

A&SPIRE YEAR THREE (2016-2017)

Theme 1

ADVANCING LIBERAL EDUCATION IN THE 21ST CENTURY



AOD 1 – Evaluating the Four Cs

- This AOD is completed

AOD 2 – 10-year Enrollment Management

Year 3 Accomplishments

Recruitment

- The fall 2016 census reached a significant milestone: 30 percent of Arts & Sciences incoming freshmen identified as high-ability students.

- The A&S Dean's Office met with all Admissions representatives in August 2016 to equip them to represent A&S on various topics: articulating liberal arts, better representing undersubscribed majors, students' career paths post-graduation, etc. We provided a document post-training with written responses to all questions for resource purposes, and we plan to offer this again in 2017.
- Targeted communication with premedical (PMDV) students who would fall below the benchmarks (note: PMDV Designation Policy implemented January 2017) for enrolling with a confirmed PMDV educational goal setting was implemented through collaboration with Admissions on the application. The messaging continued throughout the admission cycle and on into Orientation as new scores became available.
- While the overall enrollment level has remained stable in A&S, fall 2016 enrollment evidenced a continued slight decrease in biology majors — which is an A&S goal. (In fall 2016 there were 416 new enrolled biology majors, the lowest number in six years. Our stated enrollment goal is 350 biology majors).
- In summer 2016, the second year of concerted effort via Advising in Orientation/Registration, 72.9 percent of eligible PMDV freshmen enrolled in 2 science-1 math PM sequence curriculum due to a university-wide effort. The first year showed a level of 72.3 percent, while the previous three-year average was 21.4 percent. After the fall semester, analysis revealed no significant negative impact on GPA, thus keeping PMDV students on track to be prepared to take the MCAT their junior year.
- Arts & Sciences hosted the second Baylor to Seminary program for religion major prospective students in January 2017. A yield rate of 75 percent was reported, and eight majors, including six scholarships, were realized. To reach goals of hosting 20 prospective students for Year 3 of the event, two new leaders drafted a recruiting plan including more focused effort at reaching out through a variety of channels (BSU, alumni, churches, admissions records, etc.).
- Arts & Sciences faculty greatly partnered with Admissions for programs, including: Invitation to Excellence; Code Red (with the A&S Dean's Office assuming more of a leadership role in fall 2016); Joint Hurricane Program; Know Where You're Going Day; Distinguished Scholars Days (DSD, six departments); Rallies; Premiere; and Campus Visits Under the Tent. For the first time, the Dean's Office hosted a gala reception (featuring the dean of Arts & Sciences) for the undersubscribed DSD departments in fall 2016.
- There was a concerted effort at recruiting by each department in A&S. For a period of three weeks in spring 2017, faculty members (largely Undergraduate Program Directors and their colleagues) telephoned prospective students to answer questions and encourage deposits. Additionally, targeted communication via emails, cards and gifts increased from previous years. Oversubscribed departments messaged high-ability students, while undersubscribed departments messaged all incoming majors.

- Summer sessions during Orientation continued with the added component of a 7-minute video that highlights the option to pursue premedicine with a major in the humanities. The second session highlighted the benefit of pursuing a liberal arts degree. The Office of Career and Professional Development at Baylor assisted with these presentations.

