



Syracuse University

College of Arts & Sciences

Academic Strategic Plan | 10.10.17

DRAFT

Overview

In fall 2016, the College of Arts and Sciences initiated a collaborative academic strategic planning process. The College conducted a series of preparatory meetings among the dean and her cabinet, with the Board of Visitors, with all prior deans of the College still on campus, and other campus stakeholders, in order to establish a plan, structure, and schedule for the strategic planning process.

After laying the initial groundwork, three working groups were established as a result of a College-wide call for nominations. The working groups, whose charges correlated with the University's Academic Strategic Plan, began meeting in early 2017 to formulate findings and recommendations for the College Academic Strategic Plan. Their detailed reports formed the basis of much wider discussion and were used to seek further input from all constituencies in the College in the fall of 2017. The working group reports form the foundation of this planning document and lay out a strategic direction for the dean and for College and University leadership. This fall semester, we have worked to refine and finalize this document with further input from our CAS community of faculty, staff, and students as well as guidance from University leadership. It is also important to note that, like the University-wide plan, this is conceived as a living document, subject to adjustment or revision as new opportunities and priorities emerge.



Mission

The College of Arts and Sciences stands as the intellectual center of Syracuse University and is committed to internationally recognized research and innovative instruction with an emphasis on disciplinary rigor, creative interdisciplinarity, as well as ethical engagement with issues of social justice and global citizenship.

Vision

Internationally recognized faculty and outstanding staff work to engage students in a research-driven, dynamic, innovative liberal arts experience to ensure academic achievement and lifelong success.

Foundational Strengths

In support of and in alignment with Syracuse University's academic strategic plan, the College of Arts and Sciences' academic strategic plan seeks to focus the College's energy and efforts on its three foundational strengths:

Diversity and inclusion are drivers for new ideas, creativity, and academic excellence and are at the core of the liberal arts experience. We recognize the evolving demographics of the student population and the need to develop instructional approaches and support structures that are responsive to all students. Further, we are dedicated to workplace practices that ensure full participation of all members of our community. The College emphasizes the critical role that intellectual and experiential engagement with difference plays in preparing students for the challenges and opportunities they will face in their personal, professional, and civic lives. Our approach values difference and engages in instruction and research that appreciates all voices and perspectives.

Educational excellence in the College of Arts and Sciences is defined by research-driven teaching that is the foundation for a holistic liberal arts education. We offer richly diverse innovative learning opportunities and ensure that students have access to strong academic and career advising services needed to make connections between academic study and the workplace. The Renée Crown Honors Program provides students with an intellectual community, as well as research and leadership opportunities. The teaching, research and mentoring of Arts & Sciences faculty and staff empower students to develop theoretical knowledge, intellectual agility, research competencies, and strategies for reading, writing, and thinking critically, skills that are vital to their success as ethically committed professionals, citizens, entrepreneurs and leaders in a diverse cultural and global context.

Research and discovery are central strengths of the College of Arts and Sciences. We are committed to a culture of research and research-driven instruction. Our students, faculty, and academic staff—from across all disciplines—engage in research, scholarship, and creative activity that develop knowledge in service to the public good. Our internationally recognized faculty lead research that provides deeper understandings of the biological and physical universe, illuminates human experience and creativity, offers insight about the intricacies of human communication, develops mathematical and analytical thought, responds to the complexity of global and local social problems, and sets the stage for technological and scientific breakthroughs. Our students learn to put theory into action and to work collaboratively and ethically on future-oriented solutions that address the multifaceted, complex challenges that face the world today.

STRATEGIC GOALS

The goals in this section represent our plan for strategic initiatives that build on our foundational strengths. These goals reflect that our strengths reinforce each other and collectively represent the coherent values that define a liberal arts education. The goals, strategies, and objectives are not prioritized here.

GOAL 1: Foster an inclusive, accessible College that supports the recruitment and retention of a diverse community to advance the academic and professional achievement of our students, faculty, and staff.

Objective 1.1: Hire and retain a more diverse faculty and staff to better reflect and support our student population with the recognition that climate and diversity are key requirements for instructional and research strength.

Strategy 1.1.1: Appoint an Associate Dean for Diversity and Inclusion to support students, faculty and staff.

Strategy 1.1.2: Identify and secure funding to implement best practices (e.g. cluster hires, open searches) in support of hiring that builds and retains a diverse faculty and staff aligned more closely with the student population.

Strategy 1.1.3: Develop best practices to support the success and retention of non-traditional and veteran students.

Strategy 1.1.4: Provide professional support and recognition for high-achieving staff.

