

**COLLEGE OF ARTS & SCIENCES  
BLUEPRINT FOR ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE  
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

**February 20, 2009**

**GOAL 1: To enrich the educational experience for all undergraduate students in the University of South Carolina.**

**DESCRIPTION**

The College of Arts and Sciences is the intellectual core of the University, uniquely situated to transform the lives not just of its own students, but of all students at the University. This goal mirrors the University's mission to provide all students with the highest-quality education; that is the knowledge, skills, and values necessary for success in life and responsible citizenship.

**ACHIEVEMENTS (2007-2008)**

- The College made progress on several fronts:
- As freshman enrollments continued their steady increase, the College redoubled our efforts to ensure access to introductory courses for all incoming freshmen.
  - The College redesigned the mathematics placement test to ensure accurate placement and to maximize student learning in the first-year mathematics sequence.
  - The College redesigned our first-year English sequence, responding to increased demand for effective writing across disciplines and contexts.
  - College faculty continue to contribute significantly to the University effort to redefine General Education.
  - A College-wide task force completed its assessment of the advising process and submitted recommendations.

**FUTURE PLANS (2008-2009)**

- College faculty are active and significant contributors to the General Education reform process.
- The Academic Planning Council remains actively involved in the discussion of General Education reform and the enrichment of undergraduate education.
- The backlog of upperclassmen in introductory courses is an ongoing concern to which we have dedicated substantial funding and planning.
- The College is supporting exploratory models of engaged learning experiences.
- The College will encourage and support the development of new courses that address learning outcomes in the new University General Education curriculum.
- Increased attention will be applied to placement and learning methods in key first-year courses to maximize student success.
- The College is preparing to combine the two College offices that serve our undergraduate majors into a single Office of Undergraduate Academic Affairs and Advising.
- A College Task Force on Summer School has been appointed and charged with making summer school more responsive to student needs.

- The College will build on its traditionally strong relationship with other units, e.g., SC Honors College, Capstone Scholars Program, through increased collaboration.
- In difficult budgetary circumstances, the College will maintain our commitment to delivering the highest quality undergraduate education by maximizing existing faculty resources.

### **INDICATORS**

- The College annually compiles data from major University databases and Arts & Sciences sources, to measure progress over time against the benchmarks established in prior years.
- Not all facets of a large and complex College can be measured.
- Included in this section are College-level measures of student access to and performance in courses and programs; student satisfaction with course access and advising; student independent and international learning and research; and student recruitment, retention, and graduation.

#### **Short-Term Initiative 1.1:**

Improve the quality of general education delivered to all SC undergraduates

Whether USC students decide to take a major in one of the arts and science disciplines or to pursue professional studies in business, engineering, education or other fields, College faculty and staff provide all students core educational and research programs that are foundational to their future success. Our increasingly competitive world requires that we constantly review and enhance our curriculum, so that all USC students emerge with the knowledge and skills they will need to be effective citizens and leaders in their communities and the global society.

#### **Short-Term Initiative 1.2:**

Enhance the undergraduate educational experience for all majors in the College of Arts and Sciences

In addition to fostering intellectual breadth through general education courses, the College enriches the academic experience of its majors by affording them a wide and diverse array of in-depth courses in all disciplines. Increasingly, such enrichment takes place both within and outside the classroom.

#### **Short-Term Initiative 1.3:**

Attract, retain, and graduate a diverse and high quality population of undergraduates in the College of Arts and Sciences

Improving general education for all undergraduates, and enhancing the undergraduate experience for all our majors, enables us to attract a diverse and academically talented group of students to the University and the College.

**GOAL 2: To foster research, scholarship and creative activity by recruiting, retaining, and supporting faculty members who are or will become nationally and internationally known as leaders in their fields.**

## **DESCRIPTION**

The transformation of the lives of our students begins with those who create and share knowledge at the frontiers of their disciplines, the faculty of the College. The excellence, breadth, and diversity of our faculty are vital to the University as a whole.

## **ACHIEVEMENTS (2007-2008)**

- Hired 49 tenure-track faculty.
- Funded 27 sabbaticals for the current year, 6 of which are for full year.
- Integrated University family-friendly policies into College hiring and management plans.
- Supported 5 associate professors preparing for promotion to full professor in the College Associate Professor Development Award program.
- Continued implementation of College plan for space utilization and facilities improvement.
- Reconceptualized a broader role for the Industrial Mathematics Institute in support of interdisciplinary research efforts.
- Pledged funding for new interdisciplinary initiatives in Digital Humanities, African American Research, and Jewish Studies.
- Earned 3 new positions for the College in Spring 2008 from 14 FEI proposals.
- Garnered \$44,836,614 in funding across all sources in FY08.

