College of Liberal Arts and Sciences
2020-2025 Strategic Plan Report

Academic Years 2020-2022 (Fiscal Years 2021 and 2022)

Published October 2022
For updates, visit clas.uconn.edu/strategic-plan
I. Overview

As the largest and most academically diverse college at the University of Connecticut, the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (CLAS) is fundamental to the success of the University and its students, faculty, staff, and constituents. The College provides critical ideas, infrastructure, and employment for the State of Connecticut, and its impacts have global significance.

During the 2019-2020 academic year, more than 80 faculty, staff and students in the College developed a CLAS Strategic Plan that articulated the College's mission, goals, and strategies for reaching those goals over the next five years.

We ensured from the beginning that plan represented a dynamic entity, a roadmap of guiding principles with the flexibility to adapt to the changing environment in which we work. COVID-19 hit the world in spring 2020 as we were entering the last phase of creating this plan. We could not have imagined the duration or impact of the pandemic, and the importance of developing a flexible guide that can adapt to situations we cannot control has become all the more clear.

This report reviews progress in the first two years of the Plan’s implementation. It is also available on the CLAS website.

II. Statement of Mission, Vision, and Academic Themes

Mission
The UConn College of Liberal Arts and Sciences transforms lives. Through critical research and inquiry, creative education and mentorship, and ethical social engagement, we generate the foundational, collaborative environment that empowers all members of the UConn community to discover their agency and do meaningful work in the world.

Vision
The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences will be UConn’s recognized and supported hub of learning and research, where an engaged, innovative liberal arts and sciences community develops student success, crosses boundaries of study, and reflects the diversity of our state and our world.

Academic Themes
- The Earth and Its Future
- Sustainable Systems, Global Resources, and World Cultures
- Big Data: Science, Policy, and Ethics
- Inequalities, Social Justice, Truth, and Belief
- Health, Disease, and Well-Being
- Brain, Mind, Language, and Logic
III. Report of Progress

We are at our best when our work is integrated across our goals. To make this report a useful and indexable document, the text is divided into sections, but many of the articulated goals and strategies overlap and complement one another.

For each of the four major College goals, we summarize the objectives set out in the original Strategic Plan and report progress on specific strategies (indicated with bold text) during July 2020-June 2022 (Fiscal Years 2021-2022; FY21 and FY22). In some cases, initiatives were added as we progressed through the year, which are also reported on below.

We are grateful for the input of the Strategic Plan Advisory Committee, which meets with the Dean twice each semester. This committee's full membership for 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 is listed in the Acknowledgments.

Goal 1: Climate, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Build and continually support an academic environment and workplace where diverse faculty, staff, and students feel valued and thrive.

Objectives

Recruitment: Develop a comprehensive plan to attract more diverse individuals (e.g., with regard to ability, race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, and socioeconomic status) for all positions.

Recruitment of a diverse workforce is a critical step to ensuring a broad community of equity and inclusion. In the last two years, our Associate Dean for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI), Kate Capshaw, worked with every tenure system faculty search committee to ensure diverse membership, as well as examine the advertisements for invitational language, advise committees on recruitment efforts, and consult on ways to keep DEI in the foreground through the interview and selection process.

Kate assessed each candidate pool by working with the UConn Human Resources Department (HR) to examine the demographics, and she asked for further advertising and recruitment until the pools were diverse and representational of the field. Kate then evaluated all “long lists” of potential candidates for initial interviews and “short lists” for prospective in-depth interviews (virtual visits due to the pandemic). She advised committees and unit leaders throughout faculty searches on best practices for interviews and candidate selection. The Associate Deans oversaw individual units and the Dean worked with department heads on negotiations to provide attractive and equitable startup packages.

In 2021-22, Kate increased her oversight of searches for positions outside of the tenure track to increase the diversity of the applicant pools. Beginning in fall 2022, this work is transitioning to the other Associate Deans for the units they oversee.

Recognizing that to attract the best new faculty it is often important to provide employment for their partner, CLAS aggressively pursues partner hires. These receive partial funding from the Office of the Provost. For faculty searches conducted during the 2020-21 academic year, the College facilitated four partner accommodations; three were provided for faculty hired in searches during the 2021-22 academic year. We continue to budget for some partner hires each year, which are used both for partners of new faculty and to facilitate retention of existing CLAS faculty (see section below on Retention).

In spring 2021, the College instituted changes in staff searches to help recruit wide-ranging candidate pools. Every staff advertisement now contains a preferred qualification that allows search committees to consider the candidates’ ability to support and work with diverse student, administrative, and faculty populations. Candidates are considered for their “commitment to the values of diversity, equity, and inclusion in an educational setting.” The interview process also now involves a standard question that allows candidates to discuss their perspective on DEI as a core value to the College.
In concert with the Provost’s Office, in 2020-21 the College conducted a **cluster search** for faculty pursuing antiracism scholarship. In addition to advancing areas of research where the College has particular strengths in line with our academic themes, this initiative increased the diversity of faculty members across several departments (see Goal 2, Hiring Initiatives).

We also pursued cluster hires for some tenure system faculty in the 2019-20 academic year, while this Strategic Plan was being developed, and therefore include the data in the numbers presented below.

To assess effectiveness of our efforts to increase the diversity of CLAS faculty and staff, we quantified the ethnicity of individuals hired during each fiscal year. The numbers include individuals hired both during searches, as well as any that joined our faculty through partner accommodations.

**Tenure-Track Faculty.** From FY20 to FY22, new tenure-track faculty hires were more diverse in terms of race and ethnicity than in our baseline year of FY19 (academic year 2018-19; Fig. 1). Specifically, in FY19, 71% of the existing 617 tenure system faculty identified as white, and in FY20-FY22, more than half of the faculty hired were non-white. The proportion of women hired has also been consistently greater than in the faculty as a whole (53% in FY20, 76% in FY21, and 43% in FY22 compared to 39% in FY19).

