

COLLEGE OF HUMAN SCIENCE AND SERVICES
ACADEMIC PLAN, 2009 – 2014
Adopted November 18, 2009

It is the mission of the College of Human Science and Services to enhance human potential by creating a culture of achievement for undergraduate and graduate students. Our faculty are teacher/scholars who engage in collaborative interdisciplinary learning and research on contemporary global human issues.

Goal 1: Create and support excellent academic opportunities for our students

Our aims are to: (1) retain freshman students, (2) deepen engagement with the HSS Living Learning Community, and (3) expand out-of-class student/faculty opportunities for engagement. Students tell us that they are not aware of what goes on in departments other than their own or in the College in general; they want a means to learn more about social and academic events in the College. We know also that our students seek opportunities to engage in meaningful discussions with faculty members and that class meetings do not adequately meet that need. Finally, students tell us that they need better advising that focuses on long-term planning and a “go to” person if their advisor is not effective.

Objective 1: Create an HSS Sakai Tab

The goal of the HSS Sakai Tab is to enhance communication among students in each of the six departments so they feel connected, regardless of year or major.

Strategy 1: The HSS Sakai Tab will be achieved by creating an HSS Dean’s Office Sakai account whereby the Associate Dean, or designated individual, would be responsible for maintenance and access of the account. Student workers or graduate students can maintain the account as well yet not have access to send announcements.

Action Step: Blaire Gagnon and Associate Dean or designated individual would meet with a member of IT to set up the account.

Strategy 2: The announcements (both social and academic in nature) will include items that are occurring, both College and University-wide, for undergraduates and graduates. Initially, announcements will be sent to students; gradually, the account can be set up for students to add comments about HSS. These notices will appear in the students’ “Announcement” section of Sakai which they will view as soon as they open their account.

Action Step: Chairs will send the announcements, beginning September, 2011, to the Associate Dean or designated individual in language and format that can relate to students.

Strategy 3: The Sakai announcements that relate to academic deadlines such as registration, late add, intent to graduate, and so forth, will also link to the HSS website.

Action Step: The Associate Dean or designated individual will ask our web technologist to ensure that academic-related announcements that are sent are linked to the HSS website.

The Metrics

Indicator 1: The achievement of the goal can be measured by a questionnaire (via Sakai or Survey Monkey) about the effectiveness, relevance, and/or usefulness of the announcements sent via the HSS Sakai account. It is important not to inundate students' accounts with information that they don't deem useful.

Indicator 2: The achievement of this goal can be measured by pre- and post-"hits" to the Sakai announcements and HSS website to view traffic on both sites.

Objective 2: HSS-LLC Barbeque

The goal of the HSS-LCC Barbeque for the students in the Living Learning Community (LLC) located in Butterfield Hall is to engage with our freshman students within the first two weeks of school so they feel connected to each other and can meet faculty and administrators in the College.

Strategy 1: The HSS-LLC barbeque will be organized by members of the task force working with the College's LLC faculty representative and Residential Life to create a time and location for the event. The LLC faculty representative will work with the dean's office to develop and distribute an invitation.

Metrics

Indicator 1: The achievement of the goal can be measured by how many tickets are collected (the R.A.M. will be distributing tickets to students in the Butterfield LLC) to count how many students actually attended the event.

Indicator 2: The achievement of this goal can be measured by an HSS Scavenger Hunt done during the event which can demonstrate that the student understands in which College he/she resides and that there are six departments in their College.

Objective 3: HSS Academic Review Sessions

The purpose of these sessions is three fold: 1) offer freshmen additional advising services; 2) create new opportunities for students and HSS faculty to interact; and 3) create a social and academic experience for students (e.g., You Matter in HSS)

Objective 4: Department Ombud

The purpose of this board is for one faculty member to be the “ombud” and/or point person for his/her department for students, especially freshmen, if they need to talk to about an academic or personal issue. This point person would then handle the issue at the departmental level or elevate to the dean’s office or the appropriate office on campus.

Objective 5: HSS “coffee space” for HSS students and faculty

The purpose of this “coffee space” would be for students and faculty to engage outside of the classroom to discuss academic and/or appropriate non-academic issues or events.

