

2023-2024 Strategic Plan Report College of Arts and Sciences

Executive Summary:

The College of Arts and Sciences created four committees, each focusing on a goal from the Blueprint for Success. In this report, committees describe their achievements in Fall 2023 and explain their activity in Spring 2024.

Groups organized around four goals:

- G1. Improve Educational Access and Student Success
- G2. Innovation for Institutional Impact
- G3. Advance Research and Creative Activity
- G4. Foster Thriving Community

Each group reported resounding success.

The Student Success and Retention (SSR) Implementation Group launched their Student Success Leadership Team, Strategic Enrollment and Retention Plan (SERP) with a data appendix, a data team to support COAS administration and an advising council.

The Innovation Lab Strategic Planning Group revised application tracks for 2023-2024 to focus on curriculum modernization and student recruitment and retention. They collaborated with the Strategic Enrollment and Retention Planning Group (SERP) to launch a coordinated effort connected to education, assessment and alignment. The group received 27 notice of intent (NOI) applications—seven for student recruitment and retention and 20 for curriculum modernization.

The Research and Creative Activity (RCA) Implementation Group began developing a hub for research and creative activity. The RCA hub will promote the healthy, meaningful, sustainable and inclusive growth of research and creative activity within COAS by providing faculty, postdocs and graduate students with administrative support and resources that support scholarship.

The Thriving Community Implementation Group prepared and conducted studies of faculty workloads, faculty and staff compensation, graduate student support and equity, overall wellness and professional opportunities. They also sourced \$7,034 in grant funding for 11 projects in 2023.

Student Success and Retention (SSR) Implementation Group

Members: Casey Iezzi (LING), Clay Cox (BIO/COAS), Cynthia Campbell (PSYC), Dan Scott (ADVS), David Brandt (COAS), Debra Purdy (DWS), Jason Herbeck (DWL), John Bieter (HIST), Jon Schneider (IPS/BAS), Jose Lee-Perez (COAS), Karen Viskupic (GEO), Kathrine Johnson (MATH), Kimberly Henderson (PSYC), Manda Hicks (COMM), Megan Gambs (HCRI), Nancy Tacke (COAS), Nico Diaz (IFITS), Nicole Brun-Mercer (LING) and Sarah Dalrymple (BIO).

Lead: Kelly Myers (COAS)

Fall 2023 Progress

Back in the fall of 2022, the SSR implementation group started at the beginning with Goal 1, Strategy 1 of the COAS Strategic Plan:

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

To advance Goal 1, Strategy 1, we needed to create a Strategic Enrollment and Retention Plan (SERP) that nests within both the college and university plans. Susan Shadle and Kris Collins, leaders of university-level SERP, often say that the “P” in “SERP” stands for *process* as much as *plan*. Following their lead, the SSR team put process at the center of our approach to SERP development and implementation. That means, we embrace the SERP as an opportunity to engage in an ongoing equity-minded strategic planning process to make a sustainable impact on student retention and satisfaction, particularly for our most vulnerable students.

Fall 2023 marks an important milestone for the SSR group. Guided by Casey Iezzi’s strategic planning leadership and expertise, we now have a [COAS SERP and Data Appendix](#). At the beginning of the Fall semester, we shared the full draft of the SERP document with the SSR group for analysis and discussion. The team carefully and collaboratively reviewed the document, yielding the following key questions for implementation:

- How can we make the excellent student success work that’s already happening across the college more visible through the SERP process?
- How will we directly involve students in all phases of our SERP work, from needs assessment through implementation?
- How will we embed faculty and staff recognition and support into all aspects of SERP-related work?

These questions are essential because they represent potential barriers to advancing the goals in the COAS SERP¹. In our SSR group discussions, we consistently work to bring barriers to the surface so that we can examine and address them. We know that creating a clear-eyed view of our challenges is the only path to sustainable change-making. Once we identify barriers, we turn them into guiding principles and action items. For example, from the key questions that emerged this fall, we named/reinforced core commitments that guide our work:

- We must honor the incredible student success work that is embedded or emerging across our college. We are not starting from scratch; instead, we are organizing for impact to advance shared equity goals.