Objective 1.2: Create opportunities for greater student understanding of their membership in a diverse, inclusive global community.

Strategy 1.2.1: Identify and expand opportunities for all students to participate in an international academic experience.

Strategy 1.2.2: Reward faculty who pursue grants and teaching strategies that ensure the inclusion and success of our diverse student population.

Strategy 1.2.3: Secure additional funding to build upon existing programs that analyze varied facets of diversity.



GOAL 2: Enhance the undergraduate academic experience by offering students innovative learning opportunities that promote academic, professional, and personal growth.

Objective 2.1: Establish classroom environments that promote active learning, foster close interaction between students and faculty, and support inclusion and respect for difference.

Strategy 2.1.1: Collaborate with department chairs to pursue an enhanced international educational experience and stronger partnerships between A&S faculty and SU Abroad.

Strategy 2.1.2: Reinforce and strategically develop course and degree programs that promote critical engagement with diverse histories, global cultures, and traditions.

Strategy 2.1.3: Develop flexible degree tracks, and establish advising and support services that are tailored to all students, including those with unique academic needs.

Objective 2.2: Develop structures that strengthen the capacity of faculty and staff to provide students with the best possible academic experience.

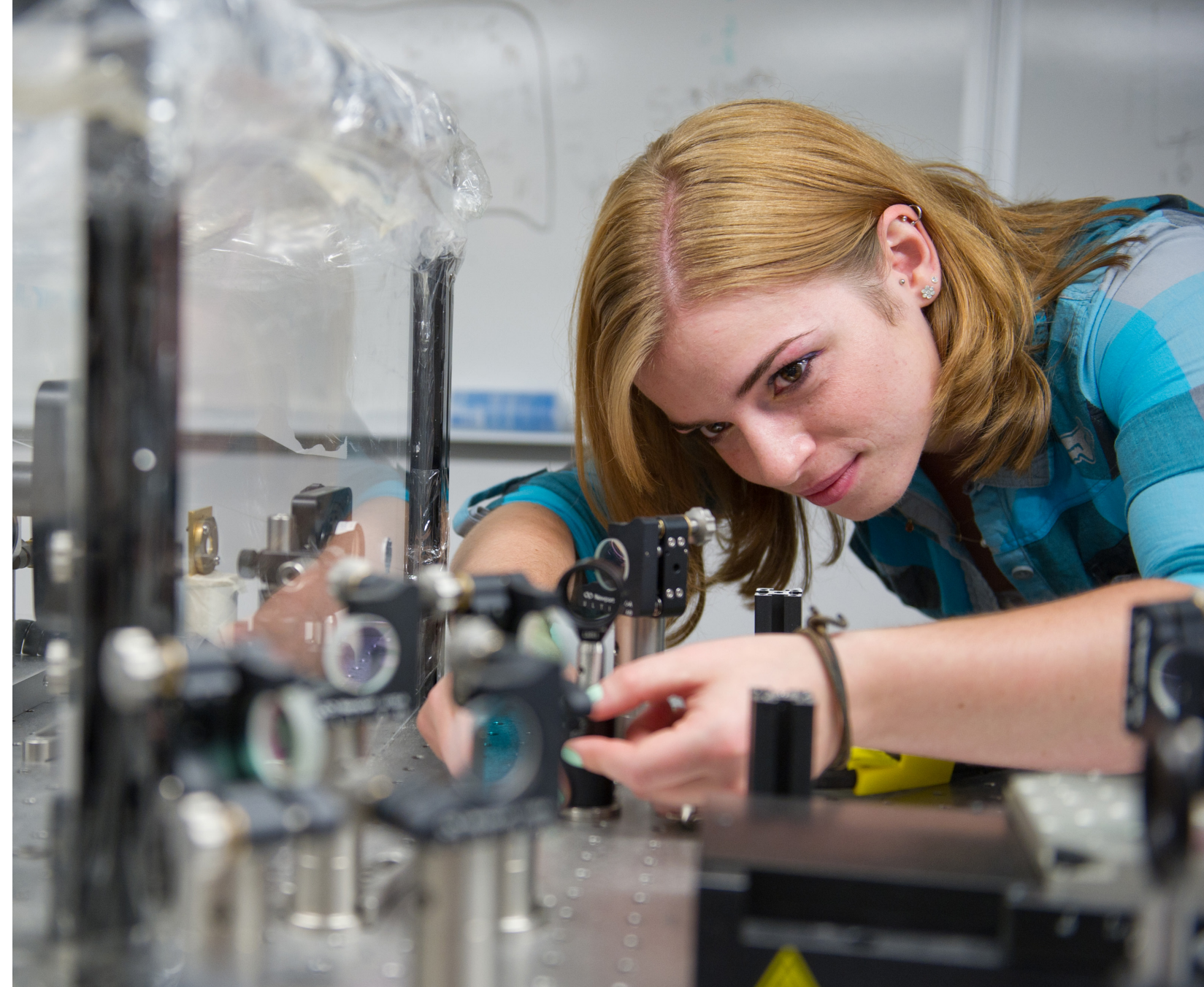
Strategy 2.2.1: Enhance the Renée Crown Honors program as a focal point for undergraduate academic and intellectual achievement across the University.

