

SHAPING THE FUTURE:
Innovation, Engagement and Impact
College of Arts and Sciences Strategic Plan 2025-2030

January 2026



Introduction

Today's biggest opportunities to do good emerge where diverse academic disciplines meet. Climate innovation demands scientific precision and persuasive storytelling. Health breakthroughs require both biomedical expertise and cultural understanding. Technology's promise can only be fulfilled when guided by ethical reflection. And community transformation happens when data meets narrative and analysis brings meaning. With 16 academic departments, hundreds of accomplished faculty and more than 150 years of liberal arts excellence, the College of Arts and Sciences (A&S) is positioned to lead and respond to those opportunities.

The future is being shaped today in A&S labs, classrooms and the communities we serve. Faculty and students are helping to protect drinking water supplies while poets inspire environmental action. Researchers are restoring voices to Parkinson's patients while creative writers facilitate healing for veterans. Scientists are building AI therapy tools while philosophers are raising issues of care and dignity. Now we're poised to expand this work with a bold new strategic plan that marshals research, teaching and career preparation to make transformative impact on a global scale.

The launch of this plan—Shaping the Future: Innovation, Engagement and Impact—is your moment to be part of something extraordinary. Whether you graduated decades ago or recently, whether you've stayed closely connected or life has taken you in other directions, this is your invitation to join A&S at its most ambitious.

Our plan's four strategic pillars—Climate Change and the Environment; Health and Well-Being; Culture, Community and Change; and Innovative Technologies—reflect areas of distinctive and interdisciplinary excellence at A&S. Just as importantly, each aligns

with some of the world's most urgent challenges, providing a unique moment to contribute meaningfully to their solutions. The foundation we build together today will shape students and their world for generations to come.

Why A&S Now? The Liberal Arts Advantage

At the foundation of an Arts and Sciences education are the Liberal Arts Core competencies—the essential capacities that enable students to translate knowledge into action and address complex problems with precision and perception; ethics and integrity; critical and creative thinking; communication skills and information literacy.

These aren't abstract skills. They're the crucial proficiencies cited by employers and required to solve big problems. When you invest in A&S, you're investing in both the education that prepares students with professional excellence and humanistic insight, and also in the research that generates knowledge while serving human flourishing. In doing so, you are investing in a world that is healthier, more hopeful and more humane.

Vision for 2030

We are at an exciting turning point. Building on the College's traditional areas of distinctive excellence, faculty, staff, alumni and Syracuse University leadership have created a visionary five-year strategic plan that will help shape the world we want to see.

We're inviting you to join us in this opportunity. Your investment today will be producing graduates by 2030 who are actively solving the world's challenges and demonstrating what becomes possible when curiosity and compassion converge.

With a firm foundation in the liberal arts, this plan expands on A&S' decades of research, scholarship and teaching excellence to include crucial work related to four interconnected pillars. At the same time, we'll be developing students who are even more career-ready, ethically driven and confident in their place in the world.

Climate Change and the Environment

A&S is advancing environmental sustainability through research that integrates scientific investigation with human-centered inquiry. While climate challenges are urgent, they're also opportunities for collaboration. Think of the innovative solutions that can arise from combining atmospheric science with environmental storytelling or ecosystem data with environmental justice.

Key Initiatives:

- **Curriculum Innovation:** Certificate programs and interdisciplinary pathways integrating environmental sciences with creative writing, philosophy and communication studies. Course-based undergraduate research experiences (CUREs) pairing scientific data collection with community storytelling.
- **Global Learning Experiences:** Faculty-led study abroad and study away programs examining environmental issues through scientific and cultural lenses, such as studying glaciology alongside Indigenous knowledge systems, examining deforestation through ecological and postcolonial perspectives or learning climate policy while engaging with environmental literature and art.
- **Community Partnerships:** Regional climate summits featuring faculty from biology and creative writing, Earth sciences and philosophy, alongside community partners. These gatherings translate environmental science into actionable knowledge through multiple forms, from data visualization to poetry, from policy briefs to public art.