Goal 2: Embed themes of ethics and social justice in all work that we do including in academic experiences for our students

The University of Rhode Island Academic Plan (2010-2014) envisions an innovative, interdisciplinary institution that is connected to the world through productive research and scholarly partnerships (http://www.uri.edu/provost/documents/academic_plan_handbook.pdf). Such an institution “celebrates diversity and complexity, and instills empowerment and social responsibility” (p. vii). Inspired by these principles, The College of Human Science and Services, through the HSS Diversity Committee, is actively engaged in articulating and implementing initiatives that further University-wide goals and objectives related to the creation of culturally competent citizens and an inclusive, empowering, and diverse campus community.

Committee Mission

The College of Human Science and Services Diversity Committee serves as an active forum for the creation of an inclusive, equitable, and socially just educational environment in the college and University community.

Based on this mission, the committee generated five objectives designed to help the committee realize its mission and enhance the Provost’s and College’s diversity aims.

Objective 1: Create space for students and faculty to dialogue and increase awareness around issues of diversity

Strategy 1: Identify faculty and staff interests related to diversity and use this information to invite participants into projects and to initiate discussion within departments

Action Step: Create assessment survey (end of October, 2010)

Action Step: Administer survey (end of November, 2010)

Action Step: Share results with departments (end of fall 2010 semester)

Strategy 2: Create training for faculty and instructors in facilitation of constructive diversity dialogue.

- Action Step:** Develop training (end of July, 2010)
- Action Step:** Send announcement (first week in August, 2010)
- Action Step:** Conduct training (August 26, 2010)
- Action Step:** Follow up contact with participants (Fall semester, 2010)

Strategy 3: Utilize Departmental student clubs/groups to initiate discussions and projects related to issues of equity and diversity.

- Action Step:** Identify student groups (January, 2011)
- Action Step:** Conduct focus groups with students (March – May, 2011)
- Action Step:** Analyze and report findings to the College (June, 2011)

Objective 2: Assess the needs of the college related to diversity and equity among students, staff, and faculty and develop relevant projects that respond to those needs

Strategy 1: Create and administer an online survey to all faculty and staff that assesses perceptions of strengths and needs and identifies faculty and staff scholarship, service, and projects related to diversity.

- Action Step:** Create survey (end of October, 2010)
- Action Step:** Administer survey (end of November, 2010)
- Action Step:** Report results and recommendations to Departments and College (end of fall 2010 semester)

Strategy 2: Access college data related to student access, retention, and excellence and disaggregate statistics based on race and ethnicity.

- Action Step:** Contact Vice Provost, Enrollment Services regarding statistics and data for college (December, 2010)
- Action Step:** Analyze data (January, 2011)
- Action Step:** Report findings and recommendations to the College (February, 2011)

Strategy 3: Utilize departmental student clubs/groups to gain a better understanding of student experiences living and learning on campus related to issues of equity and diversity and to elicit their ideas for change.

- Action Step:** Identify student groups (January, 2011)
- Action Step:** Conduct focus groups with students (March – May, 2011)
- Action Step:** Analyze and report findings to the College (June, 2011)

Objective 3 – Support learning experiences that encourage students, staff, and faculty to understand, respect, and embrace difference and diversity

Strategy 1: Develop and implement diversity training for a pilot group of URI 101 HSS instructors.

- Action Step:** Develop training (end of July, 2010)

Action Step: Send announcement (first week in August, 2010)
Action Step: Conduct training (August 26, 2010)
Action Step: Follow up contact with participants (Fall semester, 2010)

Strategy 2: Assess outcomes for pilot project and develop future training that enhances learning objectives.

Action Step: Follow up contact with participants (Fall semester, 2010)
Action Step: Review findings from follow-up (March, 2011)
Action Step: Design next training based on findings (May, 2011)

Strategy 3: Develop and implement one day of Diversity Week for fall, 2011.

Action Step: Invite CHSS Associate Dean Nancy Fey-Yensan to committee meeting to share her expertise in devising the day (November, 2010)
Action Step: Create specific outline for the day (February, 2011)
Action Step: Gain support from the college faculty, staff, and students using the online survey data (March, 2011)

Objective 4 – Provide support for the college to recruit and retain historically marginalized students in a safe and equitable environment

Strategy 1: Create and administer an online survey to all faculty and staff that assesses perceptions of strengths and needs and identifies faculty and staff scholarship, service, and projects related to diversity.

