

2023-2027 STRATEGIC PLAN

COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES, EDUCATION AND SOCIAL SCIENCES





OUR MISSION

The College of Humanities, Education, and Social Sciences is a supportive community of faculty and students engaged in civil discourse honoring diverse cultural, religious, artistic, and scientific traditions. By integrating these traditions with innovation and creativity, students learn how to live productive, ethical, and meaningful lives in a changing world.

OUR 2023-2027 VISION

The College of Humanities, Education, and Social Sciences will lead Gannon University to excellence as a liberal arts university by emphasizing intellectual vitality and interdisciplinarity. Through our collaborative, affirming culture and promotion of community engagement and social responsibility, our graduates will become dynamic and ethical leaders of their communities and the world.

OUR GOALS

The College of Humanities, Education, and Social Sciences (CHESS) provides a foundation for Gannon University as the locus of the Catholic Intellectual Tradition. The college strategic plan for 2023-2027 illuminates and furthers this university identity and highlights ways in which the humanities and social sciences uniquely contribute to university goals and initiatives. Specifically, the CHESS strategic plan includes three key goals:

- 1** Advance and distinguish academic programming,
- 2** Empower students to create experiences that fulfill their values through Catholic Social Teaching and Intellectual Tradition, and
- 3** Broaden student access and professional applicability of academic programs.



OUR PLANNING PROCESS

The CHES Strategic Planning Process began in January 2022 with the formation of the college-wide strategic planning committee, led by Dean Lori Lindley. Committee members included:

- Derek DiMatteo, Assistant Professor of English
- Lindsey DiTirro, Assistant Professor of Communication
- Leighann Forbes, Associate Professor of Education
- Lauren Garskie, Assistant Professor of English
- Douglas King, Professor of English
- Christopher Magno, Associate Professor of Criminal Justice
- Dominic Prianti, Assistant Teaching Professor of Philosophy
- John Ranney, Associate Professor of Psychology

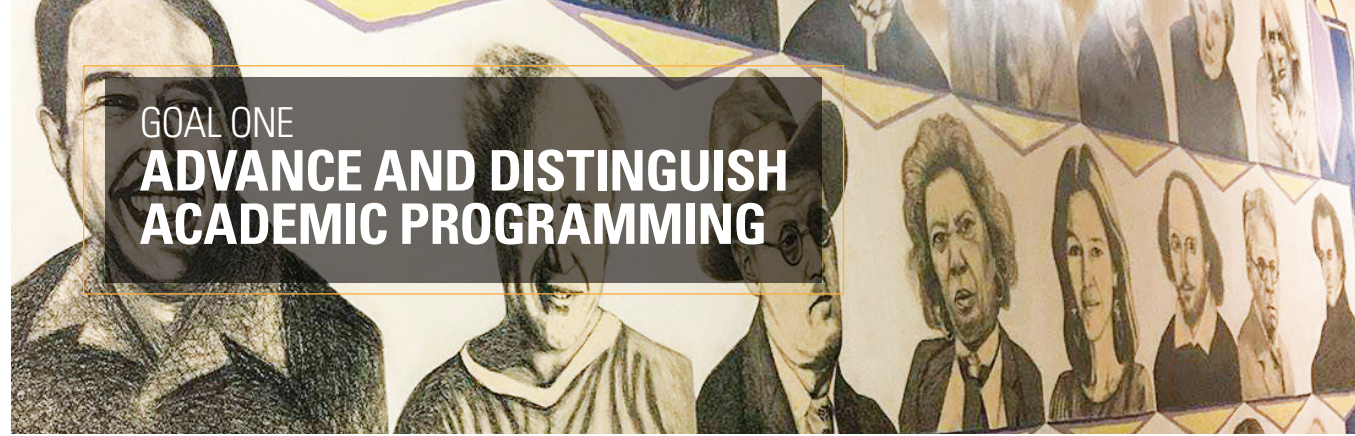
During the Spring 2022 semester, the committee engaged in the following activities:

- Completed a SWOT analysis identifying strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats for the college
- Analyzed the college mission and vision statements, recommending a new vision
- Deployed a college-wide survey requesting input on the vision for the college
- Established a new vision statement, based on these various sources of information

During the Fall 2022 semester, the committee engaged in the following activities:

- Conducted a gap analysis, comparing the current state of the college to the new college vision
- Considered alignment with the 2021-2025 Gannon University Strategic Plan, the Gannon University Service Standards, and the university's commitment to Laudato Si'
- Compiled all sources of information to arrive at three goals, including strategies and measures associated with each goal
- Conducted a series of in-person and virtual focus groups inviting all CHES faculty to give feedback on the proposed plan
- Made final changes and additions based on college-wide feedback

The 2023-2027 CHES Strategic Plan was launched at the college meeting in January 2023.



