

**College of Letters and Science
University of Wisconsin Oshkosh**

**Strategic Plan
April 2010**

The College of Letters and Science Strategic Plan

Summary

The College of Letters and Science works to provide a strong liberal arts education for its students while maintaining a supportive, collegial environment for faculty and staff. This becomes increasingly challenging as demands on faculty and staff change and expand and resources diminish. In such a context, the catalysts for change are often perceived to be not only external, but also beyond our control. Initiative and morale can suffer, impeding progress. It is in this context that the College of Letters and Science leadership became convinced that a strategic plan was needed to resist such a trend and to assure that we remain connected to our primary vision. While the planning process was not solely motivated by the current financial climate, the climate does make it timely. This process is an opportunity to reflect on past success and reexamine our core mission. The plan will guide us as we move forward during tough times, and it will prepare us to react swiftly when the financial climate improves and we are able to grow and develop programs and initiatives.

As Dean of the College of Letters and Science, I initiated the planning process, but it has included the entire College. During the process we confirmed that, for the most part, units and individuals across the College are working towards the same basic goals. The planning process provided the opportunity for College members to have intensive, structured time to foster ideas, create goals, formulate objectives and devise plans to guide the College in its work and to improve student learning. The College of Letters and Science Faculty Committee and I organized a strategic planning process that included an external consultant, a leadership team comprised of faculty members, a college retreat with broad representation from all departments and programs, and dialogue groups of faculty, staff and students. We examined our strengths and the prior work that has been accomplished to develop priorities.

The process led us to identify key priorities and to recommend strategic actions related to those priorities. The priorities and strategic actions delineated in this plan were generated through an extensive collaborative process and are designed to guide the College leadership, departments, programs, and individual faculty and staff members in decision-making and resource allocation. We know that change is inevitable; we are committed to being initiators of constructive action that explicitly serves our identified priorities.

Over the next several years the following will be priorities in the College:

- Promote the liberal arts education vision that unites the College of Letters and Science.
- Optimize students' learning experiences.
- Enable COLS faculty and instructional academic staff to reach their highest potential in research and creative endeavors, teaching, and service.
- Provide leaders who foster sustainable and inclusive communities.
- Maintain and enhance our community engagement.
- Cultivate connections and collaboration across disciplines.

Beginning now and continuing through the next several years, the members of the College of

Letters and Science should discuss the priorities and the suggested strategic actions identified. The strategic actions listed throughout the plan are suggestions of opportunities to strengthen the College and to work toward identified priorities. These actions will guide the College in the work we do over the next several years especially during this time of expanding expectations and waning resources. The set of strategic actions should not be viewed as an exhausting “to-do list.” Rather the actions are meant to be initial ideas of how the College can, in a significant way, respond and react to change. This plan is intended to guide the programmatic, departmental and college leadership in its decision-making and resource allocation, and it establishes a framework for all to prioritize goals and actions. We will not be able to accomplish all actions listed, and different units may choose to participate in some actions, but not others.

Even in this era, we hold firmly to the “Wisconsin Idea” that the influence and benefit of higher education should be strong, deep, broad, on going, and integrated. In his well known line from a 1904 speech, UW President Charles Van Hise declared, “I shall never be content until the beneficent influence of the University reaches every home in the state” (Legislative Reference Bureau, 2010, p. 1). We are not yet content, and we recommend these priorities as critical to the educational aims and future flourishing of the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh College of Letters and Science.

John Koker, Dean
College of Letters and Science
April 19, 2010

The College of Letters and Science Strategic Plan

Introduction

Award-winning programs, nationally recognized faculty, and talented students represent the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh College of Letters and Science (COLS). The largest and most varied college at UW Oshkosh, COLS offers 37 undergraduate majors as well as numerous minors, emphases, pre-professional programs, and graduate programs spanning the sciences, fine arts, humanities and social sciences. The College of Letters and Science is also home to the University's general education program. All UW Oshkosh students choose from a variety of liberal arts courses offered through the College. Importantly, as this strategic plan is enacted, we will maintain our distinctive, long-standing commitments to faculty research and creative endeavors, student learning, and substantive service central to our liberal education purpose.

