

College of Natural and Social Sciences

Strategic Plan

Mission:

We are agents of change, promising to serve and transform greater Los Angeles and the global society through innovative and intentional learning environments, socially conscious and equity-minded civic engagement, and impactful (inter)disciplinary research.

Values:

In everything we do, this mission guides our work. Together, our community of students, faculty, staff, alumni, and partners value:+

- Collaborations
- Intentionality
- Scholarship
- Civic-mindedness

In everything we do, this mission guides our work. Together, our community of students, faculty, staff, alumni, and partners value:

- *Each other*. We develop relationships that are inclusive, empowering, and engaging;
- *Scholarship*. We value the pursuit, discovery, and sharing of knowledge.
- *Collaborations and interdisciplinarity*. Complex issues require complex solutions.
- *Education*. We appreciate and acknowledge our students, their communities, their global heritage, and their backgrounds.
- *Intentionality*. We are purposeful in developing high quality educational environments that facilitate upward intellectual, social, economic, and political mobility.
- *Innovation*. We focus our energies on building the new.
- *Equity-mindedness and Inclusion*. We actively eliminate patterns of unfairness, injustice, and partisanship that create barriers for our students' and our successes.
- *Civic-mindedness*. We take responsibility for engaging our passions to producing work that makes a difference and impacts greater Los Angeles and the world.

In doing so we *Transform ourselves and others* as the knowledge created through our communities becomes part of the canons that inform and transform.

We measure our success in fulfilling our mission and living our values by increasing:

- Diversity amongst our faculty, staff and students;
- Access and opportunity for our students;
- Student success reflected in our graduation rates and retention rates, and career readiness;
- Interdisciplinary collaboration in our research and teaching; and

- Partnerships with our community stakeholders including K-12 systems, community-colleges, research institutes/centers, community organizations, local governments, businesses, foundations and philanthropies.

Strategies

Our mission is bold and reflects our deep commitment to the communities we serve. To accomplish our goals we will be *student-centered, embrace diversity, collaborate broadly, empower agents of change,* and *focus on Los Angeles*. Each of these five goals includes a corresponding set of strategies to guide our efforts.

Student-Centered

We engage students in learning that fosters personal and professional growth in an inclusive and student-centered environment that is accessible and welcoming. This educational foundation of theoretical and practical expertise supports students' emotional, economic, and professional development through learning that applies to real-world issues and develops employable skills. In this way, we prepare leaders who will transform the professions and community. At the College of Natural and Social Sciences our focus on being student-centered means we will:

- Identify bottleneck courses as roadblocks to graduation;
    - Count numbers of hybrid courses offered now and in 3 years;
    - Incentivize faculty to redesign bottle neck courses into hybrid courses;
    - Strategical incentivize senior undergraduate and grad students with seed investment for peer mentoring support;
    - Survey departments with courses with high DFW rates, are correct pre-reqs enforced, does a course need a pre-req;
    - Incentivize Los Angeles wide area colleges and universities to establish a LA area consortium of course offerings to allow our students to take low enrollment/cancelled courses not offered at CSULA.
- Increase student participation in research, scholarship, and creative activities;
    - Implementation 3-3 workload for research-active faculty, through increasing external funding with local, state, or federal grants or philanthropic gifts or foundation contacts;
    - In line with Strategy 1, promote awareness for student opportunities;
    - Integrate training on communicating and translating research and scholarship for diverse audiences;
    - Promote academic entrepreneurship by teaching students how to translate their scholarly work into positions in policy work and corporate social responsibility work;
    - Increase opportunities for students from historically underrepresented backgrounds to engage in meaningful research activities.
- Create a senior level course in all departments to provide a capstone or culminating experience for every student;
    - Survey departments already offering senior level/capstone courses, what works/what doesn't;
    - Identify departments that would like to participate in developing senior courses such as, research experiences, internships, capstone courses etc.;

