

Strategic Plan Executive Summary

A Road Map to Boldness

October 2017

Background

One of Dean Kevin M. Guskiewicz's first acts upon assuming the helm of the College of Arts & Sciences on Jan. 1, 2016, was to initiate a formal strategic planning process to plot a path forward for the College, the oldest and largest school of UNC-Chapel Hill. As a dean candidate, Guskiewicz had pledged to be "strategic, bold and student focused," a directive that resonated with both College faculty and the University's senior leadership. It has served as an informal charge for the strategic planning process and has echoes here in the subtitle of this executive summary.

Guskiewicz engaged the services of Paul Friga, clinical associate professor at Kenan-Flagler Business School and a noted authority on strategic planning for corporations and nonprofits, and Friga's handpicked consulting team of business students to direct the process. Along with Guskiewicz, the strategic task force included the College's four senior associate academic deans, the senior associate deans of administration and strategy and of development, and the director of communications. The task force met every two weeks from March through October 2016.

To assist the task force, an advisory committee consisting of approximately 30 prominent faculty and department chairs in the College, some UNC deans outside the College, and other key figures including the provost, student body president, Board of Trustees members, A&S Foundation Board members and alumni business leaders was assembled. This group's role was to review and comment on the task force's findings and actions. It met at key times during 2016 to provide feedback to the strategic task force.

A second advisory group, the College Think Tank—a group of thought leaders, mostly UNC alumni and friends of the

College, was assembled by the dean to advise him and serve as an informal sounding board for strategic planning and preparing students for life beyond Carolina.

Why a strategic plan?

A strategic plan is a thoughtful road map that provides direction, helps define priorities, and assists with management of limited resources. The College of Arts & Sciences has more than 70 departments, curricula, programs, centers and institutes. It has 108 areas of study (majors, minors and concentrations). It is not possible—or even beneficial—to invest in *everything*. A strategic plan helps the College's leadership identify the differentiators and ways we can distinguish ourselves from our peers. A clear strategy decreases ambiguity about the future of departments and programs. Mission, vision and value statements are guiding beacons for deans and department chairs to make both short- and long-term decisions.

Having a clear strategy and road map are powerful tools for recruiting new faculty and students and for securing additional resources. It also facilitates alignment with other strategic plans of which the College is an important component, such as Chancellor Folt's *Blueprint for Next* and the UNC System's *Higher Expectations* plan.

Not all road maps are bold, however. The College's Road Map to Boldness seeks to be more than a way forward. It is a strategic plan that reinforces our belief in the lifelong value that a liberal arts education provides, especially one that emphasizes *breadth, depth and practice* in arts and sciences disciplines. It is a means to empower our talented researchers, scholars, artists and creators, so that the world turns to us to solve the grand challenges of our times.

The Process

The strategic planning process was divided into three phases: *Assessment*, *Visioning* and *Implementation Planning*.

For the *Assessment* phase, internal and external surveys were conducted, along with a competitive analysis of our peer universities’ mission statements, organization and departmental offerings. The group also looked at how UNC performed in national rankings from groups such as *U.S. News & World Report*. An alumni survey conducted by the Boston Consulting Group in 2013 was another important source of information. The internal survey went to all department chairs and faculty and staff within the College, and more than 1,000 responses were received (out of 1,900 sent).

Using information gathered from all of these sources, the task force created a SWOT analysis—strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats—for the College.

The second phase of the strategic planning was *Visioning*. During this period, the task force developed mission, vision and value statements and key priorities, which were then vetted with the Advisory Committee and College Think Tank.

A mission statement, according to Friga, is a statement that specifies an organization’s purpose or “reason for being” and the primary objective toward which the organization’s programs and plans should be aimed. The mission should

make you feel proud.

The first part of the College’s new *mission statement* — “To think, communicate, collaborate and create” — is not only what we strive to teach our students, it is also the environment we seek to provide for our faculty and staff so that they may do their best work.

Each of those words packs a lot of meaning. “Think” refers to analytical and creative thinking, to reflecting, to making cognitive leaps to connect ideas. “Communicate” encapsulates written, oral, visual and digital fluencies. “Collaborate” recognizes that most research and learning experiences today are team sports, and the ability to work cooperatively toward a shared goal is essential. “Create” means producing knowledge as well as inventing technologies or materials; it embraces performance, composition and art.

“...For meaningful lives”—the second half of the mission statement—is equally multilayered. It refers to the empowering effects of education and self-knowledge. It’s a recognition that a broad and deep liberal arts education provides perspective, context and understanding. It recognizes that today’s students will likely have multiple careers—and our job is to provide the foundation that permits them to adapt, to excel and to explore the unexpected path.

A *vision statement* captures what the organization strives to become, and should be specific and motivating. A vision statement should make you feel excited.

