

**College of Fine and Applied Arts, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign  
Strategy 2018-2021  
Summary of Goals and Actions**

The college and its units remain dedicated to serving the region, the state, the nation and the world through teaching, scholarly and creative research, and public engagement. In light of growing awareness the arts' role in meeting the world's most urgent challenges, and of the changing conditions of life in an institution of higher education in Illinois, this work requires regular strategic review.

A previous college strategy developed in 2013, saw the realization of a variety of goals planned through the year 2017. In January 2017, the college invited all faculty and staff to a planning meeting to identify new goals for the years ahead. The themes that emerged at this initial gathering served to convene several sub-committees; these then met through Spring 2017, and left recommendations to the college before the academic year's conclusion.

The following summary, accompanied by materials gleaned directly from the committees themselves, represents a synthesis of goals identified by both the strategic planning committees, the Executive Committee, and Administrative Council.

***I. Undergraduate Learning***

Recent years have seen ever greater clarity on the needs our students face, and the strengths we bring to meeting these and other needs emerging at this place and time in higher education. As the schools and departments across FAA work to improve their appropriately distinct disciplinary offerings, we will all work to realize the following goals in curriculum and student experience:

1. Ensure strong and skilled advising for all undergraduate students, with consistent integrated guidance on post-educational and career paths.
2. Create opportunities for credit-bearing, certifiable training in business and entrepreneurship for all FAA students.
3. Develop and deliver a college-managed, large-scale course for non-majors on design methods and processes. (SEE APPENDIX A, item I.)
4. Create a college-managed design minor, accessible to all campus, and geared to utilize existing courses where possible. (SEE APPENDIX A, item II.)
5. Establish courses that fulfill the U.S. Minority Cultures General Education requirement, and explore their coordination as a minor or concentration in race, ethnicity, and aesthetics.

***II. Undergraduate Recruitment and Enrollment***

The success of the college depends on attracting a strong, diverse student body appropriate to the unique potentials of studying the arts at Illinois. In an increasingly competitive field, recruitment and enrollment requires that we start early in building and maintaining relationships with prospective students. Such intentional efforts are also essential to reaching schools from which few have ever attended Illinois or collegiate study in the arts. The following actions will help us not only in securing a sound economic foundation but in better fulfilling our mandate to serve the entire state of Illinois:

1. Connect meaningfully and personally with all accepted undergraduates through their decision process to ensure a good application experience and improved admission yields.
2. Improve scholarship and fellowship opportunities for undergraduate students, with a focus on funding for students from underrepresented groups.
3. Cultivate substantive partnerships and connections with Chicago-area K-12 schools, including a possible summer program for high school students.

### ***III. Structure and Identity***

Each academic unit understandably serves as the more visible face of the university for most students, staff, and faculty. Where the respective missions of the units overlap and draw from shared resources, college administration, governance and processes need to be clear and efficient. Realization of the following goals will help keep the role and work of the college sound, inclusive, and appropriate to the tasks at hand:

1. Ensure clear understanding among faculty and staff of the revised campus budget model, and goals for application of new revenue.
2. Create paths and training for leadership and deeper participation in governance for all faculty, with a special emphasis on women and people of color.
3. Design and implement a new college website.
4. Assess fit of current college name and identity, devise and evaluate possible new names.

### ***IV. Research and Graduate Study***

Research and creative work will continue to be the lifeblood of the college, and in ways that are often distinctively integrated with teaching and public service. From graduate studies to the work of senior professors, FAA personnel are constantly inventing and discovering, bringing invaluable perspectives that colleagues across disciplines outside the college are increasingly hungry to experience. The next four years will see the college achieving the following goals toward remaining responsive to the changing nature of research, and committed to seeing ever more people in contact with the ideas and practices that emerge here:

1. Establish new tuition-earning masters programs in Sustainability, Urban Design, and Design Thinking.
2. Examine the graduate student experience from recruitment through career-placement to ensure quality across contributions from FAA, its academic units, and the Graduate College.
3. Build meaningful cooperation among humanities programs across the college, including shared seminars and co-sponsored events and guests. (See Appendix B.IV)
4. Design and launch a new research center housing labs for interdisciplinary performance, arts-integrative research methods, and public/community partnerships. (see Appendix B. I-III)

