

## RESPONSE OF THE COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS AND SCIENCES TO THE REVIEW REPORT

The process of responding to the *Findings of the Committee Reviewing the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences* (the *Review*) has been a stimulating one for the College. This response has been informed by a series of discussions held in the College, including meetings of the DEOs, the Educational Policy Committee, the Executive Committee, and the Faculty Assembly; as well as meetings with the College's administrative support staff. Individual faculty members also were invited to submit comments and suggestions.

The *Review* has provided the College with a range of recommendations intended to promote excellence in the College's academic and research programs, faculty, administration, and governance structure. The Dean, the Self-Study Committee, and the CLAS constituency groups have welcomed this opportunity to discuss the future of the College and formulate a plan that builds on our strengths to advance our mission.

Our response addresses major issues highlighted in the *Review* including strategic planning, collegiate communication, and organizational structure.

- 1. Engage in strategic planning.** We agree that it is important for the College to have a well-articulated strategic plan to guide decision making and resource investments. We will broadly engage the faculty and staff of the College in developing a new strategic plan that tackles key challenges facing the College and identifies areas of focus where we can leverage our existing strengths and construct new paths for teaching and research.
- 2. Enhance communication.** The College supports the call for improved communication at all levels, particularly as it relates to increased access to reliable data, financial transparency, and the allocation of resources. In the following pages, we detail the changes in policies and processes that currently are in progress, as well as plans to further enhance communication.
- 3. Improve collegiate and departmental organization.** The College as an organization (its structure, leadership, and governance) is changing, and in our response to the recommendations in the *Review*, we describe our strategies to increase faculty participation and provide greater autonomy to CLAS divisions, departments, and units.

## **MISSION AND PLAN**

The University of Iowa is the flagship institution of higher education for the State of Iowa, and the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (CLAS) provides the foundation for success in teaching, research, and service at the University. Not only is CLAS the University's most comprehensive college— awarding approximately 67% of all undergraduate and 56% of all graduate degrees—but CLAS also prepares students for professional and graduate programs offered by the University and other institutions around the country. Within the last academic year, the College has developed new majors, minors, certificates and tracks that afford additional degree options for students. CLAS faculty fuel collaborative research endeavors with colleagues throughout the University and are heavily invested in University cluster initiatives. Moreover, CLAS students, staff, and faculty reach out to communities and constituencies around the state as well as nationally and internationally through public engagement.

## **STRATEGIC PLANNING**

Throughout its 167 year history, the College has demonstrated its capacity to provide outstanding academic programs and impressive scholarly research and creative work. The College has been resilient in the face of adversity including a catastrophic flood and an unstable economic environment. As we emerge from flood recovery and the recent recession, the time seems appropriate to craft a new strategic plan anchored in our strengths and cognizant of our role within the University.

The new CLAS five-year strategic plan (2015-2020) will reflect not only the changes, challenges, and growth within the College, but will present a well-defined vision for future developments in teaching, research, and public engagement. The Review Committee has suggested that the College “create strategic initiatives that assume that no new funds will flow from the State or from central administration.” We recognize our financial limitations, and we agree that a new strategic plan cannot aspire to an impractical funding model that fails to acknowledge current and projected State and University funding. We also believe that the College's strategic plan should include revenue enhancing activities to bring new resources critically needed to achieve our mission. This includes expanding enrollments through both on campus and online course delivery, increasing our level of external funding for research, and leveraging our partnership with the University of Iowa Foundation to build our endowment.

### **Teaching and Research Strengths**

The Review Committee recommends that the College “develop a set of realistic aspirational goals linked to existing and projected strengths.” Most of our departments are relatively small compared to our peers. To be competitive, we must build strength across departmental boundaries in areas of strategic importance. The College has been an active participant in cluster hires and part of our plan must be to

build on these University-wide investments. However, many of our strengths are not represented by the current clusters. As part of our strategic planning, we will identify a set of CLAS clusters to be targeted for strategic investment. These clusters will combine the strength of existing faculty with new hires. Faculty line allocations will prioritize these new cluster areas.

