Strategic Plan for the College of Arts and Sciences

2017-2022

Draft—to be finalized by next Dean and the Faculty

Mission

The College of Arts and Sciences encourages excellence in teaching through academic programs in the arts, humanities, social sciences, Harrington School of Communication and Media, mathematics, and physical sciences; engages in internationally renowned programs of research, scholarship, and creative activities; and supports application of knowledge through outreach to serve the changing needs of the state, the country, and the world.

The College offers graduate and undergraduate programs of research, scholarship and artistic expression to enable students to understand the intellectual and cultural heritages in the global community, the physical world, rapidly changing technologies, and social, economic, and political development.

The College promotes students’ ethical and intellectual development and capabilities through critical and independent thinking, reading, and communicating.

The College fosters breadth through engagement with theoretical foundations and basic skills, and depth through the intellectual challenges explored via intensive study in a field of concentration. Student-faculty interaction is enhanced through independent and collaborative experiences to inspire life-long learning and civic engagement.

Vision

The College of Arts and Sciences forms the vibrant core of the University of Rhode Island, delivering a liberal arts education for the 21st century and performing a central role in fulfilling the mission of the University in undergraduate and graduate education, research, and outreach. We aspire to be a College of first choice for prospective students and faculty, offering internationally and nationally renowned programs.
Goal 1 — Enhance Student Success

Strategy 1
Expand pedagogical approaches focused on engaging students in learning across the curriculum.

Action steps:
- Make connections between and among disciplines in the College of Arts and Sciences.
- Expand connections with disciplines in the professional colleges.
- Create incentives and opportunities for faculty to lead experiential learning courses, field schools, and study abroad programs.
- Increase, enhance, publicize, and retain the variety of experiential learning offerings in the College of Arts and Sciences.
- Incorporate more project-based, problem-based, and/or co-taught classes into the curriculum.
- Work with and support the new Writing Across URI initiative to support faculty and students.
- Work with the Office for the Advancement of Teaching and Learning to encourage workshops and initiatives to support teaching and learning and introduce new state of the art pedagogies across the curriculum.

Strategy 2
Significantly expand opportunities for experiential learning within all majors and restructure academic and career advising to better support students in meeting their life goals.

Action steps:
- Increase experiential learning.
- Increase experiential and service learning in existing programs and interdisciplinary centers and institutes (Harrington Hub and TV studio, Social Science Institute for Research, Education and Policy, Center for the Humanities, and Feinstein Center for Hunger Free America).
- Improve academic to career advising.
- Invite alumni to speak on panels on career pathways to success.
- Work closely with the Arts and Sciences liaisons to the Center for Career and Experiential Education and the Alumni Association.
- Develop more internship opportunities both on and off campus.
- Promote college career workshops, panels, and programs such as those offered by the Center for the Humanities and the Department of English.
- Keep accurate data on internship placements and experiential learning courses.

Strategy 3
Facilitate the implementation of new learning pedagogies and expand modes of course delivery and assessment by leveraging space and time in new ways.

Action steps:
- Increase online and hybrid offerings.
- Explore the possibility of adopting the RN to BS time frame with seven-week semesters and other innovative time frames.
- Increase J-Term offerings (on campus and study abroad sections), including critical required courses.
- Develop innovative best practice models for gateway courses in all disciplines.
- Work on retention for at risk students who are “at need” for remedial help during J-Term in immersion classes.

**Strategy 4**
Support a comprehensive faculty development program and explore the opportunity for a faculty/teaching commons and expanded digital initiatives within the University Libraries.

**Action steps:**
- Recruit a talented faculty prepared to educate students of the 21st century.
- Provide, support and promote faculty development opportunities.
- Identify and eliminate barriers to retaining talented faculty.
- Increase faculty development opportunities and workshops on new technology and pedagogy.

**Strategy 5**
Sustain and enhance a vibrant liberal arts education at URI for the 21st century.

**Action steps:**
- Communicate the sustained value of a liberal arts education to internal and external constituencies.
- Develop programs and graduate programs for the next generation in the 21st century.
- Form Arts and Sciences Council on General Education to work closely with the Director of the new General Education program.
- Develop new, bold leadership in the Fine Arts.
- Develop political and donor support for the renovation of the Fine Arts Center.
- Promote and value the Arts and creative work.
- Commission an economic impact study on the Arts.

**Strategy 6**
Focus on access and affordability and improve credit and degree completion rates for all undergraduate and graduate students, with specific attention in data reporting to underrepresented, economically disadvantaged, international, out-of-state, and in-state populations.

- Work closely with Admissions, Graduate School, and Talent Development Program to review access to programs in Arts and Sciences.
- Collect and analyze data on credit and degree completion by major and for graduate students.
- Use data analysis to inform revisions to advising and support programs.
- Identify and eliminate barriers to timely completion of degrees.
- Develop recruitment goals.
- Improve advising.
- Give special attention in advising to students who are at risk of not graduating in four years.

**Goal 2 — Expand Research, Scholarship, and Creative Work**

**Strategy 1**
Broaden resources and support for significant growth in research opportunities with the state, nation, and world, and demonstrate value and recognition for multiple forms of scholarship.

