

College of Liberal Arts
Strategic Plan
2008-2010

The College of Liberal Arts makes substantial contributions to the University's mission of research, teaching and service. The disciplines in the college—humanities, social sciences, fine and performing arts—cover major areas of human knowledge and experience and address significant societal needs through a variety of methods that include visual, literary, political, and historical analysis. Our interdisciplinary programs, cross-college, cross-university or external partnerships, position us to move nimbly as the frontiers between disciplines are redrawn, and as new paradigms of knowledge emerge. Cognizant of the University's urban mission, many of the College's research and teaching programs—both undergraduate and graduate—explore past and present urban and transnational, and international issues such as the personal and social consequences of social and cultural change, migration, transnational identities, intercultural relations, health care, education and the environment in Massachusetts and the U.S., as well as international issues ranging from development and human rights to conflict and diplomacy in frameworks ranging from the local to the global. In the humanities, social sciences and the arts, we offer a rich mix of cross cultural perspectives on these issues.

In research, the College's faculty is highly productive as measured by peer-reviewed publications, extramural funding, and artistic production. The College is committed to excellence in research/creative activity across the disciplines, a commitment that is not only congruent with our status as a research institution, but one that informs and underpins teaching at every level from undergraduate through doctoral study.

In teaching, the College's faculty is committed to the success of every student, undergraduate and graduate, in our richly diverse student body. This commitment is enacted in classes both large and small, in office hours and in off campus learning opportunities.

In service, the College engages in many collaborative projects, including work with the K-12 schools, engagement with the immediately surrounding community and with communities across the world.

The College of Liberal Arts plays a pivotal role in the University. CLA faculty are the mainstays of much of the faculty governance on campus, and have a history of constructive collaboration in service and teaching and research with other Colleges, Centers and Institutes. Its faculty make important teaching and research contributions to programs in the other schools and colleges; it is responsible for the preponderant majority of the general education instruction of all undergraduate students and has taught the lion's share of courses in the Honors Program. CLA generates the largest amount of revenue for the institution from an aggregate of instructional fees and research grants.

CLA has acted to maintain and improve this pivotal academic and financial role by an aggressive hiring policy during the last seven years, following a decade-long deficit. We have brought in and will continue to recruit an impressive and productive new generation of faculty. To retain

those faculty our strategic plan must envision and implement ways to be competitive in terms of salary, teaching load and expanded opportunities to teach at the graduate level.

This strategic plan looks at how we will deploy our energies and resources in the coming two years, 2008-2009 and 2009-2010.¹ It uses as its twin frameworks the College's mission described above and Chancellor Keith Motley's November 2007 Strategic Plan as presented to the Board of Trustees. Below I highlight a number of our initiatives. A complete list of goals for the coming two years is found at the end of this plan.

OIRP data shows that CLA teaches about half of all the University's students, and has 4507 headcount undergraduate majors.² Our ability to retain these students and move them to graduation is essential to the University's success as an institution that provides access to populations underserved by higher education. This access is meaningless, however, if it does not lead to graduation. In 2008-2010, we want to make the College an example of how pro-active advising interventions can improve our students' success. CLA has a plan for College-based professional advising that will make major strides in accomplishing this goal.

We already have a nationally recognized PhD program in Clinical Psychology that attracts highly competitive applicant pools to work with our productive, externally-funded faculty. Building on this strength, we are in the fourth year of a five-year plan to build a parallel center of strength in developmental and brain science. A pre-proposal for a PhD in this area will be submitted in the 2008-2009 academic year. This initiative will further enhance the Department's ability to produce translational research that improves the lives of people in the Commonwealth and across the world.

As part of the strategic planning process, the University has chosen to develop a signature research strength in the developmental sciences. The initiative described in the previous paragraph is an important part of this effort. The developmental sciences research cluster will add considerable value, fostering interdisciplinary research among Psychology, Biology, Chemistry, Computer Science, and with many other disciplines across the University.

If the Psychology initiatives and the developmental sciences research cluster address issues of health and health disparity, CLA's development of an undergraduate major in Asian Studies will prepare our undergraduates to work in the globalized world of tomorrow, where both South and East Asia will be major players. We hope to gain Board of Trustee approval for this major during the 2008-2009 year.

