

DRAFT

School of Humanities and Social Sciences

2009 Strategic Plan

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 to both 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.
- All HSS faculty embrace the Teacher-Scholar model: they understand research and teaching to be inter-animating activities.
- For their successes, they 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. Our Teacher-Scholars 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).
- Most especially the 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.
 - These Centers and Institutes are attractive to potential donors.
 - 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 serve as the site of many of the most important intellectual resources and the most vigorous intellectual energy at the College.
- HSS is funded at levels commensurate with its centrality.
- HSS makes excellent use of its new facilities, especially its state-of-the art classroom buildings.

Running across all of the HSS goals are the following issues:

- 1-Need for greater diversity
- 2-Need for new and improved facilities
- 3-Need for additional resources
- 4-A focus on Charleston, including Dixie Plantation

Goal #1: Build a new, appropriate HSS Identity

- HSS will be recognized as the heart of liberal arts instruction at the College and is understood, along with SSM and LCWA, to be the foundational center of the College.
- HSS will be housed in a group of buildings, centrally located and designated as HSS, anchoring it in the center of campus.
- The cluster of buildings will provide a symbol of the unification of the diverse disciplines that define HSS giving the school a physical, visible, recognizable presence on campus.

Current Reality: A new HSS Identity, Positives

- HSS faculty teach nearly every student who passes through the College.
- HSS faculty participation constitutes the greatest percentage of FYE:
 - HSS faculty taught 6 of 10 learning communities this fall
 - HSS faculty taught of 8 of 20 FYE seminars this year.
- HSS faculty participation essential to Honors:
 - HSS faculty taught 46 of 97 Honor sections in 08-09.
- HSS faculty participation essential to Interdisciplinary programs in HSS and LCWA.

Current Reality: A new HSS Identity, Challenges

Lack of disciplinary coherence:

- Self-described as “loosely affiliated autonomous units”
- Bifurcated nature of the departmental specialties, Humanities and Social Sciences
- Confusion about mission post-LCWA split

“Place Matters”:

- Some lovely, renovated offices; some entire buildings in disrepair
- No recognizable, symbolic place: a too diffuse presence makes for incoherence, even erasure
- A high percentage of substandard classrooms, and a low percentage of smart rooms
- No space for School purposes, congregating, lectures

Internal Reputation, Value:

- HSS is the workhorse school, generating 90,000 credit hours in 05/06. Many of those credits are General Education requirements, and Honors, FYE, Interdisciplinary classes---not HSS major credits.
- Such good citizenship often generates confusion about mission: is HSS the “service” school, the way English, or mathematics, or languages are often called “service” departments?
- HSS is not seen as the source of professional education or career preparation

A New Idea about Identity

- A group of HSS faculty, especially those serving on the “Identity” Working Group, are interested in creating a combined College of Arts and Sciences that would include SSM, LCWA, and HSS.
- This administrative arrangement would create a genuine Liberal Arts and Sciences “core” and might make GenEd changes easier to effect, produce greater administrative efficiencies, and even save money.

Goal #2: Provide better support for Faculty Life and Work

- Our Teacher-Scholars will 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.
- Faculty have flexibility in their workloads and control over the emphases they want in their work lives: a 3-year 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 have better-than-adequate support for research, including travel funded in parity with other CofC schools.
- Faculty have better-than-adequate support for development of innovative curriculum and pedagogy.
- Faculty participate in streamlined forms of evaluation.
- Faculty have classrooms of different sizes that are outfitted for different pedagogical purposes.
- Classrooms are rich in technology.
- Library resources are commensurate with faculty research and teaching needs.

Faculty Life:

- 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 who 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.

Current Reality: Faculty Life and Work

- Faculty are better than they should be considering minimal levels of support.
- We lose faculty at hiring because of low salaries, no 4th year leave, too little research support, too little flexibility in workload; too few appealing classrooms (not even 50% of rooms are smart, most the same size, too few options for big classes).
- We have too few faculty for our ambitions.
- We have no margins for anything – no discretionary or contingency funding to support the following: travel to archives, subventions for publication, international travel, lack of spousal

accommodations, too few childcare options, no-family friendly environment, no tuition exchange programs.

- Faculty use their own funds for institutional purposes – travel, hiring.

Goal #3: Implement Curricular Innovations

Inter-, Intra-, and Cross-Disciplinary Studies:

- Courses, team-taught both within and across departments, emphasize multidisciplinary perspectives. Faculty partnerships across disciplines are encouraged. These could involve 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 promoted 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; “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

Internationalization:

- 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.

Experiential Learning:

- Gen Ed requirements have been restructured to include an experiential learning component.
- Our systems allow for expandable numbers of credit hours for any course.
- “Laboratory” sections have been added to courses to enhance learning, in a variety of models – such as writing intensive sections, service activity, site visits, 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.
- Experiential learning possibilities for early (freshman-sophomore) and later (junior-senior) stages of student education have been developed.
- 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 (where not already active), as well as HSS-based intern-service activities.

- “The Academic Habit”: 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.

Technology:

- All classrooms in HSS are “smart” classrooms.
- Technology in the classrooms is accessible through proper training and tech support; faculty are encouraged to increase technical familiarity.
- Faculty are well-versed and well-supported in their uses of new technologies.
- Faculty elsewhere look to HSS to model their courses on the best practices of the finest teachers in America.

Curricular Innovation: *An example*

- A wonderful example of pedagogical innovation and delivery is the Humanities course offered by Stephen Greenblatt, at Harvard. Greenblatt is an internationally celebrated scholar who brought together “the insane resources of Harvard”— including the Widener and the Houghton Rare Book Libraries, the assistance of the IT team, the creativity of graduate students and advanced undergraduate assistants, and the vision of a topnotch scholar – to produce a rich, multi-layered, always evolving approach to a complicated subject. His class studied early modern travel, a subject that engages students in the questions of geography, the evolution of scientific discourse, the beginnings of the slave trade, the problem of “difference” first encountered, the reliability of narrators, and the beginnings of colonialism and imperialism---all informed and supported by the latest technology and pedagogy.

