University of Waterloo

Strategic Plan 2014-2019

Faculty of Arts

BUILDING ON STRENGTHS: ARTS FOR THE 21ST CENTURY
# Table of Contents

- Message from the Dean  
- Executive summary  
- Priority 1: undergraduate students  
- Priority 2: graduate students  
- Priority 3: research  
- Priority 4: space  
- Priority 5: outreach  
- Priority 6: governance  
- Appendices: strategic planning process, people, reports
Message from the Dean

The Faculty of Arts at the University of Waterloo will be a destination of choice for those seeking the richest opportunities to advance knowledge, develop their creativity, and discover solutions that address pressing questions of the past, present, and future. Our researchers and students have the skills and perspectives needed to confront a rapidly changing and increasingly globalized world, where knowledge is produced, transformed, and applied at an unprecedented rate.

Many societal challenges we read about daily in the news media or in the tidal wave of social media fall squarely within the domain of Arts scholarship. Our faculty and students respond to challenges such as regional and cultural conflicts which threaten security, management and use of big data, social and policy implications of aging, giving voice to marginalized communities, and improving intercultural communications across sectors. These are but a few of the issues Arts scholarship tackles; we also have long excelled in open inquiry and we regard the pursuit of basic research as a vital part of our mission.

Building upon our strengths in research, scholarship, and teaching, our Strategic Plan will guide us over the next five years to prepare engaged and productive citizens who possess both agility and a sense of enterprise cultivated through the experiential traditions of the University of Waterloo.

We do Arts differently at Waterloo. We are proud of that heritage and excited by the future.

Douglas M. Peers

Dean, Faculty of Arts
April 2014
Executive summary

Building on strengths: Arts for the 21st century

The Faculty of Arts at the University of Waterloo is known for its innovative liberal arts programs and scholarship. Our Strategic Plan builds upon these strengths, ensuring we will deliver on our potential while aligning ourselves firmly with the objectives and priorities of the University of Waterloo’s strategic plan, A Distinguished Past – a Distinctive Future.

This Faculty has a long history of putting research and scholarship into action - whether through co-op programming, or in our many unique undergraduate and graduate programs, such as Arts and Business, Accounting and Financial Management, Global Business and Digital Arts, the Master of Public Service, or our PhD in Cognitive Neuroscience amongst others. Our scholarship and teaching is increasingly embedded within wider national and international networks, through the activities of both formal projects and units, such as the Balsillie School of International Affairs, the unique joint MA in German with Mannheim University, and the French language immersion programs offered with Trois Rivieres and Nantes, and the many informal partnerships forged between Arts faculty members and international collaborators. These initiatives, combined with such research centres as the Games Institute and the Centre for Mental Health Research, demonstrate the best of liberal arts scholarship and responsiveness to societal needs.

We are committed to the application of knowledge through increased experiential learning across programs and a revitalized undergraduate curriculum that allows students to combine majors and minors in practical and meaningful ways. We will enable more disciplinary combinations through joint honours programs, launch a suite of interdisciplinary and career-focused minors, facilitate more international exchanges, and articulate the learning outcomes for our first year curriculum. Our undergraduates will be able to identify their paths forward sooner in their programs, and they will acquire core skills in communications, information literacy, and analysis during their first year, forming a foundation for success both here and in the future. Our graduate students will be better outfitted through dedicated programming for the range of careers that await them, and we will pursue funding packages that attract those best suited to our distinctive programs.

We will foster creativity and entrepreneurship amongst our faculty, staff, and students, and we will cultivate the preconditions for a stronger sense of community by promoting greater interaction and collaboration. We will create improved space in response to both the changing needs of our researchers as well as the pressing demand for study and social space for our undergraduate and graduate students. An atrium dedicated to our students
will be added to Hagey Hall and we will initiate planning for a new Arts building to accommodate research needs and dynamic learning spaces in the coming years. Current space will be more effectively managed, and necessary renovations will be pursued, matching resources with the demands of teaching and research. We will invest in our researchers across the disciplines, with resources being allocated transparently, sustainably, and with accountability.

Our Advancement and Communications will be aligned with and support our Strategic Plan. We will ensure that our strengths become better known, and that the achievements of faculty, students, and staff are well publicized nationally and internationally. We are revitalizing our links to Arts alumni and other external friends, engaging with them as both members of our community and as potential employers of our students. Fundraising initiatives will be periodically assessed and prioritized to satisfy the most critical needs of our community and to generate sustainable resources as we move forward.

The final priority in our Strategic Plan focuses on governance and organization. We will consult and determine how our organizational structures, policies, and practices can be revitalized to provide the appropriate platform upon which we can build. We will review and update committee structures, administrative divisions, and decision-making processes – with the goal of better engaging our community, enhancing communications, and facilitating timely and sustainable planning for the Faculty.