**Non-Tenure-Track Faculty.** It is very difficult to assess change in the demographics of faculty outside of the tenure system, because a large number have not identified ethnicity in some years. For example, in FY19, 74 of the 206 individuals (36%) employed in these roles did not identify an ethnicity, and in FY22, 7 of the 30 (23%) did not. However, in all cases, a majority of the individuals are white: 52% of the faculty outside of the tenure system in FY19 identified as white, as did most of the hires in subsequent years – 79% in FY20, 88% in FY21, and 57% in FY22.

**Staff.** A similar issue exists with determining changes in the demographics of CLAS staff, with 24% of the existing employees in FY19 not identifying an ethnicity. The information is more complete in FY20, with 83% of the new hires identifying as white, 6% as Hispanic, and 11% not providing the information. Hires in FY21 were 70% white, 20% Hispanic, 5% Asian/Asian American, and 5% unknown. In FY22, new hires were 72% white, 8% Black, 8% Hispanic, 6% Asian/Asian American, 2% Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, and 4% unspecified. Thus, the diversity of our hires is increasing over time.

![Tenure-Track Faculty Demographics](image)

**Figure 1.** Demographics of tenure-track hires from searches during the three academic years from 2019-20 through 2021-22 (FY20-22), with the demographics of the full CLAS tenure-track faculty body in the 2018-19 academic year (FY19) at the bottom for comparison.
We had intended to collect data on the demographics of applicants for faculty in the tenure and non-tenure systems as well as for staff. We continue to work with HR to try to collect sufficient data to assess change in a meaningful way.

The College also initiated the new CLAS Research and Teaching Scholars program in 2021-2022. This initiative is designed to build a stronger culture of engaging postdoctoral scholars in research at UConn, with additional goals of generally enhancing the diversity of the professoriate while advancing research within our units. To accommodate differences across our disciplines in terms of the benefit of teaching experiences for the individuals, CLAS provides 75% of the cost if the individual teaches one course per year and 50% if the individual does not teach. In the past year, we offered seven of these Assistant Research Professor positions based on a call for proposals, with two years of funding possible. The Departments of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology, Economics, Human Development and Family Sciences, Marine Sciences, Physics, Physiology and Neurobiology, and Psychological Sciences participated. Going forward, we plan to offer five additional positions each year.

A range of initiatives have been undertaken in efforts to increase the diversity of graduate students. After a pilot in 2021, the College fully launched the CLAS Strategic Priority Graduate Assistantships program in spring 2022 to attract outstanding, diverse Ph.D. students. Based on nominations from departments, we plan to fund 10 new graduate students each year who demonstrate significant academic achievement, research experience, and a commitment to enhance a diverse and inclusive community in higher education. The demographics of the 10 students admitted during the 2021-22 academic year and joining us in fall 2022 are as follows: Black/African American: 2 students, 20%; Asian: 3 students, 30%; Native/White: 1 student, 10%; Hispanic: 2 students, 20%; White: 2 students, 20%; Female: 7; Male: 3. With 80% non-white students in the program, and all stellar scholars, we are excited by the potential of the program. The students are in departments across the Humanities (English, History, Philosophy), Social Sciences (Anthropology, Political Science), and Life and Physical Sciences (Ecology and Evolutionary Biology, Marine Sciences).

During the 2021-22 academic year, a group of faculty and graduate students across eight CLAS units received funding through the College Climate, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion initiative to conduct research and create a report, “Building a CLAS BiPoC Graduate Recruitment/Retention Knowledge Base.” The document contained a wealth of information and suggestions, which the College discussed with unit leaders in October 2022. During the 2022-23 academic year, we will begin to implement some of the ideas.

Our units are making strides with various “bridge” programs, meant to support the movement of underrepresented undergraduates into graduate school. In 2021-22, the Department of Marine Sciences successfully applied to the American Geophysical Union Bridge Program, which seeks to increase diversity in the geosciences and related fields by providing students from historically marginalized populations with a support network before, during and after graduate school. As part of that initiative, faculty pledged 5% of their indirect cost (IDC) funds, annually, as matching funds. The Department of Earth Sciences also applied for this funding, although they were not successful. The College supported departmental initiatives related to these programs at the level of $8,000 and $6,003, respectively, from the CLAS Climate, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion funding initiative this year.

Ecology and Evolutionary Biology also participated in the UConn Bridge+ program, aimed at providing a two-week intensive immersion to prepare incoming graduate students from under-represented groups for success in graduate school. This initiative was funded by the UConn President’s Office and by CLAS with $3,750 through its Climate, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion funding initiative.

In 2021-22 we worked further toward connections and exchanges with Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), Hispanic-Serving Institutions, and Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs). During her Leadership Fellowship (see description of the Leadership Fellows program near the end of this section) in spring and summer 2022, Associate Professor-in-Residence and Director of Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Sherry Zane made connections with an HBCU and a Tribal College and will continue to develop the relationships with the goal of creating exchanges of students and scholars. In partnership with the Office of the Provost, the College hired Chris Newell, a citizen of the Passamaquoddy tribe and tribal community member-in-residence for the CLAS Native American and Indigenous Studies initiative, to teach and create partnerships between the College and Native American communities.

As of this writing (Oct. 14, 2022), data on graduate students newly enrolling in CLAS during the 2022-23 academic year have yet to be finalized by the Graduate School. However, some patterns can be seen. Across
CLAS master’s programs, the percentages of applicants who are Black increased steadily, and the increase was greater for Latinx applicants (Table 1). White applicants were variable over this period, and international applicants declined substantially between the first two years. Changes in enrollments over this period did not fully match these patterns, but we are encouraged by the applicant data, and the modest increases in the percentage of Black and Latinx students enrolled.