**College of Fine and Applied Arts, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign  
Strategy 2018-2021  
Appendices**

**Appendix A: Design Across the Campus**

Contributors: Sears (chair), Benson, Uihlein, Murray, Pokorny, Garcia, Stallmeyer

I. College-Coordinated, Large Scale Course in Design

Develop a FAA coordinated large-scale undergraduate course open to all university students. The course will introduce the methods and processes inherent to design thinking as a method of inquiry, the practice and application of design as well as studying the successful application of these processes through case studies. This course is imagined as primarily a lecture-based, rather than studio-based course, and will include the methods and processes inherent in design as practiced by multiple disciplines within FAA.

*Rationale:*

This course would serve the entire campus undergraduate community, by providing foundation-level knowledge about the design process and its application. Students could apply their experiences from this course to additional FAA coursework in design, and new and existing unit-specific courses across campus.

*Alignment with Emerging Demand:*

In the article, *Design Thinking Comes of Age*, Jon Kolko writes, “There’s a shift under way in large organizations, one that puts design much closer to the center of the enterprise. But the shift isn’t about aesthetics. It’s about applying the principles of design to the way people work.” (Harvard Business Review, September, 2015). The design process offers a framework for managing the complexities of innovation, an understanding increasingly recognized by units across campus. This course would meet the needs of all students and programs who endeavor to structure their existing expertise using the process-based principles of design.

*Alignment with Scholarly Mission(s):*

FAA Design Across Campus would affirm the College’s commitment to interdisciplinary collaborative creative research by providing a venue to disseminate core principles shared by scholars working in the applied arts. This platform would equip students new to the applied arts with creative, generative practices that could be applied to diverse lines of inquiry in other fields. In time, new research opportunities would emerge as an increasing number of students would leverage the processes of design to explore new creative trajectories, and use the fundamental principles of design to advance a diverse range of research questions.

*Financial Sustainability:*

It is anticipated the course would require an academic staff instructor/coordinator and several graduate teaching assistants. If this course were designated as a required course, or as a supporting elective, for a core set of units outside of FAA, the course would generate substantial revenue for the College.

*College/University Benefits:*

A Design Across Campus course is the first step in a series of inter-related initiatives that would allow the university to capitalize on a unique brand of curricular innovation - where the core

principles of design thinking and the design process are used to identify and solve problems in a manner that is applicable to any discipline.

*Outcomes:*

This course will equip students with the ability to apply design methods across a wide spectrum of disciplines across campus, to address real-world, human-centered design challenges. Students will learn to leverage problem-seeking strategies and develop solutions through an iterative design process.

*Learning Objectives:*

1. To understand design process as a method of inquiry.
2. To understand design as a tool for addressing complex contemporary issues
3. To gain fluency in fundamentals of design processes and principles
4. To develop dynamic and interdisciplinary collaborative practices
5. To demonstrate efficacy of design through making and applied simulations.

II. Curriculum for a College-Hosted Design Minor Course Sequence:

Develop a three-tiered course structure for deeper student engagement in design.

- 1) A large-scale FAA-based general course to introduce design methods and process.
- 2) A series of FAA unit-specific courses for initial application of methods and process.
- 3) A series of home unit, discipline-specific design oriented courses.

A potential fourth course could include FAA-unit-specific history/theory seminars, or independent study courses. Other existing introductory course would be used to fill out the requirements for course units for the minor. The selection of the courses would include entry level course from FAA units and allow a student to be introduced to multiple design disciplines.

A selection of existing courses that can be used to fulfill minor requirements:

Arch 171	Design I: Concept and Theories of Architectural Design
Arch 172	Design II: Drawing and Modeling
Arch 210	Introduction to the History of Architecture
ARTF 103	Design I: Color, Communication and 3D
ARTF 105	Design II: Research, Time and 3D Exploration
ARTD 217	Introduction to Graphic Design for Non-Majors
ARTD 222	Typographic Practice
ART 310	Design Thinking (I believe this is a gen. ed)
ART 105	Intro to Design for Non-Majors (8-weeks) (also a gen ed)
LA 101	Introduction to Landscape Architecture
LA 250	Environmental Site Analysis
LA280	Design Communication I
LA281	Design Communication II
LA 314	History of World Landscapes
LA 427	American Vernacular Cultural Landscape
THEA 220	Survey of Design for the Theater

## Appendix B: Center for Arts Research

This new effort will serve as an incubator for faculty-driven research efforts that span multiple units within the college, drawing from shared infrastructure to ensure staff support, visibility, physical space and coordinated pursuit of external resources. Established as a campus peer to efforts as diverse as the Beckman Institute, the Center for Wounded Veterans, or the Illinois Program for Research in the Humanities, the center will facilitate cross-unit explorations that bear strong likelihood of external support and partnerships, while also impacting the student experience for those involved.

