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College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

STRATEGIC PLAN

2021 – 2026



CLAS STRATEGIC PLAN

2021-2026

Our guide for decision-making, community-building, and excellence.

The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences at the University of Iowa has a long and distinguished history.

Founded in 1900, our college is home to some of the leading programs in the world in the arts, humanities, and sciences, including the Iowa Writers' Workshop, speech pathology and audiology, fine arts, social psychology, and space physics.

Our college is responsible for a number of firsts. It was the first to:

- Completely design, assemble, and operate a spacecraft
- Offer a university-sponsored program in creative writing
- Accept creative work in lieu of academic theses from graduate students
- Uncover the earth's radiation belts
- Discover the origin of the northern lights

CLAS faculty and students have been awarded over forty Pulitzer Prizes and over twenty Rhodes scholarships, in addition to numerous other awards and recognition for excellence.



The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences is driven by our core values and commitments. We aspire to foster and then build on a foundation of community, transparency, communication, equity, diversity, creativity, excellence, and humility.

Our 2021-2026 Strategic Plan works to regard all of these values as intimately connected and inseparable across its four pillars:

- **Research and Discovery**
- **Student Success**
- **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion**
- **Public Engagement**

We are committed to peer mentoring and to bringing awareness to the critical role that each of us plays in something that is larger than any one of us. The faculty, staff, and students of CLAS have individual expertise, interests, and perspectives, but as an academic learning community, our most impactful contributions arise from our work as a cohesive whole:

- **Staff** who are integral to the student-success and research mission of the university
- **Faculty** researchers and teachers who instruct students to learn and apply knowledge from new and innovative angles
- **Departmental and collegiate** spaces that encourage equity and belonging
- **Students** who graduate with writing, communication, and research skills through which they may align their personal, professional, and civic goals.

Through the strategic planning process, every five years, CLAS renews its commitment to its core values and to making sure that we are community-built and community-strong.



l-r Dean Sara Sanders; Associate Deans Christine Getz, Cornelia Lang, Roland Racevskis, Maggy Tomova, Joshua Weiner



YEAR ONE PRIORITIES

We know where we want to go.
How will we know when we've gotten there?

Thanks to outstanding collaboration among the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences Strategic Planning Committee, CLAS leadership, departmental leadership, and the many faculty, staff, and students who offered ideas and insights, the **2021-2026 College of Liberal Arts and Sciences Strategic Plan** reflects the aspirations of our collegiate community.

Our plan provides a roadmap to guide our decision-making as we seek to sustain and enhance a community built on excellence in education, research and discovery, and community engagement.

Year One of our 2021-2026 CLAS Strategic Plan's implementation will focus on identifying college-wide, transparent metrics for measuring our progress toward our collective goals.

- How do we support student success?
- By what standards do we assess our teaching and mentoring?
- How do we measure the impact of our research and discovery?
- What does it mean to have a genuinely diverse, equitable, and inclusive community?
- How should we engage with communities?

By deciding together on shared definitions and commonly held metrics, we can ensure that we're all pulling in the same direction as we tackle our biggest challenges and realize our greatest hopes during the subsequent four years of the plan.

Let's get started!

RESEARCH AND DISCOVERY



Joshua Weiner, Associate
Dean for Research

Goal 1: Infuse the research mission with renewed energy and vitality

Strategy 1: Enhance investment in faculty development and productivity

Strategy 2: Promote a culture of discovery and creativity

Goal 2: Enhance the research visibility of the college

Strategy 1: Invest in existing and emerging areas of strength

Strategy 2: Increase the number of research grants and fellowships awarded to faculty, staff, and students

Strategy 3: Harness the collective strength of units that can have cross-disciplinary research impact

YEAR ONE PRIORITIES

Develop and **communicate** transparent metrics for assessing CLAS research productivity

Identify departments poised for growth in grant-seeking, and develop strategies to support their efforts

Set goals for the CLAS Grant Support Office to increase their assistance with grant and fellowship submissions

Identify existing and emerging areas of research strength, using internal and external data sources, and seek ways to support them

Identify “bottom-up” research synergies developing across CLAS and consider strategies for fostering their growth

Identify bottlenecks and barriers to research, and develop strategies for mitigating them

Identify and develop key campus partners for ongoing collaborations

Develop and communicate a CLAS master facilities plan



STUDENT SUCCESS (UNDERGRADUATE)



Cornelia Lang, Associate
Dean for Undergraduate
Research

Goal: Build a strong community of undergraduate learning and engagement

Strategy 1: Increase undergraduate student success with evidence-based practices

Strategy 2: Expand undergraduate recruiting and retention efforts to ensure sustainable student enrollments