- **Research Excellence:** Support for collaborative research that teams environmental scientists with scholars examining ethics of climate adaptation, historians documenting environmental change and communication specialists like those in LIN 300: Science of Language studying how linguistic choices shape environmental discourse.
- **Career Pathways:** Preparation for careers demanding subject-matter expertise and interpersonal skills, e.g., environmental policy advisors who craft compelling narratives, sustainability directors who understand stakeholder engagement, and climate communicators who bridge science and public understanding.

Impact: Graduates who can analyze climate data, inspire ethical action, design sustainable systems and communicate why they matter.

Health and Well-being

Health and well-being cannot be understood through biology alone because they're shaped by history and community. A&S produces internationally recognized research integrating biomedical innovation with cultural understanding. Recognizing that healing requires both scientific intervention and human-centered care, we're pioneering treatments for Parkinson's, Alzheimer's, sensory disorders and mental health disorders while examining how different communities understand wellness.

Key Initiatives:

- **Enhanced Clinical Infrastructure:** Modernize facilities for speech and hearing, clinical psychology, school psychology and marriage and family therapy—creating spaces where care is informed by awareness of how different communities understand health and healing.
- **Interdisciplinary Health Concentrations:** Programs where pre-med students take medical anthropology, speech pathology students study linguistics and narrative theory, and future therapists learn about differences in expressing distress.
- **Community Health Engagement:** Health fairs that build trust while providing screening and care. Community partnerships positioning University expertise as a resource rather than an authority. Health interventions for at-risk populations through the Center for Behavioral Health.

- **Research Innovation:** Teams studying neurodegenerative diseases alongside cultural psychology, AI therapy tools designed with attention to ethics and bias, health communication strategies honoring diverse understandings of body and mind.

Impact: Health care leaders who understand that effective treatment calls for technical skill and cultural humility, who can read an MRI and recognize how patients make meaning of illness. By 2030, interprofessional clinical services providing care that is medically excellent and deeply humane.

Culture, Community and Change

In times of division, the humanities aren't a luxury. They're essential to understanding current circumstances—and how to respond to them. A&S is committed to building capacities for working across differences through research, teaching and community engagement. When communities fracture, we need scholars who trace conflict's historical roots so that compromise can be found. When rhetoric inflames, we need those who understand language's power to extinguish the flames of polarization. When division seems intractable, we need practices of dialogue and meaning-making that can bridge divisions.

Key Initiatives:

- **Inclusive Teaching Excellence:** Faculty development in teaching across experiences facilitating difficult dialogues and creating classroom environments where students with diverse perspectives can engage productively.
- **Community Literacy and Storytelling:** The Engaged Humanities Network—serving 400+ students and faculty through 35+ community partnerships—embeds reciprocal engagement throughout the curriculum.
- **Change-Making Platforms:** Social Change Shark Tank where students compete for funding to address social issues they care about. Shaping Change symposia centering student voices in urgent topics. Spaces where Liberal Arts Core competencies—especially civic engagement and ethical reasoning—become visible action.

- **Study Abroad as Perspective Transformation:**

Programs explicitly designed to challenge assumptions and build capacity for working across differences.

Not tourism, but transformative learning that develops the humility, curiosity and adaptability our polarized world urgently needs. Financial support ensuring access regardless of economic background.

Impact: Ethical leaders equipped to listen to opposing viewpoints, facilitate dialogue in divided spaces and pursue change through community partnership. Faculty producing scholarship that communities can use. An institution modeling authentic belonging.

Innovative Technologies

Emerging technologies raise fundamental questions about human flourishing—questions that cannot be answered by engineering alone. Who decides which problems technology solves? How do we prevent bias in AI? When should efficiency yield to dignity? These are humanistic questions. A&S ensures that advancements serve the greater good by cultivating in its students the technical sophistication and ethical wisdom necessary for responsible innovation.