The University of Wisconsin Oshkosh is committed to providing students with a liberal arts education and the College of Letters and Science serves a central and critical role in that process. We aim to lead and shape liberal education reform efforts and to model exemplary liberal arts education for the benefit of all students on this campus. Our identified priorities emanate from this commitment that unites faculty and staff from diverse academic disciplines. As we move into this new decade, we emphasize the need for liberal arts educators and students to collaborate across disciplines to lead inclusivity efforts while working for sustainable change, beginning with our own campus and extending to local and global communities. We recognize that accomplishing these liberal arts education aims is dependent upon intentional investment in our most vital undertakings: student learning and faculty/staff accomplishment in research and creative work, teaching, and service.

The University of Wisconsin Oshkosh Essential Learning Outcomes for Students

The University of Wisconsin Oshkosh Faculty Senate and Senate of Academic Staff both voted unanimously in May 2008 to adopt a set of essential learning outcomes for students. These learning outcomes are based on a set of outcomes in the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U report), *College Learning for a New Global Century*. Furthermore, we support the AAC&U's definition that a liberal arts education is a philosophy of education that empowers individuals with broad knowledge and transferable skills, and a strong sense of values, ethics, and civic engagement. These broad goals have been enduring even as the courses and requirements that comprise a liberal education have changed over the years.

Characterized by challenging encounters with important and relevant issues today and throughout history, a liberal education prepares graduates both for socially valued work and for civic leadership in their society. It usually includes a general education curriculum that provides broad exposure to multiple disciplines and ways of knowing, along with more in-depth study in at least one field or area of concentration.

Knowledge of Human Cultures and the Physical and Natural World

- Through study in fine and performing arts, humanities, mathematics and science, and social science

Focused by engagement with big questions, both contemporary and enduring

Skills, both Intellectual and Practical, including

- Identification and objective evaluation of theories and assumptions
- Critical and creative thinking
- Written and oral communication
- Quantitative literacy
- Technology and information literacy
- Teamwork, leadership, and problem solving

Practiced extensively, across the curriculum, in the context of progressively more challenging problems, projects, and standards for performance

Responsibility, as Individuals and Communities, including

- Knowledge of sustainability and its applications
- Civic knowledge and engagement—local and global
- Intercultural knowledge and competence
- Ethical reasoning and action
- Foundations and skills for lifelong learning

Developed through real-world challenges and active involvement with diverse communities

Learning: Integrated, Synthesized, and Advanced, including

- Synthesis and advanced accomplishment across general and specialized studies

Demonstrated through the application of knowledge, skills, and responsibilities to new settings and complex problems.

The College of Letters and Science advocates the many benefits of a liberal arts education. Guided by this strategic plan, we will continue to expose students to a broad spectrum of knowledge about human experience and the natural world; prepare students to be responsible citizens who understand and contribute to the changing world in which they live; and challenge students to appreciate their cultural heritage, be sensitive to diverse traditions and opinions and value the pursuit of truth. We expect students to develop a lifelong commitment to inquiry as they develop a deeper value of knowledge for its own sake as well as for the achievement of specific objectives.

In short, the *vision* of the College of Letters and Science is to educate and inspire students to think deeply and act constructively, advancing knowledge and human culture.

Given our current context and these liberal education aims, benefits, and learning outcomes, the following strategic actions related to our priorities have been established for the UW Oshkosh College of Letters and Science. To move forward on several of these strategic action recommendations, it may be necessary for COLS to create task forces, designate leadership responsibilities, and/or (re)allocate resources. Multiple connections exist among these priorities, which we see as further evidence of their vitality.

The College of Letters and Science Strategic Plan

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank all of the faculty, staff and students who participated in developing this plan. In particular I would like to thank the L&S Council, the COLS Faculty Committee and the COLS Strategic Planning Steering Committee (listed below). A special thanks goes out to Pat Alea, from Alea and Associates, Madison, WI, who assisted us in the process used to develop the plan.

