Introduction

Rider University’s Strategic Plan projects a vision for the University as a learner-centered institution dedicated to the education of the whole student for citizenship, life, and career success in a diverse, changing, and interdependent world.

The College of Liberal Arts, Education, and Sciences’ Five-Year Strategic Plan aligns its goals with those of the University. Each of the four goals (or vision elements) is divided into three strategic directions, each with an action. The Strategic Plan includes the implementation of the actions, benchmarks and timelines; the assignment of responsibilities and the resources necessary to complete each action; and, the assessment of the actions.

Preeminent among our values is our commitment to academic excellence and student-centeredness.

As with any plan, it is important to know how we are doing, to learn what is working and what is not, so that we can develop strategies and effective steps to improve our results. It also is important to recognize that academic excellence, program development and enrollment management are complementary and interdependent efforts, which should be mutually supportive. Colleges’ goals evolve over time, and programs and curricula should not be static. We must regularly review our program offerings to be certain that they remain not only consistent with our strategic vision, but also attractive to prospective students and relevant to their career goals.

College Mission

The College of Liberal Arts, Education, and Sciences is the academic heart of Rider University. It is central to the University’s mission to educate “talented students for citizenship, life, and career success in a diverse and interdependent world.”

Like other liberal arts colleges, the College of Liberal Arts, Education, and Sciences cultivates intellectual creativity, maturity, reflection, and autonomy. It aims to develop academic breadth and specialized knowledge, an understanding of our democratic heritage and the ability to look towards the future, and an appreciation of the diversity of our society and our world. It also fosters ethical and effective communication and technological skills.
Rider University’s College of Liberal Arts, Education, and Sciences is distinct in a number of ways. Its faculty provide individual attention to students throughout a college experience that encourages the free exploration of ideas and the examination of difficult problems. Students can participate in expert and deep academic research, collaborate with faculty and other students, engage in interdisciplinary programs of study, and explore the world beyond the boundaries of our nation. The College inspires students to appreciate the value of a liberal education while remaining aware of graduate school and employment opportunities. It also cultivates a desire for, interest in, and enjoyment of, life-long learning in the arts and sciences.

Goals
(Vision elements)

By providing a disciplinary and interdisciplinary student-centered education, we prepare our students to:

1. think critically and creatively in a mature, sustained, and reflective manner, to develop a commitment to life-long learning;
2. understand the historical, cultural, and global interconnections of our world;
3. appreciate diversity in society;
4. use technologies ethically and effectively.

The goals for the CLAES match the strategic directions of the University.

Strategic Direction 1: “Strengthening student-centeredness” aligns with our four Goals and the Student-centered actions outlined below.

Strategic Direction 2: “Advancing academic achievements and leadership skills” aligns with our four Goals and the Curriculum-centered and Faculty-centered actions outlined below.

Strategic Direction 3: “Enhancing connections among the liberal arts, education for the profession and the community” aligns with our four Goals and the Curriculum-centered and Student-centered actions outlined below.

Strategic Direction 4: “Fostering diverse perspectives and social responsibility” aligns with our Goals 2 and 3 and many of our Curriculum-centered and Student-centered actions outlined below.

Strategic Direction 5: “Building resources for the future” aligns with our four Goals and our actions outlined below.
Actions

We have created fifteen actions and, although they are interlinked, we have divided them into three main areas: **Curriculum-Centered**, **Student-Centered**, and **Faculty-Centered**.

**Figure 1. Graphic organization of the fifteen actions**

1. **Curriculum-Centered**
   a. Examine the degree to which the present core curriculum aligns with CLAES vision elements
   b. Develop criteria for the assessment of student learning in the core curriculum
   c. Design a program of coherent multi-year curricular and co-curricular experiences for all students
   d. Increase experiential learning opportunities in local, regional, national, and international arenas
e. Explore the development of new undergraduate and graduate courses of study aligned with the College and University visions, which fit with University Enrollment goals and which hold the promise of increasing net University revenues

f. Provide initiatives for “greening” our college

2. **Student-Centered**
   a. Recruit high quality students by working closely with Enrollment Management
   b. Develop strategies to include student voices in college planning and actions
   c. Enhance post-graduate success by working closely with Student Affairs to develop additional opportunities for career preparation
   d. Increase opportunities for students working on interdisciplinary teams and service projects
   e. Foster an appreciation and an understanding of diversity and the importance of social responsibility

3. **Faculty-Centered**
   a. Foster a rich and active intellectual community in the College
   b. Maximize available faculty resources for the benefit of students with particular emphasis on reducing the reliance on adjunct teaching in introductory courses
   c. Provide meaningful faculty development opportunities focused on teaching critical and creative thinking and disciplinary and interdisciplinary teaching strategies
   d. Actively participate in decision-making to improve teaching facilities and the general quality of life on our campus

**Actions 1: Curriculum-Centered**

a) Examine the degree to which the present core curriculum aligns with CLAES vision elements.

