



2016 FALL PLANNING LETTER

COLLEGE OF ARTS & LETTERS

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Last year, we identified four priorities through which we would advance our strategic objective to establish the College of Arts & Letters (CAL) as a national leader in arts and humanities research and education for the 21st century: **culturally engaged digital humanities, engaged scholarship in an interconnected world, integrated design, and media arts**. Over the past year, we have made strategic investments in each of these areas with an intentional commitment to [cultivating practices of inclusion as a matter of institutional habit](#).

This has enabled us to refine our approach in each priority area. What we first articulated in terms of culturally engaged digital humanities has now become a more focused initiative on Critical Diversity in a Digital Age that will anchor our digital humanities approach more broadly at MSU. We have advanced our commitment to engaged scholarship in an interconnected world through the establishment of the [Center for Interdisciplinarity](#) and by initiating an exploration and planning process for a [School of Language Studies](#). We have strengthened the area of integrated design through strategic hiring in Experience Architecture, Graphic Design and Electronic Art. And through the MSU Media Arts Collaborative with the College of Communication Arts and Sciences and the College of Music, we have begun to create a culture of collaboration that has already had an impact on our media arts programs across the University.

Below, we outline how these priorities dovetail with and reinforce the [three priorities outlined in the Provost's Spring 2015 LEAD session](#).

SUPPORT FOR FACULTY

Empowering the research and creative activity of our faculty is at the heart of our efforts to raise the profile of the College and the University. Our approach is designed to help faculty envision and chart a path to intellectual leadership in their fields of study. Drawing on our successes in this regard last year, we will continue to invest in the Faculty Summer Fellowship Program and our Domain of One's Own initiative, and we will advance our efforts to recruit and retain faculty from traditionally underrepresented groups through an innovative Artist in Residence Program and our Critical Diversity in a Digital Age cluster hire.

The goal of the [Faculty Summer Fellowship Program Summer](#) is to foster the intellectual development of faculty, increase sponsored research activity in the College of Arts & Letters, and facilitate faculty efforts to achieve national and international prominence in their disciplines. The priorities of the program are to support the growth and development of junior and mid-career faculty, to fund promising innovative research and creative activity, and to support projects that are likely to be competitive for external resources.

Last year, we had 37 applications, 24 of which were funded. We are tracking the results of the fellowships this year to determine whether the return on our significant investment justifies continuing investment in the future. Based on outcome reports that were required in early fall, initial results are promising. The majority of the grants were awarded to junior and mid-career faculty members and were used by both groups productively to build their RPT dossiers. Additionally, the fellowships led to the preparation or submission proposals for NEH, NIH and NSF grants and other significant funding opportunities. Due to its encouraging launch in 2016, we decided to continue the program in 2017 and have received 24 proposals that are currently undergoing review.

Michigan State University's land-grant mission mandates the public accessibility of the scholarship and creative activity produced by our faculty. Our [Domain of One's Own](#) initiative is designed to empower faculty to consider how to use new modes of digital communication to cultivate community around their scholarship. This strategy, addressed in more detail below in the section on Advancing Quality Through Digital Scholarship and Pedagogy, is undertaken in collaboration with the Office of Communication and Brand Strategy to increase the exposure, impact and engagement with the creative scholarship of our faculty. Here too we continue to monitor the results of our efforts to ensure that they are raising the visibility of our faculty over time.

Excellence in arts and humanities research and creative activity requires recruiting, hiring and retaining the very best faculty from traditionally underrepresented groups. Strategic hiring continues to be an important part of our efforts in this regard. This year, we are undertaking two bold initiatives that should advance our attempts to diversify the faculty. The [Critical Diversity in a Digital Age](#) cluster hire will begin with three senior digital humanities scholars — one in English; one in Writing, Rhetoric, and American Culture; and one in History (partnering with the College of Social Science), whose work addresses the intersection of digital theory and practice with issues of social justice and human difference. As the digital humanities community continues to wrestle with issues of inclusion and diversity, the DH program at Michigan State University has embraced critical diversity as the very lens through which we will pursue work in the digital humanities. This should position us as *the* place for innovative scholars from traditionally underrepresented groups to study and work.