John Koker, Dean
College of Letters and Science

COLS Strategic Planning Steering Committee Members

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The College of Letters and Science Strategic Plan

Priorities and Strategic Action Recommendations

The priorities and strategic actions delineated in this plan were generated through an extensive collaborative process and are designed to guide the College leadership.

The College of Letters and Science will make it a priority to:

- Promote the liberal arts education vision that unites the College of Letters and Science.
- Optimize students' learning experiences.
- Enable COLS faculty and instructional academic staff to reach their highest potential in research and creative endeavors, teaching, and service.
- Provide leaders who foster sustainable and inclusive communities.
- Maintain and enhance our community engagement.
- Cultivate connections and collaboration across disciplines.

In what follows the priorities are described in more detail, and each priority is followed by a number of strategic actions. The strategic actions listed throughout the plan were devised by working groups and are suggestions of opportunities to strengthen the College and to work toward the associated priority. The strategic actions are initial ideas of how the College can move towards the priority. Over time, additional actions may be implemented while those stated may be modified. In addition, different units across the College may choose to participate in some actions, but not others.

Priority: Liberal Arts Education Identity

To clarify, promote, and value the liberal arts identity of the College of Letters and Science.

The College of Letters and Science is essential in fulfilling the mission of the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh to provide high-quality, affordable liberal arts education to its students. However, students, faculty, and staff are often isolated within their respective divisions, departments and programs. Students may not realize they are a part of this College until their graduation ceremony. Faculty and staff are often unaware of how their department or program fits within the College; defining themselves as a member of COLS community is much less likely than identification with their specific disciplines. While such disciplinary identity is likely to remain primary, liberal education is a real, under-utilized, and critical connection among us. In the external community some still question the intrinsic value of a liberal arts education while others completely misunderstand the concept. There is a need to enhance the understanding and appreciation of a liberal arts education within and beyond COLS. Building community, fostering sense of belonging, and affirming a worthiness of purpose will advance the priorities of COLS.

Strategic Actions

Define the identity of the College of Letters and Science.

- Conduct a survey of faculty, staff, and students to formulate the identity of COLS, and report the survey findings through a COLS-wide meeting, soliciting additional input.
- Provide recommendations based on survey results and COLS-wide meeting input to the divisions, departments, and programs, and then to the Dean.
- Distinguish and highlight the differences and commonalities among divisions, departments and programs.
- Conduct a promotion (*Where's COLS?*, *What's COLS?*, or *Who's COLS?*) headed by a class or student group to increase curiosity and knowledge about the College.

Increase awareness of who we are and what we do.

- Provide interactive hyperlinks, pop-up or drop-down menus for the divisions, departments and programs on COLS Web home page.
- Encourage and enable divisions and departments to provide an audio and visual resource on their Web page that introduces the division or department to prospective students.
- Showcase and recognize the talent of students, faculty, and staff within COLS through the redesigned Web page, the new Web “spotlight” series, COLS newsletters, e-newsletter for alumni and community members, and/or community programs.
- Enhance pride within COLS community to celebrate recent accomplishments by faculty, staff, and students utilizing existing and novel events (e.g., COLS opening day ceremony, COLS Convocations, Dean’s Symposiums, etc.).
- Connect with University Advising, the Admissions Office, the Transfer Student Office, and Career Services to promote and highlight departments and programs. Ensure that all campus materials and Web references about COLS are current and enhance the identity image of the College.
- Create a “Points of Pride” list by division on the COLS Web site.

- Develop a systematic approach for informing Integrated Marketing and Communication of COLS faculty and departmental or division accomplishments to support the preparation of press releases.

Showcase the tradition and highlight the benefits of a liberal arts education.

