

## **University of South Alabama**

### **College of Arts and Sciences**

#### **STRATEGIC PLAN - 2001**

##### Introduction

During the Fall semester of 2000, each of the nineteen academic departments and three of the interdisciplinary academic programs in the College of Arts and Sciences prepared a strategic plan for their future development. Each plan was designed to incorporate the views and concerns of the faculty, staff, students, alumni and other relevant constituencies of the academic unit. The departments and programs were asked to identify their unique strengths and weaknesses, goals and aspirations, and then to develop strategies for accomplishing the goals they had identified for themselves. They were also asked to include within their plans a discussion of priorities with respect to the goals they identified, as well as an analysis of the costs associated with each goal, the timetable for achieving each goal, and strategies for assessing the progress being made in each area.

A list of assumptions was provided to the academic units concerning the environment in which the University is expected to operate over the coming years. These assumptions are discussed below. The units were asked to draw up their strategic plans with these assumptions in mind, and to work within the restrictions implied by the planning assumptions. Other than that, there were no limits or structures imposed upon the departments and programs; they were free to think creatively and plan boldly, to select priorities according to their own collective perceptions and values.

In January 2001, the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences convened a Strategic Planning Committee consisting of eleven members of the College faculty. The committee members were selected to represent broadly the entire range of interests and disciplines within the College, and to provide diverse perspectives on the future of the College. The committee included the following individuals:

Keith Blackwell, Assistant Professor of Earth Sciences (Meteorology)  
Frank Clark, Associate Professor of Music and Chair, Department of Music  
R. Kent Clark, Professor of Physics  
John Friedl, Dean and Professor of Anthropology  
Nancy Grey, Assistant Professor of Foreign Languages and Literatures  
Roma Hanks, Associate Professor of Sociology and Director, Program in Gerontology  
G. David Johnson, Associate Dean and Professor of Sociology  
Elise Labbe-Coldsmith, Professor of Psychology  
Neill Matheson, Assistant Professor of English  
Daniel Rogers, Associate Professor of History and Chair, USA Faculty Senate

Robert Shipp, Professor of Marine Sciences and Chair, Department of Marine Sciences

The Strategic Planning Committee met throughout the Spring Semester of 2001, and discussed a wide range of topics with respect to the College and its many activities and responsibilities. The Committee reviewed each of the strategic plans submitted by the departments and academic programs, and drew some common themes and concerns from those documents. The Committee also addressed the question of developing a mission statement for the College, one that is consistent with and supportive of the mission statement of the University.

The initial draft of the College of Arts and Sciences Strategic Plan was prepared by Dean John Friedl, and was submitted to the Committee, where it underwent thorough review and extensive revision. The result of that process was a “public” draft of the Strategic Plan, which was circulated for further comment to various members of the University community, and to others groups of individuals who might contribute suggestions that will add to the scope and quality of the final product. Eventually the Strategic Plan was revised in its present form, and submitted to the Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and the President for their approval. Once those approvals have been obtained, we will begin to implement the Strategic Plan for the College.

It should be stressed that although we speak of a “final” version of the Strategic Plan for the College, nothing in the plan is intended to be final. Strategic planning is properly viewed as a dynamic process, and not an event. It is our intention that each year a new Strategic Planning Committee will be selected to consider revisions and improvements to the most recent version of the plan. As new opportunities or constraints arise, we must be prepared to respond quickly. As the academic environment evolves, so must our Strategic Plan evolve with it. As some of our goals are achieved, others will arise to take their place. And as new resources become available, we must be willing and able to change our priorities and to reallocate our resources to achieve those priorities.

#### Mission Statement of the University of South Alabama

The University of South Alabama was chartered in 1963 by the State of Alabama as a comprehensive, coeducational institution of higher education. The University serves as a major center of high quality and accessible undergraduate, graduate and professional education for metropolitan Mobile, the State of Alabama, the Gulf Coast region, and the southeastern United States. The University mission actively embraces the functions of teaching, research, public service, and health care through which it vigorously pursues the preservation, discovery, communication and the application of knowledge. As it grows and develops, the University will focus its strengths to produce programs of interdisciplinary excellence that address the special needs of the people it serves.

Undergraduate education is designed to promote the growth of the individual to think critically and analytically, to communicate effectively, to acquire information and apply it to problem-solving, and to understand the context of global complexity and diversity in which knowledge is applied. The University is committed to the education of the whole person--the creative person. To accomplish this, a wide range of curricular and co-curricular opportunities for students to expand their cultural, physical and emotional awareness are provided. The University's environment must encourage and foster the qualities expected of leaders, such as integrity, service, stewardship, involvement and respect for individuals, as well as an appreciation for diversity.

Graduate education provides students with increasing levels of challenge and opportunities for independent investigation, creative achievement, the advancement of knowledge, and participation in traditional and new forms of scholarly activity in a broad range of discipline-based and interdisciplinary programs. These programs will prepare students for new, as well as traditional, professional and academic careers.

Scholarship is an important aspect of the mission of the University and the responsibility of every faculty member. The University of South Alabama will provide quality research and scholarly activity in all areas of its academic programs and community service activities, as illustrated by the work of its faculty in business, education, engineering, mathematics, science, fine arts, humanities, and health sciences. To advance scholarship the University will provide appropriate instructional and investigative facilities within an atmosphere of academic freedom and shared governance.

