CAS Strategic Plan 2010
Narrative Summary

The overarching focus of the College of Arts and Sciences 2010 Strategic Plan is Experiential Learning. The Strategic Planning Committee and the Dean envisage this focus as capturing an essential element of what the College's unique contribution to SIUE will appropriately be in the coming years.

The Committee then identified several general areas that fall under the umbrella of experiential learning, as well as various initiatives and actions that might support the focus. The general areas within the Strategic Plan that were delineated are an innovative interdisciplinary curriculum, taking students to the world and bringing the world to our students, faculty-student engagement, hands-on learning, intellectual enrichment, raising our College profile, and improving physical and financial assets.

The Committee noted that the initiatives and actions discussed in this narrative are by no means exhaustive of the possibilities, but provide underline examples only. In addition, not all departments would likely be active in all areas and each would be expected to make their own unique contribution within the general framework of the strategic plan. Additional ideas and innovations generated from departments would be welcomed, and could be embraced within the plan. Thus, the plan is designed to be flexible and dynamic in nature.

The format of the final strategic plan that will be distributed is envisaged to be high-impact and graphic intensive *(see draft concept document provided)*. There is no plan to produce a lengthy verbal document that would likely to be boring, uninviting, and include unnecessary detail that would impose limitations rather than enabling innovative ways of fulfilling our strategic goals.

Experiential Learning and the CAS Mission

The new CAS mission presented in this draft is kept deliberately simple, and is:

> *A CAS education is a journey of intellectual transformation in which*
> *students explore diversity of ideas, experiences, and people*

Fulfillment of the mission is through experiential learning in its broadest and most holistic sense. The following general areas, and related action examples (which can often be envisaged to fit in multiple areas) that support the experiential learning focus, are presented in the sections that follow. We invite additional ideas to fit into this framework.

Experiential Learning - An Innovative Interdisciplinary Curriculum

An innovative and interdisciplinary curriculum is essential to deliver an education that is relevant to students' careers and life plans. Connecting learning to experience through the curriculum is

the goal of initiatives relating to IS courses, new programs, faculty expertise, flexible options for minors, and experiential teaching that are included in this section.

IS courses

There would be focus within the College on stimulating the development and delivery of more needed IS courses. Plans in this regard would be linked to the Lincoln Plan implementation.

Action examples:
- An 'IS hour' where people can meet and talk
- Thoughtful discussion and recognition of IS teaching in annual review and P&T documents
- An IS coordinator to assist in getting more departments involved and developing faculty partnerships

New Programs

The College should explore the possibility of selected interdisciplinary PhDs. While competing with other PhDs already in Illinois is not allowable, there may be support for a strong proposal. It takes years to get a PhD program approved and running, so the College should not let resource questions prevent a strong request from being developed.

In addition to PhDs there may be options for additional Masters and undergraduate programs. In general, applied degrees may be a good option and support the focus on experiential learning. While student demand and available resources are fundamental considerations, the College should be entrepreneurial and proactive in exploring the possibilities and assessing the current curricular needs of students.

Action examples:
- Form a working group to explore the possibilities of interdisciplinary PhDs.
- Engage in departmental discussions about possible new programs. Examples already mentioned include International Studies, Experimental Theater, Costume Design, and Forensics. Of course, these examples reflect the make-up of the Committee and other possibilities deserved to be fully explored.

Faculty Expertise

Faculty are our greatest academic resource within the College and their expertise should be recognized and utilized as fully as possible.

Action examples:
- Specialized software will assist in structuring and accessing information about our faculty resource pool
- Publicize the achievements of faculty in as many ways as possible

Flexible Minor Options

Traditional rigidly structured minors within a discipline do not always support the needs of students, and minors may be selected somewhat arbitrarily based on classes taken rather than academic or career interests. More flexibility in the design of minors may better support the goals of students.