- Collaboratively re-visit definitions of a “liberal arts education” at UW Oshkosh.
- Describe the history and tradition associated with a liberal arts education at UW Oshkosh.
- Formulate a thoughtful and research-informed statement regarding the use of technology as it relates to a liberal arts education.
- Identify and connect promotion of liberal arts to broader existing efforts, such as the Liberal Education Reform (LER) Team, Liberal Education and America’s Promise (LEAP), and other efforts as applicable.
- Develop materials (brochures, handouts, text on the COLS Web site, etc.) that highlight the benefits of a liberal arts education; the intrinsic value of a liberal arts education to career paths available in the twenty-first century; and the “Points of Pride.”
- Generate further internal support of a liberal arts education and COLS by:
 - Disseminating developed materials on campus to faculty, staff, administrators and students
 - Promoting each division’s “Points of Pride”
 - Integrating language into course syllabi and Web pages addressing the value of a liberal arts education
- Generate external support of a liberal arts education and COLS by:
 - Disseminating developed materials to alumni, legislators, taxpayers, potential students and parents of incoming and current students
 - Establishing a COLS alumni association that would work to promote the benefits of a liberal arts education
 - Developing outreach programs to local and state government, business and industry leaders, high school teachers and administrators, the media, and the nonprofit sectors to highlight the benefits of a liberal arts education

Priority: Student Learning

To broaden and enhance our students' learning experience by delivering quality advising, mentoring, and innovative classroom experiences and providing students with opportunities to engage in research, creative work, internships, community engagement, fieldwork and other high impact educational practices.

Faculty and staff within COLS are committed to fulfilling the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh mission of developing students' "general intellectual capacities, specific interests and abilities." We desire to nurture a college culture in which students expect to be challenged and, in return, faculty and instructors commit themselves to expanding students' opportunities for learning, research and creative work—both within and outside of the classroom. We believe that the potential for enriching our educational environment and for creating new models of engaged learning hinges upon the willingness and ability of faculty to work closely with students and provide them with the advising and mentoring they need to succeed.

Strategic Actions

Augment opportunities for in-classroom learning

- Where possible, reduce the enrollment limits of COLS lower-level introductory classes (typically at the 100 and 200 level) and upper-level classes (typically at the 300 or 400 level) in order to increase student contact with professors and academic staff, promote in-class discussion, and provide a more interactive learning environment.
- In large introductory classes, significantly expand the use of tutoring, study groups, and Supplemental Instruction—coordinated through the campus Center for Academic Resources and with the active involvement of COLS faculty and teaching staff.
- Improve the instructional environment and learning experiences offered by interim classes and summer classes.
- Improve the use of valuable, supplementary teaching technologies—both within and outside the traditional classroom environment.

Augment student advising and mentoring

- Recognize that advising is central to the student-teacher relationship and, at its best, can provide an opportunity for quality mentoring.
- Make advising a priority so that students understand why general education courses and a liberal arts education are important, so that students who have been traditionally marginalized in the university community will gain access to resources that can assist them, so that students of all backgrounds will be better able to map their individual learning plans and streamline their progression of coursework, so that students and COLS personnel can better communicate about what they expect from each other.
- Formalize training for advising through better and more consistent interaction between the Undergraduate Advising Resource Center and COLS personnel, possibly through regular advising workshops.
- Allow students greater choice over the selection of their advisor within individual COLS departments.
- Educate students and their faculty advisors about learning opportunities within COLS by developing and sustaining a COLS-based clearinghouse of information for classes taught

in each term (COLS Learning Network—CLN) to be maintained by members of COLS departments using.

Augment the integration of research, studio, and field experiences into the student learning experience

- Facilitate more community-based learning (see related “Community Engagement” priority), including opportunities for students to prepare for leadership roles related to diversity and sustainability (see related “Change Agent Leadership” priority).
- Increase collaborative research opportunities with COLS faculty and instructional staff.
- Enhance internship opportunities (within individual COLS departments and with the COLS Internship Program) and increase opportunities for field and studio experiences.
- Encourage student participation in UW Oshkosh Undergraduate Research Programs such as Student-Faculty Collaborative Grants and publication within the *Oshkosh Scholar*.