Because of its location and commitment to the community, the University's academic health center is an important resource for accomplishing its mission. The University is dedicated to the education of physicians, health scientists, allied health professionals, and professional nurses who will provide the community and the region with the highest quality health care. To promote improved health care in its service region through research, teaching, and outreach programs, its hospitals and clinics will offer the latest scientific and medical technology possible.

The University is further dedicated to the promotion of lifelong learning and to the enhancement of access to education for a variety of individuals and communities. Thus, it will continue to develop programs that meet the needs of its evening, weekend, off-campus, and special program clients who seek both credit and non-credit learning experiences on campus and at the USA Brookley campus site. The USA Baldwin County campus will provide degree programs and other learning opportunities required by the rapidly growing population in Baldwin County.

The University of South Alabama's programs of education, research, public service, and health care are all founded upon the basis of a reciprocal relationship between the institution and the community it serves. Instruction, research, scholarship, public service, and health care that enhance the economic development of the State and improve the quality of life and health of its

citizens are integral and essential parts of its mission as a comprehensive, metropolitan university.

### Planning Assumptions

The following list of Planning Assumptions of the Institutional Environment for the University of South Alabama was developed by the Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs, and has been incorporated into the strategic planning process for the College of Arts and Sciences. These assumptions are reproduced here to provide a context for reviewing and evaluating the Strategic Plan that follows.

1. Higher education's share of state appropriations will not increase, and growing competition from other educational sectors will threaten higher education's current share.
2. Increasingly, the state will hold higher education accountable for efficient use of resources and will demand continuous review of faculty productivity with particular emphasis on teaching loads and degree productivity as dictated by legislation passed in 1996.
3. New initiatives and new programs will be possible only through reallocation of existing resources and should thus be carefully considered in the context of impact on activities that are central to the mission of the program, the college, and the university. Yet it must be understood that some activities are of a greater priority than others to the institution and/or the academic unit.
4. Review of proposals for new academic programs will become more stringent. To gain Alabama Commission on Higher Education approval, new academic programs must demonstrate benefits to Alabama's economy and workforce, conservative use of state funds, and a relation to institutional mission, role, and strengths.
5. Both in terms of student enrollment and institutional commitment, USA will continue primarily to be concerned with outstanding undergraduate education, with gradual and selective increases in the number and size of its master's and doctoral programs.
6. As a result of the articulation and general studies requirement and lower tuition costs, an increasing number of students will complete part or all of their first two years at community colleges. Thus, the lower division of the University may continue to experience declining enrollments with the expected consequences on students, on curriculum, on tuition revenue, and on programs.
7. Increases are expected in the proportion of students who are: 1) 23 years or older, 2) female, and 3) African-American.
8. Continuing changes in the workforce will result in the return to higher education of many

college graduates seeking post-baccalaureate degrees, certifications, and other types of job-related educational needs.

9. While USA aspires to achieve national and even international standards of excellence in its instructional, research, and public service programs, it has a particular obligation to respond to the needs of the region, including those related to health, economic development, the solution of pressing social problems, and cultural enrichment of the citizenry.
10. Both publicly- and privately-funded research will continue to be highly competitive and will increasingly be oriented toward particular concerns related to health, to the environment, and to economic development.
11. Technology will have an increasing impact on teaching and learning and on the way the University operates. Incoming students will be more technology-literate and will expect more sophisticated applications of technology to deliver instruction and support the learning process. Effective application of technology will present a continuing challenge for members of the faculty and support staff because of the rapid pace of technological change.
12. Institutional technology will afford students unprecedented choices for fulfilling their educational needs. Students will place increasing emphasis on compatibility of program design, instructional methods, and course scheduling with their personal circumstances as they choose the institution at which they will enroll. These developments will present both the responsibility and the opportunity to extend access to the resources of the University through appropriately designed and scheduled regular instruction, continuing education, and professional service via a variety of alternative class schedules, i.e., evenings, weekends, online, compressed terms, and others.

### The College of Arts and Sciences

The College of Arts and Sciences at the University of South Alabama consists of nineteen academic departments and four interdisciplinary academic programs:

#### Departments

Air Force Studies  
Art and Art History  
Biological Sciences  
Chemistry  
Communication

Dramatic Arts  
Earth Sciences (Geology, Geography and Meteorology)  
English  
Foreign Languages and Literatures  
History  
Marine Sciences  
Mathematics and Statistics  
Military Science  
Music  
Philosophy  
Physics  
Political Science and Criminal Justice  
Psychology  
Sociology and Anthropology

Interdisciplinary Programs

African-American Studies  
Gender Studies (approved beginning Fall 2001)  
Gerontology  
International Studies

Nine of the academic departments offer programs of graduate study leading to the Master of Arts and Master of Science degrees, and one offers a doctoral program:

Master's Degree Programs (M.A. or M.S.)

Biology  
Communication  
English  
History  
Marine Sciences  
Mathematics  
Public Administration (Political Science)  
Psychology  
Sociology

Doctoral Program (Ph.D.)

Marine Sciences

Mission Statement of the College of Arts and Sciences

The College of Arts and Sciences is the intellectual center of the University of South Alabama and is the foundation for establishing and building the quality of the University's academic programs. In the College of Arts and Sciences students receive broad exposure to all areas of academic inquiry, as well as in-depth knowledge in their chosen field of study. The

College provides every undergraduate student at the University, regardless of major, with the fundamentals of a liberal arts education to enhance students' knowledge and create an atmosphere in which students develop their own critical thinking, communication skills, and the tools with which to carry out independent inquiry. Such an education promotes a heightened sense of intellectual curiosity, an appreciation of the values and accomplishments of the sciences, arts and humanities, and a sense of awareness and responsibility for the well-being of their society.

