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College of Arts and Sciences
Strengths and Opportunities
Spring 2017

In the fall semester of 2016, in response to Chancellor Christensen's announcement of his retirement in summer 2017, I engaged the College of Arts and Sciences in a discussion designed to prepare A&S to tell its story in anticipation of the arrival of the next UNO Chancellor. We held two College meetings, where we used a model that was a modified SWOT analysis (Strengths/Weaknesses/Opportunities/Challenges—instead of threats). The ultimate goal is to begin to outline the desired shared vision about the future for the College of Arts and Sciences and an agreement about ways to achieve that vision, focusing on what the College is and does and what it aspires to do and become. The result of the meetings was very positive, and a number of common themes and topics emerged.

What follows these SWOC lists are my general thoughts about College priorities and some strategies to achieve these priorities that emerged from the meetings.

Strengths	Weaknesses
Attributes of the College of Arts and Sciences that will be helpful to and have a positive effect on the achievement of the College and University's goals.	Attributes of the College of Arts and Sciences that likely will be detrimental to or have a negative effect on the achievement of the College and University's goals.
- High quality education - Wide array of academic offerings - Strong interdisciplinary perspective - Solid liberal arts foundation, breadth and depth - Lead role in university general education - Student focus - Focus on writing - Innovative and effective teaching - Commitment to using high-impact practices - Global focus - Undergraduate and graduate research opportunities - College advising office - HCRC - Writing Center/MSLC - Community engagement - Service learning	- Over-reliance on part-time instruction - Too few graduate programs - Graduation rates/roadblocks - Numbers of internship opportunities - Faculty development opportunities - Part-time pay - Promotion and marketing of College and its values - Assessment of part-time faculty - Assessment of online courses - Alumni relations - Support for interdisciplinary teaching - Planning for online course/program development - Faculty diversity - Space and facilities (esp. for science) Faculty technical training—workshops/office available during

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• Fundraising • Online education • Prepare graduates for jobs not replaceable by robots/automation	prime teaching times not during breaks •
Opportunities Conditions in the College of Arts and Sciences that will likely have a positive effect on the College and University's accomplishment of its goals. • Growth • Global/intercultural perspectives • More study abroad programs • Computational education • Alignment of College departments and programs to address real problems facing the region and state (i.e. health care and water quality/environment/sustainability • Experiential experiences (i.e. study abroad, internships, service learning) • Online education • Fundraising • Transfer students • Need in workforce development to develop characteristics of independence, self-direction, communication, and problem solving [vague] • Develop high-impact practices in teaching • Increasing alumni support • Increase faculty and student diversity • Developing new academic programs	**Challenges** Conditions external to the College of Arts and Sciences that will likely have a negative effect on the College and University's accomplishment of its goals. • State/university budgets • Perceived diminishing value of liberal arts education • Need for students to work while in College • Generational changes in donor base • Transfer students

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College of Arts and Sciences: Moving Forward…

The purpose of what follows is to prepare a substantive document that represents the College of Arts and Sciences' best ideas for promoting and sustaining success in the future. The College of Arts and Sciences remains distinctive in that, even as the largest College at a complex, metropolitan university, it continues to offer students rich experiences that are characteristic of the liberal education tradition. Students gain essential skills and perspectives grounded in a liberal education—skills and perspectives required for students to become lifelong learners and productive, contributing members of society, well prepared to negotiate a complex, rapidly changing world.

Moving forward, the College of Arts and Sciences is committed to providing students with the knowledge and skills, as well as the ability to acquire new information and competencies, fully aware that it is impossible to predict the future in ways to anticipate exactly what graduates will need to know to achieve success.

The College of Arts and Sciences
Mission

The College of Arts and Sciences is a liberal arts College within a metropolitan university. The College serves as UNO's standard-bearer for the tradition of liberal education, which emphasizes the importance of breadth of knowing and ways of knowing as central to a student's education, and defending this view of education from critics who see the tradition as outdated, impractical, and unable to prepare students for the 21st-century workforce. Courses of instruction are offered in the humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences/mathematics to support a liberal education for students of the College and to provide a significant portion of the general education requirements of the university. We offer disciplinary and interdisciplinary majors and minors at the bachelor's, master's and doctoral levels. The College is committed to outstanding teaching and significant scholarship, research **and creative activities** of its faculty and students and encourages involvement with our metropolitan community and the world at large.

