



2015 FALL PLANNING LETTER

COLLEGE OF
ARTS & LETTERS



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The College of Arts and Letters (CAL) at Michigan State University aspires to be a national leader in arts and humanities research and education for the 21st century. This involves, above all, generating the resources required to attract, recruit, support, and retain the best, most innovative and most diverse faculty and graduate students in the arts and humanities. Faculty research and teaching are at the heart of a leading-edge arts and humanities education in which the enduring strengths of the liberal arts—excellent communication, critical thinking, ethical imagination, and global engagement—combine with new and emerging scholarship committed to digital fluency, civic leadership, and innovation to deepen our understanding of the world and address the most complex challenges of our time.

The College's strategic initiatives over the next five years will integrate these new commitments with our existing and developing excellence in the arts and humanities. To achieve this, we will pursue priorities that build strength in units across the College by enhancing faculty research and creative activity, improving graduate education, and enriching the undergraduate experience. Our priorities are four: **culturally engaged digital humanities; engaged scholarship in an interconnected world; integrated design; and media arts.**

Because these priorities emerged from unit level strategic planning, they extend across the College. However, if everything is a priority, nothing is; so we must invest strategically and boldly in these four priority areas to move the College to a position of national leadership and heightened scholarly and pedagogical impact even as we continue to support and promote the core strengths of an arts and humanities education.

Below we outline how these priorities dovetail with and reinforce the three priorities outlined in your Spring 2015 LEAD session.

SUPPORT FOR FACULTY

Excellence in arts and humanities research and creative activity requires recruiting, hiring, and retaining the very best faculty from traditionally under-represented groups. To do this effectively, we have structured our priorities in areas that demonstrate a commitment to live out the values of diversity in our curriculum, research programs, and creative activities. Specifically, by focusing on engaged scholarship, including culturally engaged digital humanities, we will position ourselves to recruit and retain top faculty from traditionally under-represented groups.

Over the last several years, the digital humanities community has wrestled with issues of inclusion and diversity among DH scholars. These issues have centered around questions of usability, accessibility, and how best to engage communities of cultural stakeholders whose artifacts, values, and practices are the focus of digital humanities inquiry. We in the College have worked collaboratively with the Departments of History and Anthropology in the College of Social Sciences and the University Libraries to create the institutional infrastructure in graduate and undergraduate curriculum and the world-class research centers (Matrix, LEADR, WIDE) to lead the way in culturally engaged digital humanities, a vision of DH research that addresses the above mentioned international challenges faced by the DH community.

A **cluster hire in culturally engaged digital humanities** that focuses on humanities questions of race, inclusion, cultural preservation, global interconnectedness, and engaged scholarship would establish Michigan State University as an international

leader in digital humanities research and scholarship, position us on the leading edge of an emerging strength in the CIC, increase our capacity to compete successfully for prestigious grants and fellowships, and enable us to recruit the very best of a new generation of diverse and innovative scholars.

In order to attract excellent and innovative young faculty members and graduate students from diverse backgrounds, the College will establish an **Engaged Scholarship Post-Doctoral Fellowship program** designed to attract traditionally under-represented MFAs and PhDs in the arts and humanities across four priority areas: culturally engaged digital humanities; engaged scholarship in an interconnected world; integrated design; and media arts. This will enable us to recruit excellent young faculty members into the College and create a rich pool of prospective future faculty hires. On the graduate level, we have combined resources from the College and Provost's Office to establish the **CAL Top Recruit Program** designed to attract the best graduate students in the world to MSU and to practice inclusion as a matter of habit. This program provides resources that can be flexibly and strategically deployed to position units to match or exceed the financial terms of any competitive offer for our very best students.

Attracting traditionally under-represented faculty and graduate students to Michigan State University, however, is only one aspect of an integrated set of institutional challenges to create a culture of inclusion and excellence in the College and at the University. In order to ensure that our new and continuing faculty, graduate students, and undergraduates from under-represented groups are supported and successful, we must develop a **robust and sustained Inclusion Initiative**. This initiative, led by our Associate Dean for Diversity, Inclusion, and Community Engagement, will involve three dimensions: 1) developing more diverse curriculum and co-curricular activities across the College, drawing on our four College priorities; 2) investing in integrated structures of support and mentoring for under-represented faculty, graduate students, and undergraduates; 3) partnering with units across the university, including the Office of Faculty and Organizational Development, to take the lead in educating the university community about the complex and pernicious mechanisms of institutional prejudice.