In achieving these educational goals, the College of Arts and Sciences will:

- ! offer a full range of subjects in the humanities, fine arts, social sciences, mathematics, and the natural sciences
- ! encourage breadth of learning and training in the fundamentals of scholarship
- ! create and apply knowledge in the arts and sciences through dedicated research, teaching, scholarship, and creative works
- ! foster educational exchange within the University, the Mobile community, and society as a whole
- ! maintain a community of teachers and scholars devoted to the preservation and discovery of knowledge and its transmission to students and to the public
- ! promote an intellectual climate that encourages lifelong learning and open and free inquiry
- ! encourage and support the application of knowledge in service to the University, the Mobile metropolitan area, and the wider society
- ! promote diversity, tolerance, and mutual understanding among all members of the University community and society as a whole
- ! emphasize the regional uniqueness of southwest Alabama, including its cultural heritage, its natural environment, and its strategic location as a port city on the Gulf of Mexico
- ! prepare students to participate in the larger world beyond the region by giving them an awareness of the complexity of global issues and contexts
- ! prepare students for meaningful and productive careers and contribute to the development of an educated work force responsive to the needs of the region

## A Vision for the College

The College of Arts and Sciences is the intellectual foundation of the academic enterprise at the University of South Alabama. Its 200 faculty, more than 3000 undergraduate majors, and over 200 graduate students make it by far the largest academic unit. More importantly, through the liberal arts general education curriculum, the College accounts for more than half the instructional credit hours delivered by the University, playing an integral role in the education of every undergraduate student at the institution.

Research and scholarship are essential to the teaching mission of the College. As the University has evolved since its origin in 1964 to its present status as a doctoral research intensive university, its mission has expanded to include an emphasis not only on teaching and service, but on research as well. The faculty have responded to the challenge to engage in research, and as the University has grown and new faculty have joined its ranks, research has become increasingly important in defining the University of South Alabama and in distinguishing it from other colleges and universities in the Gulf Coast region.

The College of Arts and Sciences has played an integral role in sustaining the new direction for the University. Faculty in Arts and Sciences have demonstrated increasing success in their research and scholarly pursuits. The faculty in Arts and Sciences are second only to the Medical School in the level of extramural funding received, but that is only one measure of the scholarship that has become an expected part of every faculty member's professional responsibility. Much of the research, scholarship and creative work of the faculty receives little or no extramural funding, yet it contributes significantly to the intellectual climate and to the growing reputation of the University of South Alabama as a leading research institution in the Southeastern United States.

The vision for the College of Arts and Sciences at the University of South Alabama, which is shared by students, faculty and administrators alike, is one of continued excellence and expansion in the integration of research and scholarship with the teaching and service missions of the College and the University, and in the application of research to classroom instruction and to the solution of problems and the improvement of the quality of life in our community.

## Goals and Strategies

Each of the strategies listed below includes a statement of "estimated costs." By this is meant simply the initial increase in cash expenditures needed to meet the strategy. We recognize that this is a narrow and incomplete understanding of the true costs associated with meeting these objectives. For example, in many cases faculty and other employees will be asked to devote their

time and energies (labor costs) to carrying out these strategies. These costs, among others beyond the initial financial expenditures, are not captured by our estimates. Before any strategy is implemented, we encourage the College community to think through these other, not yet estimated, costs and make sure that the strategy is fully cost effective in this wider sense.

### Teaching and Learning

The College of Arts and Sciences has as its primary mission the delivery of outstanding instruction to undergraduate and graduate students, both in the traditional classroom setting and in other formats and forums. The College will strive to provide an environment for teaching and learning that is rigorous and challenging. It will seek ways to improve teaching and learning through the use of state of the art instructional technologies. It will provide a curriculum that reflects the interests of students and the demands of the modern world in which they live and in which they will pursue their chosen careers.

### Goal 1.

**The College will continue to improve the educational experience of undergraduate students.**

Strategy 1: The College will continuously review and revise its curriculum, both for the general education requirements and within each major or interdisciplinary program. We will seek ways of allowing greater flexibility within the general education curriculum without sacrificing the underlying goals and standards of a liberal arts education.

Time frame: ongoing

Estimated cost: no additional monetary cost; two faculty committees are currently working on this task

Assessment: curriculum revisions; student surveys

Strategy 2: The College will promote and encourage faculty training in the use of technology to improve instruction, including increases in the use of existing training resources and implementation of new training initiatives (if needed).

Time frame: ongoing

Estimated cost: to be determined; implementation will require faculty

time in learning to use new technologies

Assessment: survey faculty regarding use of technology in instruction; assessments of teaching and learning in classes with technology enhancements

Strategy 3: The College will conduct a review of existing technological resources available to assist instruction in its classrooms. Deficiencies will be identified, and corrections implemented, to bring all classrooms up to at least minimally acceptable standards.

Time frame: 2001/02

Estimated cost: to be determined

Assessment: Ask College Technology Committee to survey faculty to identify needs; survey faculty regarding satisfaction with technology; monitor technology improvements

Strategy 4: The College will assess the need for advanced, technological “smart” classrooms. If justified by the needs assessment, the College will support the creation of one or more such classrooms as demonstration projects.

