

Strategic Plan: 2021-2024

Review of Year-Three 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—2022-2023 (to begin Fall 2023)

- Natural Sciences, Mathematics and Technology: Biochemistry; Data Science and Mathematics
- Business: Finance
- Nursing: Dean, School of Nursing
- Social Work: Active Search Ongoing
- New faculty include two faculty members of color (2)

2. Early Career Faculty Success Plan

The Early Career Faculty Success Program, which includes funding to support both mentoring and professional development for early career faculty members along with monthly information meetings, successfully completed its second year in 2022-23. In addition to increasing the number of mentors and mentees in the program and offering information sessions, we advanced our efforts to improve our support for faculty through collaboration between the Director and two standing faculty committees: Faculty Development and Tenure & Promotion.

A total of 10 experienced faculty members agreed to act as Formal Mentors to 12 early career faculty members. In addition, Dr. Betty Hukowicz has provided mentoring to Dr. Tyra Good. In sum, a total of 24 faculty members participated in the college's mentoring program this year. Following the Committee on Faculty Development's recommendation and Vice-President Walter Breau's approval, five early career faculty members—Dr. Yeukai Imeh, Dr. Michael McGravey, Dr. Amber Scoon, Dr. Laura Porter, and Dr. Jacqueline Jamsheed—were awarded ECFS Scholarship Grants this spring.

We held five ECFS information sessions: the dates, topics, and presenters were as follows:

- September 21: "Introduction to Elms College Students and Mission" (Sr. Carol Allan, Dr. Jennifer Shoaff, Mike Theulen)
- November 14: "Scholarship" (Mike McGravey, Sudad Saman, and Danielle Maurice)

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- February 21: “Student Accommodations and Support Services” (Tiffani Ashline)
- March 20: “Experiential Learning” (Jenny Granger Sullivan)
- April 19: “Third-Year Review and Tenure Process” (Damien Murray, Debbie Gomes, and Anthony Fonseca)

Over the course of the year, 23 full-time faculty members attended at least one ECFS meeting. Of that 23, 16 were either tenure-track or early career non-tenure-track faculty members. Nine of the 16 faculty members attended at least two ECFS meetings.

Respondents to the 2022-23 AY Climate Survey were asked to rank their top five areas of mentoring from a list of eleven:

- teaching and pedagogy
- scholarship
- tenure portfolio development
- advising students.
- goal development (replaced “balancing life and work” from previous year)

3. Business Repositioning Plan—Implementation of year-two of the repositioning plan:

- Completed search for full-time faculty in Finance.
- Updated the marketing major to include creative technologies and are working on additional opportunities.
- Business internships linked to Experiential Learning and donor funding to unpaid opportunities.
- Two business division faculty have embedded community-based learning into spring coursework using the Faculty Experiential Learning Teaching (FELT) grants.
- Revised degree completion program in Business Management and Healthcare Management as a 100% online degree programs relaunching Fall 2023.
- Increased flexibility of MBA program. Zoom is available 100% of the time, while looking into asynchronous opportunities, and multiple start dates for student-centered flexibility.

4. Cynthia A. Lyons Center for Equity in Urban Education (CEUE)

- Thirteen CEUE graduates (BA, MAT) in May 2023, with the BA graduates continuing on as CEUE master’s students.
- Dr. Ryan Ambuter, Assistant Professor of Secondary Education, first CEUE Faculty Fellow.
- MTEL Preparation Workshop Series launched in the spring 2023, focusing on Communication and Literacy, Reading and Writing subtests (spring 2023) and Writing and Mathematics subtests (beginning summer 2023).
- Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning Series held in partnership with the Office of Diversity and Inclusion, Institutional Diversity Curriculum & Development Subcommittee, and the Faculty Development Committee to provide a professional

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development series, with funding support from the Community Foundation of Western Massachusetts.

- Supported the summer reading program by providing culturally responsive literacy instruction and intervention support.
- Impacted the diversity of the teacher pipeline: the percentage of BIPOC students in the Education Division has increased from 19% in 2018 before the creation of the Center to 40% in Spring 2023.
- Enrollment has grown to 68 students (58 Black and Latino, 10 White), with the majority focused on high need areas of secondary education, mathematics and science, and special education, with moderate disabilities.