We deliberately took time to develop this plan so that we could undertake extensive consultations both within the Faculty as well as beyond. The initial task force, assembled under professors David DeVidi and Theresa Libby in January 2012, held more than forty consultations with staff, students, faculty, and alumni. Their discussions were firmly anchored in a number of overarching principles: transparency, collegiality, responsiveness to the aspirations of students, staff and faculty, engaged citizenship, sustainable resource allocation, and striking the right balance between promoting interdisciplinarity initiated by faculty members while continuing to foster discipline-specific scholarship and learning. Out of these consultations emerged a clear sense of the Faculty today and an appreciation of the opportunities lying ahead and how we should respond.

The Task Force report, approved by Arts Faculty Council in April 2012, was the focus for a retreat of chairs and directors, which led to the refinement of key priorities. In turn, four working groups comprising faculty, staff and students addressed the priorities and developed specific objectives and action plans. Our extensive planning process allowed us to continually refine, ensuring our goals are both inclusive and achievable. We are pleased and confident that our Strategic Plan meets not only the needs and aspirations of the Arts community but also aligns our goals with those of the University as a whole.
Priority 1: undergraduate students

Enriching the undergraduate student experience

The Faculty of Arts will build on strengths and proven successes in undergraduate education. We will employ best practices to strategically leverage existing models and resources at the University so that all Arts students have access to a range of vital learning opportunities for the 21st century. To achieve our goals we will pursue the following objectives and associated action plans:

Objective 1
Recruit and enroll students who will thrive in the particular programs offered in the Faculty of Arts

Actions:

• Undertake a detailed study of current and prospective students to help us understand better their backgrounds, expectations, motivations, and experiences during their first-year
• Coordinate Arts high school outreach programming by working closely with departments; complement existing UWaterloo initiatives that appropriately engage students in grades 9 to 12
• Bring prospective students to campus for meaningful events that clearly highlight the advantages of Arts academic and experiential learning opportunities
• Develop audience-appropriate messaging that clearly communicates and differentiates the value and benefits of a Waterloo Arts degree
• Expand our social media strategy to reach prospective students with our messaging and outreach events
• Initiate Faculty-wide discussion and planning for the recruitment and support of international students

Objective 2
Increase enrollment, retention and student success in Honours programs

Actions:

• Ensure curriculum structure and process is comprehensible to students
• Revise first year program to provide common foundations, core skills, and improved pathways to majors and experiential learning opportunities, possibly through common courses and cohort or community based programming
• Review curricula to ensure flexibility in academic plans, facilitating opportunities for interdisciplinary study
• Introduce new and revised career-focused and interdisciplinary minors
• Create an Honours program in Liberal Arts available online to extend and enhance learning opportunities for our mature and distance students

Objective 3
Increase student awareness of the connection between their learning experiences and career readiness, and enhance their ability to articulate that connection

Actions:
• Direct greater attention to core skills and competencies in first year programming for both academic success and co-op/career readiness
• Explicate and substantiate learning outcomes for all undergraduate levels
• Increase the practice of building digital/online portfolios across programs and in all years of the undergraduate degree

Objective 4
Increase and promote experiential education opportunities to enhance students’ skills as well as their global awareness and engagement

Actions:
• Explore and develop more opportunities in both domestic and international locations for non-academic learning experiences, such as co-op, field placement, practicum, study abroad, and community service
• Explore and develop more accessible opportunities for entrepreneurship programming and activities (including social entrepreneurship) for Arts students
• Facilitate student pathways between courses and research opportunities across the Faculty of Arts
• Identify opportunities for deeper international and cross-cultural learning within our curriculum, including but not restricted to exchange programs

Objective 5
Build and improve facilities to address the pressing need for students’ social and study space

Action:
• In addition to the Hagey Hall renovation, develop plans for a new Arts building which include the provision of student space as well as state of the art classrooms to support evolving curriculum
Priority 2: graduate students

Recruiting and supporting strong graduate students

Graduate students in Arts should be prepared for a range of career options, either inside or outside academe. Anticipating various career outcomes, our students need more opportunities for research practice and professional training, as well as other experience-based learning. Underpinning a strong graduate student experience is competitive, transparent, and fair financial support. To achieve our goals we will pursue the following objectives and associated action plans:

Objective 1
Recruit the right graduate students who will succeed in our distinctive programs

Actions:

- Understand the expectations and motivations of current students
- Document the career paths of graduates since 2009 and use this information in recruitment material
- Work with Graduate Studies and the provost to identify opportunities to attract and fund more international research graduate students

