Strategic Plan

Phase I

The College of Arts & Sciences

A Destination of Choice

Spring 2013
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The College of Arts and Sciences is the largest and most diverse academic unit at the University at Buffalo. With approximately 450 faculty members and 220 staff, we teach roughly 350,000 credit hours each year, including two-thirds of all undergraduate credit hours at UB. Given our size, scope and service function, the College has a significant role in the aspirations of Realizing UB2020, the University’s strategic plan. Owing to the financial stability provided through steady enrollment and the NYSUNY 2020 legislation, the University and the College can now plan for the investment of new resources, fueling a recovery from the budgetary restrictions of 2008-2011, that will lead to an enhanced definition and realization of academic excellence at UB.

This CAS@20 strategic plan has resulted from a College-wide planning process that involved many faculty and staff, and a number of opportunities for all to comment and provide feedback. With the principal goal of advancing within the ranks of the AAU, there are five major strategies that emerged as a result of this planning. The College will:

- grow its faculty size by 60 and staff size commensurately
- provide improved research support for faculty
- improve the curricular and co-curricular experiences of our students
- support initiatives by faculty, staff, and students to engage our WNY neighbors
- enhance its relationships with students, alumni, and friends

The detailed recommendations associated with these strategies were culled, categorized and summarized, resulting in a number of investment areas that will support the success of these strategies. This document outlines the recommendations within each strategy and the overall investment areas that are required in order for the College to flourish under the guidance of this plan. Some recommendations are already being implemented, while it is expected that other issues will require additional planning over the next 12 months. With focused implementation, the College will accomplish several goals: (i) improve its standing among AAU institutions, the premiere research universities in North America; (ii) enhance the UB experience of all our students; (iii) engage our community; (iv) build an ongoing engagement with alumni and friends. It is our hope that by 2018, the 20th anniversary of (this incarnation of) the College of Arts and Sciences, the successes of both CAS@20 and Realizing UB2020 will have propelled UB to a Destination of Choice for students.
INTRODUCTION

Mission

The College of Arts and Sciences at the University at Buffalo provides a liberal arts education to its students within a major research university. Our mission is threefold:

1. to engage in research, scholarship, and creative activities in the arts and humanities, natural sciences, and social sciences
2. to provide excellent programs of undergraduate and graduate education in the liberal arts, and
3. to engage the larger community through our scholarly activities

Who We Are

The College of Arts and Sciences is the largest and most diverse academic unit at the University at Buffalo. The College includes some 450 faculty members and 220 staff members, and is home to approximately 6000 majors (undergraduate and graduate) and several thousand intended majors. Comprised of 25 departments, 16 programs and 23 centers, the College teaches about 350,000 credit hours each year, including two-thirds of all undergraduate credit hours at UB. But more than numbers, our faculty are internationally known scholars. They compose music, write books, discover new materials and explain the mysteries of human behavior. Our students work in laboratories, perform on stage and work to improve their communities. Our staff are dedicated to the College, the success of our students, and our mission of research, teaching and service.

In the early 2000s, faculty members who first came to UB during the expansion of the 1970s began to retire. Favorable budgetary changes transpired at the same time. This combination of events provided a special opportunity for the College. From 2001-2008, the College grew in faculty size by 21%, from just over 400 to 489. Due to that growth, coupled with retirement replacements, approximately two-thirds of our entire College faculty today has come to UB since 2001. This vibrant and energetic cohort brings new approaches to scholarship and to the classroom. It is because of this energy and creativity
that UB looks to create a new and distinctive academic direction that integrates excellence in research, teaching and engagement, positioning the University to improve its standing in the Association of American Universities (AAU), the premier research universities in North America.

At its heart, the College of Arts and Sciences is the locus for a liberal arts education at UB. This idea of a liberal education has its roots in the notion of responsible citizenship through the cultivation of character. For us today a liberal education means an ability to think critically, reason carefully, and communicate effectively. In today’s global economy, we should also add preparing students for a world without boundaries, connected and always online, and engaged in intense competition for every potential gain. Derek Bok, former president of Harvard University, writes about a broad-based education providing empowerment and independence and, appropriate for these days when our graduates may change careers perhaps half-a-dozen times, professional flexibility. This is one of UB’s institutional goals—to prepare our students to be productive citizens in an ever-changing world.

Our goal, then, is to take our place as the College of Arts and Sciences in one of the leading public research universities in the AAU, by conducting scholarship of the highest caliber, educating engaged and successful students, and making meaningful contributions to our community.

Challenges

During the period from 2001 to 2008, departments hired into core disciplinary areas and also expanded the range of expertise represented in the faculty ranks. In 2004 the University embarked on the UB 2020 process that, among other initiatives, developed the Strategic Strengths, areas of scholarship in which the campus excelled and for which additional hiring was directed. The Strategic Strengths provided funding for hiring in targeted areas of scholarship that crossed department and school boundaries, to enhance programmatic offerings and research capabilities. Then, as happened at many public and private universities across the country, UB experienced painful cuts consequent to the national economic collapse in 2008. The University struggled to support key programs and keep its best faculty.