¹ As you will see in the document, we aim to achieve a 90% Success Rate for all COAS majors by 2030, with a 50% reduction in equity gaps for our SERP student populations. Achieving this universal goal means that we will have raised our overall baseline Success Rate by 10%. Over time, this means we will need to improve our success rates by about 2% each year, from 2024 to 2030.

- We cannot guess what our students need, and we cannot look at quantitative data alone. We must listen to our students' voices and experiences, and we must directly include them in the work.
- We must support the faculty and staff who support students. SERP work cannot advance as added, invisible labor.

When we are facing decisions and implementing ideas, we must always look at existing work, seek ways to understand student experiences, and carefully consider impacts on faculty and staff.

This fall we saw an important opportunity to live our core commitments when Amanda Ashley, Kevin Feris and the Innovation Lab Strategic Planning Group invited us into collaboration. First and foremost, we were happy to receive the invitation because we believe that partnering across areas is an essential element of student success work in COAS (see "Collective Impact" in SERP document). We also know that the Innovation Lab grants will surface amazing work—both existing and emerging—across our college. Having reviewed NOIs and proposals, we looked for ways to create new connections (e.g., to the SERP goals, to colleagues and students, to information and tools). From this collaboration across implementation groups, many more collaborative efforts will grow.

During the fall semester, the SSR group also formed two college-level teams that will support our SERP implementation. First, Casey Iezzi launched the COAS Data Team to support COAS academic leaders, faculty and staff in their efforts to design and track student success initiatives. With eight members, the COAS Data Team aims to improve data access in order to support the design, implementation, and tracking of student success work. In addition, we formed the COAS Advising Council. The group operates as a learning space for identifying and prioritizing college-level advising strengths, needs and challenges. The Council is also a space where we can recognize innovative advising solutions and practices across our college to assess the impact of policy changes, technological tools/advances and other factors that affect advising in the college.

Spring 2024 Progress

With the SERP as our roadmap, the SSR group is moving into an exciting new phase of coordinated student support across our college. With José Lee-Perez (First Year Experience), David Brandt (COAS Advising), Megan Gambs (Student Persistence and Re-enrollment) and Casey Iezzi (SERP), we have college-level leadership in place to advance and support student success and retention efforts. Importantly, though, even with dedicated leadership, we understand that student support work can feel additive, weighty and unrecognized for faculty and staff. This spring the SSR team has been actively exploring ways that we can increase visibility and understanding of our colleagues' student-success-related work.

The COAS SERP emphasizes the importance of partnership. The SERP document points to Collective Impact as our model for enacting meaningful change through networking. Equity gaps are a large-scale, intractable social problem that has persisted over decades; there is no easy solution to create the change we want to see. This kind of work must be done collectively, combining efforts and aligning around a common agenda. As we implement the SERP, we look forward to learning with and from the many student, faculty and staff leaders across our college.

Innovation Lab Strategic Planning Group

Members: Anthony Ellertson (GIMM), Eva Kannenberger (COAS), Gautam Basu Thakur (HCS), Henry Charlier (CHEM), John Ziker (ANTHRO), Lisa Brady (HIS), Michelle Bennett (IPS) and John Ziker (ANTHRO).

Leads: Kevin Feris (SOE) and Amanda Ashley (SOA).

The Innovation Lab Strategic Planning Group supports COAS's strategic plan goal: **G2: Innovation for Institutional Impact**. The lab specifically aligns with related strategy *Establish individual and collective opportunity and accountability for innovation (G2.S3)* where:

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.

Scope and Funding

The Innovation Lab is designed to:

- Create tangible evidence of innovation emerging from and supported by COAS.
- 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 and capitalize on 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.
- Incentivize and reward progress towards SERP goals and other COAS objectives.