Strategy 2.2.2: Pursue capital and technological improvements to support innovative teaching methods.

Strategy 2.2.3: Fund incentives for faculty course innovations and collaborations to increase the number of team-taught, cross-disciplinary courses within and across colleges.

Strategy 2.2.4: Facilitate faculty and teaching assistant professional development aimed at innovating teaching practices.

Strategy 2.2.5: Establish an office of language support to centralize language instruction for international students across the university. Develop a comprehensive, research-based strategy to foster international student language acquisition and academic success through: coordination with other units to reduce redundancy and provide clarity; pairing international students with trained peer mentors; and conducting ongoing analysis to provide data about international students' academic achievement.



Objective 2.3: Provide all students with comprehensive academic and career advising services to support transition to college life, increase retention and decrease time to graduation, connect academic and co-curricular work, and demonstrate the value of a liberal arts education in professional success.

Strategy 2.3.1: Invest in the advising office, implementing best practices, creating an organizational structure that supports advisors, and training academic advisors in forward thinking advising practices that support all students.

Strategy 2.3.2: Develop an advising paradigm that merges career and academic advising throughout the student's experience, with a special focus on outcomes and postgraduate academic and career success.

Strategy 2.3.3: Engage alumni to serve as mentors in career planning and to help identify internship and experiential learning opportunities.



GOAL 3: Enrich the undergraduate academic experience by engaging undergraduates in knowledge creation.

Objective 3.1: Expand collaborative research experiences and experiential learning opportunities for all undergraduates.

- Strategy 3.1.1:** Raise endowed funds to support student research.
- Strategy 3.1.2:** Incentivize faculty to engage undergraduate students in research projects. Provide summer salaries to faculty directing funded undergraduate research programs.
- Strategy 3.1.3:** Work with academic units to develop discipline-appropriate experiential learning opportunities. (For example, field work, experiential short courses, internships, service-learning/community engagement, undergraduate research, SU Abroad experiences, archival research, etc.)

GOAL 4: Enhance excellence in graduate education and graduate scholarly activity.

Objective 4.1: Increase support for graduate students to sustain a high-achieving graduate population.

- Strategy 4.1.1:** Institute systemic support for graduate students and post-docs in writing proposals for research-related fellowships.
- Strategy 4.1.2:** Analyze the support structure and workload for graduate students across the disciplines with the intent to increase quality of programs.
- Strategy 4.1.3:** Raise endowed funds to support graduate student fellowships, tuition, summer support, and travel.
- Strategy 4.1.4:** Work with departments and the Graduate School to provide career service support for graduate students pursuing non-academic jobs.

GOAL 5: Further elevate the College as a national and international leader in research and scholarship.

Objective 5.1: Attract, hire, and retain extraordinary faculty members.

- Strategy 5.1.1:** Establish endowed professorships to hire and retain the best faculty.
- Strategy 5.1.2:** Utilize proactive, innovative, and flexible strategies to optimize faculty recruitment, retention, and research success.
- Strategy 5.1.3:** Seek support for new state-of-the-art research space.
- Strategy 5.1.4:** Invest in lab and collaborative space for all disciplines.

Objective 5.2: Create a strong research culture and intellectual community that promotes professional growth.

- Strategy 5.2.1:** Encourage faculty to train for and to assume internal and external leadership roles in support of research.
- Strategy 5.2.2:** Formally recognize activities that support research, such as mentoring of faculty members and students, grant and center development, and external professional service.
- Strategy 5.2.3:** Provide mechanisms to support faculty members and department chairs in nominating colleagues for national and international awards.
- Strategy 5.2.4:** Formalize policies on using funds for teaching relief and research leaves.



Objective 5.3: Enhance infrastructure to support research and scholarly work.

Strategy 5.3.1: Establish a shared research instrumentation facility and develop mechanisms to provide technical support staff and encourage equipment sharing.