    - Incentivize faculty with course release time to help develop senior level courses;
    - Have departments reach out to the center for engagement service and the public good to build partnerships with community organizations to facilitate student internships etc.
- Develop access to meaningful research and scholarly engagement during students' first entry to campus;
- Develop robust internship/externship opportunities for students on campus, in community, world-wide;
    - Create a website promoting relevant external internship opportunities;
    - Leverage alumni contacts to identify these opportunities;
    - Proactively develop relationships with area businesses, institutions, community organizations, and other entities which can support appropriate internships.
- Engage broadly in sciences;
- Ensure integration of participatory, high-impact learning practices;
    - Provide release time to develop these courses;
    - Encourage participation in national conferences that showcase/teach these methods
    - Capstone courses which apply scholarship in respective departments;
    - Provide NSS Departments and faculty with CUREnet resources and similar programs related to other NSS disciplines;
    - Promote related workshops and curricula from National Center for Science and Civic Engagement;
    - Provide resources specifically for faculty attendance at CURE-based and similar workshops and meetings.
- Develop more interdepartmental themed curriculum;
    - Utilize faculty expertise across disciplines to create unique courses;
    - Merge subject matter;
    - Show students how different disciplines link in with each other.
- Launch the NSS Center of Student Excellence, through philanthropic gift or endowment;
    - Explore development opportunities to establish center and fund initiatives (staff funding, study abroad, undergraduate research, career/internship opportunities, mentor program;
    - Hire CSE staff coordinator;
    - Leverage campus partnerships for CSE initiatives: Advancement, NSS Advisement Center, Undergraduate Studies, ORSCA, Career Development Center, Office of National and International Scholarship and Fellowships, Center for Engagement, Service, and the Public Good, Student Affairs, Dreamers Center.
- Establish a peer-reviewed Cal State LA Student NSS journal;
    - Allow students (with or without faculty collaborators) to submit manuscripts, undergo review, receive critical feedback, and (potentially) publish their work.

Embrace Diversity

We embrace diversity and practice inclusion throughout our community. For the College of Natural and Social Sciences, embracing diversity means being purposeful and inclusive as we recruit and retain students, faculty and staff. NSS is a diverse academic community and our promise of transformation and service can only be completed by creating instruction that incorporates the rich diversity of our students' lived experiences. Embracing diversity also

means being globally minded and increase our global presence, given the multitude of cultures in Los Angeles and our city's deep connections to societies around the globe. To embrace diversity we will:

- Recruit and retain a diverse faculty and staff who reflect our students' needs and aspirations;
    - Increase tenure-track faculty and staff hiring;
    - Utilize best practices as outlined in Faculty Affairs recruitment procedures;
    - Obtain and keep data on faculty retention (exit interviews, surveys) for evidence-based decisions;
    - Develop structured mentoring programs and resources;
    - Active department outreach to area doctoral programs and community colleges to recruit lecturer faculty; outreach to community colleges to facilitate student transfers;
    - Develop visiting scholar, visiting assistant professor, and post-doctor teaching opportunities to attract underrepresented faculty.
- Educate students in global fluency;
- Enrich our internal culture and morale within the College;
    - Move toward a transparent culture in decision making;
    - Allow more opportunities for participation at department and college levels for faculty (full time and lecturer), staff, students, and alumni; and
    - Increase recognition for our faculty, staff, students, and alumni.

Collaborate Broadly

We cultivate our unique talents through a strong community and intentionally-designed, meaningful engagements. These collaborations require an integrated, communication-oriented organizational culture as well as effective and transparent support systems. By working with our partners, and by operating internally through shared governance that is inclusive and participatory, we empower our faculty and staff to actively transform our educational and working environment. Our individual strengths, added to the strengths of others, create synergies and solutions that change the world. To collaborate broadly we will:

- Support more effective communication within NSS and between NSS and stakeholders;
    - Strengthen two-way communication in NSS;
    - Improve NSS and department websites and media.
- Increase alumni participation through a wide scope of programs, consistent outreach and communication, and philanthropic opportunities;
    - Highlight alumni relationships and activity via media platforms (e.g. send out alumni newsletter and highlight strong alumni donors with events);
    - Partner with alumni to offer internship opportunities to students;
    - Establish alumni mentoring program that connects students with former students.
- Work closely with the Career Development Center, Center for Innovation and Business and Alumni Relations to ensure community stakeholders have consistent connection with faculty, staff, and students, and normalize explicit professional development as part of core curriculum;
    - Invite CDC, CEI, alumni and representatives from organizations to briefly speak to classrooms about professional development and job opportunities;
    - Pursue RFPs for community work that can be incorporated into curriculum and create entrepreneurial maker spaces (either virtual or physical) for each department to foster entrepreneurship and innovation that can be incorporated into curriculum;

