

ACADEMIC MASTER PLAN
2008 to 2018

*Enhancing Student
Learning*



New College
THE HONORS COLLEGE of Florida

Adopted by the Board of Trustees January 29, 2008

Executive Summary

New College of Florida has developed this Academic Master Plan to serve as a road map for navigating the terrain of academic change over the next 10 years. It is a living document that should and will be revised periodically to reflect changes in New College and the environment in which it functions. The Plan is firmly rooted in the College's mission and reaffirms the distinctive, innovative academic features developed by our founders over forty years ago. Restated here, the College's mission and goals are:

Our Mission: New College offers an undergraduate liberal arts education of the highest quality in the context of a small, residential public honors college with a distinctive academic program which develops the student's intellectual and personal potential as fully as possible; encourages the discovery of new knowledge and values while providing opportunities to acquire established knowledge and values; and fosters the individual's effective relationship with society.

Our Goals

- a. To provide a quality education to students of high ability who, because of their ability, deserve a program of study that is both demanding and stimulating.
- b. To engage in undergraduate educational reform by combining educational innovation with educational excellence.
- c. To provide programs of study that allow students to design their educational experience as much as possible in accordance with their individual interests, values, and abilities.
- d. To challenge undergraduates not only to master existing bodies of knowledge but also to extend the frontiers of knowledge through original research.

The Plan reinforces this foundation while it lays out a framework to enhance learning for our 21st Century students.

The Plan was developed over seven months with broad New College community participation in discussions and web-based surveys. The first phase of work clarified the College's academic values and identified academic issues – areas where we could do better. The second phase presented goals and abundant possible strategies to enhance student learning at the College. Surveys and discussion sharpened these into the goals and strategies of the 2008 Academic Master Plan.

The Plan contains six ambitious goals, each with a series of strategies designed to accomplish the goal. Some strategies are already being implemented, while others will require new collaboration and commitment, enhanced financial resources from philanthropic sources, and our best talents – creative and rational, innovative and concrete.

Goal A. Enhance the curriculum/co-curriculum for a highly effective academic program.

We reaffirm the distinctive components of the College's academic program (the centrality of advising and contracts, narrative evaluation of student work instead of grades, a variety of research and/or creative experiences, culminating in a senior thesis and baccalaureate exam, tutorials, and independent study projects), while enhancing our emphasis on a broad Liberal Arts education to complement our existing strong disciplinary program.

We will provide adequate depth and breadth in disciplinary programs while strengthening interdisciplinary programs. We will create a new Strategic Plan for the Arts. We will improve first-year and transfer student success. Recognizing that residential life is crucial to learning, we will better integrate curricular and co-curricular activities to enhance the educational experience. We will improve our processes for curricular planning. We will improve participation in, and reassert the academic value of, off-campus study, study abroad, and internships.

Goal B. Enhance opportunities for the professional development of the faculty and instructional staff as teachers, advisers and scholars within the bounds of a sustainable, balanced workload.

We will improve faculty access to training, mentoring, and coaching, and we will share best practices with respect to teaching, learning, and scholarly life at New College. We will consider flexible faculty assignments as a way to respond responsibly to changing curricular needs, priorities in student learning outcomes, and faculty development. We will develop measures for managing Thesis Advising workload for faculty along with guidelines and programs that would also improve the overall success of the senior thesis project as a critically important component of the academic program. We will increase funding to support faculty research and faculty and instructional staff career development.

Goal C. Enhance the diversity of the College community.

The College will foster a campus climate based on tolerance, mutual respect, and multiculturalism. We will implement a plan to recruit and retain students, faculty, and staff from underrepresented populations. We will provide incentives to develop curriculum that, in its content and its approaches, recognizes the range of knowledge and experiences of diverse peoples.

Goal D. Focus technology, facilities, media and support staff to generate academic program improvements.

We will fully integrate the Writing Resource Center, the Quantitative Resource Center, the Information Commons, and Educational Technology Services into curricular and co-curricular learning. We will ensure the library's capacity to keep pace with the rapidly changing demands of undergraduate learning and faculty scholarship. We will develop policies and procedures governing the role of part-time and full-time assistants, adjuncts, and instructors in teaching, laboratory teaching, art and performance instruction, language instruction, field study, and interterm group projects. We will ensure that Laboratories and Studios are effective settings for student learning and research. We will enhance the ability of Institutional Research to inform and improve the academic program.

Goal E. Ensure the size of New College is in harmony with our academic program and mission.

First, we will become a well-functioning academic program for 800 students. We will define principles to govern future decisions regarding size and growth, and establish a cycle of periodic review of the appropriate size to meet our mission. We will conduct biennial monitoring of the impact of growth on the academic program, student life, and campus space needs, and of our progress in meeting the conditions under which growth without loss of quality is feasible. Should growing beyond 800 students prove desirable, we will adopt strategies and procedures for growth that is sustainable and incremental.

Goal F. Enhance community decision-making and governance processes to better support innovation, change, and improvement in order to accomplish our mission.

We will improve communication surrounding shared governance to overcome isolation and build constructive engagement across the NCF community for positive institutional change. We will develop the capacity for decision-making promoting well-being of the College rather than its constituent parts. We will clarify the roles that should be played by faculty, students, staff, administration and trustees in academic governance.

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PREFACE

This Academic Master Plan builds on two documents prepared by the Academic Master Planning Committee: the *Values and Issues* paper (which took as a starting point the comments expressed at the open meeting of the campus community on June 28, 2006) and the *Possible Strategies* document (posted on the web for comment on November 26, 2007). The strategies have been revised to reflect comments and strength of consensus received in a web survey, and in a series of open community meetings during December, 2007 and early January 2008.

The Academic Master Plan is a road map that the College will use to navigate the terrain of academic change over the next 10 years. It is a living document that should, and will, be revised every two years to reflect changes in New College and the environment in which it functions. The strategies contained in the Plan will be considered, refined, and implemented using normal faculty and administrative processes. Some actions can be instituted through administrative action. Other strategies will require changes to the Faculty Handbook, with the Educational Policy Committee and the Faculty Academic Status Committee taking the lead. Changes to the Collective Bargaining Agreement will be taken up by the negotiating teams. The plan also calls for several Ad Hoc Committees and Task Forces develop plans for important parts of the academic program.

Strategies are plans to achieve goals and subgoals, and are listed under the goal or subgoal to which each relates.

The strategies are categorized as actions, projects, or processes. For purposes of this document, these terms are defined as follows.

Action – Something that can be implemented with a minimum of additional planning or development.

Project – A coordinated or related series of actions to achieve an agreed-upon goal or subgoal. A project may be complex and require extensive planning and work to achieve the objective, but will not require additional discussion or consensus-building to define the goal or subgoal.

Process – A series of steps, involving significant additional discussion and consensus-building within the New College community to agree on a goal or subgoal and develop projects or actions to achieve it.

Members of the Academic Planning Committee

Sam Savin, Chair

David Banks

David Brain

Malena Carrasco

David Harvey

Elzie McCord, Jr.

Pat McDonald

Laura Mohai

Miriam Wallace

Facilitator: Rafael Montalvo

Staff Support: Julie Morris

PREAMBLE

The overarching purpose of this Academic Master Plan is to formulate shared goals for New College and develop strategies to achieve those goals. These goals reflect our shared principles. The strategies provide practical responses to the questions and challenges of this post-independence phase of our history. Our ability to address many of these challenges depends on the clarity with which we understand and can articulate our core values.

Seven core values motivate this academic master plan and have been the basis for building consensus around proposals for change.

A. Freedom

We value the freedom to be creative and innovative as both teachers and students. We aspire to maintain in our own learning as teacher-scholars the freshness and excitement of rethinking what we know and how we know it. We value the liberty to be innovative in our approach to teaching and learning—whether disciplinary and foundational or more advanced and experiential. We value the possibility of the fortuitous mistake that leads to new discovery and thus we value the possibility of taking intellectual risks.

Parallel to this, we seek freedom from demands that do not advance the integration of scholarship, service, and learning. Finally, we value conventional academic freedoms: freedom of speech, freedom to define and develop our own scholarly or creative directions according to our best judgment, freedom for individual self-determination for teachers and as appropriate for students.

B. Responsibility

We value responsibility both to self and to others. Responsibility to one's self includes the expectation of accepting and meeting academic challenges; of accepting the consequences of one's own choices; and the responsibility to acknowledge the need for help or support that develops self-knowledge. Freedom requires responsibility.

We recognize that alongside a responsibility to one's self comes a great responsibility to others. This responsibility includes respect, although not an uncritical acceptance, for others and their views; and a recognition that failing to meet responsibilities causes difficulty for other students, faculty, staff, and even those beyond the college campus. We value in particular, responsibility to the college and its mission, and finally we recognize a responsibility to the larger community, both local and global, in which we exist.

C. Respect

We also value respect for many kinds of differences, including but not limited to intellectual, disciplinary, ethnic and racial identities, sexual identities and gender expression, political views, and religious and faith-differences. Respect, rather than mere tolerance, requires an openness of mind, recognition of the value of different ways of being and knowing, and our respectful engagement with social and community practices. Respect guides our honest intellectual inquiry.

D. Intellectual Rigor & Academic Achievement

We value academic excellence and intellectual curiosity, both a willingness to challenge one's self and one's ideas and to learn from others. We value upholding the standards of an "honors college" as a special kind of learning community that engages the life of the mind, but also the life of action; engages critical thinking and analytical rigor but also creative expression and performance expression; engages individual inquiry but also collaborative and shared investigation. We value academic depth in field, but also breadth across fields and knowledge which is cross-, multi-, inter- or trans-disciplinary. We value learning by doing, learning through student research, learning through performance or creative arts, and reflection.

We value foundational skills that enable students to develop real expertise and mastery including: writing skills both academic and expressive, quantitative skills, experiment design skills, library research skills (both analog and digital), time-management skills, oral fluency and rhetorical skills including argumentation, and finally foundational skills for the performing and creative arts. There is a productive tension between intellectual rigor and the high value we place on freedom that makes New College a unique and endlessly challenging environment.

E. Individualism & Independence

We value individualism and independence in their most positive aspects. For students, we value 1) the ability to trace an individualized pathway through their studies in negotiation and consultation with faculty; and 2) independence of thought in the context of rigorous and disciplined inquiry.

For faculty we value 1) the ability to evaluate students as individuals, recognizing each student's own abilities and challenges; 2) the ability to formulate individualized academic expectations as appropriate to the goals, talents, and character of individual students; and 3) independence of thought (in the context of rigorous scholarship).

F. Community

We value New College as both a community and as part of a larger community, recognizing that a learning community requires a diversity of ideas and opinions, as well as a diversity of people and individual purposes. To create a learning community we value aspects of the college that are conducive to regular interaction with real purpose: a residential student population and local faculty; a size that supports participation and engagement; education and learning that is grounded in face-to-face interaction; advising that assumes deep conversation about academics between advisor and advisee; learning that may include study off-campus, fieldwork, and independent research, but that returns to the campus; and shared intellectual exploration and shared investment in building and maintaining the academic atmosphere outlined above.

G. Civic Engagement/Citizenship

We also highly value social engagement and citizenship in the largest sense as foundational to our liberal arts curriculum. One important aspect of a liberal arts education is the development of a "moral compass," and the cultivation of the capacity for judgment necessary to sustain the coherent moral orientation necessary for real civic engagement in a complex society.

In the context of a liberal arts education, we support our students' growth as moral and ethical citizens in the ways that we teach, the ways that we engage ideas, and the ways that we encourage students to develop their studies. The serious engagement with ideas is one of the hallmarks of a liberal arts education, but should not be seen as disconnected from active engagement with the world around us. We value a self-conscious and active recognition of the intersection between college curriculum and the local, national, and international world in which we live. We value opportunities to bridge between academic work in the classroom and active engagement in the community.

New College in 2018: One Vision of the Future

The goal of this Academic Master Plan is to enhance student learning. The vignette below is a vision of how the College might look after the Plan has been implemented.

