



2019 FALL PLANNING LETTER

COLLEGE OF ARTS & LETTERS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	1
The Department of African American and African Studies	2
The MSU Arts Strategy at the Heart of the University's Research Mission	2
Toward a Culture of Care - Creating the Conditions for Intellectual Leadership	3
Core Commitment to Undergraduate Studies and Student Success	6
Enacting Values	7



College of Arts & Letters
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

Michigan State University is undergoing an intense period of transformation. With the arrival of President Samuel L. Stanley Jr., the departure of the Provost and senior leadership at the Vice-Presidential levels, the University has entered a decisive moment in its history, one that requires the intentional articulation of core values and the disciplined embodiment of those values into practice. We in the College of Arts & Letters have undertaken an approach to strategic planning that focuses on enacting the values for which we advocate in order to create the conditions under which our students, staff, and faculty are empowered to do high-quality, meaningful work.

During Fall 2018, all units in the College of Arts & Letters were asked to identify three core values of the unit and to map these values onto their primary strategic initiatives to ensure that we are putting our values into practice through our activities. Chairs and Directors also were asked to articulate how the unit is advancing a culture of shared accountability and trust based on the values conversations they had undertaken.

Drawing on the values articulated in the units, College leadership identified the following three core values of the College of Arts & Letters:

- Equity – inclusivity, diversity, social justice, equitable access, accessibility
- Openness – transparency, open process, candor, accountability, open source
- Community – collaboration, collegiality, empathy, respect, connection

The self-reflection and dialogue that led to the articulation of unit-level values were designed to establish safer, more respectful and welcoming environments that promote student, staff, and faculty success. Identifying shared values is a critical first step in establishing a culture of accountability in which we are all committed to living up to the values we have established. Trust, however, is earned over time as we intentionally and explicitly enact these values in our processes, procedures, and daily interactions.

Over the past year, we have been disciplined in aligning our decisions and initiatives with our core values. For example, last spring we experimented with an open and collaborative budget request process in which all unit chairs and directors were asked to prepare two priority requests that were then shared with and evaluated by all the deans, chairs, and directors in the College. To facilitate the process, we worked together to establish a budget request evaluation rubric that included consideration of values alignment, student success, faculty retention, and a variety of constraints. Having developed this rubric in an open and collaborative way, the deans, chairs, and directors evaluated one another's requests, and the results were mapped onto a matrix that provided a sense of the shared judgment of the College's leadership. The results were themselves shared and discussed at a deans, chairs, and directors meeting.

This transparent and collaborative process deepened trust across the College, brought a new level of awareness to our leadership team of the opportunities for collaboration and the constraints on resources, and generated more joint hiring requests than we have seen in the past. This process also reaffirmed support across the College for the top strategic priorities outlined below, each of which aligns with the values we have articulated and advances the President's five initial priorities in concrete ways.

THE DEPARTMENT OF AFRICAN AMERICAN AND AFRICAN STUDIES

Our top priority as a College is to facilitate the success of the new Department of African American and African Studies (AAAS), which was established on July 1, 2019. We recognize this as a primary way through which we can live out our core value of equity by recruiting and retaining talented faculty and students of color to the College of Arts & Letters and Michigan State University.

For this strategy of recruitment and retention to be successful over the long term, we must embrace the *intellectual substance* of African American and African Studies by building curriculum and supporting an organizational structure that conveys, with clarity and urgency, the importance of Black and Africana Studies.

Over the summer, the new Department initiated two searches, one for a new external chairperson and one for a new full-time, tenure stream position in African American and African Studies. The chairperson candidates have finished their on-campus visits in early December, and we expect to be able to make an offer soon. The candidates for the tenure stream position will come to campus early in the spring semester. Space for the new Department has been the top priority space request of the College for the past two years. We are actively working with Barb Kranz and her team to identify space for 12 faculty and the chair, staff, the undergraduate and graduate programs, a seminar room, and other related facilities as discussed with Barb on October 30, 2019.

THE MSU ARTS STRATEGY AT THE HEART OF THE UNIVERSITY'S RESEARCH MISSION

As Michigan State University develops a coordinated approach to an Arts Strategy that would place the arts at the heart of the University's land-grant mission, the College of Arts & Letters must take a proactive leadership role in shaping the engaged university of the 21st century. The arts offer creative ways of knowing that are integral to the mission of the University, both in themselves and in reciprocal connection with scientific, humanistic, and professional practices.

The College has established the Dean's Arts Advisory Council (DAAC) to advise the Dean on Arts Initiatives, to elevate the profile of the arts, and to integrate the arts into the research mission of the university through strategic collaboration.