Our vision statement, “*Reimagining the Arts & Sciences for the public good*,” recognizes that we are the nation’s first public university and with that comes responsibility. Public service is steeped into the ethos of Carolina faculty, students, staff and alumni. We are seeking to identify and solve some of the world’s grand challenges—energy efficiency, clean water, economic disparities, urban sprawl, religious intolerance, to name just a few. Our forward-thinking faculty and students are also working on solutions for challenges that lie ahead. We are striving for changes that will positively disrupt.

SWOT Analysis – UNC College of Arts & Sciences (Based on 1,048 faculty/staff survey responses, BCG alumni survey, College Strategic Planning Advisory Committee feedback; Think Tank)	
Strengths <ul style="list-style-type: none"> World-renowned teaching and research faculty who attract excellent students Many aspects of a small liberal arts college experience, with the resources of a world class research university Low tuition and successful employment leading to high return on investment 	Weaknesses <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Faculty, staff, and graduate students receive below peer average compensation and inconsistent raises Communication, information exchange, and organizational inefficiencies Lack of integrated academic advising and career mentoring
Opportunities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a more contemporary, innovative, and interdisciplinary global curriculum and new models of delivery Differentiate among other universities on our commitment to service as the most “public” university Expand high-impact research that engages with rapidly developing and changing world issues 	Threats <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inadequate and decreasing funding The increasing demand for value from a liberal arts degree Students expect more experiential, customized and global learning opportunities

Our Mission

*Think. Communicate. Collaborate. Create.
...for meaningful lives.*

Our Vision

*Reimagining the Arts & Sciences
for the public good*

Our Values

*Student Focus
Scholarly Excellence
Strategically Bold*

A *values statement* is a declaration of what we believe in, our guiding principles, and how we interact. A values statement should make you feel like you belong.

Our new values statement is: “*Student Focus, Scholarly Excellence, Strategically Bold.*” It indicates that we put students first and foremost—they are the reason we are here. Second, as a renowned global public research university, we aspire to lead the world in research, academic scholarship and creative endeavors. Third, we recognize that courageous change is usually preceded by a systematic plan and a mindset that doesn’t settle for the status quo.

Strategic Priorities for the College

These new mission, vision and values statements were instrumental in crafting the overarching strategic priorities for the College. These priorities were intended to be big-picture, multidisciplinary and inclusive, so that every academic unit could envision its role in them.

Three major strategic priorities for the College emerged from the planning process and are stated below.

The General Education curriculum (the foundational coursework every student is required to take regardless of major) was last updated in 2006. The curriculum that will be rolled out to first-year students in 2019 is actively being developed now.

Other initiatives under this priority include reimagining the humanities Ph.D., expanding and developing instructional methods based on evidence-based inquiry and generating more interdisciplinary (across departments and across schools), experiential and global learning opportunities. These efforts will build on the new interdisciplinary, team-

taught courses the College has funded and will continue to fund.

Although many think of the College of Arts & Sciences as the place where three-quarters of Carolina undergraduates will earn their degree, it is also a research powerhouse. Its faculty brought in \$112 million in research grants in fiscal year 2017 and is on pace to surpass this in fiscal year 2018. Initiatives under this second strategic priority include strengthening the basic and applied research portfolio, harnessing interdisciplinary talent for addressing global issues, building adaptive research facilities and increasing commercialization of research.

The third priority, “tell the story of the College of Arts & Sciences,” is an acknowledgement that the excellent teaching, research and public service that occurs daily at Carolina from College faculty, students and staff is not as well-known as it should be. Initiatives under this priority include raising the national profile of the College and its faculty, and creating awareness at the state and local levels of the College as a research entity, economic driver and source of innovation.

As the University prepares to launch its public comprehensive campaign, “telling the story” will be an important part of raising funds for the College. This narrative will engage volunteers and advisory boards and provide compelling content for case statements and mini-campaigns. The College is coming off a record year in fundraising— raising \$91.3 million (a 30% increase from last year) to help support many of the strategic priorities outlined in this *Road Map to Boldness*.

The third phase of the strategic plan is the *implementation plan*, the part of the plan the College is in now. Objectives and initiatives supporting the priorities have been created, and metrics to track progress and results are being developed. A budget to fund key strategic initiatives has been created. The plan is intended to be a four-year road map for the College starting in late 2017.

Departmental Strategic Plans

Once the College completed phase two of its strategic planning process, Dean Guskiewicz charged academic

Our Strategic Priorities

1. Develop a contemporary, innovative, inclusive and global **curriculum**
2. Expand high-impact and interdisciplinary **research**
3. Tell the **story** of the College of Arts & Sciences

department chairs at the October 2016 Chairs Retreat to complete their own strategic plans. Chairs used the same planning processes as the College, performing peer reviews, surveys and SWOT analyses and then crafting mission, vision and values statements. Friga and his team supported the departments with data gathering, analysis and strategy creation.

