Transforming the Modern Liberal Arts College:

Drexel University College of Arts and Sciences
Strategic Plan 2012-2017

January 9, 2013

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INTRODUCTION

The intellectual center of all great comprehensive research universities is the College of Arts and Sciences; it provides the educational foundation of all undergraduate students and contributes new knowledge through faculty and student research and scholarship.

The last several years have witnessed increasing national debates regarding the value of a college education and the value of a liberal arts education in particular. While some colleges and universities focus on teaching students the professional skills necessary for their chosen careers, other institutions, often referred to as liberal arts colleges, are designed to educate students more broadly, preparing them for a wide range of challenges. In the latter case, it is expected that most students will pursue post-graduate training. However, even within that context, there is increased discussion on the importance of "real-world" experiences for future employment.

Drexel University College of Arts and Sciences transcends this dichotomy. From our inception, we have recognized the importance of both the liberal arts and professional school model. A liberal arts education provides a broad foundation in historical and social concepts, critical reasoning and problem solving, cultural perspectives and the theoretical tenets of basic and applied research. Importantly, it instills a passion for intellectual inquiry and debate, an understanding of the *process* of learning, and a commitment to lifelong learning.

The professional school model, on the other hand, focuses on the knowledge and skills necessary for success in a defined occupation, emphasizing the *application* of this knowledge. The cooperative education program, which is the hallmark of Drexel University, addresses this imperative and is as relevant to students in the College of Arts and Sciences as it is to those in the Colleges of Engineering and Business. We have worked diligently to provide rewarding co-op experiences, as well as a range of other experiential learning activities, for students across our wide range of majors. In this way, the College integrates both the liberal arts and professional school models.

Building on our previous gains, we plan to intensify our efforts, expand on our successes, and improve our visibility. Over the next five years, we will refine the concept of the integration of the humanities and sciences within the context of a technologically rich environment that emphasizes experiential learning. We will invest in traditional discipline-based research and scholarship in order to provide critical expertise to interdisciplinary programs that will allow Drexel to become "One University."

The goal of this strategic plan is to transform the College of Arts and Sciences into a destination college: the model of a modern liberal arts college. Our graduates will possess the *breadth* of knowledge acquired through a liberal arts education, which will allow them to draw on the insights of diverse fields and perspectives to meet the evolving demands of today's fast-paced and global professional environments. They will simultaneously possess the *depth* of knowledge acquired through experiential learning, promoting a quicker "start-up" in the work world. This vital balance of breadth and depth is a model for all Drexel units, but its core and foundation begins in the College of Arts and Sciences.

We will transform Drexel's College of Arts and Sciences into the model of a modern liberal arts college through five main strategies:

Priority 1: Refine the Organization of the College

Goal 1.1. Assess the needs of the growing and diverse University.
Goal 1.2. Develop and invest in academic units that address identified needs.

Priority 2: Invest in World-Class Scholarship

Goal 2.1. Enhance discipline-based expertise.
Goal 2.2. Develop interdisciplinary programs built on disciplinary strengths.
Goal 2.3. Emphasize vertical integration of research activities from undergraduates to senior faculty.

Priority 3: Strengthen Co-Operative Education

Goal 3.1. Create stronger ties between academic programs and co-op.
Goal 3.2. Develop a wider range of opportunities for experiential learning.
Goal 3.3. Ensure experiential opportunities for *all* students.
Goal 3.4. Expand co-op and experiential learning in graduate programs.

Priority 4: Energize the General Education Curriculum

Goal 4.1. Create courses on issues relevant to the educated citizen.
Goal 4.2. Redefine teacher-student interactions through innovative educational strategies.
Goal 4.3. Develop strategies to more effectively recruit and reward teaching faculty.

Priority 5: Infuse Global Perspectives

Goal 5.1. Expand international experiences for students.
Goal 5.2. Incorporate international students more effectively.
Goal 5.3. Foster international research collaborations.