Objective 2
Prepare students for careers inside or outside post-secondary educational institutions

Actions:

- Develop broadly conceived career and professional training opportunities, programs and resources, including more internships, co-op placements, and study abroad options such as co-tutelle programs
- Research and develop new professional master’s programs, including online programs in areas where capacity exists, and where there is support from the unit(s)

Objective 3
Improve student satisfaction and retention

Actions:

- Develop and implement Faculty-wide policies for funding levels and number of teaching assignments
• Design and work toward centrally budgeted, planned, and sustainable five-year funding packages at the doctoral level
• Develop better integration of external funding into student packages
• Improve study, research and social space with dedicated graduate student space
• Identify opportunities for enhancing research support for graduate students
Priority 3: research

Enabling research opportunity and impact

Arts researchers produce nationally and internationally recognized scholarship, including peer-assessed research and scholarship in the form of influential disciplinary and interdisciplinary research, as well as research intended to provide solutions to immediate societal challenges. The development of our scholarly community is enabled when support processes and resources are transparent and accessible to researchers across the Faculty. To achieve our research and scholarship goals we will pursue the following objectives and associated action plans:

Objective 1
Strengthen and sustain the conditions that support high-quality research

Actions:

- Identify and dedicate discipline-sensitive funding to support faculty researchers, including competitive course releases
- Support greater transparency and best practices in allocation of resources
- Streamline processes and reduce redundancies where possible
- Develop Faculty-specific guidelines and procedures for the initiation and support of research centres and institutes

Objective 2
Enable interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary research activity

Actions:

- Review current practices and procedures to identify ways in which interdisciplinary research can be better supported
- Create opportunities for interested researchers across disciplines to meet and collaborate

Objective 3
Lead national discussions about measuring research impact

Action:

- Work with Tri-councils and the Canadian Federation of Humanities and Social Sciences to develop broad-based definitions and criteria for
assessing impact of scholarship in the humanities, social sciences, and creative arts

Objective 4
Enhance communication of research developments and outcomes
Action:

• Ensure that research excellence and impact is a central plank in our communications plan, including media outreach
Priority 4: space

Optimizing space

The most consistent theme emerging from the strategic planning task force consultations, expressed in every meeting with departments, staff and students, is the need for better space if Arts is to meet its goals in education, research and student engagement. To respond to these issues we will pursue the following objectives and associated action plans:

Objective 1
Improve the use of Arts’ current space for all needs - teaching, research, study and social

Actions:

• Maintain an up-to-date inventory of Arts spaces
• Implement a made-in-Arts Space Management Policy

Objective 2
Construct new space to meet the needs of our growing community

Actions:

• Build an atrium enclosing the Hagey Hall courtyard to meet Arts students’ urgent need for social and study space
• Plan a new Arts building and secure the funding necessary to build it, in order to meet Arts’ critical shortage of research space, state of the art teaching space, and to free up space in our current buildings
Priority 5: outreach

Increasing outreach and visibility

Outreach encompasses functional areas that play an integral role in supporting the Faculty’s strategic priorities. The core areas contributing to Faculty outreach are: Advancement, which includes Alumni Relations, Communications, and both undergraduate and graduate recruitment. To increase our outreach and visibility we will pursue the following objectives and associated action plans:

Advancement

Objective 1
Create a fund development plan anchored in and supporting identified strategic goals

Actions:

• Develop a case for support that speaks to the vision of the faculty and will engage and motivate alumni and friends to invest in the Faculty
• Identify and prioritize the fundable initiatives outlined in Strategic Plan and, working with faculty champions, develop fundraising plans

Objective 2
Engage alumni in the life of the Faculty, developing mutually beneficial activities that support the priorities of the Faculty and provide a stimulating and enjoyable experience for alumni

Actions:

• Further develop the “Ask Arts Alumni” program, making it a more meaningful and interactive experience for alumni and students
• Develop, in conjunction with our departments and programs, alumni programming that connects alumni with our scholarship, teaching and students
• Develop a new Arts Reunion based on the principle of “life-long learning”
• Identify, connect with, and celebrate the success of our alumni

Communications

Objective 1
Deliver communications aligned with strategic priorities of the Faculty and the University
Actions:

- Implement a framework that will guide and prompt all aspects of Arts Communications, including strategic content and messaging, platforms and channels, and targeted audience groups
- Continuously develop greater awareness and understanding of people, programs and fields of expertise to ensure communications opportunities are leveraged
- Seek and tell stories that exemplify our values and advance both our mission and vision
- Ensure Arts maintains prominence in the mainstream media
- Enhance social media strategy and explore options for use of new media and technologies
- Provide ongoing support to partners in Advancement, including Alumni Relations, and to graduate and undergraduate recruitment
Priority 6: governance

