The University of Oklahoma
Christopher C. Gibbs College of Architecture

STRATEGIC PLAN

2018 - 2021
Through **Design in Action**, the Christopher C. Gibbs College of Architecture’s research, teaching, and service are grounded in our shared values based on the tradition of The American School: contextual, resourceful, and entrepreneurial practice. We imagine a future in which all communities are resilient and empowered to maximize their social, economic and environmental well-being.

**Who We Are**
While the College’s history dates to 1916, the Christopher C. Gibbs College of Architecture (GCA) was founded in 1970 as the College of the Built Environment and evolved into the College of Architecture in 1984. In 2017, it received a historic naming gift from Christopher C. and Ania Gibbs and was named in their honor. Today, it is the only college in the United States that houses the following allied programs: Architecture, Construction Science, Environmental Design, Interior Design, Landscape Architecture, Regional & City Planning, and Urban Design. Our intellectual bridges shape an environment that best prepares our graduates for successful working relationships on the job site or in academia and creates an operational base for community outreach efforts.

**What We Do Well**
GCA faculty are eager collaborators who contribute to cross-campus collaborative efforts that advance the work of multiple disciplines. For example, our faculty contribute to the university mission by co-directing the collaborative OU Center for Peace and Development; working with faculty in Education on improving learning in schools; and testing the resilience of traditional home framing methods with Engineering faculty at the Fears Lab.

Students in the GCA are passionate about achieving excellence in planning, design, and construction. This excellence is recognized by third parties through success in national design-build competitions, through admission to highly competitive graduate programs such as Harvard, Columbia, and Penn, and by 100% employment placement within three months of graduation.

**Where We Wish to Go**
The GCA aims to cultivate high-performing industry professionals, measurable community impact and peer-reviewed research and creative activity at the leading edges of our allied disciplines. Investments in teaching capacity, research, and community engagement shall be concentrated in the following over-arching areas of focus: Resilience, Entrepreneurship, Wellbeing and The American School. These focused investments will help secure unparalleled learning experiences for our students, support traditional and community-oriented research by students and faculty, and bolster the impact of our graduates on their communities.

**What We Need to Get There**
To develop capacity in the GCA’s areas of focus, the 2018-2021 Strategic Plan identifies key goals and objectives in the following areas: resilience-centered research and creative activity; community-engaged scholarship and service learning; inclusion, diversity and opportunity; facilities and technologies; the college identity; and financial resources.

Hans E. Butzer, Dean
OU Christopher C. Gibbs College of Architecture
Strategic Plan Process

The OU Christopher C. Gibbs College of Architecture drafted this new strategic plan during Spring and Summer 2018. This process began by casting a wide net for feedback from critical stakeholders: Faculty and Staff, Students, Advisory Board Members, and Alumni.

Over the last few years, each Back to School Meeting has included breakout sessions that asked groups of faculty and staff to discuss aspects of the College’s work. Additionally, students have been consulted during Town Hall meetings.

An effort to collect a wider range of feedback from stakeholders began in January 2018 with a meeting format inspired by community engagement meetings. During the meeting in the Gould Hall Gallery, faculty and staff provided their thoughts and ideas using Post-it notes and sticker dots to respond to a number of categories: Facilities, Funds, Faculty, Staff, Students, College Identity, Existing Strategic Guidance, Ongoing Efforts, Dreams for the College, Challenges for the College, Future Headlines, a Wall of Questions, and 2018 Goals.

At the end of the January, students responded in the same format during a student town hall that included a pizza party. The boards and materials to leave feedback remained in the gallery for several days. On February 9, coinciding with Board of Visitors and Advisory Board meetings, the same meeting format and opportunity to provide thoughts was offered to members of these boards. Finally, alumni received an online survey version of the feedback prompts, and the College received nearly 100 responses.

Faculty, staff, and program directors were presented with findings and provided additional comments and suggestions in March, May, and over the summer. These efforts resulted in the Strategic Plan found in this document, which includes goals, actions, and metrics for implementation of important priorities of our college community.
University Mission
To provide the best possible educational experience for our students through excellence in teaching, research, and creative activity, and service to the state and society.

University Values
OU embraces its identity as a research institution and takes pride in the breadth of disciplines represented by our faculty, staff, and students, which creates unique opportunities to solve complex problems, to serve society, and to engage in basic discovery. The institution aspires to conduct research and creative activities that drive innovation, promotes human flourishing and justice, and fosters human expression.

College Vision
Design in Action: We imagine a future in which all communities are designed for resiliency and empowered to maximize their social, economic, and environmental well-being.

College Values
Our research, teaching, and service are grounded in the values of The American School:

- **Contextual**
  Sensitive to people and place.
  We respond to the identified social, cultural, environmental context of people and place.

