

Strategic Plan: 2021-2023
Review of Year-Two Priorities and Accomplishments



Excellence in Academic Programs

BOT Dashboard

% of FT instructional faculty from underrepresented groups

No of students enrolled in high impact programs

No of Students enrolled in online/Elms Flex

1. Faculty Hires—2021-2022

- Nursing: DNP Track Coordinator; Associate Dean, Undergraduate Nursing
- Business: Accounting, Healthcare Management, Marketing
- Education: Secondary Education
- Social Work: MSW with Ph.D. in Sociology.
- Humanities and Fine Arts: Full-time Assistant Professor of Fine Art.
- New faculty include a faculty member of color (1), API (1), and LGBTQ (1)

2. Early Career Faculty Success Plan

The 2021-22 academic year saw the successful launch of the new Early Career Faculty Success (ECFS) Program, which included significant new funding to support both mentoring and professional development for early career faculty members, along with monthly information meetings.

A total of 8 experienced faculty members agreed to act as Formal Mentors to 11 early faculty members. Two faculty members—received a course release in the spring to work on scholarly projects. Following the Committee on Faculty Development’s recommendation and Vice President Walter Breau’s approval, four early career faculty members were awarded ECFS Scholarship Grants for spring 2022.

Altogether, there were six ECFS information sessions: the dates, topics, and presenters were as follows:

- September 23: “Tenure and Promotion Requirements”
- October 26: “Center for Student Success”
- November 30: “Research and Scholarship”
- February 22: “Self-Care and Moodle Training”
- March 15: “Advising Responsibilities”
- April 19: “Committee Service”

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Over the course of the year, 29 full-time faculty members attended at least one ECFS meeting. Of that 29, 15 were either tenure-track or early career non-tenure-track faculty members. 11 of the latter 15 faculty members attended at least two ECFS meetings.

3. Business Repositioning Plan approved by the Board of Trustees at their February 11, 2022 meeting. FY2022 goal of rebuilding the faculty met with the hiring of three faculty in the areas of Accounting, Healthcare Management and Marketing.
4. Cynthia A. Lyons Center for Equity in Urban Education (CEUE): Work continued towards goals of the CEUE.
 - Administrators Licensure program launch delayed until Fall 2023.
 - MTEL Diagnosis and Academic Support Coach will be in place for the Fall 2022 incoming class.
 - Professional Development opportunities for school teachers and leaders planned for the Fall 2022.
5. Liberal Arts Core review—Good progress made by the faculty ad hoc Liberal Arts Core Review committee in 2021-2022.
 - Committee has reviewed the learning outcomes, assessments and course requirements for the core from the perspective of what are the essential skills students should gain from the core, as well as, what is distinctive about the Elms' liberal arts core now and what should be emphasized in the future, from a Mission, Core Values and SSJ Founders perspective?
 - Core Outcome linked to the Mission and Core Values—Draft:
 - Rooted in Faith and Compassionate in Heart (Faith, Justice & Community Core Values)
 - SPIRITUAL AND ETHICAL DEVELOPMENT
 - Religious Literacy
 - Ethical Leadership
 - Educated in Mind (Excellence Core Value)
 - CRITICAL THINKING
 - Critical Thinking (Written Expression) - combines elements of current critical thinking, written communication, and information literacy outcomes
 - Critical Thinking (Numeric Expression) - current quantitative literacy outcome
 - Civic & Social Obligations (Justice & Community Core Values)
 - GLOBAL AND CULTURAL AWARENESS AND ACTION
 - Global and Cultural Understanding
 - Civic Knowledge or Civic Engagement

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- Innovative and Entrepreneurial Thinking is linked to the core through the Innovation Challenge, which is now integrated into First-Year Seminar.
 - The faculty ad hoc committee plans to have a new core ready for presidential and board review by the February 2023 BOT meeting.
6. Two cohorts of students (total 47) completed the Haiti Nursing Professional Development Program by May 2022.
 7. The Biotechnology (BS, MS), Life Sciences (BA), Bioethics and Medical Humanities (MA), and the Post-Baccalaureate Pre-Speech Studies programs are approved, with launch dates dependent on the date of Department of Education Title IV approval.
 8. The “Out of the Box” committee, chaired by the VPAA, met three times this year with several faculty, and focused on graduate nursing and health science related programming opportunities, in particular Biology and Pre-Medical, Biomedical Sciences and Biotechnology, the Post-Baccalaureate Pre-Medical Studies program and Bioethics and Medical Humanities.

