	Blueprint for Academic Excellence FY2024-2025
Arts and Sciences UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA	

Goal 1: Engage in transformative research and creative achievement by supporting an outstanding faculty and a dynamic, well-trained staff.

SMART GOAL	RESULTS
1a. Increase extramural grants awards by 10%.	**Goal Achieved.** FY24 funding totaled $53.8M, representing a 25% increase over the previous year. External funding for FY25 year-to-date is $42.0M (as of Feb. 2025) and is on track to show *at least* a 10% increase over FY24 assuming no cataclysmic actions by federal agencies. We are closely monitoring the federal funding landscape.
1b. Support targeted units for increased research and creative achievement in arts, humanities, and social sciences	**Goal Achieved.** Conducted Fellowships Workshop for faculty in the humanities and social sciences. Finalized and released new college fellowship policy to clarify and communicate how college supports faculty on seeking external fellowships. Met with chairs of targeted units to ensure familiarity with Academic Analytics as a tool for identifying possible awards for faculty. Established the Excellence in Collaboration Grant to facilitate innovation in engaging local communities in their research. Several units have increased proposal activity to date (including African American Studies, Political Science, Sociology, and the School of Visual Art and Design).
1c. Increase collaborative funding applications in the natural and social sciences	**Goal Achieved.** The CAS Grants Operations team tracks all proposals and publishes data on submissions in quarterly reports to college leadership. During the first half of FY25, CAS faculty and other researchers submitted 206 proposals as Lead PI and 33 as collaborators (non-lead) for 239 total submissions including seven non-competing continuations. For FY25, we are on track to exceed the number of submissions from FY24.
1d. Recruit 75% of top-ranked candidates in our faculty searches with competitive startup packages	**Goal Achieved.** We filled 30 tenure-track positions, including several from the Presidential Hiring Initiative. Of those searches, 27 successfully recruited the top ranked candidate while the remaining three searches successfully recruited their second-ranked candidate. The remaining searches were carried over to FY25. We are committed to excellence in faculty recruitment.
1e. Retain top faculty with targeted, proactive retention packages.	**Goal Achieved.** Eight of 10 faculty were retained in FY24 with competitive retention offers.
1f. Increase faculty participation in development programs (junior, mid-career, etc.) by 10%	**Goal Partially Achieved.** RSVPs increased from 241 to 337 (40%) between FY24 and FY25 (to date). Faculty attendance remained the same.
1g. Increase participation in faculty and staff wellness initiatives by 15%	**Goal Achieved.** Developed new faculty wellness initiative to increase faculty satisfaction and success. Launched new wellness initiatives to facilitate individual and collective well-being and engagement in the college • Petigru Huddles: Fostering social engagement across teams within the Dean's Office. • Wellness Walks: Held monthly to promote physical wellness within the College. Digital Delegates Trainings: Three-part training series developed in collaboration with the Digital Accessibility Network and Center for Teaching Excellence to promote innovative practices among CAS staff and faculty. The first session in January 2025 had 18 participants.
1h. Increase collaboration between search committees and unit HR contacts by 15% and increase participation in faculty search committee training by 3%	**Goal Achieved.** In FY25, the College hosted several faculty search committee trainings for all Committee Members and Department Chairs, an increase from years past. In FY25, 83% of faculty on search committees participated in search committee training, an increase of 40% over FY24.
1i. Increase private philanthropy revenue by 10%	**Goal Achieved.** In FY24, we raised $7.1M, an increase of 36% over FY23, when we raised $5.2M.