   **Procedure:** A Task Force will be created to evaluate the degree to which the present core curriculum aligns with the vision elements
   **Benchmark:** A report from the Task Force with recommendations for any needed changes
   **Suggested Timeline:** Task Force work will begin in Fall 2010; recommendations to be submitted in Fall 2011; implementation will begin in 2012
   **Responsibility:** Dean, the Task Force, Strategic Planning Committee, LASCAP
   **Resources:** Minimal operating budget
   **Assessment:** Review implementation after 2 years; pre-post analysis; other assessment instruments

b) Develop criteria for the assessment of student learning in the core curriculum. Review how the TFLO objectives align with the student-learning objectives and competencies of the core, as an integral part of the academic outcomes assessment program. Use these objectives to evaluate student achievement, to evaluate alignment with vision elements, and to guide academic advising and curricular assessment and revision.

   **Procedure:** A Task Force will be created to develop criteria for the assessment of student learning in the core curriculum as defined by the vision elements
c) Design a program of coherent multi-year curricular (vertical gradient) and co-curricular (horizontal gradient) experiences for all students, which will connect discipline-based intellectual competencies specific to their majors with interdisciplinary breadth, instilling enthusiasm for integrating learning as a whole.

   Procedure: A Task Force will be created to develop vertical multi-year curricular and horizontal co-curricular experiences for all CLAES students
   Benchmark: A report from the Task Force
   Suggested Timeline: Task Force work will begin in Spring 2011; recommendations to be submitted in Spring 2012; implementation will begin in 2013
   Responsibility: Dean, Task Force, Strategic Planning Committee, academic departments, LASCAP
   Resources: Minimal operating budget
   Assessment: Development of assessment rubrics to evaluate how well the new cohort of students performs in comparison with prior students; pre-post assessment; graduation and retention rates; placement after graduation

   d) Increase experiential learning opportunities in local, regional, national, and international arenas, applying course content to real world experiences.

   Procedure: Involve the Liberal Arts, Education, and Science Advisory Boards in identifying and creating opportunities for students, and in securing funding for such opportunities
   Benchmark: First cohort of students obtaining experiential learning opportunities through broad participation, recommendations and support
   Suggested Timeline: Meetings with boards will begin in Fall 2010; implementation in 2011-12
   Responsibility: Deans, Assistant Deans, Advisory Boards
   Resources: Variable; mostly financed by Advisory Board members
   Assessment: Increase the number of students taking advantage of experiential learning opportunities

   Procedure: Create a budget line in the College to support experiential learning opportunities for students outside those from the Advisory Boards
   Benchmark: FY 12 Budget cycle
   Suggested Timeline: Implementation to begin in Fall 2011
   Responsibility: Dean
   Resources: Moderate, probably $5000/year
   Assessment: Increase the number of students doing experiential learning opportunities

   Procedure: Have Internship Directors meet once a semester to share information and increase opportunities for students
   Benchmark: First meeting
   Suggested Timeline: First meeting in Spring 2011; continuous
   Responsibility: Internship Coordinators in the College
   Resources: No new resources
Assessment: Increase number of students doing internships across all disciplines
Procedure: Coordinate with the Center for International Education to increase Study Abroad opportunities for all our students
Benchmark: First meeting with Director of Center for International Education to target new Study Abroad opportunities for all our students
Suggested Timeline: First meeting in Fall 2010; Implementation to begin in 2011-12; continuous
Responsibility: Dean and Director of the Center for International Education
Resources: No new resources, unless minimal budget is needed to increase student participation
Assessment: Increase number of students studying abroad

e) Explore the development of new undergraduate and graduate courses of study aligned with the College and University visions, which fit within University enrollment goals and which hold the promise of increasing net University revenue, in particular new academic programs that connect communications and business, science and business, education and sciences, and liberal arts, and sciences.

Procedure: Request from each department a five-year outlook on possible new programs that match market and student demand, which fit within University enrollment goals and which hold the promise of increasing net University revenue. This report should include a preliminary estimate of resources needed
Benchmark: Submission of report
Suggested Timeline: Departmental reports to Dean by March 2011
Responsibility: Deans, Department chairpersons, Provost, Vice President of Enrollment Management
Resources: Moderate to significant, depending on new program implementation
Assessment: Implementation of new programs and their annual assessment according to University policies

f) Provide initiatives for “greening” our college.

