

COLLEGE of CHARLESTON

STRATEGIC PLAN

Draft: The Strategic Plan

The School of Humanities and Social Sciences

October 1, 2009

HSS Mission

In the School of Humanities and Social Sciences, we are Teacher-Scholars committed to the study of human nature and human creations. We seek to deepen our understanding of history and literature, inquire into the character of cultures and societies, and support the value of ethical and moral reflection.

HSS Core Purpose

HSS Teacher-Scholars cultivate in students the skills of creative problem-solving, critical thinking, and writing to discover, activities that prepare students for productive civic engagement, understanding of different global perspectives, and learning as a life-long pursuit.

HSS: Our Envisioned Future

The School of Humanities and Social Sciences is recognized for its fundamental importance to the life of the campus. Its contributions both to the General Education curriculum and to intensive study and research in departmental majors place HSS in a central role in liberal arts instruction at the College.

HSS makes excellent use of its new facilities, especially its state-of-the-art classroom buildings. The new HSS buildings will be models of cutting-edge educational architecture, being flexible and rich in technology.

HSS is funded at levels commensurate with its centrality.

All HSS faculty embrace the Teacher-Scholar model. They understand that research and teaching are inter-animating activities. For their successes, HSS faculty are nationally recognized as model Teacher-Scholars. They are emulated for their creativity in combining instruction and scholarship.

Curricular innovation and pedagogical excellence are the watchwords of HSS. The faculty have produced an innovative curriculum that is cutting-edge in its content — especially in its inter-, intra-, and cross-disciplinary emphases; its internationalism; and its experiential opportunities. Faculty are student-focused and experiment with innovative learning opportunities, with a special emphasis on research directed by faculty (fieldwork, archival work, data collection, laboratory experience). HSS faculty are

renowned for their commitment to using writing as a source of discovery and learning, both for their students and for their own research.

Research Centers and Institutes emerging from faculty expertise and from the unique opportunities provided by the City of Charleston are vital to the successes of HSS and the College:

They serve as the site of the most important intellectual resources and the most vigorous intellectual energy at the College.

They provide rich sources of inspiration for new curricular initiatives and innovative pedagogical practices.

They help us attract the best undergraduate and graduate students.

They are attractive to potential donors.

GOALS AND STRATEGIES

To achieve its envisioned future, the College has identified the following five goals that will enable it to combine the personalized, student focus of a small teaching institution with the breadth of curricular, and co- and extra-curricular opportunities of a research university.

GOALS

Goal 1: Provide students with a highly personalized education based on a liberal arts and sciences core and enhanced by opportunities for experiential learning.

Goal 2: Develop or improve nationally recognized undergraduate, graduate, and professional programs in areas that take advantage of our history, culture, and location in Charleston and contribute to the well-being of the region.

Goal 3: Provide students with the global and interdisciplinary perspectives necessary to address the social, economic, ethical, scientific, and political issues of the twenty-first century.

Goal 4: Establish and promote a vibrant campus life atmosphere dedicated to education of the whole person through integration of curricular and co- or extra-curricular activities.

Goal 5: Achieve financial security by creating a new financial model for the College of Charleston.

STRATEGIES

The 10 Strategies that follow must be implemented to bring the Goals outlined in this Strategic Plan to fruition. Together, they represent the necessary steps to strengthen the College of Charleston overall and improve its visibility and national prominence. Bulleted under each strategy is a series of HSS-specific “tactics” that we could use to realize those strategies. The tactics will be reviewed annually, as each school, department, and division reviews its own plans annually; thus, the items listed in the bullet points may change.

Strategy 1: Enhance the undergraduate academic core.