Strategy 3: Increase academic, peer, and career mentoring

YEAR ONE PRIORITIES

Identify individual students' academic and mental health challenges, by increasing partnerships with student success supports across campus

Increase academic support in undergraduate courses in CLAS, especially those that serve as introductory or "gateway" courses to programs of study

Assess the experiences of undergraduate students in the classroom, lab, studio, and field, with regard to inclusion and equity across CLAS

Identify majors and programs with high growth potential and strategic importance, and determine strategies for targeted recruiting

Increase awareness of the critical and important role of the CLAS Core general education program to provide students with foundational educational experiences, including writing, communication, and teamwork skills

Increase the number of undergraduates who participate as peer mentors and learning assistants and, are mentored by CLAS faculty and staff



STUDENT SUCCESS (GRADUATE)



Christine Getz, Associate
Dean for Graduate
Education and Outreach
and Engagement

Goal: Support the graduate student experience by building a strong community for learning and discovery

Strategy 1: Foster student success through faculty and staff development and through increased academic, peer, and career mentoring

Strategy 2: Create objective measures for evaluating the success of graduate programs and direct resources accordingly

Strategy 3: Engage in innovative and inclusive approaches to graduate education and support a diversity of career trajectories

YEAR ONE PRIORITIES

Create opportunities to diversify career preparation through Individual Development Plans, mentorship, targeted seminars, and a pilot TA/RA program

Assess support packages for graduate students

Develop transparent assessment metrics for programs, thereby enabling CLAS leadership, DEOs, and program leaders to evaluate program success

Identify “destination graduate programs” in CLAS and develop recruitment “pipelines” for them

Identify opportunities for pedagogical collaboration among smaller programs



DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION



Dean Sara Sanders,
Director of Diversity,
Equity, and Inclusion

Goal 1: Promote an inclusive environment

Strategy 1: Use empirically validated methods to address the challenges and opportunities that arise for CLAS students, faculty, and staff

Strategy 2: Integrate DEI throughout the educational and scholarly experience in CLAS

Strategy 3: Foster a greater sense of community within the college

Goal 2: Build stronger infrastructure to support DEI efforts

Strategy 1: Increase support provided to first-generation, URM, and international students, faculty, and staff in CLAS

Strategy 2: Build DEI capacity across the college

YEAR ONE PRIORITIES

Research strategies for conducting departmental and college-wide equity audits during year two

Identify formats and mechanisms for CLAS community members to inform CLAS leadership of “on-the-ground” issues regarding matters of equity and inclusion

Assess issues of empowerment and shared governance for non-tenure-track faculty

Create goals and strategies for mentoring faculty, staff, and students with regard to diversity, equity, and inclusion

Expand implementation of best practices in the hiring process, to eliminate bias at all stages



OUTREACH AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



Christine Getz, Associate
Dean for Graduate
Education and Outreach
and Engagement

Goal: Support the work of faculty, students, and staff in building partnerships with communities throughout the state, region, and nation

Strategy 1: Build a community of alumni partners to enhance the overall educational mission and student professional development

Strategy 2: Integrate outreach and community-engaged research into the undergraduate and graduate curricula

Strategy 3: Promote the impactful nature of outreach and community-engaged scholarship and teaching

Strategy 4: Generate revenue to promote outreach and community-engaged research

YEAR ONE PRIORITIES

Establish clear definitions of outreach and community engagement

Identify areas of thematic focus for CLAS outreach and community engagement

Develop strategies for supporting the community-engaged scholarship and teaching of faculty and staff, including in the tenure and promotion process

Integrate CEC-designated courses into the undergraduate and graduate curricula

Determine funding priorities for outreach and community engagement





CLAS VISION AND MISSION STATEMENTS

Vision

We aspire to create and nurture a community in a College of Liberal Arts and Sciences that is dedicated to a liberal arts education and to the diversity of thought that it generates. Our students will be able to think critically, to further their learning, to flexibly and creatively adapt to change, and be engaged, ethical, global citizens. Our scholars will be leaders in advancing knowledge and educating future generations. We strive for everyone in the college to have a sense of belonging and community and to have individual and collective purpose.

Mission

The mission of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences at the University of Iowa is to foster community that enables innovative research and discovery and empowers students with the knowledge and skills to think systematically about all aspects of their lives—the creative, the professional, the personal, and the civic. We are home to some of the leading programs in the world in the arts, humanities, and sciences, and we live at the intersection of all three—as writers and researchers, as performers and inventors, and as individuals who work together to develop ideas of what might be and then to implement those ideas after a careful process of reflection and consideration. Our mission is guided by a value in diversity and inclusion that recognizes the wide spectrum of voices and talents that enable excellence in education, research and discovery, and public engagement.