Expand Experiential Learning

BOT Dashboard

Faculty EL Teaching grant applications

No of students in EL activities receiving funding

No of Internship Relationships

Overall Participation in EL for all seniors

I. Summary

Priorities for the Office of Experiential Learning (OEL) continued to focus upon building campus capacity for experiential learning, with a special emphasis upon expanding curricular opportunities and internships.

Key Accomplishments 2021-22

1. Hiring and onboarding an ***Associate Director of Experiential Learning, Dr. Jennifer Granger Sullivan***. Dr. Sullivan has made significant contributions to the program in her first months, taking the lead on organizing two EL showcases (Fall and Spring) and supporting internship applicants and scholarship awards among other achievements.
2. Dr. Bloomgarden facilitated faculty development and collaboration for ***four 2021-22 Faculty Experiential Learning Teaching (FELT) recipients*** to co-design and support implementation of new EL courses in Religious Studies, Psychology, Education, and Communication Sciences and Disorders. ***Four additional projects have been awarded 2022-23 FELT grants*** in Biology, Education, Psychology and Social Work, and History.
3. The OEL supported experiential programming in the First Year Seminar and Honors Programs. This featured a ***“Latinx Communities” panel discussion*** with leading Latinx journalists facilitated by New England Public Media host Zydalis Bauer in Fall 2021 to support the campus Common Read, Sonia Sotomayor’s “My Beloved World.” In Spring 2022, this featured a multi-faceted, ***digital storytelling project involving three Elms College faculty members, nearly two dozen students, and New England Public Media’s Media Lab***. The project produced archive quality documentary interviews with Sisters of St. Joseph, and several in-depth local community narratives created by students.
4. Launch and success of a ***community-based work-study program*** utilizing federal work study “America Reads/America Counts” funds. Six Elms tutors worked in an experiential learning partnership with the Chicopee Bowe Elementary School.
5. Implementation of both a ***course designation (“CEXP”) in the Registrar’s course catalog to track enrollment, and a student participation tracking system using the “Colleague”***

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student information system database to monitor curricular and co-curricular participation. Analysis shows that for the graduating class of 2022, 79% of all seniors and 86% of all traditional student seniors had at least one experiential learning activity during their Elms studies.

6. ***Awarding of scholarships through the Keating-Schneider (KSF), Elms Advantage Internship Experience (EAIE) donor funds and Community-based federal work-study (America Reads/America Counts)*** led to 24 students receiving funding for unpaid internships and research opportunities in 2021-22.

7. A ***Career Closet*** was created in the Dooley College Center to provide professional clothing to students interviewing for internships and jobs. An internship was developed and a senior business student was hired to work in the Career Closet, market the store and assist students with their selections. The Internship position has been posted in Handshake for FY23.

II. Activities and Key Data Points

<u>Area of Responsibility</u>	<u>Relevant Data Points</u>																		
<i>Faculty/Staff Capacity-Building for Experiential Learning</i>	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>● EL Steering Committee, Assessment and Marketing, and Scholarships Subcommittee Meetings</td> <td>9</td> </tr> <tr> <td>● Group Faculty Development Events (recorded and also made available on ElmsConnect for asynchronous viewing)</td> <td>3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>● Individual & Small Group Faculty/Staff EL Development Consultations</td> <td>25</td> </tr> <tr> <td>● 2021-22 Faculty EL Teaching Grants Awarded</td> <td>4</td> </tr> <tr> <td>● 2022-23 Faculty EL Teaching Grants Awarded</td> <td>4</td> </tr> </table>	● EL Steering Committee, Assessment and Marketing, and Scholarships Subcommittee Meetings	9	● Group Faculty Development Events (recorded and also made available on ElmsConnect for asynchronous viewing)	3	● Individual & Small Group Faculty/Staff EL Development Consultations	25	● 2021-22 Faculty EL Teaching Grants Awarded	4	● 2022-23 Faculty EL Teaching Grants Awarded	4								
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<i>Student Funding Support and Engagement (cont'd)</i>	<i>Fall 2021 Showcase</i>	
	Student Presenters	15
	Registered Attendees (actual attendance higher)	53
	<i>Spring 2022 Showcase</i>	
Student Presenters	68	
Attendees	120+	

Elevate Ethical Leadership

BOT Dashboard

No of students in CERC academic programs

No of students participating in CERC non-academic programs

No of publications through CERC

Updates from the St. Augustine Center for Ethics, Religion and Culture

1. Curricular Updates

M.A. in Bioethics and Medical Humanities

- Revised curriculum to remove oral examination requirement, include structured elective courses, include an additional required course, and reduce (from 36) to 30 total credits.
- M.A. program launch now anticipated for Spring 2023 or later.
- M.A. program will be cross-listed with M.S. program in Biomedical Sciences on Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC)'s website.
- Graduate certificate program prepared for simultaneous launch.