Financial constraints affect how scholarly and creative work is funded, conducted, and evaluated. Nevertheless, these difficulties present opportunities for the College to review its portfolio, commit to realistic objectives and make selective investments in centers and core facilities.

Developing collegiate strengths also will expand opportunities for undergraduates. For example, in April 2014, the Sloan Foundation awarded a 1.2 million dollar grant to establish one of only five University Centers of Exemplary Mentoring, which will empower CLAS to expand, strengthen, and institutionalize efforts aimed at minority recruitment. Another recent initiative also builds upon our STEM strengths. Scheduled to open in the 2015-2016 academic year, the new CLAS Science and Social Engagement Center will focus on the intersection of the sciences and significant issues facing local, state, nation, or global communities. Finally, the first UI constellation course, "Origins of Life in the Universe," taught by faculty from several CLAS departments, presents a broad perspective on origins, including the origin of the universe, the biochemistry of life, and the origin of life on earth. A second constellation course, "People & the Environment: Technology, Culture & Social Justice" is scheduled to begin in the fall of 2014. These projects demonstrate our faculty's commitment to innovation and undergraduate teaching.

The collegiate goal to increase undergraduate success through a collaborative model of faculty/staff advising is directly related to the Student Success Pillar in the University Strategic Plan. This model has helped increase retention, graduation rates, and levels of satisfaction of our students. In a fall 2013 *Student Experience in the Research University (SERU)* survey, an overwhelming majority of students responded positively to questions that asked about their levels of satisfaction and engagement with faculty members. Similar results were obtained when students were questioned about being able to get into the major they wanted as well as both the quality and variety of courses offered in their majors.

The College is aggressively responding to student desires for an expanded curriculum, and the undergraduate program is vibrant, innovative, and exciting. For the coming year, CLAS will introduce new majors in Sport and Recreation Management, Enterprise Leadership, and Biomedical Sciences as well as minors in Health and the Human Condition, Latina/Latino Studies, and Rhetoric and Persuasion. Additionally, new tracks in Anthropology (Anthropology for Health Professions) and Interdepartmental Studies (Engaged Social Innovation; Writing for the Sciences within the Health Sciences) indicate how responsive the College is to requests from students to develop vital contemporary areas of study. Further, CLAS and the College of Law are implementing a 3 + 3 Program under which the first year of law school satisfies one-quarter of the requirement for the student's bachelor's degree.

CLAS will continue to foster initiatives in undergraduate education and course delivery including on-line courses, courses that incorporate active learning pedagogies, and constellation courses. The College

and constituency groups agree that incentives and rewards are needed to develop innovations in teaching and course delivery. To address this need, CLAS is drafting guidelines for the allocation of teaching effort and compensation in online and other innovative course formats.

### Human Resources

We agree with the Review Committee that the assignment of faculty lines (tenure-track and lecturer) should not automatically follow legacy decisions, and we also agree that enrollment should be a key component in the allocation of faculty lines.

The Review Committee recommends an increase in the number of full-time, fixed-term lecturers. The College recognizes the special value that tenure track faculty active in research and scholarship bring to both undergraduate and graduate teaching. At the same time it acknowledges that lecturers play a key role in our teaching mission. The College is firmly committed to providing lecturers with a career path that will integrate them into the academic community. Consequently, CLAS is implementing the new senior lecturer classification and will advocate for a third tier for our distinguished lecturers. The College will engage in discussions with departments and the collegiate advisory groups to determine an appropriate balance across tenure-track, clinical, and lecturer lines.

