



COLA Top Tier Strategic Plan

2018 – 2022

The College of Liberal Arts, as the home of humanities, social sciences, and interdisciplinary scholarship and teaching, addresses issues of fundamental importance to our world, including how to understand and improve the human condition and how to create and nurture structures that allow people to live and work together constructively. For these reasons the College of Liberal Arts is critical to the educational and scholarly mission of UNLV.

Mission: The College of Liberal Arts (COLA), as a diverse collection of individuals, works to enrich our students and our respective communities by developing and disseminating fundamental ideas, knowledge, skills and creative works related to communication, reasoning, and the understanding of social, cultural, personal, and interpersonal perspectives and contexts.

Vision: COLA strives to be a place where faculty provide maximally enriching educational and developmental experiences for our students, conduct high-impact scholarship and creative activity, and constructively engage the community.

Values: The diversity of our student body and our community shapes our identity, and we value that diversity as one of our unique strengths. We understand inclusion as creating an environment of involvement, respect, and connection for everyone. We recognize that both diversity and inclusion are essential elements of our pursuit of excellence and help us to better reflect our student population and local community. This means that we must bring together the richness of ideas, backgrounds, and perspectives of our faculty, staff, students, and community to enhance our intellectual and workplace environment and the educational experience we offer to students.

Current Status: COLA offers a broad array of undergraduate and graduate degrees of interest to students; we have an engaged and productive faculty; and we enrich the local and broader communities in significant ways. Current challenges include ensuring that all students receive consistently enriching educational experiences inside and beyond the classroom; increasing the percentage of our students who earn their desired degrees; finding additional resources to support our faculty, especially financially given the relative stagnation of salaries during recent years; diversifying and retaining our faculty to more closely mirror our student body and surrounding community; increasing the impact and visibility of our faculty's research and creative activity; and selectively adding new degree programs online and face-to-face that are of value to students and the community, and are aligned with UNLV's Top Tier goals.

Faculty

Maintain and increase the impact and visibility of scholarship and creative activities:

College Actions:

- Advocate for and/or develop methods to increase faculty salaries commensurate with productivity and to be more comparable with peer and aspirational peer institutions.
- Continue to provide teaching loads for research/creative-active faculty that are aligned with and support their scholarly productivity
- Continue and grow seed grants for scholarly and creative projects
- Continue and grow funding of scholarly activities that create new opportunities for collaboration and increase visibility of scholarly and creative work (e.g., small conferences, etc.)
- Continue and grow funding for publication costs (e.g., subvention costs, etc.)
- Provide funding and other forms of support (commensurate with the amount of funding being sought) to encourage grant applications and increase chances of success (e.g., funding the cost of outside grant reviewers, grant writers, consultants, etc.)
- Develop metrics and processes for evaluating the overall scholarly and community impact of our units

Department/Unit Actions:

- Identify and publish appropriate metrics for scholarly and creative activity
- Produce annual bibliographies and summary of impact metrics
- Develop strategies for increasing the impact and visibility of faculty scholarship and creative activity, including supporting faculty work and status within relevant professional organizations (e.g., journal editorships, fellow status, etc.)
- Provide guidance to the college and university leadership about what else can be done to support faculty scholarship and creative activity
- Increase breadth and depth of graduate and undergraduate participation in research
- Maintain and grow graduate programs, especially doctoral programs

Foster a positive faculty culture of success, inclusion, collaboration, trust, respect, empathy, camaraderie, and the valuing of diversity:

College Actions:

- Engage University climate data and initiatives including the COACHE survey data as information and context for COLA practices and initiatives
- Develop a vision for how all ranks of fulltime faculty (e.g., tenured, tenure-track, FIR, lecturers, and administrative faculty) can work together collaboratively to fulfill the mission of the college and to create collegial departmental climates
- Participation from key COLA faculty and administrators in UNLV's NSF ADVANCE Institutional Transformation grant proposal (Fall 2017) to expand opportunities for women to engage in science and engineering careers
- Partner with the Women's Research Institute of Nevada and the UNLV Women's Council on Family Advocacy and offer a workshop on the process of applying for FMLA leave and how it relates to the P&T process
- Provide trainings for faculty, staff, and instructors on how to support students, including diverse, underrepresented, DACA-mented, and undocumented students
- Offer training opportunities and mentoring for department chairs, including a list of Department Chair Leadership and Management Roles
- Work with departments to increase clarity and standardization of promotion and tenure standards across the college
- Mentor promotion and tenure candidates on their dossier and materials