In addition to this cluster hire in digital humanities, we are investing in a Visiting Artist in Critical Race Studies program designed to bring to campus noted contemporary artists and designers who engage critically with race in their creative practice. Working closely with the Eli and Edythe Broad Art Museum, the Department of Art, Art History, and Design is leading this effort to bring three visiting artists to campus for a year both to enrich our engagement with questions of race through art and design, and also to better position us to recruit artists interested in such issues to the University. In this regard, we hope to leverage fixed-term faculty positions as a pipeline for more permanent faculty hiring in this area.

ELEVATING SCHOLARSHIP

Last year, we set an ambitious goal to quadruple our annual externally sponsored research and award production from \$3 million in 2015 to \$12 million by 2020. We made significant progress toward this goal over the past year, increasing our total external award output from \$3.1 million to \$5.1 million. In order to build upon and sustain this level of growth in sponsored research, we are bringing the Office of Research together with the Office of Graduate Education under the Associate Dean for Graduate Education and Research. Recognizing that the mission of our graduate programs is tightly connected with that of the research endeavor, this restructuring will provide the institutional infrastructure to support sustained growth in sponsored research and the ongoing adoption of innovative practices in graduate education.

This restructuring also involves the reorganization of our research centers in the College of Arts & Letters. The directors of our 10 research centers/labs — Writing, Information, and Digital Experience (WIDE); Matrix; Center for Interdisciplinarity; Digital Humanities Literary Cognition Lab (DHLC); Center for Language Education and Research (CLEAR);

Center for Language Teaching Advancement CeLTA); Sociolinguistics Lab; EEG Lab; Language Acquisition Lab; and the Eyetracker Lab — will now report up to the Dean through the Associate Dean for Graduate Education and Research. This will enable us to drive strategic planning and development to ensure that our research mission dovetails with and advances our academic objective to create a culture of inclusive excellence in research and pedagogy.

We have had some success this year advancing the quality of our graduate programs through two strategic initiatives: the **College of Arts & Letters Scholars Recruitment Fellowship program** and the **External Funding Incentives** program. The CAL Scholars program provides flexible recruitment funding packages to ensure that our offers are competitive with our most well-resourced aspirational peers. This year, we were able to attract six high-quality Ph.D. and M.F.A. recruits from traditionally underrepresented groups with competitive offers from other schools in Philosophy (1), English (1), RCS (1), WRAC (2) and AAHD (1), using the new CAL Scholars recruitment funding. In all, seven of the nine programs in CAL held recruitment events with matching funds from the Dean's office, resulting in one of our most diverse recruitment classes ever.

Our External Funding Incentive program provides graduate students with a \$500 incentive to submit a proposal for external research support to programs pre-approved by the College. We had nine students apply for major grant or fellowship funding in 2015-16, roughly double the number reported last year by program directors. Of these, one student from Philosophy was awarded a three-year Ford Foundation Fellowship, which will cover her GA expenses. A student from SLS also won a fellowship that brought a semester's worth of support. Our return on our investment for last year was 16:1; we invested a total of \$4,500 and received \$73,400 in awards. Thus far in Fall 2016, we have awarded six incentives. Applications are for agencies and foundations that include Fulbright, NSF, ACLS and Ford. So we are off to a strong(er) start in 2016-17.

In an effort to advance the stature of Michigan State University as a center of Digital Humanities Scholarship in Critical Diversity, we are partnering with the MSU Libraries and the HUB for Innovative in Learning and Technology to facilitate the creation of a Digital Scholarship Lab that would enable us to bring digital scholarship in the arts and humanities that is currently dispersed across campus together into a dynamic, innovative new lab for faculty and graduate and undergraduate students in the Library.

These strategic initiatives to support faculty and elevate the research and scholarly productivity of the College are tied tightly to our efforts to strengthen the quality of the undergraduate education we offer.

ENHANCING THE UNDERGRADUATE EXPERIENCE

Our commitment to cultivating practices of inclusion as a matter of institutional habit, has led us to restructure the administrative support for our undergraduate program by appointing an Associate Dean for Undergraduate Education, Diversity and Inclusion. This restructuring is motivated by the recognition that our efforts to diversify our faculty and student body in the College of Arts & Letters must be rooted in a commitment to diversifying the curriculum.