### Facilities and Infrastructure

A discussion of strategic planning must address the need for improvements to facilities. The College faces significant challenges to its planning and operations with the buildings it currently occupies. Flood recovery efforts necessarily delayed plans to address important deferred maintenance needs. As we approach completion of the replacement buildings, it is imperative that focus be shifted to the many buildings now badly in need of attention. The College's highest infrastructure priority is a new building for the highly-ranked Department of Psychology. This project is central to the research and teaching missions of both the College and University. Laboratories for Biology, Chemistry, and Physics are operating at capacity and must be expanded if enrollments increase. The Wendell Johnson Speech and Hearing Center, the Jefferson Building, Hallsey Hall, North Hall, Seashore Hall, Jessup Hall, and MacBride Hall are all in need of serious overhaul. The English and Philosophy Building and Phillips Hall have outdated and poorly operating heating, ventilation, and air conditioning systems. The Theater Building will not have space for the costume shop once the flood recovery project is complete. The temporary spaces to be vacated when the replacement projects are complete offer great potential to address some of these needs. The College is developing proposals for using these spaces, which will be submitted to a university-wide committee that assesses space requests.

### **COMMUNICATION**

The Review Committee recommends improving internal and external communication. We acknowledge that communication within an organization as large and diverse as CLAS is difficult. The collegiate communication network, established decades ago, has labored to keep pace particularly given

increasingly stringent requirements for compliance with a growing number of policies. We presently are in the process of redesigning the DEO mailing, identifying a key staff member in each functional area to serve as the point person for information, and clarifying roles, principally in the areas of decision-making and budgetary information. Also, the Dean's Office has scheduled new budgetary information sessions for faculty and staff, restructured DEO meetings, improved technology services across the College, and invested in strategic communication in order to provide an improved flow of information within the College, and between the College and external constituencies. We will continue to seek ways to facilitate conversations about the important issues facing the College through the strategic planning process, through engagement with faculty governance bodies, and through new venues for direct communication with collegiate administrators.

### Data and Information

We agree with the Review Committee that effective collegiate decision making is anchored in timely access to accurate information, and that our information resources are ill equipped to meet our needs. In order to serve its constituents and provide transparency for the efficient allocation of resources, the Dean's Office, along with CLAS administrative units and departments, must have better access to information. Consequently, CLAS is strengthening both staff and internal mechanisms to manage and access information and is working with the Provost's Office to establish an institutional information infrastructure.

### Financial Transparency

The Review Committee strongly recommends that the Provost and the Dean "untangle the complexities of the CLAS budget situation." The College and its constituency groups concur. The Review Committee additionally has recommended that the Provost's Office conduct training sessions on the University budget system; this recommendation also has the endorsement of the College. In the words of the Review Committee, training sessions will help the College to "articulate more clearly and frequently how budget decisions are made," and thereby will contribute to financial transparency.

The Dean's Office is taking steps in response to the review recommendation to "communicate principles and goals to administrative and financial staff early in the academic year." The final DEO meeting of the spring 2014 session featured a presentation by the Associate Vice President and Director of Administration and Planning who explained the annual University operation and approval budget process as well as the budgetary outlook for the upcoming fiscal year. This spring, the College's financial office conducted instructional sessions designed to educate collegiate staff about the budget in preparation for the 2014-2015 fiscal year. A financial information session for departmental administrators and DEOs is scheduled for June, which will be followed by a retreat for the two groups prior to the start of the academic year.

## Public Engagement

The review committee commented that “the College does not have a uniform view of the meaning of public engagement.” CLAS already has taken the first step in communicating our outreach efforts to a wider audience while better defining our mission by joining with the Provost’s Office to seek Carnegie Community Engagement Classification. As defined by the Provost’s Office, “this endeavor will raise the profile of the great work faculty, staff, and students are already doing—and provide a catalyst to help us strengthen and create new partnerships with the communities we serve.” The process also will help CLAS catalog previously undocumented collegiate public engagement as well engagement by individual departments, faculty, staff, and students.

Public engagement will play an expanded role in the new CLAS strategic plan. In order to strengthen the student experience, several of our departments and programs are expanding public engagement as part of their course offerings. For example, the College has added a new track—Engaged Social Innovation—for the 2014-2015 academic year, and the program (offered through the College’s Interdepartmental Studies major) requires community engagement with service learning components, which will be noted on the student’s transcript. We will continue to build upon new engagement initiatives that inform our vision and mission.