Table 1. Changes in applicants and enrollments in CLAS master’s programs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Applicants for 2020-21*</th>
<th>Applicants for 2021-22*</th>
<th>Applicants for 2022-23*</th>
<th>Enrollment in 2020-21</th>
<th>Enrollment in 2021-22</th>
<th>Enrollment in 2022-23</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
<td>3.6%</td>
<td>3.9%</td>
<td>6.6%</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latinx</td>
<td>6.9%</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td>10.8%</td>
<td>12.9%</td>
<td>10.1%</td>
<td>14.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>33.0%</td>
<td>48.4%</td>
<td>43.1%</td>
<td>46.0%</td>
<td>56.0%</td>
<td>48.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International</td>
<td>50.4%</td>
<td>32.4%</td>
<td>35.1%</td>
<td>15.3%</td>
<td>13.0%</td>
<td>19.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Includes applications submitted at any time for enrollment during this academic year. In CLAS, applications are commonly submitted during the prior year (e.g., during the 2019-20 academic year for starting a program in fall 2020); 2022-23 data are estimates.

Across CLAS doctoral programs, the percentage of Black applicants also increased, albeit modestly. The percentage of Black student enrollment was greater in fall 2022 than either of the previous two years. However, as can be seen in Table 2 the patterns are complex.

Table 2. Changes in applicants and enrollments in CLAS doctoral programs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Applicants for 2020-21*</th>
<th>Applicants for 2021-22*</th>
<th>Applicants for 2022-23*</th>
<th>Enrollment in 2020-21</th>
<th>Enrollment in 2021-22</th>
<th>Enrollment in 2022-23</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>2.1%</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latinx</td>
<td>5.4%</td>
<td>6.8%</td>
<td>6.2%</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
<td>6.9%</td>
<td>4.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>40.9%</td>
<td>40.4%</td>
<td>39.6%</td>
<td>52.3%</td>
<td>39.1%</td>
<td>47.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International</td>
<td>45.0%</td>
<td>40.8%</td>
<td>42.0%</td>
<td>34.6%</td>
<td>41.6%</td>
<td>36.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Includes applications submitted at any time for enrollment during this academic year. In CLAS, applications are commonly submitted during the prior year (e.g., during the 2019-20 academic year for starting a program in fall 2020); 2022-23 data are estimates.

Graduate student admissions and enrollments were certainly affected by the pandemic and immigration policies. In addition, we are just beginning in fall 2022 to implement some of the recommendations of the BIPOC graduate student report (see above description of the “Building a CLAS BIPOC Graduate Recruitment/Retention Knowledge Base” document). It will be most productive to consider trends after more time has elapsed.

Retention: Develop policies and practices that improve retention of all faculty and staff.

We worked in the past two years to value scholars with diverse perspectives and lived experiences by elevating their stories and work. Articles produced by our Communications Office include announcements of new faculty the College hired through cluster searches (see details in Goal 2). Many articles by our Communications Office elevated research themes in the strategic plan, including antiracism work, health disparities research, and climate science in 2020-2021, and new faculty, Native American and Indigenous Studies, and renowned faculty member Dexter Gabriel (in UConn Magazine) in 2021-2022.

In 2021, the College funded four projects totaling $34,100 following a call for Anti-Racist Scholarship, Pedagogy, and Workplace Climate. In 2022, the College funded 11 projects totaling $85,453 through a funding initiative
titled *Climate, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion*. See the section above on Recruitment for examples of projects. A full list of resources provided through CLAS internal funding initiatives, as well as planned calls for proposals, is [provided on our website](#).

In 2020-2021 we also revised and expanded our [Annual CLAS Faculty and Staff Awards](#) so that they reward College employees for work conducted across the goals of this plan, further emphasizing leadership, service, DEI initiatives, and notably, a new series of endowed awards for mentoring by faculty. Over the two years, we recognized 18 faculty and staff with these awards.

To create a more transparent and fair process to identify and mitigate existing issues in faculty salary compression and inversion, in 2019 we developed a tool to make salary data relative to years of experience readily available within our office and to CLAS unit leaders. Using these data in concert with the process outlined for the Provost Fund in the university’s collective bargaining agreement with the AAUP, in the summers of both 2021 and 2022, we worked with department heads to begin systematically making equity salary adjustments for faculty in both the tenure and non-tenure tracks. In raises that took effect in August 2021, the University invested $100,881 for equity increases for CLAS faculty; CLAS invested $193,973. In raises that took effect in August 2022, the University invested $287,000, and CLAS invested $458,000 (numbers include both salary and fringe).

We promoted an environment of social and professional support for faculty by strengthening our Centers, Institutes, and Programs. Beginning in Summer 2020, we facilitated collaborative conversations among these non-departmentally organized units in CLAS focusing on race, gender, and ethnicity. To assist this faculty-driven effort, CLAS convened and resourced a working group in May 2021, consisting of the Directors of the Africana Studies Institute (ASI), the American Studies Program, the Asian and Asian American Studies Institute (AAASI), El Instituto, and the Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality Studies (WGSS) program, with facilitators Professor Sandy Grande of Political Science and the Native American and Indigenous Studies Initiative (NAIS), and Jane Gordon of Political Science, American Studies, El Instituto, and WGSS. The group worked during the 2021-2022 academic year to build consensus around a new entity that could house these vital units. In May 2022, the units voted to join together to form a School under CLAS. During fall 2022, the directors of the Institutes and Programs will finalize documents to present for levels of institutional approval, including the Board of Trustees, to establish the School. Importantly, the School will offer a structural body that will facilitate collaborations and community for faculty of color and will advance our efforts to support and retain them at the University.