Vision

With its vast selection of majors and minors, and interdisciplinary programs, the College of Arts and Sciences will be recognized as a leader on a local, regional national, and international level, in equipping students to be lifelong learners and global citizens.

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Values

The College of Arts and Sciences endorses the four goals articulated by UNO's Strategic Plan: (1) place students at the center of our academic enterprise, (2) achieve academic excellence, (3) actively engage with our community, and (4) demonstrate the College's institutional excellence.

…Toward a Strategic Plan

The Strategic Plan for the College of Arts and Sciences is organized around the College and university's fundamental core values: Student Focus, Academic Excellence, Community Engagement, and College Excellence.

What follows is a preliminary list of specific, measurable, achievable, realistic priorities that the College of Arts and Sciences will strive to achieve within the next five years. Work will have to be done to gather relevant data to create valid and reliable baselines and targets for these priorities.

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Strategic Values, Priorities, College Strategies, and Key Objectives

Note: 1 person asked how we could incorporate student voices in the strategic planning process.

Core Value 1: Student Centered

Priority A: Recruit, develop, retain, and support a diverse student body reflecting a dynamic metropolitan community. As addressed by the following measurable outcomes and strategies:

- **Demographics of student population. The College's diversity of students reflects the population of the Omaha metro area.**
    - Strategies include:
        - Encourage more direct recruitment efforts in high schools by faculty, which involve going beyond dual enrollment and advanced placement classrooms (3 references);
        - Expand demographics to include international and low income students;
        - Increase and maintain faculty diversity;
        - Provide support for diverse students (through Multicultural Affairs) to sustain and retain;
        - Include diversity among disciplines.
- **Retention rates. Retention rates between freshman and sophomore year and sophomore and junior years for first-generation and under-represented students meet or exceed the retention rates of traditional undergraduate students.**
    - Strategies include:

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- Employ strategies that will increase retention, including first year major groups (3 references); cohorts (3 references); pre-College learning and/or research experiences (3 references); learning communities (2 references).
- More faculty and/or peer to peer mentoring;
- Social groups;
- Develop a sense of community;
- Assure that online courses promote sense of community (2 references);
- Focus on higher retention for all students.

- **Academic programs that focus on diversity. Increase the number of students participating in majors, minors, concentrations, and coursework that focus on diversity.**
  - Strategies include:
    - Encourage, increase, or require double majors and/or interdisciplinary majors (4 references);
    - Require a minor
    - Increase advisor awareness of study abroad/opportunities to engage in diverse studies.
- **Provide resources to high demand academic programs to meet student demand and reduce academic bottlenecks.**
  - NOTE: Several faculty mentioned the costs (faculty and more sections) associated with this.
- **Create new academic programs to serve the interests of students and needs of the community.**

NOTE: Support, including increased support for graduate students, was mentioned in this section but did not fit neatly under any bulleted category.

Priority B: Prepare students for academic success, careers, and professional responsibilities in an increasingly complex world. As addressed by the following measurable outcomes and strategies:

- **High impact practices (HIPs). These include: First-Year Seminars and Experiences, Common Intellectual Experiences, Learning Communities (Synergy/Cohort Classes), Writing-Intensive Courses, Collaborative Assignments and Projects, Undergraduate Research, Diversity/Global Learning, Service Learning/Community Based Learning, Living-Learning Communities, Common Reader Experience, Internships, Capstone Courses and Projects.**
  - ✓ **Undergraduate students participate in two or more HIPs prior to graduation beyond general education.**
  - ✓ **Graduate students participate in two or more HIPs.**
    - Strategies include:

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- Promote and inform students about HIP opportunities (2 references).
- Develop tracking mechanism to capture number of HIPs students participate in.
- Increased faculty participation in HIPs.

