

THE PLAN
FOR THE
COLLEGE *of*
**ARTS &
SCIENCES**

2025





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DEAN'S MESSAGE

It is my pleasure to present a shared image of the future for the College of Arts & Sciences. This first strategic plan for the college is the outcome of an inclusive process, whereby faculty, staff, students and other stakeholders came together to shape a common vision for our identity as a liberal arts college within Bucknell University. Beginning with focus groups in October 2019, it has been our goal to offer an open and transparent process with multiple opportunities for all voices to be heard — and to continually reflect back and check in along the way. It is important to note that our process overlapped with the COVID-19 pandemic and an opportunity for long-sought progress for racial justice in America — two issues that elevated the need for a college-level strategic plan. I am appreciative of the continued work by our faculty and staff who were able to support our students in-person and remotely and thoughtfully craft a vision for the future of a liberal arts education at Bucknell. This reveals the strength, malleability, professionalism and dedication that is Bucknell.

The outcome of these past several months is, most notably, a mission statement for the College of Arts & Sciences that articulates our identity — who we are and what we do. Our mission serves as a guidepost for commitments to Our Community; Transformative Education; Advising and Encouraging Our Students; and Scholarship. These commitments are not easily separated nor is it desirable to do so. This document preserves the overlapping and interconnected nature of these commitments.

I want to extend my deep appreciation and gratitude to all who participated, whether as team leaders or individual contributors of ideas and feedback at any point along the way. I commend you for your dedication and agility and look forward to our next steps together. I would like to add my thanks to those individuals from other departments, divisions, offices and programs across the University who participated in the process and with whom we will partner to achieve our goals.



Karl Voss

Douglas K. Candland Dean of the College of Arts & Sciences



OUR PROCESS



THE STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

The College of Arts & Sciences process for strategic planning was the result of meaningful interaction from across our community. We value greatly the thoughtful input and perspectives from the vast array of disciplines that make up the liberal arts.

Through various small and large focus groups, discussions, visioning sessions and workshops, both online and in person, we embraced principles of generous listening and a mindset of empowerment, inclusivity and transparency. Using a strengths-based approach, we identified the “best of what is” for the College of Arts & Sciences as a foundation for defining a common-ground future together.

Five big ideas emerged from our early efforts and teams of faculty and staff worked to further refine these through white papers that served as the foundation for the final written plan. A special thank-you is extended to those who participated in these teams and to all from our community whose voices are reflected in these pages.

Identity/Mission

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With special appreciation to Julie Engerran, consultant and educator (Julie Engerran LLC) for assistance in our Strategic Planning Process, and Sunny BenBelkacem, graphic recorder and visual facilitator (Partner, Matter Group) for her graphic recordings, some of which are reproduced here.

*Identity/
Mission*

*Our
Community*

*Transformative
Education*

*Advising and
Encouraging
Our Students*

Scholarships

FIVE BIG IDEAS



STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS TEAM

MISSION STATEMENT

WHO WE ARE & WHAT WE DO



The College of Arts & Sciences is the core of Bucknell University. Together, faculty, staff and students in the college generate and disseminate knowledge in the arts, humanities, social sciences, natural sciences and mathematics, affirming the liberal arts as the foundation for success in professional, personal and public endeavors.

We are committed and creative scholars and artists working across disciplines. We foster intellectual and ethical growth by providing a diverse, equitable and inclusive learning environment in which we can realize our full potential regardless of our differences.

Within a safe and supportive community, we challenge ourselves and each other to analyze and synthesize our insights on knowledge, beauty and justice.





The College of Arts & Sciences holds a distinctive place in American higher education. We are a large liberal arts college within a small university. This unusual balance of large and small gives our college the scale and resources to be ambitious in our intellectual pursuits, while preserving the intimacy of an introspective community.

As citizens of the Susquehanna River Valley, we are committed to meaningful and mutually beneficial collaborations with our complex local region while reaching out to address global concerns. We aim to prepare our students to thrive in any kind of environment.

If Bucknell University is committed to creating an inclusive and diverse learning environment, then it will be the work undertaken by the members of the College of Arts & Sciences that will safeguard that commitment.