- Collaborate with the Office of Faculty Affairs and the Office of Diversity Initiatives to pursue an institutional membership to the National Center for Faculty Development and Diversity
- Offer fall welcome reception and annual spring check-in event for new faculty cohorts
- Include a statement on diversity and inclusion on the COLA website
- Create programming for new and existing faculty offering networking opportunities and information about tenure and/or promotion for Assistant Professors, Associate Professors, and Faculty in Residence
- Hold a meeting for search committee chairs prior to the beginning of search season and provide them with resources regarding how to conduct effective faculty searches
- In collaboration with the offices of Faculty Affairs and Diversity Initiatives, develop and provide resources to search committee members regarding potential sources of bias that may influence searches

College and Department/Unit Actions:

- Assign departmental mentors to each incoming faculty member; periodically check-in with new faculty and mentors
- Support junior and mid-career faculty through the tenure and promotion process
- Increase the recruitment, retention, and promotion of faculty from underrepresented minority groups
- Review institutional data such as the COACHE survey and recent departmental program reviews for organization-level information about department climate and culture
- Provide guidance to the college and university leadership about what else can be done to support faculty diversity and inclusion via departmental representatives on the COLA Diversity & Inclusion Committee

Department/Unit Actions:

- Evaluate unit culture and develop plans to address any existing shortcomings or issues

Student Achievement

Increase student success and improve all aspects of the student experience for undergraduate and graduate liberal arts majors

College Actions:

- Support high-quality classroom and online instruction, including supporting curricular reviews and reforms
- Foster student engagement through experiential learning, such as problem-based learning, applied projects, service learning, internships and externships, and co-curricular activities, including sharing community partners and working with interested faculty to incorporate service learning into established curriculum
- Encourage a mindset of career readiness, sponsoring events and workshops that promote career readiness and identification of liberal arts students' transferable skills
- Coordinate and harmonize RPC activities with Wilson Advising Center and other campus entities, including sharing data between Wilson Advising Center and departments
- Develop materials and guidance for faculty about the range of resources available on campus to support student success
- Improve communication throughout the college to help student organizations cross-pollinate and increase visibility through financial and logistical support
- Work with the Disability Resource Center to educate faculty about how to foster inclusive class environments

- Support the development of new programs, including allocating new resources, in accord with UNLV's and COLA's Top Tier goals, student demand, and community needs and interests

Department Actions:

- Develop a 5-year action plan increasing First-Time Full-Time cohort retention and the 6-year graduation rate by measurable percentages (current COLA 6-year graduation rate is 47.7%)
- Review curricula to ensure course requirements, offerings, and pedagogy (including milestone and culminating experiences, and online courses) reflect current disciplinary knowledge, UNLV curricular expectations and best practices, and that they meet the needs of our diverse student body
- Encourage faculty, instructors, and staff to see student retention and success as a faculty responsibility, including creating a positive and inclusive classroom climate, reaching out to struggling students, employing pedagogical best practices, and encouraging personal connections with students inside the classroom
- Provide professional development for GTAs and PTIs, especially those who teach general education courses
- Improve the culture of student engagement by strengthening student organizations, exploring service learning and internship possibilities, and encouraging student participation in activities at the department, college, and university level
- When appropriate, develop new programs that align with student interest and community needs

Community Engagement

Continue to support and grow the ways we engage and enrich our community, near and far

College and Department/Unit Actions:

- Continue and grow our support for department/unit community engagement activities
- Develop a comprehensive inventory of our community engagement activities
- Develop a set of community engagement metrics for the scope, volume and impacts of our community engagement
- Partner with the Office of Community Engagement on community partnerships and initiatives