There is considerable potential for the development of an Arts Research Center as a part of the College of Fine and Applied Arts at the University of Illinois today. Our college has research-intensive faculty and graduate students across a distinctively wide spectrum from making in performing, visual arts, and industrial and environmental design, to scholarship in the humanities, social and behavioral sciences, and engineering. An institute that draws on this deep and broad well of accomplishment could serve as an incubator for new research, an amplifier for our work, and a conduit connecting our expertise to the wider university, international scholarly communities, and the world beyond the academy.

Four distinct efforts will comprise the center, each reflecting needs identified by strategic working groups in Spring 2017:

- The **Community Lab** will build collective capacity for meaningful, long-term, and resourced relationships with municipalities at urban, rural and regional scales.
- The **Performance Lab** will incubate new work for performance that draws primarily from expertise in Dance, Theatre, and Music, and that brings clear prospects for external presentation.
- The **Methods Lab** will host cohorts of faculty who have identified a shared interdisciplinary research concern spanning scholarship and practice, and that bears examination towards new publication and presentation.
- A new **Graduate Humanities Hub** will provide a more visible base for the college's research-oriented graduate students and their advisors, with an emphasis on the humanities.

What follows are the specific recommendations of four distinct groups, whose ideas form the basis of these four efforts.

### I. Community Lab

Contributors: Hinders, Deal, Greenlee, Rost, Chakraborty, Sullivan, Mortenson, Olshansky

This lab will host cohorts of faculty developing long-term partnerships with municipalities. Though any configuration of units in the college might meaningfully occupy this lab, the pilot effort will be led by Architecture, Landscape Architecture, and Urban and Regional Planning. Together they will build on recent efforts to more formally establish a regular presence in Chicago, which offers a wealth of opportunities as site, subject, and partner for teaching, research, and public engagement.

*Goals for an inaugural effort focused on Chicago:*

- Greater value and impact for its current work in the eyes of the State.
- Enhance capacity to meaningfully engage publics.
- Build connections to alumni.
- Increased visibility for recruiting students, especially from underrepresented groups.

- Improved access for students to practitioners as part of the educational experience.
- Revenue generation through new masters-level programs and courses aimed at professionals in the city.
- Clarified distinctiveness and contribution to the respective disciplines served by the college's units.
- Connection for research to actual on-the-ground projects in a major urban center.
- Improve marketability of current masters programs.
- Advance relationships to the City of Chicago's planning department.

*Principles for a Chicago-focused effort:*

A regular Chicago presence for FAA would be most effective and distinctive as an interdisciplinary venture across Architecture, Landscape Architecture, and Urban and Regional Planning. Increased impact and opportunities for research in Chicago will be key to the longevity and return of any new coordinated efforts; However, in the present economic climate, instructional programming will have to take the lead of any new effort. Finally, as cooperation between the units has not been a regular part of FAA here in Urbana, we should not expect it to happen easily in Chicago. Any planned shared curricular efforts for Chicago should be modeled here as well.

*Steps toward implementation:*

- Explore, test, and evaluate the potential of a regular Summer Pre-College program in Chicago, in cooperation with units across the college.
- Develop a new regularly offered shared studio course here in Urbana with a goal of deploying it regularly in Chicago.
- Finalize a revenue model for supporting a cohort of staff based in Chicago charged with developing partnerships and sponsored opportunities for interdisciplinary studios.
- Coordinate new shared masters degrees across the units to include at least some portion of common coursework in Chicago.