The College was forced to reduce the size of its faculty and staff, cut the support of research and academic programs, and forgo initiatives.
In addition to the state and federal fiscal situations, other factors have recently come into play, influencing the actions we may take. Across the country parents and students question the wisdom of taking on enormous debt for a college degree. UB students graduate with one of the smaller debt loads of any major institution in the country. Nevertheless, the SUNY commitment to educate all qualified students in the State requires us to examine the impact of tuition and fee increases on accessibility. The recent recession and continuing sluggish job growth mean that some students receive their bachelor’s degree without any prospect of finding a satisfying job in their field of study. Recent books and articles lament the poor performance of US elementary and high schools. Increasingly the country seems unable to find a middle ground between the highly skilled workers in high paying jobs on one side and the unemployment line on the other. We ignore these external forces at our own peril.

Finally, demographics are not in our favor. We are in a fiscal environment that increasingly relies on student enrollment, at a time when the traditional college-aged population in New York is diminishing in size. The Buffalo-Niagara region is particularly affected. Nearby states are also experiencing a decrease in college-ready students. So it is important for us to make a case for “Why UB?”, to attract the number and quality of applicants that will meet our enrollment goals and maintain our funding plans.

**Strengths and Opportunities**

In spite of these challenges, UB has much to be proud of. The UB 2020 plan established a strong foundation for the university. UB attracts high quality students who graduate at rates higher than many universities and colleges and do so with relatively little debt. Our research reputation is among the best in the country. Within the College there are eight NSF CAREER Award winners in Physics and seven in Chemistry. College faculty members have received fellowships from the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Guggenheim and Sloan Foundations. Their work has earned recognition from the Rockefeller Foundation, the Fulbright program, and the National Science Foundation. One of our faculty has garnered a Tony Award nomination. Another colleague has been awarded the Chevalier dans l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres, recognition by the French government of significant contributions to the arts, literature, or the propagation of these fields. Our Center for 21st Century Music brings the best of modern music to campus and Buffalo, while the Humanities Institute attracts nationally known scholars. Through President Tripathi’s leadership, the endowment of WBFO professorships offers a special opportunity to attract the most dynamic voices in the arts and humanities to our campus.
We now have the opportunity to build on these and other points of excellence within the College as we move forward with this plan.

In 2011, after advocacy from UB and other SUNY institutions across the state, the Governor and Chancellor signed the NYSUNY 2020 legislation, which offers us fiscal stability and the ability to plan for revenue growth through small, regular increases in tuition. As part of the financial support offered, NYSUNY 2020 committed UB to specific outcomes, including: improved graduation rates; an increase in research expenditures; a general increase in faculty hiring to address class size and number of courses offered, with targeted hiring in fields identified as important to the state’s economy; moving the School of Medicine to the downtown campus; and a larger role in the economic development of Western New York. Our plans for the future must direct the College’s contribution to those ends.

While NYSUNY 2020 provides the campus with the prospect of revenue for recovery, it makes student enrollment the principal driver of those revenues. As a campus, enrollment management becomes an important factor in planning, both for the overall enrollment picture and in shaping incoming classes for balance of interests. For the College, undergraduate enrollment management will help us provide the necessary classes for the right number of students. At the graduate level, we have the flexibility to carefully plan admission, in order to meet enrollment targets while also preparing students for timely graduation. In short, enrollment is both a challenge and an opportunity that is key to our financial security.

To that end, the University has several advantages over other institutions. Even with the increases specified in the NYSUNY 2020 legislation, tuition at UB will be among the lowest of any major public research institution in the country. Within the state, the name recognition of UB is high. It is our challenge to capitalize on these factors to bring the best students to Buffalo for their education.

As we close the 2012-13 academic year, we have successfully endured the budget contraction of the past several years and have recognized a great deal about what we most value. The NYSUNY 2020 legislation provides us with an opportunity for strategic re-investment of millions of dollars, using the lessons learned from the years of reductions to articulate our goals clearly and carefully, with an eye towards the 20th anniversary of (this incarnation of) the College of Arts and Sciences. Thus CAS@20 was conceived.
THE STRATEGIC PLAN

The Planning Process

The CAS@20 planning process started in the Fall of 2012. 65 members of the faculty and staff participated in one of six sub-committees that guided a process of information gathering, discussion, committee deliberation, and recommendations. Sub-committees focused in the areas of: graduate education, undergraduate education, creative activities and research, faculty affairs, college identity, and academic support and resource management. In making their recommendations, these sub-committees consulted with faculty and staff groups throughout the College. Their reports are available in the appendices of this document. The present document draws from the committee reports and attempts to weave together common themes while acknowledging the need for further discussion to set priorities and create specific implementation plans. Subsequent discussions with undergraduate students and with a small group of engaged alumni and benefactors have refined an earlier draft of this plan. Throughout the process, our work is guided by principles of collegiality and respect for diverse viewpoints and a desire to excel in exercising intellectual leadership in our disciplines.

