

COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS & SCIENCES (CLAS)
Contribution to the UF STRATEGIC PLAN (Summary version)

As an international research institution, the University of Florida plays an increasingly prominent role in shaping the future of society through global collaborations and academic leadership in interdisciplinary studies. Excellence in key areas is a first step in this collaboration. The goals of the strategic plan for the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences build on the strengths of the diverse intellectual resources founded in department, college and university-wide programs that bring academic units together to advance these interdisciplinary and disciplinary initiatives. In order to move the university into the company of the great educational institutions, these college goals focus on those areas that will make the University of Florida unique and showcase its advancement in cultural and intellectual achievement across broad boundaries.

Major College Goals

- ❖ Focus on selected areas of research and education where we have unique strengths to build programs of national and international prominence.
- ❖ Advance interdisciplinary initiatives that build on the strengths and integrity of the departments to probe the complexity of issues from multiple perspectives.
- ❖ Continue to build a diverse university community and create an inclusive campus for faculty, staff and students at all levels.

Areas of Focus

1. Astronomy, Astrophysics, and Particle Physics

UF has a partnership with Spain and Mexico to build *El Gran Telescopio Canarias*, the world's largest optical telescope. We will expand to other areas of astrophysics: particle astrophysics, and international grid computer networking; and strengthen existing collaborations with leading international projects such as the Large Hadron Collider and the Laser Interferometric Gravitational Observatory.

Goal: Create a teaching observatory using a central real-time network to connect UF to all 10-meter and 8-meter telescopes in Spain, Chile, and Hawaii, which would be the only one of its kind in the world; develop new technologies to expand nanoscience and nanofabrication.

2. International Studies

(African Studies, Asian Studies, European Studies, Latin American Studies, Paris Research Center; Language and Literature Departments, Anthropology, Classics, History, Sociology, Political Science, Criminology, Law)

A top priority of 2003 SACS accreditation review is to focus on interdisciplinary studies of global cultures and societies, political economies, and environmental politics, thereby bridging the social sciences, natural sciences, and the humanities.

Goals: Strengthen our national resources centers (African Studies, European Studies, Transnational and Global Studies); create a BA in International Studies; enhance overseas study and research opportunities for graduate and undergraduate students.

3. Diversity Enhancement **(All units)**

The college is committed to increasing diversity among our faculty, staff and student body in all areas and also building key academic programs dedicated to studies of race relations and ethnicity: African American Studies, Hispanic and Latino Studies and Asian-American Studies.

Goals: Create a BA in African American Studies, hire 10 new faculty members in African American, Hispanic-Latino, Asian American and Native American studies throughout the college by 2006 (some jointly with departments and other colleges), and increase the number of endowed chairs, postdoctoral programs and student scholarships.

4. Humanities and the Public Sphere **(English, History, Language and Literature Departments, Linguistics, Philosophy, Ethics, Classics, Medieval and Early Modern Studies, Fine Arts, Law, and Medicine)**

Top-ranked academic institutions have a recognized Center for the Humanities that attracts world-class scholars in specialized research and cultural areas of the arts and letters. Understanding our heritages, traditions, and values is critical to world relations, and the center will be designed to include the intersection of the academy and public life.

Goals: Implement the recommendations of the AAU Task Force on the role and status of the humanities, which include: (1) create “flexible structures” within the university “for interaction and collaboration across all disciplines”; (2) build “partnerships” with educational and cultural organizations in the public sphere.

5. Ecological and Environmental Studies (EES) **(Anthropology, Geography, Geological Sciences, Ecology, Botany, Zoology, Political Science, Sociology, History, Religion, Philosophy, Ethics)**

CLAS faculty members focus on fragile ecosystems, global climate change, and human-environment interactions. UF scientists will participate in the National Science Foundation’s National Ecological Observatory Network (NEON) that is part of continent-wide network of observatories that will collect data on ecological and evolutionary processes.

Goals: Offer a graduate degree in EES; work with the Savannah River Ecological Laboratory to form the Southeastern Ecological Observatory Consortium (SEEON), which is part of NEON.

6. Biological and Genetic Sciences **(Botany, Zoology, Bioinformatics, Biological Physics, Plant Genetics, Anthropology, Mathematics, Biostatistics, Statistics)**

The college emphasis is on genomics, proteomics and bio-informatics, in collaboration with IFAS, FMNH and CALS on key national projects such as is the Floral Genome Project. We will strengthen these partnerships to include evolutionary functional genomics and epigenetics.