Time frame: 2001-03

Estimated cost: to be determined

Assessment: monitoring of technology improvements

Strategy 5: The College will explore the use of wireless technology in one or more of its buildings or programs to facilitate electronic communication among faculty and students and with the wider world.

Time frame: 2001-03

Estimated cost: up to \$5,000 per building (institutional costs); cost of laptop computers and wireless modems for students and faculty

Assessment: implementation of wireless capacity; monitoring usage of the wireless network

Strategy 6: The College will expand course offerings available to students through electronic media. The College will explore the possibility of offering entire programs (e.g., certificate programs for part-time and non-degree students) through distance learning. The College will monitor the quality of on-line courses and programs, ensuring that teaching and learning meet appropriate standards.

Time frame: beginning 2001/02; ongoing thereafter

Estimated cost: start-up costs per course currently are between \$3,000 and \$4,500, which are offset partially by fee revenues returned to the College as courses are taught; costs for developing new courses may include reassigned time for faculty

Assessment: submission of course proposals; ongoing monitoring of the number of on-line offerings and enrollments; ongoing assessments of teaching and learning in on-line courses and programs; survey faculty regarding interest in developing on-line courses

Strategy 7: The College will explore ways to promote a collaborative educational experience for students, stressing teamwork in problem-solving settings.

Time frame: beginning in 2001/02

Estimated cost: no additional cost

Assessment: submission of course proposals, revision of instructional methodologies; survey faculty and students regarding outcomes

Strategy 8: The College will promote the expansion of undergraduate involvement in research, under the supervision of faculty, and will explore the possibility of including a research experience within the general education requirements for all graduates. We will support undergraduate student participation in professional meetings where they can present the results of their research and be exposed to the professional research activities of faculty and other students.

Time frame: ongoing

Estimated cost: initially up to \$5,000 per year

Assessment: submission of course proposals, revision of general education requirements; consult with faculty regarding expansion of opportunities, necessary resources

Strategy 9: The College will promote involvement of students in service activities as part of their undergraduate educational experience, and will explore the possibility of including a service-learning experience within the general education requirements for all graduates.

Time frame: 2001/02

Estimated cost: no initial cost

Assessment: submission of course proposals, revision of general education requirements; number of students engaged in service learning activities

Strategy 10: The College will promote involvement of students in internship experiences through placements in nonacademic settings, and will encourage departments and academic programs to provide opportunities for all students who seek such an experience to receive academic credit for their participation.

Time frame: beginning in 2001/02

Estimated cost: no initial cost

Assessment: involvement of students in internships; student satisfaction with experiential learning

Strategy 11: The College will explore the possibility of offering an introductory orientation course on a pass-fail basis for all incoming freshmen and transfer students. This course will stress such basic subjects as study skills, time management, using the University library resources, navigating various administrative requirements, working with advisors to build a course schedule and academic plan, etc.

Time frame: Fall 2001

Estimated cost: no initial cost

Assessment: submission of course proposal; educational

outcomes of course, if implemented

Strategy 12: The College will strive to improve the rate of retention of students enrolled in Arts and Sciences programs, and to increase the success rate for students enrolled in Arts and Sciences courses. It will expand programs such as Supplemental Instruction and Learning Skills Seminars. It will review threshold standards for course enrollment where appropriate and will seek ways to improve and expand placement testing in key areas.

Time Frame: ongoing

Estimated cost: to be determined; cost of Supplemental Instruction is currently covered by a grant from the USA Foundation; Learning Skills Seminars in the History Department currently cost the College \$4,000 - \$5,000 per year

Assessment increased retention; increased success rates; compare results of SI and Learning Skills Seminars

Strategy 13: The College will seek to be responsive to the needs and interests of an increasingly diverse student population by expanding academic programs that address issues related to human diversity (such as African-American Studies, Gender Studies, and Gerontology), and by encouraging the development of new courses where appropriate.

Time frame: ongoing

Estimated cost: to be determined

Assessment: student surveys; student enrollment

Strategy 14: The College will support the development of the University honors program, including the expansion of course offerings in the honors program.

Time Frame: ongoing

Estimated cost: no additional cost

Assessment: additional courses offered to honors students

- Strategy 15: The College will seek ways of expanding international programs and overseas experiences for its undergraduate students.
- Time frame: Fall 2001
- Estimated cost: no initial cost; overseas experiences for students will require financial support
- Assessment: more students participating in overseas programs
- Strategy 16: The College will evaluate its advising programs to identify weaknesses, and will explore ways to strengthen its advising programs and to improve the relationship between student and advisor.
- Time frame: Fall 2001
- Estimated cost: possible addition of a second adviser to the College staff will require allocation of the cost of salary and benefits
- Assessment: student surveys; faculty surveys
- Strategy 17: The College will provide a supportive working environment for part-time faculty, in order to attract and retain the best teachers available and to facilitate a successful and rewarding teaching experience.
- Time frame: ongoing
- Estimated cost: to be determined
- Assessment: survey of part-time instructors, retention rates for part-time faculty; student evaluations of faculty
- Strategy 18: The College will support programs to assist all faculty in obtaining the skills and experience necessary to achieve the technological and pedagogical goals enumerated above. This will include, at a minimum, support for reassigned time during the academic year and support during summers for additional training and development activities.
- Time frame: beginning Fall 2002
- Estimated cost: to be determined

Assessment: surveys of students and faculty to identify needs and to evaluate improvements in technological and pedagogical approaches to instruction

## **Goal 2**

### **The College will expand its offerings of interdisciplinary courses and will facilitate student participation in interdisciplinary programs.**

Strategy 1: The College will explore ways to facilitate the election by students of a double major, by reducing overall credit hour requirements and allowing the double counting of courses in related disciplines.