No matter the external forces acting on the University, in order to improve in our research and teaching, faculty members, departments and the College as a whole, must set high expectations of achievement, assess whether those expectations are being met, and rise to the challenge of acting on that assessment. This strategic plan proposes a basis for a path forward for the College, within the context of Realizing UB 2020, to achieve national recognition in teaching and scholarship while preparing our students to be effective leaders and resilient citizens in an ever-changing world. Success in our efforts will rely on improvements in measures such as the quality of our undergraduate and graduate student body, graduation rates, job placement rates of our graduates, research expenditures, publication rates, faculty awards, and philanthropy.

Strategies

The primary objective of both Realizing UB 2020 and CAS@20 is, quite simply, to elevate the College’s and the University’s ranking among the nation’s elite research universities by attracting the best faculty and students possible, enhancing our ability to make a significant difference in Western New York and beyond.
The College will put in place five strategies to achieve this objective:

- The College will grow its faculty size by 60 and staff size commensurately. Faculty growth will enhance diversity, improve the output of research and scholarship, provide greater flexibility in course offerings, and improve the student-faculty ratio. Staff growth will facilitate teaching and research productivity, improve the operations of our research centers and departments, and provide increased student service.

- The College will provide improved research support for faculty, will foster the development of research centers and scholarly groups, and will modify policies governing research leaves. These changes will foster greater research and scholarly productivity, resulting in higher research expenditures, greater success garnering prestigious fellowships, and better recognition of faculty accomplishments.

- The College will improve the experiences of our students through changes to curricular and co-curricular offerings, through a reconsideration of general education courses, and through changes in the delivery of general education courses and online courses. Through these changes, the College and UB will provide a richer experience for our students while also reducing time to graduation and helping keep student debt low.

- The College will support and enhance initiatives by faculty, staff, and students to engage our neighbors by bringing expertise and energy to the challenges of Buffalo and Western New York through our community engagement initiatives.

- The College will enhance its relationships with students, alumni, and friends through improved communications and an enhanced web and social media presence. By communicating more effectively with prospective students and parents, the College will help recruit the best students to the campus. By continuing to build stronger relationships with alumni and friends, the College will be promoting the achievements of our current and former students as well as our faculty, bringing increased recognition to the impact of their discoveries.

A host of specific action items were recommended by the various sub-committees to guide our work in successfully implementing these strategies. Those many action items were culled, categorized and summarized, resulting in a number of investment areas that are believed will successfully support plan implementation.

1. Investing in the faculty, staff and students in the College, to put in place the support mechanisms to help them develop in their careers and in their lives;
2. Investing in research and scholarship, to improve the College’s research metrics;
3. Investing in excellent teaching by reconsidering what and how we teach, how we recognize exceptional effort in teaching and mentoring, and how we support our undergraduate and graduate students;
4. Investing in a College infrastructure that will motivate and reward student involvement and faculty scholarship in the university’s community engagement agenda, enhancing the quality of life in WNY and beyond;
5. Investing in an identity for the College via enhanced communication with our students, alumni and friends.

Of course we will need to prioritize the action items recommended in order for these investments to have maximum impact. And we must put in place mechanisms to assess our success in achieving each of the five strategies, leading to improved ranking in the AAU. The process of setting priorities, benchmarking against peer institutions, and instituting mechanisms for assessing our actions will be developed over the next several months as part of detailed implementation plans.

The College’s success in implementing the strategies of CAS@20 will contribute to the University’s goals as articulated in Realizing UB 2020. The two initiatives share the ultimate goal of improved rankings of the university and the reputation of its faculty. The proposed hiring, the enhanced support of research, and the enrichment of student experiences, all advance the President’s ambitions stated in Realizing UB 2020. Indeed the College is already taking steps to meet those objectives.

INVESTMENT AREAS

1. Investing in Faculty, Staff and Students:

   The College will grow its faculty size by 60 and staff size commensurately. Faculty growth will enhance diversity, improve the output of research and scholarship, provide greater flexibility in course offerings, and improve the student-faculty ratio. Staff growth will facilitate teaching and research productivity, improve the operations of our research centers and departments, and provide increased student service.

As a member of the AAU, the University at Buffalo counts itself among the premier research institutions in the country. Many of UB’s institutional goals, and many of the College’s, follow from this fact. In order to improve rankings and provide a fuller
experience to all our students, CAS commits to a fundamental principle: our faculty, staff and students make the College what it is and are the key to our improvement. Therefore, we will invest in quality hiring, professional development, and empowering faculty and staff to excel in their jobs thereby creating the best education and experience for our students.

