

**College of Fine and Applied Arts  
Strategic Plan**

**2015–2020**

The College of Fine and Applied Arts is made up of seven departments:

- Art
- Applied Design
- Communication
- Military Science and Leadership
- Sustainable Development
- Sustainable Technology and Built Environment
- Theatre and Dance

Sustainability, Communication, Technology, Creative Practice and Design are at the heart of this institutional unit. While the college offers a wide variety of programs of study in various disciplines, one belief unites us in a common purpose - that our students must engage with confidence in realizing their dreams and aspirations by confronting challenges and seizing opportunities informed by a strong sense of social responsibility and well being. To that end, the faculty, administration and staff of the college seek to offer varying perspectives with many opportunities for interdisciplinary collaboration and experiential learning in order to provide our students with the finest quality education.

With more than 2,700 undergraduate and graduate majors, 200 faculty and staff and nearly 11,000 alumni from all over the country and the world, the College of Fine and Applied Arts is a vibrant incubator and laboratory that brings together a variety of perspectives, experiences and hands-on education. The college seeks to create an environment in which students and faculty can engage with the most innovative and appropriate technologies, cutting edge professional pursuits, artistic expressions, relevant

knowledge discovery and scholarly pursuits of all kinds in order to provide opportunities for personal, professional and social success for students and alumni.

### **The Vision**

The College of Fine and Applied Arts is uniquely positioned to lead the university in the areas of sustainability, technology, communication and creative practice. We strive to provide our students and faculty with opportunities to think expansively, to dream large, to collaborate across disciplines, to develop the necessary skills that support their personal and professional aspirations and to live responsibly in the world.

### **The Mission**

The College of Fine and Applied Arts strongly supports the university's mission statement that emphasizes the combined intent to develop in our students a genuine engagement with global citizenry and a strong sense of responsibility for creating a sustainable future. The college further endorses and supports the university's mission to strengthen and integrate our students' abilities to think critically and creatively, to communicate effectively and with passion, to make local to global connections and to foster genuine community engagement. Our college acknowledges as its primary mission the building of strong academic programs and active co-curricular activities.

Concurrently, our college promotes an active and innovative interdisciplinary structure that fosters significant scholarship and creativity, transformative teaching and learning and just and sustainable engagement with local, state, regional, national and international constituencies. In order to fulfill this mission, we strive to provide support for faculty

research, interdisciplinary collaborative teaching and engaged participation in community organizations so that we may live more responsibly in an ever increasingly diverse and changing global world.

### **Essential Character and Core Values**

The College of Fine and Applied Arts is founded on the recognition that the best scholarship, creativity and teaching/learning depends on:

- Innovative thinking
- Imaginative entrepreneurial skills
- Critical intellectual inquiry
- Engaged pedagogical practice
- Dialogue between diverse constituencies

While developing specific skills and technical abilities in a variety of areas, the college strives to help students develop broader visions in order to enrich the various communities in which they will live.

Core values that inform our college include the following:

- Synergistic education that is based on creative, critical and practical thought and action
- Strong foundation in written, oral, physical and visual communication and expression
- Strong commitment to interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary scholarship, creativity and teaching

- Integration of the principles of sustainability and justice into all human endeavors to create a world where well being, social justice, and ecological integrity are valued and guarded with the same rigor as economic prosperity
- Risk-taking acknowledged and supported as an important part of innovative thinking and process
- Cultivation of intellectual capacities, ethical sensibilities and practical competencies
- Recognition that diversity and social justice are linked in intricate ways that inform the breadth and depth of students' education in each of these fields of study
- Development of leadership potential or capacity in faculty and students in this era of deep transformation to solve problems and navigate opportunities that will allow us to move forward with a confident and creative spirit

### **The Plan**

The College of Fine and Applied Arts strongly endorses the university's strategic plan, *The Appalachian Experience: Envisioning a Just and Sustainable Future* (<http://strategicplanning.appstate.edu/strategic-plan>).

## ***FAA Strategic Direction 1: Transformational Teaching and Learning***

### *Goals*

- A. Build on the college's pedagogical strengths in terms of innovative risk taking and up-to-date engagement with technological resources.
- B. Endorse a continued commitment to the embodied experience in teaching/learning, creative practice and communicating.
- C. Create transformative learning experiences based on a liberal arts foundation informed by technological innovations and global awareness and competences, and utilizing best practices found in the scholarship of teaching and learning.
- D. Afford opportunities for faculty and students to develop and demonstrate leadership skills that connect disparate ideas, articulate concepts and relationships clearly, build strong and adaptable collaborative communities and take ownership for implementation and ongoing critical reflection and revision.

