

FACULTY OF ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

STRATEGIC PLAN 2020–2025



**DALHOUSIE
UNIVERSITY**

FACULTY OF ARTS AND
SOCIAL SCIENCES

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OUR PROCESS

Over the past year, faculty members, students, staff, alumni, external FASS reviewers, and the Senate's FASS Review Committee contributed to the development of this strategic plan. We conducted seven face-to-face consultation sessions with over 140 people, compiled survey results from 483 respondents, and received extensive feedback from the Faculty's Academic Development Committee. We are very grateful to all participants for their valuable insights, feedback, and recommendations.

OUR VISION

The Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (FASS) will demonstrate the essential role of the humanities, languages, social sciences, and performing arts in every facet of society.

OUR MISSION

Through critical and creative inquiry, informed reflection, and the rich exchange of ideas, FASS is committed to providing its students, faculty, and staff with the knowledge, skills, resources, and experiences essential to make meaningful contributions to their communities.

OUR CORE PRINCIPLES

We celebrate and uphold the principles of academic freedom, scholarly autonomy, individual expression, intellectual integrity, strict ethical standards, and mutual respect in teaching, research, and administration. *Nothing in this document is intended to contravene these core principles.*



OUR VALUES

(the following list is not meant to be exhaustive or exclusionary)

Excellence:

We seek to create and maintain high-quality academic programs that attract and retain the best students, faculty, and staff; to foster excellence in research and teaching that is nationally and internationally recognized; and to advance and disseminate knowledge and understanding through rigorous critical and creative inquiry (including ongoing critical reflection on the core principles and values listed in the current Strategic Plan).

Curiosity, Creativity, and Discovery:

We recognize our obligation to build respectful understanding of diverse philosophies, cultures, intellectual approaches, histories, literatures, languages, and creative and performing arts, and to foster a passion for critical inquiry, thoughtful reflection, clear expression, and interdisciplinarity that is grounded in strong disciplinary foundations.

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion:

We recognize that excellence in teaching, learning, and research is inseparable from the creation and maintenance of an inclusive, diverse, fair, and accessible university. We commit to taking ongoing action to eliminate barriers that impede access to education and employment; to increase the diversity of our faculty, staff, and students; and to ensure an equitable, respectful, and inclusive learning environment for all.

Engagement:

We strive to meet our students' interests in connecting their programs to future opportunities and to bolster their commitment to making positive contributions to society.

Influence:

We are committed to enriching and forming positive partnerships with the larger communities in which we are embedded in our city, province, region, nation, and world. We aim to engage directly and with genuine influence in key conversations within these communities.



OUR STRATEGIC PRIORITIES, OBJECTIVES AND BENCHMARKS

1. RENEWAL

We remain steadfast in our commitment to renewal of our faculty and staff complement; the recruitment and retention of excellent and engaged students; and the ongoing maintenance and improvement of spaces for teaching, research, student interaction, and collaboration.

a. To foster faculty renewal, as well as effective mentorship of new and existing faculty members, we will:

- i. Continue to implement a sustainable plan to recruit outstanding new colleagues through a combination of Probationary Tenure Track appointments, Dalhousie Diversity Faculty Awards, and Canada Research Chair appointments.
- ii. Develop effective strategies to facilitate the mentorship and engagement of new faculty members, for example by organizing an official FASS faculty mentorship program.
- iii. Through our hiring, recruitment, and professional development practices, contribute to the Faculty's culture of equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility as defined under Dalhousie's Diversity and Inclusiveness Strategy, as well as relevant Collective Agreements and, where fully consistent with these agreements, Dalhousie's Principles for Fair Consideration of Hiring of Designated Groups.
- iv. Track tenure and promotion timelines to monitor and address gender-based variations and other inconsistencies amongst equity-seeking groups.
- v. Promote opportunities for Chairs, Coordinators, Directors, and other academic leaders to engage in academic leadership development, consulting with Talent Management (Human Resources) as necessary, in order to ensure that those who are interested in taking on further leadership positions in the university are given the support and skills they need to succeed.

