

College of Arts and Sciences Strategic Plan

DRAFT

November 7, 2024

INTRODUCTION TO DRAFT FOR COLLEGE REVIEW

After the university developed its strategic plan, the colleges were tasked to develop or update their own strategic plans, and to identify how their plans align with the university plan. The university has established a bold set of goals that invite us to imagine how we want to become a “next-gen” college. The timing for this is good, as the college has been exploring how to address the challenges we have been facing and determine how we will thrive in the new higher education environment.

This plan draws from discussions across the college that started in the fall of 2022. It has been shaped by input from unit heads, the College Committee on Planning, and the college’s Alumni Council, and it encapsulates the vision of Dean Culbertson for how our college can grow and thrive in the coming years.

Our strategic plan will be a map—a set of guideposts for our journey together. It will sharpen our focus and remind us to keep our collective path true to what we value as an institution and as individuals. We will regularly refer back to this plan when we make decisions in the coming years.

This plan represents deliberation on the challenges ahead of us and reflection on the priorities we have identified. We have drafted a new mission and vision statement to help orient us as we enact this plan. Our mission grounds us. Reminding ourselves of our mission during change will help ensure that we do not stray from our values. Our vision calls us forward. Keeping an eye on what we want to become will help us advance even when change is hard. We will need to stretch in areas and transform ourselves in others, but we will do so while staying true to our mission.

Strategic plans are only as good as the commitment the organization has to them. We need your input to help shape our direction and ensure that we have a plan we will be able to use. This document is a draft. As we finalize the plan, we will identify some more precise targets and a timeframe for implementation.

Our plan will be an important mechanism for us to share with each other, our colleagues, and our community what we value and where we are headed. Please help us shape our future by responding to the survey that we are sharing with the college, by attending our November 21st faculty meeting (which all faculty and staff are encouraged to attend), or by emailing asdeans@k-state.edu (please use subject “strategic plan feedback”).

Thank you for all you do.

MISSION

The mission of the College of Arts and Sciences is to

- **Prepare students and learners at all levels for responsible citizenry, critical inquiry, and career success in a diverse and ever-changing world;**
- **Provide the academic foundation of Kansas State University and a hub for interdisciplinary work across the university;**
- **Contribute to the betterment of society and the advancement of knowledge through**
 - 1) innovative basic research and creative activity,**
 - 2) the application of disciplinary expertise to solve complex problems, and**
 - 3) active engagement with professional societies and local and global communities.**

Arts and Sciences is a diverse college with a wide range of disciplines and excellent faculty and staff. We are committed to the success of our learners and the advancement of knowledge and betterment of society. An arts and sciences education prepares students for a lifetime of career success, professional responsibility, and personal fulfillment while enriching our communities.

We teach critical thinking, promote understanding of how the world works, and provide opportunities to imagine how it could be different. Students in Arts and Sciences develop high-demand job skills and the ability to adapt to change, address ethical dilemmas, and negotiate the complexities of a multicultural and global society. Our graduate students gain cutting-edge, discipline-specific training that prepares them for high-level industry positions and academic careers.

We contribute to the betterment of society through engagement with our communities, research that solves problems, and investment in foundational research, creative activity and scholarly work that generates new knowledge and explores what it is to be human.

We are the core of K-State, serving learners in all colleges and creating frameworks for interdisciplinary work across the university.

Just as we value all the disciplines within our college, we value our people and their contributions and collective and individual identities. We are stronger together through our shared, empathic and diverse experiences and perspectives. Recognizing this inherent human value, we see our commitment to diversity, inclusion and belonging embedded in each of our strategic priorities.

VISION

The vision of the College of Arts and Sciences is to

Lead as a thriving, mission-driven arts and sciences college, proactively adapting to meet evolving challenges and opportunities in Kansas, our nation and the world.

The landscape of higher education is changing. Learners have more options than ever and are questioning the value of higher education. Families are looking for an explicit return on their investment. Communities are expecting solutions to immediate challenges. Businesses are increasingly focused on skills rather than general credentials when hiring. States are requiring increased efficiency. Meanwhile, societal and scientific challenges have never been as complex as they are today and demands on universities and colleges have never been greater.