*Thoughtful, Planned Growth*

The losses of faculty and staff during 2008-2011 halted the momentum of the College, and took a toll on morale. Supported by the rational tuition increases of NYSUNY 2020, the College is now beginning a new phase of growth, building from “the new normal” of 2011. The College will recruit exceptional scholars to increase our faculty size by 60. Faculty growth of 60 means the College will have over 500 faculty members, a goal of this unit for more than a decade. This growth accomplishes several objectives, among them bringing talented scholars to campus, strengthening the scholarship in the disciplines, enhancing diversity, enabling our departments to offer more courses to our students, and improving the student-faculty ratio within the College. In addition, this growth, coupled with the usual rate of retirements and turnover, means that by 2018 roughly 400 of our faculty, approximately 80% of the total, will have come to UB within the past 15 years. This represents a tremendous injection of energy and enthusiasm into our programs, revitalizing our scholarship which positively impacts our recruitment of both faculty and students.

Some of the anticipated hiring will be directed toward 3E projects and the theme activities articulated in Realizing UB 2020—currently health, innovation, justice, humanity, and the environment— and the majority will be directed through departmental hiring plans. The themes articulated in Realizing UB 2020 are, by design, broad in scope. The College can and will participate in all the theme activities and hiring. Because of our breadth and scope, the College will also play an active role collaborating with other schools in interdisciplinary 3E and theme initiatives. These initiatives include deliverable outcomes that help judge success, a notion that should be present in all hiring proposals. This participation will advance our hiring strategy, and theme activities will help create the intellectual vibrancy of the University. Participating in theme areas will provide a vehicle for faculty engagement with a larger effort, bringing colleagues from different units together in shared interests.

All College departments have written hiring plans that briefly describe departmental goals and development over the next several years, addressing how we will be at the
forefront of national trends in the various fields of study. These development plans will not only provide the focus for hiring actions, but more generally will help shape departmental activities. Several common themes emerged from the department plans. Some proposals augment 3E hiring, adding department personnel to these provostial initiatives. Several departments will recruit scholars with an interest in the voices and actions of minority populations. Other departments look to develop scholarly groups working in the culture and literature of Africa and the African diaspora. More generally, a sense of community among humanities scholars has been fostered through the activities of the Cultures and Texts strategic strength. Where it makes sense, this sense of community can be enhanced through shared participation in hiring. Our social science departments will expand expertise in quantitative methodology. Science departments share an interest in materials and “big data,” spurred in part by the Materials Science and Engineering and Computational and Data-enabled Science and Engineering 3E programs. Our arts departments are at the forefront of integrating art practice with theory and critical analysis, and the Technē Institute has emerged as a new center for scholarship that merges art and computing technology. Cluster hiring, when appropriate, will allow the College to recruit talented faculty to the campus to improve departments, programs, or interdisciplinary research activity.

Mentoring to Maintain Faculty Growth and Excellence

A necessary component of successful hiring and sustained faculty growth is mentoring and supporting these new colleagues. Departments should clearly articulate the expectations they have for each new faculty member. The progress of new colleagues toward tenure and promotion should be monitored carefully. It must be a priority for every department to assist faculty members, from assistant professor to full professor, in advancing their scholarship, improving their teaching, and in developing new opportunities to serve the greater community. Departments should define the expectations they have for themselves as a unit and understand the role of each faculty member in meeting those expectations.

Accompanying faculty hiring must be growth in the staff, who affect so much of the scholarship and instruction that makes the College the vibrant unit it is. Targeted areas for staff growth include research support, general department and student support, and web and communications enhancement. Important for staff members, both new and old, is the opportunity for professional development and the ability to learn and participate in University and College initiatives in scholarship, instruction, and service.
Space is another resource that will need much review and discussion as the number of faculty and staff increase and the need for office and lab or studio space grows accordingly. While we anticipate the renovation of the Cooke and Hochstetter complex in the near future, many of our departments are now landlocked and will have to be creative in assigning space for new hires. We have begun a review process in the arts precinct, assessing the use of space in the Center for the Arts in order to consolidate where possible and make better use of spaces that are not meeting the current and future demands of the programs. Similar processes are needed in other areas of contiguous department space.

Finally, the College will examine the support of our graduate students. These young professionals provide a significant percentage of introductory course instruction and are integral to the research that the College performs every year. Base stipend levels, enhanced support for exceptional incoming students, and the opportunity for additional support beyond the standard four years of teaching assistantships must be carefully explored and addressed within the implementation plans to come.