- **Build a new HSS Classroom building**
Classrooms of many different sizes are created, all flexible in their uses and rich in technology. (Technology is accessible through proper training and tech support in the Schools.)
- **Continue to be recognized as leaders in personalized education**
Faculty/student research is encouraged and supported.
Internships and independent studies are the norm.
We offer small classes in our majors — with capstones in every major.
A large variety of small writing classes is offered to all College students.
We take the lead in peer mentoring.
We make excellent use of our residence halls for instruction and meetings.
Some classes are conducted as tutorials.
HSS departments involve students in decision-making, including inviting suggestions for emerging areas of interest to promote student/faculty interaction.
HSS departments have named a select group of juniors as “Senior Fellows.”
These students serve as representatives of the department to the campus and Charleston communities.
- **Spearhead initiatives that revise our General Education requirements, with a special emphasis on writing**
Our reputation has been enhanced through a new emphasis on writing.
All HSS majors will be required to complete a writing intensive course of study.
We offer faculty an attachable “W” credit to any class with writing intensive work.
More students choose thesis writing, including a capstone with writing credit.
Writing has been re-organized as part of Gen Ed program, with outcomes specified over a 4-year period.
The work currently undertaken by faculty in conducting writing intensive classes is acknowledged in the reassessment of the appropriate credit hours for writing intensive classes.
All HSS students will graduate knowing how to use writing for problem-solving and discovery.
The extra effort to teach writing well is recognized in credit hours — for faculty and for students.

We have established a “Writing Works Institute” that ensures a single, ambitious goal: all students who matriculate at the College of Charleston will receive intensive instruction in writing at strategic points throughout their undergraduate careers, while a special group, the Writing Works Scholars, will graduate as experienced, accomplished writers.

We have designed a new MFA degree that provides graduate students in creative writing with work experiences in the art and business of literary publishing, as well as the means by which to serve the local community and the Low Country:

- Study with a Distinguished Visiting Chair in Writing
- An Emerging Writer Residency
- Internship opportunities with *Crazyhorse*
- The *Crazyhorse*/Tupelo Press Publishing Institute
- Graduate coursework tied to the Arts Management program (resulting in a Literary Publishing certificate)

- **Develop new programs and majors**

We have formalized our discussions about establishing a Public Health minor/major. We will undertake discussions with USC and MUSC about an -MPH, as appropriate.

We seek approval for the MFA degree.

We begin discussions about niche Ph.D. programs. Possibilities about these niche programs might include Atlantic Studies, Environmental Studies, and/or Public Policy

- **Provide better support for existing departments and programs**

Travel budgets have been increased, and HSS has parity with other Schools.

Research and Development money has increased.

Start-up packages are nationally competitive.

Incentives are provided to develop strategic priorities, including interdisciplinary and international curricula, more personalized education opportunities, and new revenue-generating programs.

- **Develop an interdisciplinary and international focus in our curriculum and in our faculty research**

Interdisciplinary initiatives:

- Courses, team-taught both within and across departments, emphasize multidisciplinary perspectives. Faculty partnerships across disciplines are encouraged, including extra-curricular activities, visiting speaker series, film discussion, and special HSS-sponsored events.
- Year-long themes and school-wide events (not just classroom courses) are sponsored and coordinated by HSS.
- Select HSS courses (INTR or another rubric) model new pedagogical approaches.

- Support is provided for faculty-student research collaboration within departments, between departments, and with various centers.
- “Local and global” teaching opportunities are emphasized, linking local community resources to larger, global learning strategies; and “learning beyond the classroom” is a given.
- Intra-cultural experiences thrive and are poised for expansion. Research projects tied directly to local groups (ethnic [e.g. Gullah], political, religious, literary, NGOs, etc.), have been developed to promote College-community relations.
 - We offer specialized courses about Charleston such as:
 - Charleston and the 20s
 - Charleston and the Atlantic Slave Trade
 - Charleston in Literature and Art
 - Charleston in the News
 - Religions of the Low Country
 - South Carolina Politics
- Expanded relationships with the Charleston community have established links such as these:
 - “My Life as a Girl”: WGST, Burke, and Ashley Hall students
 - “Poetry in the Schools”: Creative writing program with Burke
 - “WWI Veterans project”: The oral history project in History
 - Anthropological fieldwork at Michaux, McLeod, Dixie and other sites

International Initiatives

- Departments in HSS offer international components for individual majors, including service/intern learning opportunities. There are rich funding opportunities for sponsoring international themes, events, speakers, and curricular innovation.
- The number of HSS students participating in study abroad increases every year, as does the number of international partnerships with other institutions. Multiple faculty/departments are engaged in study abroad.
- Alternative learning linked to the local community is available for students who cannot go abroad, through organizations/centers with international orientations.
- We have expanded our existing bilateral study abroad partnerships. Some possibilities include the following:
 - We could formalize our relationship with England’s Bath Spa University. We exchange students periodically, but we would like to increase the volume of this activity and possibly expand the nature of the partnership to include a faculty exchange program.
 - We could establish a semester in Argentina, with College of Charleston students taking courses in Buenos Aires as part of an ongoing agreement with the Universidad Nacional de La Matanza (UNLM).