The Innovation Lab is in its second year with \$250,000 in one-time funds. These funds stem from the Fall 2023 2.5% reallocation from COAS to Central to cover structural budget deficit and where each college was able to *retain 0.5% for revenue generating opportunities*.

2022-2023 Awardees and Projects

In our September 2023 COAS newsletter, we announced the award winners from our first cohort. They include:

- Allison Simler-Williamson (Biological Science), Konrad Meister and Oliviero Andreussi (Chemistry) - The ArtSci Community at Boise State: An interdisciplinary platform for inquiry and Innovation
- Alex Urquhart (Biological Science) - Biol100 Lab Materials and OER Resources to Lower Student Costs and Improve Student Experience
- Cynthia Miller (Media, Blue House Agency) – COAS Promotional Partnership
- Emily Meredith (Biological Science) and AASC staff members: Matt Schmasow, Brittany Artz, and Carissa Wilcox - A Biology Learning Center to Increase STEM Student Success
- John Bieter, Lisa Brady, Sara Fry, Stewart Gardner (History) and Russ Heller (Boise School District, ret.) - Annual Conference for Idaho Social Studies Teachers

- Joseph Meredith (Chemistry) - Organic Chemistry 1 Workbook & Course Revisions
- Kristin Snopkowski (Anthropology) - Professional Development and Mentorship for Adjunct Instructors Teaching High-enrollment Foundations of the Discipline courses in Anthropology
- Mariah Devereux Herbeck, Brittney Gehrig and Amber Hoye (World Languages) - Français inclusif: Diverse and Inclusive French 101-202 Curriculum
- Mark Schmitz, Karen Viskupic, Ellyn Enderlin (Geosciences) and Matt Schmasow (CASS) - Geosciences Learning Hub
- Oliviero Andreussi (Chemistry) - Python in the Undergraduate Curriculum
- Sherena Huntsman (Department of Writing Studies) - Accessibility Hub
- Steve Olsen-Smith (English Literature) Lisa Hunt (School of the Arts)- IIIF Adoption at Boise State University
- Rulon Wood, Jim Wareck, and Charlie Hewitt (Theatre, Film and Creative Writing) - Lecture Series and Mentorship Program
- Brian Wiley and Eryn Pierce (Art, Design and Visual Studies) - Restructuring the Graphic Design I and II Curriculum
- Reggie Jayne (Interdisciplinary Professional Studies) - Interdisciplinary Studies Undergraduate Certificate
- Erin Taylor (Chemistry) - Modernized Analytical Chemistry Laboratory Curriculum

Fall 2023 Progress

The Innovation Lab convened in the fall consisting of previous and new team members from across the college. Our primary work consisted of five parts:

1. Reflecting on our process last year to inform our work this year.
2. Identifying our lab's scope and related application tracks for the 2023-2024 funding program.
3. Developing a progress report structure and check-in process for projects funded in 2022-2023.
4. Reviewing and revising our process including interest, assessment, and support for 2023-2024.
5. Distributing our NOI call for 2023-2024. You can find our general call, notice of intent and rubric [here](#).

During our fall reflection process, we discussed a few important areas that we wanted to address this cycle. It's important to provide more support and guidance about how to help teams learn about project sustainability. We need to ensure that staff time is accounted for in the project budgets. We should work with other strategic planning groups to share knowledge, expertise, and perceptions. We need to provide more feedback to applicants on their proposals to provide more effective mentoring, and to help with future alignment and interests.

We were thrilled to partner with the Strategic Enrollment and Retention Planning Group (SERP) for the Lab's direction to create a stronger process and integrated program. Together we developed a joint call and related materials. The primary outcome of that work thus far is the creation of the two primary tracks within this year's RFP: 1) Strategic Enrollment & Retention Plan (SERP), and 2) Curricular Innovation, Career & Experiential Learning, High Impact Practices.

We sent out the joint general call and specific criteria for the NOI in December 2023 through the COAS listserv. We'd like to thank Makenzie Phillips for helping us communicate the information to the college.