5. Liberal Arts Core Review—continued progress was made this past year, including:

- Completed review of all outcomes and courses which meet each particular outcome
- Completed review of course requirements by discipline
- Finalized process for team-taught courses that fulfill more than one core outcome
- Finalized review of associate and baccalaureate transfer student core requirements
- Clarified process to meet the foreign language requirement of the core
- Began meetings with the registrar's office to plan for degree audit updates once the new core is approved and implemented.
- In the summer 2023, the VPAA, core review committee chair and a "writing group" will develop a draft to complete the narrative or "story" around the value proposition of the core, the distinctiveness of the core, and the connection to our Catholic identity and Mission. This narrative can be used as a recruitment tool as well as a statement that ties the Elms community together, in a way similar to our Mission and core values.

6. Haiti Nursing Continuing Education Program

- Cohort three (34 students) completed the 12 credit certificate in 2023.
- Cohort four (37 students) began the program with a new student orientation on May 13, 2023.
- Ten cohort 1 and 2 certificate completers are matriculated into the MSN program at FSIL.

7. Academic Program Updates:

- Six programs that had been internally approved received DOE approval in late fall 2022:
 - Biotechnology (BS, MS)
 - Life Sciences (BA)
 - Liberal Arts degree completion (BA)
 - Bioethics and Medical Humanities (MA)
 - Post-Baccalaureate Pre-Speech Pathology
 - Academic leadership and faculty are assisting Admissions and Marketing in the formal launch of programs.
- In addition:
 - The BS in Data Science and AI completed all internal approvals

- Documentation for the new MSW program has been submitted to CSWE, as well as to the DOE for financial aid approval. The college is currently in the pre-candidacy phase. Recruitment for a fall 2023 start is ongoing now.

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

Summary

Priorities for the Office of Experiential Learning (OEL) continued to focus upon building capacity for a wide variety of experiential learning opportunities as we come out of the COVID pandemic. A special emphasis was placed upon expanding curricular opportunities and internships for our students.

Key Accomplishments 2022-23

1. **EL Leadership Transition** of the Associate Director of Experiential Learning, Dr. Jennifer L. Granger Sullivan to Director of Experiential Learning, after the departure of founding Director, Dr. Alan Bloomgarden in October 2022.
2. **Seven Faculty Experiential Learning Teaching (FELT) grant** recipients co-designed and implemented 11 new EL courses in Biology, Education, Psychology and Social Work, Accounting, History, Honors, and Marketing with support from OEL.
3. The OEL further supported our students' introduction to experiential programming through direct involvement in the **First Year Seminar's Innovation Challenge**. Through a live, one-month long curriculum, the Innovation Challenge (IC) teaches a variety of important skills related to EL and career readiness.
 - Following IC participation, students indicated the following: Improved skills in teamwork (82%), problem-solving (70%), communication (78%), they were 13% more likely to attempt something where success is not guaranteed.
 - This high-impact experiential element of our First Year Seminar program is an excellent introduction to Experiential Learning, increasing students' abilities to undertake team and creative problem-solving early in their college careers.
4. **Increased Participation in EL:** The continued implementation of both a *course designation ("CEXPL")* in the Registrar's course catalog to track enrollment and a *student participation tracking system using the "Colleague"* student information system database, we are able to better monitor curricular and co-curricular participation.

- Analysis shows that for the graduating class of 2023, 91% of all traditional student seniors had at least one experiential learning activity during their Elms studies, which is an increase of 6% from the year prior.
 - Black student traditional 2023 graduates participated at a lower rate (75%), and OEL will develop strategies to increase participation.
5. **6% Increase in Donor Scholarship and Community Work-study EL Recipients:** Due to increased EL opportunities and marketing/education of funded scholarships, including Keating-Schneider (KSF), Elms Advantage Internship Experience (EAIE), and availability of community-based federal work-study (America Reads/America Counts) funds, there was a sizeable increase in the # of students supported in high-impact EL opportunities.
- Unpaid internships and research opportunities – 36 students,
 - Study abroad - 6 students, including 4 with the Elms in Japan program with our long-term institutional partner, the University of Kochi,
 - Community-based work-study – 2 students two working at Bowe elementary school.
 - Notes:
 - 11 students who qualified for the internship/research funding did not receive it due to lack of funding.
 - New donor funding was made available to help support study abroad (6).
6. **Expanded *Experiential Learning Showcase* (April 28, 2023).** Over 100 students, 25 faculty/staff and 20 community partners were involved in the fifth annual full-day Showcase that occurred in multiple locations throughout the Elms campus with poster presentations, video presentations, simulations. Over 250 people attended the celebration to see applied learning in action as our students also developed skills integral to being career ready.
7. **Naming of the *Dolores Donlin Noonan '39 Experiential Learning Program*:** In support of the *Building Bridges Comprehensive Campaign*, Trustee Regina '71 and Joseph Hitchery, added to their previous gift to the Elms Advantage Internship Experience and made a leadership commitment to Experiential Learning at Elms College. In recognition of this significant contribution, it was announced that the Elms Experiential Learning Program will be named the *Dolores Donlin Noonan '39 Experiential Learning Program*, in honor of Dolores Donlin Noonan '39, mother of Trustee Regina Noonan Hitchery '71 and Martha Noonan Murtaugh '68, MAT '91, and sister of Clare Donlin Mannix '47. The benefactor naming of the EL program was an exciting part of the EL Showcase Kick-off Celebration.
8. The ***Student Electronic Portfolio*** initiative piloted ePortfolios with our EL internship students using the Google Sites platform. The OEL prepared a “How to” website (<https://sites.google.com/elms.edu/experiential-learning/home/el-e-portfolio-guidance>) and ran information sessions on ePortfolio creation. Two student ambassadors were hired to help their peers.
9. **The Office of Career Services (OCS) and OEL worked with faculty and staff to capture existing Internship Relationships and to develop new ones for our students.** Specifically, we were able to collect updated community partner information from the following majors: 1) Social Work and 2) Nursing. We were also able to capture EL