Last year, we initiated a robust **Inclusion Initiative** that involves 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 underrepresented faculty, graduate students and undergraduates; 3) partnering with units across the University, including the Academic Advancement Network (AAN), to take the lead in educating the University community about the complex and pernicious mechanisms of institutional prejudice.

In order to facilitate the development of a more diverse curriculum, we created an **Engaged Pedagogy and Programming fund** for proposals that support efforts to integrate content connected to critical diversity and intersectional scholarship into the curriculum. The Associate Dean for Undergraduate Education, Diversity and Inclusion has facilitated a series of workshops to advance emerging curriculum in this area. Our hiring initiatives are tied to these efforts, both through our Critical Diversity in a Digital Age initiative and more broadly across the College, so that we will be able to recruit and retain faculty committed in their scholarship to the diverse curriculum we intend to cultivate. With regard to mentoring and leadership, we are working with the AAN to facilitate more robust leadership development for our faculty and to implement a mentoring corps that will create an institutional structure that does not depend on inconsistent one-on-one mentoring organized at the department level. The College has sponsored approximately eight National Center for Faculty Development & Diversity Faculty Success Program registrations for mostly untenured faculty and will do so again for the 2017 session.

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.

To this end, we launched our **Citizen Scholars Program** this year and have started a planning and exploration process that will create an experiential learning requirement integrated with a new, more comprehensive approach to career networking and alumni relations that will position our students to chart successful paths from MSU to leadership in fulfilling careers. A liberal arts education at Michigan State University does not simply prepare students for jobs that have yet to be created or imagined, but more importantly, it positions them to be leaders in professions committed to creating a better world.

This year, we established the structure of the Citizen Scholars program, appointed its inaugural director, Professor Sandra Logan, and its student advisor, Sarah Whitaker, and welcomed 82 new aspirants who have committed themselves to being the citizen leaders of tomorrow. The program 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, who are willing to make the effort 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 \$5,000 of enrichment funding to be used for required study abroad/internship/engaged undergraduate research experiences. Raising funds for this program is a College priority, and our early success in this area of philanthropy suggests that the program will have substantive and sustained support among our friends and alumni.

We have initiated a new **Experiential Learning (ExL)** initiative in the College of Arts & Letters that is designed to ensure that our students have the experiences they need to chart a path to meaningful careers and a fulfilling life. The faculty is considering an experiential learning requirement that would be tied to a newly developed career network that will focus our efforts in career and professional networking and in experiential learning. The network will provide an innovative hub in which there is a continuum of care for student professional development that starts when students enter MSU and continues as they move into careers after graduation. Pulling together our resources in student success, career services, experiential learning, alumni relations and advising, we will create career communities in the College and provide a holistic experience that prepares the whole person to live an enriching life.

We continue to partner with the HUB for Innovation in Learning and Technology and the Associate Provost for Undergraduate Education and Dean of Undergraduate Studies to pilot an innovative integrative studies curriculum designed to improve our retention rates for students at risk of dropping out after their first semester.

Our **MSU Media Arts Collaborative** with the College of Communication Arts and Sciences (ComArtSci) and the College of Music continues to support collaborative projects between the colleges that enrich the undergraduate learning experience and provide faculty opportunities to work together on innovative media arts projects. ComArtSci and CAL have agreed on a goal to raise \$2 million in a shared endowment that would enable us to provide \$100,000 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. We are beginning to have some fundraising success with the initiative after our high-profile presence at the 2016 Traverse City Film Festival in which one of our documentary films, *From Flint: Voices of a Poisoned City*, won a 2016 Student Academy Award.

ADVANCING QUALITY THROUGH DIGITAL SCHOLARSHIP AND PEDAGOGY

The College of Arts & Letters has emerged as a leader at the University in leveraging advances in technology to improve the quality of our pedagogy and scholarship because our approach has been strategic and holistic. Our digital strategies are wholly integrated into our in-person strategies to provide the highest quality educational experiences to our students.