Although the chairs identified priorities specific to their departments, the priorities were intended to somehow reflect one or more of the College's three overarching priorities.

Departments were asked, for example, to:

- Illustrate how they were contributing to the development of a contemporary, innovative, inclusive and global curriculum
- Describe their plans to build on existing research accomplishments and efforts to accommodate/ encourage more interdisciplinary partnerships
- Identify ways in which their faculty's research and service positively impact the state and promote the College as a research entity, economic driver and source of innovation.

Chairs were also asked to provide statistics and hiring justifications for a data-driven, strategic three-year faculty hiring plan for their departments that would (a) meet instructional needs, (b) expand high-impact research and scholarship, and (c) address any diversity needs.

The departmental plans were submitted to College leadership during the summer of 2017 and reviewed and discussed at the senior leadership retreat in July.

Although every department's strategic plan was unique, some common themes emerged from the exercise as a whole. They included the need for greater support for graduate students, interdisciplinary research, developing "cluster hires" that spanned several academic departments, experiential learning opportunities and infrastructure improvements.

These departmental road maps have provided our College leadership and development teams with important data and inspiring stories about the successes of our faculty and students. They have also been instrumental in justifying the sustainability of initiatives that are excelling, and highlighting new and emerging initiatives in which we must invest to stand out from our peers.

Funding our Strategic Initiatives

Dean Guskiewicz, along with his senior associate dean of administration and strategy, senior associate dean for development, and associate dean of finance and budget management, have raised or identified approximately \$1.5 million annually in private funds that could be tapped to support strategic initiatives over the next several years.

The leadership team then used the College's and departments' strategic plans to identify initiatives and projects for round one funding in five thematic areas that would have immediate impact for faculty and students in the College. The thematic areas are described below; some are College-wide and some are specific to departments. *(Note: This is not a complete list of funded projects, just a representative sample.)*

Excellence in Undergraduate Experiential Education

Internships and other experiential education opportunities: We aspire to provide Carolina undergraduates with increased experiential education opportunities. Undergraduate research and internships represent high-structure active learning opportunities that need to be expanded at Carolina. Our new Quality Enhancement Plan—"Learning by Connecting, Doing, and Making"—is providing research opportunities for hundreds of undergraduate students. We now want to provide more internship opportunities for students.

Our strategic investment fund will help build an academic internship resource center and a general internship course in the College that (a) helps undergraduate students learn about available internships across the College and University; (b) establishes new partnerships; (c) works with College departments to create programs, if desired; and (d) matches students with faculty mentors as they pursue their interests in local nonprofits, industry and summer experiences.

Study Abroad: Currently, about one-third of undergraduates study abroad for academic credit, and the goal is to raise that number in the coming decade to nearly 50 percent. This is in line with our ambitions to provide a truly global education to Carolina students.

Many students desire to study abroad but face financial limitations. Stipends would help cover costs such as transportation or living expenses, which students typically pay out of pocket. This strategic investment fund will

provide merit/need-based awards for 20 students in the College in each of the next three years.

Beyond study in foreign countries, we envision expanding some of our programs that send students elsewhere in the United States, such as our Silicon Valley and Washington, D.C., semester offerings.

Student-Centered Programming: The College is offering support to an innovative student-led programming initiative, the Institute of Politics, for two years. It integrates student-developed internships with on-campus forums and offers expanded opportunities for experiential education across multiple departments and curricula (Political Science, Public Policy, Economics, and the program in Philosophy, Politics, and Economics).

Excellence in Graduate Student Education

Graduate student support: A common feature of many departmental plans was excellence in graduate student training; a common threat from the SWOT analyses was insufficient funding. To attract the strongest graduate students to our programs, we must be able to keep up with our institutional and aspirational peers. Having stellar graduate students in a department can be a powerful tool to recruit and retain top-tier faculty.

Graduate students assist faculty with their scholarship and conduct their own original research. They provide valuable teaching assistance in the classroom and are the next generation of scholars who serve as ambassadors to Carolina

Graduate programs in the College of Arts & Sciences ranked in the top 30 nationally by *U.S. News & World Report*:

- Sociology (6th)
- History (11th)
- Political Science (11th)
- Psychology (13th)
- Chemistry (15th)
- English and Comparative Literature (18th)
- Statistics (20th)
- Computer Science (25th)
- Biology (26th)
- Math (28th)
- Economics (29th)

(Plus many other programs highly ranked by other entities, including those offered by City and Regional Planning, Classics, Exercise and Sport Science, Philosophy and Religious Studies.)

as they enter the academy, industry, government and other sectors.