- **Graduation rates. An average of 27 or more credits is earned by full-time undergraduate students each year.**
  - Strategies include:
    - Offer more summer courses (4 references).
    - Phase in 12 month teaching schedule.
    - Encourage advertisement of 12 month course offerings (especially for graduate students).

- **Co-curricular experiences. Provide students with the opportunity to participate in a unit-specific co-curricular activity, such as a club, etc.**
- **Advising. Advising is transparent and accessible from pre-admission through senior check, and includes course advising, major and minor selection, and career focus.**
  - Strategies include:
    - Continuity in advising
- **Graduate/professional school placements.**
  - Strategies include:
    - Provide alt-ac career advising/training [alternatives to the academic career path for graduate students (2 references)].

Priority C: Prepare students for global citizenship. As addressed by the following measurable outcomes and strategies:
- **Study-abroad experience. Increase and promote participation and opportunities in study abroad.**
  - Strategies include:
    - Increase funding and/or scholarships for study abroad (6 references).
    - Move beyond "study" to include research abroad and service abroad (5 references).
    - Increase awareness, including other programs' and advisors' awareness, of study abroad opportunities (3 references).
    - Use technology verses travel to bring international students to UNO and UNO students to other countries (4 references).
    - Increase number of study abroad opportunities.
- **College internationalization courses and programs. All students engage in global learning and are prepared for global citizenship.**
  - Strategies include:
    - Develop Model United Nations (4 references) and/or Model Diplomacy from Council of Foreign Relations (3 references).

- Expand internationalization by utilizing local ethnic communities (4 references).
- Promote and encourage student involvement in existing conferences at UNO that have international components [i.e. European Global Studies, Missouri Valley History, etc. (3 references)].
- Increase international speakers (3 references).
- Promote global focus in Newspapers in Curriculum Program (2 references).
- Increase collaboration with global partner institutions.
- Encourage a global perspective College-wide.
- Encourage Global Languages.
- Develop "Global Citizenship Certification."
- Increase number of internationalization courses.
- Capitalize on existing speakers' series to bring in international speakers (i.e. Goldstein Lecture on Human Rights).

Priority D: Develop resources that reduce financial barriers to increase access and success, and minimize debt. As addressed by the following measurable outcomes and strategies:

- **Scholarships. Increase the number of externally funded undergraduate scholarships.**
  - Strategies include:
    - Increase advisor awareness of existent scholarship availability (3 references).
    - Develop "completion" scholarships.
    - Tie recruiting and retention to funding.
- **Graduate scholarships and fellowships. Increase the number of externally funded graduate fellowships and scholarships (3 references)**
- **Donor development/alumni outreach. Increase donor and alumni involvement (2 references).**
  - Strategies include:
    - Develop "mini-university" "vacation of the mind" to bring alumni/donors/potential donors to campus (2 references).

Priority E: Create a supportive culture that enhances students' experiences and success. As addressed by the following measurable outcomes and strategies:

- **Learning centers. Students utilize and/or contribute to the functioning of the Writing Center and Math/Science Learning Center.**
  - Strategies include:
    - Encourage peer-to-peer tutoring/advising (3 references).
    - Expand learning centers into other disciplines (3 references).
- **Student clubs/co-curricular activities. Increase student involvement in student clubs and co-curricular activities/departmental events (3 references).**
  - Strategies include:

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- Organize meeting times around "anchor" classes (3 references)
- Promote learning communities (2 references).
- Encourage all departments and programs to have student clubs.
- Train faculty and advisors.

- **Distance learning. Encourage best practices in online and hybrid course development to foster sense of online community (2 references).**
- **Student spaces. Increase/enhance student spaces in all College renovations (3 references).**

NOTE: Support classes and staffing for foundational courses was also in this section.