FASS Leads/Champions:

- Dean's Office

Benchmarks:

- Faculty recruitment data
- Faculty EDI benchmarks
- Retention and success (publications, grants, SRIs) of new faculty members
- Satisfaction of new faculty members
- Retain FASS's ongoing institutional leadership across EDI goals

b. To maintain and improve student recruitment, retention, engagement, and success, we will:

- i. Develop and support a FASS-based recruitment, communications, and marketing plan in coordination with FASS Departments and the Dalhousie Registrar's Office, as well as with the Registrar's Office and academic programs of our sister institution, the University of King's College.
- ii. Identify emerging local, regional, national, and international markets for attracting highly qualified and diverse students.
- iii. Develop and implement outreach strategies to engage local International Baccalaureate (IB) and rural high school students.
- iv. With support and resources from the Provost and Centre for Teaching and Learning (CLT), continue to develop integrated first-year offerings for incoming undergraduate students.

- v. Expand and support collaborative, experiential, work-integrated, co-op, and community-based learning opportunities for undergraduate and graduate students.
- vi. Expand and support digital literacy and numeracy opportunities for FASS students who seek these additional skills, for example by collaborating with the Faculty of Computer Science on new classes in these areas and by building required or elective classes in digital and numerical literacy into degree programs, minors, and certificates to which they are relevant.
- vii. Facilitate student leadership, employment, and career development/planning opportunities (broadly defined).

FASS Leads/Champions

- Dean's Office with Dalhousie Career Development Advisors
- FASS Assistant Dean, Student Matters
- FASS Recruitment, Communications and Marketing Manager

Benchmarks

- Sustain positive trends in New from High School enrollments
- Sustain positive trends in first – second year retention rates
- Higher student engagement in extracurricular activities
- Positive student exit surveys

c. To ensure effective maintenance and renewal of spaces for teaching, learning, research, and collaboration, we will:

- i. Seek to improve teaching spaces and classroom technology by collaborating closely with Facilities Management, Dalhousie's Classroom Planning Committee, Audio-Visual Services, and other bodies charged with ensuring such improvements.
- ii. Ensure that learning and research spaces meet current and evolving needs of faculty and students by working with Chairs, Coordinators, and faculty members, as well as with other Dalhousie Faculties, Dalhousie University Libraries, the Dalhousie Arts Centre, and other stakeholders to identify and advocate for improvements in areas that require development or transformation.
- iii. Allocate spaces to facilitate student interaction, engagement, and research collaboration.

FASS Leads/Champions:

- Associate Dean, Academic
- Associate Dean, Research
- Academic Development Committee (via representative on Classroom Planning Committee)

Benchmarks

- Positive Information Technology and space surveys
- Identify and establish spaces for student and faculty collaboration



2. EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING AND RESEARCH

We will foster excellence within the core dimensions of our work – teaching, research, administrative service, and community outreach. In doing so, we recognize that excellence is inseparable from principles of equity, diversity, and inclusion. Goals related to this priority are expected to enhance student experience.

a. To foster strong, effective teaching and ongoing pedagogical development within FASS, we will:

- i. Recognize, document, share, and celebrate best practices in teaching and learning at the undergraduate and graduate levels to enhance student experience and faculty-student relations.
- ii. Work with the CLT and the Associate Provost and VP Academic to provide support and resources to encourage and facilitate effective, inventive, and (where appropriate) innovative pedagogy across FASS.
- iii. Apply best practices for strengthening, revising, updating, and diversifying our academic programs, including integration of equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) across the curriculum.
- iv. Identify and implement FASS-appropriate and discipline-specific approaches to describing and measuring program learning outcomes for the liberal arts.
- v. Review graduate program requirements and learning outcomes in light of changing academic job markets and alternative career options for graduate students.
- vi. Streamline our approach to nominating faculty members for university and national teaching awards.

