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CLA

College of Liberal Arts

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Strategic Plan

2025-2030



Overview

During the 2024-25 academic year, the College of Liberal Arts (CLA) revisited its 2019 strategic plan to establish updated priorities, goals, and initiatives for the next five years. In September 2024, an online survey was distributed to faculty and staff to assess the relevance and effectiveness of the existing plan. Sixty-six individuals responded, many offering written comments and feedback.

In addition to the survey, listening sessions were held with various stakeholders, including CLA Student Emissaries, Chairs and Directors, staff, faculty (in-person and via Zoom), and Friends of Liberal Arts Board. Altogether, 60 participants contributed to a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) analysis of the college.

The current strategic plan, along with insights from the survey and listening sessions, was shared with faculty members selected for the Strategic Planning Advisory and Steering Committees. These groups met both in person and online from November 2024 through Spring 2025. They also reviewed strategic plans from MTSU and peer institutions, generating multiple drafts of the new CLA strategic plan.

The finalized draft was submitted to a separate faculty committee for review. This process concluded in May 2025, with dissemination and implementation of the new strategic plan scheduled for Fall 2025.

Steering Committee

Eric Detweiller
Alicia Fuss
Lucy Langworthy, Chair
Aliou Ly
Ugur Orak

Advisory Committee

Priya Ananth
Erin Anfinson
Mary Beth Asbury
Michael Baggarly
Chris Combest
Heather Gibbs
Clarence Johnson
Ida Fadzillah Leggett
John Maynor
Kris McKusker
Greg Slack
Antoinette Van Zelm
Chris Weedman

Review Committee

Ja'Net Davis
Rachel Davis
Darren Levin
Julie Myatt
Moses Tesi
Jennifer Woodward

Strategic Priorities for the College of Liberal Arts (CLA) 2025-2030

The College of Liberal Arts (CLA) is committed to fostering a supportive and innovative environment for its faculty, staff, and students. We aim to ensure the success of all by prioritizing balanced workloads, enhancing recruitment and retention, investing in professional development, and increasing support for research and creative activities. Additionally, we will expand opportunities for student engagement through mentoring, scholarships, and co-curricular experiences.

In our pursuit of academic excellence, we will foster curricular innovation and interdisciplinary collaboration, integrating career readiness skills into our courses and expanding the visibility of liberal arts education. Our efforts will be complemented by a strong focus on community engagement, celebrating individual and unique contributions through enrichment programs, wellness support, and intentional programming that foster strong networks. We will expand community engagement to support online students, integrating virtual programming. Physical space and infrastructure will also be improved, with plans to advocate for a new CLA building and enhance existing spaces for collaboration.

Through targeted outreach, we will strengthen promotion of the liberal arts, empowering students, faculty, and alumni to communicate its value and impact. We will also focus on increasing operational excellence by improving communication, streamlining processes, and fostering a culture of transparency and continuous improvement.

By embracing these strategic priorities, CLA will continue to create a thriving academic and community-centered environment where everyone can explore the world, engage their minds, enrich their lives and earn a living.

Dr. Leah Tolbert Lyons, Dean
Dr. Meredith Huey Dye, Associate Dean
Dr. Rehab Ghazal, Associate Dean
Jeff Gibson, Associate Dean

Mission

The College of Liberal Arts takes pride in its role as the intellectual foundation of the university, teaching essential skills through courses in the arts, humanities and social sciences. As an engaged and collaborative community of students, faculty, and staff, CLA provides a rigorous and relevant scholarly environment where our major and minor programs equip students with career ready skills to thrive in their chosen professions, as lifelong learners, and contributing members of society. Our caring staff and expert faculty demonstrate excellence through innovative teaching and learning, research, creative activity, and service that inspires transformative growth for individuals and communities.

Vision

CLA envisions a community where students, faculty, and staff:

Explore the world and shape the future

Engage their minds to solve real-world problems

Enrich lives and showcase their skills

Earn a living and succeed through the liberal arts

Guiding Values

Community & Belonging | Innovation & Opportunity | Value of the Liberal Arts

Implementation & Timeline

- Each goal will be led by representatives from relevant departments; measured, assessed, and reported on annually.
- Budget allocations and partnerships will support implementation.

Strategic Priorities for the College of Liberal Arts (CLA) 2025-2030

Prioritize innovative opportunities and experiences for CLA faculty, staff, and students to accomplish their goals.

1. Faculty, Staff, & Students

Support faculty and staff at all levels through fair workloads, internal funding and external grant opportunities, professional development, and recruitment/retention of dynamic faculty and staff colleagues.

Enhance mentoring and financial support of student scholarship in and beyond the classroom.

2. Curricular Innovation & Collaboration

Elevate CLA presence in the True Blue Core and Career Edge QEP and facilitate interdisciplinary collaboration and research in CLA and among other colleges.

Recognize the worth of every member of CLA and the unique ways CLA faculty, staff, and students contribute to and enrich the University

3. Community, Belonging, & Recognition

Strengthen the CLA community by mentoring students and meeting tangible needs, offering enriching programming for faculty, staff, and students, and celebrating the accomplishments of all.

4. Spaces & Structures for Engagement

Prioritize space needs and outreach, both physical and virtual, to promote engagement for students, faculty, and staff.

Communicate the value, versatility, and necessity of the liberal arts on campus, in the community, and beyond

5. Liberal Arts Outreach & Communication

Equip faculty, staff, students, alumni, and community partners to articulate the value of the liberal arts.

Employ multiple strategies to promote the liberal arts and improve communication and operations among departments, programs, and centers.

MTSU College of Liberal Arts Goals and Values

Support Faculty, Staff, and Student Success

We will **support** faculty, staff, and students in the College of Liberal Arts by fostering fair and balanced workloads, enhancing staff and faculty recruitment and retention, investing in professional development and advancement opportunities, increasing support for faculty research and grant activity, and strengthening student engagement through expanded mentoring and financial support for co- and extra-curricular experiences.

Promote Curricular Innovation & Interdisciplinary Collaboration

We will **promote** curricular innovation and interdisciplinary collaboration by developing new programs and initiatives, expanding support for innovative teaching, integrating liberal arts and career readiness skills into our courses, and enhancing the visibility of liberal arts in the broader curriculum.

Foster a Deep Sense of Community and Belonging

We aim to **recognize** the unique contributions of every CLA member and to foster belonging through enrichment programs, wellness support (such as microgrants), and celebration of excellence. Inclusive and intentional programming will continue to build strong interpersonal and professional networks within the college.

Expand and Elevate Online Engagement

CLA will take meaningful steps to **include** online-only students in the college community. This includes adapting programs like LAMP, supporting faculty in working with online learners, and offering virtual access to events and resources.

Improve Infrastructure to Support Connection

Physical space shapes our experience. We will **advocate** for a new CLA building and improve existing spaces to foster collaboration. We also will aim to establish regular, shared gathering times and locations that facilitate informal and formal interaction.

Advocate the Value of Liberal Arts

We will **strengthen** advocacy for the liberal arts by equipping students, faculty, and alumni to articulate their skills, expanding community partnerships, and tailoring outreach to support recruitment, retention, and pathways into the liberal arts.

Increase Operational Excellence

We aim to **cultivate** a culture of clear communication and efficient operations by improving internal information flow, standardizing processes, promoting CLA achievements, and enhancing transparency through regular updates and feedback mechanisms.