Our efforts are inspired by a passage from the [2008 Harvard Task Force on the Arts report](#), which recognized that a 21st century research university should:

"... make the arts an integral part of the cognitive life of the university: for along with the sciences and the humanities, the arts—as they are both experienced and practiced—are irreplaceable instruments of knowledge."

To this end, we continue the open and exciting re-visioning process in the Department of Art, Art History, and Design (AAHD) that began two years ago, including the re-opening of a restructured MFA program in AAHD that empowers students of diverse backgrounds to identify individualized pathways that focus on themes like Arts, Science, and Technology or Design, Culture, and Identity. We approved a national search for a new Chair of the Department of Theatre who will be able to advance the Department's signature initiatives in entrepreneurship and in the creation of innovative sensory-friendly performances for neurodiverse audiences. Our efforts in the Arts have been aligned with the three core values of equity, openness, and community as indicated, for example, by our Critical Race Studies Artist Residency program in AAHD, and in Theatre, by our multi-sensory theatrical performances.

The Deans Arts Advisory Council has begun to gather feedback from across the College to identify initiatives connected with its charge, and is considering ways to facilitate collaboration through curriculum development, collaborative grants, strategic social gatherings across the arts, and support for student access to experiences in the arts. A key focus on the College in regard to the arts is to drive the adoption of the MSU Arts Strategy's bold vision of a 21st Century Arts corridor that would require renovations of the Kresge Building and the MSU Auditorium to create world-class facilities to match the world-class faculty in the arts.

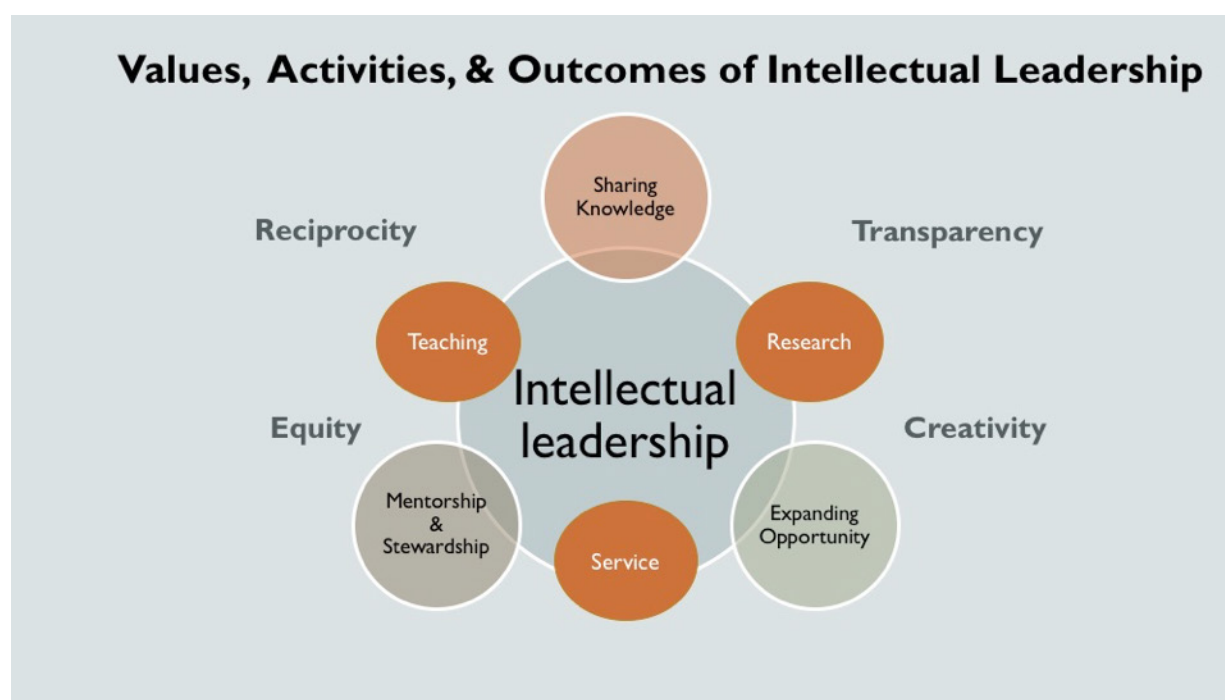
TOWARD A CULTURE OF CARE - CREATING THE CONDITIONS FOR INTELLECTUAL LEADERSHIP

At the heart of our values-enacted strategic plan is the idea that if we can create a working environment in which faculty, students, and staff are empowered to do the work that is most meaningful to them, we will have an advantage in recruiting and retaining the most innovative and engaged faculty and students. Recognizing that establishing a culture of equity is the condition under which the most sophisticated and highest quality research and pedagogy can flourish, the College has put the Culture of Care initiative at the center of our strategic practice.