## II. Performance Lab

Contributors: Gunn & Ciofalo (chairs), Anderson, Taylor, Kikta, Miller

*Mission:*

This lab will incubate new interdisciplinary performance work with clear potential for external presentation, and support a robust community of practice intersecting Dance, Theatre, Music, and the Krannert Center. Where the current culture and structure of the College facilitates a host of such efforts that take advantage of the unique faculty, staff, students, and spaces in FAA, this work happens from a largely "grass-roots" level, without strategic coordination of resources across the units. The new lab will facilitate efficient coordination of time, space, and labor across the research, teaching, and engagement work of the three performing arts units and the Krannert Center to help realize ambitious projects conceived from within or with external partners.

*Rationale:*

Krannert Center is already a center for collaboration and new work within the performing arts disciplines and provides programming and curricular support campus-wide, however access to KCPA and the resident producing units is limited to ad hoc encounters and has no systemic support within any specific organization. Integrated creative projects ranging from student-driven performance research to large-scale resident productions to Marquee performances occur now, but often on a one to one basis, making it difficult to schedule, prioritize, fund or publicize. The three major

performing arts disciplines: music, theatre and dance are administered separately, making it even more challenging to collaborate with cross-campus units like engineering, design, and humanities. Faculty members have expressed interest in working more closely together but lack the organizational structure to do so effectively.

Even though the Krannert Center Board of Producers discusses common issues surrounding space, time and resources, those are generally limited to only the performing units and specific to KCPA productions both of the BOP and Marquee events. To further performance art research and create access to KCPA and the performing arts units, we propose a Multi-Arts Performance Lab that can explore and articulate the details and logistics of curricular opportunities that are already occurring as well as create space for new opportunities to be developed.

*Steps toward implementation:*

- Create a board of advisors to develop and implement five-year goals that reflect the aspirations of Dance, Theatre, Music, and the Krannert Center.
- Organize work around calls for proposals, with emphasis on projects with clear external partners and venues.
- Resource the realization of selected projects through coordination of the annual 2-3 weeks “Board of Producers” slots at KCPA.
- Coordinate the dedication of 2-4 hours a week as unscheduled time across Dance, Music, and Theatre for work on Lab projects, hosting of shared events and visitors, or other lab-associated programming designed to connect students, faculty, and staff with the world of interdisciplinary performance.
- Identify at least one “marquee” KCPA artist annually to work on an embedded project with the Lab.
- Develop a new interdisciplinary course shared by the three performing arts units that serves as a key gathering point for the lab.

### III. Methods Lab

Contributors: Solis (Chair), Ruecker, Doussard, Dixon, Monson, Robinson, Shin

The Methods Lab will give groups of faculty time and space to collectively discover, invent, explore, and share new approaches to research and creative production that are uniquely possible at the intersection of scholarship and creative practice.

The College of Fine and Applied Arts is distinct among its peers, bringing together as it does disciplines across the performing and visual arts, and the wide array of industrial, visual, and environmental design fields. As such, the college is explicitly multi-disciplinary: our faculty and graduate students are practitioners of the arts and design, but also humanists, social scientists, and engineers. Many of us engage in interdisciplinary work, and indeed our areas of study and practice are often interdisciplinary as such. Building on this strength, we believe the Methods Lab and the broader work of a new Arts Research Center can bring a greater level of focus to interdisciplinarity in faculty and graduate student research.

On the one hand this will mean more intentionally moving from multi-disciplinarity to interdisciplinary practice. We see this as more than engaging in collaborative work and more than subcontracting out aspects of work beyond a researcher’s specialization. **Rather it involves investigation and an orientation to problems that requires the conceptual, methodological, and material resources of fundamentally distinct world-views.** In foregrounding such approaches, we

see the Methods Lab as tying our research as a college to real world making of the kinds that are at the heart of art and design thinking. On the other hand, the goal of bringing more focus to interdisciplinarity involves lifting up and interpreting to our campus, local, and international constituencies the excellent work of this sort that we already do, as well.

While we see interdisciplinarity as a defining feature of the lab and the center, we also recognize a broad opportunity for the center to support and promote excellent work of all sorts in the arts and design fields. Our work as a college has much to offer to the UIUC campus, to the local and state community, as well as on national and international stages. As practitioners and scholars we toggle back and forth between the infinite and the definite, between the speculative and the concrete. We engage the imagination and the imaginative, and inasmuch as we do so, produce unexpected, transformational results. In the process our research fundamentally enriches communities and points toward deeper levels of human experience. We need an center that grasps this as well as one that grasps the fact that our work often involves critical problem-solving on a more granular level.