    - Incorporate work-for-credit arrangements into the curriculum across all NSS disciplines and create partner based curriculum (where applicable);
    - Develop college advisory board that includes alumni industry;
    - Encourage faculty to have job talks as part of curriculum delivery.
- Provide systematic support for the NSS strategic plan and other initiatives;
    - Produce streamlined and well-defined policies for RTP;
    - Ensure equitable and reliable administration of S-factor;
    - Increase the number and diversity of full time faculty and staff; and
    - Reduce unpaid "labors of love" in research, advising, mentoring, etc.

Empower and Facilitate (Agents of) Change

Our ability to transform Los Angeles and communities around the world begins with the accomplishments of our faculty and staff. Together they foster inclusion, diversity, equity, and community involvement. This vibrant community delivers transformational social and scientific teaching and learning for our students while producing discipline-specific and interdisciplinary research, scholarship, and creative activities that elucidate the natural world and the human condition. Our ability to deliver on this promise depends on our ability to nurture our faculty and staff in ways that benefit our teaching and learning, scholarship, and our service to the community. To empower our faculty and staff and thereby make them agents of change we will:

- Make best use of our facilities and address highest priority needs equitably;
    - Build additional facilities or obtain mobile lab spaces to reduce overcrowding (esp. in natural sciences);
    - Redistribute NSS space, (i.e. faculty offices and labs to meet changing needs and promote equity across departments;
    - Update labs, lecture rooms, and technology;
    - Improve health and safety of working spaces / environment; and
    - Improve aesthetics of college to promote a distinctive NSS identity/image.
- Empower faculty and staff as proactive agents of change in their work environments;
    - Implement a culture of continual process improvement;
    - College recognition of excellence in faculty and staff performance;
    - Recognition and validation of faculty and staff contributions to college/department/community service;
    - Sponsor annual college mixer for staff, faculty, administrators;
    - Expand yearly "All-College Meeting" to all staff and faculty;
    - Increase access to professional development.
- Invest in professional development for faculty and staff across rank;
    - Support for faculty development in pedagogy;
    - Support for faculty development in disciplinary research and conferences (tenure-line) and currency in the field (lecturer, including research-oriented colloquia and symposia on campus);
    - Access to professional development of communication and interpersonal skills (faculty/chairs/staff);
    - Development for professional advancement for staff, chairs, mid-career faculty, MPPs;
    - Leverage campus resources for professional development.
- Recognize and award faculty and students for scholarship and creative activities;

    - Develop annual NSS Outstanding undergraduate researcher award;
    - Develop annual NSS emerging scholar award(s) for students;
    - Develop annual Outstanding faculty research and scholarly activities awards for Natural Sciences faculty Social Sciences faculty;
    - Highlight outstanding student scholars at graduation;
    - Highlight research and creative activities in NSS publication.
- Increase external funding to support increased faculty engagement and support scholarship and working with students;
- Support disciplinary and interdisciplinary faculty as well as undergraduate and graduate research programs in ways that showcase our impact;
    - Educate students about distinct research opportunities through the Introduction to Higher Education course
    - Support grant writing activities to bring more external research funding to support student research programs
    - Create a user-friendly campus webpage or other medium through which faculty can advertise/list open research positions/projects
    - Promote an environment which recognizes the important value of faculty-led student scholarship
    - Create and enhance collaborations with R1 institutions with the view of developing our students into prime candidates for their graduate programs
    - Provide 'bridge-funds' to faculty who desire to be research-active but are between or lack external funds
    - Work closely with CSULA ORSCA to support and enhance technology transfer
    - Develop the appropriate space required to support research and scholarly work
    - Provide appropriate start-up funds for new faculty
    - Provide appropriate amount of indirect costs from extremal funding to support maintenance of research infrastructure and instruments.
- Practice a consultative, goal-oriented, and developmental evaluation and reflection process for staff and faculty;
    - Training for supervisors in developmental evaluation, utilizing HRM as a resource;
    - Workshops for faculty (all ranks) and staff to aid in preparing for the evaluation process;
    - Develop annual planning process for faculty and staff; determine professional goals, assistance and training needed through pre-evaluation planning;
    - Mentoring program for lecturers and probationary tenure-track faculty focusing on the evaluation process;
    - Explore feasibility of Individualized Success Plans at the college level for staff based on dialogue between staff and supervisor.
- Develop effective mechanisms of disseminating the results of scholarly and creative activities;
    - Community events showcasing NSS/CSULA scholarship. Develop our own and/or participate in existing events;
    - Regularly highlight research accomplishments on website;
    - Create internal NSS scholarship publication;
    - Support for hosting regional or national research symposia/conferences;
    - Support student, faculty, and staff travel for attending national conferences;