**Action steps:**
- Ensure faculty have access to funding opportunities at the state, federal and international levels in both grants and foundation sources.
- Promote workshops that offer new strategies in securing funds to support research and creative work.
- Develop strategies to facilitate high scholarly/creative productivity without reducing commitment to the curriculum
- Create a culture that values all forms of scholarship and creative work
- Publicize the work of faculty to garner recognition for faculty and increase opportunities for interdisciplinary and collaborative work
- Work with existing interdisciplinary cluster hires and groups (Center for the Humanities and Feinstein Center for a Hunger Free America) and newly emerged groups (Social Science Institute for Research, Education and Policy, and the Digital Humanities) to develop actions to support and reduce barriers for interdisciplinary research and creative work.

**Strategy 2**
Foster inquiry-based interdisciplinary knowledge and the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL), and build greater connections across disciplines and academic units.

**Action steps:**
- Identify and eliminate bureaucratic barriers to enable students to earn double majors and dual degrees.
- Identify and eliminate barriers to enable faculty to collaborate across and among disciplines for research, teaching and outreach.
- Recognize and reward impressive achievements in interdisciplinary research, creative work and teaching.
- Support research on pedagogy.

**Strategy 3**
Target research initiatives that impact economic and workforce development.

**Action steps:**
- Work effectively with the RI Collaborative to identify state priorities for research.
- Work with the Social Science Institute for Research, Education, and Policy and Division of Research and Economic Development to identify state, national and international priorities.
- Promote results of research projects that impact economic and workforce development.
- Develop programs that support RI workforce development needs.

**Strategy 4**
Involve undergraduate and graduate students in rich and varied research and creative projects.

**Action steps:**

- Encourage and promote more student engagement in URI research opportunities for students.
- Create a College of Arts and Sciences opportunity, with funding, to engage in competitive research and creative projects.
- Demonstrate commitment to doctoral level graduate programs.

**Strategy 5**
Develop high-performance research computing initiatives to facilitate research and advance big data analyses and applications across all disciplines and other opportunities.

**Action steps:**

- Support URI Big Data and high-performance computing initiatives.
- Ensure college representation on all university-wide committees addressing Big Data, Data Science and high-performance computing.

**Goal 3 — Enhance our international presence and establish transnational literacy**

**Strategy 1**
Articulate and prioritize internationalization of faculty hires, including joint appointments and cluster hires.

**Action steps:**

- Encourage all departments to link strategic hiring requests to internationalization where appropriate.
- Identify status of all active international partnerships where departments might recruit or exchange faculty and students.

**Strategy 2**
Provide appropriate administrative leadership and structure to promote and coordinate the globalization efforts of the College and to support the globalization efforts of the University.

**Action steps:**

- Develop a major and an Institute of International Studies and Diplomacy.
- Recognize and reward faculty who take on international programs for J-term, summer, and semester programs.

**Strategy 3**
Create opportunities for the internationalization of the curriculum and co-curriculum to ensure that all students are exposed to transnational perspectives and build intercultural competence.

**Action steps:**
- Develop curriculum maps for students who study abroad.
- Improve access to curriculum at institutions abroad that accept URI students for study abroad programs.
- Develop database of courses previously approved at international institutions with dates of approval.

**Strategy 4**
Create policies and support mechanisms to provide faculty with opportunities to develop global competence to maximize the impact of student global experiences on learning outcomes.

**Action steps:**
- Offer language immersion for faculty, including face-to-face and online.
- Offer workshops on particular countries and invite faculty across the university who plan to teach, conduct research or engage in outreach there.
- Encourage sharing of plans with faculty in other colleges who work in the same countries abroad.

**Strategy 5**
Expand support structures and efforts to increase numbers of domestic students engaging in international education experiences, and successfully recruit, enroll, retain, and graduate international students.

**Action steps:**
- Increase J-Term faculty-led courses.
- Increase support for scholarships for study abroad and J-Term opportunities.
- Disseminate more information about scholarship opportunities to faculty who lead study abroad and J-Term programs and to students who participate in these trips and programs.
- Improve lead time and PR for scholarship opportunities.
- Develop one website for information about study abroad scholarships.
- Identify grant support for faculty to support students abroad, such as 100,000 Strong in the Americas.

**Strategy 6**
Formalize international partnerships with respect to the process of strategic planning and proposal review, approval, tracking, and assessment of international partnerships.
Action steps:

- Develop a centralized inventory of Arts and Sciences partnerships and programs.
- Keep records of those who participate with partners in any capacity, noting networks of professionals at each institution.

Goal 4 — Embrace Diversity and Social Justice

Strategy 1
Develop robust plans for diversifying faculty and staff by employing novel approaches that realize and retain greater numbers of underrepresented faculty.

Action steps:

- Develop plans by department and program for diversifying faculty and staff and share best practices with heads of each unit.
- Invite a focus group of underrepresented faculty and staff to generate ideas for best practices and include them in unit plans.
- Work collaboratively with the Office of Community, Equity and Diversity to recruit a diverse faculty.

Strategy 2
Increase the recruitment, retention, and graduation of students from underrepresented groups, and provide support for their inclusion and success in the academic environment.