- **Resourceful**
  Relentlessly leveraging assets.
  We seek solutions that draw on existing social, economic, and environmental assets to produce low-waste, innovative results.

- **Entrepreneurial**
  Visionary, ready to take action.
  We work at the leading edge of the ideas, technologies, methods, and processes of our disciplines.

College Purpose
The Christopher C. Gibbs College of Architecture community develops new knowledge and trains high-performing professionals to design resilient communities. By working across disciplines, we design and optimize community infrastructures by achieving excellence in research, teaching, creative activity, and community engagement in our areas of focus:

- Resilience
- Entrepreneurship
- Wellbeing
- The American School

**Resilience**
We define resilience as “...the capacity of individuals, communities and systems to survive, adapt and grow in the face of changes” (Rockefeller Foundation, https://bit.ly/2Lt9sM).
Outcomes

High-Performing Industry Professionals
Graduates who are well-rounded individuals, lifelong learners, and leaders who are prepared to make contributions in our fields.

Measurable Community Impact
Local and global communities that are positively impacted by research, teaching, and creative activity that includes community engagement.

Peer-Reviewed Research & Creative Activity
New knowledge that enhances our program’s standing at the leading edges of our disciplines.

Goals and Actions

1.0 Expand support for student excellence that advances College Outcomes.
  1.1 Advance curricula that prepare graduates to lead.
  1.2 Develop common peer-review and evaluation criteria for teaching.
  1.3 Encourage faculty to seek teaching-related development opportunities including mentorship and training.
  1.4 Measure and report the results.

2.0 Expand support for excellence in research, community engagement, and creative activity in our areas of focus.
  2.1 Align faculty searches to work toward the ideal college-wide distribution of effort.
  2.2 Develop common peer-review and evaluation criteria for faculty research, engagement, and creative activity.
  2.3 Encourage faculty to seek research- and creative activity-oriented mentorship.
  2.4 Refine Program for Research Enhancement to support increased research activity and external funding.
  2.5 Develop a college framework for community engagement.
  2.6 Measure and report the results.

3.0 Foster an environment of diversity, equality, inclusion and opportunity.
  3.1 Support college and campus-wide groups, events, and training programs that foster diversity and inclusion.
  3.2 Compare student body demographics to state and university averages to inform recruiting and retention efforts.
  3.3 Implement proactive diversity recruiting and retention practices in employee search and promotion processes.
  3.4 Measure and report the results.

4.0 Build capacity to support the work of faculty, staff and students.
  4.1 Conduct a capacity and occupancy assessment of Gould Hall.
  4.2 Develop utilization and management plans for specialty labs.
  4.3 Support OU campus planning, design, and construction.
  4.4 Conduct an assessment of staff roles and classifications.
  4.5 Measure and report the results.

5.0 Communicate a strong college identity.
  5.1 Develop a marketing plan that communicates a clear, concise, and aspirational brand identity.
  5.2 Measure and report the results.

6.0 Expand and manage financial resources to support strategic investments.
  6.1 Create a stewardship plan to guide development efforts in the following areas:
    - Student scholarship, travel study and student opportunities
    - Faculty teaching, research and outreach opportunities
    - Competitive pay for faculty and staff
  6.2 Measure and report the results.
1.0 Expand support for teaching excellence that advances College Outcomes.

Overview

The College will expand support for curricula and teaching that results in high-performing industry professionals who are well-rounded, lifelong learners, and leaders who are prepared to make contributions in the field. This effort requires continued review and reflection on curricula and teaching effectiveness.

Faculty whose distribution of effort is heavily weighted toward teaching enable research faculty to dedicate more effort to research and creative activity.

1.1 Advance curricula that prepare graduates to lead.

Divisions will continually ensure that their curricula meet available accreditation requirements, industry standards, and competitive benchmarks for third-party recognition.

Beyond this, the College will continue to support curricular enhancements that expand student opportunity and increase credit hour generation in the College from non-major students. These will include continued investment in travel study programs, growth of certificate programs in our areas of focus, training in emerging technologies, interdisciplinary opportunities in classrooms, or other efforts.

The extra-curricular environment continues to be important to student development. The College supports student organization activities and social engagements.

Lead Implementer: Division Director  
Implementers: Deans’ Office, Division Directors, Student Organizations, Advisory Boards  
Timeline: Spring 2020+ Divisional Review Annually

1.2 Develop common peer-review and evaluation criteria for teaching.

The College shall establish consistent standards or key metrics that are comparable across disciplines and achieve College-wide distribution of effort goals. These standards will be used to inform faculty advancement and award decisions.