Time Frame: Fall 2001

Estimated cost: no additional cost

Assessment: adoption of new approach toward double majors;  
number of students electing double majors

Strategy 2: The College will promote the creation and adoption of new courses and programs that stress an interdisciplinary approach to subject areas that appropriately involve the participation of more than one discipline. It will seek ways to facilitate the joint participation of faculty from more than one discipline in teaching such courses, including a reassessment of the assignment of teaching credit for team-taught courses.

Time Frame: ongoing

Estimated cost: no initial cost

Assessment: submission of course proposals, offering courses;  
number of faculty and students participating

Strategy 3: The College will explore the development of new interdisciplinary programs, including a new program in film and television studies.

Time frame: beginning Fall 2002

Estimated cost: no initial cost; new programs will require additional resources

Assessment: courses offered; students electing new programs;  
student satisfaction surveys

Strategy 4: The College will seek ways to simplify the procedures and requirements for students who wish to pursue an individually designed major curriculum.

Time frame: Fall 2001

Estimated cost: no initial cost

Assessment: revision of procedures; student enrollment in  
Personalized Studies Program majors

### **Goal 3**

**The College will explore ways to expand graduate programs offered by the College and to increase enrollments in the programs it offers.**

Strategy 1: The College will support the development and submission of proposals for doctoral programs in Psychology, Communication, and possibly other disciplines.

Time frame: Psychology by Spring 2002; Communication by  
2003/04

Estimated cost: no initial cost; eventual approval of Ph.D. programs  
will require allocation of new resources or  
reallocation of existing resources

Assessment: proposals submitted

Strategy 2: The College will support the development and submission of proposals for interdisciplinary master's degree programs in Chemistry (industrial ecology and pollution prevention) and Physics (medical physics) and a master of fine arts (M.F.A.) degree program in graphic design in the Art Department.

Time frame: Fall 2002 to Fall 2006

Estimated cost: no initial cost; new programs will require the  
allocation of new resources or the reallocation of  
existing resources

- Assessment: proposals submitted
- Strategy 3: The College will explore ways to increase enrollment and maintain the viability of programs with enrollment below the ACHE minimum, including Art History, Dramatic Arts, Mathematics and Statistics (undergraduate and graduate), Music, Philosophy, Physics and Sociology (graduate).
- Time frame: ongoing
- Estimated cost: to be determined
- Assessment: increased enrollment in these programs
- Strategy 4: The College will seek ways to expand the financial support for graduate students in its programs that will allow it to compete with other universities in the region, such as the University of Alabama, Auburn, Mississippi State, Florida State and Georgia State.
- Time frame: ongoing
- Estimated cost: up to \$900,000 per year, with source of funding to be determined; a proposal has been submitted to the USA Foundation
- Assessment: increased financial support, increased enrollments
- Strategy 5: The College will seek ways to enhance the library collections in areas of need, particularly in disciplines in which it offers graduate instruction.
- Time frame: ongoing
- Estimated cost: to be determined; a proposal has been submitted to the USA Foundation
- Assessment: upgrade of library holdings in key areas

#### **Goal 4**

**The College will engage in continuous assessment of its programs and will use the results of its assessment to improve the learning experiences of its students.**

- Strategy 1: Each department will engage in formal assessment of learning outcomes for its majors, and will develop a plan for applying the results of that

assessment toward the improvement of its instructional programs.

Time frame: ongoing

Estimated cost: no additional monetary cost; implementation will require faculty time devoted to assessment and program review

Assessment: annual program review and report by departments

Strategy 2: The College will work with the Office of Institutional Research to develop and implement a program of assessment of learning outcomes for the undergraduate general education curriculum. The College will develop a plan for applying the results of that assessment toward the improvement of the general education curriculum.

Time frame: beginning Fall 2001

Estimated cost: to be determined

Assessment: student surveys; student outcomes assessments; revisions in general education curriculum

Strategy 3: The College will institute a schedule of program review, in cooperation with the Office of Academic Affairs, on a 5-year rotation for each undergraduate major, interdisciplinary program and graduate program within the College. The program review will include, among other things, external review by faculty at other institutions and other experts in the field.

Time frame: beginning Fall 2002

Estimated cost: to be determined; costs will include fees and expenses of external reviewers, faculty time to produce self-study reports

Assessment: results of program review

Strategy 4: The College will participate in a committee of faculty and students to review and revise evaluation of teaching. The College will explore the possibility of making appropriate results of evaluations of teaching available to all students.

Time frame: beginning Fall 2001  
Estimated cost: no initial cost  
Assessment: committee report

### **Goal 5**

**The College will enhance its support for programs that can achieve regional or national recognition for excellence.**

Strategy 1: In conjunction with the external review of each program, the College will identify those programs that have the potential to achieve regional or national recognition for excellence in teaching and in scholarship, and will seek additional resources to provide the support needed to achieve that potential. In doing so, the College will maintain the University's commitment to its core academic programs and will remain consistent with its mission.