2. Investing in Research and Scholarship

*The College will provide improved research support for faculty by fostering the development of research centers and scholarly groups through greater staff assistance and by modifying policies governing research leaves. These changes will foster greater research and scholarly productivity, resulting in higher research expenditures, greater success garnering prestigious fellowships, and better recognition of faculty accomplishments.*

The hiring and the infrastructure to promote faculty interactions that was set in place as part of the Strategic Strength initiative have assisted several departments in building and redefining core scholarly strength. The 3E initiatives provided a vehicle for new collaborations to develop. Other initiatives not funded by the 3E mechanism should be considered as means of bringing together individuals engaged in creative scholarship. Department hiring plans submitted as part of CAS@20 articulate a path forward for those disciplines. As we proceed with faculty hiring, our objective of continued improvement in rankings relies on our defining aggressive yet achievable goals for scholarship. Some goals have been articulated by the University administration during the last several years: improving research expenditures by 40%; increasing the number of prestigious awards, fellowships, and memberships bestowed on UB faculty; and increasing the number of...
citations to UB-authored publications, particularly in the sciences. Each department must also define its aspirations, to improve its own standing among peers.

Enhancing Knowledge Production

In an effort to improve research support university-wide, the College will advocate for a robust and responsive Sponsored Projects Services unit that is appropriately staffed. In addition post-award services must be augmented so that researchers can focus on their investigations while professionals administer all appropriate policies and regulations. The College will work with the office of the Vice President for Research and Economic Development to support teams of researchers who are pursuing larger collaborative grants, to assist with the administrative burden of organizing and administering these integrative, cross-disciplinary proposals.

To assist departments in working toward the institutional research goals outlined above, we will examine research support provided to faculty members, departments, centers and institutes of the College. Details of this review will be defined in subsequent implementation plans. Whatever the specifics, College processes and the activities of all its scholars must be reviewed; new ways of doing business should be considered; and policy guidelines regarding resources allocations need to be developed.

Researchers in the sciences, and those doing interdisciplinary work with the health sciences and engineering, would benefit from a rational plan for shared facilities and collaborative workspace and a mechanism to maintain shared equipment. The College will partner with other schools and the Vice President for Research and Economic Development to identify space for shared instrumentation and collaborative laboratories.

Research support is also needed in the social sciences, arts, and humanities. The research support review will study the staffing needed to provide appropriate support in these areas. Because the libraries are intimately connected to work in the humanities, the College will also establish mechanisms for facilitating closer working relationships among the faculty and UB Libraries, which may assist in open access publication and a more collaborative approach to shared data resources by a wider group.

Finally, the College will examine its support mechanisms for conferences, faculty travel, and publication subvention, all of which were suspended during the budget constrictions of 2008-2012. The College will also examine policies regarding leaves with the goal of providing incentives that motivate scholars to seek the most prestigious fellowships and
awards, bringing recognition and benefit to our faculty, students, university, and community. We will establish guidelines for these research support vehicles, measure their efficacy, and recommend changes or modifications over time.

3. Investing in Teaching and Learning

_The College will improve the experiences of our students through changes to curricular and co-curricular offerings, through a reconsideration of general education courses, and through changes in the delivery of general education courses and online courses. Through these changes, the College and UB will provide a richer experience for our students while also reducing time to graduation and helping keep student debt low._

Because providing a liberal arts education to our students is an important part of our mission, the College reaffirms its commitment to providing quality instruction in the classroom and opportunities for meaningful learning outside the classroom. The College is already working to provide students every opportunity to successfully meet the Finish in Four promise by offering hundreds of additional course sections and several thousand extra seats in courses annually. Through this effort the College is partnering with the central administration to achieve the goal of improving four- and six-year graduation rates, allowing students to graduate faster and with less debt. The College has also been the prime driver in expanding course offerings during the summer and creating the new winter session to help students catch up or get ahead. Our Student Assistance Fund helps upperclassmen who are experiencing exceptional financial hardships make it through to graduation.

In addition to deep domain knowledge, the Realizing UB 2020 plan includes as core learning outcomes for all UB students the notions of critical thinking, collaboration, communication, cultural appreciation, and engagement. The College will work with the central administration to examine the undergraduate learning landscape and include these outcomes as part of the education provided to our students. We will reexamine our course offerings with the intention of providing all students the opportunity to learn new topics and to develop skills in quantitative thinking, writing and textual analysis, and creative expression. More generally, the College will continue to advocate for a re-examination of general education requirements, including a revitalized writing curriculum. In this regard, one should note the establishment of the Center for Excellence in Writing, a College-led 3E initiative that will provide support to undergraduate and graduate students throughout their academic careers.
Instruction

As the provider of approximately 2/3 of all undergraduate credits taught at UB, excellent instruction is crucial to the College. Therefore, we will take a leadership role in promoting exceptional classroom teaching and creative learning experiences outside the class. The College will continue to promote new ideas for instruction, and new ways to analyze the efficacy of these ideas. Specifically, the College will work with the central administration to offer opportunities for faculty members to experiment with new technologies to deliver courses and programs online. The College will also support experiments to use online technologies to “flip” classes. Together with colleagues from other schools and campus units, we will work to measure the long-term success of these learning modalities providing alternatives for students with all types of learning styles.