Action Step: Create survey (end of October)
Action Step: Administer survey (end of November)
Action Step: Report results and recommendations to Departments and College (end of fall 2010 semester)

Strategy 2: Access college data related to student access, retention, and excellence and disaggregate statistics based on race and ethnicity.

Action Step: Contact Vice Provost, Enrollment Services regarding statistics and data for college (December, 2010)
Action Step: Analyze data (January, 2011)
Action Step: Report findings and recommendations to the College (February, 2011)

Objective 5 – Connect with campus-wide initiatives related to developing an inclusive and socially just institution and become a campus leader in advancing issues of diversity and equity

Strategy 1: Create, circulate within college for approval, and disseminate a statement of support for GLBTIQQ initiatives on campus.

Action Step: Write statement in consultation with committee

Action Step: Submit statement for approval at College meeting (November, 2010)

Action Step: Post statement on the Diversity webpage for College after approval (November, 2010)

Strategy 2: Develop and implement one day of Diversity Week for fall, 2011.

Action Step: Invite CHSS Associate Dean Nancy Fey-Yensan to committee meeting to share her expertise in devising the day (November, 2010)

Action Step: Create specific outline for the day (February, 2011)

Action Step: Gain support from the college faculty, staff, and students using the online survey data (March, 2011)

Strategy 3: Contact individuals working on equity and diversity issues in other colleges across campus to share information about initiatives and to open dialogue around collaboration.

Action Step: Obtain list of names from the CHSS Dean and Associate Dean

Action Step: Committee chair and other committee members contact persons from list and report to committee

Action Step: Integrate new ideas into ongoing projects or develop new projects based on new ideas learned from contacts

Action Step: Coordinate with the Equity Council to support mutual goals and reduce duplication of activities.

Strategy 4: Update and improve the webpage to include recent initiatives and to feature college achievements related to issues of equity and diversity.

Action Step: Use information from the online survey to identify achievements and interests in the college

Action Step: Gain permission from persons to post pictures and summary of projects and interests

Action Step: Contact web master for the college to implement changes to the website

Future Directions

As outlined, strategies and actions overlap—working on one goal often facilitates progress on others. The committee has prioritized goals based on available resources and College priorities. We believe that it is important to assess strengths and problem areas to target activities. We also want to be responsive to immediate conditions on campus and to engage in meaningful projects, even though we are still collecting assessment data.

Goal 3: Become the green college on the campus

Objective 1: Infuse green ideas into our teaching

Strategy 1: Host faculty forum to share ideas on teaching green.

Action Step: Dean's office selects facilitator and extends invitations.

Strategy 2: Create Energy Fellows Program of faculty and students to evaluate practices and recommend ways to reduce energy use.

Strategy 3: Annual award (HSS Beach Party) for faculty member teaching greenest.

Action Step: Create criteria; advertise award; solicit nominations and evidence.

Strategy 4: Conduct competition among six College units to be greenest in teaching.

Action Step: establish award for winner (\$2,000 discretionary money); solicit nominations and evidence.

Objective 2: Become the greenest college on campus

Strategy 1: investigate eliminating desk phones in favor of cell phones

Strategy 2: Annual award made to department that uses fewest reams of paper per faculty/lecturer

Strategy 3: Convert all advising from paper to electronic

Objective 3: Become the most electronically sophisticated College on campus

Each unit will be asked to document the number of faculty using Sakai, in particular the tools that are used with a goal of 100% participation. Go Green Task Force will develop and tally a survey to faculty on their use. Results of the survey will be presented at the Annual Beach Party.

Goal 4. Create and enhance opportunities for our students to be fully-participating global citizens

In February 2010 we distributed surveys to 77 faculty members and lecturers on the HSS email list. The data from the 26 returned surveys were summarized and organized by question and theme as related to HSS strategic goals regarding international efforts. The following recommendations flow from these responses. Although the recommendations are intended for the College, applicability for the University at large should be considered as appropriate. Because the responses do not include all HSS faculty, this report should be considered a preliminary attempt to understand what international programming already exists and the nature of faculty opinions about our international efforts.

Objective 1: Provide and support a variety of programs and opportunities for students

Strategy 1: Encourage development of new courses with international or cultural focuses and Discipline Specific International Opportunities / Travel Courses. To facilitate the process, best practices should be recognized and showcased, and professional development workshops should be offered. Funding can be provided for group lunches and other related activities involving international students.