During the Spring 2019 semester, more than 40 staff and faculty of the College of Arts & Letters volunteered to be members of the Culture of Care Task Force. The College Advisory Committee and the Dean charged the Culture of Care Task Force of 12 faculty, students, and staff members, led by Professor Rob Roznowski, to make recommendations that would enable the College to create a culture of care, which they defined as: "active community empathy that leads with intention and kindness." The Task Force made important recommendations concerning six areas of focus: Orientation, Community Building, Peer Review, Academics, Conflict within the Work Environment, and Acceptable Resolution Models. In Fall 2019, the Task Force established a corresponding set of six action committees to engage more members of the College community in putting these recommendations into practice. The Culture of Care Task Force is another strategic example of how we are intentionally aligning our priorities and activities with our values.

FACULTY DEVELOPMENT APPROACH TO REAPPOINTMENT, PROMOTION, AND TENURE

The College aims to create a culture in which scholars doing innovative interdisciplinary and intersectional research and pedagogy by developing a faculty development approach to RPT. This requires creating structures and practices that empower our faculty to chart their path of intellectual leadership as they undertake the RPT process. At the center of our efforts is [a framework we call CPIL: Charting Pathways for Intellectual Leadership](#). Over the course of a career, intellectual leaders share knowledge and expand opportunity, contributing to greater transparency and accelerating creativity. Intellectual leaders engage in mentorship of others, formally as instructors and informally. They also engage in stewardship of the institutional spaces for learning as a reciprocal dynamic, creating the conditions for greater equity.



The semi-transparent circles in the diagram are the things we should measure and reward. The solid ovals are the means by which we do these things, and they should not be confused with ends. Too often, these means are the only things we measure. A better measure of published scholarship, for instance, would look to evaluate the *benefit* of sharing the knowledge. This is a challenge the College has taken up in conjunction with a group of other institutions and scholarly organizations in the [HumetricsHSS project](#).

RESEARCH AGENDA

Our efforts to shift the research culture in the College toward creating more research engagement, collaboration, and opportunity – and in the service of doing so, toward generating more external support for research – have focused on transforming the research culture to catalyze collaboration via research centers & groups and to build pre- and post-award support capacity throughout the College.

Our boldest initiative is the broader shift toward faculty career development through the CPIL framework that enables us to recognize, incentivize, and reward participatory research that has meaningful impact on local, regional, national, and global communities. Its emphasis on expanding opportunity, sharing knowledge, and mentorship/stewardship empower faculty to tell more textured stories about how their research is oriented toward indicators of success relevant to communities beyond the academy. Together, these qualities define our research mission beyond the pursuit of numbers of grant dollars and publications.

Three thematic focus areas complement an overarching emphasis on critical diversity and inclusion as areas of investment in research for the College. These areas are higher education transformation, health and sustainability, and visual culture and sound studies. All are areas with active externally funded awards, grants and fellowships, and within each we have high-profile intellectual leadership efforts. An example in the higher-education transformation thematic cluster is our Mellon Foundation funded initiative (\$3.7M over 6 years) in less commonly taught languages (LCTL) that includes a focus on indigenous languages and collaboration with tribal communities in the ancestral lands of the three fires confederacy. An example in the health and sustainability category that also includes partners from these tribal groups is “Socio-Technological System Transitions: Michigan Community and Anishinaabe Renewable Energy Sovereignty.” The project uses community-engaged research to collect and analyze local renewable energy risks, barriers, and opportunities that can help with decision-making and future transitions to renewable energy systems.

SALARY INEQUITY ACROSS APPOINTMENT TYPES

In the College, there is a salary equity problem across appointment types. Over the past 10 years, the College has come to increasingly rely on the talents of non-tenure stream faculty and academic staff to meet its instructional commitment as a University core college. Although not required, a good number of these faculty are research and service active and regularly contribute as intellectual leaders in their fields. These dedicated personnel ensure continued delivery of high-quality, student-centered courses in the Arts & Humanities and particularly in writing that serve multiple colleges across campus as well as through the general education offerings and the College’s own majors and minors. This purposeful reliance on non-tenure stream faculty also enables those in the tenure-stream to pursue their research. The work of our 250 dedicated non-tenure stream faculty in the College is at the heart of the university’s land-grant mission.