Imagine that it is 2018. New College of Florida continues to be regarded as an outstanding liberal arts college and among the very best public liberal arts colleges in the nation. Student learning is buoyed by the distinctive components of the New College academic program their underlying philosophy (semester contracts negotiated with a faculty advisor, narrative evaluations rather than grades, independent study projects, and an undergraduate senior thesis or major project, capped by an oral exam). Students move easily between disciplinary and interdisciplinary inquiry, following established programs of interdisciplinary study or working with faculty to tailor their own programs. Classroom learning is well-integrated with and augmented by co-curricular programs, the writing and quantitative resource centers, internships, and projects beyond the campus. The first phase of the 2010 strategic plan for the arts, firmly rooted in the liberal arts, has been implemented.

Several years ago, enrollment reached 800 students and faculty numbers reached 82, for a 10/1 student/faculty ratio. The College is conducting its second cyclical review of the optimum size for New College, based on the principles spelled out in the 2008 Academic Master Plan. There are early signs of an emerging consensus for adding significant numbers of students and faculty.

The six-year graduation rate for New College students has reached 90%. Key to this improvement have been programs supporting first year and transfer students in their transition to college learning in the highly independent New College tradition. In addition, academic and residence-life staff work hand-in-hand to help students find their way through the rigorous curriculum with its stress on accountability and independent work. Faculty talk frequently about curricula using the Educational Program Committee (EPC)'s curricular planning guidelines and best practices. This has resulted in college-wide curricular expectations and a balanced, long-term process for planning course offerings. Students are coached to be responsible advisees, seeking conversation and advice about academic direction.

A multi-year faculty mentoring program combined with a center for teaching provides each faculty member with support and resources to be a dynamic advisor and teacher. Faculty routinely collaborate with technical staff to create cutting edge classroom pedagogy. Technological tools for sampling and data analysis, plus databases of images, articles and primary source materials support impressive student and faculty research. Software tools also assist with drafting narrative evaluations, in which faculty assess student learning in creative and meaningful ways.

The College has made modest gains enrolling students from underrepresented populations. The climate for campus diversity has improved dramatically, under an initiative led by the Dean of Multicultural Affairs. Membership in the Consortium for Faculty Diversity and other nationwide groups has resulted in a significant increase in the number of tenure-track faculty from underrepresented groups.

New academic buildings facilitate greater informal conversations among faculty members, reversing the isolating trends of the early 2000's. Faculty feel they are working together toward a compelling and rewarding mission at a college that encourages innovation and collaboration in order to enhance undergraduate learning. New College faculty, students, and staff live balanced, healthy lives.

Goal A: Enhance the curriculum/co-curriculum for a highly effective academic program.

Subgoal A1: Reaffirm or revise as appropriate the distinctive components of the academic program (advising, contracts, narrative evaluations, baccalaureate exams, senior thesis/project, independent study project).

Advising and Contracts

Because the New College curriculum lacks predetermined structure, and because depth, breadth, and focus depend on the interaction of students with advisers, good advising is critical to success in the program. Nonetheless, there are no guidelines which describe what constitutes good advising. As a result, there is no standard to provide a framework for the uniform evaluation of advising. Without such a standard and associated evaluation procedure, it is difficult to identify problem areas and strategies for improvement. Advising is uneven. Some advisors are active and insightful, others solid and reliable, and still others relatively uninvolved with their advisees. This performance spectrum often leads to problems for students, some of which are discussed below.

There are special challenges for advising transfer students and students on academic probation. Transfer students have a shortened time in which to choose an Areas of Concentration (AOC) and develop a thesis project. It is particularly important that they benefit from excellent advising.

Some faculty believe that first semester students who do not meet regularly with their advisors are more likely to fail classes and fail their first contract. In addition, much of current advising is discipline-oriented, and there is a perception that overall liberal arts advising may not be as strong.

Assessment of the quality of advising by individual faculty members, either for mentoring or evaluative purposes, is not done systematically. Advising is addressed by the Provost's Advisory Committee (PAC) in pre-tenure and post-tenure reviews and in promotion and tenure decisions, particularly as it relates to the effectiveness of contract certifications and numbers of students advised by a faculty member. Current students and alumni may write letters for a faculty member's file that address advising. Students have requested that they be able to evaluate advising regularly; faculty are significantly less supportive of such a prospect, many citing the absence of clearly articulated criteria on which such an evaluation is to be based.

Advising and reflection are often lacking at the end of the contract.

Contract success could be improved if students and their advisors were able to detect problems with academic performance mid-semester and make adjustments. However, with our late "drop" and "renegotiation" deadlines and no transcript record of unsatisfactory or post-deadline dropped classes, unless a preemptive "unsatisfactory" is filed, advisors have no way to know, and student pay no penalty for failing to file an appropriate "drop" form unless they "unsat" the contract.

Strategy A1.1

Process: Strengthen advising by charging the EPC with establishing guidelines for good advising. Such guidelines should address expectations and responsibilities for both advisor and advisee while accounting for the variation inherent in advisor/advisee relationships. Provide training for faculty advisors, a forum for faculty to share best practices for advising, and faculty mentors for advising. The associated materials could be disseminated through a Teaching Center (See Strategy B1.1).

Strategy A1.2

Project: Develop mechanisms for both students and faculty colleagues to evaluate faculty advising for mentoring and evaluative purposes. Evaluate faculty advising based on guidelines established pursuant to A1.1. Reward good advising.

Strategy A1.3

Process: Designate three advising times in the academic calendar specifically for: contract negotiation at the beginning of the semester, mid-semester contract assessment, and end of semester contract certification and student self-reflection. Develop a process for faculty instructors to notify students and their contract sponsors at mid-semester if a student's work is unsatisfactory.

Narrative Evaluations

Thoughtful, comprehensive narrative evaluations take a great deal of time, yet they are a particularly distinctive and valued part of New College's academic program. Missing or incomplete evaluations, however, are less informative than the letter grades they replace and their number has been increasing.

The following issues have surfaced in our system of narrative evaluation:

- Some evaluations are not completed in a timely manner and students express frustration at their inability to get responses from their instructors;
- Some evaluations are incomplete and "details to follow" fail to follow;
- Some faculty find a conflict between their belief in the value of evaluations and the mental focus necessary to provide comprehensive evaluations at the end of the semester;
- Some faculty minimize the "narrative" component eliciting criticism from peers (too quantitative, too brief, too close to a grade), but there are no guidelines for what constitutes effective narrative evaluations;
- Some evaluations are heavy on details of assignments and work and lack useful summation or evaluative statements; conversely, some evaluations may give mostly evaluative information (e.g., 80%, "excellent work") without useful contextual detail;
- Some faculty express a need for more coaching on methods for compiling pieces of the evaluation and for clear direction of its purpose;
- Some evaluations do not attend sufficiently to their multiple audiences, which include 1) the student, but also 2) the contract sponsor, 3) other faculty, and potentially 4) the SASC and the Provost;
- Some students need to send copies of their evaluations with graduate school applications, but the evaluations are not officially part of their transcript;
- Evaluations serve *both* internal and external assessment purposes, but are treated as solely internal documents.

Strategy A1.4

Project: Revive a sense of commitment to narrative evaluations by providing 1) opportunities for discussion among faculty at different career stages about the practice and purpose of evaluations, 2) models of varieties of exemplary evaluations, and 3) mentoring for faculty to improve the quality and timeliness of their narrative evaluations. As required in the Faculty Handbook 6.5.1, the timeliness of narrative evaluations shall be considered in annual evaluation of faculty and in PAC reviews, and incentive programs. In addition, quality of narrative evaluations should be noted,

Strategy A1.5

Process: Develop models to support faculty in producing narrative evaluations. Such proposals should consider the value of 1) enough consistency of form and content that the evaluation is easily scanned for relevant detail, 2) succinct and efficient communication of

specific information about the student's performance, 3) addressing college-wide and discipline-specific learning outcomes, and 4) the range of internal audiences for whom the evaluation is written. This initiative may include creating technological tools to assist faculty in compiling narrative evaluations throughout the semester to minimize unmanageable workload at the end of the semester.

Strategy A 1.6

Action: Create a mechanism in the Student Evaluation System for contract sponsors and students to alert the Registrar about missing or incomplete evaluations and automatically to request narratives from faculty who have filed evaluations with "details to follow" after the final deadline for evaluations has passed.

Senior Thesis/Project and Baccalaureate Exam

The senior thesis process varies greatly across the curriculum. While we are pleased that some senior projects are equivalent to (or better than) typical masters theses, it concerns us that we may encourage students to specialize early, to sacrifice breadth for not only depth but relatively narrow focus on a thesis project identified in their third year. Faculty often complain that students seem unprepared for the thesis project. Some are also concerned that the thesis project is not a productive experience for some students – some invest too much time, some too little. There is lack of consensus as to whether the thesis is to be the capstone experience of the student's entire education, or is just one important experience among others leading to graduation?

The nature of baccalaureate examination varies greatly across divisions and disciplines. In some it is a comprehensive examination of learning in the field; in others it is focused on the thesis research of the student; in some, the audience may ask questions while in others questioning is limited to the committee; the examination is variously regarded as a celebratory event or a capstone experience.. The timing of the baccalaureate exam is often too late for the committee to ask for significant changes in the thesis if the student is to graduate on schedule. The examination can be especially problematic when the student has done marginal work. The purpose of the exam is unclear. Is it a sign-off on the area of concentration, a comprehensive exam for the AOC, a chance to rethink or revise the thesis, or a defense of the thesis? What are the expectations and standards to which students can be held? The baccalaureate system is labor intensive and enormously time consuming for faculty. Some functions and value have been lost as sheer numbers have made it difficult for faculty to give the same attention to the event for each student. There is a common opinion among the faculty that the "Student Academic Program Assessment (SAPA)" form is subjective, comprised of questions that committee members interpret inconsistently and are sometimes not certain how to answer.

Strategy A1.7

Process: Reaffirm or revise, through College-wide discussion, the faculty handbook statement (and normal practice) that baccalaureate exams normally include a defense of the thesis or project, an examination in the area of concentration, *and* an examination of the student's education in general.

Strategy A1.8

Process: Discuss and develop proposals for standards and models for alternatives to the normal written senior thesis including: senior portfolios, senior group/collaborative projects, theses of more modest scope, and other projects of longer duration and larger size than normal class projects or term papers.

Strategy A1.9

Project: The EPC will develop more effective and consistent assessment rubrics for the senior project and the baccalaureate examination, providing explicit and implicit guidelines for the baccalaureate examination itself, while also providing a more robust basis for institutional assessment of student learning.

Strategy A1.10

Project: Develop measures to spread the baccalaureate workload more evenly among the faculty, for example, recommend that one out of the three committee members be out-of-discipline, with faculty sponsoring few theses/projects serving on a greater number of baccalaureate committees

Tutorial

There is considerable variety in tutorials. When compared to regular classes, some faculty require higher standards for tutorial work and other faculty may have lower standards; there may be less academic content compared with classes in the same discipline, particularly when the topic is outside of the core area of expertise of the faculty sponsor;. Students often think they are *entitled* to take tutorials, given our emphasis on creating individualized programs of study, but they may not be well prepared for the less structured or more independent work of a tutorial. Faculty are not always clear as to what is expected of them as tutorial sponsors, or consistent in what they expect of their tutorial students.

Strategy A1.11

Process: Develop proposals, through a discussion led by the EPC, to clarify the definitions and purposes of various types of tutorials (internships, faculty-led group tutorials, student-led collaborative projects with faculty guidance and sponsorship, tutorials in the usual sense of one-on-one or small group interaction between students and faculty, thesis tutorials or “directed research,” independent reading projects) and the faculty’s teaching and evaluating responsibilities in each. These discussions should include clarification of the place of tutorials in a student’s overall program.

Independent Study Project

There are four educational objectives for ISPs, identified by the Educational Policy Committee.

1. Train students to carry on independent research, to prepare them to plan and carry through an effective senior thesis;
2. Supplement the curriculum and to provide an opportunity to cover areas not usually available, particularly off-campus;
3. Provide an opportunity for non-traditional, innovative, and/or experiential learning projects;
4. Provide an opportunity for intensive involvement with one subject, as a change of pace from the regular terms of multiple endeavors.