If the university intends to embody the core value of inclusiveness, we must invest resources and articulate priorities at all levels of the academic mission—from the curriculum, to the faculty, to the culture—that reinforce our commitment to the reality that there is *no excellence without diversity*. This portion of the College plan fleshes out our deep commitment to diversity in three specific ways: first, through our academic focus on culturally engaged digital humanities, second, through our plan to attract more diverse young faculty and graduate students, and third, through our inclusion initiative designed support the success of our diverse faculty and graduate students. Creating a culture of inclusion is tightly tied to our broader strategies to expand, enhance, and elevate scholarship.

ELEVATING SCHOLARSHIP

Over the past few years, the College has sought to create a culture of research and creative activity that supports and rewards excellence in humanities scholarship, performance, and artistic practice by providing research awards, travel funding, and support for engaged, collaborative scholarship. These strategies have enjoyed moderate success, doubling our total annual award distribution from \$1.5M to \$3.1M since 2011. In order to lead our peers and contribute more substantively to the University's external

research goals, the College needs to create bolder, more innovative programs and structures to incentivize external grant writing. Over the next five years, our goal is to quadruple our annual award output to \$12M. This requires both institutional investment and a transformative cultural shift among the faculty.

Exponential growth in sponsored research requires an exponential increase in the number of grant applications we make. Our academic priorities in digital humanities, engaged public scholarship, design, and media arts align well with external funding opportunities in the arts and humanities. Pre-tenure faculty are explicitly expected now to apply for external funding at least once during their probationary period, and we will further develop our emerging grant writing and mentoring program into a **Future Funded Faculty** program in which we strategically bring faculty whose research has been sponsored together with those who are seeking their initial grants.

On the institutional investment side, the College will commit \$300K during the summer of 2016 to pilot a **Summer Research Incentive program** that gives tenure system faculty summer salary to advance their scholarship or develop a proposal for external funding without having to rely on summer teaching for supplementary income. Rather than teaching, faculty will be expected to deliver a completed book manuscript, chapter, article, or grant proposal by the end of the summer. We will also increase the size and quantity of external grants and the number of faculty members involved in sponsored research by tactically investing in research centers and initiatives within the College—WIDE, CeLTA, CLEAR, the EEG lab, Ethics and Environment, and the DH Literary Cognition Lab—and between Colleges—MATRIX and DH@MSU.

On the graduate level, we have adopted a similar approach with our **CAL External Funding Incentive** program. Our goal is to encourage graduate students to seek grant, fellowship, and scholarship support for their research, scholarship, and creative endeavors. This program offers \$500 in fellowship support to students who submit applications for major externally-funded awards designed to enhance their research and creative activity. The goal of both of these incentive programs is to increase the number of grant applications submitted by CAL faculty and graduate students.

To further our ability to participate in major NSF, NIH, and other federally funded grant activity, we will **establish a Center for Interdisciplinarity in the Department of Philosophy**. The aim of the Center will be to study, develop, and enrich the artistic and humanistic side of collaborative scientific practice, including but not limited to its ethical, social and political, epistemic, and communication dimensions. Specifically, the Center would be positioned to provide a wide variety of sponsored research projects across the University with innovative mechanisms for generating and disseminating the broader impacts framework required by most major funding agencies. By emphasizing the rich and nuanced texture of human engagement with the world, the Center would increase the competitiveness of a wide variety of major MSU grants by differentiating our proposals from others that focus narrowly on empirical questions. In addition, such a Center would position the Philosophy Department as a national leader in the emerging field of “Interdisciplinary Studies,” which considers the epistemological and practical dimensions of interdisciplinary work.

These strategic initiatives to elevate the research and scholarly productivity of the College will also strengthen the quality of the undergraduate education we offer.

ENHANCING THE UNDERGRADUATE EXPERIENCE

A 21st century arts and humanities undergraduate education must offer extensive and supported opportunities for students to deepen their awareness of their place in a global world, to cultivate digital fluencies and ethical thinking, and to engage in professional development in order to make a successful transition to meaningful work.

