

College of Arts and Letters

Strategic Plan (2024-2028)

Mission Statement

The College of Arts and Letters empowers students to become reflective lifelong learners who can address today's social, cultural, and political challenges through inclusive awareness, creative thinking, problem solving, communication, and responsive leadership.

Vision

To be a champion for liberal arts education, empowered locally and engaged globally.

Value Statements

- **Stewardship:** The College of Arts and Letters is committed to the responsible, ethical, equitable, and transparent use of our time and our financial, scholastic, environmental, and human resources.
- **Collaboration:** The College of Arts and Letters embraces the power and benefits of working together to achieve results and recognizes that only through collaborative governance and shared decision-making among leadership, faculty, and staff will it realize its full potential.
- **Faculty and Staff Development:** The College of Arts and Letters invests in our employees' well-being and life-long learning. The College prioritizes professional development and cultivates work environments in which faculty and staff flourish both professionally and personally.
- **Equity:** The College of Arts and Letters commits to maintaining a fair and just environment where all are welcome, respected, and able to contribute to the academic experience.
- **Integrity:** The College of Arts and Letters holds its leadership, its faculty, and its staff to the highest standards of honesty, ethical behavior, and mutual respect and to full accountability in decision making.
- **Shared Governance:** The College of Arts and Letters upholds its commitment to shared governance through inclusive participation in planning and decision-making and meaningful accountability that fosters a climate of mutual trust.
- **Academic Excellence:** The College of Arts and Letters promotes high standards in teaching and research, upholds academic freedom and academic integrity for faculty and students, and challenges students to think and create in original and complex ways.

Goals

Strategic Focus 1: Community and Global Engagement

CAL is committed to strengthening community ties and fostering global university connections to enhance student opportunities and workforce preparation.

Goal 1: Grow professional partnerships and invest resources to increase service learning and internship opportunities for student workforce preparation.

- Action item: Investigate funding and resources available to facilitate professional development of students.
- Action Item: Work with the Community Engagement and Volunteer Center (CEVC) to create CAL-specific exchanges with local partners.
- KPI: Enhance ongoing community partnerships to support and enrich service-learning opportunities by spring 2027.
- KPI: Show an increase in student internship opportunities in CAL by spring 2027.

Goal 2: Work with the Center for Global Engagement to foster collaboration with universities overseas to create CAL-specific student and faculty exchanges with global partners.

- Action item: Fund new or promote existing international faculty exchange programs.
- Action item: Establish study-abroad scholarships for students.
- KPI: Increase opportunities and/or funding support for faculty exchange, globally engaged faculty programs, and international grant proposals by spring 2027.
- KPI: Increase international travel and/or study abroad funding for students by spring 2027.

Goal 3: Incentivize faculty to integrate global perspectives in curricular design and campus-wide programs.

- Action item: Create a seed grant program to support faculty integrating global perspectives into the curriculum.
- KPI: Increase guest speakers for global interactions and virtual exchanges by spring 2027.

Strategic Focus 2: Workplace Culture

CAL prioritizes inclusivity in its educational and work environments, fair resource allocation, and diverse recruitment and retention practices to ensure equitable treatment for all members of the community.

Goal 1: Create and maintain educational and work environments that are free from bias and discrimination.

- Action Item: Audit the distribution of college resources across units for equity and fairness (e.g. CAL leaves, grants, other college-level resources).

- KPI: By 2027, 100% of CAL Academic Units will design and implement an internal equity audit of their policies, practices, and processes.

Goal 2: Foster Community in the College

- Action Item: Provide opportunities for professional connections and programming to promote inclusivity and belonging.
- Action Item: Provide opportunities for social connections across college (book clubs, picnics, social hours, etc.) to promote inclusivity and belonging.
- Action Item: Manage, publicize, and sustain a shared college event calendar to encourage and celebrate college and unit events.

Goal 3: By 2027, develop and implement faculty recruitment and retention models that are competitive with other nationally ranked, R2 institutions.

- Action Item: Work with institution-wide committees to identify a stable list of R2 peer institutions and identify best practices in recruitment and retention with an emphasis on strategies that can be implemented at the college level.
- Action Item: Invite faculty departures to take part in an exit interview that will include questions about why they chose JMU and why they are leaving JMU. Dean's office will collate and identify available departure interview information and share trends and actionable information with the CAL Executive Committee and CAL Faculty Council.
- Action Item: Investigate the barriers to partner hiring on campus and lead an effort to build reciprocal partner hiring strategies with other colleges.
- Action Item: Regularly assess the college for compression and inversion by working with units to identify and report the information to Academic Resources.
- KPI: By 2027, CAL will work with Academic Resources to identify compression and inversion discrepancies.
- KPI: By 2027, CAL will work with Academic Resources to advocate for initial salaries that reflect cost of living for all hires, while also being mindful of compression and inversion.

Goal 4: Develop and implement staff recruitment and retention models specific to staff concerns.

- Action Item: Using information from the climate survey and inviting input from staff, CAL will work with its units to facilitate plan/s to address staff needs.
- Action Item: Cultivate a culture that allows staff to seek opportunities for growth.
- KPI: Starting with the 2024-2025 academic year, supervisors will utilize the Individual Professional Development Plan (IPDP) to chart and support short-and long-term goals with staff members.
- Action Item: CAL will create a policy related to staff taking classes. (Despite the university's policy, some academic units require staff to make up time even though that process is not outlined in the policy.)