Due to the significant economic challenges experienced early in the decade, the majority of fixed-term faculty and academic specialist salaries in the College remain tied to the UNTF minimum. Most of these positions are devoted to teaching and therefore rely on general fund dollars rather than external grants. Salaries do not keep pace with inflation and make it increasingly difficult for non-tenure stream faculty to make ends meet, thus forcing them to seek full or part-time employment in other fields or at other locations. Salary compression continues to be a challenge. It is difficult to meaningfully address salary inequity with the limited resources of our existing raise pool. We are trying to address this issue in other ways such as creating transparent promotion and career development pathways. In the spring, a College task force will be charged with reviewing non-tenure stream promotion criteria and recommending ways to better integrate and reward such faculty for their dedication and investment in their students and units. Salary inequity puts the College at a competitive disadvantage in recruiting and retaining the

teaching faculty most capable of enhancing the undergraduate educational experience and achieving our University student success goals.

CORE COMMITMENT TO UNDERGRADUATE STUDIES AND STUDENT SUCCESS

The College has undertaken several initiatives at the undergraduate level to advance our commitment to equitable access and student success. [The Excel Network](#) establishes and supports a holistic approach to experiential learning, career education, student advising, and alumni networking in the College of Arts & Letters to chart successful paths to meaningful careers. Drawing on our new experiential learning requirement, the Excel Network supports our students as they seek to put their core values into practice and chart their own paths to intellectual leadership.

The [Citizen Scholars Program](#), now in its fourth year, continues to provide open access for any aspiring College of Arts & Letters undergraduate to perform their way into academic excellence and advanced cultural and civic understanding through a combination of course-based and co-curricular requirements to the designation of “Citizen Scholar”. The program prepares students for meaningful careers and leadership roles by providing structured and self-directed paths that help them explore their own interests in diversity, inclusiveness, social justice, and civic service. Citizen Scholars access resources to fund an enhanced capstone experience that sets them apart from their peers both through self-knowledge and career preparation.

With these signature programs in place as the infrastructure through which to enrich the undergraduate experience, the College needs to encourage more engagement with and support for the undergraduate mission through incentives that provide more robust rewards for undergraduate teaching and experiential learning. To this end, we appointed Cara Cilano as the Associate Dean for Undergraduate Studies in July 2019. This newly formed role draws together the College’s investments in undergraduate student and academic affairs with direct reports from Integrative Studies in the Arts and Humanities, advising, assessment, the Excel Network, the Citizen Scholars program, and all undergraduate programs, minors, and majors in the College. By leveraging the collaborative potential derived from this reorganization, the Associate Dean for Undergraduate Studies has already undertaken several initiatives that address a mandate to diversify the curriculum, to live up to our commitments to access and equity, and to enhance faculty engagement with undergraduate education in their units and in the Integrative Arts & Humanities program.

Given the College’s considerable contributions to general education, the Associate Dean’s office has initiated two efforts that address changing curricular needs as well as student success and well-being that align with President Stanley’s priorities. Both initiatives anticipate a general education revision and, as a core college, assert the abiding centrality of the arts and humanities to MSU’s undergraduate mission. The Integrative Studies in the Arts and Humanities Advisory Committee, for instance, has appointed a Diversity, Equity, Inclusion (DEI) Steering Committee whose charge is to articulate clear learning outcomes that will infuse DEI content into all IAH courses. This group is also working closely with our Assistant Director of Assessment to structure this curricular shift in ways conducive to our abilities to gauge student learning and development. The result of these efforts will be readily transportable to a new general education curriculum and the University’s strategic planning initiative around DEI.

Additionally, the Associate Dean for Undergraduate Studies has convened a First Year/Transfer Experience work group whose goal is to define “student success” anchored in the College’s values of equity, community, and openness. To date, this work group has sketched First Year/Transfer Experience programs that begin with recruitment and yield, continue through NSO and welcome week, and get developed further through first-year and transfer seminars potentially linked with specially designated sections of first-year writing and major gateway courses. This approach takes advantage of the combined student and academic affairs expertise that operate within the office of the Associate Dean for Undergraduate Studies.

ENACTING VALUES

During this intense period of transition at Michigan State University, the College of Arts & Letters has sought to take the lead in embodying the culture change we hope to foster across the university and more broadly in higher education. This has required our intentional identification of core values and a disciplined commitment to live up to those values in every decision we make and in every initiative we undertake. This values-enacted approach is a key to building trust across the College so that each member of our community is able to do meaningful work that elevates our capacity to live up to the land-grant ideal of broad access to excellent education and research.