Core Value 2: Academic Excellence

Priority A: Ensure quality and relevance of academic programs. As addressed by the following measurable outcomes and strategies:

- **New program development—need and demand indicators.**
  - Strategies include:
    - Identify stakeholders (4 references).
    - Increase capacity in high demand programs (4 references).
    - Develop Masters in Technical Communication (1 reference).
  - Note: one person noted that increased capacity means more hires.
- **Curriculum revisions. Department and programs periodically review and revise curriculum to address disciplinary changes and trends as well as workforce needs.**
  - Q: How is "curricular revisions" different from academic program review process?
  - Strategies include:
    - Respond to or in advance of external reviews.
    - Use Assessment to inform curricular revision.

- **Best practices. The College will develop inclusive strategies and opportunities for faculty and staff to share best practices in teaching in traditional, online, hybrid, service-learning, and interdisciplinary area. Note: 2 faculty members thought this section was vague.**
  - Strategies include:
    - Minimize reliance on student teaching evaluation or better teaching evaluations (5 references).
    - Include student demand for voice over Power Point/universal design (4 references).
    - Encourage Teaching Analysis by Students (TABS) (3 references).
    - Bring teaching circle back (3 references).
    - Adopt risk taking as a best practice (3 references).
    - Provide space for reflections on teaching (2 references).
    - Include learning objectives on syllabi (2 references).
    - Consultation with other faculty.

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- **Assessment. (5 references)**
  Note: one of these references suggested it be assessment of Gen Ed SLOs

Priority B: Support and enhance faculty and student research and creative activity. As addressed by the following measurable outcomes and strategies:
NOTE: Faculty noted that supporting and enhancing research and creative activity included needing more time for research (7 references); as one stated "you can't create more time." Some suggested adopting a standard 3/2 teaching load (5 references). Others mentioned funding for research (3 references), including support for graduate students (1 reference).
- **Participation in student research and creative activity in all disciplines through FUSE and GRACA awards.**
  NOTE: While faculty support student participation and presentation of FUSE/GRACA (4 references), many noted that faculty should be awarded for FUSE/GRACA participation beyond the stipend (i.e., a part of workload, 4 references), as it takes research time away from faculty (2 references). One even points out the "risk" of FUSE supervision: "research outcomes [resulting from FUSE projects] are often not as useful for a faculty's research program because [these are] novice-learning experience[s]… not guaranteed to help faculty…[h]igh risk if faculty need publishable data."
- **Professional development. Faculty and staff participate in professional development to expand, enhance, or extend their competencies and capabilities ~~with the responsibilities of their positions~~ (1 suggested stiking).**
  - Strategies include:
    - Expand support of international research (which can translate to more global engagement (3 references).
    - Promote faculty and staff participation in professional development.
    - Increase fudning funding for external professional development opportunities/

- **External funding applications and awards.**
  Note: One faculty member noted the time necessary for applying for external funding.

- **Books, articles, conference presentations, etc.**
  - Strategies include:
    - Assess quality and quantity of books, articles, etc. (multiple references)
    - Increase number of books, articles, etc.

Priority C: Identify, develop, and support interdisciplinary/transdisciplinary academic priorities and College-specific teaching and research. As addressed by the following measurable outcomes and strategies: Note 1 faculty member suggested striking this entire priority and rewriting.
- **College alignment with university strategic priorities** (NU System or UNO?).

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- **Interdisciplinary teaching. The College will develop strategies for faculty and staff to collaborate in interdisciplinary teaching and research.**
    - Strategies include:
        - Develop mini-grant for team teaching (6 references).
        - Support of current interdisciplinary programs (2 references).
        - Support of current academic programs and depth within disciplines (2 references).
        - Develop award(s) for interdisciplinary teaching.
        - Offer 1-2 new interdisciplinary classes per year.
        - Build supportive website for interdisciplinary teaching.
        - Tie outcomes to specific strategic goals; measure outcomes that go beyond the classroom (publications, publicity, etc.)

    Note: Several faculty mentioned the challenge of team teaching as it relates to workload distribution. One member asked "where's the focus on research, and how can this be encouraged or rewarded?"