In addition, departments should acknowledge the contribution of service teaching and include service teaching and large lecture teaching in workload considerations. Also important to enhancing the classroom experience for instructors and students are the facilities. The College will evaluate classroom utilization within our own inventory of teaching spaces, and will advocate for improved central classroom facilities, including the installation and support of technology in every appropriate classroom.

Service Learning

To best prepare our students for successful careers, the College will work to expand service learning opportunities and internship and research experiences for students, including expanding departmental opportunities for meaningful capstone experiences in majors and promoting senior/honor theses. In addition to enhancing the preparation of our students for employment in a changing workforce, these opportunities also enhance our engagement initiatives, creating a stronger community for all residents.

Finally, the College and its departments will examine the recruitment, enrollment, and advancement of both undergraduate and graduate students. At the undergraduate level, the College will work with the Vice Provost for Enrollment to recruit exceptional students to UB, and will provide every opportunity for those students to find a meaningful experience at the University. At the graduate level, the College will encourage departments to offer new degrees and advanced certificates in areas that will afford career advancement. Departments will provide enhanced advising for graduate
students, including professional seminars, to both reduce the average time to degree and help students prepare for academic and non-academic careers following graduation.

4. Investing in Community Engagement and the WNY Community

_The College will support and enhance initiatives by faculty, staff, and students to engage our neighbors by bringing expertise and energy to the challenges of Buffalo and Western New York through our community engagement initiatives._

Universities cultivate intellectual and creative resources that can make transformative contributions to society. UB faculty, staff and students influence thousands of lives within the community every day, helping Western New York build a brighter future. The College encourages faculty, staff and students to make a difference in our regional and global communities through teaching, research, and service programs, recognizing the importance of integrated engagement as vital to our mission. Faculty scholarship impacts lives around the globe, while locally our activities touch our neighbors across Western New York, from the Buffalo schools to Roswell Park Cancer Institute to the galleries and studios of Elmwood Avenue.

_Engaging the Community_

Initiatives such as the _Civic Engagement and Public Policy_ strategic strength were formed to advance applied research and engage scholarship to address social and policy challenges and persistent inequalities such as those related to race, class, and gender. Results of collaborative research are shared among scholars, community leaders, and policymakers with the goal of developing integrated solutions to pressing social needs and concerns, positively impacting communities and informing public policy. Through this initiative, and others like it, faculty have been awarded fellowships in support of community-based research in collaboration with local partners.

_Extreme Events: Mitigation and Response_, another strategic strength, involves the Center for Geohazard Studies and the School of Engineering working together to make the world a safer place through research on earthquakes, volcanoes, and other natural disasters, to help communities become better prepared. Associated faculty have been instrumental in studying the aftermath of the earthquake in Haiti and have recently simulated the effect of an eastern US earthquake on New York City brownstone buildings, improving the capability to predict damage to life and property.
The Human Capital Institute brings together scholars from Economics and the Graduate School of Education, to study the impact of education on economic development through job creation and worker education, and by enhancing cultural infrastructure.

The Humanities Institute and the Technē Institute for Arts & Emerging Technology have established themselves as important entities supporting the arts and humanities in the region, promoting research and intellectual exchange across many disciplines. Building on Buffalo’s rich legacy of artistic and cultural innovation, these institutes bring together community organizations and faculty to promote innovative scholarship and teaching.

These are but a few examples of how the faculty and students of the College are engaging the community to solve the problems of today. The College will continue to advance the establishment of centers and institutes that contribute to scholarship, especially scholarship that helps improve our understanding of the human social condition.

In ways both large and small, the activities of the College improve the local economy and better the lives of people both in Western New York and afar. These College activities also enrich the learning experience of our students by providing a unique, hands-on experience that enhances their personal development while improving their skills as engaged citizens and thoughtful leaders. In an effort to expand these types of opportunities, the College will examine current community engagement initiatives and prepare new programs to assist UB in meeting its regional engagement goals providing mutual benefit to our students, the University, and the community.

Any implementation plan to enhance the community engagement strategy must include changes in policy to reward faculty who excel in community service and engagement. The College will support departments who provide internships and experiential opportunities for students; in particular, the College will advocate for an internship clearing house to be established in conjunction with Career Services and work closely with the new office of Student Engagement and Experiential Learning in Academic Affairs.

In addition, the College will participate in the development of the Global Competency program for undergraduate students; leverage the internationalized environment of the UB community to develop a program that fosters strategic interaction between international and domestic students; and encourage student participation in study abroad programs, all of which will give our students an edge in the global job market.
Engaging our Alumni

Now more than ever, universities rely on the support of dedicated alumni and friends to achieve their goals. Alumni represent one of the College’s greatest resources, touching our efforts in community engagement, research, career services, and philanthropy. Partnerships are vital to increasing alumni engagement and ensuring impact on our programs.