### *Implementation Initiatives*

1. Create opportunities for more engagement between faculty and students in dialogue, professional presentations, collaborative efforts, research opportunities, course development and internships. Some examples might include fostering more participation in student research projects (like the Solar vehicle), seeking out internships that address real world problems, developing short-term credit or non-credit courses taught jointly by faculty and students on timely and/or innovative problems or techniques and engaging students in pedagogical research projects not only as subjects but also as co-researchers.

2. Create a cross-college seminar on selected topics that could be team-taught.  
Topics might include: The Anthropocene, Big History or Design Thinking.
3. Establish opportunities for faculty to interact in meaningful ways with each other such as lunch-and-learns, professional workshops, creating a community space (virtual and real) or other communicative means that encourage discussion and collaboration.
4. Create some unique teaching and learning opportunities, which might include summer institutes and weekend or weeklong credit or non-credit courses on selected topics.

## ***FAA Strategic Direction 2: Professional Preparation***

### *Goals*

- A. Prepare students to contribute to the general well being of North Carolina, the United States and the world via careers in fine and applied arts, sustainability and affiliated fields.
- B. Prepare students for entrance into professional schools and graduate schools in which they can further hone their knowledge and skills.
- C. Prepare students to engage creatively and effectively in the changing cultural landscape including the shifting digital landscape, new political realities, economic restructuring and a profound interrogation of “the human experience.”

### *Implementation Initiatives*

1. Incorporate STEAM (science, technology, engineering, art and mathematics) between the departments and among the various programs within the college as an overarching aspiration for the college in order to realize its full potential in terms of its scholarship, creative work and teaching. STEAM was initially promulgated by the Rhode Island School of Design as a way in which to incorporate art and design thinking into the traditional areas of science, technology, engineering and mathematics. Given the unique makeup of our college, STEAM best represents the breadth and cross-disciplinary nature of what our particular college configuration provides for students as they best prepare for the opportunities and challenges they will meet in the twenty-first century (<http://steam-notstem.com>, view their white paper at

[notstem.com/about/whitepaper/](http://notstem.com/about/whitepaper/), or review the journal, *STEAM*, for a more in-depth look at the research and scholarship at <http://scholarship.claremont.edu/steam>.) APPLAB may serve as a model for this kind of collaboration. APPLAB is a team of faculty and student researchers or investigators who take on real-world problems and create solutions. For example, they have discussed creating a stamp or other recognizable symbol in area grocery stores that identify certain foods as being locally grown, and creating better shelters for area farmer's markets so that they can extend their selling and/or growing season. Another might be to build on the Solar Decathlon experience for current and future projects such as the Solar Vehicle project.

2. Create college-level resources that place students in career-oriented internships and practicums that will enhance their experience and increase their potential for employment in their chosen professions.
3. Build long-term relationships with businesses, agencies, non-profit organizations and others that focus on the needs and opportunities in North Carolina.



### ***FAA Strategic Direction 3: Global Learning***

#### *Goals*

- A. Engage students in global learning initiatives that enhance their participation as responsible citizens of the world.
- B. Provide students with opportunities to develop entrepreneurial and creative skills that enable them to successfully participate in global initiatives and opportunities.
- C. Connect our courses and programs with the mission of the university QEP on Global Learning

#### *Implementation Initiatives*

1. Establish a Laboratory for Creative Engagement, Exploration and Discovery.  
(Note: This might be modeled on similar efforts like David Edward's The Lab, a contemporary center where artists and designers collaborate with scientists to explore innovative solutions to problems and questions on the frontier of knowledge in areas like energy for the future, virtual worlds and the future of water. Each requires collaboration across disciplines with global participation (<http://lelaboratoire.org/en/>). Other models to explore include the Global Education Lab that combines issues of sustainability with global learning initiatives (<http://globaleducationlab.org>), Global MIT, which provides many examples that combine technology, communication, design and other areas (<http://global.mit.edu/education>) and The Learning

Connection: School of Creativity and Art in New Zealand

(<http://www.tlc.ac.nz/about-us/>).

2. Support the current aims, goals and programs of the Quality Enhancement Plan on Global Learning in our course work, research and international partnerships (<http://qep.appstate.edu/>). There are many ways we can do this, from seeking Global Learning Opportunities attribution for many of our courses that currently incorporate global learning units to expanding the use of video conferencing and/or social media into courses to provide collaboration opportunities with students at sister institutions around the world. We may also seek private and/or corporate sponsorship to help students of limited financial means take advantage of international study abroad opportunities. Finally, we may create a web site or portal that allows for more interactive collaboration between faculty and students from Appalachian State University with those from other universities, research laboratories or creative centers around the world.