COMMITMENTS THAT SUPPORT OUR MISSION

The College of Arts & Sciences will:

- 1.** Build and support transformative **living-learning** experiences through **communities** grounded in a liberal arts identity and strongly entwined with cultural humility and practices of diversity, equity and inclusion — and that foster the development of positive change-makers.
- 2.** Create an educational environment that continually transforms Bucknell — its students, faculty, staff and broader communities — for the common good. **Transformative education** is a product of shared and multidirectional interactions among a variety of groups of people on and around Bucknell's campus.
- 3.** **Encourage and enable** students to consider their education as one path in a lifetime journey of curiosity, exploration and preparation. A developmental approach to **advising** will address the whole student and help them to view themselves broadly as students of the liberal arts.
- 4.** Seek and create knowledge, understanding and meaning through **scholarship**, and share the experience of meaning-making with our students so they can participate in the creation of knowledge.

1. OUR COMMUNITY

The College of Arts & Sciences will build and support transformative living-learning experiences where intellectual engagement across the liberal arts is fostered and refined. The foundational goals of such communities are tightly bound to the principles of diversity, equity and inclusion and the mission statement of the College of Arts & Sciences. Faculty, staff and students will sustain these communities through active intellectual commitment. The communities, grounded in a liberal arts identity that is strongly entwined with practices of inclusion and cultural humility, will foster the development of positive change-makers in the world.

PRIORITIES

1. Commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion, all of which strengthen our community:

- a. Reassess the rhetoric and priorities of the college, working collaboratively with faculty, staff, students and other University offices (e.g., the offices of the provost, accessibility resources, and diversity, equity & inclusion) to develop related plans across all academic departments, centers/institutes and administrative units in the college that focus on staffing, staff development, student recruitment and retention.
- b. Renew our attention to the contributions of staff, the goals of students and the efforts of faculty, while encouraging, respecting and celebrating a diversity of thoughts and perspectives.
- c. Teach students to practice cultural humility, a foundational skill for productive discourse and meaningful action.
- d. Create a more responsive academic environment that works closely with the Division of Student Affairs to address effectively cultural shifts and emerging needs.
- e. Engage people of all social identities and backgrounds in the full fabric of Bucknell from their first interactions.
- f. Mindfully attend to those who are underrepresented in traditional organizational structures.
- g. Make inclusive excellence a hallmark of the College of Arts & Sciences with all faculty and staff participating in diversity, equity and inclusion workshops, activities and outreach regularly.
- h. Become a model for diversity, equity and inclusion integration at Bucknell and a leader in such initiatives among our peer reference schools.

2. Engaged learning communities:

- a. Offer transformative learning experiences in the college to help students think critically and practice cultural humility to become global citizens capable of enacting positive change.
- b. Recognize international students as an essential and vital part of our community both as learners in our local community and as contributors to our understanding of international perspectives.
- c. Foster student growth through faculty trained in diversity, equity and inclusive practices and invested in interdisciplinarity and civic engagement in local and global communities.



3. Local learning that builds bridges with our region and beyond:

- a. Implement opportunities for place-based learning, recognizing the Susquehanna River Valley as an integrative part of the undergraduate experience.
- b. Utilize both curricular and co-curricular experiences and intentional partnerships focused on economic and cultural challenges and public service to encourage the development of students as informed citizens and problem-solvers.
- c. Deliver on all three dimensions of learning locally that include academic integration in classrooms that offer access to geographically relevant material; experiential learning and high-impact experiences that allow students to have substantive, sustained engagement with local institutions; and collaborative sustainability providing direct student experience across environmental, economic and/or social sustainability and that develops model practices as a college.
- d. Design curricular and other programming experiences to help students explore beyond the local region to engage with issues and opportunities in national and international settings.

4. Development and enhancement of shared and culminating experiences:

- a. Provide all students with a shared intellectually substantive or artistic culminating experience that enriches the academic engagement of the college and solidifies its liberal arts identity.
- b. Cultivate major-based and college-based community identities and activities through department fellows and cohorts that encourage and support interdisciplinarity.