MISSION STATEMENT

By pursuing excellence in teaching, research and scholarship, we educate our students to become ethical professionals and citizens with knowledge of, and appreciation for, the fundamental interactions between the humanities and the sciences in a fast changing, challenging, and diverse world.

VISION

The College of Arts and Sciences incorporates experiential learning into the culture of a liberal arts education to produce ethical and intellectual graduates ready to make an immediate impact in their fields and beyond.

PREAMBLE

The integration of arts and sciences is a concept that goes beyond liberal arts colleges; it forms the educational foundation necessary for the success of all students in a modern, comprehensive research university. With a general background in the sciences, students in the humanities and social sciences are able to appreciate the complexity of the world and contribute to the elucidation and resolution of societal issues, such as those affecting health and the environment. Similarly, students in the sciences grow as citizens and professionals as they gain a deeper knowledge of history, develop greater communication skills, cultivate an appreciation of the socio-political context of world issues, and understand the ethical demands of their professional lives. The synergistic integration of the arts and sciences fosters the development of key critical-thinking and problem-solving skills in all students, regardless of their primary disciplinary focus.

A modern liberal arts college takes this valuable humanities-sciences integration further, incorporating into its core the application of knowledge through hands-on career experience and the flexibility needed to adapt to our ever-changing world.

Drexel University College of Arts and Sciences will refine its position as the model of a modern liberal arts college. Our graduates will possess the breadth of knowledge acquired through a liberal arts education and the depth of knowledge acquired through experiential learning. This vital balance of breadth and depth is a model for all Drexel units—but its foundation begins in the College of Arts and Sciences.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Priority 1: Refine the Organization of the College

In the last ten years, CoAS has added nine new degree programs and refocused departments to serve changing disciplinary and interdisciplinary norms. The number of students in the College has increased by more than 41% and the University by 36%. These numbers will continue to grow. In order to provide the education needed for this larger and more diverse population, it is essential to evaluate our current structure and modify as needed.

Goal 1.1. Assess the needs of the growing and diverse University.

Many departments in the College combine disciplines that typically stand alone as distinct departments. We will assess the needs of the College and University communities in both teaching and research, taking into account the expertise of current faculty, the assets of the local environment, and the need for discipline-based skills in today's society. We will identify the best structure to support disciplinary strengths that contribute to interdisciplinary growth in the context of Drexel's unique environment, assets, and mission.

Goal 1.2. Develop and invest in academic units that address identified needs.

Although specific areas of reorganization will depend on the findings under Goal 1.1, one clear area of reorganization is Modern Languages. To more successfully address the breadth and flexibility of skills required in today's increasingly international stage, an academic unit will be developed to allow students from all disciplines to infuse their education with global perspectives and language skills. Reorganization of other units will be pursued, if warranted, following careful analysis.

Priority 2: Invest in World-Class Scholarship

Scholarship within the College has dramatically increased in quantity and quality over the past ten years. It is important to remember that the College's mission was primarily one of teaching until the turn of the century. To capitalize on our impressive gains in scholarship and to continue to build quantity and quality simultaneously, we will:

Goal 2.1. Enhance discipline-based expertise. Conduct in-depth reviews of each department to identify areas of investment that will increase disciplinary strengths in key focused areas.

a) Growth. Each department requires a faculty large enough to adequately and effectively engage in research, graduate and undergraduate training, and community service consistent with University goals. Based on recommendations of external reviews, the number of tenure-track and tenured faculty will be adjusted and incorporated into a five-year strategic hiring plan. Recruitment will focus on both junior and senior faculty who enhance the national/international reputation of our research programs.

b) Faculty Retention and Development. Develop a plan to retain and reward productive, research-active tenured and tenure-track faculty with facilities, research support, predictable and regular travel grants for academic activities, and greater flexibility in teaching.