Strategy 2: Explore J-term opportunities and/or support flexibility within the semester structure to support Discipline Specific International Opportunities / Travel Courses.

Strategy 3: Study of foreign languages should be encouraged but not required. Encourage undergraduate students through early advising to take advantage of opportunities to learn second language(s). For graduate students there appear to be too many barriers to requiring a second language with current curricula.

Strategy 4: Study Abroad office opportunities should be recognized. Explore options for utilizing the Study Abroad office more extensively to facilitate these programs.

Strategy 5: The international theme should be integrated into all levels of student experience; e.g., Grand Challenge Course offerings, undergraduate and graduate level opportunities, discipline specific opportunities, and interdisciplinary opportunities.

Strategy 6: Encourage faculty to more actively engage international students at URI in their teaching and research. These students can be considered as unique resources and provided with unique opportunities. They can be invited to classes as guest speakers and discussion leaders. They can be consulted when international travels and initiatives are planned and implemented.

Strategy 7: Encourage faculty to incorporate international and cultural perspectives into courses where appropriate.

Objective 2: Create an environment for international efforts

Strategy 1: Form a standing Global Initiatives Committee to serve as an advisory body to facilitate global initiatives at the college level.

Strategy 2: Facilitate the development of an Interest Group that might include posted resources, news, etc. Develop some sort of online access to “Global Happenings in HSS” (e.g., SAKAI).

Strategy 3: Develop a funding stream perhaps through a donation mechanism (publicized to alum and others) like a “Global Initiative Fund” within the Foundation.

Strategy 4: Utilize information from the completed survey and seek additional input from non-represented faculty members.

Objective 3: Provide moral, institutional and financial support for faculty who are involved in the start up and implementation of global initiatives

Strategy 1: Make evident that the Tenure and Promotion process recognizes faculty efforts in promoting international programs and activities.

Strategy 2: Provide adequate seed money for discipline-specific International Opportunities / Travel Course development and ongoing budget resources could be provided for Discipline Specific International Opportunities / Travel Courses.

Strategy 3: Develop a mechanism for monitoring and measuring outcomes and benefits of international programs and efforts. At the end of the academic year, courses with international perspectives, teaching and research activities involving international students and Discipline Specific International Opportunities / Travel Courses could be evaluated and recognized. Outstanding faculty members and programs can be recognized at the college meeting.

Objective 4: Encourage faculty to engage in international programs and opportunities

Strategy 1: Faculty should be encouraged to explore opportunities to enhance existing and develop new international research and teaching collaborations.

Strategy 2: Interdisciplinary efforts at international level could be explored, encouraged, and facilitated.

Strategy 3: International university-to-university collaborations for faculty collaboration, research, and student opportunities should be encouraged. Existing relationships should be further developed and expanded.

Strategy 4: Develop reciprocity university relationships and partner with international institutions through hosting visitors and involving students by hosting student/faculty visitors.

Goal 5: Enhance research productivity

The College of Human Science and Services is diverse in its research areas, faculty responsibilities, research goals, and standards. Thus, the Objectives and Action Steps listed below are general in nature, but we chose those that would likely have the greatest impact on future research productivity and scholarship across the College. These Objectives and Action Steps should be applied to each department as appropriate given each department's disparate resources and other non-research goals.

Objective 1: Promote an improved culture of scholarship in HSS

Strategy 1: Tie resource allocation to scholarship

Action Step: The future grants from the Dean's office (e.g. \$5K seed grants) should be awarded to those with the most potential for securing future external grants

Action Step: Track those who have already received internal seed grants from various URI funding sources and the outcomes achieved from these grants.

Strategy 2: Provide a 3/2 teaching load for post-tenure faculty who remain the most productive in research without negatively impacting FTE interpretation. This could be assessed college-wide or intra-departmentally.

Strategy 3: Given the high teaching load for HSS faculty, tuition dollars generated should be tied to supporting research infrastructure (e.g. lab equipment, graduate research assistants, support staff).

Strategy 4: Formalize a “buy-out” mechanism for teaching load, whereby faculty members submit a detailed and attainable plan to 1) publish peer-reviewed manuscripts for submission to high-impact journals, 2) write and submit a strong external grant proposal, and/or 3) conduct a research study that will yield pilot data to be used in (1) or (2).