The College of Arts and Sciences is prepared and eager to overcome these challenges. We will be proactive, identifying potential opportunities before they arise. We will be agile, able and willing to shift to adapt and try new things. And we will do all of this efficiently while staying true to our values and mission as a comprehensive arts and science college. We will be a model for others of how arts and sciences can thrive in today's environment, leveraging our faculty's expertise to make critical contributions to local, regional and global communities.

Priority 1

Innovate in academics and instruction to deliver relevant, explicit, and long-lasting value for our students, the community and employers.

We will provide **continuously-improved programs** that are responsive to the demands of students and employers in Kansas and beyond, and that prepare students for a lifetime of ethical, culturally aware, and responsible citizenry, of creativity and adaptability, and of personal and professional success. We will provide **high-quality instruction** that meets our land-grant mission and makes the value of every course apparent to its students.

Strategies

- Make the university's research and land-grant mission evident in all courses
- Excel in all instruction
- Expand programs with marketable ROI and career skills
- Expand focus on career readiness in programs
- Emphasize coursework and topics that prepare ethical, culturally aware, responsible citizens.
- Adapt recruitment and marketing to meet or exceed best practices and emphasize value
- Expand micro-credentials, stackable credentials, and professional and concurrent master's degree programs
- Incentivize and support innovation in course design and content
- Expand and enhance applied learning experiences
- Integrate digital/AI literacy and ethics across the curricula

Outcomes

- Increased total, undergraduate and graduate enrollment
- Increased non-degree-seeking enrollment
- High student performance in assessments of student learning objectives
- High student satisfaction
- High employer satisfaction

Related Imperatives

- **Imperative 1** (grow our total enrollment)
- **Imperative 3** (applied learning experiences)
- **Imperative 5** (meet the needs of learners, employers and society)

Priority 2

Practice transparent and agile resource management to support the long-term fiscal health of the college.

We will develop a **transparent, mission-driven budget and college practices** to ensure responsible fiscal management of the college and the capacity to fulfill our vision. The college will build revenue through multiple streams and practice agile resource management. We will solicit and generate funds to renew investment in faculty, staff and programs. The college will be transparent with its decision-making so that its units can facilitate their own planning consistent with the college.

Strategies

- Build and expand pipelines for both high schools and community colleges
- Expand scholarships for incoming students
- Increase efficiencies across all areas of college work, including instruction, curricula, administrative support and space utilization
- Foster and support resource sharing
- Provide dynamic, consistent and transparent data to support decision-making of administration, heads and other stakeholders
- Develop and implement transparent policies and procedures for determining unit budgets
- Diversify revenue streams and fundraising through corporate partnerships, donor naming opportunities and expanded philanthropy

Outcomes

- Improved college annual net revenue/costs
- Development of reserve/discretionary funds
- Increased investment in strategic hiring and initiatives
- Increased philanthropy
- Increased alternative revenue streams

Related Imperatives

- **Imperative 8** (one K-State/operational excellence)
- **Imperative 10** (grow our total fundraising and philanthropic giving)
- **Imperative 6** (aggressively pursue partnerships)

Priority 3

Expand both foundational and applied work in research, creative activity, and engagement.

We will expand and sustain an enterprise of **research and creative activity** that contributes to the advancement of our disciplines and connects with our land-grant missions of accessible education, public engagement, economic development, and betterment of society. We will expand our tradition of excellent basic research while also making sure that our work remains relevant to Kansans, the nation, and the world in both practice and perception. We will **actively engage** with both Kansans and the global community through our broadly accessible programs, community outreach and involvement, and economic partnerships. We will better support engagement activities across the college and encourage and recognize engagement in all parts of our trifold mission.

Strategies

- Encourage and provide support for faculty to develop intellectual property and creative ventures
- Develop new research service centers to provide consulting and analysis for community groups and governmental bodies
- Increase budget available for strategic new tenure-track hires and startups for impactful research and creative activity and cross-college collaborations
- Collaborate and share resources with other units in research (e.g., intercollege bioscience advisory group, core facilities)
- Improve support, opportunities and incentives for current faculty's research and creative activity
- Encourage and reward community engagement and engaged scholarship
- Develop corporate partnerships

Outcomes

- Increased research expenditures
- Increased grant expenditures
- Increased and diverse teams applying for grants
- Improvement in departmental research and creative activity success metrics beyond financial expenditures
- Increased national and international recognition of faculty

Related Imperatives

- **Imperative 4** (grow our research enterprise)
- **Imperative 7** (positive force for Kansans)
- **Imperative 6** (aggressively pursue partnerships)

Priority 4

Build and maintain an inclusive community of satisfied, successful faculty, staff and students.