c) Training**.** Graduate education is an essential component of a world-class research university. To this end, we will:

i. Explore expanding the range of Ph.D. programs in the humanities and social sciences based on faculty strengths and market analysis.

ii. Develop strategies to increase the quality of our current Ph.D. and M.S. students, including an increase in stipends and benefits.

iii. Increase the number of post-doctoral fellows.

iv. Explore the possibility of developing interdisciplinary graduate programs.

v. Include more career development and co-op experiences in our graduate programs.

d) Mentoring. Introduce and maintain formal mentoring programs and best practices for faculty, graduate students and postdoctoral trainees to foster research success and cultivate leadership skills.

e) Intellectual Exchange. Enhance our atmosphere of inquiry by increasing seminars offered within each discipline and hosting more conferences on campus. Develop programs for visiting faculty to stimulate collaboration and infuse new ideas.

f) Environment. Assess instrumentation needs and develop strategies for acquiring necessary equipment. Develop a plan to address deferred maintenance of both equipment and facilities.

Goal 2.2. Develop interdisciplinary programs built on disciplinary strengths.

a) Create Centers of Excellence. Utilize the discipline-based strengths of the individual departments to create faculty-driven interdisciplinary centers. The centers will maximize the unique elements that continue to distinguish Drexel University: practical engagement supported by an informed perspective in areas of the humanities and social sciences such as history, ethics and philosophy.

b) Foster interactions across departments and colleges. While many collaborations are limited in size and do not yet merit the structure of a formal center, multidisciplinary collaborations of all sizes and scopes need to be fostered to maximize research and scholarship. The College, working with the Office of Research, will facilitate the development of these teams both within the College and with other colleges and schools through funds for interdisciplinary seminars and pilot research projects.

c) Develop joint research facilities. In an increasingly interdisciplinary world, innovative research facilities that serve a range of disciplines are essential to integrating research programs and maximizing resources by minimizing duplication. In addition, state-of-the-art facilities aid in the recruitment of outstanding faculty, postdoctoral trainees, and graduate students.

i. Assess the facilities currently available in the College and disseminate information to other colleges.
ii. Form inter-collegial partnerships to develop and expand shared facilities.

Goal 2.3. Emphasize vertical integration of research activities from undergraduates to senior faculty. To both maximize and sustain our investment in research, it is essential to have excellent role models at each step of the career path. We will encourage collaborative research teams comprising undergraduates, graduate students, post-docs and faculty to further this objective. Each department and research group will develop activities and venues to facilitate this integration.

Priority 3: Strengthen Co-operative Education

Cooperative education is the Drexel "difference"—the element that marks a Drexel education. Whether in the one co-op or three co-op option, students are able to develop the professional skills necessary for the workplace, thus gaining a competitive edge when looking for a job. As our student numbers increase and our programs change with the needs of society, it is critical that cooperative education is a meaningful and integral part of the curriculum and that it expands in both quantity and flexibility.

Goal 3.1. Create stronger ties between academic programs and co-op**.** In some areas, the co-op program is well integrated into the academic majors. In others, however, co-op often appears as a separate, disconnected six-month assignment. All academic programs need to be more strongly aligned with the co-op experience. We will:

Obtain feedback from co-op employers on the discipline-specific and general education skills they are seeking.

a) Establish courses during co-op to:
   i. Address both discipline-based and professional situations.
   ii. Provide an opportunity for students to be exposed to the variety of co-op experiences of fellow students.
   iii. Develop leadership and entrepreneurial skills.

b) Develop courses for before and after co-op to complement the experience.

Goal 3.2. Develop a wider range of opportunities for experiential learning. Although many majors have an adequate amount of challenging, paid co-ops, some disciplines do not. It is essential to develop a wider range of excellent, paid co-op experiences. We will:

a) Expand the staff assigned to CoAS majors in the Steinbright Career Development Center (SCDC).

b) Provide faculty in each major with course release time to work with the SCDC to develop and monitor new co-ops and experiential opportunities.

c) Seek philanthropy to support co-ops in nonprofit organizations.

d) Develop more university-based research co-ops.

