our Vision

Our vision is to achieve excellence in all aspects of learning and discovery across the humanities, social sciences, and sciences while fostering a climate of intellectual freedom, diversity, and inclusion.



Collaboration | Creativity | Equity | Financial Sustainability | Integrity | Intellectual Freedom | Student Success

Our Core Values



Goal 1. Outstanding learning and discovery experiences foster undergraduate and graduate student success at WMU and beyond

Objective 1.1: Strengthen and integrate undergraduate and graduate advising and mentoring resources to foster student success

Strategies:

- a. Encourage undergraduate and graduate instructors to record mid-term grades and use student concern form
- b. Investigate best practices in arts and sciences undergraduate advising and consider alternative advising and mentoring structures that better integrate professional staff and faculty advising
- c. Fully integrate Student Success Services with departmental, college and university advising and mentoring resources
- d. Develop and implement exit surveys for undergraduate and graduate programs

Objective 1.2: Improve the experience of first-year students to increase student engagement

Strategies:

- a. Explore implementation of a cohort model
- b. Explore new opportunities for faculty to engage with first-year students
- c. Develop and offer college-specific first-year seminar courses

Objective 1.3: Increase achievement of course learning outcomes in general education and lower division courses to foster student success

Strategies:

- a. Recognize and share excellent pedagogy in general education and lower division courses
- b. Use assessment tools to identify and respond to gaps in students' knowledge and preparedness for introductory and gateway courses
- c. Consider systematic use of course directors for multi-section courses to ensure consistent achievement of course learning outcomes
- d. Encourage programs to develop and implement innovative undergraduate learning assistant models

Goal 1. Outstanding learning and discovery experiences foster undergraduate and graduate student success at WMU and beyond

Objective 1.4: Improve mentoring and support of graduate students to foster graduate student success

Strategies:

- a. Establish and require systematic annual review of graduate students in all programs
- b. Provide GA orientation, rigorous instructor training and consistent oversight of GAs teaching all courses and programs.
- c. Create peer networks focused on interdisciplinary research and creative activities
- d. Develop and disseminate best practices resources and training to graduate advisors
- e. Provide cost shares to support research assistantships for externally-funded graduate students
- f. Create a college graduate education committee

Objective 1.5: Improve transfer student experience to increase recruiting and retention of transfer students

Strategies:

- a. Articulate clear degree completion pathways with community colleges
- b. Develop systematic communication with community college advisors and instructors
- c. Improve alignment between community college and WMU courses
- d. Explore cohort advising for transfer students



Goal 2. The College thrives because it is a diverse, inclusive, equitable, and globally-engaged community of scholars, learners and leaders

Objective 2.1: Recruit, hire and retain diverse, multiculturally-competent and globally-engaged faculty and staff

Strategies:

- a. Explore and implement best practices for recruiting diverse, multiculturally-competent, and globally-engaged candidates
- b. Develop and implement a new faculty mentorship program
- c. Develop and implement a partner hire policy
- d. Conduct implicit bias training for all members of faculty and staff hiring committees and for the College of Arts and Sciences Chairs' Council
- e. Develop a pilot program with search committees to assess turndowns and offer withdrawals
- f. Conduct exit surveys with resigning and retiring faculty
- g. Encourage and facilitate continuing education opportunities for staff
- h. Research programs at peer institutions that address dependent-care costs associated with work-related travel

Objective 2.2: Recruit and retain a diverse student body

Strategies:

- a. Explore and implement best practices for recruiting a diverse student body
- b. Facilitate faculty and staff outreach to K12, especially in diverse school districts
- c. Provide multicultural competency skill training to faculty and staff
- d. Explore the development of partnerships with minority-serving and international educational institutions
- e. Encourage students to apply for prestigious scholarships for underrepresented students
- f. Communicate and collaborate with WMU organizations focused on specific student populations

Objective 2.3: Develop a diverse leadership team

Strategies:

- a. Create a College of Arts and Sciences faculty fellow position in diversity and inclusion
- b. Recruit a diverse group of faculty and staff to participate in academic leadership academy
- c. Provide opportunities for a diverse group of faculty, staff and chairs to receive leadership training and professional development

Goal 3. Excellence and accountability define faculty, staff, and administrative actions

Objective 3.1: Recognize, incentivize and support faculty and staff excellence

Strategies:

- a. Identify and incentivize opportunities for professional development in teaching for tenure and tenure-track faculty, part-time instructors and graduate assistants
- b. Establish and resource interdisciplinary learning and discovery communities
- c. Identify and incentivize opportunities for professional development in research and creative activities
- d. Create a prominent display case showcasing awards and achievements of faculty and staff
- e. Celebrate faculty and staff achievements through press releases and College of Arts and Sciences e-newsletters, social media, and friends and alumni magazine
- f. Nominate outstanding faculty and staff for college, university, regional and national awards to recognize achievement in teaching, research, advising, professional and community engagement
- g. Develop incentives for the acquisition of external funding, especially to support student research