5. Living-learning communities for multiple years:

- a. Expand intentional living-learning communities that provide students meaningful engagement opportunities throughout their academic careers.
- b. Develop affinity housing and other ways to actively engage in community building in addition to encouraging participation in Residential Colleges.
- c. Value and reward faculty who are supportive of curricular and residential experimentation.
- d. Institute a more flexible course credit system to permit further integration of learning into living environments.

UNITED in BELONGING and UNDERSTANDING



HOW do WE
UNDERSTAND
our COMMUNITY?
HOW do DRIVE DIVERSITY?

2. TRANSFORMATIVE EDUCATION

The College of Arts & Sciences will create an educational environment that continually transforms Bucknell — its students, faculty, staff and broader communities — for the common good. Central to our commitment to transformative education is social justice and the pursuit of diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives.

The college principally serves its students, but we feel that it is critical to understand that the commitments set forth in this document will also have important and deliberate impacts on the faculty, staff and alumni, along with our local and global communities. Bucknellians should feel that they are striving for a greater good. Transformative education is a product of shared and multidirectional interactions between a variety of groups of people on and around Bucknell's campus.

PRIORITIES

1. Continual transformation of our liberal arts pedagogy, philosophy and approach as we guide ourselves and others on a trajectory of lifelong learning:

- a. Offer and engage in consistent professional development opportunities to inform staff, faculty and students about the needs of our campus community's shifting demographics and societal contexts.
- b. Reflect as faculty and staff upon our liberal arts pedagogy and philosophy and engage in reflective and forward-thinking teaching practices throughout their individual career trajectories.
- c. Partner with community organizations to create meaningful discourse and engagement opportunities within the central Susquehanna River Valley and beyond.

2. A living-learning environment in which students thrive and contribute to the campus and broader communities in positive and constructive ways:

- a. Maintain a culture of intellectual and social engagement throughout the entire student experience on campus.
- b. Offer unique learning opportunities through community partnerships that enhance and utilize students' skills in order to address local needs.
- c. Tap existing and new connections with colleagues and alumni, so the college will better understand and can then lend expertise to address the issues of concern beyond campus.
- d. Leverage international student connections and experiences to develop intercultural humility and global issue awareness, bringing these to bear on the campus community.

HIGH-IMPACT EXPERIENCES

3. Increased capacity to acknowledge and engage with challenging issues using both historical and present contexts:

- a.** Become more nimble as a college in our response to and preparedness for evolving societal concerns by foregrounding challenging problems.
- b.** Develop curricular and co-curricular opportunities for students and the wider campus community to learn more about pressing issues through departments and programs and centers and institutes.
- c.** Leverage interdisciplinary, problem-based forms of learning, both curricular and co-curricular, to promote thoughtful and (self-)critical engagement — giving due attention to historical and structural factors — with the most pressing issues facing humanity, including climate change, sustainability, inequality, poverty, racism, gender and sexual violence.

4. Exercised and expanded capacity among faculty and students to see the world from multiple angles in order to promote self-reflection and cultural humility:

- a.** Continue or begin a lifelong trajectory toward global citizenship and global professionalism by participating in courses on cross-cultural issues, short- and long-term study abroad programs, international internships, professional development and related campus activities.
- b.** Impart collaborative, open-minded and reflective practices that are carried beyond Bucknell as life-changing skills.
- c.** Acquire skills in a second language and continue to work toward cross-cultural competence and cultural humility.
- d.** Engage with one another across disciplines and divisions through shared experiences related to language learning and cross-cultural activities.

5. Culture of collaboration across perspectives and backgrounds as a means of exposure to different ways of knowing, processing and creating:

- a.** Promote interdisciplinary and interdivisional activities that take scholarly, pedagogical and co-curricular forms.
- b.** Create students' capacity to use thought processes derived from various disciplines to become more complete learners, thinkers and creators.



6. Vertical integration¹ of education at Bucknell to clearly demonstrate the value of interdisciplinarity:

- a.** Utilize a vertically integrated curriculum to explicitly bring interdisciplinary thinking about pressing issues into the student experience, a hallmark of the liberal arts.
- b.** Center issues-based learning that includes student development within peer groups and values faculty and staff partnership with student cohorts.
- c.** Promote collaborations among first-year students and students beyond their first year to ensure expertise transfer, continuity and community-building in issues-based learning groups.
- d.** Harmonize issues-based, vertically integrated learning with the goals and activities of living-learning communities, including the Residential Colleges.

