

College of Liberal Arts Strategic Planning Process

Interim Report – April 12, 2021

As the 21st century develops, land-grant institutions face new challenges for which the liberal arts will be essential partners, if not central players: the need for an educated citizenry, addressing social and cultural dimensions of technological change, developing and understanding key resources of the knowledge economy, and meeting a critical need to educate civically engaged and productive citizens.

To meet these challenges, we in the College of Liberal Arts are called to revisit and reimagine the ways in which we work, teach, learn, research, and create. To that end, the College has formed a strategic planning process that includes work from a guiding coalition, cross-department task forces, and the work of individual departments to create a plan that will guide us from 2022 to 2025 in our scholarship, teaching, and workplace habits.

To read more about the process and see a timeline of work and outputs, visit <https://www.libarts.colostate.edu/strategic-plan-2021/>

Overall strategic challenge

The Dean's overall strategic challenge to the task forces was as follows:

Can we imagine an "ecosystem" of scholarship and learning that allows us to develop complementary relationships between degrees/programs, progressive teaching and working modalities, team approaches to scholarship and administration, and a new vision of how the distinctive aspects of CLA and CSU fit into a changing higher education landscape?

Task Force 1 – Discovery with Impact – was asked to consider the areas of engaged scholarship, interdisciplinarity, impactful scholarship/impactful learning, and how liberal arts can lead a land-grant university.

Task Force 2 – The Future of Learning and Working – was asked to consider teaching innovations and practices, the workforce and workplace of the 21st century, internal and external engagement, and the use of technology to enhance our efforts.

Task Force 3 – Structuring Change – was asked to consider employee growth and impact, including professional development, evaluation, hiring, promotion, and various administrative structures and supports that would allow the College to adapt to changing circumstances, reflect our digital-first world, and ensure equity and inclusion in all our efforts.



Interim Report of Task Force 1: Discovery with Impact

April 8, 2021

Co-Chairs: Michael Carolan, Associate Dean for Research and Faculty Development

Catherine DiCesare, Associate Professor, Art and Art History

Overview

The first questions identified by Task Force #1, which framed all discussions to follow, were:

“What does it mean to be a student in a college of liberal arts in the 21st century at a land-grant university, and how should the values of both liberal arts and land-grants inform what we do as instructors, scholars, and staff as we reimagine our programs and practices?”

The guiding practices of task force #1 place the student experience at the fore: How can we best prepare our students to better the world that awaits them? Thus our task force is informed by the need to raise the visibility of the vital work being done in the College of Liberal Arts, on campus and beyond, and by our mission to serve the public good.

Where we've been

The group identified a number of goals, principles, and practices that we believe needed to be elevated, encouraged, and rewarded. Major topics of discussion addressed important goals and values:

- expanding collaboration, interdisciplinarity, engaged teaching and scholarship, community partnerships, inclusive pedagogy
- emphasizing multiculturalism and cultural literacy
- the importance of improving diversity, equity, access, and inclusion for students, faculty, and staff

Expanding collaborative opportunities for faculty and students (e.g., team-teaching, interdisciplinarity) also required identifying unexplored opportunities and structural barriers (such as budgets/resources, course/credit loads, department cultures) that have historically stood in our way.

What we've done/short-term wins

- We will be exploring team-teaching opportunities with the College of Health and Human Sciences
- We are investigating the expansion of the CLA Extension internship program to provide more engaged learning opportunities for students
- We will be writing a white paper to develop more comprehensive teaching evaluation processes (drawing on recommendations from TILT and other resources)
- We will be writing a white paper assessing historical trajectories across departments about externally funded scholarship and creative artistry.



Where we're headed

With this backdrop in mind, we ask departments and units to contemplate the following questions:

- Does your department have collaborative goals for research/creative artistry and how do they connect to the University's Courageous Strategic Transformation?
How will your department better align resources and effort to further this connection and your distinctive contributions?
- Does your department have collaborative goals for teaching—at undergrad and graduate levels—and how do they connect to the University's Courageous Strategic Transformation?
How will your department better align resources and effort to further this connection and your distinctive contributions?
- Realizing that collaboration is a means rather than an end, what ends are best/only reached through collaboration within your particular unit?
- How can current structures and practices be reimagined to facilitate and reward collaborative efforts within and across departments, as well as with the University and the larger community?



Interim Report of Task Force 2: The Future of Learning and Working

April 7, 2021

**Co-Chairs: Roze Hentschell, Associate Dean for Academic Programs
Eliza Wagner-Kinyon, Operations Manager, Dept of Comm Studies**

Overview

During a most challenging year, faculty, students, and staff were required to pivot into blended modes of teaching, learning, and working. While there are many pre-pandemic practices we are eager to return to, this taskforce is excited to explore and reflect on the innovative practices born out of this moment, using them as a catalyst for the future vision of the College to harness the innovative practices from across the College that inspire our future directions and support our future learners. We have grounded our discussions through these guiding questions: “What have we learned?” and “How does this learning inform who we want to be as a college?”