## **FUTURE PLANS (2008-2009)**

- Since 2005, the College has focused its resources and energies toward recruiting and hiring over 120 new faculty. With this accomplished, the College will refocus our efforts to mentoring and supporting faculty throughout their careers.
- The College will continue to plan for our future despite difficult budgetary circumstances. Fiscal constraints will not deter us from carefully and thoughtfully planning for growth in areas with high potential.

## **INDICATORS**

- The College annually compiles data from major University databases, and Arts & Sciences sources, to measure progress over time against the benchmarks established in prior years.
- Not all facets of a large and complex College can be measured.
- Included in this section are College-level measures of faculty recruitment, retention and awards, and College efforts in support of faculty research, scholarship and creative activity.

### **Short-Term Initiative 2.1:**

Identify, attract, and recruit a diverse, highly qualified faculty in specific areas of high need and potential for growth.

Carolina students deserve to have as role models faculty who are accomplished in their fields as teachers and scholars. The faculty of the College are the heart and soul of the enterprise. Recruited nationally and internationally, faculty bring unique expertise and multicultural experience to the state and to the students. College faculty are active participants in FEI and other University hiring initiatives.

### **Short-Term Initiative 2.2:**

Support and mentor faculty throughout their careers in the College

While attracting, recruiting, and hiring the highest quality faculty are high priorities for the College, supporting and mentoring those faculty to success throughout their careers are equally important. It is only through our faculty and their dedication to teaching, research, scholarship, and creative activity that we serve our students and engage the broader community.

**Short-Term Initiative 2.3:**

Protect and enhance the research/ creative activity infrastructure

Scholarly discovery and dissemination of knowledge about the natural and human world requires up-to-date laboratories, space, equipment, and technology. Dynamism in research informs excellence in both teaching and engagement with the broader community.

**GOAL 3: To develop the next generation of intellectual leadership through its excellent graduate programs in the arts and humanities, and in the social, physical, biological, and mathematical sciences.**

**DESCRIPTION**

Integral to the College's vision of creating and sharing knowledge at the frontiers of inquiry, graduate students are active participants in the University's pursuit of a vibrant research and scholarship program. These students directly contribute to the discovery, critical examination, integration, preservation and communication of knowledge, wisdom and values. During their graduate careers, students learn to frame questions in order to extend human knowledge, build new understandings of nature, develop new ideas, and create new images, as well as shape methods and procedures that further these efforts.

**ACHIEVEMENTS (2007-2008)**

- Established stable, systematic, and sustainable plans for graduate student support.
- Since January 2007, the College has made 165 awards, totaling \$83,650, in travel support to graduate students presenting papers at national and international professional conferences.
- Academic Planning Council completed academic program reviews of two units with graduate programs, initiated two additional reviews of departments with graduate programs, with eight in progress. (In progress reviews are expected to be concluded in 2008-2009.)
- Reinvigoration of School Psychology graduate program was begun with a key hire and completion of the program self-study (with APA external review set for Fall 2008.)
- The College contributed substantively to a study of graduate student funding and support initiated by the Graduate School.

**FUTURE PLANS (2008-2009)**

- Concern for issue of compensation and benefits for graduate students is ongoing.
- The College will continue the cycle of thorough external reviews of graduate programs.

- The College continues to monitor recruitment of underrepresented groups enrolled in our graduate programs.
- Plans for a PhD in Spanish are underway.
- Reconceptualization of certain graduate programs is under review in response to findings of academic program reviews.

### **INDICATORS**

- The College annually compiles data from major University databases, and Arts & Sciences sources, to measure progress over time against the benchmarks established in prior years.
- Not all facets of a large and complex College can be measured.
- Included in this section are College-level measures of faculty productivity and grantsmanship, graduate program review, graduate recruitment, time to degree, and College support for graduate students.

### **Short-Term Initiative 3.1:**

Improve the national standing of College graduate programs through increased faculty productivity

In the past decade, the College has graduated almost 4,000 master's and doctoral students who have taken positions of leadership in institutions of higher learning as well as in government, schools, foundations and corporations in this country and abroad. The quality of the graduate programs in the College is integral to the national and international standing of the University.

