

University of Hartford
Five-year Academic Strategic Plan
2009-2014

Vision: *To inspire Inquiry, Imagination, and Leadership*

Mission: *As a private university with a public purpose, we prepare students to acquire the knowledge, skills, and values necessary to thrive and be engaged in a pluralistic, complex world. Our academic community of faculty, staff, and students forms a dynamic, interdisciplinary learning environment that arises from outstanding teaching, innovative research, scholarship, and creative attainment. We are committed to the personal attention associated with a small college, enhanced by the expertise, breadth, and intellectual excitement of a university. Diversity of every sort is integral to our academic mission, along with connections to local, national, and global communities.*

I. Goal #1: *To recruit and retain a diverse academic community who will embrace our mission.*

A. Faculty

1. Recruit and retain high-achieving full- and part-time faculty members who will embrace our mission.

- a. Reference our academic mission in all faculty job advertisements.
- b. Require candidates during their interview to address the ways in which they will contribute to the University's academic mission.
- c. Place the academic mission in a prominent location on the University's web site.
- d. Maintain a fund for competitive compensation offers to exceptional full-time faculty candidates.
- e. Provide start-up packages for new full-time faculty members to support their research and professional development.
- f. Set a specific five-year goal for raising our full-time faculty salaries, using CUPA data as a benchmark.
- g. Work with Institutional Advancement to target areas for Endowed Faculty Chairs.
- h. Develop a five-year plan to increase minimum salaries for part-time faculty.

2. Improve the ratio of students to faculty.

- a. Lower the current ratio of full-time faculty to FTE students from 1/18 to 1/17.
- b. Continue to support use of regular part-time faculty.

3. Increase faculty diversity.

- a. Increase the number of Jackie McLean Fellows.
- b. Rotate the cluster of disciplines in the McLean Fellowship among academic areas, based in part on anticipated faculty needs.
- c. Assess needs for increased diversity in specific academic units.
- d. Develop a diversity tool kit for use in faculty searches.
- e. Maintain and publicize financial support for initiatives designed to increase faculty diversity.
- f. Develop a tracking system to assess strategies for attracting a more diverse candidate pool.
- g. Develop a web page that highlights the diversity of the Hartford region.

4. Support faculty development for instructional effectiveness and for a wide range of research, scholarship, and creative activities.

- a. Create an instructional support program for new college teachers and an instructional development program for all faculty.
- b. Increase faculty development funding as necessary, so that each college has a faculty development pool of \$1000 per full-time faculty member, and increase the minimum pool for faculty development over time to keep pace with inflation.
- c. Ensure that part-time faculty are invited to participate in University-sponsored faculty development activities.
- d. Provide opportunities for part-time faculty to participate in the life of their departments and colleges.
- e. Grow scholarship, creative endeavors, and externally funded projects as means of enhancing the recognition and reputation of the University.

B. Academic Staff

1. Recruit and retain high-achieving academic staff members who will embrace our mission.

- a. Reference our academic mission in all staff job advertisements.
- b. Require candidates during their interview to address the ways in which they will contribute to the University's academic mission.
- c. Place the academic mission in a prominent spot on the University's web site.
- d. Provide competitive salaries, opportunities for advancement, and recognition of achievement for new and existing academic staff members.

2. Increase the diversity of the academic staff.

- a. Require that all advertisements for academic staff contain the same diversity-friendly language that is currently required in all advertisements for faculty positions.
- b. Develop specific strategies tailored to departments and disciplines for attracting a more diverse applicant pool for academic staff positions.
- c. Develop a web page that highlights the diversity of the Hartford region.

3. Support professional development for academic staff.

- a. Work with Human Resources Development to investigate and implement staff development workshops appropriate to the needs of academic staff.
- b. Ensure that a professional development plan is part of the annual performance review for academic staff.

C. Students

1. Recruit and retain students who have high potential and will thrive in the context of our vision and mission.

- a. Infuse the academic mission and vision into recruiting materials.
- b. Make the academic mission and vision prominent on the University web site.
- c. Continue to improve first-year orientation activities, including consideration of more cross-college common experiences.
- d. Work with the Freshman Success Center to create an event that honors outstanding performance by first-year students.
- e. Work with Student Affairs to create an academic component to the Sophomore Retreat.
- f. Develop a comprehensive approach to orientation and retention of transfer students.
- g. Work with Institutional Advancement to create endowed scholarships targeted at students who exemplify our mission and vision.
- h. Develop graduate student orientation at the program and university levels.

- 2. Help students with placement opportunities and/or with furthering their education.**
 - a. Work collaboratively with Career Services to identify activities appropriate to programs and disciplines.

- 3. Continue to increase student diversity in targeted areas.**
 - a. Conduct an inventory of each college or academic unit to determine racial, ethnic, gender, and other forms of student diversity.
 - b. Set targets for improving or maintaining diversity in each college or academic unit.
 - c. Work with Admission and Graduate Admission on recruiting strategies to meet the targets.
 - d. Study and implement retention strategies in targeted areas.
 - e. Work with Institutional Advancement to create endowed scholarships targeted at specific areas of diversity.

