Preamble

The College of Arts and Sciences Strategic Plan is anchored in our vision and mission:

**COAS Vision**

To be a nationally recognized leader in future-facing liberal arts education and transformative research. We unite tradition with innovation as we foster student success across the academic journey and enrich communities local and global through our research and creative activity.

**COAS Mission**

The College of Arts and Sciences fortifies the scientific, ethical and cultural foundation of the university and society through education, research, creative activity and community engagement. Our faculty, staff and students discover and share knowledge; understand and appreciate diverse perspectives; create and analyze art; and engage and enrich our local and global communities.

In alignment with our Vision and Mission, we engaged in the following collaborative process:

**Development and Implementation**

To ensure that our strategic plan represents a wide range of voices, all members of the College of Arts and Sciences were invited to share ideas through a series of
open listening sessions and two survey mechanisms. For those interested in more in-depth participation, the Dean issued an open call for participation in a set of Strategic Planning Working Groups that align with the university’s strategic goals.

The COAS strategic plan represents a synthesis of materials created by three main sources: 1) the COAS working groups, 2) the college-wide listening sessions and survey data, and 3) the projects and goals the Dean set for the college over the last three and a half years. The full draft of the plan was vetted and approved by the COAS Working Groups, and each group will design implementation timelines and metrics beginning in the spring of 2022.

For each university goal listed below, we offer a brief description of the commitments we are making, followed by the list of tactics we will use to advance those commitments.

**Improve Educational Access and Student Success**

**G1.S1** Create and enact a comprehensive strategic enrollment and student success plan, including components related to supporting the whole student, recruitment, retention/graduation, and addressing equity gaps

One of the first steps of our implementation process will be the development of a Strategic Enrollment and Retention Plan (SERP). Several tactics in our strategic plan intersect with the SERP. For example, as we enhance advising support across the college, we will align resources and tactics with our SERP. In addition, as we consider workload allocation and compensation, we will prioritize efforts that advance the goals of the SERP. Overall, the COAS SERP will function as a touchstone and tool for decision-making across the college. New project ideas and funding requests will be considered alongside the SERP (i.e., does this idea serve our target student populations; does this request advance our recruitment and retention goals?).

- Create and enact a college-level strategic enrollment and retention plan (SERP).
○ Gather and analyze data to understand our student populations and their needs.
○ Identify and prioritize equity gap targets for COAS
○ Set specific, achievable retention targets for each year (1st to 2nd, 2nd to 3rd, etc.) and for specific, historically underserved populations within COAS. For example: Pell-eligible Idaho students, rural students.
○ Set specific, achievable enrollment targets for each department and/or program, and align faculty effort and financial resources to support attainment of these goals.
○ Organize/synthesize/combine the above approaches into a consistent and multi-partnered student success plan.

● Create and enact a college-level recruitment initiative.
  ○ Inventory and analyze current best practices across COAS departments and across the University.
  ○ Direct human and financial resources to support these practices
  ○ Analyze and link recruitment practices to enrollment and retention strategies
  ○ Implement a college wide recruitment plan.

● Design and implement a consistent and comprehensive COAS system of advising that students navigate often and with ease.
  ○ Audit advising practices and resources across COAS programs and departments, looking for both patterns and unique features.
  ○ Synthesize the philosophy, outcomes, resources, and core strategies for advising that emerge.
  ○ Ensure that advising practices align with the college’s philosophy and outcomes, while maintaining area-specific nuance.
 Develop and integrate advising resources (training, COAS-level orientations) to strengthen collaboration between CASS and departments, and between departments.

**G1.S2 Integrate career education and experiential learning opportunities into the curriculum and the student experience to improve career readiness and post-graduation outcomes**

From the SERP process, we will gain a better sense of our students’ needs and the barriers that they experience. Working from that knowledge, we will implement tactics that embed career readiness and experiential learning into programs and curricula, ensuring equal access to opportunities. As we implement tactics, we will prioritize existing resources and partnerships (e.g. GEC, Career Services, IFITS) with the goal of organic integration rather than additional workload for faculty and students.

- Embed Career readiness and reflection at key milestones within the COAS student experience.
  - In collaboration with the General Education Committee, develop at least one student learning objective directly related to career readiness and post-graduation outcomes per university Foundations course offered in COAS.
  - In collaboration with the General Education Committee, develop at least one student learning objective directly related to career readiness and post-graduation outcomes in a required upper-division course in each COAS major/program.
  - Provide at least one career-focused educational opportunity or workshop for students per year per COAS department.
  - Seek funding to establish embedded career advising within COAS departments and schools.
  - Explore adding a requirement of three credits of internship work into more COAS degree programs.
[Note that the COAS Strategic Plan does not explicitly speak to each strategy in the “Blueprint for Success” document. For example, the COAS plan does not include a reference to G1.S3 in the university plan.]