Time frame: ongoing  
Estimated cost: to be determined  
Assessment: external reviews; national rankings

### **Research and Scholarship**

The College of Arts and Sciences reaffirms its strong commitment to the continued importance of research and other scholarly activity by its faculty. Not only are research and scholarship important in the generation of new knowledge and the application of knowledge to the development of new solutions to problems faced by our society, but research and scholarship are also essential to the teaching mission of the College. Teaching and learning are more effective when they are informed by the latest developments in the discipline, and students are stimulated to learn when their classroom instruction includes up-to-date applications of knowledge to problems they face in their everyday lives.

In the most recent rating of U.S. colleges and universities by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Higher Education, the University of South Alabama was designated as a "Doctoral Research Intensive" institution. This ranking places the University in an elite group of research universities comprising only seven percent of all institutions in the country. USA's elevation to the status of research university reflects an ongoing commitment by the University's

administration and faculty to encourage and support research. While the Carnegie Foundation's ratings are based largely on the level of extramural funding obtained by an institution's faculty, the commitment of the College of Arts and Sciences to research and scholarship extends far beyond the competition for extramural grants and contracts and includes all forms of scholarship, whether funded or not.

The College of Arts and Sciences will provide all available support, including financial resources, to encourage and foster the research and scholarly activities of its faculty. The College will strive to increase the level of research activity, including, but not limited to, the level of extramural funding obtained by the faculty. It will encourage and promote the publication of the results of that research in appropriate academic and professional forums.

In addition, the College will recognize and support other forms of scholarly and professional activities, including performances, exhibitions, musical compositions, and similar endeavors. It will also promote contributions to professional organizations that enhance the scholarly potential of the individual and of the faculty as a whole.

Specific initiatives by which the College will promote and support faculty research are set forth in this section of the Strategic Plan.

**Goal 1.**

**The College will increase the quality and quantity of faculty research, scholarship and creative activity by providing additional funds and various other types of support.**

Strategy 1: The College will provide increased support for start-up costs for new faculty.

Time frame: ongoing

Estimated cost: initially, up to \$50,000 per year

Assessment: grant proposals and publications by new faculty; surveys of new faculty regarding needs and perceptions of support available

Strategy 2: The College will review and award reassigned time to encourage active faculty research.

Time frame: beginning Fall 2001

Estimated cost: possible costs for additional reassigned time beyond

that currently budgeted for the College

Assessment: grant proposals and publications by faculty

Strategy 3: The College will subsidize journals produced or edited by College faculty.

Time frame: beginning Spring 2001

Estimated cost: initially, up to \$10,000 per year

Assessment: publication record

Strategy 4: The College will increase support for faculty travel to conferences and other professional meetings.

Time frame: beginning Fall 2001

Estimated cost: initially, up to \$25,000 per year

Assessment: travel and attendance figures

Strategy 5: The College will support conferences and symposia hosted in the greater Mobile area by College departments and programs.

Time frame: beginning Fall 2001

Estimated cost: initially, up to \$10,000 per year

Assessment: tally of conferences and symposia

Strategy 6: The College will support the activities of on-campus scholarly organizations such as Sigma Xi, the Humanities Colloquium and the Gender Studies Colloquium.

Time frame: beginning Fall 2001

Estimated cost: initially, \$1,000 - \$2,000 per year

Assessment: tally of presentations and other events

Strategy 7: The College will ensure the highest standards of ethical conduct and research integrity for all research activities engaged in by its faculty and students. It will require full compliance with all applicable federal, state and

University regulations and policies in the conduct of research.

Time frame: ongoing

Estimated cost: no additional cost

Assessment: periodic surveys; Institutional Review Board and Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee oversight; verification of compliance with educational and other requirements

## **Goal 2.**

**The College will promote interdisciplinary research by teams of faculty including one or more members of the College faculty.**

Strategy 1: The College will provide additional reassigned time for up to ten courses each year for faculty to prepare grant proposals for extramural funding for research involving interdisciplinary teams, at least one of whom is a member of the College faculty

Time frame: beginning Fall 2001

Estimated cost: initially, up to \$20,000 per year

Assessment: number of proposals submitted; number funded; survey of faculty attitudes toward collaborative research

Strategy 2: The College will develop a Faculty Interest Profile compiling information about faculty research interests and expertise, to facilitate cooperative research ventures. The Faculty Interest Profile will be available to all University faculty on the College web page.

Time frame: Fall 2001

Estimated cost: no additional cost

Assessment: use of Profile to identify potential research collaborators; faculty response and participation

### Goal 3.

**The College will explore the possibility of establishing interdisciplinary centers and institutes to promote faculty scholarship and service activities.**

Strategy 1: The College will solicit volunteers, including faculty from other colleges, for committees to develop proposals for interdisciplinary centers in the following areas:

Ethics  
Gulf Coast Studies  
Religious Studies  
Gerontology and Intergenerational Studies  
Classical Studies  
Psychology and Juvenile Justice  
Youth and Family Behavior  
Cognitive and Perceptual Neuroscience  
Atmospheric Oceanic Modeling  
Preparatory Music/Theater Program  
Gulf Area International Exchange

Time frame: beginning Fall 2001

Estimated cost: no initial monetary cost; faculty time will be required to produce program proposals

Assessment: evaluate proposals submitted for approval

### Service

Service is an important part of the Mission of the University of South Alabama. As a public institution, the University is committed to applying the benefits of higher education to the solution of problems and the improvement of the quality of life in the surrounding community, and throughout society.