Our most important resources are our faculty and staff. We will provide the work environment, compensation and development opportunities needed to support a **vibrant, diverse and inclusive workforce**. Together, we will foster our students' **academic and personal success** so that they can meet or exceed the high standards we and society have for their futures.

Strategies

- Provide competitive faculty, GTA and staff compensation and standards
- Expand/develop strong educational support programs for undergraduate students at each stage of their university career (first year, second year, third year, fourth/final year(s), post-graduation) and for special populations such as transfer and non-traditional students
- Improve recognition of all employees, including post-docs and graduate students
- Improve access to professional development opportunities across the college workforce, and establish clear paths for promotion
- Foster strong alumni engagement across all units
- Establish college-wide initiative on faculty, staff and student well-being and belonging

Outcomes

- Improved retention of faculty and staff
- Decreased salary compression and eliminated inversion
- Improved overall faculty and staff compensation relative to peers
- Improved graduate teaching assistant compensation relative to peers
- Increased retention of first-year students and first-time transfers
- Increased retention of all categories of learners in university plan
- Reduced 4-year and 6-year graduation rates gap between Arts and Science and the university
- Increased recognition of faculty and staff through named excellence awards

Related Imperatives

- **Imperative 9** (employer of choice)
- **Imperative 2** (improve our retention and graduation rates across all student populations)
- **Imperative 7** (positive force for Kansans)

Priority 5

Develop modern, adaptable and multi-disciplinary infrastructure.

We must provide **instructional and research facilities** appropriate for the mission, success and growth of the college. We will overcome the challenges presented by our aging infrastructure to be able to attract top faculty, provide students with superior experience, and fulfill our promise as a next-gen college in an R1, land-grant university.

Strategies

- Improve current facilities through renovation and prioritized maintenance
- Relocate/consolidate units into facilities better aligned to their current and developing needs
- Plan (collaborating with other colleges) for major new facilities such as the Interdisciplinary Physical and Life Science building and the Visual and Performing Arts Corridor
- Develop and maintain robust IT hygiene and device replacement framework for teaching, research and faculty/staff
- Strategically develop core facilities and use areas between units

Outcomes

- Substantially reduced deferred maintenance backlog
- Substantial progress in planning at least one major new facility
- Increased use and development of core facility services

Related Imperatives

- **Imperative 4** (grow our research enterprise)
- **Imperative 5** (meet the needs of learners, employers and society)
- **Imperative 8** (one K-State/operational excellence)

SPECIFIC INITIATIVES

Interdisciplinary Physical and Life Sciences Building. The College of Arts and Sciences will partner with other K-State colleges to conceptualize, develop and implement funding strategies, and plan and build a twenty-first century interdisciplinary teaching and research building for the life and physical sciences. This facility will allow the university to solve challenging problems facing Kansas and the nation and world. It will allow us to effectively attract and retain faculty and prepare undergraduate and graduate students for successful careers.

Visual and Performing Arts Corridor. The College of Arts and Sciences will create a visual and performing arts corridor with additional performance and creative activity spaces in the southeast corner of campus. This corridor will better integrate the School of Music, Theatre and Dance, the Department of Art, McCain Auditorium and the Beach Museum of Art. It will provide the university, Manhattan community and surrounding region with welcoming spaces that promote health/well-being and exploration of the multiple dimensions of what it means to be expressive and creative.

Biosciences Program. The College of Arts and Sciences will co-create a cross-college biosciences advisory board and graduate umbrella program that will guide collaboration in the biosciences across the Colleges of Agriculture, Veterinary Medicine, Health and Human Sciences, Engineering, and Arts and Sciences in both undergraduate and graduate education.

Artificial Intelligence Across the Disciplines. The College of Arts and Sciences will continue to work with university partners to create an AI Across the Disciplines initiative to address the changes AI will bring to our society. The college will contribute interdisciplinary research and creative activity, instruction and engagement across the natural and quantitative sciences, social sciences, humanities and arts, and will help ensure that our students and the citizens of Kansas can critically evaluate and responsibly apply AI.

