

COLLEGE OF LETTERS, ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

STRATEGIC PLAN

The College of Letters, Arts and Social Sciences (CLASS) is the academic bedrock of the University of Idaho, offering curricula in the liberal arts and select professions that are central to the university's statewide mission. Through these curricula students gain a better sense of their place—physically, socially, ethically, and aesthetically—within their region and the world. CLASS is committed to excellence in teaching and scholarship and to lively intellectual exchange and collaboration across disciplines.

CLASS offers discipline-specific as well as interdisciplinary study at the undergraduate, graduate, and professional levels in English, Foreign Languages & Literatures, General Studies, History, International Studies, Journalism & Mass Media, Music, Philosophy, Political Science, Psychology & Communication Studies, Sociology/Anthropology/ Justice Studies, and Theatre & Film. Toward the fulfillment of its mission, the college focuses on three general goals: providing educational excellence; promoting research and creative activity both within and across disciplines; and maintaining strategic relevance through its contribution to general education and its involvement in outreach activities. In pursuing these goals, CLASS is committed to diversify aggressively, hire competitively, uphold standards assiduously, develop opportunely, and compensate adequately.

Goal 1. Teaching and Learning. Engage students in a transformational experience of discovery, understanding, and global citizenship.

Context. Our graduates will live, work, compete, and prosper in a global and multicultural environment. Consequently, graduates must attain proficiency in their studies and understand the values, perspectives, skills, and experiences that advance humankind.

Objective A. Build and sustain innovative curricula of distinction.

Strategies

1. Identify and publish learning outcomes that inform curricula and programs at the undergraduate and graduate levels.
2. Use learning outcomes assessment pro-actively as a means to keep teaching and learning vital, contemporary, and grounded.
3. Ensure the strength of those individual disciplinary programs that lay the foundation for a vibrant, well-rounded university education.

4. Provide faculty leadership and direct support to the UI core curriculum through innovative instruction in, and continuous development of, Core Discovery courses to better engage and prepare students as learners.
5. Develop selective interdisciplinary programs that build upon strong disciplinary programs, respond to significant cultural and societal needs, and challenge, engage, and influence thought.
6. Integrate extramural learning opportunities into the curriculum.
7. Increase the availability of programs to students through the development of online courses, short courses, and summer session courses.

Objective B. Develop effective integrative learning activities to engage and expand student minds.

Strategies

1. Create a culture recognizing exceptional teaching and outstanding student achievement.
2. Encourage students to expand horizons by taking appropriate courses in other disciplines.
3. Foster faculty development within and outside their own specialties.
4. Coordinate coursework across disciplines.
5. Foster interdisciplinary learning.
6. Engage students in interdisciplinary teams to solve complex learning tasks.
7. Increase opportunities for student international experiences.
8. Expand learning opportunities for students in independent research and creative activity, field work and outreach, service learning, national student exchange, internships, disciplinary competitions, and professional societies.
9. Provide graduate and professional students with integrated experiences in teaching, research, creative activity, and outreach.
10. Collaborate with appropriate alumni/ae and professional partners to facilitate strategic recruitment, retention, and post-graduation employment and internship opportunities for students.

Goal 2. Scholarly and Creative Activity. Achieve excellence in scholarship and creative activity through a college culture that recognizes that teaching, outreach, research, and creative activities are inextricably intertwined.

Context. More than any other college, CLASS is represented by a diverse set of disciplines. Our scholarly and creative activities range from creative and professional writing to theatrical and musical performance to archival, field, and laboratory research. We share a common understanding that students should benefit from engagement in these activities as participants and consumers.

Objective A. Emphasize scholarly and creative activities that support the university's strategic themes and contribute to the research-intensive and land-grant missions of the university. Promote strategically important graduate and professional programs.

Strategies

1. Increase the number of competitive graduate assistantships.
2. Improve and expand start-up packages and compensation that attract and retain a diverse, competitive faculty.
3. Increase the number of endowed faculty positions and fellowships.
4. Allocate physical and financial resources to enhance an infrastructure that supports scholarly and creative activity.
5. Strengthen library collections and technological innovation to improve access to information sources.
6. Partner with all disciplines, agencies, and professions to provide grant support and proposal preparation assistance.
7. Enhance scholarly modes of discovery, application, and integration that address issues of importance to the citizens, government, economy, and environment in Idaho.
8. Build strategic partnerships regionally, nationally, and abroad.