Goals: Expand the capabilities of the C.A. Pound Human Identification Laboratory (anthropology) so it will become an advanced DNA screening lab for human identification, which will make it unique in the nation; expand UF's participation in NSF's Early Bird Project and the angiosperm tree of life project.

**7. Women's Studies and Gender Research (WSGR)
(English, History, Anthropology, Sociology, Political Science, Criminology)**

There is a strong need for basic academic studies and research on complex issues related to women and gender in and among the workplace, families, schools, and government. Every major research university has a Women's Studies undergraduate program, and the top institutions combine academic programs with research institutes.

Goals: Strengthen the undergraduate major in WSGR by increasing concentrated research programs; structure a doctoral program by 2007. UF will then rank with the three national leaders.

UF-wide Initiatives

**1. Nanosciences and Nanotechnology
(Chemistry, Physics, Materials Science, Engineering, Biosciences, Geosciences, Neuroscience, Astronomy, Medicine, Pharmacy)**

One area of rapid growth area is bio-nanosciences, a strength in the college, which includes research on living cellular systems, imaging single biological cells, and design of smart bio-nanomachines. Merging scientific skill sets will create an internationally renowned research program in translational nanotechnology and nanomedicine.

Goals: Collaborate with the College of Engineering to develop UF Nanotechnology Facility for nanofabrication in a new building near the Particle Science Center, and partner with the College of Medicine to establish a Biosciences/pathogen Institute; strengthen biosciences component of UF's role in the National High Magnetic Field Laboratory.

**2. Aging
(Gerontology, Sociology, Psychology, Communication Sciences and Disorders, Anthropology, Geography, and Medicine)**

CLAS faculty participate in critical studies of the life course and life-span development, with special strengths in studies of the aging mind; social contexts of aging; community, neighborhoods; and housing studies; and communication and aging.

Goals: Build on the advances in student recruitment that have resulted from the current National Institute on Aging Predoctoral Research Training Grant, which is a selective recruitment, mentored research and training program for students interested in research careers in aging.

**3. Institute for Survey Research in Political, Economic and Social Research
(Economics, Political Sciences, Sociology, Criminology, Psychology, Biosciences,
Biostatistics, Law, Education, Agriculture)**

A major research university demands excellence in social research. At UF, there is a need for a strong capacity in studies of the socio-economic factors and demography of aging, children and family studies, political sciences, and a data and analysis support center to support medical research.

Goal: Create this institute that will bring together the talents of UF's large and diverse faculty and produce the needed synergy to provide a unique service in the state for government and private organizations

**4. Children and Families Studies
(Sociology, Psychology, Children's Literature, English, Criminology, Anthropology,
History, Law)**

CLAS emphasizes research on family relationships, economics of family life, and demographic aspects of family formation and dissolution. Particular strengths reside in Criminology, Law and Society and the College of Law's Center on Children and the Law.

Goals: Create a cross-campus faculty group that studies challenges facing families, such as geographic mobility, international immigration, poverty, racism, divorce rates, unemployment, and health care.

**5. Linguistics and Language Learning
(Linguistics, Languages and Literatures, Computer Sciences, Neurosciences, Neuro-
biology, Psychology, McKnight Brain Institute)**

UF is poised to become a national and international leader in cutting-edge research on the cognitive neuroscience of language, second language acquisition, sociolinguistics, and language analysis. These areas will remain frontier fields of enquiry for the next 10-15 years and beyond, particularly given the national needs post September 11.

Goal: Emerge as an international leader in the development of new, technology-based research and educational applications of linguistics and language learning.

**6. Mathematical Sciences and Applications
(Biostatistics, Botany, Chemistry, Computer Science, Geology, Mathematics, Physics,
Statistics, Zoology)**

Important problems in medicine, biology, material sciences, and behavioral sciences are complex, and solutions require interdisciplinary mathematical/computational approaches such as imaging analysis, genomics, proteomics and nanotechnology.

Goal: Develop an organizational structure to build strong interdisciplinary collaborations among physical and biological science faculty who have mathematics and computation as major parts of their research. We also need to bridge existing programs such as the Applied Math Center, the McKnight Brain Institute and biostatistics.