Goal 3.3. Ensure that all students have a significant experiential opportunity. While co-op is the hallmark of a Drexel education, 30% of CoAS students choose the non co-op option. To guarantee all Drexel students graduate with significant real-life experience, we will:

a) Utilize the success of Goal 2 to advertise available opportunities and increase the percentage of students choosing to do co-ops.

b) Develop a process to review and optimize other experiences that achieve this purpose.

Goal 3.4. Expand co-ops and related experiential activities in graduate programs, as appropriate. Integrate co-op and experiential activities into graduate programs to better prepare students for the range of careers available post-graduation.

Priority 4: Energize the General Education Curriculum

The College of Arts and Sciences provides the foundation upon which all students, regardless of major, build. These courses are often referred to as the "General Education Curriculum." With the wealth of resources available to current students to access basic knowledge, modern "General Education" courses must provide students with the skills to integrate disciplinary and interdisciplinary knowledge to make informed decisions. Courses need to be revised to foster this integrated learning.

Goal 4.1. Create courses on issues relevant to educated citizens.

a) Design courses for non-majors in each discipline that do not require a pre-requisite and that impart disciplinary concepts and a discipline-specific approach to societal issues.

b) Develop clusters of these courses that approach a single theme from different disciplinary perspectives (e.g. psychology, politics and biology courses on the "The Basics of Cancer").

Goal 4.2. Redefine teacher-student interactions through innovative educational strategies.

a) Diversify teaching modes.

i. Encourage faculty to utilize varied classroom formats that allow more flexibility than current 50- and 90-minute structures and 10-week courses.

ii. Expand both online teaching and incorporation of developing technologies (i.e. wikis and Twitter).

b) Reward innovative approaches to teaching.

i. Grants to support development of courses.

ii. Appropriate incorporation of successful innovative teaching into performance evaluations.

Goal 4.3. Develop strategies to more effectively recruit and reward teaching faculty.

a) Develop a five-year strategic hiring plan for teaching faculty based on a comprehensive analysis of the expertise of current teaching faculty and the

needs of an increasing and diverse student population.

b) Evaluate the role of teaching faculty and develop appropriate and definable goals for promotion.

c) Provide opportunities for continuing development of teaching faculty.

Priority 5: Infuse Global Perspectives

In recent years, Drexel has seen a growth in international outreach, both in terms of Drexel initiatives in other countries and in increased numbers of international students coming to campus. However, the quantity and breadth of our international programs requires further development to meet the needs of the College. In addition, international students need to be better integrated into the culture of the College.

Goal 5.1. Expand international experiences.

a) Encourage more students to take advantage of study abroad programs, including co-ops abroad, by introducing opportunities early (e.g. in UNIV 101). Work with former study abroad students and specific course instructors to organize recruitment events.

b) Develop topic-focused courses that incorporate international faculty and offer the option for travel to a country, as a class, to expand on the topic.

c) Work to establish scholarships to allow a wider range of students to get involved in international activities.

Goal 5.2. Incorporate international students more effectively.

a) Support faculty efforts to ensure that international students are fully incorporated into classes and other experiences.

b) Develop curricular and co-curricular activities that encourage cross-cultural interactions.

Goal 5.3. Foster international research collaboration.

a) Work with the Office of International Studies to identify foreign universities that align with CoAS research strengths and provide CoAS faculty with an opportunity to meet potential collaborators.

b) Provide financial support to faculty to facilitate the maintenance of international collaborations.

APPENDIX

Structure

Dr. Donna M. Murasko was named Dean of Drexel's College of Arts and Sciences in 2003. Her goals for the College include strengthening research, education, service, and faculty governance, while promoting the activities of the College to the University, the local community, the nation, and the world.

