Theme 1: Advancing Liberal Education in the 21st Century is found at the intersection of academic excellence and informed faith as articulated in *Pro Futuris*. This intersection has been and always will be the heart of the College of Arts & Sciences and is exemplified in our commitment to transformational education. With a foundational, cutting-edge core curriculum, enhanced interdisciplinary collaboration, more engaged learning opportunities, and additional undergraduate research, successes will reverberate across all departments and programs. Utilizing these resources, our students will continue building skills in communication, critical thinking, civic leadership, and Christian perspective.

Acts of Determination

1 – Evaluating the Strength of the Four C’s in the Core Curriculum
2 – Implementing the 10-Year Enrollment Management Plan
3 – Investing in Teaching
4 – Developing Strategies for Engaged Learning and Merit Scholarships
5 – Assessing the Structure and Function of the Arts & Sciences Core Curriculum
Theme 1 -- Act of Determination 1:
Evaluating the Strength of the Four C’s in the Core Curriculum

ACTION STEP:
The Arts & Sciences Curriculum Committee co-chairs and the academic departments will assess student competencies in communication, critical thinking, civic leadership, and Christian perspective in their respective majors and will make a recommendation to the A&S Council of Chairs regarding the next step needed to ensure the range of core course offerings fully addresses these competencies.

ACCOMPLISHMENT

- During fall 2014, the taskforce surveyed Arts & Sciences departments to assess the extent to which the core curriculum currently addresses the 4 C’s for general education. The survey indicated:
  - seventy-five courses were reviewed that satisfy the BA and BS general education requirements;
  - all courses included in the survey met at least one outcome;
  - 43% of courses included in the survey met all four outcomes;
  - 100 % incorporate Critical Thinking;
  - 92 % incorporate Communication skills;
  - 52 % incorporate Civic Engagement; and
  - 69 % incorporate Christian Perspective.

NEXT STEP

- The survey results will provide one of the inputs for the core curriculum vision document in Act of Determination 5.
Theme 1 -- Act of Determination 2:
Implementing the 10-Year Enrollment Management Plan

**ACTION STEP:**
By 2022, we will successfully meet the goals presented in the 10-Year Enrollment Management Plan.

**ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

- Arts & Sciences implemented a new advising model whereby all students have a professional advisor for their freshman and sophomore years.
- Based on a study of the Premedical student cohort, the Arts & Sciences Enrollment Council (EC) strongly urged academic advisors to register qualifying freshmen in premedical course sequence to prepare these students to take the MCAT in a timely manner.
- To address the oversubscription of students in the Medical Humanities (MH) program:
  - Arts and Sciences eliminated the MH minor to preserve seats in MH courses for majors; and
  - established a pre-major in MH with the aim of reducing majors to 100.
- The University approved the Baylor to Seminary Program, a scholarship initiative to identify, engage, and enroll highly competitive applicants at the undergraduate level at Baylor University and, following their graduation as undergraduates, to enroll at the George W. Truett Theological Seminary.
- The University is now offering new sessions in Summer Orientation to recruit humanities majors: “What You Can Do with a Humanities Major” and “Premed Tracks in the Humanities.”
- Arts & Sciences approved MTH 1220 (Algebra Review) as a dropdown course, to be offered in fall 2015, to assist science students who are transitioning to other majors.
- Arts & Sciences implemented training for faculty in the use of Bearhaus (the Baylor data warehouse system) for recruiting high ability students.
- Arts & Sciences coordinated recruiting efforts for Invitation to Excellence (I2E), Premieres, Know Where You’re Going Days, and Campus Visits.
- The BU to High School program, a recruiting initiative, enabled six Arts & Sciences undergraduates to speak to 357 high school students across the U.S. about their research at Baylor.
- Arts & Sciences hosted eight Distinguished Scholars Days in five undersubscribed departments (ART, ENG, MTH, MLC, and THEA).
- Arts & Sciences developed seven online courses from four departments (HIS, GEO, PSY/NSC, REL), offering these courses to students during summer 2015.

**NEXT STEPS**

- Arts & Sciences will reconsider a dropdown course in biology (BIO) similar to chemistry (CHE 1300).
- Arts & Sciences will evaluate the success of the online courses with respect to increasing summer enrollment and improving retention and graduation rates, specifically for students returning home for summer who could advance at a more rapid pace or repeat courses that they dropped or attained a grade of D or F.
Theme 1 -- Act of Determination 3: Investing in Teaching

**ACTION STEPS:**

3.1 **To Improve Pedagogy:** By Summer 2014 the Dean’s Office will meet with representatives of the Provost’s Office to encourage the inclusion of liberal education values in course content and in all instruction for general education courses for the New Faculty Orientation.