Goal 2: Provide innovative, relevant, and impactful educational experiences for undergraduate students.	
SMART GOAL	**RESULTS**
2a. Develop an overarching enrollment management strategy (internal goal)	**Goal Achieved.** Established an office of Curriculum Management and Data Analytics to support a data-driven strategic approach to curriculum development and management. Key initiatives include tracking and updating courses and programs, supporting academic program assessment, and managing distributed learning programs, including winter sessions, summer sessions, and online course delivery. The office further tracks unit size, distribution of personnel, credit hour production, and degree completions. The office has an established planning cycle that evaluates faculty workload, supports short-term instructional hiring and assesses graduate assistant utilization.
2b. Decrease by 10% the number of gateway courses with high DFW rates	**Goal Achieved.** In FY25, the number of gateway courses with high D/F/W rates (20% or higher) offered through the College decreased from 4 courses to 3, a decrease of 25%. Notably, D/F/W rates in MATH 141 (Calculus I) fell from FY24.
2c. Increase the number of 4-year professional advisors in the college to encompass 90% of CAS students	**Goal Achieved.** In FY24, the College added 8 new UAA 4-year professional advising positions, for a total of 35 advisors, covering 97.1% of CAS undergraduate students.
2d. Increase career readiness and Beyond the Classroom experiences by 10%	**Goal Achieved.** In FY24, the College: • Developed and piloted two new career readiness courses (U201 and U401) tailored to the needs of arts and sciences majors. • Launched new CAS-specific career development events, including a weekly Employer of the Day series (21 employers), and mock interview, professional headshot, and resume review sessions (6 employers), and an SC State Agency career fair (37 agencies). • Increased the number of CAS students participating in for-credit internships by 25.8% over FY23 (from 245 to 312). • Increased CAS student attendance at Career Center job fairs by 24.1% over FY23 (from 1410 to 1793). • Increased the number of CAS students enrolled in undergraduate research/independent study projects for academic credit by 13.6% over FY23 (from 346 to 393). • Increased Study Abroad participation by 2.4% over FY23 (from 474 to 494). • Had 3 additional CAS courses approved as Experiential Learning Opportunities (from 28 to 31), an increase of 10.7% over FY23.
2e. Increase online courses + programs by 10%	**Goal Achieved.** In FY24, six courses and two programs were approved for online delivery and 25 courses were offered online for the first time. Students enrolled in online courses in FY24 increased by 14% over FY23.
2f. Support curricular innovation and streamlined degree pathways of new and existing degree programs	**Goal Achieved.** In FY24, two CAS senior staff, 2 chairs, and 3 UAAs underwent training on the Curricular Analytics tool adopted by the Office of the Provost. Two senior staff served on the Provost's Curricular Analytics Working Group to develop resources and processes for adopting this tool. Fourteen degree programs were revised and streamlined.

Goal 3: Recruit, train, and support outstanding graduate students.	
SMART GOAL	**RESULTS**
3a. Increase acceptance rate among top graduate applicants by 10%.	**Goal Partially Achieved.** Acceptance rates remained unchanged from FY24. However, fewer offers were made, and only 4 programs did not recruit their top 3 candidates, down from 7 in FY23.
3b. Develop a plan for increasing graduate stipends across the College and increase funding for graduate students by 5%.	**Goal Achieved.** For FY24, a minimum GA stipend for a 20-hour/week assignment was normalized across programs and increased to $20,000/year. In FY25, this will increase to $21,000/year. The investment in GA stipend alone for CAS increased salary support for graduate students by

	14% or $1.7M while maintaining funding levels for tuition supplements at $4.7M.
3c. Develop new targeted graduate programs.	**Goal Not Achieved.** We delayed developing new graduate programs to reassess current offerings and be more strategic about next steps.
3d. Develop a partnership with the placement center for better ways to capture placement data	**Goal Achieved.** We are now actively partnering with the Career Center to collect Graduation Survey Responses from graduate students. The graduate response rate for the First Destination survey was 28%. The second survey response rate was 30% as of December 2024.
3e. Increase support for non-traditional career pathways for doctoral students	**Goal Partially Achieved.** The Graduate Student Resources hub conducted workshops and provided other support and training for doctoral students interested in non-traditional career paths.

Goals for 2025-2026:

1. **Engage in transformative research and creative achievement by supporting an outstanding faculty and a dynamic, well-trained staff.**

   In light of uncertainties in the federal funding landscape:

   1a. Increase number of extramural funding applications across the College by 10%.
   1b. Maintain level of federal funding above $50 million absent any cataclysmic funding shifts in federal agencies.
   1c. Increase college support for faculty in identifying and pursuing new funding sources, including corporate and foundation funding.
   1d. Increase extramural grant applications from arts, humanities, and social sciences faculty.
   1e. Review and reimagine current faculty support initiatives (research, travel, and equipment)
   1f. Reimagine and assess faculty development programs.
   1g. Achieve 75% success rate in faculty search hiring.
   1h. Retain top faculty with targeted, proactive retention packages.
   1i. Increase philanthropic donations by 10%

2. **Provide innovative, relevant, and impactful educational experiences for undergraduate students.**
   2a. Implement an overarching enrollment management strategy.
   2b. Develop a sustainable recruitment and retention infrastructure.
   2c. Score at or above the university mean on all Provost's Academic Advising College Scorecard categories.
   2d. Implement evidence-based initiatives to enhance student success in gateway courses with high D/F/W rates, focusing especially on students at academic risk.
   2e. Increase student enrollment in CAS-specific career readiness courses by 25%.
   2f. Implement internship data tracking and best practices guidelines for internship supervision.
   2g. Develop an internal study abroad process and review to develop higher-quality programs that provide more impactful experiences for students.
   2h. Develop and launch a Center for American Civic Leadership and Scholarship.

3. **Recruit, train, and support outstanding graduate students.**
   3a. Partner with small graduate programs to review needs and provide better support mechanisms.
   3b. Review and reimagine graduate enhancement support initiatives.
   3c. Increase support for alternative career pathways for doctoral students.
   3d. Foster partnership with placement center to capture better placement data.
   3e. Enhance access to student support services for graduate students