II. Goal #2: *To build and maintain high-quality academic programs.*

A. Undergraduate Curriculum

1. Maintain the centrality of liberal education in all academic programs.

- a. Curriculum
 - 1) Establish core liberal learning outcomes for all undergraduate students, including opportunities to expand civic and global awareness.
 - 2) Improve curricular connections between professional courses and liberal arts content through increasing learning communities and incorporating liberal education identifying themes.
- b. Publications
 - 1) Ensure that each degree program will include, in curricular materials, catalogues, and web sites, the liberal education courses and the rationale for their being part of the program.
- c. Advising
 - 1) Include an orientation to liberal education in first-year orientation.
 - 2) Conduct workshops for advisors and all faculty on the value and integration of liberal education.
- d. Admissions
 - 1) Ensure that admissions materials include information on liberal education and its role in all programs.
- e. Faculty
 - 1) Consider contributions to liberal education in hiring and review of faculty.

2. Develop assessment methods for both core learning and discipline-specific outcomes and use the results to improve curricular and instructional effectiveness.

- a. Use the Core Learning Outcomes Committee to develop ways of assessing student learning for each of these core outcomes in all undergraduate degree programs.
- b. Work with schools and colleges as needed to ensure that learning outcomes and assessment methods have been identified.
- c. Procure a data management program suited for the above assessment activity.
- d. Assure that all assessment activity provides feedback to the programs to make improvements in the areas of curricular and instructional effectiveness.
- e. Incorporate review of assessment data into the program review process.*

3. Increase student engagement.

- a. Continue to use the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) to assess our successes and areas for development.**
- b. Increase significantly faculty development activities with appropriate faculty incentives that are focused on improving student engagement, including, but not limited to:
 - 1) Collaborative learning approaches
 - 2) Appropriate technology in and out of the classroom
 - 3) Increase/improvement of writing assignments
 - 4) Increase/improvement of internships and community service activities.

*This effort will also prepare the University for NEASC re-accreditation expectations to develop clear learning outcomes and assessment throughout the curriculum, as well as address general education regulations of the State of Connecticut for all baccalaureate programs.

**NSSE, administered in 2006 and underway again in 2009, identifies the level of student engagement in a wide range of classroom and outside-of-classroom learning activities. NSSE compares University of Hartford results to peer and national results.

B. Graduate Curriculum

- 1. Develop program-specific assessment methods to measure student competencies and use the results to improve curricular and instructional effectiveness.**
 - a. Use existing accreditation standards or newly created learning outcomes and methods of assessment as needed.
 - b. Procure a data management system suited to the assessment.
 - c.
- 2. Assure that all assessment activity provides feedback to the programs to make improvements in curriculum and instruction.**
- 3. Use the program review process to ensure that graduate programs have the following elements, appropriate to their discipline and level:**
 - a. Coursework that
 - 1) Is up-to-date and in depth.
 - 2) Is presented in a manner that stimulates analysis, synthesis, and creativity.
 - 3) Prepares professionals to understand the social context of their work and ethical responsibilities of their professions.
 - b. Options for practical training, including
 - 1) Preparation for College Teaching
 - a) Expand current University resources to deliver pedagogical training for graduate students.
 - b) At the program level, provide teaching experience for graduate students where appropriate.
 - 1) Research
 - a) Provide formal and informal instruction on research methods for graduate students in all graduate programs and assign independent research projects where appropriate.
 - 3) Internships
 - a) Provide opportunity for internships in all non-thesis track degree programs.
 - b) Include regular seminars to address issues that arise in the workplace.
 - c. Culminating Event
 - 1) Provide integrated assessment of individual student learning and overall program instruction.
- 4. Establish and maintain contact with graduate alumni**

C. Degree Programs

1. Develop and support mission-centered degree programs that are, or that have the demonstrated potential to be, high quality, mission-centered, and financially viable.

- a. Create a new program investment fund that supports the exploration and development of new academic degree programs.
- b. Using the New Program Review, specifically the preliminary review process, identify promising proposals and, where necessary, propose a budget that could include items such as program and market research, expert consultants, and other related expenses.

2. Commit resources for accreditation initiatives.

- a. Initiate better planning and budgeting to handle the dozens of accreditation reviews, report, and visits.

3. Develop interdisciplinary experiences, encourage diverse perspectives, and support opportunities to apply knowledge and skills through local, national, and international educational connections.

- a. Promote the creation of new interdisciplinary majors and minors that make use of the rich variety of existing majors and programs.*
- b. Develop international experiences imbedded in appropriate majors or courses, such as interdisciplinary, team-led, short-term study abroad experiences.
- c. Develop interdisciplinary service learning experiences, both cross-disciplinary and cross-college.
- d. Revitalize the All-University Curriculum courses in four of the interdisciplinary breadth categories.**

4. Encourage interdisciplinary graduate research projects.

*Examples of existing interdisciplinary majors: Multimedia Web Design and Development, International Studies, Gender Studies, Acoustics and Music.