We could institute summer study in South Africa. One such program would expand College participation in Global Partnership in Action (GPACT) program in Grahamstown, South Africa. A second initiative would offer a summer travel course in Durban, South Africa.

Strategy 2: Develop nationally recognized academic programs at the graduate level.

HSS will develop new Institutes and Centers that enrich both graduate and undergraduate offerings:

- The HSS Research Institute
The Institute would include faculty, students, community members, and scholars from area universities and beyond. The Institute would be housed in a single unit bringing together all HSS disciplines and those scholars from outside. Modeled on the National Humanities Center in Raleigh/Durham, it would house scholars of national and international renown and provide competitive grants for HSS faculty to participate in the semester- or year-long seminars. HSS faculty would earn release time from teaching and additional research support while Fellows in the Institute.
- The Joseph P. Riley Jr. Center for Livable Communities
The Joseph P. Riley, Jr. Center for Livable Communities focuses on sustaining the legacy of Mayor Riley through projects that develop and maintain livable communities in urban, suburban, and rural contexts. The Center carries out its mission by connecting community needs with faculty and student research interests, facilitating and administering grants, and providing expertise and assistance to public and nonprofit organizations. The goal of fostering livable communities builds on the current expertise among College faculty and helps foster new areas of strength. Faculty interested in a broad range of community-level research — from assessing the special needs of an aging population to exploring the impact that Internet access has on different segments of the community — are served by this Center. In addition to its broad focus on “Livable Communities,” the Center could also house appropriate academic departments, such as the following:
 - Nonprofit and Community-Based Organizations
 - Crime, Community and Legal Studies
 - Environment, Health, and Urban Studies
 - Urban Studies
 - MES (with SSM)
 - Historic preservation (with Clemson and SOTA)

The MPA program — one of the largest and most successful programs at the College with more than 300 alumni, many of whom work in public service positions in government and in area nonprofit organizations — will initially serve as the centerpiece of the reinvigorated Riley Center. It offers a vehicle for both academic and professional preparation, with a more diverse student body than most other graduate programs on campus.

- The Atlantic Studies Institute
The Atlantic Studies Institute would foster faculty, undergraduate, and graduate research in the Atlantic World, broadly defined as the connections established among Europe, Africa, and the Americas between the fifteenth and twenty-first centuries. While primarily focused on the history of migration and trade around the Atlantic World, it would pay particular attention to Charleston and its unique role as a major hub of the Transatlantic Slave Trade and a major port of entry for many immigrant groups.
- Center for Communication and Politics
The nonpartisan Center is devoted to innovative and interdisciplinary teaching, research, and service, with the goal of understanding and improving political communication in contemporary society. The Center brings together leading professionals and scholars in political communication and provides research and expertise to students, elected officials, and media representatives in South Carolina and throughout the nation.
- Center for Politics, Philosophy, and Law
The Center will promote interdisciplinary teaching, learning, and scholarship in legal, moral, and political philosophy. It will be the Center of expanding interdisciplinary research opportunities for faculty, especially in the area of human rights law, civil rights law, constitution law, and the politics and philosophy of judicial adjudication and mediation. Students — who are significantly ahead of the academic curve in this field — would find their increasing interest reflected in an array of classes and programs that would provide a more systematic field of study and other opportunities. The Center will sponsor workshops, speakers, faculty and student conference travel, and other events that create a community of practitioners that will foster collaborative relationships among faculty, students, alumni working in the legal community, and area professionals. Area attorneys will be cultivated as an important subset of alumni.
- Center for Middle Eastern Studies
The Center will be devoted to the history, culture, politics, religions, and languages of the Middle East, defined as the areas encompassing ancient Mesopotamia, Egypt, Iran, Turkey, Syria, the Levant, the Islamic Near East and North Africa, with extensions into the Caucasus, including the medieval to modern Islamic Central/South Asia. The Center would adopt a nonpartisan point of view, with no single country, topic, academic perspective, or political ideology occupying a privileged position. The Center would support and promote Middle Eastern related courses and research within the College at-large and could aid in advancing understanding of the Muslim Middle East.
- Additional ideas for new centers:
 - Center for Peace Studies
 - Center for World Religions
 - CARRI Center (Community and Regional Resilience Initiative)
 - Center for the Study of the Human (the Post-Human?)
 - Center for Global Traditions