*Unmet Needs:*

A Lab focused on methods of interdisciplinary research and and creative work could address several currently unmet needs in developing and promoting the research mission of the College of Fine and Applied Arts—and thereby the UIUC campus as a whole, including:

- Space: it is crucial for this kind of institute to have a space that is dynamic and reconfigurable, and that is welcoming, that will both allow and invite practitioners and scholars to work in proximity to each other.
- Pop-up scheduling: some projects are long-term and ongoing, and can be planned in advance and carried out over the course of the standard academic calendar of semesters, but some are quick, happen on short notice, and do not fit well with departmental schedules. Ideally this institute could facilitate both.
- Teamwork: there is a significant need for both internal and external team-building. We envision international meetings and conferences—both virtual and IRL—as something this institute could help with. Internally this might take the shape of a brown bag or pub night series “pitch a project/join a project,” or something like that, where our colleagues can find each other for new work.
- Fellowship: this is not the same as teamwork, but not unrelated. This institute could provide a space and place that would help build the sense of connection and investment in community that many in our college are looking for, and that we believe is fundamental to the production of good work in arts research.
- Design-thinking: we are interested in the possibility that this institute could help with the move from theory to practice, providing resources to bring speculative work into real applications, making meaningful social change.
- Funds: the lab could be a source of new external grants, and could help make better use of internal funding as a support for securing such resources.
- Permanence: We need a center that will not only serve as a focal point for our research, but also provide an infrastructural means of institutionalizing the processes we engage in.
- Promotion: We need better and more communication about our work to each other, to campus, and to the wider world. While we know that the college, many of our units, and campus all have communications offices, we still think that a formalized lab in the context of a center can extend the visibility and impact of our work in ways none of those offices are tasked with doing.



*Steps toward Implementation:*

First, our discussions led to the clear concern that the activities of an arts research center should not be exclusively aimed at mechanistic, utilitarian ends, but at the same time such activities would need to offer some concrete value to junior and mid-career faculty as well as to senior faculty. In that regard, it is necessary to build in both long-term project development and near term, identifiable results—awards, fellowships, and so forth—particularly for junior faculty and graduate students.

To accomplish its work, the Methods Lab and the Center would need significant resources, which we outline here in two categories: near-term resources necessary to initiate the Institute and begin its activities; and long-term resources that should be developed to fulfil the Institute’s full potential. We note from the outset that while there are costs associated with establishing the Institute, we see the potential for significant opportunities as well, including the development of an endowment; active grant writing and engagement with foundation relations; and ultimately a holistic growth that we expect will come through raising the regional, national, and international profile of the research activities of our faculty.

Starting up the center will require staff, space, and a budget for project development. We believe a staffing model similar to other centers and programs on campus would likely work: a director, drawn from the faculty and serving at at least 50% time would be critical to the success of the unit. In addition, some kind of support staff would be needed: we envision an associate director for administration, and some level of administrative support, perhaps shared services with the college or its units. Finally, we believe a dedicated associate director for communications would be critical to the fulfillment of the Institute’s mission. While the director would need to be active in all levels of internal and external communications, if the Institute is to serve as a conduit for promoting the research work of our college both to the campus and the wider community, it will need someone with the skill set and time for the job. In addition to these positions, which would need funding, we envision the Institute drawing on the expertise of faculty and perhaps graduate students for a board. We imagine this would be worked into the service component of those faculty’s appointments.

Space is always a crucial issue on our campus, and it is no different in this case. The most immediate space need will be a dedicated set of offices in a central location for the director and affiliated staff. However, we envision a larger collection of spaces to enable the Institute to serve a more extensive role in the life of the university. Three kinds of space would be useful: first, meeting space, in the form of a seminar room; second, a dynamically reconfigurable space for experimental work in interdisciplinary arts; and third some kind of presentation space, again reconfigurable, but broadly intended to serve for exhibitions, performances, and lectures. While many spaces exist on campus now to support one or another of these needs, the goal of interdisciplinary integration, of creating experimental work that crosses the lines of media and the making/scholarship divide is best served by establishing dedicated space. Moreover, space of this sort will help create a sense of solidity and commitment to the Institute that will ultimately be critical in establishing its place as a leading thought center on campus. Initially the Institute will likely have to work into existing spaces, but fundraising for a unique space will need to be a key priority.

