

A&SPIRE YEAR TWO (2015-2016)

Theme 1

ADVANCING LIBERAL EDUCATION IN THE 21ST CENTURY



AOD 1 – Evaluating the Four Cs

Year 2 Accomplishment

The survey of the 4 Cs (competencies) assessed to what extent communication, critical thinking, civic engagement and Christian commitment are incorporated into the curriculum of the different academic majors.

- The survey results of the 4 Cs, or competencies (communication, critical thinking, civic engagement and Christian commitment) were delivered to the Core Curriculum Committee, providing one of the inputs for the core curriculum vision document in Act of Determination 5 (AOD).

Year 3 Goal

- This completes AOD 1.

AOD 2 – 10-year Enrollment Management

Year 2 Accomplishments

Recruitment

- The Arts & Sciences Dean's Office hosted personnel from the Baylor Admissions Office in August 2015 to help them better represent A&S to prospective students. Discussion topics included second and secondary majors, special scholarships, advising structure and pre-majors.
- A cross-university group, the Nudge Team, focused on early communication with pre-medical/dental/veterinarian (PMDV) students who would fall below the benchmarks for enrolling with a confirmed PMDV educational goal setting, as per the Pre-Med Designation Policy, effective January 2017. Letters and calls were made to more than 175 incoming students.
- A&S completed the goal of decreasing the number of biology majors.
- Through a University-wide effort this year, 72 percent of eligible PMDV freshmen (up from 24 percent) enrolled in pre-medical sequence curriculum. This early exposure to the prehealth curriculum resulted in an increase of 4 percent of students changing their educational goal to other areas.
- A&S hosted the first Baylor to Seminary program for prospective religion majors in January 2016. Eighty-four percent of those that visited the program (8) are planning to enroll at Baylor.
- The A&S faculty, in partnership with the Admissions Office, assisted the University in reaching the 2015 enrollment goals. The faculty made significant contributions to the Invitation to Excellence, Code Red, Joint Hurricane Program, Know Where You're Going Day, Distinguished Scholars Days, Premiere, and Campus Visits Under the Tent.
- Departments in A&S increased targeted communication to incoming majors: oversubscribed departments communicated with high-ability students and undersubscribed departments communicated with all incoming majors.
- The Dean's Office expanded the impact of the BU to High School program in its third year: Baylor scholars presented their research to 550 high school students in four states (Vermont, Hawaii, Tennessee and Texas).
- The Dean's Office initiated improvements in Summer Orientation: added a video to highlight the major in the humanities for pre-medical students and a presentation focused on the benefits of pursuing a liberal arts degree.

Retention

- Initiated a “Welcome Week Friday” in August 2015: connected new students to their major and to department faculty in a presentation conducted by 14 academic areas in A&S.
- Created a successful pilot program in August 2015 -- Student Ambassadors: hired 15 students in three oversubscribed departments (Biology, Chemistry and Biochemistry, and Psychology and Neuroscience) for one year to assist fellow majors to be successful.
- Added and increased enrollment in the New Student Experience (NSE) credit-bearing courses in Fall 2015. Overall, NSE courses reached 67.3 percent of freshmen in A&S.

Graduation

- Offered seven online courses during the summer of 2015, and these general education courses filled within three days of the opening of registration. The program was deemed successful.
- Implemented a new policy for students to transfer in Biology credit via AP, DC or prior college work, as of May 2016. Provided that the student feels competent in the subject, he/she will be advised to progress in the major/department. This effort will enable more students to be prepared for the MCAT in the spring of their junior year and to graduate within four years.
- Advising is now required for all juniors who were advised as freshmen and sophomores by CASA (College of Arts & Sciences Advisement).

Year 3 Goals

- Explore the possibility of hosting an Arts & Sciences Visit Day. To gather information, a site visit is planned during the summer of 2016 to an aspirant institution that has exhibited success with this event.
- Plan a parent webinar course targeted at retention and success for new freshmen, possibly focused on first generation students, with a Fall 2017 implementation date.
- In Fall 2016, roll out the retention-graduation tool Student Success Collaborative (SSC).
- Implement the new A&S transfer policy designed to improve the quality of our transfer students and to increase the accessibility of our degrees for transfer students.

AOD 3.2 – Investing in Teaching

Year 2 Accomplishment

- Representatives from the Dean’s Office examined the workshops currently offered by Baylor’s Academy for Teaching and Learning (ATL) and identified the target audience of faculty in Arts & Sciences who could participate in each workshop. For example, faculty who teach large introductory sections might participate in a workshop focused on interactive techniques for large classes.

Year 3 Goals

- 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 members. 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 members 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.
- Evaluate each remaining action stem and create a precise plan for implementation. This goal will be implemented in August 2016 by a committee of associate deans: Frieda Blackwell, Carrolle Kamperman and Betsy Vardaman.
- The committee will present recommendations to the Dean in September 2016.

AOD 3.3 – Improving Technology/Enhanced Learning

Year 2 Accomplishments

- Completed an inventory of teaching practices and methods across campus with respect to technology in the classroom and provided this information as a resource to all faculty.
- Recommended the Director of Arts & Sciences Technology, Wes Johnson, serve as a representative on the University Technology Committee.
- Recommended additional opportunities for online courses within the university.

Year 3 Goals

- In August 2016, a committee of associate deans -- Frieda Blackwell, Carrolle Kamperman and Betsy Vardaman -- will meet to develop the plan to 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;
 - Insights and protocols from the University Technology Committee; and
 - Development of an action plan based on a review of the current inventory of classrooms and available technology.
- Present recommendations to the Dean in September 2016.