G1.S4 Cultivate a commitment to high-quality, new, and innovative learning experiences in all courses, curricula, and co-curricula.

In the COAS commitment to innovation, we approach the concept of “innovation” as a spectrum of inventive theories, practices, and experiences. We envision “innovation” as an expansive space of individual and collective creativity. We support innovation in both new and existing pedagogies, technologies, programs and projects, research and creative activities, and student support methodologies. Our tactics will support and connect existing innovations, as well as create space for new ideas to thrive.

- Scale VIP and other experiential learning opportunities to be available for all COAS students.

- Recognize and reward faculty effort in support of these programs.
  - Explore connecting these efforts to Finishing Foundations courses or other required courses in each major.
  - Develop support positions within schools as numbers of participating students grow.

- Empower student leaders to build an outstanding college community in collaboration with faculty and staff.
  - Create peer mentoring opportunities at the departmental level by providing an easy-to-implement framework.
  - Create COAS student working groups to study and test important COAS initiatives from a student perspective.
• Sustain and advance Bronco Gap Year programming.
  ○ Expand programming to include “Leap Year” programming for students who need to reflect on their academic progress and path mid-career.
  ○ Engage with rural communities to help students see that they belong and can thrive in college.

Innovation for Institutional Impact

G2.S2 Build scalable university structures and align philanthropic and strategic investments that support innovation

Based on the unique opportunities and needs in the College of Arts and Sciences, we will customize our budget model, increase visibility of budget systems, and provide new forms of training and support to COAS leaders.

• Invent a COAS Budget Model aligned to the full scope of the COAS vision, mission objectives, and values.
  ○ Develop metrics for pass-through beyond SCH/majors/and graduates.
  ○ Align with COAS SERP.
  ○ Recognize research and creative activity innovation and productivity, especially transdisciplinary and community engaged activities.
  ○ Incentivize collaboration across units.
  ○ Account for carryforward, summer revenue, online fee programs, F&A and other revenue.
  ○ Provide opportunities for training in budgetary systems and includes public reporting so anyone who wants to be informed/understand the system and related decision-making has access to information.
**G2.S3** Establish individual and collective opportunity and accountability for innovation.

Through a coordinated effort, aligned with the COAS and university SERPs, we will provide a distinct system for submitting and vetting innovative ideas in the college. This process will offer a clear path for sharing innovative ideas, as well as an archive of ideas from which new collaborations can emerge.

- Launch the COAS Improvement and Innovation Lab.
  - Re-center innovation within the college.
  - Provide faculty with a venue for seeking support as they incubate new ideas in curriculum and academic programming.
  - Provide funds to faculty to study and solve problems/challenges/opportunities in the college and acknowledge and reward their work in a manner equivalent to scholarship.
  - Support the development of new interdisciplinary programming within emerging schools.
  - Align with the COAS SERP.

**Advance Research and Creative Activity**

**G3.S1** Provide the physical space, policies, information systems, technology, budgetary and human resources to sustain and grow research and creative activities

To enhance and sustain the innovative work and vital contributions that emerge from research and creative activity across the college, we will intentionally build our research infrastructure through a process of auditing needs, synthesizing resources, and developing solutions. Our research infrastructure must be stable but malleable so that we provide consistent support along with adaptable support that can meet new needs and opportunities.
• Conduct Space, Safety, Technology, budgetary and human resource audits.
  ○ Ensure safety and functionality of all spaces.
  ○ Equip spaces with current discipline-standard technology.
  ○ Assess the magnitude of space needed relative to that assigned per use type
  ○ Determine schedule of maintenance and upgrading needed for spaces and funding required to execute it.
  ○ Determine space allocation parameters and targets through comparison to our aspirational institutions or via establishment/qualification of our desired “future state” (e.g. use a CUPA-like approach to determine space, staffing, etc. needs to achieve our future state goals by evaluating what types of space, staffing, support, etc. is provided or deemed necessary at our aspirational peers)
  ○ Create quality and productivity metrics for space allocation that are appropriately aligned with the intended use of the associated space/human resources.
  ○ Deploy appropriate levels of staffing to support research and creative activity mission
  ○ Utilize human resource audits to inform development of RHIT (described in G3S2).