Finally, to accomplish its mission the center will need some budget for projects. Many of the Institute’s activities could be done for very little beyond the cost of staff: lectures that leverage the considerable expertise of campus faculty and students, for instance; likewise research prizes that recognize and lift up the work already being done on campus. However, we also imagine at least

two kinds of funded activities at this juncture: first, faculty and graduate student fellowships, and second funded visitors. While the model on campus for fellowships is most commonly the one-semester teaching release, we believe that a more flexible system may be more well-suited to the many types of research activity in our college. Performers, in particular, may find it valuable to have rolling fellowship periods that might allow for concentrated work on project-oriented research. Summer fellowships may also be a useful and cost-effective way to support faculty research (and to provide “chits” that make research evaluation legible to tenure and promotion committees) as the Institute develops its budget. Funded visitors may similarly be brought in on a flexible basis. In some cases it may be useful to offer residencies of up to a semester, but we envision primarily using funding to bring in visitors for brief periods. Scholars and artists may be brought to campus for conferences, to develop research teams, and to work on experimental art-making.

While all of this requires a substantial, recurring budget, we believe the Institute has the capacity to develop its own funding lines to offset at least some portion of its costs. First, the Institute would be a strong advocate for grantship in the college, and should become a key point of contact for institutional foundation relations. The potential for grant funding to support project costs is considerable, though such revenue streams typically cannot be used to cover operating expenses. We also envision the Institute developing a range of courses in synergy with interdisciplinarily-inclined faculty on campus. These courses would produce IU income which could help offset operating costs. In time we imagine the Institute developing an interdisciplinary arts certificate for graduate students, and could see eventually offering some kind of interdisciplinary arts Masters degree. Such a program would be able to further generate tuition income that would similarly help fund the underlying budget.

#### IV. Graduate Humanities Hub

Contributors: O'Brien, Bashford, Senseney, Robinson, Deming, Vazquez

##### *The Problem:*

Masters and PhD students as well as their advisors in the Humanities across FAA face some distinctive challenges in the present environment. Graduate enrollment is shrinking in some cases, due to loss of faculty or inability of programs to compete with better funding at peer institutions. The college's increased reliance on tuition for revenue has also led to a greater focus in some units on undergraduate recruitment.

Effects of all this include a diminished intellectual community, inability to offer upper-level courses, and lack of visibility for Humanities-related research and teaching across college communications and recruitment.

Two possible solutions to these problems should be rejected at the outset:

- Consolidation of smaller programs across the college is not a good idea. Humanities doctoral students in FAA tend to come for the advisor, not the program. Though humanities disciplines across the college share some structural and cultural challenges, they are importantly and necessarily distinct from one another as disciplines and traditions.
- Moving these programs to departments within the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences is also not a good solution. Work as a humanistic scholar in a practice-based context is distinctive and has many advantages. For example, scholars that can move between practice and disciplinary scholarship not only fit well in FAA, but will likely bring a unique set of skills to their post-educational careers within and without academia.

*The Solution:*

In addition to establishing three new research labs as the practical core of the new Arts Research Center, the college would begin associating research-based graduate programs in the humanities with the center through internal and external communications, hosting of shared lectures and events, and coordination of shared curricula.

Another significant effort of this hub would be the establishment of a new 2-credit 8-week mini course in research methodologies common to all programs, co-taught by faculty across the college, and offered for students in all programs. This course, when combined with complementary second 8-week courses offered by units that also need to cover discipline-specific methodologies for their new students, would fulfill the traditional function of the introductory methods courses currently offered across the college, and typically under-enrolled. This effort would help provide new opportunities for intellectual community among graduate students and faculty, and reduce the number of courses needed to accomplish this basic curricular task. In addition, this new shared seminar could then lead in more reliable ways to enrollment by graduate students in 500-level seminars across the college.

**Appendix C: Other working groups**

Faculty and staff also convened in Spring 2017 around the themes of “Space and Time” and “Health and Place.” Though these groups’ conversations did not result in concrete proposals, their reflections, analyses, and ideas are reflected across the goals and actions of this Strategy.