The College comprises nine departments and three interdisciplinary centers, which house 16 undergraduate and 20 graduate programs.

> The ***Department of Biology*** has 13 tenure-track faculty members, 8 teaching faculty members, and 2 research faculty members. The department offers a B.S., M.S. and Ph.D. in biological sciences. The research is focused in the areas of molecular and cellular biology research, including many sub-disciplines and interdisciplinary research areas. The research projects are often related to human health and disease. The Department of Biology has been continuing to expand since the merger with MCP Hahnemann University, with 293 freshmen entering as biology majors in September 2012, making it the largest undergraduate major in the University. In addition, the Biology graduate programs and research programs benefit from the interactive and collaborative environment that exists with the basic science and clinical departments within the College of Medicine. In 2012, the B.S., M.S. and Ph.D. in environmental science were relocated from the Department of Biology to the newly formed Department of Biodiversity, Earth and Environmental Science.
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> The ***Department of Biodiversity, Earth and Environmental Science*** (BEES), was officially created in March 2012 as a result of the partnership between Drexel University and the Academy of Natural Sciences. The new department brings together faculty from Drexel's Department of Biology and from the Academy. There are17 tenure-track faculty members. Research in the department focuses on ecology and environmental science, as well as earth science and biodiversity. Its focus is experiential learning with a heavy emphasis on a strong core program (biology, chemistry, physics, mathematics, and earth science) and field experience with hands-on science. The department offers a B.S., M.S. and Ph.D. in environmental sciences.
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> The ***Department of Chemistry*** has 14 tenure-track faculty members and 5 teaching faculty members. Research areas include analytical chemistry, atmospheric chemistry, bioinorganic chemistry and organometallic chemistry, biochemistry, chemical education, materials and polymer chemistry, physical chemistry, and theoretical and computational chemistry. The department offers an ACS accredited B.S. degree along with M.S. and Ph.D. in chemistry. In addition the department recently developed a B.A. to allow students to choose from a wider breadth of courses that will better prepare them for professional schools in the fields of medicine, dentistry, and law.

The ***Department of Culture and Communication*** has 26 tenure-track faculty members and 24 teaching faculty members with expertise in anthropology, communication, criminal justice, environmental policy, modern languages, and sociology. While in theory this unity of diverse research areas would seem to embody the goal of humanities-sciences integration, the structure is not sufficient for future growth. The programs within Culture and Communication need the intellectual base afforded by being distinct academic units/departments to further strengthen faculty research and collaboration, better recruit prospective faculty and students, and to form a strong sense of community among those in the field. With this solid base, these units will be better equipped to come together via interdisciplinary centers of knowledge, assembled as needed to meet the needs of the College and University.

The ***Department of English and Philosophy*** has 19 tenure-track faculty members and 36 teaching faculty members. In addition to the B.A. in English and certificates in creative writing and publishing, the department began offering a B.A. and two certificates in philosophy in 2009. Additionally, the department collaborates with the School of Education to offer students a certificate in secondary school English. The department plays a key role in the assessment of writing across the University and provides not only the foundation English and writing courses required for all students, but also serves as a writing resource for the University community via the Drexel Writing Center. The Department also provides core education in ethics for the University.

The ***Department of History and Politics*** has 17 tenure-track faculty members and 9 teaching faculty members. In 2011, the department appointed an external hire with NSF experience as the new Department Head. The research foci of the department have been defined as science, technology and society, as well as law and society, and global organization. Many of the faculty members in the department serve as the directors of the interdisciplinary programs within the College and University, including International Area Studies, Women's Studies, the Center for Public Policy, and the Great Works Symposium. The department offers a M.S. in Science, Technology and Society as well as in Public Policy.