## ***FAA Strategic Direction 4: Interdisciplinarity***

### *Goals*

- A. Expand critical and creative thinking by enabling students to understand patterns of thought and behavior that transcend disciplinary boundaries.
- B. Create strong, interdisciplinary experiences that will facilitate our students' ability to articulate an integrated and dynamic vision that will inform their personal, professional and social identities over their life span.

### *Implementation Initiatives*

1. Create a TEDx series of presentations that are both live and streaming to present faculty, student and alumni work and to utilize this platform to interrogate questions that cross our disciplines and departmental units (one example of this that may be applicable to our college has been implemented at the University of Oregon (<http://tedxtalks.ted.com/browse/talks-by-event/tedxuoregon>.) Two that are particularly relevant to our college that may serve as examples would be Richard Taylor's "Creativity Across the Arts and Sciences" and Andrew Nelson's "Radical Interdisciplinarity and Other Ingredients to Innovation." For more information on TEDx, visit <http://tedxtalks.ted.com/>). An example of this is also provided by one of the college's art faculty members at a TEDx Greenville talk, accessible at <http://tedxgreenville.com/portfolio/2014-jody-servon>.
2. Foster multidisciplinary research architectures that encourage faculty from within the various departments and units that comprise the College of Fine

and Applied Arts to collaborate and support one another's mutually agreed-upon projects, scholarly investigations and creative work. Some of these "research architectures" might be virtual environments while others might be "floating laboratories" that move from one location to another.

3. Work with the College of Fine and Applied Art's Director of Development and the Director of Research and Graduate Education to identify and secure funding and support to implement interdisciplinary projects, research and innovative pedagogical strategies for our faculty and students.
4. Investigate and revise our differential workload policy so that it might help in terms of fostering collaborative partnerships in research, creativity and/or pedagogical team-teaching efforts.

## ***FAA Strategic Direction 5: Collaborative Environments***

### Goals

- A. Foster an environment in which faculty and staff can develop meaningful scholarship, imaginative creative work and engaging pedagogical interaction with our students and colleagues.
- B. Support collaborative interaction among faculty and students as well as staff, alumni and other interested parties that will contribute to a vibrant, college-wide culture as well as meaningful contributions to the broader community.
- C. Seek out diversity in points of view, methodologies and strategies in order to create a cauldron of innovative thinking in scholarship, creativity and pedagogical practice.

### *Implementation Initiatives*

- 1. Build on our tradition of valuing risk assessment in our special projects and grants by providing strong, supportive and ongoing assistance and mentorship.
- 2. Discover ways in which to better incorporate this critically important quality of balancing risk taking with a supportive environment in other areas that are dependent upon creativity such as teaching, scholarly and creative work and annual evaluations.
- 3. Establish a task force to explore ways in which to create virtual and digital shared community spaces for our college via social media, websites, blogs, twitter, Wordpress and other communication technologies.

4. Create a committee with broad departmental representation that would be charged with finding and establishing common ideas or initiatives that would engage faculty and students with interesting and valuable common experiences.
5. Send faculty, and when appropriate, students to pedagogical conferences and provide them with the opportunity to “give back” to the college when they return.
6. Establish a faculty and/or student committee to advise the Dean on issues related to the mission and vision of our college.
7. Encourage cooperation between broadcasting, theatre and dance performance, performance art, digital artistic expressions related to design and creative expression.
8. Explore a Common Reading, or Experience, or Theme that our college can spearhead for the wider university community. (A successful model that was discussed by several of our colleagues was the Darwin Centennial of several years ago).

***FAA Strategic Direction 6: Sustainability: Promote Just, Healthy, and Sustainable Communities/Societies***

*Goals*

- A. Foster ongoing, university-wide dialogue on the breadth, depth, and relevance of sustainability to contemporary forms of inquiry and practice.
- B. Lead the theoretical and practical integration of environmental aspects of sustainability with broader considerations of justice, economic development and community well being.
- C. Prepare students to draw on the diverse media and methods of the fine and applied arts in order to contribute to the creation of just, healthy and sustainable communities.

*Implementation Initiatives*

1. Create and promote faculty development materials on sustainability and sustainable development.
2. Initiate a series of events to spotlight sustainability-focused scholarship and creative work of faculty and students.
3. Develop collaborative projects between departments and programs within the college that promote interdisciplinary investigations and creative activities related to sustainability.
4. Establish strong relationships with local and regional communities that would result in ongoing collaborative opportunities in mutually shared areas of interest.

5. Collaborate on public art projects that would not only promote ideas related to Sustainability but would also invite opportunities to educate and collaborate with various populations both on and off campus.
6. Create an interactive web page presence with current communication materials on issues and projects related to sustainability.



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