Overarching Benefits of Centers and Institutes

- Each is a source and a repository of intellectual capital.
- New graduate and undergraduate degree programs would emerge from these Centers.
(A niche Ph.D. in Atlantic Studies, an MFA with an emphasis on outreach and public service are only two possibilities.)
- Each Institute could run a summer seminar for high school teachers (similar to the TAH grant submitted by the Charleston School district).
(Emerging from the seminars will be materials suitable for classroom use, including texts, maps, discussion questions, writing assignments, and lists of resources available at local archives and libraries.)
- Each institute or center would develop summer seminars for interested faculty from colleges and universities across the country and the world.
(The same kinds of teaching materials would be generated from that study.)
- Charleston is the perfect place for such institutes, providing a living history and a living laboratory for all HSS disciplines.

Strategy 3: Develop and support a highly qualified, diverse, and stable base of faculty and staff.

In our “envisioned future,” our Teacher-Scholars choose the College of Charleston as their academic home primarily because of the intellectual energy that defines faculty life, because of the high quality of undergraduate and graduate students attracted to the College, and because of the College’s progressive policies in support of the highest levels of achievement in Faculty Work and Faculty Life.

- **Faculty Work:**

Faculty are compensated at 100% of their peers and 75% of their “aspirational” peers.
Faculty research is supported according to institutional expectations, including a 4th-year research leave, options for more flexible sabbaticals, grant writing support for the humanities and social science disciplines, and travel funded in parity with other schools at the College.

Faculty have flexibility in their workloads and control the emphases they want in their work lives: a 3- or 5-year staffing plan produces that flexibility.

Faculty choices for variable work emphases are reflected in their compensation.

Teaching is rewarded with merit and publicly recognized in the same fashion as research.

Faculty are involved in decision-making.

Faculty are honored with new awards in recognition of their achievements.

Faculty have support for development of innovative curriculum and pedagogy.

Faculty participate in streamlined forms of evaluation.

Library resources are commensurate with faculty research and teaching needs.

- **Faculty Life:**

The HSS Center for New Faculty: The center would coordinate the various mentoring opportunities available in HSS. Those would include assistance with moving to

Charleston, support for teaching and innovative pedagogy, and writing groups engaged in production of top-level manuscripts on the verge of publication. It would be a source of community building and intellectual stimulation.

Faculty enjoy family-friendly policies, such as child care, elder care, and support for adoptions and births.

Faculty take advantage of exchange programs for tuition.

ECDC has expanded and can accommodate all requests.

An active spousal hiring plan is in place, including a designated liaison that assists with spousal hiring, both within the College and the city of Charleston.

Benefits are available for same-sex partners.

A greater variety of health care plans is offered to faculty and staff.

Children and parents enjoy a park created on campus as a picnic area, mini-field, and family site for events.

The College's emphasis on diversity has resulted in a large increase in the percentage of under-represented groups of faculty (and students) on campus.

Faculty are provided avenues for feedback, including electronic opportunities.

Faculty enjoy support for international travel and an array of development options.

Strategy 4: Identify, attract, recruit, enroll, and retain academically distinguished, well-prepared, diverse students.

In our “envisioned future,” students make the College of Charleston and the School of Humanities and Social Sciences their first choice because of its intellectually challenging curriculum, both the innovative and wide-ranging opportunities in our core General Education curriculum, as well as in the rigorous and engaged instruction students experience in their majors.