There are many examples of successful ISP’s that fulfill these learning objectives. Some independent study projects fail to reach their objectives, but nevertheless provide rich learning about the process of designing and executing a research project. Many faculty feel that the quality of student work during ISP’s is highly variable, and a vocal minority have suggested eliminating the ISP period altogether.

One area of concern is the limited ability of many first-year students to conduct independent work, which when combined with the unstructured time during the January Interterm leads to academic and residential life problems. A second area of concern is that some AOCs (particularly in the Humanities) do not readily lend themselves to four weeks of independent inquiry. A third area of concern is that some faculty want to devote significant time to their own research during January, and feel that supervising independent student projects takes too much time. Finally, the January term also shortens our faculty members’ summer term, again cutting into dedicated (although unpaid) time for scholarship and creative work.

Strategy A1.12

Project: Develop ISPs that are structured as 4-week winter seminars specifically for first-year students. (NB first year students would retain the option of arranging conventional independent study projects with faculty support.)

Strategy A1.13

Action: Engage adjunct faculty, alumnae/i, and postdoctoral fellows to lead group ISPs on topics that meet student interests and complement the existing curriculum. Develop a clear policy for identifying and hiring such adjunct experts with normative instruction time, pay, and other expectations

Strategy A1.14

Project: Develop ISPs that are designed to give students the research and creative skills that will be needed for later senior research and senior projects.

Subgoal A2: Provide adequate (a combination of desirable and practical) depth and breadth in disciplinary programs.

Few issues are as important to the future of the college, or have the potential to be as contentious, as the question of when and how to add new academic areas to the curriculum. Among the considerations that should be taken into account in considering the creation of new academic programs is the range of disciplines offered by aspirational peer institutions. We lose students to these institutions because of our limited curriculum.

Our current process for identifying fields in which to add new faculty (outlined in section 4.2 of the Faculty Handbook) makes such discussions particularly difficult, as it tends to create a zero-sum competition among divisions and disciplines, in which new or interdisciplinary fields, lacking built-in advocates among the faculty, often fare poorly.

Adding new academic areas or substantially expanding existing fields represents a major commitment of college resources and should be done selectively, following a clearly defined process that involves broad input from faculty, administration, and student body. While the Faculty Handbook makes it clear that the designation of new positions is ultimately an administrative decision, it is important to create a process that can achieve “buy-in” from all constituencies of the campus community.

The issue of the development of new academic areas is linked to the question of the optimum size of New College. Growth would both enable the creation of new programs, and place additional burdens upon existing ones. We will need to strike a delicate balance between breadth and depth in curricular development, just as we hope our students will balance it in their work. There will inevitably be trade-offs between the creation of new areas and the expansion of existing ones, and we need to have a process by which such trade-offs can be discussed openly, and priorities can be articulated within a broader strategic vision. Failure to do so is potentially corrosive of faculty morale.

Finally, it is important to recognize that the development of new programs and curricular areas is not the same thing as simply the creation of new tenure-track lines. There are a variety of ways to establish new programs: . Existing faculty may be reassigned or have their responsibilities divided between their current discipline and a newly-created academic program; cooperative programs with other institutions can be developed; strategic use of adjuncts, visiting appointments, or post-doctoral fellows may serve to “test the waters”; particularly for interdisciplinary fields. In some cases staff support positions or facilities may be more important than new faculty positions.

Strategy A2.1

Process: Develop a process by which trade-offs between the creation of new academic areas and the expansion of existing areas can be discussed openly and priorities can be articulated within a college-wide strategic vision.

Strategy A2.2

Action: Use adjuncts, visiting professors, faculty exchanges, post-doctoral fellows and cooperative programs with other institutions to add temporary disciplinary depth.

Strategy A2.3

Project: Pilot new programs by modifying assignments for current faculty members and supplementing with adjuncts, visiting professors, faculty exchanges, post-doctoral fellows and cooperative programs with other institutions. (See also B2)

Strategy A 2.4

Project: Consider opportunities for collaboration and interaction with others across the college when making decisions about creating new disciplinary and interdisciplinary programs and filling faculty positions in them.

Strategy A. 2.5

Project: Institute a regular and normal schedule of external review for disciplines and programs. The review schedule should be responsive to requests for early review due to discipline restructuring or other reasons.

Subgoal A3: Strengthen interdisciplinary programs, with sensitivity to the variety of individual programs.

Teaching and Learning Aspects of the Issue

We advertise the flexibility to develop courses of study that transcend the boundaries of conventional disciplinary specialization. Although this may be true in principle, in practice the College provides weak support for many kinds of interdisciplinary work by both students and faculty. Yet students who are attracted to New College have tended to be not only academically talented, but are often drawn to interdisciplinary areas of study that are developing fields or that intersect powerfully with their concerns.

Faculty support for established interdisciplinary programs is uneven. Students have to do much of the administrative legwork to undertake interdisciplinary work; they take courses in multiple disciplines, but they are frequently left to synthesize, on their own, what they have learned in these disciplinary courses. Without the benefit of real modeling by *faculty* of competent, rigorous interdisciplinary work, or guided exploration of the values and limitations of crossing disciplines, undergraduate students too often produce interdisciplinary work that is of lesser quality than is expected in disciplinary fields of study. At many schools interdisciplinary programs/majors are coherent fields of their own, with core courses, methodologies, theoretical frameworks, and relatively well defined bodies of knowledge. Organic conjunctions sometimes work well for students, particularly when the relevant faculty are supportive of each other, but some fields identified among our Interdisciplinary Academic Programs suffer from a lack of formal structure and faculty.

In our discipline-based system, faculty seldom advocate for new positions that do not clearly fit with an existing discipline (example: History of Science, Performance Studies, or Applied Statistics). Cross- or inter-disciplinary groups that transcend Divisional boundaries tend to be ill served by the divisional structure. The merit of some interdisciplinary fields is misunderstood or unfamiliar to some of our community.

Faculty Career-related Aspects of the Issue

Inter/cross disciplinary teaching and scholarship are dynamic and growing areas in many PhD fields and some have PhDs of their own. Faculty have legitimate reasons for wanting to teach in ways that cross disciplinary boundaries. Some interdisciplinary fields, further, are now well established in both scholarship and teaching.

To support introductory and advanced core courses, new faculty with the appropriate terminal degree, training, teaching experience, and record of scholarship/creative work may need to be hired. Some faculty with these qualifications have been hired into foundational disciplines at the college. We need to educate

each other about changes in our fields that may make some disciplines look unfamiliar to colleagues in related fields. Additionally, this may be a place where flexibility in types of appointments could be useful. Some interdisciplinary areas of concentration or of student scholarship grow organically as students develop links across fields (biopsychology, biochemistry, music-psychology, anthropology-literature, etc.). *No action is recommended here for these areas of interdisciplinary work at this time.*

Faculty who do interdisciplinary work may require more or different support to keep abreast of more than one field (*see Goal B on Faculty Development*), and may also need some clarification of how publication in explicitly cross- or interdisciplinary journals and other sites are valued in the faculty evaluation process. Faculty who would like to expand their scholarship into interdisciplinary fields may need support for professional development. Retention, promotion and tenure processes need to be clear for faculty with interdisciplinary appointments, especially where work crosses Divisional lines.

Strategy A3.1

Action: Some programs/academic fields currently listed under “Interdisciplinary Studies” conventionally include an *interdisciplinary* introduction *or* foundational core courses (some of which may be disciplinary) as well as advanced interdisciplinary instruction, and may include a methods course. Cross-listed disciplinary instruction is also common. Ensure that these programs (e.g., Environmental Studies, Gender Studies) have the ability to offer necessary instruction regularly with qualified instructors (i.e. full-time dedicated, reassigned, split appointments, adjunct or visiting faculty, postdoctoral fellows, grant-supported specialists).

Strategy A3.2

Action: Some interdisciplinary New College programs (e.g. International and Area Studies, Medieval and Renaissance Studies, Public Policy, Theater, Urban Studies) can offer most or all necessary core courses and advanced coursework through coordination of regular disciplinary offerings. Ensure that a clear pathway for interested students to complete the necessary coursework is provided in these programs, and identify additional instructional support or resources that might be necessary.

Strategy A3.3

Action: Programs currently listed in the Catalog under “Interdisciplinary Studies” should be evaluated. Those that do not offer a functional program should either be terminated or should be strengthened by the enhancement of instruction, facilities, collaborations with other institutions, or additional appropriate resources

Strategy A3.4

Project: Require each interdisciplinary area to complete an academic learning compact and AOC improvement plan to clarify AOC requirements, delineate student pathways to the senior project /thesis and thesis sponsorship, and specify measures to track student progress and ensure competencies.

Strategy A3.5

Project: Recruit core faculty and potential program directors for currently offered interdisciplinary programs/AOCs through targeted searches, in some cases combining disciplinary and interdisciplinary fields and in other cases focusing solely on an interdisciplinary field.

Strategy A3.6

Action: Clarify at the time of faculty hiring the assignment of duties for interdisciplinary teaching/scholarship/creative work, including guidelines for dividing time between disciplinary and interdisciplinary classes and students.

Strategy A3.7

Action: Clarify at the time of faculty hiring the interdisciplinary tenure and promotion process. For example, new joint positions anchored in an existing discipline could follow normal tenure and promotion process, or alternatively, an interdisciplinary position might have a designated cohort of existing faculty for tenure and promotion processes.

Strategy A3.8

Project: Supplement interdisciplinary teaching through the use of post-doctoral fellows and visiting faculty from other colleges/universities.

Strategy A3.9

Project: Create an office or division of interdisciplinary studies to:

- provide staff and financial support for existing interdisciplinary programs;
- cultivate and support faculty leadership in the development of interdisciplinary programs; and
- ensure an interdisciplinary voice in institutional curricular and faculty matters.

Strategy A3.10

Action: Provide training and professional development for existing faculty to extend their work into cross-disciplinary areas.

Subgoal A4: Create a Strategic Plan for the Arts: Examine the place of the creative and performing arts at New College, including their curricular, co-curricular, extra-curricular aspects, and propose changes and/or enhancements for some or all of the following : Studio Art, Art History, Creative Writing, Dance, Film Studies, Music, and Theater.

Although the Arts are usually considered a core component of the liberal arts, New College has not historically offered students a full range of opportunities in these fields. The creation of an Academic Master Plan provides an opportunity to examine the status of the arts at New College, to ask whether enhancements, additions, or other changes are appropriate, and to determine what form these might take. This committee believes that the potential for significant benefits to our campus from a strong and thriving program in the arts warrants devoting focused attention on this area. A selective and thoughtful program to enhance the arts might take a range of forms, including curricular, co-curricular, and extra-curricular initiatives, and is not limited to additional regular faculty appointments.

The arts are a large and diverse group of disciplines: Studio Art, Art History, Music (performance, composition, and historical/ethno-musicology), Creative Writing, Theater, Film Studies, and Dance. These disciplines incorporate fields that are conventionally academic—defined by historical and interpretive study of texts, objects (paintings, illuminated manuscripts, sculptures, photography, film, physical theaters, prompt books), and records of performance practices. The arts also incorporate fields that emphasize performance (theater, music, dance, poetry readings, performance art). And finally, they include fields that create new art and art objects (Studio Art including photography, creative writing including playwriting or screenplays, and musical composition).

The range of student interest in the arts is equally diverse. Some students undertake an AOC in the arts. For other students, one or two courses in the arts may be part of a balanced liberal arts program. Still others may wish to continue longstanding interests in musical or theatrical performance, and some may wish to learn an instrument or work on a dramatic production as part of the new set of experiences and opportunities that college offers. Some students may simply attend art exhibits or concerts, but not be actively engaged in creative work themselves. Because of the range of opportunities they offer, the arts are uniquely situated to enhance both curricular and co-curricular learning for a large number of students.