GOAL ONE ADVANCE AND DISTINGUISH ACADEMIC PROGRAMMING

As we promote and value academic excellence in existing undergraduate and graduate programs, we will also strategically identify areas for growth in both Erie and Ruskin. There will be an emphasis on promotion and public awareness of the achievements of Gannon students, faculty, and alumni and we will seek innovative opportunities to elevate this excellence. We will expand opportunities for intellectual growth and curiosity through events, research, travel, collaboration, and interdisciplinary engagement.

MEASURES

- Public recognition of programs
- Increased enrollment in majors, minors, and graduate programs
- Awards and recognition received by students and faculty
- Public attendance at events, conferences, and productions
- Alumni continuing education and employment rates

STRATEGIES

- Increase quality of academic facilities, equipment, and other resources.
- Increase opportunities for student research, travel, and other specialized academic experiences.
- Utilize current professional and academic resources (data, best practices) in decision-making regarding launching new academic programs.
- In collaboration with the Office of Sponsored Programs, support and promote interdisciplinary faculty efforts to obtain external funding in the arts, humanities, and social sciences.
- Enhance the CHES Speaker Series by bringing more national speakers and performers in the arts, humanities, and social sciences.
- In collaboration with Advancement, seek support for endowed professorships.
- Based on market analysis, launch new graduate programs at the Ruskin location.
- Expand and elevate the CHES Conference to enhance the graduate student experience.
- Increase awareness of programs and faculty expertise through collaboration with Marketing and Communications.
- Develop avenues for recognition of student and faculty accomplishments.
- Work with Advancement to create opportunities for interested faculty to engage with potential donors to their programs.

GOAL TWO

EMPOWER STUDENTS TO CREATE EXPERIENCES THAT FULFILL THEIR VALUES THROUGH CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING AND INTELLECTUAL TRADITION

As a Catholic university, Gannon is uniquely positioned to provide an environment in which students can connect values such as social justice, environmental stewardship, spiritual fulfillment, and community engagement to their educational and professional experiences. We know that over the next decade, our students will come from increasingly diverse backgrounds and we will prioritize creating an environment of justice, equity, and belonging to nurture their values and perspectives. This will be achieved through a combination of curricular, co-curricular, and extra-curricular experiences in collaboration with faculty and community partners.

MEASURES

- Higher retention rates in academic programs
- Participation in service-learning courses and other community and global engagement experiences

STRATEGIES

- Create and promote interdisciplinary minors grounded in the Liberal Core.
- Develop partnerships that create experiences for students in the community.
- Create a faculty discussion group on the interpretation and implications of Catholic Social Teaching and Intellectual Tradition as they relate to Laudato Si'.
- Pursue interdisciplinary grants that emphasize social and environmental justice.
- Provide professional development for faculty to assist in the creation of transformational experiences for students, such as GIFT courses and service learning.
- Increase opportunities for students to participate in decision-making at the program and college level via committees and student organizations.

GOAL THREE

BROADEN STUDENT ACCESS AND PROFESSIONAL APPLICABILITY OF ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

As a continuation of the previous CHES strategic plan, we acknowledge the importance of professional preparation of students in all academic programs. We will continue to increase the academic supports within academic programs, the connections within the curriculum to professional competencies, and opportunities for students to gain experiences in their future professional fields through internships and community partnerships. In addition, we will continue to promote awareness of the vital professional skills gained through Liberal Core courses as well as academic programs within the Humanities and Social Sciences.

MEASURES

- Alumni career data
- Increased student diversity in programs
- Graduation rates
- Assessment of National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) competencies in classes

STRATEGIES

- Grow summer camps and outreach to public schools as a means of recruitment and visibility of CHES.
- Professional development for faculty on inclusive classroom strategies and equitable grading practices.
- Incorporate career planning and NACE career competencies into academic courses.
- Raise awareness across the university of skills gained in Liberal Core courses.
- Create additional supports within courses and academic programs that promote academic success.
- Increase student participation in internships and corporate contracts.
- Strengthen connections with alumni through creation of a college advisory board and structured opportunities (e.g., workshops, panels) for students to engage with alumni.





Believe in the possibilities.