• Specific implementation suggestion for safety tactic (these aren’t bullets for the plan but rather suggestions for responses that would be informed by the audits described in G3.S1):
  ○ Further support from COAS staffing such as the Instrumentation Shop or a safety liaison position that works with EHSS and COAS
  ○ Department or other unit level staff to operate/maintain/facilitate use of research and creative activity spaces.
**G3.S2** Develop an integrated, transdisciplinary, and accessible research ecosystem dedicated to student excellence and success

The COAS schools, designed to function as “ecosystems,” offer an example of our commitment to transdisciplinary learning experiences. To expand the reach of our research ecosystems, we will launch the COAS Research Hub for Inclusive Transdisciplinarity. Through our commitment to transdisciplinary research, we offer ways for faculty and students to collaborate across disciplines in tackling large-scale problems and designing multifaceted solutions. Our schools and the new RHIT mitigate the isolating effect of disciplinary silos, encouraging faculty and students to actively learn, teach, and research together.

- Establish the COAS Research Hub for Inclusive Transdisciplinarity (RHIT).
  - Define Inclusive Transdisciplinarity as valuing all disciplines and while emphasizing and encouraging the integration of teaching, research and creative activity, and community organization partnerships that engage multiple disciplines.
  - Enhance grant support to sustain and advance ALL research in the college: project planning, project management, and grant management and other services that address the research and creative activity needs of COAS.
  - Establish COAS Transdisciplinary Engaged Research Faculty Board to guide RHIT support systems and programming.
  - Recognize and value all faculty disciplinary expertise in creating project teams and seeding partnerships.
  - Provide support for graduate students engaged in transdisciplinary research.
  - As schools advance, assist schools in establishing their own hubs if activity warrants.
  - Bridge to and support Grand Challenges (G3S3) and the new Center for Advancing Research and Creative Activity in development in the Division of Research and Economic Development.
○ Development of the RHIT will be intentionally coordinated with other related/parallel efforts on campus to avoid unnecessary duplication and maximize needed capacity.
○ Develop a communications and communication support staff strategy and associated capacity for inclusive transdisciplinary work.

● Pilot an Interdisciplinary GA Program.
  ○ Sweep unused program funds to the college.
  ○ Reinvest swept funds in interdisciplinary student support.
  ○ Prioritize allocation of new assistantships to interdisciplinary programs.

Thriving Community

G4.S1 Advance a learning and working environment dedicated to the flourishing, sense of belonging, and freedom of expression among all students, faculty, staff, alumni, and friends of the university

To ensure the health of our communities, and to maintain a steadfast focus on ethical hiring practices and workload distribution, we will launch a new process that involves three key elements: listening, documenting, and tracking. More specifically, we will evaluate faculty, staff and graduate student workload and compensation across the college. We will centralize feedback so that we can more easily see and assess patterns in workload issues and imbalances. From the information we gather, we will develop creative solutions, such as equitable and easily traceable distribution of workload releases.

● Conduct a Faculty Workload Study (inclusive of all full-time faculty categories).
Prepare a set of recommendations on concrete changes that can be made to alleviate stressors and avoid overload.

- Acknowledge increasing time commitments devoted to tasks that do not currently align well with the traditional tripartite (teaching, research/creative activity, service) criteria, such as assessment, program prioritization, student recruitment and retention, pursuing and developing outreach/community partnerships, etc.
- Clearly and equitably address the role and weight of graduate program teaching and mentoring for all faculty contributing to graduate education.
- Revise policies to align with Boise State’s role as an R2.

- Conduct a Faculty (inclusive of all full-time faculty categories) and Staff Compensation Study.
  - Align hiring and compensation with market valuation to remain competitive for recruitment, hiring, and retention of talent.
  - Tie faculty and staff salaries to CUPA data and faculty and staff performance expectations.

- Conduct a GA/TA/RA Support and Equity Study.
  - Collect and centralize data from all programs on funding sources, compensation, and workload.
  - Utilize information from Faculty Workload Study to assess time commitment of faculty advisors fairly.
  - Review and update program manuals as needed.
  - Investigate best practices for community building and student support within and across programs.
  - Seek additional funding to create competitive stipends for graduate students.
G4.S2 Create a comprehensive, whole-employee experience that aligns university resources and is designed to enhance employee well-being and career growth at the university.

Moving forward, we will center wellness as a key element of COAS culture. In doing so, we will build resources and support into existing structures so that wellness is an integral part of programs and departments, rather than a peripheral element. In addition to wellness-based support, we will also increase professional development and leadership opportunities across the college to help faculty and staff name career aspirations and actively engage in personal and professional growth.