Strengthening arts programs would positively impact the quality of learning experiences for students and the intellectual community for faculty across the disciplines. Educational literature supports the contention that not only arts majors, but also other students benefit from the opportunity to participate in creative and performing arts (see *Critical Links: Learning in the Arts and Student Academic and Social Development*, www.aep-arts.org). The quality of programs in the arts impacts retention and admissions efforts directly; New College admissions data makes clear the importance of performance and creative opportunities for the kinds of students that we most want to attract (see Admissions data on Prospect, Applicant, and Enrollee Interests). Further, a rich culture of arts enriches and diversifies our curriculum and our student body by incorporating a more complex range of knowledge-making and ways of knowing. The arts are thus important to sustaining a scholarly community of the kind to which most of us want to belong. As demonstrated by the continued success of *New Music New College*, an institution such as ours can serve as a catalyst for the creation and performance of new works of art, attracting a diverse audience to our campus and situating the College as a unique and distinctive resource for the larger community.

Strategy A4.1

Process: Establish a Task Force in Spring 2008, composed of representatives from various New College constituencies but consulting substantively with representatives from peer institutions, charged with creating a strategic plan for the Arts by the end of January 2009.

The Task Force should examine the following:

- What is the current state of New College's Arts programs? A historical overview of the Arts at the College is essential to ground our understanding. A careful assessment of the current status of existing programs, discipline by discipline, must precede any proposals for changes or enhancements.
- What do our peer institutions offer their students in both curricular and co-curricular Arts?
- What are the educational benefits to the College of a strong arts program (curricular, co-curricular, extracurricular)? What other types of benefits (or risks) are there?
- Given our limited resources and small size, what types of programs in the Arts are appropriate for NC?
- How can we insure that the arts are fully integrated with the larger curriculum, and that arts students and faculty are not isolated from their campus peers and colleagues?
- What would the essential budgetary needs be for each Arts field that New College might decide to enhance? What would be the best administrative structure (See also Subgoal F2)?
- How might programs be enhanced through relationships and collaborations with local institutions (Asolo Conservatory, Florida Studio Theater, Ringling College of Art & Design, Ringling Museum of Art, Florida West Coast Symphony, others)?
- What essential components must the College provide (facilities, staff, faculty)?
- What is the appropriate role for regular (tenured and tenure-track) faculty?
- What types and levels of staff and technical support would be necessary?
- What is the appropriate role of adjunct instructors (non-tenure track faculty hired to teach single courses on a course-by-course basis)?
- What facilities enhancements would be necessary? What facilities could be shared or collaboratively used, and what kinds of (new) facilities ought we to have on our campus?
- Should existing programs be reconfigured to acknowledge changes in the discipline or new patterns of student interest?
- Should any programs be dropped from the curriculum or offered only in the form of joint disciplinary AOCs?
- Principles for prioritizing should be developed to clarify reasonable expectations among students, faculty, staff, and community patrons and potential donors. Options should be prioritized for immediate or likely implementation pending the Task Force report. Others should be identified as desirable long-term goals the implementation of which may be dependent on a decision to grow the College beyond 800.

Subgoal A5: Affirm the value of Liberal Arts education as part of New College.

Although faculty, students, and staff clearly value the potential for focused and intensive study represented by the AOC, the mission of New College is to offer a liberal arts education, one that is characterized by close student-faculty interaction and an emphasis on a broad curriculum in addition to specialization. Employers expect liberal arts graduates to have developed transferable skills including strong writing and speaking, complex problem solving, the ability to collaborate effectively, and the flexibility to adapt to a changing world.

What do we want all of our students to achieve, acquire, or experience, regardless of AOC or in tandem with the AOC (since disciplinary fields do not function in a vacuum)? What fundamental abilities, exposure to different approaches to problem solving, and intellectual experiences should we expect of New College graduates? The answers to these questions should form the basis of discussions of curriculum planning and the optimum size of the college. If we value access for all students to a wide range of studies as well as deep focus in a chosen field or fields (represented by our requirement for an AOC), then the college must support such access (including access to study of resource-intensive areas such as languages, laboratory sciences, and studio art. Additionally, the answers to these are critical to striking a balance between encouraging (or even expecting) a broad, holistic exposure to the liberal arts and supporting students working towards very academically focused plans post-college or responding to external requirements in some post-graduate fields. This balance is crucial, and will be an ongoing challenge, but as AOCs are more closely linked to faculty graduate training and professional engagement it is more difficult to develop shared vision for the value of breadth at the undergraduate level without continued campus-wide vision and communication.

The current Liberal Arts Curriculum (LAC) requirements emerged in 2001. LAC classes lack prerequisites, provide a general introduction to a field rather than highly specialized topics, and are directed to beginning students in the field. Although a General Education requirement will continue to be necessary, there is little faculty or student buy-in to this minimal distribution requirement and no cross-campus planning or coordination. Many perceive that this institutional requirement can be greatly improved through cross campus planning and coordination and there is a need for the College to re-invigorate our commitment to liberal arts/general education beyond the AOC.

Thinking about the college's offerings across the liberal arts and about access for all students to the full range of liberal arts suggests the need for thinking deeply about our goals for General education. It is important to do this both as a framework for our own curricular planning and as a basis for communicating expectations to prospective and current students. Some students clearly seek the opportunity to focus in fields that they already know interest them strongly, and we don't want to lose this. However, other students discover their real passion by accident when they take a class they might have avoided given the option, or find unexpected links among new and familiar areas of study. There is a value to encouraging students to range beyond their immediate comfort zones that needs to be balanced against strong desires to delve deeply and carefully in an area of special ability and interest.

Strategy A5.1

Project: Develop a college-wide consensus about General Education, redefining its value, our pedagogical goals, desired learning outcomes and assessment measures. Correlate and revise documentation of AOC learning outcomes and AOC Academic Learning Compacts to goals for broad liberal arts study in addition to AOC focus such that these forms feel meaningful and helpful.

Strategy A5.2

Action: Review and elaborate more clearly criteria for courses that fulfill LAC requirements; post this information on the website where faculty can access it. Develop a model for narrative evaluations that includes suggestions for simple assessment of LAC learning outcomes in these courses such as quantitative skills, written expression, oral expression, critical thinking skills, creative work, etc.

Strategy A5.3

Project: Revise the current LAC requirements into a new form with broad support to emphasize not coverage in simply “Humanities,” “Social Sciences,” and “Natural Sciences,” but rather engagement with the different “ways of knowing” that our curriculum offers. These modes will be determined through discussion among faculty and educational staff, appropriate faculty committees, and the Office of the Provost. The goal here is to provide a more pedagogically connected sense of the broader curriculum goals, to attend to the special situation of transfer students who may have broad coverage without developing the kinds of skills and critical thinking we expect, to recognize that this engagement is not restricted to the first two years for many students, and to consider whether New College should continue the practice of allowing externally administered tests to meet some general education requirements.

Subgoal A6: Improve first-year and transfer student learning, transition to New College, and success.

Transition to New College in the First Year

There are a variety of issues associated with integrating first-year students into the New College community and providing them with the kind of support and educational experience they need in order to be successful at New College.

One of the recurring themes in faculty discussion has been the need for more consistent development of basic skills in the first two years at the college, particularly writing and quantitative skills. We have also recognized the need to begin developing students’ research-related skills in the first year, as a way to begin preparing for the thesis or senior project. There are also immediate concerns raised by the high rate of attrition in the first year. With respect to broader issues, there has also been recognition of the need for a more consistent first-year experience aimed at helping high school seniors make the transition to being college students, with regard to both intellectual orientations and social integration into the sometimes rather challenging New College community.

Discussion of these issues generally seems to point to something like a first-year seminar program. The response of both students and faculty to such proposals, however, emphasizes the importance of making this experience something that is not regarded as somehow remedial, or as an effort simply to teach “skills.” Although both students and faculty recognize the possible value of some structure and some level of common experience in the first year, both are wary of a required program that imposes too much structure and too much restriction on flexibility in curricular planning. There is concern among the faculty both with regard to the difficulty of creating common experiences that can be integrated both into the curriculum and the faculty’s teaching load across all divisions and disciplines. Any program intended to be mandatory for all first year students, or that would require universal participation of faculty, would likely encounter a great deal of resistance, in addition to being simply difficult to achieve with available faculty resources.

In addition to the specific issues related to basic skills, first-year preparation needs to reflect college-wide agreement with regard to learning outcomes associated with the general education components of a liberal arts education. It is important to recognize that there may be significant differences between first-year courses aimed at teaching specific skills (like writing or research methods) and experiences aimed at developing critical thinking, general analytical skills, and foundational competence in the arts and sciences. There are also important differences between a program that targets students who might need help in particular areas and a program that is aimed at providing a common experience for incoming students. The central problem is the transition that turns high school seniors into college students. The key seems to be the association of focused, high-quality advising with an academic experience that begins to cultivate the intellectual orientations, academic discipline, and particular skills necessary for success at New College.

Strategy A6.1

Project: Develop a menu of first-year courses and associated support that offer some level of common experience and that cultivate the intellectual orientations, academic discipline, and particular skills necessary for success at New College. This approach should include the following components.

- 1) Work with faculty to adapt existing courses to better meet the needs of first year students and to achieve specific learning outcomes associated with the transition from high school to New College.
- 2) Developing a freshman seminar program that focuses on introducing students to research and knowledge-making (as scholarly and creative inquiry, not just in terms of methodological techniques). Part of this need is being addressed in the QEP. This program should take the form of a menu of courses that includes seminars with a variety of different orientations, including, among others:
 - writing and critical analysis;
 - lab sciences;
 - arts (this may require assessing the role of the creative and performing arts in a first-year program);
 - interdisciplinary work.
- 3) Linking first-year advising with the first-year seminar program and activities.
- 4) Co-curricular programs to enhance transition to college-level work and life (this year's summer book program as an example/model?).

Strategy A6.2

Project: Develop a skills development program that targets students who need help in specific areas (e.g., writing, quantitative skills). This program should include three components.

- Strengthening the WRC and QRC and providing incentives and models for faculty to work with them to incorporate more explicit emphasis on writing and quantitative skills into their courses.
- Identify or develop writing-intensive courses at the level of a first-year seminar and at the level of the AOC.
- Remedial courses or activities, if need is established by placement tests.

Strategy A6.3

Project: Develop a program aimed to improve the success of first-year, non-traditional or first generation-college students as indicated. One approach would be a summer program, to focus on study skills, time management, and specific academic and life skills for success at New College. We could house them on campus, and pay stipends to returning students who might be willing to serve as mentors/tutors in the program, with Student Affairs, the WRC, the QRC, and faculty involvement.

Transfer Students and the Transition to New College

Transfer students face challenges that are not only different from students whose arrival at New College is their first time in college, but also differ widely among themselves. Transfers come to New College from a wide range of backgrounds, including everything from a two-year degree at a community college to a year or two at a top-notch Ivy League university. They also come to New College for different reasons, and with different expectations. Many students who have been quite successful at a community college find that they are not as well prepared for the kinds of writing and independent academic work required at New College. Others arrive well prepared, with a very well articulated plan for their time at New College, and quickly earn faculty support for their AOC and senior projects. Some, unfortunately, want to concentrate in areas where we do not have fully developed programs (art, business, counseling, creative writing, film, theater).

What kind of academic support do transfer students need, and how should this support be delivered? Can we identify any particular problems associated with transfer students from different backgrounds? As with every other aspect of the New College program, good advising is crucial, and may be especially crucial for transfer students. One of the biggest problems is that transfer students simply have less time to find their way through the New College program by trial and error. Transfer students need to plan very carefully, in relation to goals that are relatively well articulated from the moment they arrive and reasonable given our curriculum and faculty expertise. Transfer students also have somewhat different social needs than “first time in college” students fresh from high school, and they pose different kinds of challenges for Student Affairs. They may be older, more likely to live off campus, and are frequently at a different point in the life course (e.g., with family obligations, jobs, etc.). Transfer students are often more career oriented, more immediately concerned with post-graduate employment. Transfers from community college programs are often in a different situation from students transferring from a major state university in terms of preparation for advanced scholarly or creative work.

Strategy A6.4

Process: Develop a systematic “best practices” approach to helping transfer students transition to New College. This approach should include:

- More systematic assessment of the needs of transfer students;
- Guidelines, resources, and/or training for faculty advisers regarding the particular issues relevant to transfer students;
- Particularly careful selection of faculty advisers, perhaps based on a special interview process;
- More extensive communication between faculty and Student Affairs relevant to advising, academic support, and other campus support for transfer students.