locations for our students, through that KSF and Elms Advantage Scholarship Internship/Research sites, FELT Grant community sites, community work study sites and Career Fair community partners.

10. **OCS, OEL and the Business division collaboratively held a *Business Panel Event (April 4, 2023)*.** It was hosted for business students, but it was open to all students, to further exploration of careers in the banking, finance, and accounting industries. Panelists included a CPA (who was also an Elms alumna), and leaders from Westfield Bank and Northwestern Mutual. The event was attended by 30 people. The event provided students with a glimpse inside the real world of business and related professional opportunities. The Offices of Experiential Learning and Career Services are committed to helping students to learn about opportunities in their field for internships, employment, and careers.

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

1. St. Augustine Center for Ethics, Religion and Culture (CERC)

- With DOE approval received in late 2022, the formal launch of the MA in Bioethics and Medical Humanities (MA-BMH) has been set for the fall 2023.
 - Opportunities for MA-BMH students to complete clinical rotations through my Office of Clinical and Organizational Ethics at Baystate Health / UMass Chan Medical School - Baystate.
- The Bioethics and Medical Humanities minor continues to be the most popular minor offered at the Elms (spring 2023 census).
 - Undergraduate minors now provide a “fast-track” option (i.e., minor to master bridge) for students interested in the MA-BMH program, with six credits automatically transferred.
- Ethics across the curriculum:
 - Successful course pilots in Business (Moral Responsibility and Ethical Leadership), Biology (Global Bioethics), Biotechnology (Biomedical Research Ethics), Computer Science and Information Technology (Ethics of Artificial Intelligence), and Nursing (Ethics, Healthcare Disparities, and Social Justice), among others.
 - Future pilot courses planned in Psychology (Behavioral Health Ethics), Criminal Justice (Neuroethics and Criminal Law), and Education (Education Ethics).
- CERC-related publications included sixteen Elms’ student authors.
- The inaugural issues of the CERC journal *Charity in Truth: A Journal of Ethics, Religion, and Culture* was published in June 2023.
- The CERC hosted two distinguished lectures over the past year:

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- Ethics: Charlie Camosy, Ph.D., Professor of Medical Humanities, Creighton University School of Medicine; and Msgr. Michael J. Curran Fellow of Moral Theology, Saint Joseph's College and Seminary. Topic: "Losing Our Dignity: How Secularized Medicine is Undermining Fundamental Human Equality."
 - Rev. Hugh Crean Distinguished Lecture in Catholic Thought: Speaker: Karin Öberg, Ph.D., Professor & Director of Undergraduate Studies, Department of Astronomy, Harvard University. Topic: "Christian Creation and Big Bang Cosmology."
2. Dr. DePergola has begun the process to develop dual degree master's programs in collaboration with faculty in NSMT (BMS, BT), Nursing (MSN) and Business (MBA).
3. CERC Book Launch: *Along the Way: The Life, Lessons, and Legacy of Father Hugh F. Crean*
- Edited by Fr. Mark Stelzer and published in Fall 2022, the text includes 27 homilies and six guest essays that challenge readers to reconsider the essence and form of priesthood, religious life, and ministry while pointing to critical theological and pastoral themes that informed Crean's 53-year ministry.
 - CERC-affiliated contributors include Fr. Mark Stelzer (editor and chapter), Dr. Michael McGravey (chapter), Dr. Peter DePergola (chapter), and Dr. David O'Brien (chapter).
 - Proceeds from *Along the Way* have been generously donated to the CERC.
4. Mary Dooley Lecture 2022-2023
- Presenter: Sr. Mary McGlone, PhD, CSJ; Topic: "Charism on the Move," which aims to address the history and future of ACSSJ institutions in the twenty-first century. Sr. McGlone is a member of the Congregational Leadership Team for the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet and a historian of the Sisters in the United States. Her two-volume set, *Anything of Which a Woman is Capable and Called Forth by the Dear Neighbor*, pays special attention to the Sisters of St. Joseph here in the United States with pages dedicated to Greater Springfield and the College.