The College also actively negotiated packages to increase retention of faculty. We did not wait for faculty to receive an outside offer before working on accommodations. Depending on what was most important to the individual, these included salary increases, hiring partners (two in FY2021 and three in FY2022), and research funding. In the 2020-21 academic year our offers were sufficient to retain 8 of 9 individuals (89%). In 2021-2022, we retained 12 of 15 individuals. Although this proportion (80%) was less than the prior year, we did retain three faculty of color and 10 women, including 2 women in STEM fields. Our success rate in these two years was similar to FY20 (17 of 20 successful retentions; 85%), and far better than FY19 (3 of 5; 60%).

**Mentorship and Professional Development:** Provide training and mentorship programs for CLAS employees, including tenure-track and non-tenure-track faculty and staff.

We began to develop an evidence-based set of best practices and support mechanisms to facilitate mentoring of faculty. In academic year 2020-2021, we developed and implemented a series of five mentoring workshops for early-career faculty, including one specifically for assistant professors-in-residence. The inaugural session, on the topic of the importance of mentoring, attracted 82 participants, and the remaining four sessions attracted 50-56 registrants. We also hosted a specific session for in-residence and clinical faculty to talk with the Dean about their concerns; 62 faculty attended this session. Responses to an end-of-year evaluation suggest that the sessions were appreciated by the attendees, with 22 percent of respondents reporting that they were extremely satisfied with the offering and 48 percent somewhat satisfied. Over three-quarters of the respondents replied that they would like CLAS to continue offering mentoring programming.

Building on what we learned during the 2020-21 sessions and in conversations with faculty and unit leaders across the College, the CLAS Leadership Fellows (see below), Associate Deans, and Dean developed a **Faculty Success Program** in summer 2022, to address faculty mentoring and professional development at various levels. This program, which launched in fall 2022, includes four areas. Individual Mentoring facilitates cross-unit
dyadic mentoring by matching enthusiastic mentors with expertise in particular topics with mentees who have identified particular goals. Faculty in any career stage and appointment type can request a match from the College. Group Mentoring connects junior faculty across CLAS units to create a greater sense of community among colleagues and exchange information to facilitate success. Cohorts of faculty will engage in a series of conversations on topics of interest, hosted by experienced CLAS faculty members over the academic year. Career Progression workshops include four sessions designed to help faculty understand factors and strategies that will facilitate success to advance to the next career stage. The goal is to address broader issues of how to have productive, rewarding experiences, recognizing that responsibilities differ across appointment types and career stages. Finally, Teaching and Research Conversations are opportunities to discuss particular areas of interest across the College.

With the Leadership Fellows (see below), the Associate Deans and Dean worked in spring and summer 2022 to establish and support an onboarding program for new faculty. Efforts included creating a CLAS New Faculty Handbook (available by login to CLAS employees), which guides new faculty through the organization of the University, various policies and procedures, and teaching, research, and service resources at their disposal on campus. We also hosted the College’s first-ever New Faculty Orientation, and a New Faculty Reception event in fall 2022. Both events helped acclimate new faculty to the College and the University, and helped them make social connections with peers.

We also worked to facilitate the development of leaders at various levels within the College. In 2020-2021, we updated and expanded the CLAS Department Heads’ Manual (originally introduced by Dean Jeremy Teitelbaum in 2013) to provide new information on UConn and CLAS policies, as well as the responsibilities of department heads and best practices for accomplishing the work. The Dean’s Office also offered a series of workshops for CLAS unit leaders during the 2020-21 academic year, including department heads, and center, institute, and program directors. We encouraged these individuals to invite emerging leaders within their units. The sessions included: an overview of the CLAS budget and financial strategies; time management and running efficient meetings; rewarding, valuing, and retaining faculty; working with support staff; and difficult conversations.

During the 2021-22 academic year, the College introduced a new program, the CLAS Leadership Fellows, to provide mid-career faculty with exposure to academic administration and leadership. In addition to receiving mentoring from the Dean and Associate Deans, these fellows worked with Dean’s Office in spring and summer 2022 on projects to benefit faculty and students in the College. One example is a comprehensive program centered around peer mentoring to help students transition from a regional campus to Storrs. Research projects by several of the Leadership Fellows are described in more detail throughout this document.

Toward developing a mentoring program for College staff, the Shared Services center in 2021-2022 began to offer a series of cohort groups for junior, mid-level, and senior administrative staff in the College to address shared issues and trade best practices, as well as a set of groups focusing on specific topics. In fall 2022, a program to match pairs of mentors and mentees from different units across the College was formalized and expanded. Details about these programs can be found on the CLAS Shared Services website. The Office of Communications also hosts periodic workshops and discussions for staff in departments and units whose duties include communications work.

A group of eight staff across the College, led by Human Development and Family Sciences Educational Program Administrator Cynthia Stewart, developed and led a one-day professional development workshop for CLAS staff on June 15, 2022. Attendees included 48 staff members, not including invited speakers, from across the College who attended sessions on travel, purchasing, accounts payable, digital marketing, graduate programs, diversity, equity, and inclusion, organization, and managing up.

Amplifying Voices: Seek out new ways to give College constituents greater influence over the conditions of their work and/or education.

Beginning in 2020-2021 we worked toward providing units increased flexibility in the use of resources to better advance the mission of our College. Decisions on course releases provided to faculty were transferred from the College to the unit level with the goal of empowering unit leaders with the ability to use this resource to advance research. Two new systems were also put into place to ensure student success and equity in workload. First, Assistant Dean Mansour Ndiaye worked with CLAS units to articulate the schedule of courses that would be offered in a predictable pattern. Second, a reporting system was created to capture the releases
afforded to faculty and their intended purpose.
In fall 2020, **advisory committees were established** to offer ideas and recommendations to the College on a range of topics, including faculty research; graduate student affairs; and diversity, equity, and inclusion. Associate Deans hosted the meetings of the committees within their portfolios. The CLAS **Student Leadership Board** was reconfigured as ambassadors to the College, and Associate Dean for Undergraduate Affairs Lyn Tribble established a Student Advisory group.