Strategy 5.3.2: Increase staff and graduate assistant support in alignment with research growth.

Objective 5.4: Increase research expenditures supported by external awards.

Strategy 5.4.1: In collaboration with the Office of Research, appoint two College of Arts and Sciences grant coordinators to support faculty—one in the natural sciences and mathematics, and one in the humanities.

Strategy 5.4.2: Establish College-supported competitions for funds to develop research projects.

Strategy 5.4.3: Organize and fund research mentoring and proposal writing groups.

Objective 5.5: Strengthen interdisciplinary foci of research and support new collaborations in scholarship.

Strategy 5.5.1: Identify areas of existing and potential interdepartmental, interdisciplinary, and intercollegiate research strength and conduct strategic and cluster hires to build those areas.

Strategy 5.5.2: Create, staff, and support interdisciplinary centers and institutes that will help realize the potential of new areas of research strength.

Strategy 5.5.3: Aggressively pursue additional funding opportunities for the Humanities Center as the hub of collaborative and interdisciplinary humanities research on campus.

SOAR (Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations & Results)

Strengths:

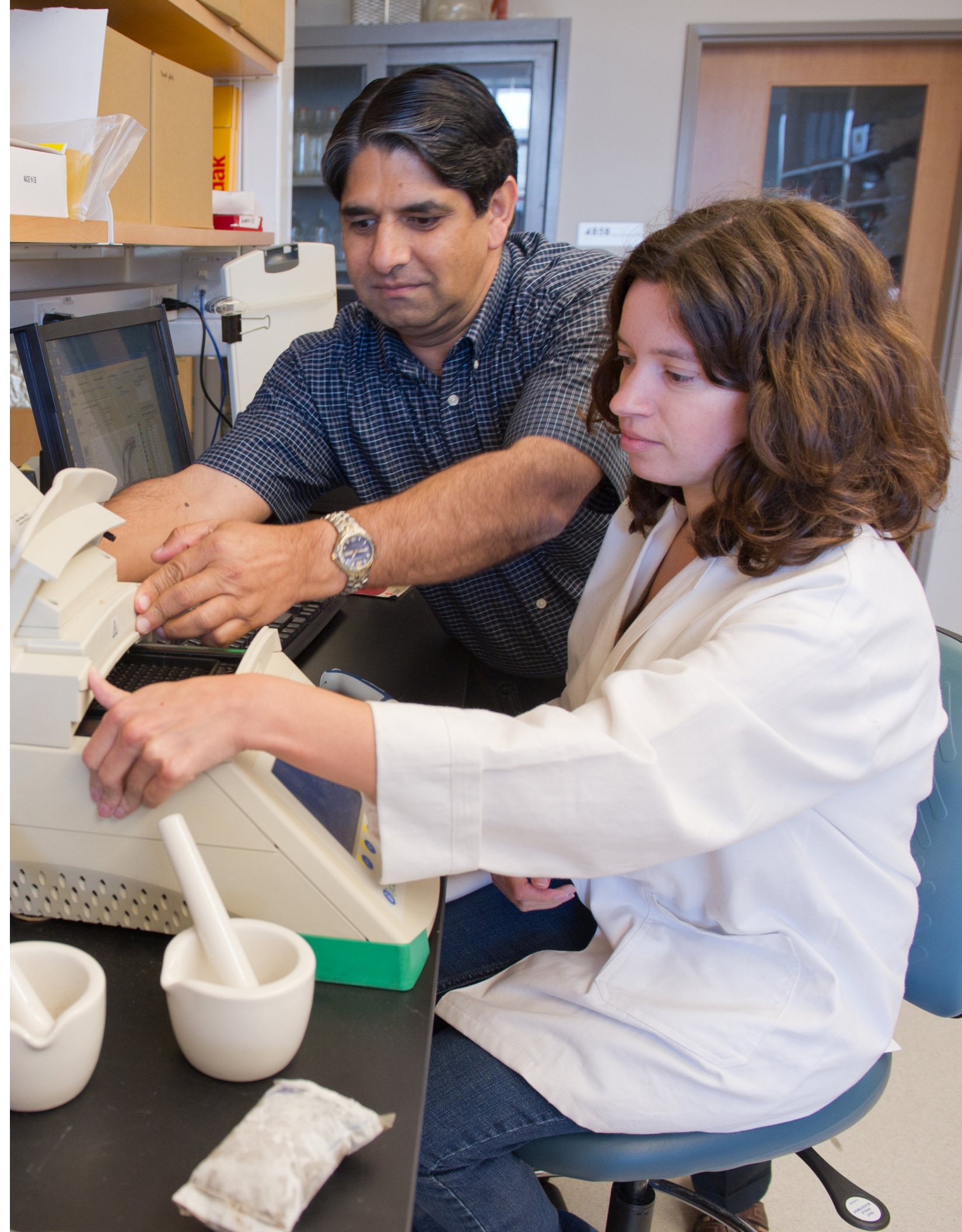
- As part of the One University mission, we are committed to providing all students at the University with a research-driven liberal arts education as the foundation of their many and diverse career paths. We are proud to play this central role, and fulfill the State's requirement that 50% of each student's curriculum is in the liberal arts.
- The strengths of the College include: nationally and internationally recognized scholars and researchers; research funding growth of 45% over the past five years; high volume and quality of research in the sciences, social sciences, and the humanities; faculty committed to research and research-driven teaching.
- Our dedicated and committed staff provides strong support for students and College operations.
- The Humanities Center provides a focus for collaboration across campus and with peer institutions.
- Our curriculum offers a broad knowledge base that students can incorporate into their pursuit of various educational and professional objectives—and that encourages the intellectual agility that will prepare them for the changing demands they will encounter in the contemporary workplace.
- The Renée Crown Honors Program is designed for exceptionally curious and motivated undergraduate students to provide special opportunities and mentoring to enrich the intellectual experience and to foster a vibrant scholarly community.
- The Center for Fellowship and Scholarship Advising (CFSA), housed in the Renée Crown Honors Program, engages high-achieving students—and alumni—at multiple points during their time on campus and in their early careers and supports their applications for fellowships and funding opportunities.
- Operational agility enables us to accommodate students across the University in response to fluctuating demands.
- Strategic financial management has allowed effective use of investments from external and internal sources to attain transformations in education and research. This provides us with a foundation for efficiently achieving our strategic goals moving forward.