Undergraduate minor program revised to allow more flexibility with electives while maintaining a focus on BMH-prefixed courses.

Undergraduate Minor in Ethical Leadership

- Successfully launched in Fall 2021 and met with high student demand.
- Graduate certificate program prepared for launch.

CERC Graduate Teaching Assistant (GTA) Program

- Descriptions completed and disseminated.
- Anticipated launch in Fall 2022
- Opportunities for eligible graduate students to become funded teaching assistants for courses that address issues at the intersection of ethics, religion, and culture.

2. Research Initiative Update

CERC Peer-Reviewed Journal

- Revised name: Charity in Truth: A Journal of Ethics, Religion, and Culture.
- Scope: Open-access, peer-reviewed publication focused on original research and scholarship at the intersection of ethics, religion, and culture. Publishes articles that critically analyze ethical issues with religious and/or cultural implications; religious issues with ethical and/or cultural implications; and cultural issues with ethical and/or religious implications.
- Hosted on the Scholastica platform.
- Editorial Advisory Board assembled with first meeting held in February 2022.

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- Associate Editors appointed: Drs. Michael McGravey (Religion) and Tyra Good (Culture).
- Opened to general submissions, May 11, 2022
- First focused call for papers scheduled for summer/fall 2022.

3. Lecture Series:

St. Augustine CERC Distinguished Lecture in Culture (held November 10, 2021)

- Scope: Nationally/internationally noted scholar in culture to speak on a topic related to the theme chosen by the DLC advisory committee each year.
- Speaker: Thea James, M.D., Vice President of Mission, Associate Chief Medical Officer, and Associate Professor of Emergency Medicine, Boston Medical Center and Boston University School of Medicine.
- Topic: Racial, ethnic, and/or cultural inequalities illuminated by the COVID-19 pandemic vis-à-vis scarce resource allocation and equitable healthcare delivery.

Mary Dooley Lecture in Spirituality (held December 2, 2021)

- Scope: Regionally/nationally noted scholar in spirituality to speak on a topic related to the theme chosen by the MADL advisory committee each year.
- Speaker: Bradley Harmon, M.Div., Executive Director, Mission Integration, Trinity Health of New England.
- Topic: The Hallowed Halls of our Hospitals: Finding Grace and Community during the Pandemic

Rev. Hugh Crean Distinguished Lecture in Catholic Thought (held March 29, 2022)

- Speaker: Mary Ann Glendon, J.D., Learned Hand Professor of Law, emerita, Harvard Law School.
- Topic: Serving as U.S. Ambassador to the Holy See for three different popes (St. John Paul II, Benedict XVI, and Francis).

4. In Planning: Development of CERC Ethics Lab

- Conceptually based on the Ethics Lab at Georgetown University.
- CERC Ethics Lab would create and sustain:
 - An agile platform for building new courses.
 - A scalable model for integrating ethics across undergraduate and graduate curricula and into the fiber of campus life.
 - A resource for ethics innovation and consultation.
 - A training site for clinical bioethics consultation and ethical leadership simulation.
- Anticipated launch in Fall 2023.

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5. CERC-related publications (2021-2022)

- Published scholarly output (15 total publications) spanning the fields of philosophy, theology, business, law, medicine, bioethics, and medical humanities, including the publishing of a book chapters, peer-reviewed journal articles and essays, and numerous other academic, corporate, and popular publications.
- Additionally, 10 manuscripts, including three book proposals, in progress or under review.
- Number of publications (2021-2022):
 - Peer-Reviewed Books and Chapters: 1
 - Peer-Reviewed Journal Articles: 3

Engage Our Learning Community

BOT Dashboard

% of Retention of Underrepresented Students (FTFT)

% of Underrepresented Staff Members

No of Participants in campus ministry programs (duplicated headcounts)

1. **Improve living and learning environments** in the residence halls, classroom spaces, and flexible spaces for affinity groups and commuters, and provide access to nutritious meals that meet students' needs.