- Introduce college-based wellness support for faculty, staff, and students.
  - Survey the existing best practices for mitigating stressors and balancing workload.
  - Create a resource list with concrete, tangible actions that can be taken at both the personal and departmental levels.
  - Connect to campus wellness initiatives as well as those offered by the state.

- Present professional development opportunities for chairs, faculty, staff
  - In collaboration with the GEC, create a faculty seminar or workshop on student learning and retention, aimed at COAS faculty teaching general education classes.
  - Create college-level chair development and inclusive leadership training.
  - Create graduate advisor and inclusive mentorship training.
  - In partnership with BUILD, expand use of Equity Advocates in COAS searches and maintain training to support inclusive hiring and onboarding practices.
○ Create “milestone mentorship program” to support faculty at crucial moments of career progression.
○ Sustain the Thriving Community grants program.

**G4.S3** Create a transparent, centralized business operations model that responsibly uses university resources, supports collaboration, and promotes consistency across individual campus units.

By adopting a shared staffing model, we will design innovative ways to use resources and distribute workload across units as a way to increase efficiencies, while also bolstering connectivity across departments and programs.

- Model and implement COAS Shared Staffing.
  ○ After reviewing and assessing tasks, streamline and prioritize them, seeking to eliminate redundancies or unnecessary activity.
  ○ Increase support in crucial areas by sharing human and financial resources across units.
  ○ Recognize and reward outstanding work as chairs, faculty, and staff utilize new systems mandated by the university and as they engage in different patterns of service to the college community.

**Trailblaze Programs and Partnerships**

**G5.S1** Leverage existing partnerships and programs and develop new opportunities with Idaho employers and private partnerships to address workforce, research, educational, and service needs.

We will launch a phased approach, beginning with the COAS schools, that strategically and sustainably embed external partnerships into academic units. The
partnerships that we establish in the schools will serve as a model for department and program-based collaborations.

- Activate COAS Advisory Groups in schools.
  - Network industry partners, community partners, donors, and alumni with students, staff, and faculty.
  - Start with SoA in phase 1; move to SoE in phase 2; and conclude with BMOL and HSGE in phase 3.
  - Host annual or bi-annual cross AG meetings.

**G5.S2** Expand partnerships across Idaho to ensure rural communities have access to high-quality educational programming that fits their needs.

Through both the university and COAS SERP processes, we will refine what we mean by “rural communities” and gain a better sense of the specific student populations we want to better serve and support. Since we believe that we can best serve rural communities by collaborating with colleges and units across the university, we will continue to invest in partnerships. To increase the scope and depth of our rural outreach, we will also invest new resources through our COAS Improvement and Innovation Lab.

- Increase COAS participation in the Community Impact Program (CIP) including linking Bronco Gap Year to CIP.
- Allocate seed funds and project support for new programming ideas to serve rural communities through the COAS Improvement and Innovation Lab.

**G5.S3** Create interdisciplinary structures to facilitate meaningful connections and experiences for students, faculty, and staff.
By creating a unique set of “schools,” the College of Arts and Sciences offers a new kind of academic unit that embeds interdisciplinarity into the structure of the college. The schools anchor faculty and students in shared research interests, while also allowing movement across departments and programs. With a job market that demands range and adaptability, and large-scale problems that require cross-disciplinary solutions, the COAS schools serve a wide range of students, faculty, and communities.

- Launch and sustain COAS Schools.
  - Make unique opportunities and expertise at Boise State more visible to prospective students, industry and community partners, and donors.
  - Integrate and showcase experiential and project-based learning and career preparation into the student experience.
  - Develop interdisciplinary curricular and extracurricular opportunities.
  - Facilitate the development of interdisciplinary research and creative activity teams.
  - Synthesize teaching, research, service, and leadership in novel ways.
  - Foster a sense of community and belonging among faculty, staff, and students with shared interdisciplinary interests.
  - Engage Idaho communities through new learning opportunities and applied research

- Reward teaching, research and creative activity, and community organization partnerships that engage multiple disciplines.
  - Include weighting in workload, annual evaluation, and promotion and tenure.
  - Institute new COAS and School awards.
  - Align to funding decisions including in the new COAS budget model/process.
• Expand the Stein Luminary Interdisciplinary Committee
  ○ Add partners from a variety of campus units.
  ○ Design high-impact programming for public visitors.
  ○ Facilitate interdisciplinary partnerships through use of the space and its technology.