Augment the integration of student in-classroom experiences across disciplines.

- Offer a new freshman/incoming student seminar (either 1 credit graded or pass/fail, and not a simple revision of the existing FYE program) in order to 1) educate students about how liberal arts disciplines contrast and interrelate 2) provide students with an understanding of the benefits of taking General Education courses 3) introduce students to the idea of how important strong advising will be to their future academic career 4) provide COLS faculty and staff the opportunity to dialogue with students about what is expected from them and 5) introduce them to challenges and rewards of research.
- Offer a capstone theme-based seminar focusing on the social sciences, humanities, or sciences in which students are encouraged to reflect on their development as learners within COLS and their preparation as future learners in the world at large.

Create mechanisms for appraising the effectiveness of achieving desired learning outcomes throughout COLS.

- With the assistance of the *Center for Scholarly Teaching*, facilitate communication between and among students, professors, and academic staff regarding the effectiveness of learning environments within COLS and the ways that students might maximize their learning potential.
- Encourage department chairs and, perhaps, COLS associate deans to conduct exit interviews with graduating students in order to learn a) how professors and instructors can further improve learning opportunities within COLS and b) what students can do to maximize preexisting learning opportunities within COLS.
- Coordinate periodic collection of survey data through Career Service’s “Graduate Survey.”

Priority: Faculty and Staff Experience

To enable and equip members of the COLS community to reach their highest potential.

The faculty and staff experience in the UW Oshkosh College of Letters and Science will be meaningful, productive, innovative, engaged, and healthy, allowing faculty and academic staff to reach their highest potential in scholarship, creative endeavors, teaching, and service across the professional lifespan, regardless of career trajectory and life path.

We envision a college community in which faculty and academic staff are encouraged by colleagues, academic leaders, models, policies, procedures, and students to reach their highest potential, so that learning can be enhanced. We seek to be leaders in liberal arts education, epitomizing research-based practices and valuing one another's varied service, research and creative contributions. To pursue this priority, the College of Letters and Science will provide diverse models of success, communicate expectations clearly and transparently, enhance professional development opportunities, and strengthen our connections within the College community.

Strategic Actions

Provide diverse models of professional success.

- Provide resources for the discovery and documentation of diverse models of UW Oshkosh COLS faculty and staff success stories.
- Collect recommendations from these models for reaching one's highest potential as a member of the COLS community while living meaningful, productive, innovative, engaged and healthy lives.
- Disseminate the stories and recommendations of these diverse models via a regularly updated component of the COLS Web site which includes links to relevant resources.
- Constructively impact the climate of COLS by demonstrating that a variety of roles and contributions are valued as "successful."
- Investigate and implement options for flexible post-tenure career plans that allow periods of intense focus in specific arenas (e.g. research, service, creative work, innovative teaching, community-based teaching, etc.).

Clarify expectations for success.

- Conduct an audit regarding the specificity, clarity, and consistency of expectations for professional advancement* across the College of Letters and Science.
- Disseminate the results of the audit, to be utilized as a catalyst for inclusive dialogues that enhance advancement policies and procedures within each department/program.
- Initiate and sustain a process for continued, annual COLS dialogue among academic leaders (chairs and relevant committee members) and diverse COLS educators (all types and stages) regarding *emerging* advancement expectations.
- Expect departments/programs to hold annual dialogues for the on-going revision of advancement expectations (after the initial audit and follow-up dialogues).
- Provide release time (or other compensation) for a COLS "Educator Advocate" to coordinate these clarification efforts, facilitate resource connections, answer procedural questions confidentially, and create a team of COLS educators willing to serve as

resources for various types of educator questions (Note: Models of such “advocates” or “ombudspersons” on other campuses should be utilized to construct this position.)

- Create a regularly updated Web page with “Frequently Asked Questions” about advancement expectations with answers and resource links.

* The term “advancement” is used here to denote all ways in which all types of COLS faculty and IAS may formally progress in their career status, from an IAS being designated “senior lecturer” to a full professor receiving a professional productivity raise.