Priority D: Develop and enhance applied and experiential student learning opportunities. As addressed by the following measurable outcomes and strategies:

- **High impact practices (HIPs).**
    - Strategies include:
        - Encourage student participation in HIPs, including internships (5 references), service learning (3 references), capstone classes/projects (2 references), laboratories, client based projects, surprise learning.
        - Develop program-specific HIPs.
        - Develop assessment and impact measures for HIPs (9 references), including space for peer evaluation (4 references).
        - Encourage publicity of HIPs through student presentations (poster sessions/displays, student talks, public presentations of final projects, etc.) (13 references).
        - Strengthen peer-to-peer learning, especially in Writing and Math Science Learning Centers (4 references).
        - Prioritize HIPs.

Core Value 3: Community Engagement

Priority A: Build and expand connections with community partners and foster positive attitudes toward UNO. As addressed by the following measurable outcomes and strategies:

- **Service learning classes, internships, and other experiential activities. Students complete service learning project, internship/externship/project that integrates learning and addresses a problem important to the student or the community.**
    - Strategies include:
        - Track job prospects through this engagement.

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- **More faculty and staff participate in service learning activities and projects, including projects that expand beyond the classroom.**
  - Strategies include:
    - Stipends for faculty for participation (2 references).
    - Collaboration with other Colleges (i.e., College of Education, which can help reach into public schools/underserved populations) (2 references).
    - More promotion by the College of service learning courses offered.
    - Time for faculty to participate.

Priority B: Prepare students to be engaged citizens and community leaders to better understand the challenges and opportunities in the environments in which they live (2 references). As addressed by the following measurable outcomes and strategies:
  - Strategies include:
    - Collect both proximal and distal surveys of current students/alumni concerning community engagement (4 references).
    - Define what is meant by "engaged citizen" and "community leaders" and measure according to these definitions. Note: one stated that leadership need not only be measured by what's happening in Omaha; another suggested using the CEC's definition of community engagement.
    - Require a set number of service learning courses prior to graduation.
    - Organize lectures highlighting the value of engaged citizenship.
    - Include community contributions to academic discourse/scholarship (partner with Criss Library).
    - Develop mechanisms for students to stay engaged with organizations after official service learning ends.
    - Develop service learning in core courses.
    - Hold end of semester year symposium on service learning where students share experiences.

Priority C: Promote, recognize, and incentivize engaged scholarship. As addressed by the following measurable outcomes and strategies: NOTE: one faculty wondered who this priority was for, students or faculty?
  - Strategies include:
    - Recognize broader categories of engaged scholarship in RPT guidelines. (2 references).
    - Develop student award for engaged scholarship; incorporate this into College awards ceremony/convocation. (2 references).
    - Develop stipends for faculty doing engaged scholarship/course development. (2 references).
    - Create lists every semester of service learning opportunities.
    - Create campaign that links service learning experiences to job opportunities.

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- Ask UCAT to include this priority in one of their conferences.
- Ask that an award for engaged scholarship be given at Research and Creative Activity Fair.
- Vet partner organizations carefully to assure fit.
- Ask all departments to develop internship program (and incentivize development).
- Hire internship expert for UNO

Priority D: Increase the involvement of alumni in advancing College priorities Note: 1 felt that advancing College priorities was "questionable"; 1 suggested striking and replacing with "College educational experiences". As addressed by the following measurable outcomes and strategies:

- Strategies include:
  - Set up lecture series in alumni names, and invite alumni to attend. (2 references).
  - Include alumni lectures into course curricula.
    - Invite alums to give talks about career paths.
    - Invite alums to give talks about their experiences at UNO and once they left UNO.
    - Develop list of guest speakers.
  - Develop scholarships in name of alumni.
  - Set up small donations in honor of specific alumni.
  - Recognize donors to end of year ceremonies.

Note: 1 recognized the role of student engagement and these specific students becoming engaged alumni.

Priority E: Fortify rewards and resources supporting engagement. As addressed by the following measurable outcomes and strategies:

- **The College will always have visible occupational presence in UNO's Community Engagement Center, such as Volunteer Program Assessment**
  - Other strategies include:
    - Provide money/mini-grants for engagement initiatives, including travel. (4 references.)
    - Guarantee RPT recognition/reward. (2 references).
    - Recognize students.
    - Develop endowed scholarship for engagement.
    - Celebrate measureable outcomes.
    - Encourage department level acknowledgement and accommodation

Note: 1 said that faculty resent taking on difficult projects that require more work but don't offer financial incentive.