Objective 3.2: Develop a process to assess and improve college administration

Strategies:

- a. Institute annual review of the dean and associate deans by the members of the College of Arts and Sciences Chairs' Council
- b. Conduct annual review of college chairs and directors by the dean
- c. Host monthly informal, open meetings with the College dean or associate deans
- d. Develop a College of Arts and Sciences student advisory council to provide feedback on student concerns
- e. Create a system to encourage suggestions for improvements in administration, teaching, research and creative activities
- f. Provide professional development training opportunities to chairs and administrative staff
- g. Update the college committee structure

Objective 3.3: Promote transparency with respect to allocation of resources and decision-making

Strategies:

- a. Develop metrics for allocation of funds for part-time instructors, faculty hires and graduate assistantships
- b. Provide College of Arts and Sciences Chairs' Council, faculty and staff with regular updates and information on college budget
- c. Use benchmark data with peer and aspirational institutions in decision-making
- d. Develop clear policies and procedures to consolidate or eliminate programs that lack sufficient demand to support with current resources

Goal 4. Resource development and allocation practices ensure financial sustainability

Objective 4.1: Articulate the value of the liberal arts and sciences to WMU and the broader community

Strategies:

- a. Create and disseminate persuasive marketing materials for the College of Arts and Sciences, college-specific programs and the new general education program
- b. Establish a faculty fellow position to work in collaboration with Admissions
- c. Work with academic advisors to develop and promote deliberate curricular pathways, including structures for multiple majors and minors within and across colleges
- d. Facilitate recruiting of undecided students

Objective 4.2: Strengthen development and alumni engagement in support of scholarships, facilities, internships and research and creative activities

Strategies:

- a. Provide development and alumni engagement training to College of Arts and Sciences Chairs' Council
- b. Produce a College of Arts and Sciences friends and alumni magazine
- c. Create advisory councils for college departments
- d. Establish a young alumni academy
- e. Develop departmental alumni networks to support career mentoring, internships, and field experiences
- f. Create a college committee focused on development and alumni engagement

Objective 4.3: Develop a college-wide enrollment, persistence and retention plan to stabilize enrollment

Strategies:

- a. Determine enrollment targets for college and specific programs
- b. Develop guidelines to foster the strategic distribution of scholarships
- c. Implement a data-driven approach to allocation of resources for student success programs
- d. Develop cutting-edge, high-demand undergraduate and graduate programs, including certificates and accelerated graduate degree programs
- e. Develop graduate school pipelines with 4-year institutions
- f. Continue to develop partnership with the Western Michigan University Cooley Law School
- g. Develop new international exchange programs and partnerships for students, staff and faculty
- h. Establish deliberate, data-driven online and extended campus program strategies



Objective 4.4: Foster more efficient use of facilities across departments and colleges

Strategies:

- a. Inventory existing facilities and share information with staff and faculty to develop policies for the optimal use of office, instructional and research spaces
- b. Develop policies to incentivize and support shared use of instrumentation and facilities
- c. Collaborate with other colleges and units on campus to purchase and maintain shared instrumentation and facilities
- d. Establish relationships with other regional institutions to support the shared use of instrumentation and facilities
- e. Develop a ten-year research facility improvement and maintenance plan
- f. Encourage the use of shared spaces to foster a sense of community

Goal 5. Innovation permeates learning and discovery

Objective 5.1: Institutionalize strategies that encourage innovation in teaching and learning

Strategies:

- a. Respond purposefully and creatively to general education revisions
- b. Identify barriers to experiential learning opportunities, including study abroad, and develop strategies to overcome them
- c. Provide seed money for innovative teaching activities
- d. Facilitate collaborative teaching across programs and colleges
- e. Develop a program to engage undergraduate students in research
- f. Encourage implementation of global learning outcomes across curriculum

Objective 5.2: Strengthen interdisciplinary and collaborative research and creative activities

Strategies:

- a. Explore faculty cluster hires across departments and colleges
- b. Create peer networks focused on interdisciplinary and/or globally-engaged research and creative activities
- c. Explore funding options and policies to support visiting and postdoctoral scholars
- d. Provide seed money for innovative research and creative activities

Objective 5.3: Establish new community partnerships in support of learning and discovery

Strategies:

- a. Offer courses on topics of particular interest to the local community
- b. Explore industry partnerships in support of certificates and continuing education
- c. Develop networks to enhance internship and field experience opportunities for students
- d. Build industry partnerships in support of research and creative activities
- e. Seek opportunities for students to participate in service-learning

Objective 5.4: Integrate innovation into long-term planning

Strategies:

- a. Create a futures committee to respond to a changing higher education landscape
- b. Explore the development of an innovation incubator
- c. Identify and capitalize on opportunities to invest in impactful programs with potential for growth

Strategic Planning Committee

We gratefully acknowledge the time, expertise and insight of these retreat participants:

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