Procedure: Provide support for the Sustainability Across the Curriculum (SAC) initiatives
Benchmark: CLAES faculty participation in SAC initiatives
Suggested Timeline: Fall 2011
Responsibility: Deans, Assistant Deans, Department Chairpersons, Director of SAC
Resources: Moderate, to support SAC initiatives in courses
Assessment: Increase of SAC initiatives in courses in CLAES

Procedure: Create an interdisciplinary program in Sustainability
Benchmark: Proposal submission Fall 2010
Suggested Timeline: Fall 2011
Responsibility: Deans, Faculty, Provost
Resources: Moderate
Assessment: Student enrollment in the programs and increased enrollment over time

Procedure: Identify and effect ways to reduce the foot-print of the College
Benchmark: Adaptation of the Energy and Sustainability Master Plan to the College
Suggested Timeline: Implementation Fall 2010; continuous
Responsibility: Deans, Assistant Deans, Department Chairperson, faculty, staff and students coordinating with the Energy and Sustainability Steering Committee
Resources: Cost-saving initiative
Assessment: Energy cost savings, environmental and health benefits
**Actions 2: Student-Centered**

a) Recruit and retain high quality students by working closely with Enrollment Management

- **Procedure:** Meetings between Deans, Assistant Deans, Vice President of Enrollment Management and Admission Directors to develop strategies for more robust recruitment of high quality students
- **Benchmark:** First meeting in Fall 2010
- **Suggested Timeline:** Implementation Fall 2011; continuous
- **Responsibility:** Deans, Assistant Deans, Department chairpersons, Vice President of Enrollment Management, and Admission Directors
- **Resources:** No new resources
- **Assessment:** Increase the recruitment of highest quality students

b) Develop strategies to include student voices in college planning and actions

- **Procedure:** Actively recruit students recommended by departments and student organizations to be part of existing and new task forces and committees
- **Benchmark:** First recruitment and inclusion of students in current and new task forces and committees
- **Suggested Timeline:** Implementation Spring 2011; continuous
- **Responsibility:** Department Chairpersons, student organizations, future and current Task Forces chairs
- **Resources:** No new resources
- **Assessment:** Increase student participation in task forces and committees

c) Enhance post-graduate success by working closely with Student Affairs to develop additional opportunities for career preparation, career advising, co-curricular projects and other areas of accomplishment.

- **Procedure:** Meetings between Deans, Assistant Deans, Dean of Students and the Director of Career Services to develop strategies for the enhancement of post-graduate success for all our students
- **Benchmark:** First meeting in Spring 2011
- **Suggested Timeline:** Implementation Fall 2011; continuous
- **Responsibility:** Deans, Assistant Deans, Dean of Students and Director of Career Services
- **Resources:** No new resources
- **Assessment:** Increase the number of students placed in jobs or in graduate school

d) Increase opportunities for students working on interdisciplinary teams and service projects, strengthening connections between the academic departments, businesses, corporations, non-profit organizations, and government agencies in the region.
Procedure: Increase funding opportunities through grants, industry and business partners, and foundation funds for research by interdisciplinary teams of students
Benchmark: First funding opportunity
Suggested Timeline: Implementation Fall 2011; continuous
Responsibility: Deans, Assistant Deans, Faculty, Director of Corporate and Foundation Relations
Resources: No new resources; funding obtained through grants, foundations, industry, and business
Assessment: Increase the number of students involved in interdisciplinary research

Procedure: Increase opportunities for service projects, community projects, and co-curricular activities, working closely with Students Affairs (Dean of Students and Director of Career Services)
Benchmark: First student placements in service projects, community projects, and/or co-curricular activities
Suggested Timeline: Implementation Fall 2011; continuous
Responsibility: Deans, Assistant Deans, Faculty, Dean of Students and Director of Career Services
Resources: No new resources
Assessment: Increase the number of students taking advantage of service projects, community projects, and co-curricular activities

**e)** Foster an appreciation and understanding of diversity and the importance of social responsibility, supporting Study-Abroad opportunities, addressing the needs of diverse populations, and increasing multi-cultural approaches for students.