### **GOAL 4: To be a catalyst for ongoing positive change in the broader society.**

#### **DESCRIPTION**

As the largest unit at the heart of South Carolina's flagship institution, the College has a special obligation to the broader community. The College is uniquely positioned to engage the community and to advance the state's agenda in improving K-12 education, fostering economic development, and improving civic life. The College's reach extends beyond the borders of South Carolina to encompass a national and international focus.

#### **ACHIEVEMENTS (2007-2008)**

- Undergraduate teaching certification programs in foreign language and dance education have been implemented.
- Programs serving K-12 students and teachers have been reinvigorated.
- A significant hire in nanoscience polymer research has been concluded successfully.
- McKissick Museum has been enhanced with a faculty curator position, strengthening connections between the museum and academic programs.
- The College has reviewed the Center for Science Education and plans are underway to reinvigorate and consolidate its programs.

#### **FUTURE PLANS (2008-2009)**

- The College will continue to engage young people's interests through events such as the Science Fair, Physics Day at the Fair, High School Mathematics Contest, Young Artists Workshop, and Split P poetry workshops.

- The College will continue its commitment to providing high quality programs for the preparation of K-12 teachers.
- In difficult budgetary circumstances, the College will explore ways to reorganize engagement and service programs and aggressively seek external funding for projects where appropriate.

#### **INDICATORS**

- The College annually compiles data from major University databases and Arts and Sciences sources to measure progress over time against benchmarks established in previous years.
- Not all facets of a large and complex College can be measured.
- Included in this section are College-level measures of support for community engagement, K-12 education, economic development, and the improvement of civic life.

#### **Short-Term Initiative 4.1:**

Promote initiatives that engage the College's expertise with the community

With a broad range of expertise among its faculty, staff, and students, the College is a rich source for partnerships with and service to the community, improving quality of life for all South Carolinians. Such engagement benefits both the College and the community.

#### **Short-Term Initiative 4.2:**

Promote and actively engage in initiatives that foster improvements in K-12 education

Connecting with K-12 teachers and students offers the College significant opportunities to effect ongoing positive change in South Carolina. The College's expertise in subject matter as well as human development and behavior position it to make significant contributions to K-12 education.

#### **Short-Term Initiative 4.3:**

Actively participate in efforts to cultivate economic development for the State of South Carolina.

As the heart of a state institution of higher education, the College is proud that its faculty and staff expertise are applied in service to the state and its economy.

**Short-Term Initiative 4.4:** Facilitate improvements in state and local government infrastructure.

Academic programs such as the Masters in Public Administration are natural laboratories in which future leaders in state and local governments learn problem-solving skills. These programs help bridge "town-gown" distinctions and link the College to the broader community

### **GOAL 5: To raise the visibility and recognition of the College.**

#### **DESCRIPTION**

Building an identity for the College among our members, supporters, constituents, and the public promotes the reputation of both the College and the University. The College continually strives to build recognition of the achievements of our faculty, staff, and students, and to enhance collegiality within our own community.

#### **ACHIEVEMENTS (2007-2008)**

- The College Board of Visitors continues to foster strong community support for the College.
- The College Alumni Council continues to promote the achievements of our alumni, and works to strengthen the linkages among past, present, and future students.
- The College has developed a comprehensive case statement with component pieces describing individual departments and programs for use in promotional and fundraising activities.
- Plans are ongoing to establish a Dean's Circle of donors at the \$25,000 and above level.
- Through organizational structures and special events, the College continues to create collegiality among our members.

#### **FUTURE PLANS (2008-2009)**

- The College will redouble efforts to attract private philanthropy and exercise careful stewardship of gifts.
- In difficult budgetary circumstances, the College will continue to build positive relationships with supporters and alumni, and within our own community.

#### **INDICATORS**

- The College has compiled data from major University databases and Arts and Sciences sources to establish benchmarks against which to measure progress over time.
- Not all facets of a large and complex College can be measured.
- Included in this section are College-level measures of community-building and promotional activity.

#### **Short-Term Initiative 5.1:**

Strengthen the bonds between the College community, constituents, and supporters

As the largest college in the University, Arts and Sciences serves a broad array of constituents. In addition to our students whose lives we seek to enrich and inform, we maintain important connections with our alumni, supporters, and the public through our public programming, recognition of alumni, and careful stewardship of gifts.

#### **Short-Term Initiative 5.2:**

Strengthen the sense of common purpose among members of the College.

The size, diversity, and complexity of the College and its many units require a comprehensive, well-structured, and ongoing effort at community-building.