Opportunities:

- The changing economic climate, including restrictions on student aid and the development of new programs such as New York's Excelsior, demands that we attend carefully to the qualities that make a Syracuse liberal arts education unique and do a better job of communicating with students and parents about the value of the education we provide.
- The changing demographic composition of our student population (including the increase in international students, students from underrepresented populations, and non-traditional students) offers opportunities to create curricular and pedagogical innovations designed to support the success of all students.
- Current trends in federal research funding will require a creative response, including a data-driven approach, diversification of the funding portfolio, and strategic focus on identifying new sources of support.
- Work with the Office of Research to develop new collaborative partnerships with other colleges, encourage expansion of large-scale grant opportunities, and ensure effective coordination of funding processes.
- Leverage current strengths to raise funds in targeted areas: for example, named professorships, financial aid, and undergraduate research.
- Create research centers in areas of documented strength to attract funding, raise visibility, and connect departments. Clearly outline expectations and deliverables for the centers.
- Improve student retention, time to degree, and overall success based on data-driven analysis and a proactive advising support structure.
- Enhance advising to support students' academic progress and offer clear pathways from their liberal arts education to a broad range of careers and will ensure greater consistency in decision making processes.
- Build upon our relationship with Maxwell school leadership to support liberal arts inquiry among faculty and undergraduate students.
- In collaboration with central administration, improve operations and resource utilization through focus on process efficiency and improved communications that will better support the work of faculty, staff, and students.
- Refine policies and procedures around transfer credit acceptance to ensure they are consistent and in the best interest of the student, while financially sound.

Aspirations and Results:

- Strategize development and investment in internationally recognized research and scholarship.
- Expand collaborations with other schools and colleges on interdisciplinary academic and research endeavors.
- Create a college-wide efficient and supportive research infrastructure, including technical staffing and core equipment facilities.
- Develop a research-driven liberal arts core in the global context of the 21st Century that keeps pace with evolving scholarly inquiry in the humanities, sciences, mathematics, social sciences, and is sensitive to cultural diversity; engages students with a critical consideration of the complex worlds they inhabit; offers multiple opportunities for experiential learning (research, study abroad, capstones, internships); and reflects current research about effective pedagogical methods.
- Develop and maintain a more diverse faculty and staff, benchmarking against national norms and our student population. Implement policies and practices that support retention.
- Sustain strong graduate programs that will contribute to the university's research mission and maintain the high standards of excellence needed in an increasingly competitive academic environment.
- Enhance advising services to effectively support students' academic progress, preparing them for success in a wide range of professional careers.
- Increase staff development and advancement opportunities that will help retain the strongest team of employees.



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