**The fifth breadth category, “Living in a Scientific and Technological World,” has been revitalized, with the addition of three new interdisciplinary courses: “Issues of Health and Society—Weighing In,” “Forensic Science from Crime to Courtroom,” and “Assessing Complementary and Alternative Medicine.”

D. Non-degree Programs

- 1. Develop new non-degree academic programs and support existing programs that are, or that have the demonstrated potential to be, high quality, mission-centered, and financially viable.**
 - a. Create a new program investment fund that supports the exploration and development of new non-degree academic programs.
 - b. Using the New Program Review, specifically the preliminary review process, identify promising proposals and, where necessary, propose a budget that could include items such as program and market research, expert consultants, and other related expenses.
 - c. Develop connections between degree and non-degree programs when both programs will be potentially enhanced by the relationship.
 - d. Assign to an individual the responsibility for non-degree activity, including assessing financial viability and content of programs and workshops.

- E. Develop standards and processes for a comparative review of all academic programs to identify those that do not contribute sufficiently to the mission, academic quality, distinctiveness, or financial viability of the University, including the possibility of program elimination.**

III. Goal #3: *To develop and employ a state-of-the-art academic infrastructure.*

A. Academic Community

- 1. Demonstrate we are a welcoming community that engages in and expresses our values openly.**
 - a. Develop and implement a semester-long new academic staff orientation.
 - 1) Include sessions on benefits, professional development opportunities, and academic mission and environment of the University.
 - 2) Provide opportunities for social networking with current faculty and staff.
 - b. Add and promote academic activities at Community Day.
 - c. Engage the academic community in dialogue once Values Committee report is published.
- 2. Create a University Teaching and Learning Center to expand the roles and responsibilities of the Faculty Center for Learning Development (FCLD).**

3. Increase the visibility of high-achieving faculty and successful academic programs.

- a. Appoint faculty contacts to work with assigned staff members from the Office of Communication.
- b. Invite Office of Communication staff to faculty meetings or other events where external communication efforts are discussed.
- c. Create, maintain, and share with Office of Communication lists of “content experts” who will be available to answer questions from the media.
- d. Create, maintain, and share with Office of Communication lists of “academic stories” involving faculty, students, and programs that can be used by the media in fast-breaking news stories.

4. Commit to developing a green and sustainable campus through responsible use of human, physical, and fiscal resources.

- a. Create a sustainability task force to coordinate sustainability efforts across campus.

5. Identify and promote best practices related to administration and organization of academic units.

- a. Evaluate the structure of the academic staff and determine whether that structure maximizes the academic units’ ability to serve the needs of the University community.
- b. Review faculty course loads and assess if faculty carrying administrative responsibilities are able to develop fully as teachers and scholars.

B. Learning Environment

1. Support versatile learning spaces matched to a variety of pedagogical approaches.

- a. Traditional Classrooms
 - 1) Inventory current general and dedicated classrooms and the technology and furniture in those spaces and determine pedagogical needs for each course delivered on campus (i.e., computer hardware, other equipment, furniture).
 - 2) Assign classrooms according to enrollment and pedagogical need.
 - 3) Form a standing committee that develops and implements a regular schedule for the increase, replacement, and update of classroom technology and furniture.

- a. Cyber Classrooms
 - 1) Identify, inventory, and promote use of synchronous internet-broadcast facilities on and off campus.
 - 2) Continue to support the effort to stimulate faculty interest in developing on-line courses, CEU, academic certificates, and degree programs.
 - b. Other Learning Environments
 - 1) Promote and provide the support for faculty who want to expand their courses beyond a lecture format (e.g., service learning projects, green demonstrations, trips abroad).
 - 2) Identify and promote among the faculty the use of currently available collaborative learning spaces (e.g., library C-pods).
 - 3) Include collaborative learning space in any new construction or renovation of campus buildings.
 - 4) Promote and facilitate professional internships for undergraduate and graduate students.
 - 5) Create individual or interdisciplinary demonstrations to make the University and larger community aware of environmental issues.
 - 6) Create a wireless campus.
- 2. Evaluate and support the offices, institutes, and centers that have a direct involvement with the academic mission.**
- a. Create a process to evaluate and approve proposals for new academic offices, institutes, and centers.
 - b. Design, schedule, and run reviews of academically-oriented offices, centers, and institutes.
- 3. Maintain a vibrant University library with the collections, digital access, educational technologies, and staff essential for research, scholarship, and creative activity.**
- a. Provide databases for faculty and student research.
 - b. Subscribe to more electronic versions of reference materials and professional journals.
 - c. Coordinate curriculum changes, faculty hiring, and research to library resources.
 - d. Create more collaborative learning spaces within the library.