Subgoal A7: Integrate curricular and co-curricular activities to enhance the educational experience.

If New College is truly going to embrace the concept of learning as a way of life, Student Affairs staff must have a close relationship with the academic administration and faculty. In the last two academic years the college has hired a new provost and a dean with the charge of bridging academics and student life. These hires are crucial, but more must be done to bring the two sides of the campus together.

Most of our students live on campus and New College bills itself as a place for life-long learners and independent thinkers. If this is the case, then Residence Life and Student Affairs have to be more than just a housing authority and a disciplinary body. Student Affairs staff must have a close relationship with the academic administration and faculty. Student housing and social space must be recognized as crucial to student learning.

Strategy A7.1

Project: Develop better ways to coordinate Student Affairs, academic advising, and Counseling Center and Wellness Center programs to more holistically address the needs of students. As an initial step in this direction, provide a mechanism for either Student Affairs personnel or academic advisors to request, as needed, conferences to review and address circumstances that may be affecting student performance.

Strategy A7.2

Project: Expand co-curricular events planning, led by Student Affairs, to provide events throughout the entire academic year, and at a minimum once each semester. These events should, when possible, be planned in coordination with interested faculty, and bear some relationship to current course offerings.

Strategy A7.3

Project: Develop a faculty lecture/discussion series targeted at students and faculty. Lecture events might provide faculty an opportunity to showcase recent work or simply topics of interest. Discussions (either following the lectures or offered as independent events) could be designed to promote faculty-student interaction around topics of academic value outside the classroom.

Strategy A7.4

Project: To take full advantage of our current (and future) residential facilities and services, Student Affairs, faculty, and Residence Life should coordinate to provide additional opportunities for informal student and student-faculty interaction that enhances co-curricular learning. Examples of such opportunities include study groups, reading groups focused on a topic of common interest, and groups using classroom learning to take action (community service, etc.).

Subgoal A8: Develop a process for curricular planning and oversight to support learning outcomes.

How can we better balance the freedom that faculty have to design their own courses, which is a core value of New College, with the needs of students and teachers for a more coherent and predictable curriculum? Is this best done at the disciplinary, divisional, or college-wide level?

Currently, we have a “curriculum” only to the extent that individual faculty or groups of faculty create some coherence around identified programs. Across divisions, there is almost no coordination at all (such that required foundation courses such as languages may conflict with other required courses in some disciplines). Within each Division there is sometimes little coordination across disciplines, and even within some disciplines faculty operate as “independent states.” The advantage is complete freedom and flexibility to create new courses without requiring review and acceptance by a central committee, to develop new areas of expertise and offer formal courses in them immediately, to create one’s own teaching schedule to serve both personal preferences and pedagogical goals, and even to create a schedule outside of the common course schedule. However, this comes at the cost of coordination and coherent curricular vision. There is a need to address certain issues at the institutional level: access to courses for baccalaureate, AOC, and graduate school requirements; large classes; capped classes; registration; a uniform class schedule that minimizes conflicts among course offerings.

We do need to engage in planning, and to find a better balance between our current freedoms and a more coherent learning community. There is strong support for retaining the autonomy individual faculty and disciplines practice in planning their respective offerings. Therefore, rather than think about curriculum planning as disciplining teaching or constraining the development of curricula, we propose that curriculum planning be conceived in relationship to a positive vision— not an abstract “vision” (which is no vision at all), but a specific set of goals shared by the campus community. It might also be helpful to

establish some kind of faculty group that thinks campus-wide about how we are balancing needs for non-majors, beginning students, some larger courses and gateway courses with the desire to offer specialized, small seminar, advanced courses for majors. So “planning” would really be a process of enlisting faculty in designing a program they are willing and able to deliver.

Strategy A8.1

Project: Develop guidelines and ‘best practices’ to help disciplines articulate long-term plans that could be assembled into a coherent set of curricular expectations for the college. The guidelines would be advisory for disciplines and divisions.

Strategy A8.2

Project: The Provost's Office will compile information from the disciplinary planning process and make it available for college-wide discussion. In accordance with the best practice guidelines outlined in A8.1, disciplines will propose intended course offerings for a rolling planning period of three years. The administration, the Academic Administrative Council and the EPC will consult with faculty in the disciplines to ensure a balance between courses intended for non-majors and beginning students, gateway courses that prepare students for advanced work, and advanced courses and seminars for majors, but curricula will not be imposed, and announced course offerings may be changed when necessary.

Strategy A8.3

Project: Develop new uniform scheme for scheduling classes that minimizes overlapping classes, and provides additional times for meetings.

Subgoal A9: Improve participation in, and academic value of, off-campus study, study abroad, and internships.

One of the most significant (as well as cost effective) strategies for expanding or filling out the curricular opportunities of a small college is the identification and promotion of opportunities for off-campus experiences that are carefully related to on-campus areas of study. (See Subgoal C) Currently, however, it is largely up to individual students to research and arrange such programs for themselves with assistance from the Office of Career Service and Off-Campus Studies.

Strategy A9.1

Project: Develop a catalog of internships, off-campus programs, and study abroad programs for NCF students, matched to particular NCF disciplinary and interdisciplinary areas of study. CSOCS work closely with faculty to identify these and integrate them with on-campus academic programs. Establish recurring internships in focused areas (medicine, museum, education, law, etc.). Hold an information session on off-campus study, study abroad, and internship opportunities at least once each year, including students who have participated, interested faculty, Career Services personnel, etc. CSOCS staff resources may need to be expanded.

Strategy A9.2

Process: Analyze pros, cons, and the feasibility of institutionalizing a semester off-campus and/or study abroad for a majority of our students. Consider creating a study abroad advisory network of alumnae/i.

Strategy A9.3

Action: Charge the Office of Career Services and Off-Campus Study to offer training and a guidebook for faculty advisers with respect to best practices for successful student off-campus study and internships, undertaken for academic credit.

Strategy A9.4:

Project: Work with New College Alumni Association to encourage alumni to help create internship opportunities for current students. Produce directory of alumni, organized by profession, who are willing to sponsor internships for New College students at their places of employment. Establish internships with both non-profit and for profit organizations.

Strategy A9.5:

Project: Encourage the use of the Summer ISP period for internships and study abroad programs, many of which are more feasible over the summer than during four weeks in January. Allow students to use financial aid for summer ISP on the same terms as they can for January ISP.

Strategy A9.6

Project: Initiate discussion of MOA's (Memorandum of Agreement) and adjustments to contracts/graduation requirements to accommodate a 3+2 program for NCF students to earn masters' degrees at other state universities.

Goal B: Enhance opportunities for the professional development of the faculty and instructional staff as teachers, advisers and scholars within the bounds of a sustainable, balanced workload.

Many of the challenges and problems that currently confront the college are tied both to issues of faculty workload and to issues of student learning. These issues are distinct but interconnected in complex ways. This section outlines goals that are related to the professional development of the faculty as teachers, advisers, and scholars/artists, and to the integration of strategic responses to the personal and professional concerns of faculty with broader efforts to enhance the success of the academic program from the standpoint of student learning.

First, how do we allocate resources and how are faculty interests taken into account? Resources that are immediately significant to faculty include: funding (academic program, facilities and equipment, technology and technology support, development and research funds including leave time and grant supplementation); faculty positions (adjunct, replacement, and new positions); faculty assignments (disciplinary, split, administrative); facilities (classrooms, labs, studios, library carrels or other dedicated support spaces, offices, etc.), and support staff (including office support, tech support, library resource support, events & conference planning support, lab and studio technical support, and instructional support for writing, statistics, quantitative/math skills, and basic language acquisition).

What kind of professional diversity do we want as part of the culture and operations of the college? Traditionally, it has been assumed that all faculty are essentially doing the same things, and that all members of the faculty would have more or less identical “assignment of duties” letter. However, the differences between disciplines and divisions, changing needs for career development, and the need to fill gaps in the curriculum have all suggested a need for more flexibility in the kinds of appointments possible at New College.

What categories of faculty appointments should be considered in addition to our foundational commitment to a substantial core of full time tenure-track faculty? Different kinds of appointments with different expectations might include where appropriate: adjuncts, non-tenure-track appointments, and even possible part-time tenured appointments. Connected to professional diversity and also important are other kinds of faculty diversity that affect learning and teaching issues, but also affect campus climate for current continuing faculty (race/ethnicity, gender, national origins, language/native speakers, etc.).

Faculty workload is a pressing issue at this time and one that tends to generate heated debate. There are a wide range of considerations relevant to workload, only some of which are considered in this section.

Subgoal B1: Improve faculty access to training, mentoring, and coaching and share best practices with respect to teaching, learning, and scholarly life at New College.

Strategy B1.1

Project: Develop a center (note: a function, not necessarily a new building) for teaching and learning that would organize workshops and training opportunities, facilitate faculty communication on local best practices, convene discussions of techniques and approaches for improving teaching and learning, and work with faculty on improving various aspects of their work. The center should include personnel trained to assist faculty and instructional staff in the use of new educational technology. (It is assumed here that this function involves expertise beyond what is currently available).

B.1.a. Explore opportunities for related professional development programs relevant to librarians, counselors, and other staff not typically listed as “instructional staff” in order to help integrate their work more effectively with the core educational mission of the college.

Strategy B1.2

Action: Develop a strong mentoring program for new faculty with enhanced support from the administration. This program should introduce new faculty to the unique aspects of New College culture, including system infrastructure, the academic program, hard and target deadlines, and support services for referral of students (student counseling, the Wellness Center, Residence Life and Housing services, and so forth). Effective mentorship may be cross-divisional. (This program should include ways to recognize and reward faculty who act as good mentors to incoming colleagues.) Where possible, mentors should be chosen from among senior faculty with a track record of successful support for junior colleagues.

Subgoal B2: Consider flexible assignments as a way to respond responsibly to changing curricular needs, priorities in student learning outcomes, and faculty development.

Strategy B2.1

Project: Develop standard measures for assessing faculty workload, making it possible to define both “part time” and “over load” conditions. Factor tutorial loads as well as official course offerings into full time teaching assignments.

Strategy B2.2

Project: Develop a program that would offer temporary postdoctoral teaching appointments for recent PhDs.

Strategy B2.3

Process: The FASC will study the desirability of policies to allow for a variety of alternatives to full-time tenure track appointments, including part-time tenure track appointments and joint appointments.

Currently our handbook expressly prohibits part-time employment. This causes some conflicts that seem opposed to the spirit of the concern for retaining a high percentage of tenured-faculty. It would seem better and more equitable to develop a regular policy and program to make such options clear and available to all, should this option seem valuable.

Strategy B2.4

Process: The FASC will study the desirability of policies and standard practices for the use of part-time, non-tenure track appointments or renewable appointments, as a strategy both for replacing faculty who are temporarily reassigned and as a way to address a variety of gaps in the curriculum.

Strategy B2.5

Process: The FASC will study the desirability of allowing phased retirement with half-time teaching and half-time pay for a fixed term (e.g. 5 years) for senior faculty approaching retirement.

Strategy B2.6

Process: The FASC will study the desirability of a policy for a more extensive use of variable assignments in response to institutional as well as faculty development needs (i.e., instead of 100% teaching or 100% assigned research, consider dividing time into a certain percentage each of teaching, research, and/or administrative work).

Subgoal B3: Develop measures for a managing Thesis Advising workload for faculty, along with guidelines and programs that would also improve the overall success of the senior thesis project as a component of the academic program.

Strategy B3.1

Process: Develop measures for assessing sponsorship of thesis projects and service on baccalaureate committees as a component of faculty workload.

Strategy B3.2

Action: Assemble and disseminate information about model “thesis seminars” and workshops, as a practice that can both provide students with consistent support through the thesis process and ease some faculty workload issues.

Strategy B3.4

Process: Develop clear norms and guidelines for different types of thesis projects, appropriate for different areas of concentrations and offering alternatives to the usual research paper for students with varied interests and abilities. Develop models of past and successful alternative senior projects as well as conventional senior theses.

Strategy B3.5

Action: Enhance the range and quality of support services available to students engaged in thesis projects (e.g., the Writing Center, the Quantitative Resource Center).