Retention

- After planning for 16 months, the New Parent Experience Webinar is set to launch in August 2017. This 12-week, one-hour-per-week webinar series is targeted at the parents of first-generation entering freshmen in Arts & Sciences. Since first-generation students retain at approximately a 5 percent lower rate than non-first-generation students, our aim is to improve information and community to increase retention and success for this cohort through partnering with the parents. The webinar was created in partnership with Parents Network, Student Success Initiatives and Campus Living & Learning and features faculty and staff across campus as presenters. Hosted by the College of Arts & Sciences, 2017-2018 is Pilot Year 1 (of 3). We are employing a pre-test, post-test study design with participants and will look at participant students' outcomes of registration, retention (fall to spring, and fall to fall) and GPA. It is possible that for Pilot Year 2, the responsibility for hosting the webinar may move to one of the other offices represented on the leadership team. We will also discuss making the webinar available to other parent groups at Baylor for Pilot Years 2 and 3 as we assess the webinar's impact.
- The Student Success Collaborative provides an online resource for better coordinated care of undergraduates. Advisors were introduced and used this resource in 2016-2017, and in 2017-2018 there will be greater participation by faculty members and deans.
- During Welcome Week Friday in August 2016, we added four more departments over the previous summer, bringing the total to 18 A&S departments or programs hosting sessions in August 2016 focused on connecting new students to their major and faculty in the department. It was a successful program, and invitations for all A&S departments to be involved will continue.
- The Student Ambassadors program remains an asset. Seventeen students in three oversubscribed departments (Biology, Chemistry and Biochemistry, and Psychology and Neuroscience) were hired in August 2015 and again in August 2016 for a full year to (a) alleviate recruitment pressures on faculty in these departments and (b) help fellow majors find success within the major. Deemed wildly successful, the two-year pilot program has now ended and budgets have been increased for fiscal year 2017-2018 in these three departments to sustain this program permanently.
- There have been continued and increased efforts at providing credit-bearing New Student Experience (NSE) courses to freshmen. In fall 2015 and fall 2016 approximately

66.5 percent of freshmen were enrolled in NSE credit-bearing courses, which represents an increase of approximately 15 percent over 2014 (50.9 percent). In fall 2016, a representative of the A&S Dean's Office, Dr. Lynn Wisely, taught an NSE course.

Graduation

- As of the fall 2016 census, the four-year graduation rate in Arts & Sciences of 64.2 percent is at the highest level in at least five years, which bodes well for increased six-year rates further on. The six-year A&S graduation rate also improved to 72.7 percent (with a goal of 82 percent).
- Summer online course offerings have blossomed since the pilot program was launched in summer 2015 (seven courses were offered). A total of 13 courses were offered in summer 2016, serving more than 200 students. After two years, the pilot was deemed successful and summer online is now the “new normal.” Summer online has continued to grow — summer 2017 offered a total of 20 classes with multiple sections accommodating up to 700 students. Thanks goes to faculty for allowing students this online flexibility to meet degree and graduation goals.
- In May 2016, after careful analysis of the data, the College introduced a new policy for incoming students with biology credit earned via Advanced Placement (AP), Dual Credit (DC) or prior college work. The student is now advised — provided the student feels competent in the subject — to progress to the next class in the major/department. This effort has several benefits: (1) students are to take what is pedagogically appropriate with respect to the next course in their learning, (2) more students will be have the requisite coursework to be prepared to take the MCAT (Medical College Admission Test) in the spring of their junior year, and (3) more students will be on track to meet four-year graduation goals. This policy, in conjunction with the Baylor University Course Repeat Policy effective August 2017, will have an impact on the successful trajectory of students through their education and to graduation more efficiently.
- Effective in fall 2017, with the exception of a few departments (Art, Theatre Arts, Aviation Sciences and Sociology), all declared majors in Arts & Sciences are being advised by professional advisors in College of Arts & Sciences Advisement (CASA).

Year 4 Goals

- We are making plans to host an Arts & Sciences Visit Day in fall 2017, in conjunction with the Distinguished Scholars Day model, particularly in undersubscribed majors.
- We will continue the planning and rollout of a parent webinar course targeted at retention and success for new freshmen, focused on the parents of first generation students, with a fall 2017 implementation date.

- We will roll out the retention-graduation tool Student Success Collaborative (SSC) to Undergraduate Program Directors (UPDs) in Arts & Sciences in fall 2017.
- The 2017-2018 academic year will include focused attention on curriculum planning — how best to articulate and market what our departments offer to the stakeholders, both prospective students and employers.
- We will implement a new Arts & Sciences transfer policy designed to improve the quality of our transfer students and to increase the accessibility of our degrees for transfer students. The implementation date for most of the policy will be August 2017, with the implementation in August 2018 of a portion pertaining to GPA cutoff for enrolling students interested in oversubscribed departments.

