

Davidson's Vision for the Future

THE DAVIDSON COLLEGE STRATEGIC PLAN

Student Initiatives

1. Academic Advising

The reorganization of the Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs (VPAA) provided the opportunity to reallocate administration of academic advising to Academic Affairs. Changes include: extensive training for faculty and staff advisers, adviser stipends for training, promote increased opportunities for interaction between adviser and advisee and an annual assessment of the program.

2. First-year Orientation - Davidson 101

Davidson 101 is a graduation requirement to help first-year students develop the skills and knowledge to be safe and successful during their transition to college. Sessions address mental health and wellness, library literacy, and vocation. Enhancements to the program include a new computerized registration system and increased collaboration between first-year advisers, Physical Education, Student Life and Career Services for the development of new and creative programming.

3. Sophomore Experience

Davidson offers a number of focused programs that sustain the support students experience during their first year, in ways that meet the unique needs of sophomores. Davidson's strategic plan calls for the institutionalization of the sophomore experience including sophomore dinners, events, retreat, and faculty grants for development of programs relevant to the Sophomore Experience.

4. International Student Experience

A major accomplishment of Davidson's strategic plan has been its focus on globalization. Toward that end, Davidson will be increasing the number of international students studying on-campus, with focus on recruiting outstanding students from all over the world and supporting them and their families when they matriculate at Davidson.

5. Study Abroad

The reorganized Dean Rusk International Studies Program and Study Abroad Office addresses the needs of international students and strengthen study abroad options for all Davidson students. The office worked with the International Education Committee to design criteria to evaluate Davidson-sponsored and non-Davidson study abroad programs and established consortial arrangements with the Associated Colleges of the South for the Davidson in Syria Study Abroad Program.

6. Admissions

The Admission and Financial Aid Offices continues to grow resources for need-based financial aid for the most talented students of all backgrounds, to identify support for athletic scholarships and extend the promotion of the college in international markets. Davidson welcomed its most diverse incoming class with the Class of 2014.

7. Career Services

Career Services is on course to develop an integrated internship program supported by the new Assistant Director of Internships. In addition to collaborating with department chairs and academic deans on graduate and professional school advising, Career Services is expanding alumni relations and developing a modular-based career advising program.

Faculty Initiatives

1. Academic Affairs

The reorganization of the Office of the Vice President of Academic Affairs (VPAA) created four Associate Dean positions: Associate Dean for International Programs; Associate Dean for Teaching, Learning and Research; Associate Dean for Academic Administration; and Associate Dean for Curriculum. Program goals include:

- Establishing best practices in academic structures and administration
- Establishing academic administration policies and processes with an emphasis on transparency
- Expanding opportunities and individual discretionary funds for faculty professional development.
- Continuing summer support for development of courses, especially those related to strategic initiatives.
- Mentoring of all faculty

2. Strategic Faculty Lines

A key element for supporting all of the initiatives of Davidson's curricular and co-curricular elements of the strategic plan is the faculty. The strategic plan calls for an increase in student enrollment. To maintain Davidson's low student-faculty ratio, the number of faculty will need to increase in strategically important disciplines. Further, it is anticipated that the increase in faculty lines will add faculty from a wide-range of backgrounds to support both of the objectives of globalization and diversity and inclusivity.

3. Post-Doctoral Fellowships

A relatively new endeavor at Davidson has been the training of postdoctoral fellows in a variety of disciplines. Contributing to the training of teaching post-docs, Davidson is developing a pipeline of future faculty who are interested in teaching at liberal arts institutions.

Academic – Curricular Initiatives

1. Interdisciplinary Programs

A major part of Davidson's strategic plan focuses on the strengthening and development of strong interdisciplinary curricular programs.

- Processes for establishing and assessing interdisciplinary programs have been approved, paving the way for two new interdisciplinary majors: Environmental Studies and Latin America Studies, and two new interdisciplinary concentrations: Biochemistry and Archaeology
- Policies for hiring, tenure and promotion for interdisciplinary positions have been implemented. Recent faculty hires include three new tenure-track positions in Arabic and Environmental Studies (a geologist and political scientist).

2. Globalization

Globalization is one of the five major objectives of Davidson's strategic plan. Programs include:

- New procedures for securing visas and immigration documentation for international faculty.
- Dedicate resources and create a formal mechanism for discussion about instruction in foreign languages, literature and culture.
- Support interdisciplinary initiatives in teaching foreign literatures, cultures and civilizations.
- Develop interdisciplinary programs or majors in area and global studies
- Cultivate courses that meet the needs of a diverse and inclusive student body.