- Financially support publications in internationally-recognized journals.

Focus on Los Angeles

We are LA. Our education and scholarship foster social justice and transformation for people, for organizations, for society. We accomplish this in partnership with our external community by creating reciprocal relationships with alumni, the public and private sectors, outside academic institutions, and other community stakeholders to leverage science for positive social change that will impact both CSU-LA and the Greater Los Angeles community. And, our work will impact the world, because our community of Los Angeles reflects the global nature of our world. To focusing on LA we will:

- Transform Cal State LA into a critically acclaimed, rich source of students who go on to be world leaders and go-to global innovators who impact the Greater LA area and beyond;
    - Create more opportunities through alumni as well as internal and external organizations for students, faculty and staff to connect the classroom and research space with real-world activities in the short term and long term;
    - Make NSS an attractive partner to collaborate with and invest in because it is evident that partners and donors are valued and a return will be realized because of the resources they provide;
    - Promote NSS as a significant source of innovation, action, intellectual prowess and community improvement.
- Make Cal State L.A the hub of a network of multi-sectoral stakeholders able to provide entrepreneurial opportunities for students, faculty and staff;
    - Enhance media mechanisms (e.g. social media platforms and website) to highlight student and faculty work and specifically indicate how external partners can be helpful;
    - Develop appreciation events and mechanisms for partners and donors;
    - Create a high profile faculty service liaison position in each department that would involve relationship building with business stakeholders;
    - Create a maker space within each department of NSS to encourage entrepreneurship and innovation;
    - Encourage students, faculty and staff to partake in external and internal competition opportunities focused on cross-discipline and organizational collaboration (e.g. Mayor's Cup, LA2050, LA Business Pitch);
    - Create a presence in DTLA that facilitates interaction of alumni within the CSU-LA space, which can help them be more connected to and vested in CSU LA activities.
- Connect media stakeholders (e.g. reporters, web content creators, podcast hosts) with faculty experts concerning a range of leading issues including LA based youth/student activism, food insecurity, and fostering critical pedagogy in public education;
    - Create a podcast where expert faculty address leading community issues;
    - Set up partnerships for features on other prominent media platforms for conversations from student leaders/faculty on these issues as well as CSULA's role in creating innovative solutions;
    - Offer NSS as a site for community activities with media traction (e.g. political debates, community engagement activities;
    - Maintain consistent upkeep with popular social media platforms (e.g. Instagram, Twitter, Snapchat etc.).

- Encourage community-based and social-justice oriented research;
    - Leverage alumni contacts to identify and develop these opportunities
    - Promote collaborative or team-based research/scholarship through mini-grants
    - Facilitate ORSCA contact with students regarding opportunities
    - Develop summer workshops which engage high school and college students with our scholarship
    - Seek community-based and social justice-oriented grant/contract support projects
    - Encourage student social activities to disseminate awareness of social, environmental, and health issues impacting both local and global populations
- Create an alumni-focused lecture series open to campus and community.
    - Collaborate with non-academic departments (career center, alumni association);
    - Create spaces to hear about current trends and issues from alumni;
    - Create student opportunities to plan and host the series.

Every strategy above includes detailed action steps, implementation plans, and measures of success. These activities will be reviewed annually to ensure they remain responsive to the College's circumstances, and to prioritize strategies and actions for the coming year. Through these efforts, the College of Natural and Social Sciences will deliver the transformational change we envision for our students and society.