We will also begin work on two other important initiatives, each of which will serve the University's research and teaching missions. We are now in a knowledge economy that is dependent on the circulation of information in multiple ways, in a world where the access to information is unequally distributed. CLA is recruiting a faculty member to lead the building of an undergraduate major in Communications that will devote an important part of its attention to the new information economy, again preparing our graduates for the issues that will confront the

¹ Since the University will begin a new strategic planning process with a September 10 impact, this plan is limited to the final two years of the current plan, although it presages future goals and areas of growth.

² OIRP *Statistical Portrait*, Fall 2007.

world of tomorrow. Our second initiative is the creation of a master's program in applied economics. There is an increasing demand for economic analysts in business, government and NGOs. The proposed program will prepare students for these careers, with a focus on urban issues, in a comparative framework. Our Economics Department is uniquely well-situated to provide such a program, which will attract local, national and international students.

Representatives of the College are hard at work in the planning and focus on international and transnational research and possible PhD in this area with a Task Force being chaired by Jeff Burr, a development to which CLA can make major contributions and that will enhance the teaching and research opportunities for its faculty, particularly young faculty that we need to nurture and retain.

A large and complex organization like the College of Liberal Arts has multiple priorities. The purpose of this plan is not to capture all those priorities and goals, but rather to focus on the College's most important goals for the coming two years.

Goals for 2008-2009³

- Developmental Sciences PhD [2.5]
 - Finalize proposal for PhD
 - Develop plan for Infant Mental Health track in MA in Psychology.
- Play central role in creation of Developmental Sciences Research Center [2.5]
- Improve retention and graduation rates through college professional advising of incoming students and undeclared students. [1.1]
 - Obtain sufficient funding to create College-based advising center to serve undeclared students, as first step to building full CLA student success center.
 - Build on-going assessment practices into CLA advising center.
- Make concrete progress toward 2+2 load, by increasing bank of course releases available for research projects. [2.4]
- Gain BOT and BHE approval for Asian Studies major. [2.5]
- Recruit new director for Communication Studies, and create major, based on task force report. [2.5]
- Work with departments to assure that adjunct faculty are integrated into the College's academic programs.
- Begin aggressive hiring of new faculty, over and above replacements, to rebuild faculty. [2.4 and 2.5]
- Graduate programs [2.5]
 - Examine feasibility of additional graduate programs, including master's in Applied Economics.
 - Foster expanded faculty participation in existing and projected graduate programs, including those in international relations/studies
 - Make College plan for graduate education.

Goals for 2009-2010

- Assess large class initiative from 2008-2009, while adding a small number of additional large classes. [1.1 and 1.3]
- Continue aggressive hiring of new faculty to rebuild faculty. [2.4 and 2.5]
- Increase bank of course releases available for research projects. [2.4]
- Implement South Asian track of Asian Studies major [2.5]
- Begin approval process for Communications major.
- Gain approval for new PhD in Psychology.

In addition to these targeted goals for the two coming academic years, the College has a number of overall priorities that guide its decisions and allocation of resources. These goals may be summarized as follows:

³ The numbers in brackets refer to the goals and objectives in Chancellor Motley's strategic plan. For example, 1.1 means Goal 1, Objective 1.

- For undergraduate students, provide an appropriate palette of learning opportunities that foster student engagement, including a mix of small and large classes, with cutting edge pedagogies in all. Class sizes and levels of support, both technological and human, must facilitate learning. [1.1, 1.2 and 1.3]
- Institute an aggressive hiring plan, of approximately 20 faculty per year. [10 new positions, 10 replacement positions per year]. This will both allow for the 2+2 load and decrease adjunct instruction from 54%-60% of course sections to approximately 40% of course sections. [2.4 and 2.5]
- Support research and creative activity across the disciplines through course releases, additional graduate stipends, increased extramural funding and increased collaboration among programs both within the College and across the University. [2.4 and 2.5]
- Work with master planning effort to assure that CLA needs for office space, laboratory space and suitable teaching spaces for both undergraduate and graduate courses are met. Use the construction of the new academic complex as an opportunity to solve persistent facilities problems for Departments of Art and Performing Arts. [1.2 and 3.6]
- Continue program of structured increases in departmental budgets. Improve staffing by re-examining the grade levels of departmental staff, and adding staff, focusing on centralizing services as staff work becomes more complex. [2.5]