Toward **creating an inclusive environment by developing opportunities for meaningful interaction and understanding of diversity**, during the 2020-21 academic year we created a set of suggestions for units to develop Community Norms. The Dean’s Office Senior Staff followed the process, which led to thoughtful conversations about diversity and inclusivity in the workplace and a document to guide our professional interactions. In addition to encouraging our departments and other units to engage in the process, we offered to share the Dean’s Office document as a model. Each fall, we review the Dean’s Office document in a senior staff meeting and update it as appropriate.

### Goal 2: Innovative Scholarship

Promote interdisciplinary research by building on a foundation of core disciplines and engaging novel intersections to address major challenges to knowledge, well-being, and our world.

#### Objectives

**Synergistic Activities and Internal Research Support: Create opportunities to stimulate convergence among disciplines and foster collaborative relationships that spur innovative thinking and advance scholarship in priority areas.**

In 2020-2021, the College **hosted two symposia**, which we called Research Conversations, among scholars in areas for which we conducted cluster searches in the 2019-2020 academic year: Health Disparities and Native American and Indigenous Studies. More than 40 faculty and students attended the Health Disparities event in February 2021, which introduced our cluster of three new faculty in this field. With the leadership of political science professor Sandy Grande, and involving faculty from our cluster hire in Indigenous studies and faculty who identify as Native or Indigenous, the April 2021 workshop drew 60 faculty, staff, and students. Attendees expressed enthusiasm about the College’s orientation towards a more just engagement with the historical and contemporary implications of colonization.

Also in 2020-21, we offered a series of Research Enhancement Workshops to provide specific training for faculty in applying for National Institutes of Health Research Project Grant Program (NIH R01) funding, writing a book proposal, developing interdisciplinary collaborations, and continuing research during COVID.

In fall 2021, the College offered the following Research Enhancement Workshops:

- Funding Opportunity Searching for Sciences, Social Sciences, and Humanities, with Internal Funding Programs and Limited Submissions Coordinator Matt Mroz from the Office of the Vice President for Research.
- Using the UConn LINCUS database, with Associate Professor Daniel Schwartz from the Center for Open Research Resources & Equipment (COR²E).
- Writing an NSF Broader Impacts Statement, with Associate Professor of Communication Jocelyn Steincke, Professor Chris Fielding from Earth Sciences, and Professor Lyle Scruggs from Political Science.
- How to Work with Industry, with Professor Steven Suib from Chemistry.
Hiring Initiatives: Pursue hiring into targeted clusters to increase the College’s interdisciplinary capacity in the thematic areas identified, while also maintaining our strengths in high-level basic research and education. These clusters might be within a department, across units within CLAS, or across colleges and schools.

In 2020-2021, the College invested $216,403 in supporting small grants to pilot collaborative work across departments and units, based on calls for proposals. Resources were designed to stimulate externally-funded research in three of the six academic themes: Big Data: Science, Policy, and Ethics; Inequalities, Social Justice, Truth, and Belief; and Health, Disease, and Well-Being. We also provided $21,430 to faculty for advancing the scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL) to provide a mechanism for supporting faculty both in and outside of the tenure system. Also in 2020-21, we invested $34,100 for faculty and staff on research, pedagogy, and programming that advances work against racial injustice. See the description of these projects above in Goal 1, Amplifying Voices.

For the 2022-23 academic year, the research workshops/conversations have been reconfigured in coordination with College teaching conversations. Details are available on our Faculty Success page.

In 2021-2022, the College invested $539,084 in Research in Academic Themes under the remaining three themes: Brain, Mind, and Logic; The Earth and its Future; and Sustainable Systems, Global Resources and World Cultures. A comprehensive list of our internal funding opportunities is posted on the college website.

The College created a competitive summer salary mechanism for scholars from fields in which it is difficult to obtain or typically not part of startup packages to apply for these resources. In summer 2021, we funded 11 proposals that supported 13 faculty for a total of $264,631. In summer 2022, we funded 35 proposals to support more than 45 faculty for $728,381.

To develop creative funding models for post-doctoral training, in partnership with the departments and units the College initiated the new CLAS Research and Teaching Scholars program in 2021-2022 (see full description in Goal 1; Recruitment).

The Associate Deans also began working with departments and non-departmentally organized units within CLAS to encourage development of strategic plans for enhancing research and fostering equitable workloads. This effort was facilitated through meetings of the humanities, social sciences, and life & physical sciences divisions, and in other conversations.

In spring 2022, Research Conversations brought together faculty from different disciplines to discuss intersections of their work around a particular interdisciplinary topic. The topics were:

- *Afterlives of Violence*, moderated by Professor of English and Director of American Studies Chris Vials, Associate Professor-in-Residence and Director of Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Sherry Zane, and Professor of History and Director of Asian and Asian American Studies Jason Chang. This panel highlighted the transdisciplinary ways in which scholars engage the gendered, racialized, and political economic dimensions of violence.

- *Sustainable Community Food Systems*, moderated by Professor-in-Residence of Geography Andy Jolly-Ballantine and Assistant Professor of Geography Peter Chen. This panel highlighted the science of food production, sustainability, and nutrition; the social dynamics of community, food access, and food justice; and political and economic forces that drive the community food system.