FASS Leads/Champions

- FASS Chairs and Departmental curriculum committees
- FASS Grad Council (Grad Coordinators)
- FASS Nominating Committee
- FASS Academic Development Committee

Benchmarks

- Maintain Faculty's overall SRI rating - highest at Dalhousie
- Increase number of faculty nominations for teaching awards

b. To foster and celebrate a culture of excellence in research, scholarship, and creativity, we will:

- i. Support our faculty members' research, scholarly endeavors, and creative work by offering and increasing mentorship, travel funding, professional development funding, awards (e.g., the Burgess Research Award), and opportunities for scholarly and creative exchange wherever possible.
- ii. Where appropriate, reinforce our Faculty's research culture by encouraging and supporting faculty members in preparing Tri-agency and other external grants, contracts and competitive funding applications.
- iii. Deploy appropriate data management resources (e.g., UNIWeb) to celebrate FASS research and scholarship and to identify discipline-specific indicators relevant to measuring engagement, contributions, and impact in the humanities, social sciences, and performing arts.
- iv. Support cross-disciplinary and collaborative research initiatives that highlight FASS contributions to our Faculty's and Dalhousie's strategic research clusters and priorities.
- v. Continue to advocate for faculty renewal and expansion to encourage the development of new research clusters, centres, and partnerships.
- vi. Support the annual Dalhousie Arts and Social Science Society (DASSS) undergraduate academic conference and other FASS-led conferences that showcase undergraduate and graduate research.
- vii. Work with Faculty of Graduate Studies (FGS) and the Provost to increase competitive funding to facilitate graduate recruitment.
- viii. Continue to advocate for faculty renewal and expansion to facilitate graduate recruitment.
- ix. Streamline our approach to nominating faculty members for university and national research awards in order to ensure that our existing strengths in research are recognized and celebrated beyond FASS.

FASS Leads/Champions

- Associate Dean, Research

Benchmarks

- Recognition of FASS scholarship & creative contributions
- FASS SSHRC success rates
- FASS CRC placements and retention
- External awards, grants and contracts (Jean Monnet European Union Centre of Excellence and the Roméo Dallaire Child Soldiers Initiative)
- Graduate scholarships and student placements
- Increased number of faculty nominations for research awards

c. To ensure the recruitment, retention, professional development, and job satisfaction of excellent and expert staff within FASS, we will:

- i. Improve opportunities for career development and training for staff members through Dalhousie's ACHIEVE program.
- ii. Continue to advocate for job classifications that reflect the work, skills, and expertise of FASS staff members.
- iii. Recognize and celebrate the crucial role administrative staff play in faculty and student success.
- iv. Increase opportunities for administrative collaboration across Departments and programs.

FASS Leads/Champions

- Director of Finance and Administration

Benchmarks

- Positive feedback in staff surveys
- Attraction and retention of excellent staff members
- Increase number of staff nominations for service awards

d. To communicate and celebrate the excellence of FASS research, scholarship, and performance, we will:

- i. Reinforce our Faculty's ongoing commitment to communicating and celebrating the contributions of Dalhousie's arts, languages, humanities, and social science teaching, research, service, and engagement with local, national, and international communities.
- ii. Challenge false narratives about liberal arts education within local, national, and international contexts by showcasing the mounting evidence of its strong and increasing value.
- iii. Highlight and celebrate the achievements of our students, faculty, and alumni, for example by disseminating news stories and press releases to media outlets within Dalhousie and in Halifax, as well as nationally and internationally.
- iv. Communicate research findings to the public and share the work of faculty as it addresses international, national, and local community challenges.
- v. Provide supports to faculty members in their efforts to disseminate their research, scholarship, and creative work to a wider audience.

FASS Leads/Champions

- FASS Recruitment, Communications and Marketing Manager
- FASS Development Officer
- FASS Alumni and Donor Relations Officer

Benchmarks

- Coverage of FASS stories in DalNews, Dal Mag and other media
- Facilitate media coverage of FASS teaching, research & outreach
- Continue to build the Faculty's social media presence
- Improve FASS Departmental websites



3. HEALTH AND RESILIENCE

We aim to build and sustain a healthy, resilient community by appropriately accommodating the needs of our students, staff, and faculty; by creating and maintaining a positive, respectful, and collegial work environment; and by fostering a healthy work-life balance for all of our members. In order to achieve these goals, we will:

- i. Work with Chairs, Coordinators, and faculty members to identify and strive to correct major inequities in workloads within and across FASS units.
- ii. In consultation with HR, identify opportunities to encourage a healthy work-life balance for staff and faculty.
- iii. Continue to advocate for faculty and staff renewal and expansion as a key means of fostering this culture of health and resilience.
- iv. Acknowledge that time for reflection, as well as time for work and productivity, is crucial to the accomplishment of the university's mission.
- v. Adopt best practices for facilitating student accommodation, accessibility, resilience, and mental health, including supports for international students within FASS (see 4.iv below).