3. First-year Courses

To introduce a framework for a first-year course to introduce students to the liberal arts – including goals and different formats for a first-year course(s) that integrate campus events and theme.

- Offered a trial first-year course: Living the Liberal Arts in Fall 2010
- Developed assessment for first-year course trials
- Initiated course load reductions for developing new first-year courses

4. Curricular distribution Requirements

Develop and propose options to faculty for distribution requirement changes.

5. Experiential Learning

Davidson's strategic plan reflects the importance of the breadth of the liberal arts experience and also recognizes the value the students derive from focused and in-depth experiences that help to prepare them for life after Davidson. Strategies for increasing opportunities for experiential learning include:

- Recommendations for EXPLR course for internships requiring academic credit
- Continuing summer research programs through grants from HHMI: Howard Hughes Medical Institute, and the North Carolina Independent Colleges and Universities (NCICU)
- Pursuit of international immersion opportunities for faculty and students

Co-curricular Initiatives

1. Annual Theme

One of the aims of the strategic plan is to link learning that occurs inside and outside of the classroom. The 2010-2011 'Global Connections' theme was selected to stimulate conversations across campus by bringing provocative activities related to the annual theme, guiding choice of speakers and other events and that will enable faculty to integrate a spectrum of campus events into course discussions.

2. Common Hour

In January 2011, Davidson College piloted a four-semester experiment with a modified Tuesday/Thursday course schedule permitting community interaction at mid-day. The Common Hour, from 11:05 to 12:05 on Tuesday and Thursday, serves varying purposes for the College community to come together, for programs, convocation, small group meetings, food and fellowship, reflection, and/or social interaction.

3. Multicultural House

The establishment of the [Multicultural House](#) and Director of Multicultural Affairs reflect Davidson's commitment to creating a welcoming environment that accepts and encourages a diversity of perspectives and backgrounds.

4. Diversity programming

Davidson has adopted a [Diversity Statement](#) that embodies commitment to diversity and inclusivity. Programming will include educational workshops and other events sponsored by the Multicultural House.

Center Initiatives

1. Coordinate efforts of four centers:

The strategic plan calls for the establishment of four Centers. In addition to the existing [Chidsey Center for Leadership Development](#) and the [Vann Center for Ethics](#), Davidson is opening two new centers. The Center for Teaching and Learning and the Center for Civic Engagement will provide services and opportunities for both students and faculty.

2. Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL)

The Center for Teaching and Learning will offer a wide variety of services to improve student learning and to assist faculty as they develop innovative teaching pedagogies.

3. Center for Civic Engagement (CCE)

The [Center for Civic Engagement](#) will increase opportunities for community-based learning, both in curricular offerings and in co-curricular experiences.

Campus Initiatives

1. Assessment

Assessment has been built into the strategic plan from the outset. Formal assessment of the major strategic objectives will be the responsibility of the Office of Planning and Institutional Research; programs and departments will have responsibility at the strategy level. Particularly in the academic area, some wide-ranging and significant changes have been proposed that will require on-going evaluation. Faculty and staff dedicated to assessment of the academic program will be able to provide the necessary support and expertise.

2. Sustainability

Sustainability includes both programs related to the environment as well as programs and practices that enrich the Davidson campus and surrounding community. Among the many initiatives included here are the campus's commitment to decreasing its carbon footprint, a restructured academic administration, the common hour, support for student athletes, and improvements to first-year orientation and the sophomore experience.

3. Master Plan

In order to maintain excellence, the college must ensure that the objectives and strategies described above are supported with the appropriate facilities and technology infrastructure. While the comprehensive capital campaign completed in summer 2005 allowed the college to bring most of its facilities into excellent condition, there are several projects that remain to be completed, including renovation of the Martin Science Building and the E. H. Little Library. In addition, the strategic plan will lead to new facilities and technology needs, including new residence halls and additional office spaces.

As technology continues to be an important part of the college's infrastructure, information technology services will be increasingly important to the college's teaching and learning efforts. Technology staff will continue to be creative in supporting faculty, staff, and students in new ways of communicating and working collaboratively to enhance the college's educational richness and opportunities. In order to determine the college's facilities priorities based on the strategic planning, the college engaged in a master planning process fall of 2009. The master planning process is comprehensive and helps determine all capital requirements driven by the strategic plan and the costs related to those priorities.