AOD 4.1 – Strategies for Engaged Learning/Merit Scholarships – Office

Year 2 Accomplishments

- Finalized the name and mission statement for the Special Programs Office. The newly approved name – Scholarship Programs, Awards, Research and Knowledge (SPARK) – has now been incorporated into the graphic design, website and literature for the office. The mission statement for SPARK is found in Appendix I.
- Recommended increased faculty support for the office -- a half-time faculty appointment to focus on mentoring students in the sciences, effective Summer 2016.
- Reviewed 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. A review was completed broadly of 29 scholarship offices, in addition to in-depth reviews of seven offices. Their structures, staffing and programs were considered – with ideas from Rice, SMU and the University of Kansas being incorporated into suggested future resources and programming for SPARK.
- Analyzed information from the National Association of Fellowship Advisors, published in the summer of 2015, based on a national survey on the structures and offices for scholarship and undergraduate research.
- Launched the SPARK CARD program during Fall 2015 to identify exceptionally talented students within the Baylor community and advise them about the national scholarships served by this office.
- Introduced SPARK FEEDBACK CARDS to the faculty to facilitate communication with the office regarding the names of students who have received SPARK CARDS. In the spring of 2016, 70 key Arts & Sciences faculty received a letter describing the mission of this

office; three SPARK CARDS and three response cards were enclosed. Many faculty members responded warmly to the opportunity to identify students for SPARK CARDS, gave out the cards, and have mailed the return postcard verifications to SPARK.

Year 3 Goals

- Increase the faculty support for the office by offering a one-course reduction for a faculty member in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) to mentor students in the sciences, effective Fall 2016.
- Continue to study the infrastructure needed to sustain undergraduate research and national scholarship efforts in Arts & Sciences.

AOD 4.2 – Strategies for Engaged Learning/Merit Scholarships – Undergraduate Research

Year 2 Accomplishments

- Proposed revision of the guidelines for the final report on Undergraduate Research and Scholarly Achievement (URSA) grant and for other undergraduate research reports to highlight the role of the student-researcher, effective Fall 2016.
- Based on a thorough review of the data and observations made during Summer 2015, the director of the Summer Research Program for Entering Freshmen, Dr. Frank Mathis, proposed specific recommendations for the future of the program (see Appendix II).
- Completed a university-wide Survey for Undergraduate Research (administered by students in BURST – Baylor Undergraduate Research in Science and Technology) in Spring 2016 with the mentorship of many experts within the faculty and staff and under the approval of all deans/directors and schools who have undergraduate research STEM units. Undergraduate students completed 980 surveys from a sample size of 2,497.
- Recommended creation of an undergraduate research position to advocate for STEM, humanities and social sciences programs. The responsibilities of this position will include:

Mentor BURST and other student organizations, be a liaison to Science Research Fellows and to Hillis Scholars as well as to URSA, be an advocate for building the culture for undergraduate research across units, and speak to these issues at various recruitment events — among other duties. This person would be the one who gathers new ideas for promoting undergraduate research. He or she will assess and implement (when appropriate) new undergraduate research programs. This is the point person and spokesperson for obtaining new internships and

additional development dollars for undergraduate research; the director of undergraduate research should also serve on grant proposal committees in order to proliferate opportunities and undergird the importance of undergraduate research to our students.

Year 3 Goals

- Confirm revision of guidelines for the final report on Undergraduate Research and Scholarly Achievement (URSA) grants to highlight the role of the student-researcher.
- Determine the future direction of the Summer Research Program for Entering Freshmen based on the recommendations set forward in the of the review of the data and observations from Summer 2015 and Summer 2016.
- Consider a proposal for a half-time undergraduate research director.
- Conduct a feasibility study regarding a clearinghouse for undergraduate research, similar to the UT Austin database.
- Based on the BURST Undergraduate Research Survey in STEM fields completed last year, review the findings and develop recommendations by Spring 2017.
- Create a comprehensive Arts & Sciences undergraduate survey to be launched in Spring 2017 to determine additional areas of support needed for undergraduate research across A&S humanities and social sciences, as well as STEM units.
- If the undergraduate research position is approved:
 - Identify inquiry-based research courses in the undergraduate catalog and schedule of classes and implement a designation (such as “R”) for these courses;
 - Advocate for additional funding for research experiences on campus during summer, as well as during the academic year;
 - Collaborate with the academic departments to create a web presence for undergraduate research opportunities and experiences;
 - Develop a network of interactions among departments and across units to foster, share and collaborate on undergraduate research opportunities; and
 - Advocate at the departmental level for the creation of a travel budget for student researchers.

AOD 5.1 – Assessing the Structure and Function of the A&S Core Curriculum – Colloquia

Year 2 Accomplishment

- Arts & Sciences departments completed departmental vision statements for their general education courses. These statements were given to the A&S task force commissioned to write a core curriculum vision document.

Year 3 Goal

- AOD 5.1 is completed.

AOD 5.2 – Assessing the Structure and Function of the A&S Core Curriculum – Determining Whether Further Assessment of the Core Curriculum is Needed

Year 2 Accomplishment

- The decision was made by the Dean, in consultation with information from the vision document written by a task force, that further assessment of the core curriculum was needed, advancing the process to AOD 5.3.

Year 3 Goal

- AOD 5.2 is completed.

AOD 5.3 – Assessing the Structure and Function of the A&S Core Curriculum – Changes to the Core

Year 2 Accomplishments

- In May 2016 the Arts & Sciences Council of Chairs unanimously adopted the vision document for the core curriculum, as created by the task force appointed by the Dean the previous year.
- See A&S Core Curriculum Vision in Appendix III

Year 3 Goal

- The task force, commissioned by the dean in May 2016, will complete a review of the existing core curriculum in light of the new core curriculum vision and present its findings to the Council of Chairs in the spring of 2017.