We are particularly proud of our cluster hires in antiracism and environment and human interactions which were launched in 2020-2021 to advance our research and teaching in the critical areas of social justice and climate change, respectively. The *Environment and Human Interactions* cluster brought a total of seven tenure-track faculty to UConn, five of which joined the College in the Departments of Anthropology, Chemistry, Political Science, Public Policy, and Sociology in August 2021 and two later joined the Departments of Marine Sciences (January 2022) and Geography (August 2022). The faculty study how human activities are impacting a range of Earth systems, and how changes to the Earth itself are impacting humans. The *Antiracism* cluster brought eight faculty in departments across the humanities and social sciences, all jointly appointed with a CLAS institute or program focusing on race, gender, sexuality, and ethnicity. From searches framed through the concept of
“Catalyzing Antiracist and Decolonial Futures and Racial Justice,” the faculty joined the Departments of English; Political Science; Philosophy; Journalism; Literatures, Cultures, and Languages; History; and Communication. Their scholarship focuses on centralizing Black, Latinx, Asian and Asian American, and Indigenous voices in the humanities and social sciences and on building transdisciplinary research.

External Funding Support and Infrastructure: Increase support for faculty in funding applications and publication activity through mentorship and training (see Goal 1: Mentorship and Professional Development above), especially in fields where underexplored external funding opportunities exist.

As part of his Leadership Fellow project in 2022, Professor of Physiology and Neurobiology Anastasios Tzingounis developed a grant writing mentorship program, called “Proposal Enhanced External Review (PEER)” to support CLAS faculty submitting (and re-submitting) grants to external funding agencies. The program will allow faculty, prior to a grant submission deadline, to get insight about their proposed research by a panel of three to five experienced faculty members or external experts, based on the funding agency’s review criteria. This program will be piloted in the 2022-2023 academic year.

To evaluate and determine ways to increase support for grant proposals, in spring 2021 the Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Education, Ofer Harel, met with the Corporate and Foundation Relations team at the UConn Foundation to increase opportunities to facilitate funding from corporations and private foundations. These were mostly mutual fact-finding meetings designed to lay the groundwork for future partnerships. The team also began in that semester to regularly forward information on funding opportunities that are shared with our units.

The College has worked with units over the last two years toward increasing equity in teaching loads for faculty both in and outside of the tenure system and encouraged them to complete or update governance documents on faculty workload. We have also provided flexibility to units to offer course releases in service of advancing research (see details of working with departments on flexible teaching in Goal 1, Amplifying Voices).

To strengthen research infrastructure, we issued calls for proposals for equipment funding, particularly large pieces that will facilitate collaborative research. The College contributed more than $1.2M to this initiative in 2021, distributed across 10 groups of faculty. Departments provided additional resources ($291K in total), as did the Office of Vice President for Research in one case ($200K). As of this writing (Oct. 14, 2022), we have an open call for Shared Equipment funding; proposals are due this month.

We are proud of the funding success of our faculty in the past two years (see Table 3). Particularly impressive is the 11% increase in research expenditures in FY22 compared to the two previous years, which indicates increased activity across funded projects. The decline in the amount of funding awarded warrants investigation. As the number of successful proposals increased slightly each year, we need to learn why on average the dollars received per proposal has declined.

Table 3. External funding to College faculty

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Fiscal Year 2020</th>
<th>Fiscal Year 2021</th>
<th>Fiscal Year 2022</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Research Expenditures</td>
<td>$50,297,558</td>
<td>$50,270,025</td>
<td>$56,721,243</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proposals Submitted (Count)</td>
<td>437</td>
<td>475</td>
<td>460</td>
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<tr>
<td>Proposals Submitted (Amount)</td>
<td>$235,770,158</td>
<td>$268,811,605</td>
<td>$269,557,529</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proposals Awarded (Count)</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>163</td>
<td>164</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proposals Awarded (Amount)</td>
<td>$60,527,072</td>
<td>$58,075,962</td>
<td>$51,187,592</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data are from the Office of the Vice President for Research. Proposals represent only those that CLAS faculty members submitted as PI.
In addition to the funds received through external contracts and grants that are processed by the Office of the Vice President for Research (OVPR), in FY22 our faculty received more than $300K in fellowships to support research. This value is a significant underestimate because it does not include funds paid directly to faculty members, as is the case with the four Fulbright fellowships that were awarded to our faculty in the past year. In addition, it is likely that the College does not know about all of the awards made directly to individual faculty members as we rely on the departments to report these details. We are working to improve the collection of data on fellowships so that in future years we can more accurately report the full extent of the external funding our faculty obtain for their scholarship.

**Fundraising:** Work with UConn Foundation colleagues to secure funding across CLAS with emphases on research areas in the academic themes identified above, and on retaining existing donors to the College.

In 2020-2021, more than $8.6M was raised through the UConn Foundation, which included support for research ($2,097,692); endowed faculty positions ($2,026,827); and students ($2,984,806), including support for graduate students ($448,004). These funds were raised from 1,916 donors, an increase of nearly 700 over FY20. The year 2021-2022 was a challenging year for fundraising in the College, in part due to vacancies across all three of our development officer positions. The College raised a total of $6,353,809, which includes $1,436,440 for research, and $2,608,023 for students, including $758,482 for graduate students. These funds were raised from 1,601 donors, a decrease of 315 from the previous year.

**Goal 3: Teaching, Learning, and Student Success**

Enhance through experiential learning, mentorship, and innovative pedagogy the College's opportunities for undergraduate education.

**Objectives**

**Course Development:** Provide new opportunities for engaged learning in cutting-edge areas.

Although because of COVID-19 2020-2021 was not a productive year to create or redesign courses, 2021-2022 saw the development of many new and innovative courses. Examples include:

**First-year Writing.** First-year Writing, housed in the Department of English, has continued to refine its innovative multi-media approach to college writing, involving more tenure-track faculty in curricular development. We were pleased to partner with the Provost’s office to fund an increased number of Assistant and Associate Professors-in-Residence (APIRs) in First-Year Writing at the Stamford campus this year, which will provide more stability in this critical program.