FASS Leads/Champions

- Dean's Office / Director of Finance and Administration
- Assistant Dean, Student Matters
- Department Chairs

Benchmarks

- Positive trends in complaints received related to accommodation
- Positive student surveys
- Positive faculty surveys

4. INSTITUTIONAL PARTNERSHIPS AND NETWORKS

We are committed to establishing and maintaining new institutional partnerships and networks across Dalhousie and its partner institutions, challenging ourselves and our students to engage other parts of the university while also building dynamic and mutually beneficial collaborations. To achieve these goals, we will:

- i. Identify, encourage and facilitate connections and collaborative opportunities for research, learning, and outreach with Dalhousie partners and networks – for example, joint SSHRC, CIHR and CRC submissions; joint research initiatives.
- ii. Explore the feasibility of joint appointments to facilitate FASS service teaching (e.g., Writing Across the Curriculum) for Engineering, Science, Computer Science, and Health students.
- iii. Develop a FASS-based international strategy to inform the university's internationalization priorities and goals, foregrounding our established expertise in such fields as language teaching, writing across the curriculum, and intercultural competency.
- iv. Work with the Provost and VP Finance to identify specific strategies for facilitating student ESL support and academic integrity case management in FASS, for example by allocating a portion of international differential fees to the Faculty.
- v. Revitalize Dalhousie's College of Arts and Science (CAS) by coordinating CAS-based programming, marketing and recruitment initiatives, first-year advising, first-year interest groups and seminars, residence experience, support for international students, and other essential retention-enhancing strategies that are common across the strongest liberal arts and science colleges in the country.
- vi. Strengthen our ongoing relationship with the College of Sustainability through enhanced joint programming and recruitment efforts.
- vii. Continue to prioritize the development and maintenance of a productive and mutually beneficial relationship with our sister institution, the University of King's College, with which FASS enjoys a unique partnership that can contribute positively to program development, student recruitment, and student retention.
- vii. Revive and continue the work of the ad hoc group on languages with its emphasis on multilingualism in a Canadian bilingual context and pursue and support initiatives to develop this, such as the existing Halifax Languages Consortium.





FASS Leads/Champions

- Dean's Office
- Associate Dean, Academic
- Associate Dean, Research
- Assistant Dean, Academic Integrity Officer

Benchmarks

- Joint submission to Tri-agency competitions
- Cross-faculty research projects (e.g., JMEUCE; RDCSI; CSSD)
- FASS supports included in Dal's International strategy
- Institutional supports for FASS service teaching
- Joint FASS-Science initiatives through CAS

5. COMMUNITY AND ALUMNI ENGAGEMENT

We are committed to establishing and maintaining new institutional partnerships and networks beyond Dalhousie by engaging directly with the communities around us to build relationships that are mutually beneficial to our students, faculty members, and community partners. To achieve these goals, we will:

- Share faculty and community expertise with community and industry partners, and work with community members to engage with students and faculty in ways that support FASS teaching and research.
- Engage our Indigenous and African Nova Scotian communities to inform FASS teaching and research initiatives (for example, by working with local university partners, Elders, and community leaders to offer Mi'kmaw language instruction).
- Deepen relations with FASS alumni to create champions and partners for FASS priorities.
- Wherever appropriate, facilitate community-based and community-driven research (e.g., practicums) and teaching projects.
- Highlight areas of teaching/learning that align with the interests of prospective students, their influencers, and our funding partners – for example, Experiential Learning.
- Identify FASS donors and develop prospective donor relationships that can support students, faculty, and academic programming.

FASS Leads/Champions

- Dean's Office
- FASS Development Officer
- FASS Alumni and Donor Relations Officer

Benchmarks

- Expanding number of community partnerships
- Expand number of donors and supports for FASS projects
- Student events/workshops that engage alumni



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