- Centers and Institutes are rich in intellectual interest.
- Faculty/Student research is the norm.
- Interdisciplinary majors thrive.
- International experience encouraged for faculty and students.
- Work and study in Charleston is accessible.
- Preparation for graduate and professional school is strong.
- Convocations/panel discussions/brown bag lunches with faculty are the norm.
- Departmental cultures are inviting to students and encourage participation.

Strategy 5: Enhance and support co- and extra-curricular programs and facilities to promote and sustain integrated, campus-wide approach to holistic education of students.

- New experiential learning opportunities are established, with an emphasis on civic engagement.

- Experiential learning possibilities have been developed for early (freshman-sophomore) and later (junior-senior) stages of a student’s education.
- Capstone courses have been created where students from different disciplines can review and assimilate experiential learning with other students (1-3 credits).
- Relationships with Charleston community have been cultivated for student placement of discipline-based learning experiences. More comprehensive intern and service programs have been developed in departments, as well as HSS-based intern-service activities.
- “The Academic Habit” has been invented: Students are assigned a small number of credits for their engagement in cultural, intellectual, and experiential learning activities on and off campus.
- Access to student co-curricular activities has been developed, perhaps a “co-curricular transcript” accessible to advisors.
- Our systems allow for expandable numbers of credit hours for any course, so experiential learning can be easily added on.
- “Laboratory” sections have been added to courses to enhance learning, in a variety of models — such as writing intensive sections, service activity, site visits, and fieldwork.
- Multilevel intensive writing is emphasized and related to experiential learning, with the development of increasingly complex assignments.
- Methods and theory courses are linked to experiential learning with emphasis on sequencing courses, within and across disciplines.
- Gen Ed requirements have been restructured to include an experiential learning component.
- Our systems have been redesigned to allow for expandable number of credit hours for any course.
- Service and civic engagement have been integrated into the First Year Experience program.
- Support for faculty-student research has been expanded, and the Center for Faculty Development has been revived.
- We have created a designation for service learning or community engagement courses.
- We have developed an engagement minor.
- Academic Affairs and Student Affairs have been integrated administratively to promote coordination.
- We have sought the Carnegie Foundation’s designation as a “Community Engagement Institution.”

Strategy 6: Align all aspects of the administrative and academic policies, procedures and practices to support the College’s purpose and achieve its envisioned future.

- Communication between faculty and administration has been streamlined.
- We have created multiple contexts for faculty feedback.
- Our assessment processes have been simplified and streamlined.

Strategy 7: Provide appropriate, up-to-date facilities and infrastructure to support and enhance academic programs and co-curricular opportunities for students.

- We have built HSS classroom buildings.
- All technologies in all HSS buildings have been upgraded.
- Opportunities to offer classes of various sizes have increased, including small seminars and large lectures.
- We have invested in laboratory spaces, and we anticipate the space and equipment needs of newly hired faculty.

Strategy 8: Engage with local, national, and international constituents to leverage higher education for a stronger South Carolina.

- We regularly sponsor international conferences.
- Local members of the community are often invited to share their expertise in our classrooms.
- Departments are encouraged to co-sponsor community events.

Strategy 9: Establish campus-wide policies and practices aimed at creating enhanced non-state resources and promoting greater fiscal responsibility and self-sufficiency.

- We offer continuing education seminars for professionals and members of the community. The “for fee” professional workshops and community seminars would use our existing expertise in cognitive, social, developmental and clinical/health psychology (program evaluation, stress management workshops, parenting skills, etc.).
- We have developed a collaborative partnership with MUSC to develop a Child Life Program, and partnerships with community practitioners to offer a certification program in Applied Behavior Analysis training (the entry level certification required for those who charge fees for working to manage the behavior of special populations — children with Autism, Asperger’s Syndrome, Traumatic Brain Injury, etc.).
- The LIFE Program for Inclusive Education has been developed to promote personalized education and partnerships with the community.
- We have tapped resources to make the College a “green” campus.
- Sustainability is a high priority.
- Relations with alumni contacts have improved and number of contacts increased.

Strategy 10: Brand the College of Charleston so that it is nationally and internationally recognized for a personalized liberal arts education with specific areas of distinction at the undergraduate and graduate level.