**Chemistry curricular redesign.** Faculty in the Department of Chemistry have continued implementation of a UConn Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL)-funded initiative for the redesign of the organic chemistry sequence. The goals are to increase performance of students, make the large classes feel small, and ensure uniform standards of teaching organic chemistry across the department. Professor Amy Howell, Lecturer Anwar Beshir, Associate Professor-in-Residence Fatma Selampinar, and Assistant Professor-in-Residence Clyde Cady of the Department of Chemistry have been working with Student Support Services towards developing a model for increasing student success, as measured by lower rates of low grades, failures, and withdrawals.

**Critical Languages: Korean and Japanese.** Through the work of Department Head Jennifer Terni, Literature, Cultures, and Languages received a $350K STARTALK grant from the National Security Agency, building upon a grant awarded the prior year. These funds have allowed the department to pilot intensive programs in Korean and Japanese languages. The STARTALK program is designed to increase the number of highly effective critical-language teachers in the U.S.; to multiply the number of highly effective materials and curricula available to teachers and students; and, ultimately, to increase the number of students engaged in the serious study of critical languages.
Digital Public History. The Department of History received a National Endowment for the Humanities curricular development grant to work with the Department of Digital Media and Design in the School of Fine Arts to refine their proposed joint minor in Digital Public History. The program will help humanities majors develop their skills in technology and digital media, such as web design and animation, to prepare for future roles in the workplace and to apply their research to publicly engaged work. The principal investigator (PI) is Associate Professor of Digital Media and Design Tom Scheinfeldt, and co-PIs are Department Head and Professor of Digital Media and Design Heather Elliott-Famularo, Assistant Professor of Digital Media and Design Clarissa Ceglio, Assistant Professor of History and Asian and Asian American Studies Hana Maruyama, Associate Professor of History and Africana Studies Fiona Vernal, and Department Head and Professor of History Mark Healey.

Programs with Engineering. In partnership with the School of Engineering and the Human Rights Institute, CLAS launched a new undergraduate program for human rights and sustainability. The program combines courses in history, anthropology, English, political science, human rights and other CLAS disciplines with engineering courses. Another cross-college collaboration is the new Bachelor of Science in Multidisciplinary Engineering with a specialization in physics. The degree will replace the existing engineering-physics degree.

The CLAS Courses and Curriculum Committee approved 53 new classes in 2021-2022, and 49 of them fit within one or more of the six academic themes outlined in the College’s strategic plan.

In spring 2022, Leadership Fellow Associate Professor-in-Residence Diego Valente of the Department of Physics, and Associate Dean Lyn Tribble organized a series of workshops titled Teaching Conversations, covering topics such as curricular reform, the role of the Dean of Students, and services provided to faculty and students by the Center for Students with Disabilities. These discussions fed into a call for proposals for Teaching Enhancement grants to advance student success in undergraduate courses. The goals for this summer 2022 funding mechanism included implementing innovations in existing courses in areas such as new forms of assessment, new approaches to increasing student engagement and participation in the classroom, and updates to course design. They had more than 50 applications from Storrs and all four regional campuses. In response, we increased the budget so that 16 projects were funded across all campuses.

In 2022, CLAS introduced a program to allow its faculty and staff to develop resources to improve accessibility in the College around teaching and climate, in one of four areas: pedagogy, structures, culture, and graduate affairs. A cohort of fellows will work on individual projects and meet as a group once per month with one or more associate deans. Three fellows were selected for the 2022-2023 year: Professor of Psychological Sciences Holly Fitch, Associate Professor-in-Residence of Political Science Kim Bergendahl, and Assistant Professor-in-Residence of Physics Erin Scanlon. Support for the projects and the program comes from a graduate assistant for accessibility, Joshua Hinostrosa, a student in El Instituto. The fellows will work through the academic year and present their findings or outcomes to the Dean in spring 2023.

Student Support and Engagement: Create multifaceted opportunities for students and reduce barriers to participation in undergraduate research, internships, study abroad, and service learning.

We continued our ongoing efforts of working with the UConn Foundation to secure scholarships for undergraduate students. Our UConn Foundation partners were successful in obtaining a $1,350,000 bequest for the Martin Horn Scholarship in Communication in 2020-2021. In 2021-22, the first two students received the new Nom and Boulieng Vorsane Scholarship, which provides $1000 for work in an Advanced Curriculum Pedagogy lab to address the need for greater teacher preparation in Asian American and Pacific Islander studies. As noted in Goal 2, Fundraising, $2,984,806 was raised for student support in 2020-2021 ($2,536,802 for undergraduates) and $2,608,023 ($1,849,541 for undergraduates) was raised in 2021-2022.

In 2020, then-Director of Alumni Relations, Elyssa Kelly, created a new program for CLAS undergraduate women, the CLAS Women’s Leadership Collective. This program couples a learning experience with group mentorship from UConn alumnae. In its first year, nearly 70 students and alumni were grouped into 16 “mentorship circles” focused on career communities. They met virtually 5-6 times throughout the course of the academic year. More than 50 students and alumnae participated in 2021-22. Mentorship circles focused on careers in social justice,
counseling, law, international relations, policy, and others. The participants met virtually 4-5 times during the academic year and held two virtual programs that included all participants. A closing brunch in April 2022 was the first in-person event for this initiative. The participants met virtually 4-5 times during the academic year and held two virtual programs that included all participants. A closing brunch in April 2022 was the first in-person event for this initiative.

In summer 2022, CLAS funded the TIP Innovation Fellows Program, which pairs undergraduate and graduate students with startup companies in UConn’s Technology Incubation Program (TIP) for mentored research experiences at $10,000. We published a UConn Today story about Claire Lee ’24 (CLAS), a political science and ecology and evolutionary biology major, and her TIP experience working with alumni Sahil Laul ’19 (CLAS) and Sameer Laul ’15 (CLAS) at their Stamford company, Social Labs.

