Highlights from the Planning Committee’s Report  
College of Liberal Arts and Sciences  
March 2020

Consonant with the mission, values, and vision, the following goals and themes constitute a strategic plan that recognizes the intellectual diversity, pedagogical distinctiveness, and wide-ranging service contributed by all of the College’s departments, institutes, programs, and centers, inclusive of the humanities, social sciences, physical sciences, and life sciences. Understanding that such diversity is a cornerstone of a liberal arts education, and affirming both established strengths and future aspirations, this plan aims to confirm the College’s centrality to UConn’s teaching mission and advance the internationally recognized research excellence of its faculty and students.

PROPOSED GOALS

1. Support an academic environment and inclusive workplace wherein diverse faculty, staff, and students can grow, thrive, and excel, through multifaceted engagement, ongoing dialogue, multilevel mentorship, and committed investment.

2. By building on existing strengths, elevating new ones, and identifying emerging areas of knowledge production, promote interdisciplinary and integrative approaches to research and teaching, thereby addressing major challenges to knowledge, human well-being, and the survival of our planet.

3. Enhance through experiential learning, intentional advising, and innovative pedagogy the College’s undergraduate and graduate teaching strengths. At stake in this CLAS-wide educational mission is the capacity to foster curiosity, inquiry, and a thirst for knowledge about the world, preparing our students to be informed, critical citizens, and creative leaders in their professions and in society.

4. Heighten and highlight the College’s contributions to UConn’s public mission of promoting accessibility and affordability through community outreach, which entails existing and new initiatives that enhance the welfare of the state’s and region’s citizens and engage collaborative partnerships with state agencies, the legislature and non-governmental service providers. As important, strengthen and pursue initiatives that productively and compellingly document, reinforce, and increase the impact of CLAS on local communities and the broader world.

CROSS-COLLEGE THEMES

What follows is a brief listing of six distinct themes along with connected subthemes and relevant foci. As per the Strategic Planning Committee’s intent, these themes are capacious and meant to encompass a wide range of fields, subfields, disciplines, interdisciplines, and intradisciplines.
The Earth and Its Future
Example Subthemes: Organisms and natural systems; biodiversity; natural resources; environmental catastrophe; environmental humanities; environmental movements; ecocriticism; environmental justice; sustainability, climate change, pollution, global change, pandemics, and the Anthropocene.

Global Systems and World Cultures
Example Subthemes: Global and critical area studies; transnationalism; non-Western cultures, practices, and philosophies.

Big Data: Science, Policy, and Ethics
Example Subthemes: Information gathering, storage and retrieval; documentation; securitization (privacy, transparency, and identity); knowledge production (along with linked cultural, social, and political entailments); artificial intelligence; critical analytics and other analytical approaches; computational neuroscience, genetics; digital humanities; digital social science; data ethics.

Inequalities, Social Justice, Truth, and Belief
Example Subthemes: Critical migration, gender/sexuality studies, and critical/comparative ethnic and race studies; social movements; human rights; post-truth politics, challenges to democracy and promotion of civic and scientific literacy; media and communication; public discourse; countering misinformation/disinformation, polarization, prejudice, and discrimination.

Health, Disease, and Well-Being
Example Subthemes: Neuroscience, applied and computational approaches to research on biomarkers; aging and gerontology; race and health disparities; global health; disability studies, accommodations, and access; substance use and abuse; diversity science; health behavior and associated psychological, societal and ethical issues; prevention and intervention.

Brain, Mind, Language, and Logic
Example Subthemes: Language and linguistics; language development; philosophy of mind and language; language teaching and learning; neuroscience, cognitive sciences, and computational models of speech, language, and cognition; language and gender; bilingualism and multimodal communication that includes sign language; autism, dyslexia, and other developmental language disorders; language and gender; formal theories of reasoning.