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.

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- Residence hall upgrades have begun in O’Leary (lounges, kitchen, and furniture) in summer 2023
- Office and meeting space in O’Leary is being created in the summer of 2023 for student clubs and organizations to foster communication and build on campus collaboration between student groups
- Commuter Student Council was formed. Meeting space is provided in Dooley Center.
- BeWell healthy dining options were introduced to students including vegan, vegetarian, plant based, and limited sugar options.

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

- Preparation for men’s lacrosse continues. 20-25 student-athletes will compete in the program in the 23-24 school year
- Women’s Softball completed its first game on the new Cheryl Condon Softball Field. This turf field also provides additional recreational opportunities for students.
Connect with students through spirituality of service
- Mission trips to Puerto Rico occurred in January. Trips to Jamaica and El Paso, TX were conducted during spring break
- Students collected over 500 pounds of food in drive to benefit the Gray House in Springfield
- First Year Encounter program coordinated volunteer opportunities for students to give back to the local community

3. *Increase the quality of college communication*

- Student Affairs established the OnCampusText platform in order to improve communication with students about college programs, services, and events
- Student Affairs expanded its use of social media, email, text messages to communicate with students about campus events

4. *Build a diverse, equitable, and inclusive campus community*

Reinforce the distinctiveness of the Elms Catholic mission through the development of new student programming initiatives in AY23 that cultivate student awareness of the Elms core values and a commitment to DEI&J.

- **equiTEA: Community Conversations**—a monthly discussion series centered around a student-selected topic and discussion questions, which encouraged participants to think with an intersectional lens about personal and institutional values as they relate to a variety of DEIJ themes.

- **The Elms for Equity Student Challenge 2023** was a 28-day experience during Black History Month by which students explored with partners and discussed in groups select educational content through an intersectional lens. Each week was thematically inspired by one of Elms' Core Values. (supported by CFWM grant)

Enhance faculty and staff demographic representation by a) Strengthening the policies and practices related to Faculty and Staff and b) Reviewing the onboarding strategy, particularly for new BIPOC and LGBTQ+ faculty and staff, with implementation of a staff support program similar to the Early Career Faculty Success program by December 2023.

- This strategic priority was shared with the Employee Retention and Recruitment subcommittee of the Institutional Diversity Committee to make recommendations to the President's Cabinet for FA23 implementation.
 - Institution of a Voluntary Demographic Survey as part of every employee application and a required Diversity Statement from every applicant
 - A requirement for all search committee members to undergo Hiring for Diversity training and complete a pre- and post-checklist of how each search process ascribed to DEIJ principles
- Review the On-boarding strategies for new faculty and staff
- Hold focus groups with BIPOC and LGBTQ+ faculty and staff

Implement at least two Faculty and Staff professional development opportunities per semester using an intersectional approach to bolster understandings of race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation and disability.

- 21-Day Challenge for Racial Justice for Faculty and Staff-FA22
- Gender Language Use (Shannon Peters)-FA22
- Universal Design Learning Brown Bag Workshop-FA22 (partnered with IDC)
- Three-part Culturally Relevant Learning Workshop Series centered on DEIJ-SP23 (supported by CFWM grant).

Formulate a strategy for developing courses and content that more fully incorporate justice, equity, diversity and inclusion into academic programs, including the liberal arts core curriculum.

- Working with Jasmine Hall to modify the Global and Cultural Awareness Liberal Arts Core requirement to incorporate and centralize DEIJ. Anticipated Faculty review in early FA23.

