

### **Goal 1.1.2 - University Committee on the Liberal Arts**

#### **Context:**

Consistent with the Seton Hall [Academic Vision](#), Goal 1 of our Strategic Plan, [Harvest Our Treasures](#), calls for the University to “provide a broad liberal arts education that emphasizes both disciplinary knowledge and collaboration across disciplines and prepares students for lifelong learning.” As academics, we of course appreciate the value of our work for its own sake, in the pursuit of knowledge and a better world. Such value is not incompatible with the role the liberal arts also play by preparing students for complex and rewarding careers that require problem solving, creativity, empathy, research, data analysis, critical thinking, experimentation, and skillful written, oral, and visual communication, as well as a robust awareness of social dynamics (political, psychological, historical, biological, economic, and so on). To cultivate a stronger culture of liberal arts education at Seton Hall, we need to collaborate in educating applicants, students, families, and other community members about these twin dimensions of a liberal arts education, the truly liberal and the practical. We strive to provide all our students the ability to pursue their intellectual and creative interests and to teach them how to articulate them into rewarding lives and careers.

Among many initiatives to achieve these ends, the Strategic Plan says: “To facilitate consistency and vibrancy of liberal arts across the University, Seton Hall will create a centralized team that guides the infusion of the liberal arts throughout the University. This standing team will facilitate collaboration and communication and will reduce redundancy across colleges and programs so that all Seton Hall students have a shared, engaging experience (Tied to 2.3.2)” (1.1.2). Activity 2.3.2 calls on us to “Strengthen the infrastructure for supporting interdisciplinarity and interprofessional programs by creating incentives for team-teaching and facilitating joint appointments.”

The Provost accordingly convenes the standing University Committee on the Liberal Arts.

#### **Composition: 11 total**

The composition of this committee, as a liberal arts and sciences committee, requires a range of expertise in the traditional liberal arts disciplines. Therefore, it shall include at least six (6) full-time faculty members from the College of Arts & Sciences, and those faculty members should include representatives from across the humanities, social sciences, natural sciences and mathematics. Because we aspire to integrate the liberal arts and sciences throughout the University and many of our faculty have investments in liberal education, the committee shall

include at least four (4) representatives from other Colleges. The Provost shall appoint a chairperson to lead the committee.

The Provost asks the Senate Executive Committee to determine how best to nominate faculty for this committee, with Senate, College, or University votes or other mechanisms. But as per Faculty Guide 12.5.c, the Provost asks for 20 nominees by September 30.

**Charge:**

We charge the standing University Committee on the Liberal Arts to:

**1. Cultivate the Liberals-Arts Culture of the University**

Work with the Career Center, University Life, Advising, Center for Academic Success, and Admissions on a regular basis (meeting each group *at least* annually, starting this fall semester) to discuss what the liberal arts and sciences are, to promote the job-market advantages and other values of a liberal education, and to work collaboratively to encourage students to pursue cross-disciplinary coursework outside of the field or college of one's major and in line with the Academic Vision.

- Establish regular meeting plans and specific agendas with each group above.
- Coordinate, as appropriate, with Goal 1 sub-committee on Joint Undergraduate-Graduate degrees, chaired by Dean Courtney Smith.
- Develop and/or curate supporting materials (brochures, posters, PPT, reports or data from [Study the Humanities](#), [Humanities Indicator Project](#), [Humanities Works](#), and media) to inform and empower these University units, faculty, advisors, students, applicants, and families.

**2. Imagine the Future of the Liberal Arts and Sciences at SHU**

Research, draft, evaluate, and recommend to the Provost a set of sustainable proposals to improve the quality, quantity, integration, and/or reach of the liberal arts and sciences at the University. Imagine different ways that Seton Hall might offer an innovative, distinctive liberal arts education that prepares students for the future. Bear in mind that curricula are under the authority of the faculty in each program and/or college and/or the UCCC and that various mechanisms of shared governance will apply and shape the potential implementation of different ideas. Curricular proposals from this committee will only be recommendations that the Provost could direct to the appropriate faculty bodies for their consideration. Proposals are due to the Provost by April 1 of each year.

Proposals *might* consider some of the following:

- Mechanisms to encourage and enable students to pursue majors, minors, certificates, or elective coursework outside of and possibly in dialogue with their major;

- Propose new ideas for applied liberal arts and science programs, interprofessional programs, or cross-disciplinary programs that could be forwarded or consideration to the appropriate faculty, program, department, or college.
- Create mechanisms for students to identify and pursue clusters of courses in different programs that address a common topic from the perspectives of different disciplines. Such a mechanism might identify particular prescribed clusters and/or allow students to develop their own cluster theme;
- Promote sustainable cross-disciplinary and other team-teaching arrangements that intensify interprofessional education and cross-disciplinary thinking;
- Establish extracurricular programming (TED-style talks, brown-bag lunches, book launches, etc) to foster interest in and engagement with the liberal arts across the University—amongst students and faculty, of course, as well as staff, the priest community, and administration, but also amongst the local communities;
- Interact with the University Life seminar to introduce students to what the liberal arts are and what they can do for them; to discuss significant current events or trends in the world, the economy, education, etc.; and/or to teach 21st-century skills (creativity, empathy, oral/written/visual communication, platform skills, digital literacy, information literacy, scientific literacy, critical thinking);
- Evaluate or survey student interests, ideas, misconceptions, or inhibitions about the liberal arts;
- Recommend changes to the University curricula that would bring us closer to realizing our Academic Vision.

### **Contacts:**

The contacts in the Provost Office for this committee are Jonathan Farina ([Jonathan.Farina@shu.edu](mailto:Jonathan.Farina@shu.edu)) and Amy Newcombe ([Amy.Newcombe@shu.edu](mailto:Amy.Newcombe@shu.edu)). They are willing and able to assist with any difficulties.