In a collaboration between the College and the Vice President for Development and Alumni Relations, a Director of Constituent and Alumni Relations was recently hired. The expectation in staffing this position is to create and coordinate a plan to improve engagement with our alumni and friends by supporting departmental events and engaging constituents through traditional and new media. Already, generous alumni are helping the College expand opportunities for internships providing meaningful learning opportunities for students outside the classroom. Towards this end, the College will work with the Senior Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education, to enhance the value and efficacy of scholarship endowments, both for new student recruitment and for co-curricular experiences for continuing students.

The actions we take to build the College’s programs and reputation impact our alumni here in Western New York and across the world. By staying focused on the goals of Realizing UB 2020 and the important features of CAS@20, we will enhance the value of a UB degree and make friends and alumni proud of their association with the College of Arts and Sciences and the University at Buffalo. As implementation plans are developed, the College will look for opportunities to create and strengthen our alumni partnerships wherever possible.

4. Investing in Our Identity

The College will enhance its relationships with students, alumni, and friends through improved communications and an enhanced web and social media presence. By communicating more effectively with prospective students and parents, we will help recruit the best students to the campus. By continuing to build relationships with alumni and friends, the College will help promote the achievements of our current and former students and our faculty, and the impact of their discoveries.

Although the departments and faculties that make up the College have been part of UB for decades, the College as a free-standing entity is a relatively new unit at UB, having been re-established in 1998. Home to the arts, humanities, social sciences, and natural
sciences, the College serves a wide breadth of students and is comprised of a vast and diverse array of departments, making it difficult to define a single identity for the College. The College is the sum of its constituent parts—twenty-five departments and sixteen degree programs, more than 450 faculty and 220 staff, some 14,000 students and roughly 90,000 living alumni. For many of these constituents, their primary identification is with their home department, with little recognition of or affinity to the College. This lack of identity affects departmental culture, faculty recruitment and interaction, alumni communication, fundraising, and student recruitment.

Establishing an identity for the College may be accelerated by creating an office of communications, similar to that of many peer institutions across the country (and several schools within UB). An office of communications would play an important role in creating a sense of community for the College, in addition to supporting enrollment and fundraising initiatives. Professional staff dedicated to this effort would bring the College and its departments up to current standards in web design, electronic and print materials, and the effective use of social media channels in sharing our successes with all generations of our various constituent bases, thereby increasing the visibility of the College.

Whether it is promoting the achievements of our faculty to the world; reaching out to prospective students and parents; exchanging information among our current faculty, staff, and students; or sharing important information with our alumni and friends, the College will work to improve its modes and methods of communicating with its constituencies. With regard to student recruitment, these efforts will include a significant investment in the redesign and updating of all departmental websites, the main portal of information for prospective students and their parents. We will evaluate print materials being used for recruitment and create new print and electronic campaigns at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. In an effort to answer the imperative enrollment question of “Why UB?”, we will collaborate with University Communications, the Office of Admissions, and other central UB offices, to promote the College as a preferred destination of choice for prospective students.

With the unique opportunity of growing by 60 new faculty lines and filling turnover positions, it will be important for the University and the College to promote UB as a destination of choice for faculty members and their families also. For the College, this plan will include developing a series of podcasts and other social media products that highlight faculty research and community engagement, shining a bright light on a vibrant
campus environment. The College will also advocate for university offices to update and
enhance the information available about the advantages of living in the Buffalo area.

As part of our efforts to establish a recognizable identity for the College, we will examine
the benefits and costs of a regular print publication, as one additional vehicle for
communicating with alumni and benefactors. And, finally, because students are our best
advocates, the College will create a Student Ambassadors program. These students would
represent the College, serve as the liaison between the Dean’s Office and the student
body of the College, assist in new student recruitment and alumni and donor events, and
participate in service and outreach activities.

IMPLEMENTATION AND EARLY OUTCOMES

The changes proposed here will impact the activities of both the Dean’s Office and the
departments. We must keep focused on our principal objective of improving our standing
among the nation’s elite universities by supporting the research and scholarship of our
faculty and enhancing the education and experience of our students. Along the way we
must measure our activities against the best of our peers.

Some of the recommendations suggested here are relatively straightforward to
implement. Indeed some have already been acted upon and others will be implemented
during the summer 2013. Other recommendations require more significant financial
investment and more detailed faculty input and planning. The Dean’s Office will work
with the CAS@20 subcommittees and other faculty groups to develop those detailed
implementation plans during the summer and fall semester.

Early Outcomes

The following are among the recommendations that have been adopted and for which
implementation has already begun.