5. Develop a culture of wellness

- Health Center completed flu vaccine clinic
- Fresh Check Day was sponsored by the Counseling Center, assisting the campus community with mental health screenings

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- A peer health education program was developed by the Counseling Center. Eight student peer educators worked with Health Center staff to provide students with information on stress management, alcohol and drug addiction, nutrition, sleep, and mental health

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:

FY23 (Fall 22 & Spring) reported declining enrollment for undergraduate students over Fall 21 and Spring 22). To mitigate the post-pandemic declines, strategic initiatives included:

- Expanding recruitment outside of the 50-mile radius and outside of Massachusetts
- Increasing merit awards for top students from \$24k - \$25K (3.8 GPA)
- Adding major awards for social work, business and communication sciences

These initiatives projected FTIC enrollment of 178 but census numbers reflected 143; a decline in enrollment over FY21 of 33 students and a further decline in TR of 9 students (59 as compared to 68). Continuing Ed also suffered declines of 35 students (111 as compared to 146) and graduate enrollment declined by 23 (91 as compared to 114).

For FY24 (Fall 23 & Spring 24) the following strategic initiatives were planned and have been implemented:

- Increased automatic application days at local high schools
- Adding Men's lacrosse – recruiting 25 new students
- Reducing the 3.2 GPA for merit scholarships to 3.0
- Adding a \$3,000 high school grant for Chicopee, Holyoke & Springfield
- Enhancing Nursing awards increased to \$4,000 and most major awards remained at \$1,000
- Promoting Urban scholarship awards at \$2,000 (stackable) & Catholic awards at \$2,000
- Early mailing of FA awards & increased efficiencies to include enhancing packages with early awards for work-study; reducing the initial perception of Elms' cost to families

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- Changed FAFSA grant deadline to March 1 (\$1,000) allowing first generation students flexibility
- Added Electronic Billboards for “Decision Day” push and point-in-time marketing for Open House
- Increased transfer partnership award to \$5,000
- Elevated multi-channel marketing to increase top of funnel with billboard presence in Hartford, CT and Springfield & SEM digital for some programs
- Increased MOUs with businesses to promote CE and grad programs
- Built relationships with community colleges and communications to their 2-year graduates
- Increased presence on LinkedIn and other social media platforms for increased awareness for grad programs
- Added onsite hospital digital ads for nursing across 4 locations
- Added Automatic admit zoom info sessions for graduate programs

These initiatives projected FTIC enrollment of 175 and TR enrollment at 40. For Fall 2023, targets have been increased for FTIC to 190 and Transfer to 50 due to early enrollment success and a healthy admission funnel.

Finance & Operations:

1. Increase athletic practice field space by installing new turf and expanding turf coverage
Faced with limited athletic field space and time to practice due to field conditions during and after a weather event, the softball field was turfed to expand and improve the current field space. This allowed us to onboard a Lacrosse team this fall.
2. Create a budget with a positive margin that includes initiatives that help retain employees and support other strategic initiatives.

While the fiscal year results are still being finalized, the expected margin will meet the budget while providing for employee relations activities such as coffee q&a, pizza on the quad, and various other events.

3. Manage financial position to optimize NECHE and other regulatory metrics.
Initial projections for NECHE and other regulatory metrics are not yet finalized. When we get closer to closing the fiscal year we will have more information.

Advancement:

The goals and efforts of the Advancement team continue to support Elms College’s overall fundraising priorities as outlined in the College’s campus-wide strategic plan. The success achieved was made possible through reinvigorated efforts around assessment and enhancement of tactical strategies in close collaboration and support by the President. The fundraising work has been highly productive and yielded successful results for Fiscal Year 2023.

When reviewing the collective work in advancing the quiet phase of the ***Building Bridges Campaign***, there were several giving components that experienced growth in support of the overall goal. The annual components such as Major Giving, Planned Giving, Reunion Giving, Blazer Blitz (day of giving), Grant Submissions, and Corporate Sponsorship were instrumental in securing significant commitments for the College this past year. The aim was to enrich those areas that may currently be less advanced yet have the most potential for growth. Building the donor base through creative and consistent constituent relations will continue to develop a strong, qualifiable, and a sustainable group of potential major and annual fund leadership donors.

In conclusion, the overall FY23 goal of \$3 million was surpassed by 38%. Hence, the total raised for FY23 stands at **\$4.1 million**. A \$1.5 million gift, the single largest one-time contribution in the College's history largely helped to achieve the overall goal of raising (and surpassing) \$3 million.