In order to attract a diverse, high achieving, and engaged student body to the College, we will create a new **Arts and Letters Citizen Scholars program** that has three dimensions: aspiration, reward, and elevated expectation. All students with at least one major in the College, regardless of their academic record prior to arriving at MSU, will be challenged to perform their way into the Citizens Scholars program by enrolling in challenging courses and achieving at a high level of academic excellence. Students who demonstrate sustained academic excellence over two semesters will be admitted as Citizen Scholars and rewarded with \$5K of enrichment funding to be used for required study abroad/ internship/engaged undergraduate research experiences. Students will then be expected to perform at a yet higher level and to integrate ethical leadership and civic responsibility into their undergraduate experience to graduate as Arts and Letters Citizen Scholars.

To sustain this program, which we hope will include 100 students a year, we will ultimately need an endowment of \$10M to provide each student with \$5K in enrichment funding each year. The Citizen Scholars program is our main fundraising priority at the undergraduate level, but it will require an initial annual investment from the College of \$500K starting in year two of the program, once an initial cohort of students earn their way into the Citizen Scholars program.

The Citizen Scholars program is at the center of a strategic initiative to enrich the undergraduate experience, diversify our undergraduate student body, and ensure the retention and academic success of our students. The Residential College in Arts and Humanities (RCAH) has been included in the planning process to help us identify ways for RCAH students to benefit from participation in this program, whose focus dovetails well with RCAH's emphasis on engaged scholarship. The Citizen Scholars program will also enable us to align our strategic priorities with those of the Honors College as we will structure the Citizen Scholars program to prepare more College of Arts and Letters students to enter the Honors College as campus admits after their first semester. We will contribute to the Honors College's goal of increasing external undergraduate fellowships and scholarships by developing workshops and financial incentives for Citizen Scholars to apply for highly competitive scholarships like the Beinecke, Rhodes, Marshall, and Fulbright.

We also have undertaken a systematic review of undergraduate advising in the College with an eye toward providing more sustained and professional support for student success while freeing the faculty to focus more on student mentoring. Investing in a centralized professional advising structure and enhancing our career network will position our students to more effectively articulate the value of an arts and humanities education for a wide range of careers.

We continue to develop a curriculum that includes the business aspects of the arts and theatre, such as the growing Arts and Cultural Management program, alongside strong traditional humanities departments that instill in students the skills in writing, critical thinking, persuasion, innovation, and creativity that are most sought after by

employers. The College is taking a lead in developing courses like THR208: “Innovation through Improvisation,” STA303: “Design Thinking,” and CAS/AL114: “Creativity and Entrepreneurship” for the new Entrepreneurship & Innovation minor in collaboration with the Broad College of Business. Religious Studies is also developing an option in Non-Profit Leadership, which will contribute to our focused attempts to integrate the College into broader initiatives in entrepreneurship.

Our growing major in Graphic Design, our minor in digital humanities, and our innovative new major in Experience Architecture (XA) anchor our efforts to build strength in design and digital humanities at the undergraduate level. The XA major in particular is at the leading-edge of a new kind of humanities major that is rooted in the liberal arts tradition of excellent writing and rhetorical sophistication even as it creates opportunities for students to work across disciplines in collaboration with experts from diverse backgrounds to develop solutions to questions of user experience, interaction design, usability, information architecture, project management, and application development. Only in its third semester of operation, XA already has more than 50 majors. Investments in faculty with research strengths in design and digital humanities will be critical to the success of these programs.

Film Studies is at the center of the College’s priority in further develop strengths in media arts. Our innovative BA in Film Studies was founded in the spring of 2015, and we offer two cross-college filmmaking minors with the College of Communication Arts and Sciences (CAS) in Fiction Filmmaking and Documentary Production. These undergraduate initiatives at the curriculum level anchor our newly energized commitment to robust collaboration with CAS and the College of Music that we are calling the **Media Arts Collaborative (MAC)**.