AOD 3.2 – Investing in Teaching

Year 3 Accomplishment

- Members of the Dean’s Office met several times with Dr. Lenore Wright, director of the Academy for Teaching and Learning, to discuss possible cooperative efforts between the ATL and the College to promote excellence and innovation in teaching. Last year, the College developed a proposal that indicated specific ways in which it could identify faculty members within departments who would have the greatest interest in such teaching initiatives.

Year 4 Goals

- In fall 2017, the Dean’s Office, in coordination with department chairs, will begin the process of identifying and selecting a faculty member from each department to partner with the Academy for Teaching and Learning on teaching innovations.
- In fall 2017, the Dean’s Office will continue identifying areas of need for additional advanced technology within the College and work to address those needs.

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

Year 3 Accomplishments

- The College of Arts & Sciences created the Office of Engaged Learning in fall 2016 with Associate Dean Elizabeth Vardaman as director. The office’s purposes and personnel have expanded, and are now focused on a variety of ways that A&S may provide transformational experiences beyond formal course work and partner with students to foster their application of classroom knowledge to dynamic, real-world opportunities. The three areas in which greater resources and mentoring/personnel have been expanded include: (1) undergraduate research, (2) internships and (3) national scholarships.

- We increased faculty support for the SPARK (Scholarship Programs, Awards, Research and Knowledge) division of the Office of Engaged Learning by securing assistance from Associate Dean Carrolle Kamperman in spring 2017 for 10 hours a week of expertise. Her initial work includes:
 - mentoring students through handling Student Profiles sent in through the SPARK website;
 - being the A&S primary contact for service learning opportunities in Waco;
 - supporting some of the Ampersand cohorts in monthly meetings;
 - assuming a significant role in assisting students with Fulbright applications; and
 - taking primary responsibility for coordinating our office with CASA to identify more students within A&S who may qualify for national competitions.
- The College began to develop fundraising plans for the Office of Engaged Learning with help of the Arts & Sciences Board of Advocates and the A&S development team.
- We expanded awareness of the SPARK division of the Office of Engaged Learning through mail-outs to Undergraduate Program Directors, and through meetings within our Partnership Council. These efforts enabled us to inform more academic programs within A&S and across campus regarding the resources SPARK offers.
- The College held a half-day symposium for women leaders in academics. It had as part of its purpose to identify and encourage top undergraduate women to aim high and apply for various internships and scholarships available through resources found within the Office of Engaged Learning in A&S.
- We assumed responsibility for advertising, recruiting applicants and establishing the interview/selection process for the Shepherd Internship program sponsored nationally by the Shepherd Higher Education Consortium on Poverty (www.shepherdconsortium.org). In concert with the Baylor Interdisciplinary Poverty Initiative, we chose six Baylor students for the eight-week internships in summer 2017. (Details of the winners and their majors are available on the SPARK website.)
- Staff within SPARK supervised student applications for many prestigious scholarships, including Fulbright, Marshall, Rhodes, Truman, and US-UK Fulbright Summer Internships. Five Baylor students won Fulbrights for 2017-2018 — three received English Teaching Assistantships (to Germany, Spain and Taiwan), one received a study grant to The Netherlands and one undergraduate was selected to attend a US-UK summer internship through Durham University in England. Other applications, awards and finalists included a Goldwater Honorable Mention, a Truman Finalist, a John Jay Fellowship, a Rotary Global Health Scholarship, a SURF/NSF summer internship to

Harvard and Research Fellowships in Neuroscience to both the Max Plank Institute and to Emory. Approximately 50 students applied for awards through SPARK.