Spring 2024 Progress

The Innovation Lab is having a busy spring semester, which includes several elements in supporting previous and future projects. We have:

1. Scheduled two open houses in consultation with the SERP team to help prepare faculty and staff for this year's RFP.
2. Explored opportunities to partner with the Center for Research and Creative Activity on grant writing and proposal feedback practices.
3. Facilitated and participated in the NOI review process for new applications.
4. Developed the full proposal criteria, rubric and assessment process.
5. Created the request for renewal funds for applications funded in 2022-2023 that align with this year's tracks and that follow the same review process as new proposals.

We are currently:

6. Exploring options for providing grant writing and assessing support from the Center for Research and Creative Activity.
7. Providing feedback to those who were funded and not funded to offer guidance about where there may be other partners and resources, or how to strengthen applications in the future.

We look forward to seeing our colleagues' ideas about how to move our college forward to support our strategic plan.

Research and Creative Activity (RCA) Implementation Group

Members: Brittany Archuleta (RCA), Stephen Crowley (PHIL), Raquel Davis (TFCW), Brandon Fudge (UA), Shay Duman Gillette (RCA), Charles Hannah (PHYS), Kendra Kaiser (GEO), Emma Kirks (UA), Richard Klautsch (TFCW), Lily Lee (ADVS), Jenn Mallette (DWS), Del Parkinson (MUS), Denise Pfeiffer (DRED), Jailynn Flaack Sanchez (RCA), Diane Smith (BRI), Rebecca Som-Castellano (SOC/HES), Tim Thornes (LING), Carolina Vierra (DWL), Michal Temkin-Martinez (LING), Kate Walker (ADVS) and Denise Wingett (BIO).

Lead: Marie-Anne de Graaff (COAS)

Outcomes:

1. Increased capacity for extramural funds management: A team of RCA administrators has been hired, and provides extramural funds management support as a shared service. RCA hub administrators serve faculty from many departments across COAS with their pre- and post-award extramural fund management needs. This helps faculty spend less time on administrative duties, leaving them with more time to focus on growing their research and creative activity portfolios. In concert, we have established regular meetings for staff who support faculty with extramural fund management. The goals of these meetings are to identify best practices in extramural funds management, create shared resources and standardize operating procedures within COAS. This work has led to a more sustainable work-load for staff, and has built a supportive community of staff that share similar tasks.

2. Increased financial support for professional development of faculty and graduate students: The RCA hub provides financial support for travel expenses incurred by department chairs, faculty, lecturers and graduate students to advance their RCA. These include a Graduate Travel Support Program, an updated version of the Faculty Travel Support Program, and a Chair Travel Program. In addition, we created a Graduate Assistantship (GA) Support Program with the intent to support and grow graduate education and research and creative activity at Boise State University.

3. Increased availability of resources for faculty engaged in RCA: The RCA hub is building a website with a variety of resources that help faculty, students and staff with their RCA needs, including templates needed as appendices for grant proposals, a directory, field and studio safety guidelines and protocols. The website also hosts an 'Intake Form' which faculty, staff and students can use to request assistance and support with their RCA needs. These resources will support faculty as they navigate growing their research and creative activity.

Preliminary Work to Inform the Design of the Hub

Listening tour: To ensure that the hub is developed in a manner that is consistent with the needs of units from across the college, we conducted a listening tour with faculty and support staff. During this listening tour, we asked faculty to respond to the following prompts:

1. What is going well in the context of support you receive to pursue your research and creative activities?
2. Imagine it is two years from now and the hub has been set up and has started. What kinds of support do you want to see coming from the hub for your unit and your area/"flavor" of research and creative scholarship?

We asked support staff the following questions:

1. What is going well with the support you provide to your faculty
2. What are your pain points?
3. Are there any resources you wish you had that you don't?
4. What could increase retention in these positions?
5. What if any changes would you like to see happen with workflow/process?"