Through the work of Leadership Fellow Associate Professor-in-Residence Michael Finiguerra, we began the UConn FIRST program, a mentoring experience for mentee students at regional campuses and mentor students who have transferred from a regional to Storrs. More than 100 students participated in the program, which was piloted in 2021-2022. During the spring 2022 semester, the cohort of peer mentors met with their mentees in small-group sessions. Their marquis event was a day-long field trip to Storrs, where students got to know one another, attended a class in their major, ate in dining halls, and toured campus with their mentors. Finiguerra will expand the successful program in 2022-2023.

We began tracking in earnest the work our students are doing in experiential learning, including internships, practicums, and other out-of-classroom experiences. In 2020-2021, 233 students registered for CLAS internship courses, 117 enrolled in CLAS practicum courses, and 386 registered to work on research with faculty members for credit. Another 871 undergraduate students enrolled in independent study courses, despite the largely virtual format. In addition, faculty across the CLAS departments reported more than 100 research projects in collaboration with students not associated with course credit.

During the 2021-22 academic year, 170 students enrolled in a practicum course and 195 students took a field study course. A total of 235 students took an internship course for credit, and departments reported another 50 who did internships without requesting course credit. Independent study course enrollments totaled 816, senior thesis research course enrollments totaled 372, and students taking other types of course credit to conduct research with a professor totaled 830. In addition to those who registered for course credit, departments reported another 244 students doing non-course credit research with faculty. CLAS departments estimated that at least 1,670 undergraduate students participated experiential learning not associated with the types of opportunities described above, often within formal courses. Examples of these student experiences include an anthropology student who helped create a database of archaeofaunal information from Neolithic sites in southwest Asia, an Earth sciences student who analyzed core sediment from the Farmington River, four marine sciences students who travelled to Hawaii with the faculty member to do field work, and four sociology students who used their research skills to analyze gun buy-back programs, among many others.

**Goal 4: Broader Impacts, Service, and Visibility**

Support existing and new initiatives that impact the welfare of Connecticut and highlight the advantages that we provide.

**Objectives**

Facilitate Community Engagement: Expand and incentivize engagement with Connecticut communities, and increase the visibility of what CLAS does with and for citizens of the state.

One way to measure the efficacy of our internal work to increase outreach of the College is positive media attention recognizing faculty, student, and College contributions. In 2020-2021, according to a media coverage database compiled annually by University Communications, at least 180 articles featuring CLAS faculty and alumni were published in the news media. In 2021-2022, at least 165 state, national, and international news articles featured faculty from the College. Of these, 36 (21%) were science faculty, 46 (28%) were humanities faculty, and 80 (49%) were social sciences faculty. Given that together, humanities and social sciences faculty make up about half of the College, the humanities and social sciences contribute an outsized role to the University’s reputation in.
Engage Government and Nonprofits: Engage with state and local agencies and nonprofit organizations to promote meaningful, evidence-based policy and enhance opportunities for funded research.

Faculty reported giving 234 presentations to the Connecticut community in 2020-2021. These presentations included 116 to interested civic groups, such as local historical societies, antiracism collectives, Rotary Clubs, and events hosted by local public libraries. Faculty gave 71 presentations to non-profit organizations and 29 schools. Fourteen presentations were made to local governments and state agencies, and four presentations were made to the Connecticut state legislature: one to the legislature’s Committee on Higher Education and three to the Commission on Women, Children, Seniors Equity and Opportunity. In 2021-2022, departments provided information indicating faculty participation in over 314 points of engagement at a similar range of venues, including community colleges, a retirement community, public service agencies, museums, and K-12 schools.

CLAS Institute and Program faculty participated in dozens of public presentations across the two academic years. Examples include in-person and virtual programs hosted by the Center for Judaic Studies and Contemporary Jewish Life. In 2020-21, El Instituto partnered with Judaic Studies, transforming the annual Luis Eyzaguirre Lecture into a two-day symposium on the noted Guatemalan-American and Jewish Diasporic fiction writer and memoirist, Eduardo Halfon, reaching a large international audience through its online delivery. In 2021-2022, Marine Sciences faculty spoke on climate change issues on several occasions to the staff of the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, and staff in the School of Public Policy’s Institute for Municipal and Regional Policy shared their expertise in meetings with the Connecticut Sentencing Commission, the Connect Law Enforcement and Racial Profiling Prohibition Advisory Board, and the Juvenile Justice Policy Oversight Council, among others.

Leverage Alumni and Donor Networks: Work with UConn Foundation colleagues to develop and strengthen CLAS alumni networks and engage alumni and corporate and state leaders as donors, mentors, and teachers for CLAS programs.

More than 70 alumni served as speakers or presenters in CLAS virtual events in 2020-2021, and 93 served in 2021-2022. These service roles include panel discussions, classroom visits, and guest speaking roles. The topics ranged from cognitive science to women in the pandemic to branding, marketing and product management. The Women’s Leadership Collective also had two successful years (see Goal 3, Student Support and Engagement).

In 2020-2021, the UConn Foundation surpassed its $8.5M fundraising goal for CLAS with support in total of $8,633,258 from alumni donors, friends, corporations, private foundations, and others. The amount was down from the previous year ($10,050,301). However, we saw an increase in the number of individuals, with 1,916 contributors. This jump of nearly 700 new donors indicated a significant increase in alumni engagement. In 2021-2022, $6,353,809 total was raised from 1,601 donors. These numbers are disappointing and reflect, at least in part, vacancies in one of our two alumni relations positions and all three of our development positions through much of the year.
V. Acknowledgements

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- Kane Lynch, Executive Director of Shared Services
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CLAS Strategic Plan Advisory Committee

We are grateful to the members of the CLAS Strategic Plan Advisory Committee for the input they provided.

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- Andrea Celli, Assistant Professor, Department of Literatures, Cultures, and Languages; Center for Judaic Studies and Contemporary Jewish Life
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