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Priority F: Formalize a system to measure and communicate the value and impact of the College's engagement in the community. As addressed by the following measurable outcomes and strategies:

- **System of metrics and evaluation. Develop a process for documenting and reporting all student and faculty civic engagement and community partnerships.**
  - Other strategies include:
    - Provide monthly press releases. (3 references).
    - Ask community partners for impact statements. (4 references).
    - Highlight engagement in College magazine/newsletter. (2 references).
    - Dedicate page on College website to engagement. (2 references).
    - Link to podcasts on engagement. (2 references).
    - Incorporate materials from Digital Measures.
    - Incorporate reflections from annual review.
    - Encourage departmental/program tracking of internships.
    - Collect these achievements in database.
    - Create College version of LinkedIn.
    - Solicit alumni accounts of their community projects.

Note: 1 said, "I don't know if this belongs here…—We need more assistance with learning technology. I want to do more with digital humanities. However-where to start? Which programs/software? I'd like to have an advisor to assist me in brain storming and then advise me as to which tech skills I actually need and how to acquire them."

Core Value 4: College Excellence

Priority A: Recruit, retain, and support outstanding faculty and staff. As addressed by the following measurable outcomes and strategies:

- **Diversity and inclusion measures.**
  - ✓ **The College has policies (which ones?--) to ensure inclusiveness and accessibility.**
    - Strategies include:
      - Include policies for non-national (international) faculty. (2 references).
      - Review full time offers.
      - Include mentoring.
      - Review hiring policies (including recruiting outside personnel for hiring committee).
      - Strengthen maternity leave.
      - Pause tenure clock when appropriate.
      - Proof-reading for non-native speakers.
      - Protect tenure-track faculty from pre-tenure service.
      - Provide time off for community service.

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- ✓ **The College's faculty, staff, and administration strives to reflect its student and metropolitan population (1 notes this is measurable, and we need data, but who will assess this?).**
- ✓ **Decision-making bodies in the College will include diverse individuals and reflect diverse perspectives (be careful of tokenism—2 references).**
- **Professional development opportunities for faculty and staff, including support for travel not tied to research.**
- **Recognitions and awards for faculty and staff. Increase the number of faculty who are nominated in College awards process.**
  - o **Strategies include:**
    - ▪ **Increased endowed chairs/professorships. (2 references).**
    - ▪ **Provide staff awards.**
    - ▪ **Provide community engagement awards.**
- **Employee engagement and climate indicators. Increase the number of faculty who are nominated in the College committee election process.**
- **Salary competitiveness. Develop and implement plan to increase compensation for part-time instructors.**
  - o **Strategies include:**
    - ▪ **Hire fewer adjuncts but pay them more.**
    - ▪ **Align payment with regional peers.**
- **Teaching excellence.**
  - ✓ **The extent to which faculty members' performance promotes excellence in teaching and workload is assessed uniformly and utilized to assign and evaluate their workload across the College.**
    - o **Strategies include:**
      - ▪ **Providing clear explanations of teaching in relation to research expectations for RPT.**
  - ✓ **Monitor and assess the College's use of part-time instruction.**

Priority B: Increase public awareness of the College as a premier Arts and Sciences College. As addressed by the following measurable outcomes and strategies:
- **The College develops ongoing strategies and mechanisms that ensure that the College's message and purpose is strong and relevant to students, parents, alumni, and other stakeholders inside and outside of the College and university. Note: 2 wondered if this was hinting at the importance of Liberal Arts degree.**
- **The College will regularly review and update its promotional materials, website, and social media.**
- **The College and its units will increase its communication with alumni via print and electronic media.**
- **Foundation support for faculty and staff teaching and research. Note: 1 asked what this meant, why is this here. 1 wondered if this is where more professorships/endowed chairs belonged.**

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Note: 1 asked if we have the right people in place within the College to measure these things and do it well? 2 suggested public lectures/brown bags of their own research.