¹ Vertical integration in this context refers to experiences or curricular structures that extend over multiple years of a student's education.

3. ADVISING AND ENCOURAGING OUR STUDENTS

The College of Arts & Sciences will promote a broad, liberal arts education, consistent with but not exclusively focused on academic majors. We will encourage and enable students to consider their education as a pathway beyond credentialing and a significant step in a lifetime journey of curiosity and exploration.

Achieving this big idea requires us to commit to giving students more opportunities to prepare for their career and life goals by exploring the curriculum, discovering their passions and finding a place in the campus community. To this end, we must provide developmental advising that addresses the whole student and helps them view themselves broadly as College of Arts & Sciences students of the liberal arts.

PRIORITIES

1. Promotion of exploration in the curriculum, consistent with a liberal arts education:

- a. Encourage students to experience a broad range of interests through increased curricular flexibility.
- b. Actively help all students, no matter their class year, to find their academic passions.

2. Identification and reduction of the disincentives for broad exploration:

- a. Trim requirements for majors with more than 16 total courses.
- b. Reduce perceptions that the value of a course lies in whether or not it satisfies a particular requirement for transcript notation.
- c. Emphasize that the intellectual diversity of the college is its strength and its identity, and that communities exist across the college as well as within majors.

3. Encouragement for developmental advising:

- a. Use advising to address the whole student, encouraging exploration and opportunities for meaningful reflection, regardless of intended or declared major, degree type or career path.
- b. Provide first-year students with new/revamped resources to help them identify the introductory courses that they should take for any major and guide them to choose more than one academic interest to explore.
- c. Encourage continued curricular exploration in the sophomore year, encouraging students to declare a major at approximately mid-year.
- d. Continue to ensure a holistic liberal arts education through advising for juniors and seniors, as they develop their interests, complete their major and prepare for life after graduation.



4. Promotion of themes that permeate the curriculum in and beyond the general curriculum:

- a. Encourage departments to address sustainability, power/privilege, and Anthropocene and global perspectives in visible ways throughout their curriculum.
- b. Expose students to these themes not just in one course but across the curriculum and within all divisions.

5. Enhanced opportunities for student/faculty/staff interactions outside the classroom:

- a. Design activities to bring students, faculty and staff together as peers.

6. Structures that positively contribute to the social climate:

- a. Enhance opportunities for meaningful interaction among campus communities (student, faculty, staff and local) across the college as a whole.
- b. Enable students to “find their people” and to engage in thoughtful, regular and open-minded interactions with peers of diverse perspectives and backgrounds.
- c. Create open access to and opportunities for fully-integrated dining.
- d. Repair or dismantle structures that promote hierarchies based on economic class, gender, race, sexual identity and other characteristics.

EXPLORE and FLOURISH



- ★ NO MAJOR DECLARATION in FIRST YEAR
- ★ DEVELOPMENTAL/EXPLORATORY ADVISER
- ★ MORE TIME to EXPLORE
- ★ COMMS: STUDENTS DEVELOP e-PORTFOLIO; ADVISERS COLLABORATE
- ★ SUMMER READING
- ★ STUDENT DEVELOPS LEARNING GOALS
- ★ CHARTING a PATH; CAREER PLANNING; LEVERAGING e-PORTFOLIO

4. SCHOLARSHIP

Scholarship is a pivotal strength of the College of Arts & Sciences and fundamental to who we are and what we do, yet the form of that experience is highly variable across disciplines and programs. It is through understanding and valuing the diversity within our scholarship and in finding ways to support it both effectively and equitably that we can live up to our full potential as a college.

The college aims to seek and create knowledge, understanding and meaning through scholarship in order to be world-transformative, to share the experience of meaning-making with our students so that they can participate in the creation of knowledge and to be student-transformative.

PRIORITIES

1. World-transformative scholarship:

- a. Actively seek and create knowledge, understanding and meaning through scholarship in our fields and broader communities.
- b. Push our work to become more multi-institutional and transdisciplinary, to cross borders and to live in the world.
- c. Provide opportunities to take risks with scholarship.
- d. Foster the creativity and academic freedom of untenured faculty.