## **ORGANIZATION**

The Review Committee commented that CLAS is a large and complex organizational unit that struggles to handle, in an efficient and timely manner, the new volume of work and decision making in the Dean’s office. The College has undergone a dramatic transformation since its last collegiate review that includes changes in leadership, size, configuration, and scope of operations. Since the summer of 2013 and upon completion of the CLAS self-study, formal and informal conversations within the Dean’s Office have taken place that have examined the consequences of these changes, including the process of decision-making and implementation, collegiate structure, leadership, and communication.

### Structure of the Dean’s Office

The Review Committee has recommended that to improve the administrative structure of the College, the Dean should consider reorganizing the College’s administrative leadership along divisional lines. Currently the associate deans portfolios are organized by function: faculty affairs, graduate and online education, research and infrastructure, and undergraduate education. Based on our experience, the functional organization is better suited to the size and complexity of the College than a strictly divisional organization. Moreover, completed as an integral part of the self-study, a faculty survey showed strong preference for the current model. We are, however, exploring a hybrid model where each associate dean would act as a liaison for one of the four academic areas (arts, humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences) while retaining functional responsibilities.

### Departmental Autonomy

CLAS welcomes the recommendation that DEOs should be granted autonomy in making fiscal decisions. The College will work to provide clearly defined parameters so that DEOs can play a greater role in resource allocation. The Review Committee also recommends that the College encourage DEOs to assess and adjust teaching responsibilities. This recommendation has our support. Working with the Provost's Office, we must empower DEOs so that they can, for example, adjust teaching portfolios as part of the Post-tenure Effort Allocation Policy (PTEAP) agreements. The College is dedicated to implementing a PTEAP system that acknowledges and rewards the range and diversity of faculty activities, a system that fairly represents a spectrum of portfolios.

The College intends to increase the DEO period of appointment to six years, which will consist of two consecutive three-year terms. CLAS DEOs will be evaluated in their third year and with positive recommendations, appointed for another three-year term. The College believes that a six-year cycle, with an evaluation at the mid-term, will allow for both continuity within the department and for change if circumstances necessitate it. The six-year cycle also will address the concern raised by departmental administrators that a three-year term is too short, allowing for only enough time to train DEOs in finance, human resources and operations by the time their terms have expired.

### Faculty Leadership and Governance

The College agrees with the recommendations that there should be two-way communication between the Dean's Office and the four elected faculty committees. Faculty participation is indispensable to collegiate administration, because decisions informed by faculty advice can be strongly substantiated and fully justified. The College invites faculty participation, which will offer a springboard to re-examine, reform, and restructure governance in CLAS.

Constituency groups are in uniform agreement with the Review Committee recommendations on leadership. The Executive Committee (EC) suggested that CLAS should establish a faculty committee to help "envision the College's long-term aspirations." The Educational Policy Committee (EPC) emphasized that it can and is willing to assist in strategic planning. Faculty Assembly (FA) envisions assuming a greater role in decision-making, and wants to facilitate faculty/Dean's Office interaction by providing "more channels for faculty members (in particular, assistant professors)." This speaks to the Review Committee recommendation that the "College should actively elicit feedback from faculty at all career stages." The Dean's Office concurs and plans within the next academic year to sponsor discussion sessions with junior faculty to encourage participation and comment.

The complex task of increasing faculty participation in the governance of the College currently is being implemented. With the assistance and contributions of the faculty, these actions will help preserve the strategic mission and promote changes for effective administration in CLAS.

**CONCLUSION**

The College of Liberal Arts & Sciences appreciates the effort and thoughtful consideration that both external and internal members of the Review Committee have given to the preparation the *Review*. The information in the *Review* has stimulated discussion and reflection throughout the College. As a result of these conversations, we are actively implementing most of the Review Committee's recommendations in ways that are consistent with the historic role of CLAS and of the University of Iowa as the flagship institution for the State of Iowa.