

## **Goal #4: Strengthen our Resource Base, Visibility, and Impact**

Increasing financial resources is an ongoing and essential task for the college's leadership team and for leaders across the college's units. Increased resources will enable us to better fund our programs, improve our facilities, provide more support for our students, and continue creating new and innovative educational programs and research initiatives. And, while growth and new initiatives are important, it's also true that we must increase revenue to help offset expenses, like salary programs, that are increasingly funded at the college level instead of by campus.

While some units in the College of LAS are better positioned to increase resources than others, we believe that all units have opportunities for this and that improvements that we make across the college have the potential to help all of our LAS students—and students across campus, for that matter.

Closely related to increasing our resources is the need to more effectively and more regularly create visibility for the college and its units and to articulate the impact of our collective work. Both external audiences—including prospective students, funding agencies, and legislators—as well as students and colleagues across campus should hear more regularly about our efforts and outcomes. They should be aware of the excellence of our teaching and research enterprises and of the success our alumni have after graduation. Increased visibility and better articulation of our impact can have tangible benefits including increased resources, more successful recruitment of students and faculty, and a stronger and more engaged LAS community of faculty, staff, students, and alumni.

The timing is right for an increased focus on resources, visibility, and impact because the campus' new budget model will enable more strategic use of resources and a stronger understanding of how programs and initiatives impact the bottom line.

The goal of strengthening resources, visibility, and impact is important to the college. These ideas are also important to campus. As such, they are reflected in the campus strategic plan—[The Next 150 years, 2018-2023](#).

- **Goal 3: Make a significant and visible societal impact** includes a sub-goal focused on developing an integrated, coordinated, and sustained marketing and communications effort. Doing so will help campus establish a unique position among its peers; share its story with internal and external audiences; empower researchers to better communicate about their work; emphasize the economic impact of the university; and increase connections and visibility in the Chicago area.
- **Goal 4: Steward current resources and generate additional resources for strategic initiatives** includes sub-goals that address improvement of budgeting systems, more use of technology, reduction of overhead, building maintenance, and planning; expansion of online education, corporate partnerships, and research infrastructure; and creating a more integrated approach to cross-campus advancement efforts.

Many LAS units addressed similar topics in their unit planning documents. Among the most frequently mentioned are improving marketing and communications support, increasing fundraising efforts, public outreach, and increased alumni engagement.

### **Strengthening resources**

*Strengthening resources is critically important to both maintaining our current level of excellence and innovating for the future. Resources can come from creating new opportunities. But just as important is the need to constantly evaluate the use of existing resources and make decisions about ways in which these resources might be better deployed. This could mean reconsidering existing programs, eliminating low enrollment courses, or reducing a unit's physical footprint.*

### ***Create new programs***

A number of units across the college already have in place or are in the process of creating professional master's programs including the Health Communication program and Master of Science in Policy Economics. The college is leading a campus wide effort to create new X + Data Science programs. The new neuroscience major is an example of broad collaboration. NetMath has shown the potential for international partnerships. And units and individual faculty regularly create new online courses with strong support from ATLAS. New programs such as these create new opportunities for students while generating additional revenue.

### ***Expand existing programs***

Recruiting students to undergraduate majors across the college has been a joint effort between individual units, the college Office of Student Academic Affairs, and the college Office of Communications and Marketing. Seeing the need for more support for humanities units in this area, the college leveraged the Investment for Growth program in 2018 to add a media specialist who is focused on furthering marketing efforts for humanities programs. Grad student recruitment is more localized within units, but may present an opportunity for further collaboration. The expansion of existing programs, particularly those with high demand, is an opportunity for increased resources.

### ***Fundraising***

The college has a strong fundraising operation that utilizes centrally maintained and analyzed data to guide activities; an evolving alumni engagement plan that includes leveraging a mix of college-, unit-, and campus-driven events; and increased engagement with international alumni. We have the potential to increase our impact through private donations from alumni and friends, corporate support, and foundation support. The most successful fundraising work in LAS typically involves a strong major gift officer, an engaged unit head, supportive faculty, and timely stewardship communication. With more than 160,000 alumni across the college, there is potential for more major giving, increased annual giving, and long-term cultivation of future major donors.

### ***Operational Excellence***

Campus' Operational Excellence program is designed to improve budgeting, increase efficiencies, and better manage costs. Improved processes, stronger oversight, and more partnering, can all impact the bottom line. The college and many units are already engaged in reductions to utility expenses, efforts to optimize space usage, capital projects, and space planning. We've realized costs savings already, but can do more.