- The expansion of resources on the SPARK website (www.baylor.edu/scholarships/) continued, with new divisions including BU GOLD.
- Expanded cohorts for the Ampersand Honors Society target 25 students in each academic year to receive enriched student resources mentoring for engaged learning.

Year 4 Goals

- Develop plans to increase the number of students interacting with the Office of Engaged Learning over the next five years so that more than 100 students a year secure internships.
- Develop plans to create and implement networks that reach out to alumni, business partners and community programs to expand and connect students to Baylor alumni and their expertise.
- Develop plans to increase the number of applications for nationally competitive scholarships to 80 a year.

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

Year 3 Accomplishments

- The director of the Summer Research Program for Entering Freshmen, Dr. Frank Mathis, administered the second successful summer of this program.
- Dean Nordt and the Arts & Sciences associate deans analyzed the university-wide Survey for Undergraduate Research (administered by students in BURST in spring 2016 and processed for data and insights gained under supervision of Dr. Dennis Johnston in the Department of Statistical Science in fall 2016). The results included this information: of the 762 respondents within A&S departments, 374 (49.08 percent) indicated they were interested in undergraduate research, but had not yet had research experience. Plans were discussed for increasing A&S resources for undergraduate research and for implementing a second undergraduate research survey in the 2017-2018 academic year.
- We continued to build the infrastructure needed to sustain current and build new resources for undergraduate research through expanding the responsibilities for the Associate Dean for Undergraduate Studies in the Sciences to include strengthening and more fully coordinating the undergraduate research efforts within STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) fields.
- We supported increased summer internships in the six STEM departments — 12 undergraduate student researcher positions were added for summer 2017.

- With the help of Dr. Rich Sanker, director of the Prehealth Science Studies Office, we continued to build the Hillis Scholars in Biomedical Sciences program through additional resources for community building and engagement with Dr. William Hillis and Dr. David Hillis.

Year 4 Goals

- Continue to build the infrastructure that will provide students limitless skills in inquiry and discovery as they move forward through their undergraduate research experiences at Baylor.
- Plan and implement more conversations across the humanities and social sciences disciplines so that needed undergraduate research areas are identified and addressed.
- Assess and expand our undergraduate research presence on Arts & Sciences websites so that students can locate opportunities readily via departmental resources.
- Collaborate with academic departments to develop a network of interactions among departments and across units to foster and share awareness of undergraduate research opportunities.
- Create an A&S web presence for undergraduate research resources that complements but also expands those resources cited within the departments' directories.
- Conduct a feasibility study regarding a clearinghouse for undergraduate research.
- Assess the status of our undergraduate research publication, *Scientia*, and determine the next steps needed to strengthen and expand the journal.
- Continue to assess undergraduate research opportunities and identify inquiry-based research courses, implementing a designation (such as "R") for these courses.
- Advocate at the departmental level for the creation of travel budgets for student researchers.

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

- This AOD is completed.

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

- This AOD is completed.

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

Year 3 Accomplishment

- This task force submitted their recommendation to the Dean for a revised Arts & Sciences core curriculum.

Year 4 Goals

- Following the presentation of the set of recommendations by the A&S Core Curriculum Review Task Force to the Council of Chairs, department chairs will ask their faculty for feedback. The set of recommendations will be voted on by the Council of Chairs in fall 2017.
- If the recommendations are approved, Dean Nordt will appoint (per guidelines from the A&S Core Curriculum Vision) an A&S Core Curriculum Advisory Committee that will oversee the implementation, maintenance and review of the new core curriculum.
- The Dean will meet with the Provost regarding the possibility of the A&S core curriculum becoming the university's core curriculum.
- The Dean will appoint a task force to study the possibility of an alternative core for students for whom a wider breadth might fit their curricular and vocational objectives.
- The Dean will appoint a task force with Graduate Program Directors from selected A&S departments to determine what opportunities and issues will exist for graduate students if a new core is approved.