

Six Strategic Goals for the Smith Curriculum

A Joint Report for CMP from CAP and the Curriculum Working Group
October 2, 2015 (Revised October 11 to integrate with other Working Group reports)

Through a series of separate and joint meetings, CAP and the Curriculum Working Group evaluated, synthesized, and prioritized the proposals sent to us from CMP. We created six potential strategic goals for the Smith curriculum. **The top priorities identified by our two groups are in green, followed by intersections with other working groups in bold.** Ideally, faculty, staff, and students will share in these goals, which span disciplines and institutional roles. Each curricular goal has a different underlying motivation for ensuring our shared future: flexibility, survival, aspiration, understanding, creativity, and innovation.

1. Create more dynamic learning communities (flexibility)

- 23 [Expanded] Provost's Curricular, Research, and Program Innovation Fund: We imagine significant awards (25-50K level of annual funding) framed in terms of implementation, experimentation, and assessment rather than development of ideas. High benefit/medium cost, assuming 1-2 awards every 2-3 years at the highest level, plus lower level awards more frequently. Currently being piloted as the Provost's "New Directions" Awards. Also listed below at #6.
- Expand the Concentrations as highly effective structures for linking applied learning with academic learning. CMP received multiple proposed Concentrations: 47 International Justice Systems Concentration, 48 Peace and Conflict Concentration, 49 Public Health Concentration, 197 Critical Disability Studies Program / Concentration. These should be wrapped into CAP's work and concentrations planning. Note, though, that a mechanism for creating concentrations already exists. In the end, there must be faculty interest to create and sustain a new concentration.
- **Other working groups have proposals that integrate with the priorities highlighted in green above:**
 - Create a classroom master plan for flexibly evolving, pedagogically-driven learning spaces and invest in renovations (Classrooms Group)
 - Make research opportunities more flexible and universally available for students by increasing investment in SURF and new research pilots. (Research Group)
- 52 Placement exam expansion: Increase consistency in how we test out of exams/give AP credit. We saw this as a "just do it", beginning with a discussion at the CAP policy subgroup.
- 19 Non-Departmental and Collaborative Honors. Creates more flexible options for honors projects. The primary cost is in advising and student time; otherwise, low cost and potentially high benefit. To be discussed by CAP policy committee.
- Multiple proposals proposed using J-Term more effectively. To be discussed by the CAP Policy Committee.

2. Foster sustainable, just communities (survival)

- 140 Building resilience: Solving wicked problems in a changing world. We want more specificity from this proposal but we could imagine 140 as a truly strategic priority with its lack of specificity providing freedom to synthesize many proposals under one umbrella. **CMP should review the Sustainability Working Group comments and consider combining most of these into a single set of initiatives.** The following also should be grouped with this 141 Confronting complex socio-ecological problems effectively; 145 Linking environmental science with education and international involvement; 87 Environmental Leadership Projects.
- 152 Science, culture, and practice and 186 Science, Culture, Practice: Studies in the Environment at Smith: Recommendations to combine studies in the environment at Smith. Low cost / high benefit. CAP is currently facilitating conversations to learn what the programs see as potential value for integrating. Note that space should not be seen as an essential part of this; CEEDS already has that aspect.
- 99 Science in the Public Domain: CAP will investigate how to integrate this into the curriculum and Praxis.
- 146 Latin honors or core curriculum in environmental literacy, 51 Social Justice Latin Honors Requirement. Low cost but low marginal benefit as well.

3. Navigate a rapidly-changing globally networked society (understanding)

- 122 Digital/Media Studies and 85 Media and Digital Studies: This is in progress and remains a priority re growing a) faculty expertise across disciplines and b) strengthening staff partnerships with faculty around emerging technology.
- 15 Visual Literacy at Smith: This is an “essential capacity” proposal that fits under three of our headers. Potentially low cost / high benefit to claiming this capacity since so many aspects of our curriculum do this.
- *The Global working group has proposals that integrate with the priorities highlighted in green above.*