For example, we have learned of the deeply exacerbated inequities in our community and how imperative our shared sense of equity and access needs to be at the core of all our work and goals, interwoven in every discussion. We have approached our questions with an understanding that while technology is integral and informative, it should not be directive. It is our hope that the work of the task force will help lay the framework for the fall process when we present a new vision of how the distinctive aspects of CLA fit into a changing higher ed landscape.

Where we've been

To date, the Task Force's conversations have focused on three main areas:

- The Future of Working in CLA, with an emphasis on staff and re-envisioning work environments.
- The Future of Engaging External Audiences, including prospective employees, alumni and donors, prospective undergraduate and graduate students, invited lectures and speakers, and larger scale events, exhibits, and performances.
- The Future of Teaching (this is a multi-part conversation that we are in the midst of): We have focused on defining excellent teaching and understanding the role of blended learning and technology in higher ed today.

What we've done/short-term wins

The Future of Working

- Drafted a survey to distribute to college constituents to guide conversations around flexible work schedules to balance departmental need with equity efforts.



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The Future of Engaging External Audiences

- Recommend an audit of remote/hybrid events and outreach from the last year to create best practices documents for future engagement.

The Future of Excellent Teaching in Blended Modalities

- Created a goal statement on the future of teaching and learning in CLA. Our vision for the future of learning in CLA is as follows, and has anchored all aspects of our conversation:

The future of teaching and learning in the College of Liberal Arts at CSU is one in which well-trained faculty lead compelling and innovative courses centered in equity and access to engage learners of the future. Faculty will have access to robust, research-based professional development and campus support to utilize and enhance best practices for the courses' formats (face-to-face, hybrid, hyflex, remote, etc.), including instructional design and technological assistance. Transformative teaching practices, including creativity and risk-taking, will be encouraged and rewarded by the college, which will promote a reflective, collaborative, iterative approach to cultivating teaching excellence. Technology will enhance but not determine pedagogical practices as we build rigorous and forward-looking curriculum that speaks to diverse identities and where variety of course options are paramount for our future students.

Where we're headed

Future conversations will be focused on:

- Collaborative course design and management, especially in multi-section courses and across the college
- The potential for creating a position for an embedded curriculum designer who is equally knowledgeable about technology and classroom teaching
- Preparing for new learners (adult, part-time, or working learners), and better serving the students of the state of Colorado, including an increasing number of Latinx learners, with the goal of increasing access and providing engaging programs and excellent teaching
- The future of engaging internally. What might meetings and department/college events look like in the future. What are best practices and good ideas? What should we make sure to avoid?



Interim Report of Task Force 3: Structuring Change

April 8, 2021

**Co-Chairs: Ryan Claycomb, Interim Assistant Dean
Wes Scharf, College Business Officer**

Overview

Task Force 3 focuses on ensuring that CLA has the right structures in place to achieve the goals of the whole college, with specific attention to structural implementation of other Task Force initiatives. Recognizing that culture and values are embedded in the structures we have built in the college, structures also help us make the most of finite resources to prioritize and realize those values. To begin, we focused on identifying known structural issues at the college level that would benefit from ongoing and/or immediate visioning and re-visioning. Over time, Task Force 3 will take on the work of identifying the structural changes needed to implement recommendations from the other task forces.

Where we've been

So far, Task Force 3 has addressed three separate but related organizational structures: HR/Finance, Recruitment, and Communications. During those conversations, we invited presentations from CLA communications, departmental communications, IT and development contexts to present on their structures.

- **HR/Finance:** Here, we look to streamline positions, policies, and procedures throughout the departments and college which in return will create efficiencies and better accuracy.
- **Recruitment:** A focus on recruitment underscores the practical need to bring invested students to our classrooms, but also to ensure that our recruitment strategies can account for and serve the diversifying student population of CSU.
- **Communications:** Recognizing the crucial importance of marketing and communications across our diverse departments to our ongoing success, we hope to facilitate a fully functioning communications team that improves coverage of all our areas while sharing work and skillsets fairly.

What we've done/short-term wins

- **HR/Finance:** By examining existing HR/Finance hubs, we are developing plans to refine those structures and determine timelines for expanding this model across all programs/departments over time.
- **Recruitment:** We reaffirmed the need for a permanent college-level recruitment coordinator, now housed within the College Communications structure; that search is underway.
- **Communications:** We are commissioning a subcommittee to outline strengths, weaknesses, etc. of possible models/structure for CLA communications (centralized, hub, decentralized, etc.).



Where we're headed

In the coming weeks, Task Force 3 will:

- Receive recommendations from the Communications subcommittee.
- Examine service rubrics as they have been discussed and implemented around the college.
- Prepare to receive new topics from Task Forces 1 & 2.