Lead Implementer: Committee A Chair  
Implementers: Deans’ Office, Division Director, Committee A  
Timeline: Develop Spring 2019 Implement AY 2019-20
1.3 Encourage faculty to seek teaching-related development opportunities including mentorship and training.

Based on their individual distribution of effort goals, faculty shall pursue mentorship or training to advance teaching effectiveness. Evaluations shall include review of mentorship and training activity.

Lead Implementer: Division Director

Implementers: Division Director, Committee A, Faculty Members

Timeline:
Develop Spring 2019
Implement AY 2019-20

1.4 Measure and report the results.

The College will track the following metrics each year:

- Division review of curricular/extra-curricular opportunities
- Enrollment in certificate programs
- Third-party recognition of programs
- Credit hour generation
- Third-party recognition of programs
- Third-party recognition of faculty creative activity
- Survey of organizations who hire our graduates to ensure that our curricular meeting the needs of industry
- Division review of curricular and extra-curricular opportunities
- 3-Year masters completion rate (Target: 75%)
- Doctoral time to degree (Target: <5 years)
- 7-Year Doctoral completion rate (Target 70%)
- First year retention rate (Target: 92%)
- 6-Year retention rate (Target: 75%)

Implementers: See Reporting Party (Scorecard)

Timeline:
Plan AY 2018-19
Tracking AY 2019+

“Each of my professors was incredibly knowledgeable and motivating. Other majors do not offer as individualized of help or provide the accessibility that the OU College of Architecture does. Furthermore, student competitions were a major success because they introduced students to the industry very early on.”

Jonathan Healey
OU Construction Science Alum
Senior Project Engineer at Balfour Beatty Construction
Overview
The College will expand support of research, community engagement, and creative activity that engages its four areas of focus: Resilience, Entrepreneurship, Wellbeing and The American School.

Community-engaged scholarship addresses local and global challenges alongside community and OU partners. By engaging with communities through research or service learning, the College of Architecture can have a measurable impact on communities’ efforts to address challenges faced by communities. Engaged scholarship improves the performance of students who graduate with experience in real-world projects, clients, and collaborative teams.

Faculty whose distribution of effort is heavily weighted toward research and creative activity enable teaching faculty to dedicate more effort to classroom activity.

2.1 Align faculty searches to work toward the ideal college-wide distribution of effort.

The College-wide distribution of effort is 40% research, 40% teaching, 20% service. As an internal standard for a Regular Faculty Recruiting Application, division directors shall include a description of the proposed distribution of effort for the faculty hire. The application should highlight (1) an explanation of the proposed hire’s relevance to the College’s areas of focus and ability to obtain external funding, or (2) an explanation of the proposed hire’s ability to assume additional teaching duties and free another faculty member to increase research.

Lead Implementer: Division Director
Implementers: Deans’ Office, Division Directors, Search Committees
Timeline: Ongoing AY 2018+

2.2 Develop common peer-review and evaluation criteria for faculty research, community engagement, and creative activity.

The College shall establish consistent standards or key metrics that are comparable across disciplines and achieve College-wide distribution of effort goals. These standards will be used to inform faculty advancement and award decisions.

Lead Implementer: Committee A Chair
Implementers: Deans’ Office, Division Director, Committee A
Timeline: Develop Spring 2019 Implement AY 2020-21
2.3 Encourage faculty to seek research- and creative activity- oriented mentorship.

Based on their individual distribution of effort goals, faculty shall pursue participation in the Institutional Faculty Mentoring Program or similar, and pursue mentorship within the college and across campus. Evaluations shall include review of mentorship activity (See 1.2).

Lead Implementer: Division Director  
Implementers: Division Director, Committee A, Faculty Members  
Timeline: Develop Spring 2019  
Implement AY 2019-20

2.4 Refine Program for Research Enhancement to support increased research activity and external funding.

The Program for Research Enhancement (PRE) application process shall continue to provide a pathway to apply for funding, course releases, and other research support. The program shall be refined to incentivize activity that aligns with the strategic plan and areas of focus. Refinements to the PRE shall encourage applications that:

- Support cross-campus research clusters
- Include undergraduate or graduate student assistants
- Develop industry partnerships
- Require matching funds to attract external funding

The College will make an effort to grow the available resources dedicated to the PRE to award larger grants and limited-term professorships.

Lead Implementer: Committee A, Chair and DRISP  
Implementers: Deans’ Office, Division Directors, Committee A  
Timeline: Develop Spring 2019  
Implement AY 2019-20

“I came to OU as a Fulbright Scholar from Russia to pursue a degree in Regional and City Planning... After my first semester, I was offered a Graduate Fellow position at the Institute for Quality Communities... At IQC I developed a strong interest in and honed my skills in placemaking and urban design by helping implement the projects to assist the speakers at the biannual Placemaking Conference.”