The ***Department of Mathematics*** has 20 tenure-track faculty members and 24 teaching faculty members. The department has recruited 12 tenure-track faculty members since 2004. Faculty research falls into a variety of areas, including applied partial differential equations, computational neuroscience, numerical analysis, approximation theory, probability, algebraic combinatorics, special functions, geometry and topology, multiscale mathematics, and analysis and operator theory. The department offers B.A. and B.S. degrees, as well as M.S. and Ph.D. degrees.

The ***Department of Physics*** has 18 tenure-track faculty members, 1 teaching faculty member, and 2 research faculty members. The department offers a B.S., M.S., and Ph.D. in physics. The research interests of the faculty are focused in astrophysics, biophysics, condensed matter, and particle physics. Faculty members and students are involved in national and international collaborations, as well as collaborative and multidisciplinary

research projects within the College of Arts and Sciences, the College of Engineering, and the School of Biomedical Engineering, Science & Health Systems. While the emphasis for both graduates and undergraduates is an intensive academic and research curriculum, the department is also committed to community service. The award-winning Society of Physics Students has worked enthusiastically with local schools to increase understanding of physics and to encourage interest in physics among future students.

The ***Department of Psychology*** has 18 tenure-track faculty members, 9 teaching faculty members, and one research faculty member. The department offers a B.S. in psychology and four graduate degrees, including a Ph.D. in clinical psychology, a combined J.D./Ph.D. in law and psychology, a new Ph.D. in applied cognitive and brain sciences, and an M.S. in psychology. There are four major concentrations within the clinical Ph.D. program, focusing on cognitive behavioral psychology, forensic psychology, health psychology, and neuropsychology. Interdisciplinary research is common, with collaborations not only within the College, but with other academic units, including the College of Engineering, School of Biomedical Engineering, College of Medicine, School of Public Health, and College of Nursing and Health Professions.

The ***Center for Interdisciplinary Programs*** encompasses one major and four minors. The International Area Studies major is a modern language based interdisciplinary program with specializations in politics, history, language, literature, and culture. The program utilizes faculty members from various departments across the College. This interactive environment is consistent with the program's interdisciplinary curriculum and focus. Four interdisciplinary minor programs provide opportunities to expand student learning and faculty research. Africana Studies offers an interdisciplinary examination of the experience of people of African descent in the United States, the Caribbean, and Latin America. Greek Studies captures the essence of the ancient culture while demonstrating the relevance of Hellenic principles to today's world. Judaic Studies explores the Jewish experience through time and from a variety of standpoints. Women's Studies explores how gender interacts with race, class, ethnicity, age, and sexual orientation to shape human consciousness and to determine the social, political, and cultural organization of society.

The ***English Language Center (ELC)*** utilizes faculty members from various departments across the College. All instructors in the program hold master's degrees in ESL, linguistics, or other related fields. Drexel's ELC is accredited through the Commission on English Language Program Accreditation (CEA) through July 2017 and agrees to uphold the CEA Standards for English Language Programs and Institutions. Year round, the Center offers an 11- and 6-week Intensive English Program for beginning to advanced-level students, including pre-academic coursework and opportunities for university study. The ELC also offers a Global Business English Pre-MBA program (GLOBE) for university graduates and professionals, in addition to two conditional admission programs: Drexel International Gateway, and University Preparation Summer

Program (UPREP), a six-week program. The Center also has partnership agreements for Bridge Programs with other institutions.

The College has two other centers: the ***Center for Public Policy*** and the ***Center for Mobilities Research and Policy***. The Center for Public Policy is a combined research and academic center that houses the M.S. in Public Policy and collaborates with all units within the College as well as with the Lebow College of Business and the School of Public Health. The Center for Mobilities Research and Policy fosters innovative collaborations between the arts and social sciences, engineering, business, law, media and design, as well as public health. Mobilities research entails interdisciplinary study of the infrastructures, flows, and policies that create the contexts for contemporary mobility (and immobility), including attention to mobility rights, mobility justice, and the new social inequalities being produced by the uneven distribution of "mobility capital."