Objective B. Promote an environment that increases faculty engagement in interdisciplinary scholarship.

Strategies

1. Establish structures, policies, procedures, and incentives for faculty, departments, and colleges to participate in interdisciplinary programs.
2. Ensure that individual efforts in interdisciplinary programs and grants are adequately recognized by their department and college.
3. Improve and strengthen faculty appointments, position descriptions, and reward structures to foster and recognize effective interdisciplinary collaboration.
4. Target hiring to strengthen interdisciplinary programs and scholarship.
5. Encourage grants that support interdisciplinary activities.

Goal 3. Outreach and Engagement. Work both through college-based strategies and with University of Idaho Extension offices to extend the expertise housed in the College of Letters, Arts and Social Sciences the public, private, and non-profit sectors in counties across the state.

Context. Our many programs add value to the lives of constituents and stakeholders throughout Idaho. As part of a land-grant institution with a well-developed extension network, we have a responsibility to communicate our teaching and scholarship broadly within the state and the region. We seek to broaden outreach and engagement in CLASS to link our academic areas to interested parties in the state and region.

Objective A. Build upon, strengthen, and connect University of Idaho Extension with other parts of the university to engage in mutually beneficial partnerships with stakeholders.

Strategies

1. Develop a CLASS-specific “Experts Guide” formatted for easy distribution in both print and web form to extension offices across the state.
2. Communicate CLASS outreach efforts to Extension via regular e-mail updates, highlighting in particular when broadcast versions (web, cable television, or DVD) are available.
3. Strengthen our presence in northern Idaho through the appointment of an Associate Dean for CLASS in northern Idaho.

Objective B. Deliver undergraduate, graduate, continuing professional education, and Extension programs and opportunities for life-long learning.

Strategies

1. Centralize CLASS outreach efforts by creating a regularly maintained database of our many symposia, forums, and other public talks by expanding CLASS News on the college website to include a calendar of events.
2. Provide course releases for development of web-based courses.
3. Modify faculty appointments, position descriptions, and reward structures to foster web-based course instruction and make it a central part of the life of CLASS departments.
4. Encourage departments to develop and deliver courses in northern Idaho.

Goal 4. Organization, Culture, and Climate. Create and sustain an energized community that is adaptable, dynamic, and vital to enable the university to advance strategically and function efficiently.

Context. The administration, faculty and staff of CLASS reaffirm their commitment to a diverse student body and work force, a supportive work environment for all employees, and an organizational structure that enables the college to attain its goals.

Objective A. Promote and sustain an organization that values shared decision making and a climate of civility and respect.

Strategies

1. Invite students, faculty, and staff to participate in the process of creating and changing college policies and practices.
2. Encourage employees to express themselves freely and openly with trust and respect and without fear of reprisal or ridicule.
3. Communicate news and information promptly and effectively to enable employees to make informed decisions.

Objective B. Recruit and retain a diverse body of students, staff, and faculty to enrich the experience of the University of Idaho’s undergraduate and graduate students.

Strategies

1. Foster an atmosphere in which students and employees of diverse backgrounds feel welcome, accepted, and comfortable.
2. Actively recruit talented and innovative faculty and staff members through intentional and effective searches that reach out to under-represented communities.
3. Find innovative ways to integrate new students and employees of all backgrounds into the campus community.
4. Support courses, degrees, certificates and co-curricular activities that address diverse populations and enhance the college's ability to reflect the populations it serves.

Objective C. Encourage and provide opportunities for all college employees to grow and develop both professionally and personally.

Strategies

1. Ensure that employees receive regular training about university policies and procedures.
2. Support and encourage faculty to pursue intellectual and professional development opportunities.
3. Establish an orientation program for new department chairs and school directors.
4. Seek funding to enable department chairs and school directors to attend regional or national workshops in higher education leadership.
5. Provide opportunities for faculty members to gain college administrative experience that prepares them to assume leadership roles.