Answers to these questions were relatively consistent across units, and can be summarized as follows:

- Faculty would like more help with pre-award related tasks, including finding extramural funding opportunities, preparing a proposal and its budget and effectively communicating with the Office of Sponsored Projects (OSP).
- Faculty indicated that they'd like more help with post-award related tasks, including accounting and receiving budget updates, and help with hiring, travel and purchasing.
- Support staff asked for more training and a more manageable workload associated with extramural funds management.
- Faculty would appreciate more opportunities for community building across COAS to learn about other's work and find new opportunities for collaboration.
- Support staff would appreciate more opportunities for community building across COAS to learn about best practices in extramural funds management.

- Faculty would like to see more support for travel to conferences.
- There was a request for more (interdisciplinary) graduate student support.
- Support with communication of scholarship, both within and outside of the University
- Faculty would like to have greater access to resources that help them conduct their research and creative activity, including templates for appendices required for proposal preparation, such as broader impact statements, mentoring plans, and support for lab and field safety.

Quantitative data assessment: The RCA hub structure is also informed by quantitative assessments of research expenditures and Facilities & Administration (F&A) returns. We used network analysis to link research expenditures to business managers, which advanced our understanding of workload associated with extramural awards management. Further conversations with Chairs and business managers, allowed us to identify how much more capacity (as a percent of FTE) is needed in COAS for administrative support associated with research and creative activity.

RCA hub staff: Based on this work we have staffed the hub with Shay Dumas Gillette as RCA hub manager, and Brittany Archuleta and Jailynn Flaack Sanchez as RCA administrators. Continued requests for support will grow the team to five RCA administrators by July 2024.

RCA Hub Support Functions

Pre- and post-award support: Our team of RCA administrators provides administrative support for extramural funds management, both on the front-end by assisting with proposal preparation, and on the back-end by assisting with accounting, hiring, purchasing and travel. Services include monthly budget updates, and recurring meetings to project expenditures. This team operates as a shared service to bring additional pre-and post-award extramural funds management capacity to COAS, and to liaison with OSP on behalf of faculty. Currently, the team serves faculty from the School of the Environment and the departments of History, Physics, Biology, English Literature, World Languages, Writing Studies and Anthropology. We will be able to support more faculty with their extramural funds management needs and alleviate the workloads of more department support staff as we continue to recruit RCA administrators.

Extramural funds management - support for staff: We have established monthly meetings for staff who support faculty with extramural fund management. The goals of these meetings are to identify best practices in extramural funds management, create shared resources, standardize operating procedures within COAS and build a supportive community of staff that share similar tasks.

Internal funding opportunities: (1) Faculty travel: We recognize the importance of travel for faculty's scholarship, and have increased the level of financial support (as available) for travel expenses incurred by regular, tenure track faculty and lecturers to \$1000. Examples of eligible travel expenses would include presentations of research in scholarly meetings, preparing/presenting performances or art works, and conference attendance for the purpose of professional development in research, creative activity or teaching. **(2) Graduate student travel:** We have implemented a COAS student travel support program to encourage and support graduate students from all disciplines in COAS to present their scholarly work at academic societies or professional meetings. We hope that this funding will help catalyze networking opportunities, collaborative efforts, career preparation, and communication skills for

our graduate students. So far, we have supported 17 graduate students with their travel needs. **(3) Chair travel:** we will provide financial support for travel expenses incurred by Department Chairs who do not receive other forms of support for their research and creative activity from the college. Award amounts are up to \$2000.

Graduate student support: We will create a Graduate Assistantship (GA) Support Program which is intended to directly support GAs in research and creative activity. Proposals for GA funding may be submitted for the following requests: (1) a one-year GA stipend that allows for recruitment of new and exceptional students to Boise State; (2) GA funds that support start-up packages for new faculty; (3) awards that leverage investments by others in support of RCA; (4) funds designated as insurance against students' support pending from other external sources, such as scholarships, or grant proposals; (5) GA funds that align with the strategic research priorities of the University.