Meeting the goal of 60 faculty hires is the most important activity the College will
undertake over the next five years. In 2012-13 we anticipated 20 hires (both new faculty
lines and replacements), yet we exceeded our original estimations by over 30%. Provided
enrollment holds, recruitment during the 2013-14 academic year should lead to
significant net growth, putting the College at the halfway mark (or better) to reach our
final goal of 60. Additionally, we have filled several staff positions, particularly
department administrative positions that were left vacant during 2008-2011.
In regard to improved research support, the College is currently authoring and will implement a new policy in the coming weeks regarding leaves and top-offs for the most prestigious faculty fellowships. In conjunction with the College’s Fellowship Committee, we have been more aggressive in our recruitment of Presidential and Dean’s fellowship students, and will be able to evaluate the success of that policy change once graduate students have registered early in the fall semester. The College has also reinstated the dissertation fellowships.

In support of excellence in teaching and providing our students with an exceptional academic experience, we are currently working on a proposal that will establish recognition for exceptional effort in teaching, service and community engagement that can be implemented immediately for the 2013-14 academic year. In addition, a significant space review has produced a plan that will upgrade and better utilize space within the Center for the Arts in support of creativity, curriculum upgrades and changes in technology within all the art departments and centers. Construction will begin this summer.

Towards the goal of increased alumni engagement and the creation of a stronger College identity, our Development Office has created and begun implementation of a systematic engagement of alumni. The College Student Ambassadors program was announced in early May with a request to department chairs to nominate students they feel would serve well in this capacity. Finally, re-design of the College website is well underway with an expected launch by mid-summer, and discussions about an overhaul of department web presence, and the respective workload implications, have begun.

Future Outcomes

There are several issues outside the purview of the College for which we can only advocate. College faculty and the Dean’s Office have a strong presence in on-going discussions about leadership and change in Sponsored Projects Services. The College has been prominent in the very early discussions about a reconsideration of the general education curriculum. Both of these initiatives will require considerable attention during the next years. Other recommendations – space, new instructional modalities, and additional modes of graduate student support among the most pressing – will be studied and implemented over the next year. In spite of the time it will take to fully establish these new initiatives, we must act with thoughtful urgency, so that in 2018 the College will be known as the Destination of Choice for the best students and faculty in the
country. We make choices now that will benefit the College years down the road. The continued involvement of faculty, staff, students, alumni and friends in this process is essential to our success.

For all of these actions, both immediate and future, it is important to know that College investments are having the desired impact. Some measures of impact are readily identified – an increase in extramural funding; an increase in the number of prestigious fellowships awarded to our faculty; improved SAT scores of incoming graduate students; improved placement of graduating Master’s and doctoral students; increased engagement of alumni and benefactors. These and other metrics used by the AAU will serve as guideposts for assessing our impact. Other measures are more difficult to quantify – measuring the enhanced experiences of our students and measuring the satisfaction and career trajectory of faculty and staff as examples. The Dean’s Office will work with the departments and implementation teams to benchmark best practices, and to develop measures to ensure that our students and faculty are meeting the highest standards of success.

CONCLUSION

Emerging from the foundation of the UB 2020 plans, the College and the University have been presented with an opportunity to break out of the unfortunate budget cycle of the last several years to begin a new phase of faculty and staff growth and to plan a revitalization of programs and activities that meet the needs of the 21st-century student while improving our rank and reputation. There are several expectations that must be met to enable the funding for these changes – stabilized enrollments, improved graduation rates, and enhanced research productivity across the University. Although none of these factors is entirely within the control of the College, we are in a position to make a substantial impact on them, if we are prepared to do so.

All change, of course, produces anxiety, and the changes suggested here for the College are significant within our culture. Today in the US we are confronted with a profoundly different economic outlook than we had five years ago. Federal, state, and local governments now expect research universities to serve as drivers of economic growth. College education is being judged, in part, on job placement outcomes and student indebtedness. How shall we respond?

To answer these questions, it is important to remember where we’ve been. You will recall that the College of Arts and Sciences offered its first classes in 1913. In 1967 the UB
faculty approved a reorganization which created the Faculties of Arts and Letters, Natural Sciences and Mathematics, and Social Sciences. Then in 1998 the three Faculties reunited to become the College. Along the way we have merged some departments and created others, and regularly reconsidered degree offerings for our students. The College is no stranger to change and has always been prepared to examine its structure and processes, to respond effectively to the needs of students and faculty. And because of this, our unit is resilient and strong.

In an 1862 message to Congress, Lincoln offered “As our case is new, so we must think anew.” The College stands ready to study all the suggestions proposed during this planning process, and commits to making the necessary changes – in spite of the discomfort that change brings.

These changes impact activities and structures both in the Dean’s Office and in the departments. We must keep focused on our objectives of improving the research and scholarship of our faculty and enhancing the education of our students. We can do this by building on our points of excellence. As we proceed, we must measure our successes and not be afraid to modify our approach to ensure success. The results being an improved ranking among our AAU peers, providing our students with meaningful curricular and co-curricular experiences preparing them for a lifetime of living and learning, and an enhanced relationship with our neighbors.