**ACCOMPLISHMENT**

- The Dean submitted the core curriculum white paper to the Provost’s Office along with a request to be allowed to participate in the new faculty orientation to speak to the importance of a liberal education.

**NEXT STEP**

- The Provost’s Office has agreed to include the white paper in the packet of materials to be handed out to new faculty members at the New Faculty Orientation.

3.2 **To Improve Pedagogy:** The Dean’s Office will meet with representatives of the Academy for Teaching and Learning (ATL) by Spring 2015 to develop pedagogical programming to foster exchanges among the faculty in various disciplines.

**ACCOMPLISHMENT**

- The Director of ATL, Dr. Lenore Wright, provided information to the deans regarding ATL programs and the number of faculty in Arts & Sciences currently participating in these offerings.

**NEXT STEPS**

- Representatives from the Dean’s Office will examine the current workshops offered by the ATL and invite faculty in Arts & Sciences to participate, as appropriate. For example, faculty who teach large introductory sections might participate in a workshop focused on interactive techniques for large classes.

- Arts & Sciences will work collaboratively with the ATL to offer special workshops, perhaps two per semester, for select groups of faculty from across Arts & Sciences to address pedagogical issues of interest to these faculty. The themes and content of the workshops could be developed in a variety of ways, including the following:
  - forming a small consulting group of faculty from across Arts & Sciences who have already shown interest in pedagogical issues and ask them to develop a list of the kinds of sessions they would find most useful to faculty; and
  - surveying chairs (perhaps as part of a discussion at a Council of Chairs meeting) regarding the pedagogical areas they believe their faculty would find most helpful.

- Arts & Sciences will develop a two-week intensive “Summer Teaching Workshop/Institute” that would begin with 10 faculty and could gradually expand to 20. The workshop would provide an opportunity for faculty to develop a completely new course plan for a course they already teach or for a new course.
3.3 To Improve Technology-Enhanced Learning: The Dean’s Office will form a committee to act as a resource for technological innovations in the classroom, to maintain an inventory of best technology-based practices, and to provide periodic feedback to the Dean, Council of Chairs, and Information Technology Services (ITS).

**ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

- The committee gathered information from the University Technology Committee regarding:
  - current technology usage on campus;
  - equipment availability to faculty;
  - faculty workloads for online courses;
  - transformational technology-enhanced learning and pilot programs; and
  - resource availability.
- The committee gathered information from the Arts & Sciences Technology Group regarding:
  - the computer technology inventory of Arts & Sciences;
  - distinctive roles of ITS and Arts & Sciences technology groups;
  - classroom maintenance and ownership and responsibilities;
  - fall and spring review processes for requesting new upgraded technology;
  - computer support from the Arts & Sciences technology group; and
  - resources offered through ATL.

**NEXT STEPS**

- Inventory the teaching practices and methods across campus with respect to technology in the classroom and provide this information as a resource to all faculty.
- Engage in future planning based on a review of the current inventory of classrooms and available technology.
- Assess the gaps and critical needs of technology for teaching;
- Recommend the Director of Arts & Sciences Technology, Wes Johnson, to serve as a representative on the University Technology Committee;
- Advocate for further opportunities for online courses within the university;
- Identify key technological issues in Arts & Sciences, including:
  - critical needs when teaching summer online courses;
  - innovative uses of technology in the classroom;
  - current technology training available for faculty through ATL; and
  - insights and protocols from the University Technology Committee.
Theme 1 -- Act of Determination 4:
Developing Strategies for Engaged Learning and Merit Scholarships

ACTION STEPS:
4.1 The Dean will form a taskforce to assess the feasibility of expanding the duties of the Associate Dean for Special Programs and to consider the following:
- availability of engaged learning and merit scholarships;
- improved advisement for scholarly and engaged learning experiences; and
- creation of a dynamic model for intense engaged learning experiences open to all students.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS
- The taskforce conducted a review of the staffing in the Special Programs Office, the merit scholarships currently supported, and the number of applicants served in recent years.
- The taskforce discussed the definition of engaged learning and the mission of the Special Programs Office.
- The taskforce conducted a preliminary review of the availability of engaged learning opportunities in Arts & Sciences. Arts & Sciences courses known to contain a research component are listed under “research resources” on the website: http://www.baylor.edu/scholarships/index.php?id=858932