Enhance professional development activities and resources.

- Conduct a professional development needs assessment, using results to
 - *connect* COLS educators with existing UW Oshkosh and UW System professional development resources via a “Professional Development Opportunity” Web page on the COLS website.
 - *create* new professional development opportunities via collaboration with related campus resources.
- Reward participation in professional development activities (listing of such activities in advancement documents and personal homepages; recognition of participation in professional development activities on the COLS Web site and in regularly scheduled COLS press releases; annual department/program recognition of all professional development participation; etc.).
- Create a climate of high expectation related to participation in professional development activities (e.g. featuring number of COLS members participating in UW System Faculty College as a yearly “Point of Pride” on COLS website, etc.).
- Provide regular professional development training for leaders and committee members in critical COLS service roles.

Strengthen connections in the COLS community.

- Reserve one hour each week during both the Fall and Spring semesters for “COLS Convocations” with the stipulation that no classes or committee meetings can be held during that hour. *Though this program may begin as a pilot, the goal will be to create a COLS culture in which attendance at this non-mandatory convocation is highly valued.* Increasing the time COLS educators have to interact with one another will combat professional isolation, create professional and social networks, and ultimately enhance teaching, research, service, and wellness.
- Designate and redesign space for informal gathering of COLS educators, to enhance 1) the likelihood of interdisciplinary projects in research, teaching and service, 2) the informal sharing of research and teaching innovations, 3) the building of supportive personal networks, and 4) the emergence of natural mentoring.
- Create a searchable COLS faculty index for internal use, to allow easy access to others with similar research, creative activity, teaching, service, or other interests.
- Advocate collectively for resources that enable our provision of a liberal arts education based on best practice (e.g. smaller class sizes).

- Promote an intellectual culture among students in our liberal arts programs with broadly publicized faculty-student events, showcases of student and educator activities, and faculty-student honors to stimulate and normalize academic activities for students.

Priority: Community Engagement

To maintain and enhance our community engagement.

The University of Wisconsin Oshkosh strives to actively share intellectual and specialized capabilities with individuals, organizations, and communities in a way that is responsive to their needs and to support a vision of civic, ethical and personal development for students, faculty and staff. A commitment to partnerships that will serve, stimulate, and shape the University and the broader public has been a longstanding goal for the University. The COLS embraces these endeavors, and strongly supports the “spirit of engagement”. We expect our students, graduates, faculty, and staff to exhibit social awareness, responsibility to the broader community, and creative problem solving with beneficial real-world outcomes. The community engagement activities of faculty, staff, and students in COLS are diverse and include, but are not limited to, internships; volunteering and community-based service learning; faculty research; faculty-student collaborative research; and public presentations and performances. Community engagement activities enhance the educational experience of our students, expand opportunities for faculty, benefit local business, assist government agencies, and serve the common good. In many cases, formal processes are not currently in place to recognize the value of these contributions beyond our campus, nor are these activities well supported. The College and its Departments and Programs are encouraged to better publicize, reward, and enhance community engagement, since these activities are central to the educational and research mission of COLS. COLS will endeavor to lead campus efforts in community engagement with the following strategic actions:

Strategic Actions

Increase awareness and participation of faculty and staff in collaborative community relationships.

- Increase awareness of COLS policies and procedures related to community engagement and student internships.
- Encourage each department to develop a mechanism to inform faculty and students about opportunities and to track UW Oshkosh-community relationships in their department or program.
- Make additional funds available to faculty who engage students in community-oriented learning and/or research projects.
- Develop a COLS policy for release, CAS, and/or additional compensation for community collaborative projects.
- Develop a COLS faculty award for excellence in community engagement activities.

Increase internship opportunities and participation.

- Survey and document current internship opportunities.
- Identify “Internship Coordinators” or “Community Engagement Coordinators” for each relevant department or program tracking opportunities and encouraging participation.
- Expand usage of TitanJobs to more accurately document internship service.