Action examples:
- Consider customized minors tailored to the goals of the individual student as an alternative to a rigidly structured minor in the discipline
- Make existing interdisciplinary minors more visible through web sites, brochures, etc
- Encourage the development of additional interdisciplinary minors, that support the academic interests of students and faculty, such as Middle East Studies

Experiential Teaching

Experiential teaching and learning is at the heart of the strategic plan and involves a 'hands-on' approach. Learning experiences provided may be similar to internships but are internal within SIUE. Experiential learning may also be supported by the addition of courses or course modules that fill current educational needs in a rapidly changing world.

Action examples:
- Encourage involvement in the Undergraduate Research and Creative Activities (URCA) program
- Seek ways to recognize and support faculty effort working with students
- Seek to add courses that support current needs such as Arabic language courses
- Utilize the University Museum collection to support experiential teaching and learning

Experiential Learning - Taking Students to the World and Bringing the World to our Students

Expanding the horizons of students in multifaceted way is the goal of initiatives relating to student study abroad, overseas student, travel, enhancing the presence of international students at SIUE, visiting scholars and artists, a diverse faculty, Arts and Issues, student travel, faculty exchange and travel, and service learning.

Study Abroad and Overseas Student Trips

Study abroad and student trips overseas, that have an academic focus, are often life-changing experiences for students. They provide rich opportunities for learning that cannot be delivered in any other way. Providing as many students as possible with the opportunity to have some kind of overseas experience is particularly valuable to our SIUE students who have frequently not traveled beyond the local region.

Action examples:
- Focus on fund raising with the goal of establishing an endowment to assist students with

costs, and to provide reliable consistent funding
- Explore any possibility of federal funding or funding through grants
- Targeted fund-raising. For example in St. Louis within particular ethnic communities
- Recognize the significant effort by faculty that is involved since many trips come to fruition from the ground up
- Coordinate efforts with the Office of International Programs
- Support project based, related to particular travel plans, funding efforts

International students at SIUE

International students who attend SIUE greatly enrich the learning environment, and bring the world to our students through their unique and varies experiences and culture.

Action examples:
- Focus on the recruitment of undergraduate students since most current international students are at the graduate level
- Explore ways to overcome admission issues such as difficulties reading and understanding international transcripts
- Provide web information in multiple languages

Visiting Scholars and Artists

Visiting scholars and artists also greatly enrich the learning environment both in and outside the classroom.

Action examples:
- Continue with the newly launched CAS 'Visiting Scholar Initiative'
- Explore the possibilities for faculty exchange with places with which we already have connections

Diverse Faculty

A diverse faculty, in the broadest sense possible, and one that mirrors the human variability of the world is an essential component in the structure of the University and College. Thus, attracting and retaining a diverse faculty must be a major goal for CAS.

Action examples:
- We must look for ways to offer incentives, and avoid inadvertently structuring disincentives, in order to maximize our success in attracting individuals who will diversify our faculty
- Our local area and campus climate are pluses that should be fully used during recruitment
- Develop a resource page for search committees; include a list of such things as childcare.
- Coordinate efforts with Assistant Provost Venessa Brown to fully integrate the resources she provides

- Target potential faculty members in the last year of doctoral program and get the word to individuals
- Attend conferences for minority faculty so we have a presence and make connections

Arts and Issues

The Arts and Issues series is a well-accepted and well-respected series that can be used as a vehicle to support the strategic plans of the College.

Action examples:
- Internationalize offerings in Arts and Issues
- Explore the possible summer offerings in Arts and Issues

Student travel

Student travel to a variety of events and locations within the United States provides invaluable experience to students.

Action examples:
- Continue College support for student travel in coordination with Student Affairs and the Graduate School
- Encourage involvement in the URCA which supports student travel
- Utilize funding through the Office of Assessment that may be available
- Include funding for student travel as a goal within CAS development planning
- Encourage departments to set up a student travel fund to which faculty and staff may contribute

Faculty exchange and travel

Faculty exchange is an option that brings visiting faculty to the College and thus enriches the learning experience. At the same time such an exchange provides our permanent faculty with experience at another institution that they can integrate in their future teaching.