Action steps:

- Ask each department to develop recruitment, retention and graduation plans for members of underrepresented groups.
- Develop outreach to secondary schools in areas with high concentrations of underrepresented groups
- Begin building the plan by hosting focus groups of underrepresented students.
- Develop recruitment pipelines with historically Black colleges and universities.

Strategy 3
Create an active learning community among students, faculty, staff, and administrators that engages in open discourse and enhanced understanding about what it means to be a diverse and socially just community.

Action steps:

- Invite small groups of faculty to discuss how to establish and sustain a diverse and socially just community by area: arts, humanities, social sciences, physical and quantitative sciences, and the Harrington School.
- Share best practices among broad areas to develop a college-wide plan.
- Examine barriers to promotion of faculty from underrepresented groups and work to eliminate the barriers.

**Strategy 4**
Create a more inclusive and supportive community for all

**Action Steps:**
- Establish better dual career assistance. Create a consortium of local schools; increase options in creating a second position at URI that is tenure-track.
- Explore options for telecommuting/working off campus. Encourage meetings at every level to offer a standard option for “dialing in” and remote access.
- Consider advocating for part-time tenured and tenure-track options to provide life course flexibility.
- Advocate for more extensive parental leave options and ways to encourage both parents to utilize those options.
- Collect and disseminate resources and information for new faculty from underrepresented groups identifying how to access a community of faculty from the same/similar demographic group.
- Advocate for more lactation spaces, including installing a Mamava pod in every building on campus and ask that all new construction have a lactation room.
- Ask all departments and committees to consider those with significant care giving responsibilities when scheduling meetings.
- Ask that all college units have more awareness and sensitivity in scheduling around religious holidays of all religions.
- Advocate for gender neutral bathrooms in every building on campus.
- Establish a professional family travel fund to enable people with significant caregiving responsibilities to be able to travel for their work.
- Establish more scholarships for student parents to help them manage parenting and school responsibilities.

**Goal 5 — Streamline Processes to Improve Effectiveness**

**Strategy 1**
Improve and where necessary transform College processes in order to increase efficiency and effectiveness.

**Action steps:**
- Assign a point person to each challenge and a small working group to revise processes or suggest changes in strategies.
- Continue to improve the University calendar process.

**Strategy 2**
Prioritize and improve information technology support to better meet future technology-related needs of the College.

**Action steps:**
- Invite a focus group of faculty to inventory technology challenges of the College.
- Use the information to develop a plan to address the challenges.

**Strategy 3**
Explore new business and administrative processes that serve faculty, staff, and students with the highest degree of service and efficiency.

**Action steps:**
- Develop better practices to improve efficiency and support where bottlenecks exist.
- Improve research administrative processes at all levels and within all units.

**Strategy 4**
Develop processes and practices that enable the College of Arts and Sciences to more nimbly update curriculum, solve problems, and work collaboratively across disciplines in order to better meet the needs of future learners.

**Action steps:**
- Identify top challenges to address.
- Develop a plan to address these challenges.

**Strategy 5**
Explore changes in long-range space, facility, and capital improvement planning for the College.

- Identify facility needs of the College.
- Prioritize needs and communicate them through URI Capital Improvement Plan.
- Consider the priorities in space planning and fundraising.

**Goal 6 — Implement a Bold Advancement Agenda**

**Strategy 1**
Develop college priorities for fundraising

**Action steps:**
- Each department and program will develop a prioritized list of giving opportunities.
-- Develop case statements for each college and department priority prior to the silent and public phases of the next capital campaign.
-- Communicate college-wide priorities and continue to refine list:
  - Renovation and construction of the Fine Arts Center
  - Further development of the Harrington School
  - Sustainability of the Social Science Institute for Research, Education and Policy
  - Development of the Institute for International Studies and Diplomacy
  - Completion of the Leadership Classrooms for the ROTC program
  - Renovation of Rodman Hall
  - Student Scholarships
  - Graduate Fellowships
  - International Opportunity Fund to support students, faculty and programs
  - Beaupre Hope and Heritage Fund
  - Further development of the Center for the Humanities
  - Further development of the Feinstein Center for a Hunger Free America

- Identify donors who might have an interest in each priority based on past giving.
- Identify new donors, foundations and other sources that could support priorities.
- Identify contacts with each funding source and work to develop relationships and prepare strategies for asks.

**Strategy 2**
Support the University comprehensive capital campaign.

**Action steps:**
- Work with College Development Officer, head of Corporations and Foundations and Planned Giving Officer to ensure that all sources of support are being leveraged.
- Align College initiatives with goals of comprehensive campaign where appropriate.

**Strategy 3**
Leverage University relationships to expand the pool of individual, alumni, Foundation, and corporate prospects and donors.

**Action steps:**
- Ask alumni and emeriti faculty to help identify college prospects who may have lost contact with URI.
- Develop international cultivation of alumni.
- Identify businesses and organizations who have hired graduates and engaged students in projects and internships.
- Leverage businesses and organization network in collaboration with the URI Foundation Corporations and Foundations head to prioritize funding initiatives.