Increase visibility of volunteer experiences and activities of the volunteer coordinator as well as student work in the community.

- Advertise the quantity of COLS students doing community work as a point of pride.
- Designate courses and/or student-community experiences more clearly in course descriptions, departmental/program Web sites, and transcripts.
- Encourage student clubs and organizations to engage in community-oriented work.

Increase visibility, opportunities, and participation in community-based and service learning activities.

- Define and clarify “Community-Based Learning” and “Service Learning” as they relate to the COLS liberal arts education identity.
- Make COLS community aware of benefits and methods of community-based and service learning activities.
- Encourage departments to provide community-based and service learning opportunities in their curriculum.
- Showcase ongoing COLS community-based and service learning activities to all in COLS via the COLS Web site, COLS Convocations, Points of Pride, etc.
- Establish a COLS list of faculty and IAS available to share their expertise with external constituencies (such interest and availability could be designated on the searchable directory described in the “Interdisciplinary Collaboration” priority).

Priority: Interdisciplinary Collaboration *Foster interdisciplinary connections and collaborations*

The vision statement of the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh advocates the centrality of the student-faculty relationship. Active learning, mutual respect and collaborative scholarship as well as partnerships that mutually serve, stimulate and shape the University and the broader public are needed to work toward this priority. The COLS strongly supports building connections in multiple contexts and forms. Our students experience coursework across disciplines; we need to provide opportunities and models of cross-disciplinary knowledge application. For example, a multi-disciplinary student group could work together on a creative production or faculty from diverse disciplines could conduct collaborative research. Most of us are aware that these types of connections enhance the educational experience of students, expand opportunities for faculty, and develop important internal and external relationships, yet systemic reward procedures and habituated work practices may keep us from pursuing such endeavors. Our recommended strategic actions for this priority seek to address those challenges, so that these healthy, helpful, research-fueled practices can become imbedded into the UW Oshkosh COLS culture. Several of our proposed strategic actions would require significant changes to current policies while others address programs that have begun but are in need of further development. The College and its Departments and Programs are encouraged to better publicize, reward, and enhance connections and collaborations across traditional boundaries. Dialogue regarding the impediments to the adoption of these actions is strongly encouraged.

Strategic Actions

Increase professional outcomes involving faculty and students within and across UW Oshkosh departments/colleges/programs.

- Facilitate and support interdisciplinary teaching by investigating the institutional traditions and obstacles that have prevented it in the past.
- Encourage and facilitate interdisciplinary research activities by providing venues for faculty to identify overlapping research interests within COLS and across the University.
- Increase awareness of opportunities for collaborative work and encourage students to engage in student-led interdisciplinary research.
- Develop grants through the Faculty Development Program, CST, and/or COLS that specifically support interdisciplinary research.

Build opportunities for students to explore and apply connections across disciplines.

- Make students aware of cross-disciplinary connections and opportunities via a first year seminar, an optional upper level cross-disciplinary seminar, and ongoing organized student cohorts.
- Create opportunities for year-long project-based interdisciplinary experiences for faculty.

Provide recognition and support for activities which help accomplish interdisciplinary collaboration including team and interdisciplinary teaching, student projects, and community activities.

- Recognize and celebrate excellence in collaborative interdisciplinary efforts by showcasing projects on the COLS Web site, e-newsletter, and other public venues.

- Value interdisciplinary collaborations in renewal and tenure decisions.

Increase interpersonal contact and communication across the campus to build a sense of community and identity for members of COLS.

- Develop a (Web based and print) faculty/staff directory to include photos, CV, home department, typical courses taught, and current research interests. Directories should be cross listed to enable users to find people using names, units, sub-units, departments, subject matter specialty, research interests, etc.
- Promote the University Club activities for building colleague relationships.
- Coordinate luncheons for interdepartmental outreach.
- Investigate ways to improve Faculty Colleges as a means of community building.
- Support COLS Convocations and designated space as crucial strategic actions for increasing interdisciplinary collaboration (See “Faculty and Staff Experience” priority).