Strategy B3.6

Process: Explore the possibilities for developing a reward system for those who do excellent work as thesis sponsors, for those who take on a large number or who take on “orphan” projects.

Subgoal B4: Increase funding to support faculty research and faculty and instructional staff career development.

Strategy B4.1

Action: As part of the creation of a center for teaching and learning, develop opportunities for teaching-related workshops and training on campus.

Strategy B4.2

Action: Develop new funding opportunities to support faculty and instructional staff development of innovative approaches to teaching and learning, within areas relevant to their research. These funding opportunities should include travel to attend workshops and training elsewhere, to develop new courses, and for development of new teaching and learning opportunities within interdisciplinary areas.

Strategy B4.3

Process: Explore a range of programs and policies that could link faculty and instructional staff career development with institutional growth and the enhancement of curricular opportunities on campus.

Strategy B4.4:

Project: Create an in-house Research and Creative Scholarship Grant program. This program would supplement existing Faculty Development Fund grants by allowing faculty to apply once every five years for a larger grant to support summer research. Existing FDF grants are helpful in enabling faculty to work on existing projects in Sarasota over the summer, but are generally insufficient to cover research travel (fieldwork, archival research, etc.) or to launch new research agendas.

Goal C: Enhance the diversity of the College community.

Faculty and students from diverse backgrounds of all kinds bring different perspectives on life and life experiences, including race and ethnic diversity, cultural and national diversity, gender and sexuality diversities, economic and educational diversity, and the differently abled. Students in the twenty-first century will live in a nation and world of tremendous diversity, in which the ability to communicate and coexist with people different from themselves is extremely important. Special attention is needed to attract, employ, and retain faculty from diverse backgrounds, who will in turn attract and support a more diverse pool of students.

What special challenges and barriers do minority faculty, students, and staff face at New College? What steps can/should be taken to create an open, diverse, and tolerant campus community? Some minority faculty, because they look different from students' normative expectations of what a professor is supposed to "look like," experience unusual challenges to their authority in the classroom. Minority students, for their part, sometimes feel isolated socially at New College, find that they are perceived through negative stereotypes, or conversely, may feel the pressure to be a "model minority" or to represent an "ethnic" or "native informant" point of view to their fellow students.

Rather than expecting minority faculty and students to "educate" the majority population on diversity issues, it is important to recognize that creating a diverse, tolerant campus climate is everyone's responsibility.

Diversity considerations are also involved in the power relationships through which both faculty and students interact with members of the college staff. How do faculty model respectful relations with our co-workers who maintain our facilities?

The following list of subgoals and strategies builds upon ideas formulated by the Academic Master Planning Committee, informed by suggestions from members of the campus community and by outside consultants on diversity in higher education. While many of these strategies could be implemented *à la carte*, they are best understood as a comprehensive menu of interrelated and mutually reinforcing initiatives to enhance the diversity of the New College community, and would likely be most effective if adopted as a whole.

Subgoal C1: Foster a campus climate based on tolerance, mutual respect, and multiculturalism.

Strategy C1.1

Action: Appoint an institutional ombudsperson to create an alternative chain of communication for students, faculty, and staff to discuss issues of discrimination, harassment, etc. Students may not know where to turn when these issues arise, and new faculty members may be uncomfortable raising them with their division chairs or senior disciplinary colleagues. The ombudsperson could be a senior faculty or staff member (though not an administrator, division chair, PAC member, or anyone with evaluative responsibilities), or an outside professional retained on a contract basis.

Strategy C1.2

Action: Address diversity issues (including, but not limited to, racial or ethnic discrimination, sexual harassment and discrimination based on gender and/or sexual orientation, and inclusion and accommodation of persons with disabilities) explicitly through new student orientation. Include section on creating positive learning environment in student catalog, code of conduct, or other relevant document. This component of orientation could be directed by a standing committee on diversity and campus climate, proposed in

Strategy C1.4 below. After orientation, diversity issues could be reinforced through a series of activities and programs, perhaps coordinated by the Residence Director (RD) responsible for diversity issues in the Student Affairs office.

Strategy C1.3

Action: Conduct survey of campus climate on regular basis; track and analyze survey results.

Strategy C1.4

Project: Create a standing committee on diversity and campus climate, with both student and faculty representation, including the Dean of Multicultural Affairs (if position created), the ombudsperson, and the Dean of Student Affairs. This committee's charge would be: 1) coordinating diversity planning and programming directed at the student body, and 2) serving as a "rapid-response" team when racially-charged incidents occur on campus, to deal with the issues in a quick and responsible fashion to prevent them from escalating.

Strategy C1.5

Process: Consider hiring a Dean of Multicultural Affairs/Chief Diversity Officer. This person should be a senior academic, eligible for tenure in an academic discipline at the college, who could teach one course per semester, chair a standing committee on diversity and campus climate, serve ex officio on the Academic Administrative Council and possibly also the EPC, and report directly to the Provost.

Strategy C1.6

Process: Conduct institutional study on ways to "make New College an ideal employer for all staff" (recommendation from the June 27, 2007 COW meeting). These might include enacting a living wage policy for all employees, offering educational benefits to staff members, providing childcare assistance, etc.

Subgoal C2: Implement a plan to recruit and retain students, faculty, and staff from underrepresented populations

Faculty:

Strategy C2.1

Action: Clarify policy on "opportunity hires" of diverse candidates. Which "underrepresented populations" are eligible for such hires? Are international candidates to be considered as well as those groups classified as minorities by the U.S. Census Bureau (African-Americans, Latinos/as, Asian-Americans, Native Americans)? Do opportunity hires need to coincide with curricular priorities identified through strategic planning? If not, what strategies should we adopt to ensure that these hires will serve the broader academic goals of the college?

Strategy C2.2

Action: Define and circulate "best practices" for including diversity considerations in faculty searches. For example, position advertisements may be posted to publications, listserves, and other venues geared to minority scholars, or mailed directly to graduate departments that train large numbers of students from underrepresented populations. Search committees should also take care to ensure that the language of position advertisements sends an inclusive message, and does not define the position in such a way as to deter potential applicants from diverse backgrounds.

Strategy C2.3

Action: Join Consortium for Faculty Diversity to bring post-doctoral fellows from underrepresented populations to New College. Assign faculty mentors to these post-doctoral fellows, and include fellows in all aspects of college life in which they wish to participate.

Strategy C2.4

Process: Ensure that the work done by minority faculty, some of which may fall outside of the traditional categories of teaching, scholarship, and committee service, is valued. Clarify expectations for tenure and promotion, and ensure that socially-engaged scholarship and service to the wider community beyond New College are considered.

Students

Strategy C2.5

Action: Track, highlight, and publicize successful post-educational outcomes of our students (graduate and professional school admissions, career placement, etc). While New College has a very strong reputation in academic circles, we are less well-known by the general public, and even less well-known within minority communities. Prospective students and their parents need to know that a New College education will help them to meet their career goals. Provide resources and models for useful collaboration to the Office of Institutional Research, the Office of the Registrar, and the New College Alumni Association, and make this data available to the Office of Admissions, the faculty, and the student body through regular reports.

Strategy C2.6

Project: Identify and cultivate relationships with high schools in Sarasota and throughout Florida that have high minority enrollments and academic honors programs. Invite guidance counselors from these schools to campus events, send admissions representatives to college fairs at these schools, and provide financial assistance to bring their students to visit our campus. Provide additional resources (both financial and personnel) to Admissions to enable them to take on this additional role.

Strategy C2.7

Project: Develop ties between New College and local community associations, public schools, etc. Such relationships could improve the college's profile in the local community, offer service-learning and valuable life experiences for students, and construct a recruitment pipeline for talented students from local public schools to New College.

Strategy C2.8

Project: Develop support infrastructure to improve student retention, either as a first-year program or a pre-enrollment summer program, for students from disadvantaged backgrounds or whose academic record suggests possible difficulties in adapting to the demands of New College. This could include, but is not limited to, supplemental instruction in writing and math skills, perhaps in conjunction with an expansion of the Writing Resource Center and Quantitative Resource Center; peer mentoring, providing a work-study and service-learning

opportunity for selected advanced students; formal instruction in time management, note-taking, and study skills; and more regular and systematic advising, perhaps incorporating advising staff with specialized training in meeting the needs of disadvantaged students in addition to regular contact with the student's contract sponsor. Some public institutions in Florida have "Centers of Excellence" that might serve as models for this sort of program, once adapted to the unique curriculum and mission of New College.

Subgoal C3: Provide incentives to develop curriculum that in its content and its approaches recognizes the range of knowledge and experiences of diverse peoples.

Strategy C3.1

Action: Articulate diversity (in a variety of senses) as a positive goal in curricular planning process. Connect this goal to the institution's mission statement.

Strategy C3.2

Project: Encourage and support faculty development; offer incentives to existing faculty to develop new courses or new fields of teaching competency that will contribute to the diversification of the curriculum.

Strategy C3.3

Project: Encourage students to pursue study abroad programs, service learning projects, etc., that will bring them into contact with people from backgrounds different from their own. Provide financial support and curricular coordination so that students who choose these options are not set back either economically or educationally. Encourage and support the use of off-campus ISPs (either January or summer) for internships, study abroad, and service-learning projects.

Strategy C3.4

Process: Develop a process for making decisions regarding faculty lines and curriculum that addresses the needs of the campus as a whole, rather than the sum of its constituent parts. In particular, the expanded EPC has the charge to engage in long-range academic planning and serve as a forum for discussion of the academic program, and the Faculty Handbook, Section 4.2, designates the EPC as a venue for these discussions to take place. (Of course, as the Handbook makes clear, decisions regarding faculty lines are ultimately a prerogative of the administration).

Goal D: Focus technology, facilities, media and support staff to generate academic program improvements.

New College's curricular needs cannot be met solely by adding more faculty to the roster. Instructional support must be a top priority. Increased funding for adjunct instructors, more direct support for the library and information technology, additional research and instructional equipment, enhanced funding for visiting speakers, increased support for faculty and student travel, and staffing for the writing and quantitative resource centers are required to ensure the success of the academic program. Amongst the topics of interest are technological support (computing, wireless access, digital classrooms, etc), the library, the Writing Resource Center, the Quantitative Resource Center, labs in both Natural Sciences and Social Sciences, studios and exhibition space, and theater performance facilities.

Subgoal D1: Fully integrate the Writing Resource Center, the Quantitative Resource Center, the Information Commons, and Educational Technology Services into curricular and co-curricular learning.

The WRC does an admirable job with minimal resources. Increasing the professional staff would facilitate more comprehensive integration with the academic program and enhance co-curricular opportunities. There is an identified need for extracurricular writing resources and training—which our current center is not fulfilling. Some reported staffing issues at the QRC during its first year. With the exception of Director Duff Cooper, the Center was staffed by New College students with varying degrees of quantitative proficiency. There were some anecdotal reports of difficulty in finding help with a specific topic.

While there have been a number of significant improvements in technological support over the past three years a number of significant challenges remain. Improved communication between IT and the community it serves is needed. In particular, responses to service requests are (anecdotally) uneven. IT has tended to determine support in isolation from discussion of faculty instructional needs in part because faculty are perceived as lacking knowledge about current technologies. There are serious problems with the New College **website**. Email access is difficult to transfer to most email clients and the setup procedures are unavailable. Currently, wireless **Internet access** is hard to find, and is unreliable when found. Classrooms also need to be outfitted with resources and tools that allow professors and students to take advantage of the **latest teaching technology**, and training and information on these new tools need to be readily available. At the same time, faculty must know what is available in their field. New College has “gone without” for so long that many do not know what to ask for or expect. There are urgent academic needs for **digital imaging and audio** resources: this is a problem that is shared by all divisions.

There is a significant need for resources and support for **scientific computing**. These needs include software (for example, Matlab upgrades and support for off-campus computing) and hardware. Both Natural Sciences and Social Sciences Divisions require more complete data analysis tools for independent student research, and guided laboratory teaching. All Natural Sciences need lab teaching space and offices. New chemical storage facilities are needed, and a new addition to Heiser Natural Sciences Complex would alleviate many resource pinch-points. Anthropology has non-recurring funds for setting up an archeology lab, but does not have a physical space or the recurring funds to support it. Sociology and psychology have little in the way of experiment facilities or fieldwork resources. Both need physical resources to conduct experiments and lab work that may require groups of people to come together in a controlled environment or individuals in isolated booths. A Mac Lab for arts students is located in CFA, maintained by IT's Technical Services.