Service takes many forms, and there are countless opportunities for the College of Arts and Sciences to participate in the service activities of the University. It is important to recognize the role of higher education in preparing students to contribute to the society in which they live. Our service mission should stress the application of knowledge in ways that take advantage of the research, scholarship and creative accomplishments of our faculty and students.

Students and faculty are expected to incorporate service into their educational and professional lives. They may work with local agencies in the Greater Mobile area to provide expert or professional assistance and support that will benefit members of the community, the State of Alabama, or the Gulf Coast region. They may work with professional organizations to promote activities that will benefit the discipline and foster the continued growth of knowledge and its application to society's needs. And, of course, they are expected to provide assistance to various groups, organizations and committees within the University of South Alabama to assure the smooth and successful administrative functions necessary to the University's operation.

Some specific service goals and strategies are listed below.

### **Goal 1**

**The College will encourage and support activities that will benefit the Greater Mobile community, especially by providing educational opportunities beyond those available in traditional K-12 settings.**

Strategy 1: The College will provide financial support for service activities by faculty in supplementing the educational opportunities available to local K-12 students. Examples of ongoing projects include Science in Motion, Physics is Fundamental, the Mobile Math Circle, the Mobile International Festival, and the Mobile Science Fair. New initiatives will be sought in developing an after-school music conservatory and a music summer camp.

Time frame: beginning Fall 2001

Estimated cost: to be determined

Assessment: number of children participating, number of new initiatives generated

Strategy 2: The College will encourage faculty participation in leadership roles in professional associations and civic organizations. Where feasible, the College will provide financial support and/or reassigned time to enable faculty to undertake additional responsibilities, such as serving as an officer of a national professional association, editing an association newsletter, etc.

Time frame: immediately

Estimated cost: to be determined

Assessment: increased faculty participation

Strategy 3: The College will explore the possibility of adding a service-learning requirement to the general education curriculum, thereby encouraging undergraduate students to integrate community involvement into their educational experience.

Time frame: Fall 2001

Estimated cost: no initial cost

Assessment: increased student participation in service activities;  
student attitudes survey

### Other College Initiatives

There are a number of activities that the College of Arts and Sciences will undertake or explore that do not neatly fall into the categories of teaching and learning, research or service. These are important for the future of the College, and are therefore included in the Strategic Plan.

### **Goal 1**

**The College will seek ways to promote its public image and to make the public aware of the variety of programs and excellence of its instructional and research activities.**

Strategy 1: The College will revise and maintain its web site, and each department within the College will revise and update its departmental web site.

Time frame: beginning Fall 2001

Estimated cost: no additional cost

Assessment: evaluation of new web sites

Strategy 2: The College will produce and distribute a newsletter to faculty, staff, students and alumni, that will inform the public of some of our significant achievements.

Time frame: beginning Fall 2001

Estimated cost: initially, \$5,000 - \$10,000 per year

Assessment: evaluation of newsletter

- Strategy 3: The College will produce and distribute an annual report summarizing its accomplishments over the previous year.
- Time frame: Fall 2001
- Estimated cost: initially, \$2,000 per year
- Assessment: evaluation of annual report
- Strategy 4: The College will work closely with the University Office of Public Relations to increase the coverage of College achievements in the press, on radio and television, and in other media.
- Time frame: ongoing
- Estimated cost: no additional cost
- Assessment: number and breadth of coverage of College events
- Strategy 5: The College will offer awards for outstanding faculty achievement in research, teaching and service. It will explore the possibility of additional teaching and research awards for junior faculty in recognition of their achievements over a shorter period of time.
- Time frame: beginning Fall 2001
- Estimated cost: initially \$3,000 per year
- Assessment: increased public awareness, increased faculty interest
- Strategy 6: The College will seek to promote public recognition of the strength of its academic programs and the quality of its undergraduate students through the acquisition of a campus chapter of Phi Beta Kappa, the national honorary society.
- Time frame: application to be submitted Fall 2003
- Estimated cost: application fee \$500; site visit (if selected) \$2,500; other costs to be determined
- Assessment: awarding of chapter by national organization

Strategy 7: The College will bring to campus noted scholars with national and international reputations to enhance the learning experience and promote and encourage research activities by faculty and students, including special lectures and symposia, writers and artists in residence, and similar opportunities outside the traditional classroom setting.

Time frame: beginning Fall 2001

Estimated cost: at least \$10,000 per year, with the possibility of subsidies from USA Foundation endowed professorship accounts

Assessment: number and quality of events

Strategy 8: The College will explore the possibility of acquiring an FM radio station and/or community access cable public television facilities, to be operated under the auspices of the Communication Department.

Time frame: feasibility study to be undertaken by Spring 2002

Estimated cost: no initial cost; future costs and sources of funding to be determined

Assessment: initial report on feasibility

## **Goal 2**

**The College will engage in various fund raising activities to obtain additional financial support for its instructional, research and service programs.**

Strategy 1: The College will develop and implement an annual fund campaign to seek gifts from alumni and other supporters of the College.