- A new lounge was created in the old student engagement office and furnished with tables and chairs for study and meetings. The Multicultural Student Collective named it the MAC Lounge, and it is designed to be an affinity space for students of color to gather. The Director of Diversity and Inclusion manages the space and tracks how the space is used.
- A space in the lower level of the Dooley College Center has been earmarked as a place for Commuters to hang out between classes.
- A bank of lockers in the lower level of the Dooley College Center has been painted and there is signage indicating they are Commuter Lockers.
- Residence Halls Upgrades-Renovations to Rose William (new kitchens, lounges and furnishings) began in Summer 2022.
- A new food provider, Aladdin, was selected with input from the Elms Community and will introduce new programs to support athletic performance and healthy eating.

2. **Provide programming and engagement activities** that build a community for students; Boosting diversity, equity, and inclusion in student enrollment.

- Engage students through athletics: A healthy mind in a healthy body through the athletics experience, facilities, and sports team sponsorship.
 - Elms College moved to the GNAC athletic conference this past year, giving student athletes an enhanced level of competition.
 - We are in the process of starting a varsity level men's lacrosse team. This will allow 50 additional student-athletes to participate.
 - We will be turfing our softball field, giving all of our students access to an additional turf field.
- Connect with students through spirituality and service:
 - Two mission trips took place during spring break. Attendance was lower due to COVID.
 - Dorothy Day was held in August, 2021, but attendance was down due to COVID.

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- Create strong leaders through enhanced student leadership programming:
 - A mandatory leadership training program is being developed for September 9 and 10, 2022 for all executive members and advisors of recognized student clubs and organizations.
3. Increase the quality of college communication.
- During the FY22 academic year, the Office of Campus Ministry and other student-centered offices created more visible messages through flyers, posters, email, word of mouth and the Student Life Instagram page.
 - During FY22, the President’s Office initiated a number of communication strategies to build transparency and a stronger sense of community, including:
 - The “ElmsNews” for faculty and staff, which gathers news from all areas of campus and is shared electronically the last week of each month.
 - A summary of each Cabinet Meeting is shared electronically to faculty and staff by the Friday following the meeting.
 - The President’s Report to the Board of Trustees was shared electronically with faculty and staff after the Spring 2022 meetings. This will continue in FY23.
 - Town Halls were held twice per semester starting in Spring 2022, and this schedule will be continued in FY23, with all faculty and staff invited.
4. Build a diverse, equitable, and inclusive campus community.
- Elms College hosted the Fifth Black Experience Summit (held virtually due to COVID) coordinated and organized by a new Director of Diversity and Inclusion. There were three components; a keynote invited speaker, a student panel and a panel of area college presidents moderated by Elms College president, Dr. Harry Dumay. The Summit was well attended.
 - A Bias Incident reporting tool was created and a Bias Response and Education Team was formed to provide educational programs to the community when appropriate
 - The annual campus climate surveys were administered and the student, faculty, and staff instruments are now coordinated to occur at the same time of the year. The student survey was revised and reviewed through the IRB at the college. Student survey respondent numbers remained low and recommendations on partnering with Student Government and changing the timing to a slower month of the year are being reviewed.
 - Student Leaders, including SAAC, RAs, OLS, SAB, Tutors and Peer Diversity Trainers participated in two workshops on anti-racism, identities and microaggressions.
 - Campus Ministry and the Diversity and Inclusion Office, along with student groups: MSC, LatinX and True Colors ran numerous events throughout the year during Black History Month, Women’s History Month, Pride Week and Solidarity Week,

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5. Develop a culture of wellness.

- An eight-week grief group for students was facilitated by Campus Ministry and Counseling.
- A Fresh Check Day, a peer-run, interactive event devoted to promote mental health and wellness, was held in Fall 2021.
- Stress Free Week was held in December 2021 with activities designed to manage stress during final exams.

Enrollment & Sustainability

BOT Dashboard

No of Overall Enrollment of Students

% of students enrolled outside of 50 miles (FTUG main campus)

No of CE and non-traditional students

No of new students

Operating margin

Cash & Investments (in millions)

Overall giving

Enrollment:

FY22 was a mixed year for enrollment for colleges across the country, with the lingering effects of the pandemic impacting all aspects of operations. Many colleges found themselves with smaller incoming classes, less students in their residence halls, and lower retention numbers. While Elms continues to weather the storm, we were not immune to the impacts of COVID.