Strategy D1.1

Process: Engage faculty, students, and IT in choosing open, flexible, technology-based teaching systems that will serve the college in the long run. Rather than conform teaching to new technology systems, technology should serve our ways of teaching. Improve academic computing through grants for upgrades, shared facilities agreements with other colleges/universities, and expansion of multi-platform support systems to be accessible to all students and faculty.

Strategy D1.2

Action: Redefine the priority of Education Technology Services to be assistance for faculty with technology for teaching, student learning, and research. Hire professional staff to build and maintain digital image and digital resource collections. Locate these staff in academic units. Also educate faculty and staff on new state-of-the-art resources available in their field.

Strategy D1.3

Project: Fully integrate the Writing Resource Center in the academic programs of all academic disciplines through modular or semester-long college writing courses, and first year writing requirements.

Action: Expand the WRC staff and resources to accomplish this expanded mission. Similar programs at other institutions usually include instructional staff or faculty with appropriate terminal degrees, relevant experience and professional status.¹ Responsibilities would include teaching (mod-length) first-year writing course, writing assessment, and assisting faculty who want to incorporate writing instruction into their classes.

Action: Enhance position of Assistant Director of WRC.²

Project: WRC continues current activities, including its various workshops on diverse aspects of writing as well as the program of Student Writing Assistants, as a supplement to an enhanced emphasis on writing in the classroom made possible by additional professional staff.

Strategy D1.4

Action: Improve the effectiveness of the Quantitative Resource Center through better scheduling and staffing, including hiring graduate students and adjuncts. Provide diagnostic tools to identify individual student quantitative weaknesses. Clarify the QRCs role in meeting college-wide needs for statistics instruction.

Strategy D.1.5

Action: Extend the working hours of the Info Commons so that students, faculty, and staff can make use of the resources later in the night. Extending the hours of the Info Commons may require physically moving those resources so that they can have open hours independent of the library.

Strategy D.1.6

Project: Set up appropriate server space and software so that the college can offer a more centralized content serving system.

¹ For example, recommended degree and status include: Ph.D. in Rhetoric and Composition, possibly English, Minimum 10 month, preferably 12 month, tenure-track ideal, adjunct status at a minimum.

² For example, recommend a full-time position, 10-month appointment, in a discipline complementary to that of the Director, responsibilities include assisting the Director, could teach writing classes as an adjunct, MFA/MA required.

Subgoal D2: Ensure the library's capacity to keep pace with the rapidly changing demands of undergraduate learning and faculty scholarship.

New College prides itself on undergraduate research and must provide facilities that allow for these goals. The library is a shared service between NCF and USF that must also serve two very different groups: students and faculty. We see many opportunities to improve the library's capacity to enhance our learning environment. These include: expanding and updating the circulation and reference collections; providing space for group studying; reducing confusion in locating reserve reading and reducing the time it takes to place electronic reserves and improving the quality/readability of scanned reserve reading; broadening the scope of acquisitions; strengthening the journal collection; expanding digital collections (images and databases) . We do have a healthy electronic library collection, and the ILLiad system is responsive. Book check-out time is very long (a whole semester), which is both fantastic and a handicap.

A community of active scholars requires library resources in order to perform. Looking to the future, we must assure that New College library resources are adequate to the kind of institution we want to be and the changes we anticipate.

Strategy D2.1

Project: Prepare a strategic plan for the Cook Library, articulating goals for both New College of Florida and University of South Florida. Develop an operational and financial plan to implement the strategic plan. In the short term, convert underused classrooms for collection storage and student meeting rooms, improve the reserve reading system to better meet faculty needs, and develop a shared service agreement with USF for digital resources and long-term borrowing privileges.

Subgoal D3: Develop policies and procedures governing the role of part-time and full-time assistants, adjuncts, and instructors in teaching, laboratory teaching, art and performance instruction, language instruction, field study, and interterm group projects.

Many academic areas currently benefit from the contributions of part-time instructors, visiting instructors, laboratory technicians and student teaching assistants. While keeping the full-time faculty at the center of the College's academic program, these assistants are essential to our mission. They keep the labs and studios running, they enrich the curricula, and they extend learning into the community and to various field locations.

Policies and procedures are needed to guide the College's hiring and management of assistants, adjuncts, instructors and teaching assistants.

Strategy D3.1

Project: Work with faculty and Division Chairs to define teaching roles for additional adjuncts, full-time continuing instructors, and post-doctoral instructors to enrich the academic program. Provide additional (non-tenure track) teaching staff to assist with technology and laboratory teaching/learning in the natural sciences, social sciences, languages, and other areas where appropriate.

Strategy D3.2

Project: Develop guidelines and priorities for identifying and ranking needs for temporary part-time staff, and develop a best practices manual for teaching assistants (TA's) that addresses roles, responsibilities, and evaluation measures.

Strategy D3.3

Project: Develop capacity to organize, administer, and sustain institutional links to other institutions and organizations for fieldwork research.

Subgoal D4: Ensure that Laboratories and Studios are effective settings for student learning and research.

Laboratories and studios require constant upgrades. Lab support requires significant faculty resources. Expansions require the allocation of physical space and long range financial planning. Resources devoted to the performing arts have historically been scarce in spite of obvious student interest. Dedicated space for performance is limited, as are faculty resources. Social sciences is severely lacking in laboratory space for empirical data collection and subject testing.

Strategy D4.1

Project: Develop short and long term plans, schedules and recurring funding (depreciation and replacement) for critical lab equipment, studio equipment, language learning equipment.

Strategy D4.2

Project: Follow campus master plan for needed expansion of natural science laboratories, psychology laboratories, additional performance space, digital classrooms, and new faculty offices. In the short-term, develop joint-use agreements for performance spaces with local arts organizations.

Strategy D4.3

Project: Co-locate academic space (classrooms, performance spaces) in dormitories and in the renovated Hamilton Center to create mixed use spaces eligible for state matching funds. Further connect academic and residential life through on-campus faculty housing.

Subgoal D5: Enhance the ability of Institutional Research to inform and improve the academic program.

Strategy D5.1

Project: Develop the capacity for the Office of Institutional Research to conduct internal research projects to: analyze faculty workloads; assist faculty with assessment of learning outcomes; track the careers and accomplishment of our graduates; and survey graduates at intervals to evaluate long term learning outcomes. This will require additional staff, professional development, and assignment of some state reporting functions to other offices.

Goal E: Ensure the size of New College is in harmony with our academic program and mission.

The size of an institution and questions concerning its growth are of fundamental importance to the institution's future. Growth potentially impacts every function of the college; a change in the size of the student body may have direct, immediate effects, for better or worse, on the ability to deliver on the institution's mission. This in turn may determine whether or not an institution is ultimately viable. For these reasons and others, questions concerning growth play a central role in all master planning exercises. This has certainly been the case for New College.

New College's most recent experiences of growth have been mixed. In recent years, student enrollment growth has outpaced the expansion of the faculty, the construction of new dormitories and academic buildings, and the increase in available financial aid funds. These disparities have led to some specific "growing pains." The present cohort of New College students has had to deal with oversubscribed classes and large-scale construction projects. On the other hand, as a result of the expansion of the faculty over the same period, they have a wider array of course offerings from which to choose than any previous generation of New College students. These conflicting experiences account for much of the ambivalence about growth within the college community, and provide a context in which to interpret the results of the consensus testing associated with the draft "Goals and Strategies" document.

This testing found strong consensus for becoming a well functioning academic program for 800 students in the short term, while implementing a monitoring system to evaluate the impact of growth on the campus community. In addition, consensus testing and recent discussions indicate majority support among the faculty for closely monitored, incremental growth beyond an enrollment of 800. In response to these discussions, the AMP committee has come to the conclusion that we need to focus not on a target size, but on strategies that use planned growth to enhance resources and educational opportunities at New College, with the stipulation that these strategies be fundamentally oriented to sustaining and enhancing those qualities and aspects of the college that we all value, over the long term. It would clearly be a mistake to set an arbitrary growth target and then simply stumble toward it with a kind of do-or-die, at-all-costs kind of approach. The first principle is that growth should not be a goal in itself, but a by-product of strategies for enhancing New College and achieving our aspirations as a community.

Subgoal E1 examines strategies to make New College successful at an enrollment of 800 students, our current target size as determined by the Board of Trustees. Subgoal E2 articulates procedures and principles to guide decisions regarding size and growth, and suggests a process of annual monitoring and reporting to track and control for the impact of growth on our academic program. These procedures and principles will be particularly important to manage any future growth in an orderly fashion, and to preserve the "equilibrium" of the academic program whenever we choose to hold enrollment at a constant level. Subgoal E3 envisions a cycle of review of the appropriate size for the college to meet its mission, and an incremental process for any growth beyond 800 students, to be implemented only once the conditions outlined in Subgoal E1 have been met, and in keeping with the principles and procedures articulated in Subgoal E2.

Subgoal E1: First, become a well-functioning academic program for 800 students.

As noted above, the New College Board of Trustees has mandated the growth of the college to 800 students. As a result of several larger than average entering classes, we are already relatively close to that goal (beginning enrollment for Fall 2007 was 764 students). The college has experienced "growing pains" in recent years, as the expansion of the faculty and of physical infrastructure (dorm rooms, classrooms, offices, labs, etc) has not kept pace with the expansion of the student body. Five new dormitories opened in Fall 2007 to meet actual and anticipated enrollment growth, and the college is once again able to house approximately 80% of a projected student body of 800. A new Academic/Administrative Building is projected for completion within two years. However, there are still other

pressing needs that will need to be addressed in order to make New College function optimally as a college of 800 students. These include:

Strategy E1.1

Action: Add new faculty lines sufficient to grow to a total of 80 faculty members, restoring the college's normative 10:1 student faculty ratio. In Fall 2007, there are 68 tenured or tenure-track faculty at New College. Two new lines have been approved for searches this academic year (a second position in Chinese and a fourth in Sociology). This leaves approximately ten new tenure-track faculty positions to be created in the near future.

Strategy E1.2

Action: Add support staff to meet the demands of an 800 student campus. This will include, but is not limited to, additional staffing in the library, the Writing Resource Center, the Counseling and Wellness Center, and the Office of Student Affairs. See "Support Services" section for further discussion of this issue.

Strategy E1.3

Action: Expand scholarship funds, particularly for non-Florida residents. Conduct fund-raising drive to be able to meet the demonstrated financial needs of a student body of 800, and to be able to make competitive offers to out of state students in particular.

Strategy E1.4

Action: Implement new campus construction as described in the 2006 Campus Master Plan, Phase I: 800 students (see <http://www.ncf.edu/MasterPlan/2006plan.html>.) This would include, in addition to the newly completed student residence halls and the projected Academic/Administrative building, additional academic buildings, additions to the existing Heiser, Pritzker, and Caples complexes, centers for some interdisciplinary programs (Environmental Studies and International Studies), an expanded Counseling and Wellness Center, and possibly also mixed-use buildings and faculty housing adjacent to campus.

Subgoal E2: Implement biennial monitoring of impact of growth on the academic program, student life, and campus space needs, and of our progress in meeting the conditions under which growth without loss of quality is feasible. Define principles to govern future decisions regarding size and growth, and establish a cycle of periodic review of the appropriate size to meet our mission.

While the growth of New College offers benefits and opportunities for the expansion of the academic program, it also brings new challenges and potential difficulties. Arguments in favor of growth include: 1) expansion of the curriculum, allowing the incorporation of new areas of study and the strengthening of existing ones; 2) achieving economies of scale that would allow the college to operate more efficiently, and 3) creating a more diverse campus community, particularly allowing the emergence of a "critical mass" of currently underrepresented groups. Arguments against growth include: 1) expansion could negatively impact student academic excellence and perhaps the intimacy of faculty/student interaction even while retaining the 10:1 ratio; 2) expansion could force structural changes in governance, and threaten the sense of a small, intimate community that is often cited as one of New College's strengths, and 3) expansion could further aggravate issues of workload and "congestion points" in the curriculum—unplanned growth might only make these problems larger rather than solving them. How we grow (pace, resources, and coordination) appears to be at least as important as the target enrollment number that we set as our ultimate goal. Institutional research and administrative coordination can provide a regular flow of information of the impact of growth on the functioning of the college. This flow of information should inform the ways in which campus leadership responds to the challenges that growth presents, thereby constituting a self-correcting mechanism that has been absent in earlier phases of expansion in the recent history of the college.