Priority: Change Agent Leadership

To provide leaders who will foster communities that are sustainable, inclusive, and welcoming to diversity.

The College of Letters and Science is committed to playing a leadership role in the preparation of graduates who are made aware of the changing global context through research, course work, community engagement, and national and international experiential learning opportunities. By incorporating the principles of Inclusive Excellence adopted by the University of Wisconsin System (2009), the College is committed to “comprehensive, well-coordinated strategic actions that foster greater diversity, equity, inclusion, and accountability at every level of institutional life” (p. 1). The dimensions of inclusion for faculty, staff, and students include access and equity, diversity in curriculum, learning and development, and a healthy college campus climate. The College has a long tradition of leadership in raising student and community awareness about the conditions that have created and sustained poverty and inequities nationally and globally. Yet, more can and should be done to highlight these important contributions and to expand efforts to promote successful interventions. The principles of sustainability are a crucial foundation for ethical participation in a diverse global context. The College recognizes sustainable societies as socially just, economically secure, and ecologically responsible. The College is committed to the preparation of responsible global citizens and, in alignment with the University’s Campus Sustainability plan, recommends the following strategic actions to lead reform in this multi-faceted arena.

Strategic Actions

Create a welcoming and sustainable campus climate.

- Provide teaching and learning workshops that encourage curricular integration of diversity and sustainability, with the goal of changing the campus climate so that members of traditionally marginalized groups are further able to see their histories and cultures reflected in the curriculum.
- Support initiatives that encourage the connection of student learning outcomes to sustainability and diversity issues such as environmentalism, civil rights, social justice, oppression, inclusion, and community.
- Develop a resource page on the COLS Web site to centralize information and coordinate teaching and learning resources related to inclusion and sustainability.
- Regularly include COLS faculty and academic staff who are publishing research in arenas related to diversity and sustainability as speakers in COLS Convocations.

Increase the success of all students, faculty, and staff, particularly those who have been marginalized traditionally.

- Improve success rates for all students in gateway courses by 1) collecting and investigating information on failure rates by department; 2) facilitating and coordinating existing resources on campus such as Early Alert, tutoring, writing center, counseling center, Equity Score Card, Dean of Students, Project Success, and Academic Support; 3) implementing strategic actions in “Student Learning” priority.
- Strengthen mentor programs for diverse students, faculty, and staff utilizing findings from the Campus Climate Survey.

- Host regular workshops for Department Chairs on how to recruit, hire, and retain diverse faculty and staff.
- Promote leadership opportunities for faculty, students, and staff from diverse backgrounds and those whose teaching, service, and research exemplify inclusive approaches.

Provide students with educational experiences that will prepare them to play leadership roles in fostering communities that are sustainable and welcoming of diversity.

- Improve faculty, staff, and student awareness of existing opportunities for increased local involvement to promote inclusion, social justice, and sustainability
- Increase student internship, community-based learning, and faculty-student collaborative research opportunities to address compelling local issues related to discrimination and environmental concerns; disseminate innovative opportunities and accomplishments throughout the College, university, and region.
- Expand opportunities for students to intern with environmental advocacy agencies and share what they learn with the campus community.

Promote understanding of the changing global context.

- Coordinate and publicize speakers, events, and course content that expose students to global issues.
- Use technology to enhance international collaboration and international content as relevant for student learning outcomes (e.g. Sykpe).
- Record relevant speakers, events, and course lectures to share online with a broader audience.
- Emphasize local connections to global issues to enable more concrete understandings of sustainable communities.

Provide leadership on sustainable local responses to global change.

- Engage the community on issues of sustainability and environmental justice.
- Use the COLS Web site to share relevant faculty, staff and student endeavors; promote inter-disciplinary partnerships that explore innovative ways to publicize and implement new discoveries and endeavors in sustainability.
- Link with tribal communities to explore ways to publicize crucial environmental successes and challenges in the region.
- Encourage the use of distance learning technologies to improve accessibility for students throughout the region and to decrease student travel.

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