Kansas Water Institute. As a key contributor to the Kansas Water Institute, the College of Arts and Sciences will develop and broadly support initiatives using a multidisciplinary lens to solve the economic challenges of living and thriving in a water-limited future.

Sustainability. The College of Arts and Sciences will collaborate with all colleges on sustainability initiatives in research, instruction and engagement to create a broad-based sustainability institute.

High School Dual and Concurrent Enrollment. The College of Arts and Sciences will build on the pilot high school dual and concurrent enrollment program to deliver foundational and advanced courses to local and rural schools while creating a pipeline of K-State students and providing affordable, high-quality disciplinary graduate education for high-school teachers across the state.

Community health and well-being. The College of Arts and Sciences will contribute to initiatives relating to physical and mental health as well as to social and cultural factors that are major components of community health and well-being.

HOW WE DEVELOPED THIS PLAN

In summer of 2022, the college undertook the first steps towards the development of a new strategic plan. While university-level efforts were in their early stages, the transition of the dean and needs of the college dictated that we undertake an early and energetic examination of our priorities.

Process for development of strategic plan:

- Input (iterative, with information collected at each step shared in the next)
 - Work from Joint Budget Committee of Department Heads and CCOP Members (completed fall 2021)
 - Environmental Scan with Department Heads (summer 2022)
 - Department Head Discussions (summer/fall 2022)
 - Town Halls (multiple, fall 2022)
 - Faculty and Staff Survey (fall 2022)
- Dean's Office Synthesis of Information and Drafting of Priorities (fall 2022/winter 2023)
 - (This work synthesized priorities collected in the fall, with commonalities identified, grouped and shared.)
- Review (winter/spring 2023)
 - Department Heads
 - CCOP
- Redrafting (winter/spring 2023)
- Review
 - Faculty Meeting and Town Halls (spring 2023)
 - Faculty and Staff Input (spring 2023)
 - Alumni Council Input (spring 2023)
- Finalized priorities (April 2023): [Values and Priorities](#)

The resulting foundational commitments and priorities guided substantial revision of the common college requirements from spring 2023 through fall 2023, and shaped college planning throughout AY 2024.

In spring 2024, the college established two taskforces to address two major priority areas: teaching effectiveness/quality and workload policies.

A strategic planning taskforce was delayed due to the cybersecurity incident and the substantial workload entailed by alignment of over 100 B.A. and B.S. programs and subplans to the new gen eds and college requirements.

An initial draft of strategic planning priorities was based closely on the ongoing priorities established by the college through the process outlined above. Particular strategies were identified within the dean's office, CCOP, and among department heads.

- Department head review and feedback: summer 2024
- Feedback from provost and university strategy officer
- CCOP review and feedback: August/September 2024
- Alumni Council and other stakeholder input: August/September 2024

Based on these discussions, a focused set of five priorities for future planning was developed. The dean shared these priorities with the college at the October 10 State of the College address. The dean's office updated strategies and outcome targets for these focused priorities.

Next steps:

- **College review and feedback by survey: November 2024**
- **Open discussion at faculty meeting: November 21, 2024**
- **Dean's office to identify specific targets and timeline for the plan**
- **Finalized mission, vision, and plan: December 2024**

Note on plan outcomes:

Metrics corresponding to university learner and student success metrics were generally chosen by estimating the difference between university outcome goals and current metrics and adding the same changes to current Arts and Sciences numbers. For a variety of reasons, due to the nature of Arts and Sciences and the makeup of its students (non-selective admission; common opt-out choice for students who struggle in selective programs; more general programs; etc.), some Arts and Sciences indicators lag behind university average. We believe we can substantially improve these, but also believe that structural and systematic factors are such that Arts and Sciences will likely always lag to some degree. We have targeted goals towards either closing those gaps or increasing at the same rate that the university overall is aiming for.

Some outcome metrics are still under development (for example, student satisfaction measures and departmental non-monetary research metrics). For these, we might indicate that we expect "improved" outcomes in these areas, but will not yet list target metric values. Establishment of the metric targets will be completed at least by the plan mid-point of AY 2027.