Similarly, the college recently restructured its business office to provide more guidance in fiscal management throughout LAS. This will involve providing assistance in understanding the new budget model and show how unit decisions and activities affect the model. The business office will also be able to provide more information and tools for units' financial oversight and operations.

### ***Questions for the working group***

1. How can we more effectively create new programs and expand high-demand existing ones? What does this look like? What incentives do units need to make this a priority?
2. In what ways can the college further support units in shared services? What are some opportunities for improved operational efficiency?
3. How do spending reduction and redistribution of unit resources come in to play? What opportunities exist to pare back in order to grow in new ways?
4. What training or other support do unit heads need to more effectively communicate about their units? To raise funds for their units?
5. How can LAS continue to leverage the Investment for Growth proposal process to strengthen its resource base?
6. What other opportunities do you see to strengthen resources?

### **Strengthening visibility**

*In the last few years the college has made important strides in adding expertise, better coordinating efforts, and creating a more effective approach to communications and marketing. One important part of this has been the creation of the LAS Communications group, which brings together professional communicators from across the college. This group shares information, collaborates on communications work, and creates more integration between campus, the college, and units.*

### ***Alumni communications and engagement***

Communicating with alumni is an important component of our college-wide communications strategy. Our alumni are the product of our work and they're also our best champions. The college and many units currently communicate with alumni via newsletters, social media, and other channels. A strategic approach to engaging alumni through communications channels is needed. Other means for engaging alumni including through unit-level alumni boards and awards programs provide additional opportunities to engage alumni.

### ***On-campus communications and engagement***

On-campus communication must start at the local level. In other words, all units across LAS need basic mechanisms for keeping faculty and staff in the loop on unit matters. Similarly, regular communication from the college to all faculty and staff is important to our goal of creating a strong, engaged, and productive LAS community.

### ***Community communications and engagement***

Many units across LAS currently engage with the community through a variety of programs including activities in schools, events like "Astronomy on Tap," and summer camps. Such activities foster a greater connection to topics we're passionate about and present valuable learning opportunities. They also serve to foster visibility for the college and its units.

### ***Facilities and visibility***

Our facilities and grounds are the most visible outward representation of our campus and our programs. They enable and support our people and their work. They also create the ambiance and

environment that greets all of our visitors, including prospective students, funding agencies, and donors. There's room for improving them and the impressions they make.

### ***Questions for the working group***

1. What are some strategies for increasing college and unit visibility?
2. What guidance and resources do units need to become more visible?
3. How can units collaborate to share resources for maximum impact?
4. What other opportunities do you see to strengthen visibility?

### **Strengthening impact**

#### ***Improve infrastructure supporting industry and foundation engagement***

In fiscal year 2018 (the last year for which we have complete data), LAS accounted for \$65 million in research funding, second highest total across campus. During the past 14 months, a new staff member dedicated to corporate and foundation relations and based in the Office of Advancement has made great strides in broadly engaging industry partners and potential partners who have an interest in research partnerships, student recruitment, corporate philanthropy, or some combination of these. We've barely scratched the surface of what could be possible with greater coordination and a more strongly organized approach to managing and engaging corporate and foundation partners.

#### ***Develop and support faculty who are "public intellectuals"***

A recent program by the National Endowment for the Humanities called The OpEd Project, has received System-level support in the form of the [Public Voices Fellowship](#) for eight LAS faculty members. This program is designed to help faculty members "amplify their expertise in ways that can contribute to public conversations about pressing issues." More programs like this could empower and incentivize faculty members to more frequently engage the broader public.

#### ***Increase the level of media exposure***

College of LAS faculty members are the topic of or commentators in hundreds of news stories, blog posts, and social media posts each year. Much of this is the result of diligent efforts on the part of these individual faculty members. Some of it is the result of strong work by campus' News Bureau, which writes about and shares press releases on peer-reviewed research, and some of it is the result of work done by college or unit communicators to capture and share news. Still, we're barely scratching the surface of what we could do if better positioned to harness the power of the college's 600 plus faculty members.

### ***Questions for the working group***

1. How can we create more structure and support for industry and foundation engagement? How could your unit help? Benefit?
2. Are there significant corporate and foundation opportunities for funding that this office or another mechanism could help faculty in your unit pursue more effectively?
3. How can the college and its units best support faculty who are interested in engaging more publically on their areas of expertise?
4. What mechanisms would help your unit more effectively demonstrate its impact?
5. What other opportunities do you see to better articulate impact?