Key Initiatives:

- **Innovative Interdisciplinary Curriculum:** Programs integrating practical training and reflection—computer science with philosophy of technology, data science with justice studies, digital humanities uniting computational methods with interpretive practices. 3+3 programs with the College of Law on ethical technology law, partnerships with Whitman School of Management on technology entrepreneurship.
- **Tech Innovation with Humanistic Grounding:** Tech Shark Tank where students compete for funding, with proposals addressing not only feasibility but social impact, and questions of access and equity. Entrepreneurship education that not only asks, “Can we build it?” but “Should we? For whom?”

- **Research Across the Technology-Humanities Divide:**

Teams bringing together quantum physicists with philosophers, AI researchers with creative writers and ethicists, bio-inspired robotics faculty with disability studies scholars. An example includes Seeds of Story Project (NSF-funded collaboration between education and writing & rhetoric faculty with Salt City Harvest Farm) exploring how digital storytelling and community science work together.

- **Global Technology Experiences:** Study abroad programs exposing students to different cultural approaches to technology—how other societies navigate privacy and surveillance, how Indigenous communities integrate traditional knowledge with new tools, how non-Western contexts reveal assumptions built into universal technologies.

Impact: Technologists who ask ethical questions, entrepreneurs who consider social impact and innovators who recognize technology as a cultural product. A&S demonstrating that the most responsible innovation simultaneously asks the questions “how?” and “why?”

Investment Priorities

Why Invest in A&S?

This is liberal arts education at its most powerful and relevant, preparing students for careers and lives of meaning and impact. Our graduates master disciplines while learning to think across them, developing technical expertise along with ethical clarity. At a time when many question the value of the liberal arts, Syracuse demonstrates their lasting influence by fusing scientific rigor with humanities-based thinking.

Our Investment Priorities:

- **Student Success**

- Financial aid opening doors for brilliant students from all backgrounds.
- Experiential learning opportunities—from internships developing therapeutic technologies to community engagement projects bridging cultural divides—transforming undergraduates from learners into innovators, allowing them to test ideas, fail safely and emerge as leaders.
- Engaged Humanities Network expansion serving 400+ students through 35+ community partnerships.

- **Faculty Excellence**

- Recruiting and retaining world-class faculty.
- Endowed chairs mentoring students and working at disciplinary intersections—pairing climate science with environmental communication, neuroscience with medical anthropology, quantum physics with philosophy.
- Graduate fellowships attracting top doctoral students.
- Curriculum development support for innovative interdisciplinary programs.
- Strategic Pillar Fellows providing faculty leadership for each pillar, creating an ecosystem where cutting-edge science and human inquiry flourish side by side.

- **Community Partnerships and Public Engagement**

- Climate resiliency summits bringing scientists and storytellers together.
- Writing and literacy programs—Veterans Writing Group, Prison Writing Group, Senior Citizen Writing Group—amplifying marginalized voices and honoring community knowledge.
- Health fairs building trust across cultural differences.
- Seed grants for faculty-community partnerships.

- **Capital and Infrastructure**

- Modernized clinical facilities supporting interprofessional collaboration and culturally responsive care.
- Advanced research equipment from quantum computing to digital humanities platforms.
- Co-located, flexible learning spaces where STEM and humanities students collaborate.
- Innovation centers providing real-world experience with industry partnerships.

We encourage all donors to consider a gift to the College of Arts and Sciences Fund. This flexible, current-use fund enables immediate response to opportunities and needs, while also providing the fuel for innovation. Hill Society membership (annual gifts of \$2,500+) identifies and celebrates leadership level-donors.

Your Investment Creates:

- Leaders who think across disciplines and lead with cultural humility and ethical clarity.
- Groundbreaking research addressing critical challenges through multiple lenses and across disciplines.
- Stronger communities through partnerships honoring local knowledge, students learning by serving community needs, University expertise positioned as a resource, communities benefiting from actionable research.
- Proof of liberal arts education's enduring power, purpose, wisdom and justice.

The next five years can be a turning point, demonstrating what becomes possible when the humanities and sciences work together as they must; when liberal arts education prepares students for career and personal success and satisfaction; and when the University serves the public good.

**The future is taking shape.
We invite you to be part of it with A&S.**



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