Contributors from these other groups included:

Keeble, Corlett-Stall, Kocher, Bartumeus, Boubekri, Edwards, and Dearborn.

## State of FAA Strategy 2018-2021

*Finalized by Dean Hamilton December 2023*

The previous college strategy outlined twenty-three goals.<sup>1</sup> What follows is a summary of actions taken to reach these goals ( presented without commentary on the goals' worthiness, clarity, or strength, which vary). (No update on these reached college governance bodies in recent years, prompting this final summary at the advice of Dr. k. Trotter in their advisory role to the Dean).

### 1. Credit-bearing, certifiable training in business and entrepreneurship

Associate Dean Linda Robbenolt built courses to meet this goal with collaborators in the Gies College of Business; they met with mixed success. When Gies opened their Business Minor to all of campus, the college considered that sufficient to meet this goal.

### 2. Large-scale course for non-majors on design

Assistant Professor Molly Briggs developed FAA 102 "Design Beyond Boundaries," an online course based on video interviews with FAA faculty, to meet this goal while she was serving in a specialized faculty role. The course ran successfully for a few semesters; when Briggs took up a tenure-system role she turned her attention elsewhere. Updating would be required to re-run this valuable course; meanwhile a suite of new courses offered by the Siebel Center for Design are likely competitors for students.

### 3. Design minor, accessible to all campus, and geared to utilize existing courses

Rapid enrollment growth in the college's design majors made the staffing of this impossible without new resources.

### 4. Establish U.S. Minority Cultures Gen Ed courses, explore their coordination in a minor/concentration

Spring semester 2017 saw the college offering four courses in this area; eight will be offered in Spring 2024. In 2018 Dean Hamilton charged Clinical Assistant Professor of Urban and Regional Planning Lou Turner to meet with any faculty who wished to get their courses approved to meet the US Minority Cultures Gen Ed requirement. Turner's resulting report provided an overview of potentials, and the barriers faculty faced in achieving their goals. Turner developed the new online asynchronous course FAA 201 Black Arts Today in response; Spring 2024 will be its fifth semester running. Dr. Sandra Ruiz, who holds a 75%

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<sup>1</sup> [https://issuu.com/artsatillinois/docs/dean\\_strategicplan\\_8x10\\_2018\\_intera](https://issuu.com/artsatillinois/docs/dean_strategicplan_8x10_2018_intera)

appointment in Theatre, is leading development of a graduate and undergraduate minor in Minoritarian Aesthetics that will draw together new and existing courses in this area.

5. Undergraduate degree in Sustainability and the Built Environment

The new B.S. in Sustainable Design is the college's fastest growing major, with 91 majors as of fall 2023; Spring 2024 will see its third class of graduates.

6. Ensure skilled advising and consistent guidance on post-graduation and career paths

In response to this goal, Assistant Dean Zelda Gardner and Associate Dean Mary Edwards developed a comprehensive list of shared goals and approach for ensuring quality advising in the college. Associate Dean Gardner now draws from these goals in support for the college's advisors.

7. Assess/address demand, opportunities for education in performance-related fields for non-majors

A small working group composed of Professors Mitchell, Moorhouse, and Simson convened to examine this need. Mitchell and Simson then retired, and the pandemic also made performance classes among the most challenging to offer. Little progressed in this area.

8. New revenue-generating masters' programs in Sustainability (DURP), Urban Design, and Design Thinking

Faculty in DURP, Landscape Architecture, and Industrial Design answered this call by establishing three new degrees. (Enrollment has not been strong.)

9. Formalize access to study-abroad opportunities across the college

Significant changes in campus-level support for study abroad and the addition of a .5FTE college position of Associate Director for International Programs have resulted in a very different array of opportunities for students since 2017. Senior Assistant Dean Nicole Turner also supports this work.

10. Grow regular student internship opportunities with external partners

The college has not met this in a systematic way, though schools and departments have made mixed progress. The retirement of Career Services Director Julie Rundell also introduced a transition into these relationships. The School of Architecture also established a dedicated position to support this dimension of their work; the position is as of yet unfilled.