The MAC initiative is designed to give CAS, CAL, and the College of Music a coordinated way to facilitate collaborative projects between the colleges that enrich the undergraduate learning experience and provide faculty opportunities to work together on innovative media arts projects. CAS and CAL have agreed on a goal to raise \$2M in a shared endowment that would enable us to provide \$100K of funding annually to undergraduate projects that cut across colleges working on media arts. In addition, the College of Music has agreed to partner with us through its own fundraising initiatives as well as by committing expendable and endowment funds to collaborative projects in media arts. Drawing on the success of the Theatre2Film project that brought the first ever student written and produced feature length film to the Traverse City Film Festival (TCFF), the three colleges are working collaboratively to create more opportunities for students to participate in the full range of the media arts creative process, from theory to practice, and from planning to implementation. These are rich educational experiences that teach students how to manage projects, work across disciplines, compromise, learn to fail fast, and create innovative work—skills they will need to transition to successful careers in a wide variety of professions. A second emerging dimension of the MAC is a shared goal to build a tighter network of alumni from the three colleges in the film and media arts industry to support our students as they transition from MSU to careers in film, acting, performance, music, and the media arts.

The collaboration between CAS, CAL, and the College of Music will enhance our shared effort to create a more coherent arts and culture experience for our students through the MSU Cultural Engagement Council (CEC). The College will partner with CEC colleagues to create, support, and develop University cultural engagement co-curriculum programing

that uses micro-credentialing to empower students to be engaged citizen leaders capable of integrating a sophisticated understanding of arts and culture into their experience at Michigan State University and beyond.

EXPAND OUR REVENUE BASE

To be a national leader in art and humanities research and education for the 21st Century, the College will need to be entrepreneurial in a constrained environment characterized by competitive markets for top faculty and graduate students and reduced public funding for education.

In addition to the **Summer Research Incentive** and **CAL External Funding Incentive** programs designed to encourage more faculty and graduate students to apply for and ultimately succeed in winning external funding for our research priorities, the College will also expand and enrich our summer online teaching portfolio. The College has had considerable success in generating revenue over the summer through the Off-Campus Credit Instruction. Between AY13 and AY15, we more that doubled our gross OCCI revenue from \$1.3M to \$3.7M. Our 5-year goal is to generate at least \$10M of OCCI revenue annually by developing a more systematic and integrated strategy among units within the College and across Colleges at MSU that will *improve the quality* of our online offerings and attract more students to our undergraduate and MA programs.

To accomplish this, the College's Assistant Dean for Technology and Innovation will lead a **Quality Online Teaching and Program Development** initiative that ensures our online courses and programs are strategically developed and offered across the College in ways that will allow us to expand our OCCI revenue and improve the quality of our online educational experience. Building upon the existing **Graduate Tech TA program**, which improves the competitiveness of our graduate students in a tight market by expanding their skills in the area of educational technology, this initiative expands our efforts to improve the quantity and quality of online pedagogy to more faculty in the College. These efforts will be coordinated with existing campus resources (HUB and IT@MSU) to ensure we have the instructional design infrastructure required to create and sustain an excellent online portfolio without duplicating campus resources.

Our third strategy for expanding our revenue base involves further **investment in and engagement with Advancement activities**. The College has reached its campaign goal of \$10M and we are in the process of assessing our capacity to significantly increase our fundraising goal for the final phase of the *Empower Extraordinary* campaign. In order to accomplish this, we have established three major fundraising goals directly connected to our strategic vision: 1) to raise funds for 5 new endowed faculty positions in the priority areas of culturally engaged digital humanities; engaged scholarship in an interconnected world; integrated design; and media arts; 2) to generate resources for 10 new endowed graduate fellowships across the College; and 3) to raise \$10M to endow the Citizens Scholars program.

A LEADING ARTS AND HUMANITIES EDUCATION FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

What differentiates the College of Arts and Letters at Michigan State University from other liberal arts colleges at R1 universities is the extraordinary impact we make at home and around the world **by combining the core strengths of a liberal arts education with a sophisticated understanding of emerging modes of scholarship, communication, and creative activity in a digital age.**

Our endeavors are bold and transformative. They can be accomplished by investments that align with the values embodied in the strategic plan articulated here. At the heart of this plan is an investment in people, as attracting, retaining, and cultivating talent is the essential ingredient we need to move the College from a position of national prominence to one of national leadership. The priorities and strategies outlined here will chart a course that positions the College of Arts and Letters at the heart of the mission of Michigan State University to educate a new generation of citizen scholars capable of solving the world's most challenging social, cultural, and ethical problems and enriching the lives of communities at home and abroad.