Time frame: first annual fund campaign held Spring 2001

Estimated cost: initially \$5,000 per year

Assessment: expand donor list; amount raised

Strategy 2: The College will seek funds to support undergraduate scholarships and graduate student assistantships to enable it to attract and retain top quality students.

Time frame: ongoing  
Estimated cost: to be determined  
Assessment: increase in available funds

Strategy 3: The College will launch a capital campaign to raise funds for targeted projects to improve its academic programs and facilities.

Time frame: not later than 2005  
Estimated cost: to be determined  
Assessment: amount raised

Strategy 4: The College will seek funds to provide for up to five fully endowed faculty positions, in addition to those positions currently budgeted, in areas of special need.

Time frame: not later than 2006  
Estimated cost: to be determined  
Assessment: number of endowed chairs

### **Goal 3**

**The College will assess its growing needs for additional space and facilities and will seek ways to provide for the needs of the faculty to achieve success in teaching and research.**

Strategy 1: The College will conduct an audit of the space utilization and needs of its academic programs to identify areas of strength and weakness.

Time frame: beginning Fall 2001  
Estimated cost: no additional cost  
Assessment: completion of audit

Strategy 2: The College will seek ways to provide additional space for existing programs that have outgrown their current facilities, or for which adequate space and facilities are not currently available. These include the following: Arts and Sciences museum; art gallery; graphic design classrooms for

Department of Art; rehearsal and storage areas for Department of Dramatic Arts; enlarged facilities for USA Polling Group; expanded space for Psychological Clinic; expanded space for Center for Archaeological Studies; space for relocation of Department of Military Science; additional laboratory space and possibly radio and television studio space for Department of Communication; multimedia teaching laboratory facilities for Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures.

Time frame: beginning Fall 2001

Estimated cost: to be determined

Assessment: improvement and expansion of facilities

#### **Goal 4**

**The College will promote diversity among its faculty, staff and students in order to strengthen the quality of the educational experience for students, provide role models for minority and women students enrolled in its academic programs, and serve underrepresented segments of the population in the city, state, and region.**

Strategy 1: The College will comply with all applicable University requirements and guidelines in its hiring practices and will seek to identify and recruit qualified minority and women candidates for faculty positions.

Time frame: ongoing

Estimated cost: no additional cost

Assessment: percentage of minority and women faculty

Strategy 2: The College will seek to recruit and retain qualified minority students, and will seek ways to provide increased financial support for all students with demonstrated need.

Time frame: ongoing

Estimated cost: to be determined

Assessment: percentage of minority and women students; level of financial aid and scholarships available

Strategy 3: The College will seek to expand academic programs that address issues

related to human diversity, such as African-American Studies, Gender Studies, and Gerontology.

Time frame: ongoing

Estimated cost: to be determined

Assessment: student surveys; student enrollment

## **Goal 5**

**The College will improve the quality of its programs by providing incentives to departments and programs that are able to document their current quality and to provide plans for improvement.**

Strategy 1: The College will couple resource allocation to assessment of quality. Requests for additional resources will be linked to plans for assessing the results of the application of those new resources.

Time frame: beginning Fall 2001

Estimated cost: no additional cost

Assessment: program reviews

Strategy 2: The College will consider the allocation of faculty lines to attain the goals articulated in this Strategic Plan. Each year the College Strategic Planning Committee will consider the current priorities of the College and weigh those priorities in the determination of how vacant faculty lines should be allocated, taking into account financial resources available, student demand, program quality, and the opportunities to achieve excellence.

Time frame: beginning Fall 2001

Estimated cost: no additional cost

Assessment: program reviews

Strategy 3: The College will develop a faculty mentoring program for all new faculty.

Time frame: beginning Fall 2001

Estimated cost: no new cost

Assessment: assessments of teaching effectiveness, grant proposals and publications, and service activities by new faculty

## **Goal 6**

**The College will seek ways to incorporate the viewpoints and take advantage of the expertise of members of the community who are not formally affiliated with the University.**

Strategy 1: The College will appoint a Committee of Visitors who will serve as an external advisory board to provide advice and assistance to the College in a variety of areas, including: developing partnerships with community businesses and civic organizations; identifying opportunities for service and outreach; identifying academic programs of potential interest to members of the community, particularly those who are not within the demographic profile of our traditional students; and providing advice and assistance in our development, fund raising and alumni relations activities.

Time frame: by Fall 2002

Estimated cost: to be determined

Assessment: formation of committee

## **Summary and Conclusions**

The purpose of strategic planning is to provide the foundation for decisions concerning the future of the College of Arts and Sciences and to serve as a guide for allocating resources. This Strategic Plan identifies issues and areas of concern and will be used to establish priorities and strategies for action to solve problems and improve the quality of the services we provide. It defines the goals toward which the College should be working, and a mechanism for assessing how well the College is doing in achieving those goals.

In developing this Strategic Plan, our goal is to create a continuous process for self-improvement, both short- and long-term. This process will allow broader participation in the governance of the College, it will increase the sharing of information among faculty, students and staff, it will provide opportunities for input into decisions on resource allocation, and it will establish the basis for successful fund raising and development activities.

The College invites your comments on this Strategic Plan, which may be submitted in writing to the Office of the Dean, College of Arts and Sciences, HUMB 118, University of South Alabama, Mobile AL36688, or by email to the Dean at [jfriedl@usmail.usouthal.edu](mailto:jfriedl@usmail.usouthal.edu).

October 22, 2001