Action examples:
- Cuba initiative to develop formal relationships with Cuban institutions and individuals
- Likewise with the Middle East initiative
- Pursue additional formal relationships with other institutions that may support faculty exchange
- Explore the possibilities for faculty exchange with places we already have connections with
- Coordinate with the SIUC President's Office to see what might be possible through the State Department.
- Work with the Office of International Programs as it reorganizes
- Develop procedures and strategies to facilitate solutions to financial questions that may present barriers to exchange
- Develop procedures and strategies to facilitate solutions to housing and transportation

questions that may present barriers to exchange
- Consider asynchronous exchanges and single semester exchanges that may minimize curricular problems

Service Learning

Service learning that involves student engagement in community projects can have a significant impact on both students and can enhance ties to the community. The opportunities for service learning exist at SIUE but not everyone may be aware of them or incorporate them as options within a course or program.

Action examples:
- Work with the Kimmel Leadership Center on getting information about Service Learning out to faculty
- Recognize faculty involvement in volunteerism as an example to students
- Show case service learning opportunities to faculty and students

Experiential Learning - Faculty-student Engagement

Faculty-student engagement is at the core of university education and has many facets. Actions and initiatives related to faculty-student engagement are grouped into the areas of faculty-student research, faculty-student publications, faculty-student conference presentations, student group problem solving, Senior Assignment, and faculty-student mentoring.

Faculty - student Research

Faculty-student engagement in research is an important opportunity for experiential learning. Such engagement provides the students with an additional strong credential with which to pursue their future academic and career goals.

Action examples:
- Explore connections with foundations that will pay student stipends to support research
- Encourage participation in the new expanded UCRA which has a research assistant category that supports faculty-student research

Faculty-student Publications

Faculty-student publications, as a product of collaborative research, are an indication that experiential learning is occurring at a high level.

Action examples:
- Continue to support, recognize, and publicize existing faculty-student publications
- Launch and run a CAS peer-reviewed online journal for students and faculty
- Publish senior projects online

Faculty-student Conference Presentations

As with faculty-student publications, faculty-student conference presentations represent an important indication that experiential learning is occurring at a high level.

Action examples:
- Explore opportunities to host additional undergraduate conferences
- Encourage participation in the Senior Assignment Showcase
- Encourage attendance of the Senior Assignment Showcase
- Consider developing awards for top students to present at conferences
- Encourage continued student participation in the CAS Colloquium
- Continue to support student travel to present at conferences

Student Group Problem Solving

Student work in groups, in collaboration with faculty, focused on problem-solving projects provides hands-on experiences that simulate 'real-world' team project work.

Action examples:
- Encourage departments to think creatively about such group project possibilities
- Explore the possibilities of interdisciplinary work applied within a group project

Senior Assignment

Senior Assignment is a well-established and well-respected capstone experience required of all students. Reinvigorating and refining the senior assignment supports the focus on experiential learning within the CAS strategic plan.

Action examples:
- Ask departments to evaluate and refine their Senior Assignment on a regular basis as part of their assessment efforts
- Make sure that Senior Assessment is a true capstone experience that involves significant faculty-student interaction
- Encourage departments to apply for available funding to support improvement in Senior Assignment

Faculty-student Mentoring

With the centralizing of student advising faculty will no longer be asked to register students for classes, do graduation checks, etc. However, while student retention and success is impacted by high-quality and consistent advising is also important that faculty and students develop mentoring relationships.

Action examples:
- Ask each department to develop plans to engage all faculty in faculty-student mentoring

- Include expectations for faculty-student mentoring activities in evaluation documents

<u>Experiential Learning - Hands-on Learning</u>

Hands-on learning is the quintessential form of experiential learning and many opportunities do already exist within the College. However, a focus on experiential learning requires that we re-invigorate and broaden hands-on learning opportunities. Initiatives relating to hands-on learning include field experiences, internships, and laboratory experiences.