NEXT STEPS
- Finalize the name and mission statement for the Special Programs Office.
- The taskforce recommends increased faculty support for the office -- a half-time faculty appointment to focus on mentoring students in the sciences, effective Summer 2016.
- During summer and fall of 2015, continue to study the infrastructure needed to sustain undergraduate research and national scholarship efforts in Arts & Sciences, beginning with a review of peer institutions regarding their organizational structure.
- Consider the information produced by the National Association of Fellowship Advisors, published summer 2015, based on a national survey on the structures and offices for scholarship and undergraduate research.
- Launch the SPARK CARD program during the fall 2015 semester to identify exceptionally talented students within the Baylor community and advise them about the national scholarships served by this office.
- Introduce SPARK FEEDBACK CARDS to the faculty to facilitate communication with the office regarding the names of students who have received SPARK CARDS.
- Investigate additional ways to publicize undergraduate research opportunities.
- Conduct a feasibility study regarding a clearinghouse for undergraduate research, similar to the UT Austin database: http://www.utexas.edu/research/eureka/
4.2 By Fall 2014 the taskforce will assess the status of undergraduate research activities and ways to better coordinate and promote this important activity. The taskforce will consider, among other initiatives, the following:

- integration of undergraduate research into the curriculum;
- strategies for greater student access to undergraduate research opportunities, including more faculty participation in the mentoring of undergraduate students; and
- the effectiveness of the new Arts & Sciences “Summer Research Program for Entering Freshmen.”

**ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

- Investigated ways to broaden interaction of the Special Programs Office with both faculty and students to increase awareness of research opportunities within and beyond academic courses.
- Reviewed the Summer 2014 report of the “Summer Research Program for Entering Freshmen” with a presentation by the director.

**NEXT STEPS**

- Use a designation (such as “R”) for existing courses with a research component and creating a travel budget for student researchers at the department level. [Suggested implementation Fall 2016]
- Designate a faculty contact person for undergraduate research within each department in Arts & Sciences in order to create a robust relationship with this office, forming a network of research directors/contacts in Arts & Sciences. [Suggested implementation Fall 2016]
- Suggest revision of the guidelines for the final report on Undergraduate Research and Scholarly Achievement (URSA) grants [http://www.baylor.edu/research/vpr/index.php?id=49406](http://www.baylor.edu/research/vpr/index.php?id=49406) and for other undergraduate research reports be amended to highlight the role of the student-researcher, effective Fall 2015.
- Review data and observations from summer 2015 for “Summer Research Program for Entering Freshmen” and make specific recommendations for the future of the program.
**Theme 1 -- Act of Determination 5:**

Assessing the Structure and Function of the Arts & Sciences Core Curriculum

**ACTION STEPS:**

5.1 The Dean and Council of Chairs will hold colloquia during the 2014–2015 academic year with a broadly representative group of faculty who teach in the core curriculum to advance the idea that courses serve a larger purpose of general importance to the University and that the subject matter of these courses be introduced to the students as such, rather than in a narrow disciplinary fashion.

**ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

- The Dean held three colloquia in the fall of 2014 involving over 70 faculty members representing all 25 academic departments ranging from undergraduate program directors to department chairs and to others having an interest in general education courses.
- In December the department chairs received an Executive Summary of the colloquia that outlined the key findings:
  - strong commitment to a robust core;
  - no unifying vision for the core at the present time, though there was agreement that the 4 C outcomes are appropriate;
  - consensus that the core could and should be improved;
  - no consensus as to what extent the core should be changed; and
  - many suggestions for improvement of the core, such as establishing an overall vision, shifting current courses to different categories, and flagging courses for particular competencies.
- The Dean produced a white paper, Advancing Liberal Education in the Core Curriculum that challenged all faculty members teaching core courses to be interdisciplinary and relevant. This paper was distributed to the department chairs and UPDs.

**NEXT STEP**

- Each academic department in Arts & Sciences will produce a departmental vision statement for their general education courses.
5.2 Following these colloquia and following the assessment of the core curriculum from the Arts & Sciences Curriculum Committee (refer to AOD 1), the Dean’s Office, in consultation with the Council of Chairs, will determine if further assessment of the core is needed. The Dean’s Office will make this determination by Summer 2015.

5.3 Should it be determined that further changes to the core curriculum are desirable, the Dean will appoint a taskforce to assess the state of liberal education in Arts & Sciences as made manifest through the core curriculum. The taskforce will report those findings to the Dean and the Council of Chairs by Fall 2015. Appendix 1C provides the details of the charges to this taskforce.

**ACCOMPLISHMENT**

- In April 2015 the Dean appointed a taskforce to write an overall vision for the core curriculum.

**NEXT STEPS**

- The vision document produced by the taskforce will be vetted through the Council of Chairs and their faculty in the spring of 2016 and it will guide future efforts (if any) by Arts & Sciences to restructure the core curriculum. Even if the structure of the core remains the same for the foreseeable future, the vision document will give Arts & Sciences a basis for strengthening the content and delivery of the current core.

- Should it be determined that further changes to the core are desirable, the Dean will appoint a taskforce to make recommendations for changes.