Although providing across-the-board graduate stipend increases is not possible at this time, the College is providing top-up funding to 16 departments this year, and post-doctoral support for two additional departments. Additional departments will benefit from this initiative over the next several years to help recruit the very best graduate students.

Expanding our Global Footprint

Support for our area studies centers: Another initiative to raise the global profile of Carolina is to support the work of the College's six area studies centers. UNC is consistently among the top universities in the number of federally funded centers, which provide resources for teaching foreign languages, training in global studies and opportunities for research. Five of our six centers have been designated as National Resource Centers by the U.S. Department of Education.

Strategic funds will enhance the Education Department's Title VI funding and help support center initiatives related to faculty research and international collaborations over the next three years. These funds are intended to seed initiatives that will help better position us for future federal funding, which will be critical for Carolina becoming the leading global public research university.

Leveraging Innovation

Digital humanities: This area of research, teaching and knowledge creation rests at the intersection of computing and humanities. The digitization of records in modern times has radically altered humanities research, providing scholars with unparalleled access to massive amounts of data.

Digital tools are allowing humanities faculty and students to explore and interpret this information in novel ways, and to share it on new platforms. Creating videos, data mapping, and building websites and online databases used to be the purview of specialists. Digital technologies have democratized the process, and new tools and approaches are being introduced every day.

Strategic funds will further the College's efforts to incorporate cutting-edge digital technologies into humanities research, teaching, graduate training and public engagement over the next three years.

Data Science: Big data has changed our world. However, much more could be done to harness the power of data to address the greatest challenges facing our communities, our state and our world. Strategic funds will invest in expanding the Data@Carolina program.

Data@Carolina weaves together: (a) a campus-wide Data Studies Program promoting universal data literacy; (b) efforts to provide a graduate certificate program and a Professional Science Master’s degree in data science; (c) development of six-week graduate training modules to help launch interdisciplinary data science research; (d) workshops and short courses for Carolina students and faculty, and programs for the public on data literacy and data science.

BeAM: The acronym stands for “Be A Maker” and the College’s network of makerspaces across campus. These spaces are for the design and making of physical objects—for education, research, entrepreneurship and recreation. Our faculty are incorporating these spaces into their curricula to reinforce concepts learned in the classroom and to move students from abstract ideas to applied concepts. The spaces also bridge the disciplines—art, music and sociology majors may find themselves working alongside applied math and biomedical engineering majors who are working toward a minor in entrepreneurship.

Strategic funds will go toward supporting faculty and student programming for the BeAM network over each of the next three years.

Extend Carolina: As mentioned last academic year, the Chancellor is preparing to expand Carolina’s footprint through strategic online programs to more effectively meet the needs of our students and those aspiring to be connected to Carolina. The departments of Communication, Statistics and Operations Research, Computer Science, and Exercise and Sport Science (and possibly others) will receive seed funding from our strategic investment fund for course development and to explore the feasibility of offering credentials through Extend Carolina online courses. This will better position the College to secure additional funding from foundations and corporations to expand our offerings and become not only a partner, but a leader in Extend Carolina.

Enhancing our College Facilities

Renovating labs and research hubs: Strategic funding has been set aside to invest in space improvements and facility renovations for several departments. The College is investing in renovating lab space and research hubs, including

opportunities to facilitate undergraduate mentoring and new collaborations among faculty. For example, the Human Biology Lab in the Department of Anthropology will support the development of a new major in Global Health and Medical Anthropology. Over the next few years, the fund will support renovation of the Digital Arts Collaborations Lab (formerly the Language Resource Center) to create a high-definition projection screening room and a classroom enriched with technology that allows for distance learning and lecture capture.

Transforming classrooms: The College is committed to transforming departmental spaces and University-controlled classrooms into more flexible technology-rich environments that facilitate high-structure active learning techniques, focused peer tutoring and the most current innovations in teaching pedagogy. This past year alone, the strategic investment fund supported renovations and classroom technology upgrades for the Department of Physics and Astronomy, Mathematics, Women’s & Gender Studies, Art and Art History, Exercise and Sport Science, Chemistry, Economics, and African, African American and Diaspora Studies.

Conclusion

We will measure the success of these strategic initiatives at the end of each academic year, and will consider new initiatives to fund each year. This road map will allow us to be true to our values in the College of Arts & Sciences – focusing on our students, striving for scholarly excellence and being strategically bold.

This strategic plan places the College in a strong position as the University is poised to launch its public campaign, “For All Kind: The Campaign for Carolina.” It helps us articulate our case for the fundraising goals we have identified, and how they will support our strategic priorities.

New opportunities will no doubt emerge during the course of the campaign, offering us additional resources to build on the excellence and distinguishing characteristics that allow us to carry out our mission: Think. Communicate. Collaborate. Create ... for meaningful lives.



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