Field Experiences

Field experiences, which provide student opportunities for data collection and other research related activities, can provide meaningful hands-on learning across a broad range of disciplines.

Action examples:
- Bio-blitz annual event; 24 hour biological observation inventory in a park, that is open to the public and in which students participate
- Explore the possibilities for similar events in other fields
- Hands-on Day when a particular department has visible events in the campus quadrangle or other high-visibility location
- Improv theater events that are then posted on YouTube
- Continue existing programs such as Cougars Volunteering for Science, a road show for local schools
- Support summer course offers with field work components

Internships

Internships provide students with opportunities to gain experience in their field of study while working toward their degree. These real-world work experiences provide a tremendous benefit to both students and employers. Students can explore their career path prior to graduation, while employers make contact with talented future employees.

Action examples:
- Work with the Career Development Center in identifying internship opportunities
- Encourage departments to be active is seeking out internship opportunities and placing students in them

Laboratory and Workshop Experiences

Laboratory experiences are a traditional part of education within the sciences and the value they bring to the overall educational experience of students is widely accepted. However, such laboratory experiences are not limited to the traditional sciences and there is great potential for growth in this type of hands-on experience.

Action examples:
- Link the addition of laboratory options to the implementation of the Lincoln Plan
- Recognize a broad definition of 'laboratory experience' such as those within social sciences and the arts

- Utilize the University Museum collection to support hands-on learning

Experiential Learning - Intellectual Enrichment

As noted in the mission statement a CAS education is envisaged to be a journey of intellectual transformation in which students explore a plethora of ideas, experiences, and people. Thus, intellectual enrichment is at the heart of the College mission. Related actions and initiatives are in the areas of the CAS Colloquium, faculty development, interdisciplinary collaboration, student academic interest organizations, and honors student events.

CAS Colloquium

The CAS Colloquium became a spring tradition from spring 2004 through spring 2008 and was a very vibrant event that drew faculty, students, staff, outside scholars, and community members together to discuss a topic of interest. The Colloquium certainly enriched the academic life of the College.

Action examples:
- Start the Colloquium series up again beginning in spring 2010
- Try to avoid concurrent sessions and evening functions
- Focus on 'edgy' topics that invite broad participation
- Seek ways to increase participation by students

Faculty Development

Highly qualified faculty, who have opportunities to develop their academic skills, are crucial within the establishment of and intellectually rich environment.

Action examples:
- Seek ways to enhance available faculty development funding
- Look for ways to support faculty development that are cost effective and not funding centered
- Encourage faculty to assist their colleagues to develop as teachers and scholars
- Encourage participation in the established peer mentoring program both as mentors and users

Interdisciplinary Collaboration

The richness and breadth of academic interests within the College offers unique opportunities for interdisciplinary collaboration that supports the establishment of a vibrant and intellectually nourishing environment for both students and faculty.

Action examples:
- Interdisciplinary round tables initiative
- Develop a student version of the round tables - pizza roundtables? Initiated through web site application and to involve students from at least two departments.
- Involve honors students as leaders in student roundtables

- Coffee with a professor program

Student Academic Interest Organizations

The academic life of students at SIUE is enriched by a wide variety of student organizations.

Action examples:
- Facilitate formation of student groups to enrich student experience
- Provide faculty advisement and mentorship for student groups

Honors Students Events

The College is the academic home to a large number of honors students. These students represent the intellectual life of our College well, and are likely to become leaders in their chosen professions.

Action examples:
- Social events - including a beginning of the year mixer for new CAS honors students.
- A follow-up event in Spring
- CAS honors newsletter

Experiential Learning - Raising our College Profile

We are proud of the accomplishments of our faculty, students, and staff and it is important that others both within and outside SIUE are aware of who we are and what we do. Actions and initiatives associated with raising our College profile fall in the areas of departmental identity building, getting the word out about CAS, student exhibits, performances, and presentations, community outreach, and faculty research and creative activity.