- Action Item: Establish an official peer coverage plan to support staff who are off for medical, family, personal leave, etc.
- KPI: Starting with the 2024-2025 academic year, supervisors will regularly (every one to two years) review position descriptions and roles assigned to employees to reflect current duties. Supervisors will also work with HR to determine whether positions and state role titles align with duties, responsibilities, and experiences and determine whether additional compensation is appropriate.
- KPI: By 2027, CAL will work with Academic Resources to advocate for initial salaries that reflect cost of living for all hires, while also being mindful of compression and inversion.

Goal 5: Strive for transparency and equity across the college about advising loads, teaching loads, and course sizes.

- Action Item: Work with units to audit advising loads, FTEs, teaching loads, class sizes, and available supports (e.g., graders or teaching assistants) by unit to define what workload equity means for the college.
- Action Item: Strive for consistency and transparency across the college in class sizes for writing-intensive courses, large lecture courses, capstones, etc.
- Action item: Create a plan to address and/or explain discrepancies in course load, course size, and FTEs across units by the end of spring 2027.
- Action Item: Work with units to adjust faculty hiring priorities to begin to address the above discrepancies by Spring 2027.
- KPI: Work with units to address discrepancies in advising by advocating for departmental advisors proportional to major student numbers by the end of spring 2027.

Goal 6: Promote an environment of civil discourse in which diverse intellectual perspectives and identity-grounded viewpoints flourish.

- Action Item: Recognize and address visible and invisible barriers (e.g. climate, compensation, language of job ads) to increase representation of diverse voices among faculty.
- Action item: Academic and administrative units will assess their local unit climates for welcoming the expression of diverse viewpoints.
- Action item: Units will define discipline-centered, actionable strategies for widening and cultivating the range of diverse viewpoints among faculty and students.

Strategic Focus 3: Academic Resources

Develop sustainable models for educating and supporting students, both undergraduate and graduate, and for supporting faculty research and creative activities commensurate with the expectations of an R2 university.

Goal 1: Work to increase access to research resources commensurate with expectations of an R2 university.

- Action item: Gather data on R2 peer institutions' (and other JMU colleges') research resources (lab spaces & resources, educational leaves, academic travel funding, equipment funding, research grants, funds for visiting scholars) by spring 2027.
- Action item: Gather and share data on CAL research resources (lab spaces and resources, educational leaves, academic travel funding, equipment funding, research grants, funds for visiting scholars) by spring 2027.
- Action item: Promote work by CAL scholars who have received CAL research resources.
- KPI: Create a plan for increasing access to lab spaces, educational leaves, academic travel funding, equipment funding, research grants, and funds for visiting scholars, zeroing the gap between JMU CAL and our peer institutions by spring 2027.

Goal 2: Create a support structure and systems for student success focused on high-quality academic advising and career readiness (scholarships and internships).

- Action Item: In concert with the APR process, and working with units, the college will assess quality, accessibility, and modes of advising and career readiness by spring 2027.
- Action Item: Units will consult alumni and current students to identify student engagement with, and needs for, career readiness resources (internships, fellowships, research opportunities) by spring 2027.
- Action Item: Units will work with University Career Center and CAL's Director of Professional Development and Engagement to identify viable strategies for building career readiness into the curriculum by spring 2027.
- Action Item: Provide resources to self-selecting units to incorporate unit specific career readiness and exploration curriculum and programming.
- KPI: Increase career exploration curriculum and experiences for students specific to their major by spring 2027.
- Action Item: Increase resources for college-wide career readiness and exploration to increase programming.
- KPI: Provide resources to hire a Graduate Assistant or PT employee to increase programming opportunities.
- Action Item: Units will work with University Advising to identify strategies for improving advising while also reducing inequities in advising loads within and across units by spring 2027.
- Action Item: Address discrepancies in advising by advocating for departmental advisors proportional to major student numbers by the end of spring 2027.

- KPI: By midpoint evaluation (four years after the APR), CAL units will document demonstrated progress on these action items.

Goal 3: Develop a sustainable graduate program model that is competitive on regional and national levels.

- Action Item: Working with unit Graduate Directors, the college will investigate funding for graduate programs at peer institutions with the goal of improving competitive funding packages by spring 2027.
- Action Item: Assess graduate faculty teaching loads across CAL and ensure that graduate teaching opportunities and responsibilities are equitably distributed within and across graduate faculty in units.
- Action Item: Assess graduate faculty teaching loads at peer institutions and suggest a model that aligns with the common practices of our peers by spring 2027.
- KPI: Increase competitiveness of graduate funding packages, zeroing the gap between CAL and our peer institutions by spring 2027.
- KPI: Identify and work with units to address inequities between the graduate teaching loads within and across CAL's graduate programs and peer institutions by spring 2027.

Goal 4: Increase full-time instruction positions consistent with current departmental needs to support curricular, scholarship, and service reach of CAL.

- Action Item: Work with units to utilize APR and FAR data to advocate for sustainable and equitable allocation of full-time faculty positions and resources by spring 2027.
- Action Item: Prioritize funding of full-time instructional positions to attain teaching loads comparable to peer institutions.
- KPI: CAL will continue to advocate for the funding of full-time instructional positions to support curricula showing 10% or more growth by spring 2027.

Goal 5: Investigate the creation of online degree and certificate programs at the undergraduate and graduate levels in CAL within the next three years to expand CAL's reach.

- Action Item: Provide curricular development grants to faculty to develop discipline-specific and interdisciplinary online degree and certification programs.
- Action Item: Support units by identifying funding and technological resources to deliver online programming.