4. Critically evaluate and apply data to solve human problems (aspiration)

- 63 Investigating Big Data across the Curriculum: Teaching students to investigate big data across the disciplines is a strategic curricular for Smith; the ability to critically analyze large corpora of many kinds will matter to professionals in every field for the future. We should make faculty hiring in this area a priority for the next 5 years. High-performance computing needs that would support this should be viewed as “perimeter initiative” – i.e., we should seek to facilitate access for our students and faculty to the Amherst facility that is being developed, rather than build this capacity in-house.
- 46 Encouraging women into computer science, 148 Enhancing spatial analysis literacy within ES&P curriculum, 163 Placing Space @ Smith - Enabling Spatial Studies, 184 Five College Shared Position, 164 Smith Sports and Space, 165 Spatial Humanities: all of these are GIS initiatives, spanning staff, curriculum, and faculty resource commitments that would expand spatial analysis at Smith. This area strikes CAP as a promising nexus of interests at Smith for curricular and faculty research development.
- 15 Visual Literacy at Smith: This is an “essential capacity” proposal that fits under three of our headers. Potentially low cost high benefit to claiming this capacity since so many aspects of our curriculum do this.

5. Build creative capacities as makers, creators, and innovators (creativity)

- 5 Creative Writing Program: Not a strategic direction but a *just do it*. A proposal is coming to CAP from the English Department for a track in English and for related positions.
- 15 Visual Literacy at Smith: This is an “essential capacity” proposal that fits under three of our headers. Potentially low cost high benefit to claiming this capacity since so many aspects of our curriculum do this.
- **The Creative Campus working group proposals dominate this category.** Of these, Office of the Creative Arts may have the highest impact for lowest cost, assuming we could gather and integrate existing human and other resources on the model of the Science Center, and reap cross-divisional benefits for creative fields as a result. These might include: economies of effort from more integrated arts programming, better visibility for creative arts, broader fundraising and grant-making efforts for a wide range of fields that encourage creativity in all modes, and stronger self-identification among our graduates as pioneers and innovators, qualities our undergraduate population self-selects for.

6. Generate new knowledge through purposeful inquiry (innovation)

- 23 [Expanded] Provost's Curricular, Research, and Program Innovation Fund: We imagine significant awards (25-50K level of annual funding) framed in terms of implementation, experimentation, and assessment rather than development of ideas. High benefit/medium cost, assuming 1-2 awards every 2-3 years at the highest level, plus lower level awards more frequently. Currently being piloted as the Provost's “New Directions” Awards. See above #1.
- **The Research Experiences Group has proposals that integrate with #23: making research opportunities more flexible and universally available for students by increasing investment in SURF and new research pilots.**
- 105 5-Year BA/MS in the Life Sciences: CAP will investigate.

Do not pursue as proposed

- 102 Anatomy and Physiology. Not a strategic initiative. Low number of students affected. The Dean's office will work with UMass to have them accept our students. They have the capacity to meet the need.
- 104 Experimental Majors. Students have this freedom already. The proposal would offer incremental gains only.
- 43 Translation Center. Should be included under a bigger umbrella (e.g., translation concentration). Note that there is already a center at UMass and a translation initiative starting at Mt. Holyoke with which our translations concentration is aligned. The Provost's office will support opportunity for collaboration rather than stand-alone development.
- 130 Reintegrate Astronomy at MacLeish. High cost / low benefit in re the small number of people who would use this.
- 25 Winter Semester. High cost / low benefit in that we are not sure there is sufficient student and faculty demand to make this really worth the effort.
- 82 Unique Collections Visiting Scholars Program and 4 Post-doc visiting program. High cost / low benefit; we already have this and the benefits are highly discipline-specific, so expansion would provide only incremental gains.
- 24 Global Winter. High cost/low benefit. Already a lot of options that are not fully funded. We'd like to see the international experience grants expanded instead.
- 10 Feminist MFA. We think there is a lot of competition in this area and it would be hard to put Smith on the map in this way. We therefore view this as high cost for low benefit.

Other

The following proposals contain position requests, and CAP will consider them separately as part of its position review process this coming year, in the light of CMP's emerging strategic vision:

- 46 Encouraging Women into Computer Science
- 76 Center for Data Sciences
- 122 Digital/Media Studies
- 148 Enhancing spatial analysis literacy within the ES&P curriculum
- 184 Five College shared position in landscape architecture, architecture, regional or urban planning

Respectfully Submitted,

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