Departmental Identity Building

It is through our departments, and their delivery of excellent academic programs and learning experiences, that the College gains its reputation.

Action examples:
- Ask departments to have in-depth discussions about what gives them their unique character and identity for which they can be recognized
- Ask each department to develop a short statement - 15 seconds or less - that captures the essence of the department's identity
- Use all available avenues to get information out including multimedia such as press releases, video, and social networking outlets

Getting the word out about CAS

It is important that the College have a reputation for excellence. There are numerous positive things going on across the College, but many go unpublicized and largely unrecognized. This

needs to change.
Action examples:
- Publish a Dean's report that is succinct, attractive, and inviting to read
- Develop marketing pieces - encourage departments to come up with this type of material
- Develop 'points of pride' for each unit
- Make sure CAS is aware of current 'talking points' for each unit

Student exhibits, performances, presentations

The achievements of students reflect the quality of education we provide. Student exhibits, performances, and presentations are capstone-type events that display the cumulative outcome of a CAS education.

Action examples:
- Explore sources of funding to support these events and make sure these sources are known about and used
- Encourage departments to ensure that Senior Assignment is a true capstone event
- Target juniors so that they are prepared by their senior year
- Publicize these events to the fullest extent possible

Community Outreach

An important dimension of the College identity is gained through reputation and the relationship we have with the community outside SIUE.

Action examples:
- Encourage outreach activities at the departmental level
- Utilize multiple means to publicize what is going on in CAS and make sure this information reaches the community
- Work closely with the Office of Educational Outreach

Faculty research and Creative Activity

The achievements of faculty through their research and creative activity are fundamental to the College identity and profile. It is through our faculty that we gain recognition and reputation.

Action examples:
- Work to keep up the momentum on our already strong record of productivity
- Consider the creation of 'centers' that may work well to create recognition of expertise in a particular area

Experiential Learning - Improving Physical and Financial Assets

Students cannot fully benefit from the academic opportunities offered to them unless they are

supported with appropriate physical facilities and equipment. Providing such appropriate support requires the development of necessary financial assets. Planned improvements focus on a performing arts center, an expansion of the Art and Design Building, the new science building and existing Science Building renovation, the Observatory project, the University Museum, and a social science research facility.

Performing Arts Center

A great campus and college of arts and sciences needs a great performing arts center

Action examples:
- Identify funding related to a new performing arts center as a development priority
- Research potential funding possibilities, both alumni and external sources, to determine a course of action
- Cultivate connections to potential donors

Expand Art and Design Building

The College should continue to work with appropriate campus units to bring an expansion to fruition

Action examples:
- The college should pursue necessary expansion of the existing Art and Design building

Science Building

Science related facilities, which support our high quality programs, are essential to the mission of both the College and SIUE.

Action examples:
- Necessary funding related to the new science building should be a development priority
- Necessary funding related to the renovation of the existing Science Building should also be pursued vigorously

Observatory

The Observatory project supports a growth area in astronomy and is a key component in supporting continued growth

Action examples:
- The ongoing Observatory project should be completed by pursuit and application of appropriate funding

University Museum

The University Museum collection is a valuable resource to support the academic mission of the

College, and as such should be utilized as extensively and as fully as possible.

Action examples:
- Use the services of a consultant to guide us on best practices and how best to manage and use the collection
- Form a committee charged with working with the consultant and recommending future actions
- Explore ways to fully utilize the University Museum collection in support of experiential teaching and learning
- Develop a permanent infrastructure in order to showcase exhibits of objects that are both, property of or produced by SIUE and itinerant exhibits

Social Science Research facility

Disciplines within the social sciences have research needs that center on the availability of a computer classroom.

Action examples:
- Investigate what space might be available for a computer classroom to support social science research
- Once space is identified explore sources of funding for computer purchase and other associated costs

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