Strategy E2.1

Project: Assign the Administrative Council, the EPC and the Office of Institutional Research the charge to monitor the impact of growth on the academic program, student life, facilities, and other aspects of the college, and to prepare an biennial report to be presented to the Academic Administrative Council, the Educational Policy Committee, and possibly an Ad-Hoc Committee on Campus Size and Growth. The report and reviews of its findings by these committees would be presented for discussion to the entire faculty. Provide the resources necessary for the Office of Institutional Research to carry out this additional charge.

Strategy E2.2

Action: Adopt the following as initial principles for managing growth, and charge the Administrative Council, the EPC and the Office of Institutional Research to address these principles in its biennial report:

1. Maintain the student faculty ratio at 10:1 as implied by the New College mission statement, which emphasizes close collaboration between academically talented students and faculty.
2. Maintain high standards for students and faculty as implied by the New College mission statement.
3. Address workload issues and “congestion points” in the curriculum.
4. Enhance the ability to provide an education that will prepare students to be successful in the twenty-first century world, with a broader, more global focus, without losing our historic strengths in the western liberal arts tradition.
5. Preserve the close-knit sense of community to which many students and alumni are fiercely loyal, while ensuring that this community is as open and inclusive as possible.
6. Study how well we compare to our aspirational peer institutions, with a focus on identifying key areas and programs that we don’t offer.

Subgoal E3: Adopt strategies and procedures for sustainable, incremental growth beyond 800 students should such growth be recommended, to be implemented after the conditions outlined in Subgoal E1 have been met.

In addition to annual monitoring of the impact of growth, New College should establish a cycle of periodic review of the appropriate size for the college to meet our mission. This cyclical review, as much as possible, should be integrated into other cyclical processes of assessment, both internally and externally mandated, such as periodic SACS reaccreditation visits, revisions of the three classes of master planning documents (physical, academic, and financial), and periodic reviews of the academic program, mandated by Section 4.2 of the Faculty Handbook to occur “every three years, or as directed by the Provost.” At the conclusion of each review cycle, the college would either reaffirm the previous decisions regarding target enrollment size, or reopen the question of growth in response to new circumstances and concerns.

With regard to growth beyond 800 students, two powerful and compelling imperatives pull New College in opposite directions: the need to offer a first-class liberal arts education, and the need to preserve the distinctive culture and sense of community that has historically defined New College’s institutional identity. Growth offers the opportunity of adding new academic areas and enriching existing ones, a combination of breadth and depth that, together, could produce a richer, more comprehensive curriculum. Small size has always been one of our defining characteristics, however.

Some Novo Collegians have expressed concerns that growth could endanger either New College's unique educational character or sense of community. It might be noted, of course, that this defense of the (relatively homogenous) status quo is quite at odds with our stated interest in enhancing the diversity of the New College community. More generally, there is a certain tension between the apparently widespread student concern regarding the benefits of a small, intimate community, and the apparently widespread faculty interest in building a more robust institution with a wider range of educational options and opportunities (not to mention professional opportunities). The educational benefits of a smaller or larger New College seem paramount, but are subject to some debate about the "right size" for achieving our goals.

Below a certain threshold of faculty and students, New College of Florida would be unable to offer the breadth and depth in the liberal arts and sciences that our students have the right to expect. Above a certain threshold, there is the perception that the intimacy and shared sense of purpose that define New College as a community would risk being diluted or lost altogether. (This assumes, of course, that a shared sense of purpose currently exists). The AMP committee has concluded that, rather than debating the merits of one arbitrarily selected number or another, we should develop productive strategies for creating the kind of college and community we aspire to be. Once the college has met its current growth target, as outlined in Subgoal E1, it will face a new challenge of "right-sizing," or finding the proper size for the college to maximize the strengths of its academic program while also preserving its institutional identity.

The strategies and principles outlined in Subgoal E2 can not only guide New College toward its current enrollment target of 800 students, but can also provide a foundation for subsequent "right-sizing" efforts. It cannot be stressed strongly enough that any growth beyond 800 should be pursued cautiously, deliberately, and incrementally, ensuring that faculty, facilities, and funds are available to meet the needs of a growing student body. While there is no precise formula for determining the upper and lower "thresholds" between which New College could maximize the quality of its curriculum without endangering its distinctiveness, it seems sensible to designate our current target of 800 students as a "floor" for future enrollment, and an enrollment of about 1,200 (roughly the size of the smallest of our aspirational peers) as a "ceiling," at which New College could compete with these aspirational peers for the best students nationwide seeking a liberal arts college experience with a broad choice of quality programs, and beyond which further growth would provide diminishing returns while posing increasing danger to institutional identity.

Strategy E3.1

Process: Establish cycle of periodic review of the appropriate size of the college, in relation to other cyclical reviews and planning considerations listed above, and taking as guiding principles the criteria listed in Strategy E2.2.

Strategy E3.2:

Process: In periodic reviews described above, conduct "right-sizing" exercise for the New College of the 21st century. Determine what programs an ideal New College should offer, and allow the goals of the academic program to guide decisions regarding the proper size of the college. This exercise should involve all members of the campus community, and, as much as possible, should be dovetailed with ongoing line allocation discussions and strategic planning exercises. It should also involve a comparative study of our aspirational peers, to identify curricular areas that are underdeveloped at New College, in relation to the best liberal arts colleges nationwide.

Strategy E3.3:

Process: In response to the results of "right-sizing," begin incremental expansion, with new faculty, facilities, and fundraising preceding enrollment growth. Maintain annual institutional self-monitoring as described in Strategy E2.1, and following each increase of 100 students and 10 faculty, impose a provisional moratorium on growth until equilibrium conditions (the 10:1 student-faculty ratio, on-campus housing for 80% of students, sufficient scholarship funds, classrooms, labs, etc) can be restored.

Goal F: Enhance community decision-making and governance processes to better support innovation, change, and improvement in order to accomplish our mission.

There is a widespread perception that our current approach to academic governance is dysfunctional. We have traditionally emphasized flexibility and individual initiative, and minimized the value of common structures, procedures, and goals. Resistance to change has preserved our institutional identity, but also inhibits our ability to identify and address problems effectively. Can we cultivate an ability to address problems on an institutional level without sacrificing the real value of our “unstructured” ideal?

Institutional Culture: Traditionally New College has defined itself in opposition to USF — this has fostered a confrontational and defensive mentality. We may wish to develop a more positive and forward-looking sense of collective institutional purpose. Should we be clearer about the degree of administration initiative we want in doing this? Can we focus on what we have in common in addition to the distinctiveness of divisions? Because we send mixed messages and do not have a good decision-making structure, administrators are set up for making command decisions or responding to outside pressures rather than to a shared campus vision.

Leadership: There is a perception that the administration has not tended to function as leadership in either supporting faculty initiatives or effectively enlisting faculty in collective projects. To make decisions that address college-wide and cross-disciplinary needs, we must articulate college-wide and cross-disciplinary interests. The only way to develop such interests is if faculty are actively enlisted in meaningful institution-building initiatives. The College will need leadership that actively challenges and engages the faculty while remaining sensitive to the faculty’s sense of ownership of the academic program.

Organization & Structure: First, clarify and assess how we currently make and implement decisions concerning the academic program. What roles are played by faculty, staff, students, administration, and trustees, and how do they fit together? From the perspective of larger institutional interests, the divisional structure has serious drawbacks, which may be aggravated by growth. Divisions do some things well. They are more inclusive than traditional departments, support some kinds of interdisciplinary work, and offer economies of scale for staffing and mentoring in related disciplines. Other things they do not do as well. They do not serve interdisciplinary fields that cut across divisional boundaries well, and academic coherence among their disciplines can be problematic. The chairs’ job is difficult, and has become increasingly more so as the expansion of the faculty has also expanded the evaluative and administrative workload for the division chairs.

Divisional governance means that some areas are likely to receive more attention than they might under another governance structure. Likewise, any other possible structure will reveal different areas for concern and potential expansion.

Communication: Many of the problems outlined above are matters of perception and misunderstanding, suggesting that we could improve governance simply by improving communication. The issue may not be simply the availability of information, but rather the feeling that we are not being engaged in the conversation, or that decision-making does not always seem related to those conversations that do occur.

Subgoal F1: Improve communication surrounding shared governance activities to overcome isolation, and build constructive engagement across the College community for positive institutional change.

Strategy F1.1

Process: Convene a short-term campus-wide discussion to explore faculty, student and administration expectations and desires regarding communication, coordination and leadership (from faculty, administration and students), and to explore ways to enhance those within the current governance structure.

Strategy F1.2

Action: Identify what type of information needs to be communicated to make communication part of a coherent and clearly articulated decision-making process. Identify whose responsibility it is to communicate the information, to whom, and the most effective format for doing so (e-mail, special meetings, regular written reports, question-and-answer sessions)?

Strategy F1.3

Action: Increase opportunities for dialogue across campus. In addition to regular reports from the Provost at faculty meetings, and from the chairs at division meetings, institute regular thematic discussions with interested faculty, students, and staff.

Strategy F1.4

Action: Clarify administrative decision-making processes (line allocations, budgeting, new institutional initiatives, facilities planning and management, etc). Provide venues for faculty, staff, and students to give input, and explain how and why administrative decisions are made. Wherever possible, incorporate either standing committees or ad hoc working groups with representation of all relevant constituencies into decision-making process.

Strategy F1.5

Action: Enhance coordination between the governance structures of faculty, students, and administration. Better harmonize the activities of various groups and individuals, so as to minimize duplication of effort but also make sure that critical issues do not fall through the cracks.

Subgoal F2: Develop the capacity for decision-making promoting the well-being of the College rather than its constituent parts.

Any changes to our structures of governance will have to be considered very carefully, with substantial input and dialogue from all relevant constituencies. F2.1 suggests that we convene a working group to review our current governing structures and explore alternatives.

Strategy F2.1

Process: Create an ad hoc working group with a 2-year mandate to do the following:

- 1) Explore other models for academic organization and structure by considering alternative proposals. Alternatives that might be considered include: affirming the current 3 divisions, creating 5 or 6 smaller divisions, creating disciplinary and interdisciplinary departments, forming cross-divisional affinity groups, granting tenure and promotion in interdisciplinary departments, encouraging cross-divisional curricular planning, and replacing the faculty meeting with a faculty Senate.
- 2) Develop potential options for alternative or supplemental structures, based on consideration of these models.
- 3) Ascertain faculty interest and support for those options or for the current Division structure. Further consensus testing of various models might be used, once faculty have had the opportunity to familiarize themselves with the various alternatives.

Subgoal F3: Clarify the roles that should be played by faculty, students, staff, administration and trustees in academic governance.

Strategy F3.1

Process: Create a working group to clarify roles and revise the Faculty Handbook accordingly within a two-year timeline. This group should address the questions outlined in the *Values and Issues Paper*, strive for coherence and readability and should consider the following options and issues:

- Develop sound and clear guidelines and articulate the jurisdictions of all standing committees (at present AAC, EPC, FASC, SASC, PAC, etc.).
- Define processes for governing standing and academic program committee (including the creation and management of interdisciplinary program committees).
- Consider relocating sections on academic regulations to the Catalog, recognizing that these regulations are a compendium of faculty and administration actions blended with state and federal regulations. The catalog would then be the single authoritative source for academic regulations.
- Review and streamline procedures for promotion tenure and review of faculty performance, and address inconsistencies between the Handbook and the NCF UFF Collective Bargaining Agreement, the BOT Guidelines, and other governing documents.
- Clarify responsibilities and processes in areas of recurring friction regarding faculty, administrative, and student roles in academic governance.