2. Student-transformative scholarship:

- a. Leverage faculty scholarship to shape topics taught and to stay knowledgeable about the cutting edge of our fields.
- b. Center student engagement in scholarship methodology and techniques in what and how faculty teach, and incorporate faculty scholarship into case studies and course-based research.
- c. Encourage faculty-student collaboration, whereby undergraduate and graduate students can shape scholarship and create experiences that change lives.
- d. Facilitate broad participation of students in scholarly projects, recognizing that different forms of scholarship require very different modes of support and degree of student involvement.

3. Greater dialogue and recognition around scholarship:

- a. Clearly articulate, recognize and communicate the foundational role of scholarship in the College of Arts & Sciences.
- b. Acknowledge, encourage and embrace differences in the products, processes and time horizons of scholarship among disciplines.
- c. Recognize and celebrate the tremendous range of scholarship with which faculty of the college engage and that entail very different modalities of creation and sharing.
- d. Create a shared vocabulary that helps us to see the means by which our work is created, shared and evaluated across the college and within larger disciplinary networks.



SCHOLARSHIP and RESEARCH



- ★ UNDERSTAND DIFFERENCES in SCHOLARSHIP
- ★ ENCOURAGE INQUIRY-BASED RESEARCH & LEARNING
- ★ RAISE REPUTATION with RESEARCH
- ★ INCREASED KNOWLEDGE-SHARING ACROSS DISCIPLINARY RESEARCH
- ★ TIME to TRAIN/MENTOR/REWARD & RECOGNITION
- ★ MORE SUPPORT for RESEARCH PRESENTING
- ★ FACULTY/STAFF: UNDERSTANDING HOW to ENGAGE STUDENTS in SCHOLARSHIP

FEEDBACK

HOW to KNOW
WHO RESEARCHED
WHAT-LEVERAGE
OWN RESEARCH and
EXPERTISE

NO SHARED
UNDERSTANDING
of WHO is RESEARCHING
WHAT

DEFINE WHAT
RESEARCH/
SCHOLARSHIP
MEANS to US
(SHARED UNDERSTANDING)

WHAT ABOUT RESEARCH
that DOESN'T INVOLVE STUDENTS?

UNDERSTAND
STUDENT INVOLVEMENT
in DIFFERENT DISCIPLINES'
RESEARCH METHODS

• THINK about
SCHOLARSHIP
in ADDITION to
CLASSES/STUDY

• UNDERSTAND the
RESEARCH FAC.
is DOING

• STUDENT INVOLVEMENT in
SCHOLARSHIP WILL VARY BASED
ON DISCIPLINE (AMONG OTHER
THINGS!)

• HONORS PROG:
MAY NEED to
CHANGE based on
CAPSTONE PROJECT

AMEN!

OPPORTUNITIES to
LEARN in DIFFERENT
WAYS

STUDENT who STRUGGLE
in CLASS MIGHT
FLOURISH in RESEARCH

MENTORING: STUDY and
GUIDE them in RESEARCH

TAUGHT by PhDs: IS that REALLY
a DIFFERENTIATOR?

HOW to INCLUDE with
COLLABORATORY
RESEARCH COHORTS
with ACCOUNTABILITY?

HONORS
PROGRAM?

HOW CAN WE
LEVERAGE
THIS? BESIDES
POSTERS/PAPERS?
(A WEB PAGE?)

WHAT about
own SIDE
PASSIONS?

OUR JOURNEY

TEACHING STUDENTS
to be CITIZENS of the
FUTURE WORLD

EXPLORE *the*
BIG
QUESTIONS



LIBERAL
ARTS as a
GATEWAY to
a GREAT LIFE
and CAREER

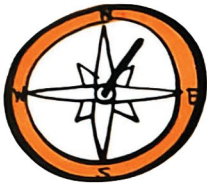


↑ CREATE a MINDSET of EMPOWERMENT,
INCLUSIVITY, and TRANSPARENCY to ACHIEVE
our VISION



AS

EXPLORATION



*We are invested
in students and
have the passion to
see them succeed.*



APPROVED APRIL 15, 2021



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