Writing:

- All HSS majors will be required to complete a writing intensive course of study.
- The work currently undertaken by faculty in conducting writing intensive classes will be 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.

Current Reality: Curricular Innovations, Positives

- Many productive interdisciplinary partnerships now exist and are growing:
 - MPA (with USC)
 - MES (with SSM)
 - Neuroscience (with SSM)
 - Historic preservation (with Clemson and SOTA)
 - Archaeology (with SSM, LCWA, and SOTA)
- Newly formed “HSS Curricular Innovations” committee:
 - Chaired by Lee Irwin
 - Meet to break down barriers to inter-, intra, and cross-disciplinary ideas
 - Offering modest summer curriculum development grants for 2010
 - Proposals due April 10, 2009
- Intra-cultural opportunities and links with community growing:
 - My Life as a Girl: WGST, Burke and Ashley Hall students
 - Poetry in the schools: Creative Writing program with Burke
 - WWI veterans project – oral history project in History
 - Anthropological fieldwork at Micheax and other sites

- Real interest in civic engagement, public service programs
- An interest in international “tracks” within HSS depts. – History, POLS, Communication, English, Religious Studies, Anthropology, Sociology

Current Reality: Curricular Innovations, Challenges

- Too much concern about workload numbers
- No support for team teaching, crossing boundaries
- Not enough faculty for our ambitions
- Old-fashioned general education requirements, old-fashioned delivery methods
- No rewards for innovation
- Coercive CHE oversight

Writing:

- The extra effort to teach writing well is not recognized in credit hours -- for faculty or for students
- Old-fashioned CHE contact-hour requirement limits innovation
- Writing needs to be organized as part of Gen Ed program, with outcomes specified over 4-year period
- More thesis writing, including a capstone with writing credit
- Attachable “W” credit to any class with writing intensive work

Goal #4: Establish Centers and Institutes: Research Centers and Institutes emerging from faculty expertise and from the unique opportunities provided by the City of Charleston will be attached to HSS and generate scholarship of national and international significance. They will provide rich sources of inspiration for new curricular initiatives and innovative pedagogical practices; they will be attractive to potential donors; and they will serve as the site of the most important intellectual and actual resources at the College.

Joseph P. Riley Jr. Center for Livable Communities:

The Joseph P. Riley, Jr. Center for Livable Communities is committed to forging connections between the campus and the broader community. It 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 to 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 serves as an umbrella for three program areas and could house appropriate academic departments:

- Nonprofit and Community-Based Organizations
- Crime, Community and Legal Studies
- Environment, Health, and Urban Studies

Writing Centers:

The Writing Works Institute

The Institute 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. In order to achieve this goal The Writing Works Institute will coordinate and support the following areas:

- Faculty Fellows
- Innovative Instruction
- The Writing Works Scholars
- Experiential Learning

A Center for Creative Writing and Literary Publishing, including The Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing

We provide prospective graduate students in creative writing work experiences in the art and business of literary publishing, as well as the means by which to serve in more rewarding and enriching settings. Our core of creative writing faculty includes best-selling, award-winning authors committed to educating writers. But our MFA program is distinctive in coupling writing instruction with professional experience and public service through the following opportunities:

- 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)
- Various outreach initiatives (LILA, the Lowcountry Initiative for the Literary Arts; Poetry-in-the-schools program at Burke High School).

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.

The HSS Research Institute

- The Institute would include faculty, students, community members, and scholars from around the 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 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.

Institute for Women's and Gender Studies

This institute will provide a site to advance faculty development and scholarly research and to enhance undergraduate education and respond to the needs of the community. The Institute will bring WGS faculty together to address important questions relating to the lives of girls and women in the Lowcountry and beyond; the research projects emerging from the Institute will often involve undergraduate research assistants. This will be the only institute of its kind in South Carolina.

Center for Communication and Politics

- The non-partisan *Center for Communication and Politics* at the College of Charleston 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 the Study of Rights

- International attention has shifted from a Cold War focus on state security issues to human security concerns, moving from studying war to studying human rights. The College of Charleston would significantly benefit from increased attention to the offerings we already have, and adding to those areas we currently lack in the curriculum. Such a Center is inherently interdisciplinary, drawing from different fields and methods across academe, and additionally reflects the renewed attention to international issues, both in Charleston and across the country. Students -- who seem to be 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.

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.

New ideas for additional centers and institutes include the following:

- Institute for Public Health
- Center for Peace Studies
- Center for Philosophy, Politics, and Law
- Center for World Religions
- CARRI (Community and Regional Resilience Initiative) Center
- Center for the Study of the Human (the Post-Human?)

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 PhD in Atlantic Studies, an MFA with an emphasis on outreach and public service)
- Each Institute could run a summer seminar for high school teachers (like the TAH grant just 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.

Current Reality: Centers and Institutes, Positives

- Tremendous scholarly interests in all of these issues as well as a critical mass of faculty expertise currently exists
- Charleston is perfect place, providing a living history and a living laboratory unlike any other city (including New Orleans)

New Ideas in Search of a Category

- Credit for in-class contemplative practice
- An on-campus organic farm
- On-campus laboratory schools, K-12

HSS Summary

HSS Teacher-Scholars are dedicated to realizing the following goals by 2020:

- #1. To build an appropriate HSS identity
- #2. To provide better support for faculty work and life
- #3. To implement an innovative curriculum
- #4. To establish research centers and institutes