Objective 2: Promote a publication standard for all tenure-track faculty that averages four publications (peer reviewed journal articles & book chapters) every three years. Though challenging to enforce especially among tenured faculty, this should be strongly encouraged by all department chairs

- This may vary based on the journal impact factor, but clearly more publications in peer-reviewed journals will substantially increase the chances for future funding.
- Department chairs need to be pro-active in encouraging this important objective.

Objective 3: Increase submission of fundable external grant proposals

Strategy 1: Fund or partially fund a statistics/biostatistics faculty member who can work as a co-investigator or consultant on future research projects.

Strategy 2: Better identify research-funding announcements and match them to faculty. This could be accomplished by having a research-specific liaison that works with both the HSS faculty and research office to streamline this process.

Strategy 3: Increase the number of faculty members who engage in interdisciplinary research projects. This will increase the likelihood of publications and future grant funding.

Strategy 4: Encourage faculty to develop productive working relationships with those outside URI who have the potential to increase funding opportunities by supporting travel, or by bringing other faculty here.

Strategy 5: Train all college faculty members on Cayuse and research ethics modules by the end of the academic year '11. This will help streamline the grant submission process and IRB approval of research projects.

Objective 4: Increase undergraduate and graduate student involvement in research

Strategy 1: Institute research grant program specifically for student training with an emphasis on interdisciplinary research projects. This would be seed money for proposed projects with strong promise for both student training and pilot data for securing external grant funding.

Strategy 2: Every department should host or co-host an undergraduate or graduate/undergraduate research day on an annual basis for students to present their work. This would also help satisfy primary aim 2, objective 1.

Strategy 3: Because student involvement in research is labor intensive and will require a significant time commitment, any future research funding opportunities from HSS should give priority to projects that have a student training component. Additionally, teaching loads should be decreased for those who do have exceptional student involvement.

Objective 5: Increase the proportion of the faculty who are highly productive researchers

Strategy 1: For faculty who have not been successful but who wish to change their trajectory, establish an in-house sabbatical program to allow motivated faculty members to “retool” in someone else’s laboratory/program. This should be a formalized process with similar stipulations whereby faculty members submit a detailed and attainable plan, with specified short- and long-term objectives.

Strategy 2: For future hires, increase the preference for faculty members who already have strong potential for future research productivity. This includes a publication history (albeit brief for assistant professor hires), post-doctoral training where appropriate, manuscripts in-progress, clear and attainable future research objectives. Preference should also be given to those with portable grants (i.e. soft money).

Objective 6: Increase the visibility of research done in HSS

Strategy 1: Every department should conspicuously display recent publications, current research project information, and other research-related products (e.g. meeting posters) in order to foster a climate of productivity and valuing research accomplishments.

Strategy 2: Create a semi-annual HSS research newsletter highlighting the work. The HSS newsletter should highlight 1) recent publications and books/book chapters, 2) internal and external grants secured, 3) grant proposals submitted, 4) abstracts/presentations, and 5) current research – especially interdisciplinary research projects and student involvement in research.

- This newsletter should be 1) posted on HSS departmental web pages and 2) sent to alumni, outreach partners, administration, faculty and staff.

Strategy 3: Allow for a formal acknowledgement of the contribution and importance of co-investigators from HSS to other non-HSS externally funded grants. This should be tracked by the research office and should result in an impact on the distribution of overhead funds to HSS.

Objective 7: Document the impact of our research to URI and the general public by the connection between research and outreach

Strategy 1: Make outreach a priority by encouraging faculty to disseminate research findings to the public. This can be accomplished by 1) increasing the number of community-based talks that may have a significant appeal to a segment of the public, 2) have any outreach effort documented and publicized to increase exposure

- Outreach builds a community-centric institution to disseminate knowledge which will promote the number of advocate/partners who may help support our research.
- Because HSS usually involves human-based research, it is critical that HSS faculty have a strong working relationship with community partners to assist with recruitment of research subjects, for example.
- Mid-career faculty should use outreach as a first step to reconnect with the community.

Strategy 2: Collect systematic data on the number and types of research activities with an outreach focus that are underway in HSS in each department.

Strategy 3: Promote grant opportunities and funding sources that have an outreach component to fund research projects as well as outreach endeavors.