ADVANCING PEDAGOGY

In order to promote quality in our online programs and hybrid courses, we have adopted a multi-tiered approach that pairs faculty, graduate students, department and college administrators, and institutional-level staff (HUB/ITS) across the design, development and revision process. Our regularly offered graduate course, “Practicum in Blended and Online Learning,” engages graduate students in exploring learning theory, best practices for design and development, and methods for evaluation and revision of online courses. Students who have completed this course are eligible to participate in our graduate internship program as a Tech TA. Tech TAs are embedded in CAL departments and work

with faculty and departmental administrators to develop, evaluate and revise online and blended courses across the curriculum.

At the college level, our academic technology staff works closely with the departments and Tech TAs, as well as with staff at the HUB and ITS to follow best practices and to innovate in sustainable ways. We have been leading the adoption of the Quality Matters rubric for course quality (in collaboration with ITS Teaching/Learning) by integrating the quality metrics into a framework for regular evaluation and revision of our courses. This framework ensures continuous quality improvement of our courses and programs through regular FLCs and workshops for faculty teaching online, surveys to assess how faculty are implementing the QM rubric, and one-on-one faculty consultations as needed. Department- and program-level strategic decisions are made within the context of this program and through regular strategic planning with departments.

The [College of Arts & Letters offers a graduate certificate](#) in college teaching in collaboration with the Graduate School. Our program follows the main requirements of the Graduate School and expands some requirements in order to make them more robust and tied more closely to online and blended learning. Students are awarded badges for each of the main components they finish, as well as a badge when the program is complete and student work is certified by our Assistant Dean for Technology and Innovation, Associate Dean for Graduate Studies and the Graduate School.

Departments are required to articulate a systematic approach to online curriculum that privilege the desires and needs of our undergraduates. Specifically, we identify courses students need to complete their degrees in a timely way and ensure those offerings are available during the summer. We have started to coordinate offerings across the college summer online portfolio to facilitate the completion of requirements, minors and majors through our online programs.

OCCI revenue is being reinvested into these programs to ensure that they are sustainable and continuously improving.

ADVANCING SCHOLARSHIP

Our digital strategy in the College is not, however, limited to pedagogy. Working in collaboration with the College of Natural Science, College of Education, Lyman Briggs College, the HUB, the Graduate School, and MSU's Academic Advancement Network, we have developed a faculty fellows program in connection to the Domain of One's Own initiative to help faculty and graduate students create, maintain and develop an online scholarly presence designed to cultivate a community of scholarship around their research and pedagogy. To date, we have 140 registered users on our web hosting service and 24 faculty members in the fellows program, 11 from the College of Arts & Letters.

Further, our Critical Diversity approach to Digital Humanities will enable us to attract and retain faculty and students from traditionally underrepresented groups who understand the affordances and limitations of technology for scholarship and pedagogy.

This will provide us with the resources we need to continue to advance and improve our efforts to leverage emerging digital technologies to improve the quality of our curriculum, both online and in-person.

The Critical Diversity approach to DH is also put into practice through our digital humanities centers: WIDE, Matrix, LEADR (with the CSS) and the DHLHC, each of which advance scholarship in their areas by adopting innovative digital practices that have had success in bringing in grant money and establishing Michigan State University as a leader in digital scholarship and pedagogy.

EXPANDING OUR REVENUE BASE

As we noted last year, 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.

We have made significant progress in expanding our revenue base through our Research Office, our online initiatives, and through our advancement activities.

In November 2015, the College of Arts & Letters reached its original goal of \$10 million for the Empower Extraordinary campaign. At that time, we identified enough capacity to justify a new goal of \$20 million and have since then raised an additional \$7 million toward that revised goal. Our three major fundraising goals are directly connected to our strategic vision: 1) to raise funds for 5 new endowed faculty positions in the priority areas of critical diversity in a digital age; 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 \$10 million to endow the Citizens Scholars program.

A LEADING ARTS AND HUMANITIES EDUCATION FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

What differentiates the College of Arts & 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.**

At the heart of this plan is an investment in people. 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 & 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.