GA equity study: We are conducting a comparative analysis of GA support at peer and aspirational programs. For this study, we use the National Center for Education Statistics to identify peer and aspirational programs. We've developed a brief survey asking about GA stipends, and tuition and health insurance support, which is sent out to program administrators. Once we have collected all our data, we will compare our GA support with support students get in peer programs, and normalize the data using a cost-of-living index. These data will be used to inform decisions about financial support of our graduate students.

Faculty community building: A group of faculty and staff are developing the Faculty Transdisciplinary Development Program. The goal of this program is to create opportunities for faculty from across COAS to build community through low-barrier, easily accessible events that enable faculty to learn about others' work and facilitate conversation. Importantly, the activities of faculty associated with this program will be recognized by department chairs and the COAS Dean as faculty workload. Our RCA team is also building out an RCA directory that will increase the ease with which faculty can navigate RCA across COAS.

Support with communication of scholarship: Working groups within our RCA implementation team are working on the question of how we can more effectively communicate our scholarship around the college and to the community at large. We are generating ideas, and we will implement them in collaboration with the communications specialist in COAS.

General support related to RCA: We are creating an RCA hub website with a variety of resources that help faculty, students and staff with their RCA needs. Resources range from templates needed as appendices for grant proposals to field safety guidelines and protocols. The website will also host an 'Intake Form', which faculty, staff and students can fill out to request assistance and support. The RCA hub team will review these requests and help find solutions. This work bridges to and supports ongoing large-scale research initiatives at the university, including Grand Challenges and the Center for Advancing Research and Creative Activity which is in development in the Division of Research and Economic Development. In developing the hub, we are intentionally coordinating these related and parallel efforts on campus to avoid unnecessary duplication and maximize needed capacity.

Thriving Community Implementation Group

Members: Vidana Brophy (COAS), Ann Campbell (ENGLIT), Daniel Fologea (PHYS), Jim Fredricksen (DWS), Susan Hamblin (GEO), Margaret Kinzel (MATH), Rick Moore (MEDIA), Katherine O'Sullivan (MEDIA), Jennifer Weaver (PSYC).

Leads: Doug Bullock (COAS) and Tony Roark (COAS).

The Thriving Community Implementation group supports Strategies 1 and 2 of Goal 4 of the COAS strategic plan:

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.

G4.S1. Create a comprehensive, whole-employee experience that aligns university resources and is designed to enhance employee well-being and career growth at the university.

Faculty Workload Study

Workload study is paused during the fall of 2023. There is some possibility of resuming work in the spring, but nothing to report at this time.

Faculty and Staff Compensation Study

We have nearly completed a comprehensive study of all faculty salaries compared to CUPA benchmarks. Data cleaning is in the final stages. The report formed the basis of a strategic budget request submitted in the spring of 2024.

Conduct a GA/TA/RA Support and Equity Study

Associate Dean Marie-Anne de Graaff and RCA Hub staff advanced this project by soliciting/collecting data from peer programs and peer institutions regarding support and compensation for graduate assistants. The work is ongoing, and the results will provide a benchmark against which COAS graduate programs can be assessed.

College-based Wellness Support

The Implementation Group developed the COAS Community Survey to assess the perceptions and experiences of college faculty and staff with respect to wellness and support. It was open to all COAS faculty and staff from February 1 to 14.

The results of the survey will inform the group's future efforts to develop local solutions and, where appropriate, to advocate for broader change.

The survey will be implemented annually to track progress and inform activity.

Professional Development Opportunities

The COAS Community Survey will also assess the perceptions and experiences of college faculty and staff with respect to professional development opportunities.

Thriving Community grants

The grant program continues to operate successfully. Program guidelines have been updated to clarify applicant and project eligibility, consistent with the program's intended goals. In addition, the post-project reporting mechanism has been streamlined to improve the user experience and information quality.

In the 2023 calendar year, 11 projects were funded for a total of \$7,034, or an average of ~\$640 per project. The post-project reports will be reviewed by the TCIG to identify transferable and/or generalizable community-building approaches.