Our overall enrollment saw a very modest increase of 1% for the fall. While we always hope for a larger increase, any upward movement in the current climate can be considered a victory. However, enrollment fell 5% for the spring due to a combination of a smaller incoming cohort and lower retention.

One of our strategic initiatives was to broaden the reach of Elms recruitment efforts. With the upcoming demographic cliff forecasted for the fall of 2025, the college will need to broaden its reach significantly to continue to increase enrollment. Elms has traditionally recruited nearly 90% of its new, incoming students from a 50-mile radius around our campus. For the fall of 2021 we were able to raise the percentage of students from outside that bubble to 15.6%, a 4.1% increase over the previous year.

Our Continuing Education (CE) population was also a mixed bag during the past enrollment cycle. This population has been particularly volatile during the pandemic, as our enrollment largely depends on the enrollment of our partner community college institutions. These partners have seen a significant decline in their enrollments, leaving far fewer students available to enroll in the Elms programs. Despite these challenges our fall CE numbers were strong, with a 11 student increase over the previous year. However, our Spring numbers struggled, down 10.7% compared to the previous Spring.

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The Enrollment division at Elms will continue to be innovative and diligent as we move into the FY23 recruitment cycle.

Finance & Operations:

1. Create a budget with at least a 4% margin and manage FY22 spending to that budget.

A budget with a 4% margin was presented and received final approval by the Board in October 2021.

Early projections indicate that the College will achieve a margin of around 4%. This includes anticipated revenue from the Employee Retention Tax Credit of \$3.1M and also provides for pushing stimulus funding of \$3.8M into FY23 to help balance that budget.

1. Through management of financial operations, determine the appropriate level of cash taking into account accrediting metrics and other benchmarks. Make a recommendation for additional cash to be invested as board designated endowment.

An analysis of the College's cash position in relation to appropriate metrics and benchmarks led Administration to recommend an investment of \$500k in addition to the normal addition of 10% of net income resulting in a total investment of cash in the amount of \$891k in FY22.

3. Launch the Income Share Agreement (ISA) program for incoming Fall 2022 students as a method to reduce the discount rate.

The ISA program was launched for availability for the Fall 2023 entering class. The program will be used for appeals, which will not happen until August or September 2022, so the success of the program is not measurable at this time.

4. Begin schematic planning for improvements to Maguire, including optional uses of natatorium.

The College engaged with architects to create schematic plans for the use of the natatorium. A plan for that space is forthcoming.

Additionally, the lobby area of Maguire, which was overcrowded and divided awkwardly using cubicle partitions was reconfigured to open up the space and provide a much more open and inviting area for students to exercise.

Advancement:

The world of fundraising is changing and evolving fast, especially as we continue to emerge from an extended period of social distancing. In FY22, the ongoing effects of the pandemic and unpredictable economic factors impacted our overall fundraising plans. While we pivoted, adjusted, and forged ahead with plans for the comprehensive campaign, Institutional Advancement also experienced a staffing turnover, which added more strain to the already challenging year.

In-person meetings and gatherings with donors remain critical to immediate and long-term fundraising success. As we were looking forward to reconnecting and rejuvenating relationships through in-person meetings this past year, we found that due to the new covid variants many donors were reluctant to participate in these in-person experiences. In turn, events and meetings needed to be postponed or cancelled until the restrictions were lifted and donors were more comfortable to be part of meaningful interactions.

Despite the challenges that impacted our fundraising efforts, we continued on a modified path and we are happy to report that the FY22 results are positive as we exceeded our overall fundraising goal. The college has indeed received some incredible and transformational gifts this year that were a significant part of the successful year-end total.

When examining the three core funding areas, with the exception of the Unrestricted Giving, the other areas exceeded their target goals. The Restricted Giving goal of \$2.2 million was surpassed by 21%, the Endowment goal of \$300K was surpassed by 209%, and the Unrestricted Giving goal of \$500K was under by only 4%.

In conclusion, the overall FY22 goal of \$3 million was surpassed by 44%. Hence, the total raised for FY22 stands at \$4.3 million. In comparison to the total raised in FY21, we are also ahead by 15%.