Procedure: Increase recruitment of underrepresented faculty and students
Benchmark: New faculty hires and new incoming or transfer students from underrepresented groups
Suggested Timeline: Begin implementation in Fall 2011
Responsibility: Deans, Assistant Deans, Department chairpersons, Vice President of Enrollment Management, Affirmative Action Officer
Resources: No new resources
Assessment: Increase recruitment of underrepresented faculty and increase recruitment of underrepresented students

Procedure: Increase service learning opportunities particularly in the areas of diversity and disability, working closely with Student Affairs
Benchmark: First student placement
Suggested Timeline: Begin implementation in Fall 2011
Responsibility: Deans, Assistant Deans, Faculty, Dean of Students
Resources: No new resources
Assessment: Increase the number of students engaged in service learning opportunities in areas of diversity and disability

**f) Improve discipline-based advising and career-oriented mentoring by providing training for faculty and working closely with the Academic Success Center and Career Services.**

Procedure: Create a training program for new faculty advisers
Benchmark: First seminar of the new training program
Suggested Timeline: Begin implementation in Fall 2011
Responsibility: Deans, Assistant Deans, Academic Coordinators
Resources: Minimal resources
Assessment: Increase the number of students successfully completing degrees and achieving career goals

Procedure: Improve department-based advisement through chairpersons working in conjunction with the Dean of Students
Benchmark: First workshop
Suggested Timeline: Begin implementation in Fall 2011
Responsibility: Department chairpersons, Dean of Students, Academic Success Center
Resources: No new resources
Assessment: Increase the number of students successfully completing degrees and achieving career goals

Procedure: Send a team to the NACADA Summer Institute to develop a proposal to improve advising in the College
Benchmark: Report from team that attended the NACADA Summer Institute
Suggested Timeline: Fall 2010
Responsibility: Deans, Dean of Students, Academic Coordinators, faculty involved
Resources: Moderate resources to cover registration, hotel, and transportation
Assessment: Improvement in advising after the proposal from the NACADA team has been implemented

Procedure: Develop career-oriented mentoring programs for students, working closely with Career Services
Benchmark: First workshop
Suggested Timeline: Task Force work will begin in Fall 2010; recommendations to be submitted in Fall 2011; implementation will begin in 2012
Responsibility: Deans, Academic Coordinators, Director of Career Services
Resources: Minimal resources
Assessment: Improvement in the level of satisfaction of recently graduated alumni with respect to their career options and opportunities

Actions 3: Faculty-Centered

a) Foster a rich and active intellectual community in the College, promoting the excellence and distinctiveness of our College.

Procedure: Create a Task Force to propose activities to improve the intellectual climate of the College
Benchmark: A report from the Task Force
Suggested Timeline: Task Force work will begin in Fall 2010; recommendations to be submitted in Fall 2011; implementation will begin in 2012
Responsibility: Task Force, Deans, Strategic Planning Committee
Resources: Minimal resources
Assessment: Increase faculty and student attendance at intellectual, academically-oriented activities

b) Maximize available faculty resources for the benefit of students, with particular emphasis on reducing the reliance on adjunct teaching in introductory courses, so students has the benefit of interacting with full-time faculty early on.
c) Provide meaningful and creative faculty development opportunities focused on teaching critical and creative thinking and on disciplinary and interdisciplinary teaching strategies, working collaborative with CLAES faculty.

Procedure: Generate a list of CLAES faculty development needs and interests, to be discussed with the Director of Teaching and Learning Center
Benchmark: CLAES faculty participation in new TLC activities
Suggested Timeline: Spring 2011
Responsibility: Deans, interested faculty, Director of TLC
Resources: No new resources
Assessment: Increase number of faculty development workshops addressing critical and creative thinking

Procedure: Create a series of critical-pedagogy seminars for faculty
Benchmark: First seminar
Suggested Timeline: Fall 2011
Responsibility: Deans, interested Department chairpersons, interested faculty, Bridge Director
Resources: Moderate
Assessment: Improve effectiveness among faculty regarding their teaching and learning strategies

Procedure: Create a series of interdisciplinary teaching workshops for faculty
Benchmark: First seminar
Suggested Timeline: Fall 2011
Responsibility: Deans, interested Department chairpersons, interested faculty, Bridge Director
Resources: Moderate
Assessment: Improve effectiveness among faculty regarding their interdisciplinary teaching strategies

d) Actively participate in decision-making to improve teaching facilities and the general quality of life on our campus.

Procedure: Improve communication between the Dean’s office and Facilities by establishing monthly meetings between the Fine Arts, Sciences, and Memorial Building Coordinators, and the Director of Facilities
Benchmark: First meetings
Suggested Timeline: Fall 2010; continuous
Responsibility: Assistant Deans, Director of Facilities
Resources: No new resources
Assessment: Increase flow of communication and effective implementation of facilities issues

Procedure: Create a flow of communication between the Dean and Department Chairpersons regarding issues approved by the Facilities Monitoring Committee (FMC)
Benchmark: First communication e-mail
Suggested Timeline: Fall 2010
Responsibility: Dean
Resources: No new resources
Assessment: Increase flow of communication and effective understanding of facilities priorities within the College