Revitalizing collegial governance and administration

Reinvigorating governance in an inclusive and collegial manner will ensure we move forward with sustainable planning practices. By reviewing our current committee structures, administrative divisions, and decision-making processes, we strive to increase engagement and commitment across the Arts community. This revitalization will include the following objectives and associated action plans:

Objective 1
Ensure a culture of discussion and participation in collegial governance within the Faculty of Arts

Actions:

• Review membership and mandates of current standing committees
• Review scheduling and agenda of Arts Faculty Council and Arts Faculty Council Executive to increase participation

Objective 2
Review and where appropriate revise administrative structures for a more sustainable and efficient Faculty organization

Actions:

• Develop and implement structures that better integrate Stratford Campus into the Faculty of Arts
• Review current department and support unit organization and introduce appropriate reforms which ensure greater sustainability
• Facilitate staff training opportunities and support succession planning
Appendices: strategic planning process, people, reports

The Strategic Plan includes the reports and data linked below. These contain consultation summaries, gathered data, recommendations, feasibility studies, and reviews of possible implementations. The outcomes of the Task Force and Working Groups guided the strategic priorities, goals, and actions; as such, they are an integral part of the Arts Strategic Plan 2014-19.

Task Force members (winter/spring 2012)

Faculty:

• Co-chair: Theresa Libby, Accounting & Finance
• Co chair: David DeVidi, Philosophy
• Kathy Acheson, English Language & Literature
• Doug Kirton, Fine Arts
• Myra Fernandes, Psychology
• Tara Collington, French Studies
• Kieran Bonner, Sociology & Legal Studies, St Jerome’s University

Staff:

• Eric Breugst, Arts Undergraduate Office
• Barb Yantha, Arts Computing Office

Undergraduate students:

• Bradley Moggach, Political Science (4th year), former President of both Arts Student Union and Feds
• Alana Vandervoort, History-Legal Studies (4th year), Arts Undergraduate Senator and Vice-President Academic on Arts Student Union

Graduate students:

• Kyle Scholz, German Studies PhD program (2nd year), Graduate Student Association German Studies rep
• Jill Campbell-Miller, History PhD program (4th year), Graduate Student Association History rep

Task Force reports and data

Mission, vision and guiding principles (PDF)
Working Groups and reports (fall/winter 2012-13)

Teaching Working Group

The working group on Teaching is co-chaired by Linda Warley (Associate Professor of English, and Associate Dean, Graduate Studies) and Doug Kirton (Associate Professor of Fine Arts, and member of the 2012 Arts Strategic Planning Task Force).

Membership:

• Brian Orend (Philosophy)
• Anindya Sen (Economics)
• Donna Ellis (Centre for Teaching Excellence)
• Rocco Fondacarro (Co-op)
• Mike Dixon (Psychology)
• Dorothy Hadfield (Extended Learning Co-ordinator in English)
• Renishaki Kamalanathan (Arts Student Union)
• Gordon Pennycook, graduate student

Teaching working group report (PDF)

Research Working Group

The working group on Research is co-chaired by Kathy Acheson (Associate Professor of English) and Tim Kenyon (Associate Professor of Philosophy and Associate Dean, Research)

Membership:

• Liz Nilsen (Psychology)
• Barbara Schmenk (Germanic & Slavic Studies)
• Ken Klassen (Accounting and Finance)
• Mikal Skuterud (Economics)
• Angela Roorda (Arts Research Development Officer)
• Jessica Genik (Arts Student Union rep)
Programs and Advancement Working Group

The working group on Programs and Advancement is co-chaired by Bill Chesney (Associate Professor of Drama and Associate Dean, Undergraduate Studies) and Shannon Dea (Associate Professor of Philosophy and Arts Teaching Fellow).

Membership:

• Chloe Baron (Undergraduate rep)
• Sarah Skyvington (Grad rep)
• Kim Bardwell (Director, Advancement)
• John Michela (Psychology, I/O)
• Donna Psutka (Accounting and Finance)
• Judi Jewinski (Renison University College)

Space and Community Working Group

The working group for Space and Community is co-chaired by Robert Park (Professor of Anthropology and Associate Dean, Arts for Computing) and Bruce Taylor (Professor of Fine Arts).

Membership:

• Chloe Baron (Undergraduate student representative and Arts Student Union President)
• Suzan Ilcan (Professor of Sociology)
• Scott Spidell (Faculty member in Drama)
• Debbie Stanley-Pallas (Operations Co-ordinator, Dean of Arts Office)
• Danielle Stock (Graduate student representative)