11. Assess/address retention and graduation rates for URM students

Initial study by Associate Deans Edwards and Gardner showed FAA to be above the campus average in these areas. The college also included dedicated support for Black, Hispanic/Latinx, and Indigenous students in the job responsibilities of the new Director of Student Success.

12. Connect with all accepted undergraduate applicants to improved admission yields

This remains a unit-specific matter, though with ever-improving attention and results. Units have implemented a variety of new approaches from videos to hand-written notes and calls from current students, staff, and faculty. The Office of Communications has also supported this work through ever better mailing campaigns and material (“swag”). The college admissions office introduced some new ways of using the Slate platform to better track unit-level contacts.

13. Improve scholarship, fellowship opportunities for undergraduates, focus on funding for URM students

The Dean’s Excellence Fund, established in Fall 2023, is designed to address this need (while staying compliant with the summer 2023 U.S. Supreme Court decision banning race-conscious admissions processes).<sup>2</sup>

14. Assess and improve graduate student experience (curricula, opportunities, and expected outcomes)

This effort saw no dedicated staffing until fall 2023, when a restructuring of the Academic Affairs office and associated roles resulted in the inclusion of graduate curriculum in an Associate Dean’s responsibilities for the first time in many years. Associate Dean Ollie Watts Davis, currently in her first year in the role, is familiarizing herself with all graduate programs and their needs.

15. Partner and connect with K-12 schools, explore possible summer high school program

Work with K-12 schools across the college has in recent years turned to focus on deeper and sustained relationships with a few schools over broad engagement with all. A major focus of investment has been Champaign’s Booker T. Washington Elementary, where the School of Music and Krannert Art Museum have been very active. Art Education continues a long relationship with Stratton Academy of the Arts. Clinical Associate Professor Will Patterson’s work with youth through his Hip Hop Xpress and Ghetto Genius initiatives have also been an anchor of the college’s work with youth of the Don Moyers Boys and Girls

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<sup>2</sup> <https://dimension.faa.illinois.edu/deans-excellence-scholarship/>

Club. Lastly, the college admissions office established and continues to successfully run a summer high-school intensive program.

16. Complete and realize goals of the Design Research Initiative

This effort concluded with mixed success; its most substantive contribution lay in a white paper authored by Professors McGuire and Uihlein, which makes a number of recommendations for strengthening the culture of research in design for the college.

17. Design and launch a new research center

The college appointed Professor Gabriel Solis as a Dean's Fellow to explore this goal. His report outlines a path dependent on external grant funding for its realization. The Dean in turn selected an area of strength in the college – that of Black Arts – as the best possible area of focus for attracting such funding. The resulting Black Arts Research Initiative then faltered when research by Dr. k. Trotter (first as a Research Assistant and later as Special Assistant to the Dean) called out the inherent problems (and indeed, antiblack violence) of a college claiming to support Black communities through such an effort when its justifications and goals lay in the establishment of a center. The college explored no further steps in the direction of a new research center.

18. Build meaningful cooperation among humanities programs

Professor Gabriel Solis designed a joint seminar for college doctoral students in the humanities based on conversations with faculty across FAA. The course did not repeat. No further action took place in this area.

19. Ensure clear understanding of the revised campus budget model & goals for application of new revenue.

Budget planning each year, as well as strategic planning in college units, reflects regular return to this goal. It has become clear that regular revisiting of this matter is needed; interim Dean Mortensen pointed to the need for a college policy document of sorts to guide this.

20. Create paths & training for leadership, especially for women and people of color

Since establishing this goal, the Provost has set up a number of new leadership training programs designed to meet this end. The college successfully nominated [x] faculty for these efforts over the years. [Summary here of participation by race,gender.]

21. Incentivize and track advancement of unit-specific diversity goals, including anti-racism training

The college first resourced this goal through establishing an Associate Dean for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion position in 2021. A process begun under Associate Dean Sennet shortly after is building toward unit-specific goals within a unified college DEIA strategy.

22. Develop a comprehensive digital communication strategy and a new college website

In AY22-23 the college completed a five-year process of new website design for all seven academic units and the college. In 2022 the Communications Office also added a new position overseeing social media strategy.

23. Assess fit of current college name and identity

Upon examination, college leaders decided that a name-change did not seem needed at this time, especially in light of the resources required.