Anna Siprikova  
OU Regional + City Planning Alum  
Senior Program Associate at Global Designing Cities Initiative, National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO)
"The support from faculty and staff was absolutely crucial to my success in school and thereafter."

Adelle York
OU Architecture Alum
Graduate Student at the Harvard Graduate School of Design

"Prior to attending graduate school, I found my interest in urbanism through the interdisciplinary and collaborative classes that the College of Architecture offered."

Shelly Zhu
OU Interior Design Alum
Senior Designer at CallisonRTKL

### 2.5 Develop a college framework for community engagement.

Faculty and staff across the college's programs are already incorporating community partnerships leading to engaged scholarship in and out of the classroom. The university continues to value community engagement and impact. The College will support these partnerships by drafting a shared framework for establishing, funding, and executing these partnerships. The process of creating the framework will include discussions among faculty, staff, and students who participate in community engagements to identify common barriers and best practices.

The College's community engagement framework shall identify pathways for peer review, recognition, and dissemination for community engagement work. The framework shall also indicate how community engagement results and impact can be evaluated in annual performance reviews.

**Lead Implementer:** IQC Director

**Implementers:** Deans' Office, IQC, Faculty Representatives, Provost's Community Engagement work group

**Timeline:**

- **Plan AY 2018-19**
- **Implement AY 2019+**
2.6 Measure and report the results.

The College will develop an annual Community Impact Report featuring brief case studies of community engagement and impacts. The Provost’s Community Engagement working group provides a survey for community partners to evaluate projects. In addition, quantitative metrics tracked internally are proposed:

- College-wide distribution of effort ratio
- Number of peer-reviewed publications and exhibitions
- Percent of faculty engaged in cross-campus research clusters
- Dollars of externally-funded research
- Dollars of PRE investment
- Percent of undergraduate students with assistantships/mentorships
- Percent of graduate students with teaching assistantships
- Percent of graduate students with research assistantships
- Third-party recognition of faculty creative activity
- Number of projects with engaged partners
- Number of student hours in engaged projects
- Number of community stakeholders engaged
- Dollars of external funding
- Percent of graduates who participated in engaged scholarship
- Percent increase in blind peer-reviewed works over previous year

“"The local and regional community-based projects created an exciting, fast-paced learning environment that was both interesting and engaging...
It is a true testament to the program to see how many Urban Design Studio projects have morphed seamlessly in to the fabric of our city today."

Sarah Gould
OU Urban Design Alum
Owner of KKT Architects

Implementers: See Reporting Party (Scorecard)  
Timeline: Plan AY 2018-19
Tracking AY 2019+
3.0 Foster an environment of inclusion, diversity, and opportunity.

**Overview**

A faculty and student body with people of many backgrounds is essential for facing challenges to create resilient communities. The College will foster a more diverse and inclusive faculty, staff, and student body to enrich the learning experience and improve diversity in our allied professions. Our travel study programs and community engagement reinforce the importance of a culture of diversity and inclusion among our students and faculty.

3.1 Support college and campus-wide groups, events, and training programs that foster diversity and inclusion.

As funding allows, the College supports student groups like the National Organization of Minority Architecture Students. The College supports the programming of the Gender and Equality Center and the Office of University Community, and includes their programming in regular communications with faculty and students. The College also endeavors to advertise regular sessions or hold special sessions of LGBTQ Ally training.

Lead Implementer: Dean
Implementers: Deans’ Office, Student Groups, Faculty

**Timeline:**
- Baseline AY 2013-14
- Track Ongoing

3.2 Compare student body demographics to state and university averages to inform recruiting and retention efforts that reduce underrepresentation.

The College shall track the demographics of the student body in comparison to state demographics. This process provides a benchmark for identifying underrepresented groups. Recruiting and retention efforts shall be tailored to overcome barriers to entry and incentivize participation by these groups.

Lead Implementer: Academic Advisor
Implementers: Deans’ Office, Academic Advising, Office of Admissions and Recruiting, Graduate College

**Timeline:**
- Baseline AY 2013-14
- Track Ongoing
3.3 Implement proactive diversity recruiting and retention practices in search and promotion processes for faculty and staff.

Hiring searches shall actively implement measures that attract a diverse pool of candidates. For example, advertising the position to minority professional organizations, historically black colleges and universities, and tribal colleges. Hiring, award, and promotion committees must be aware of and take measures to reduce implicit bias in evaluation processes. For example, committees may choose to include a member of the campus-wide Diversity and Inclusivity Campus Academic Council as an external member.

Lead Implementer: Associate Dean
Implementers: Deans’ Office, Search Committees, Award Committees
Timeline: Ongoing

3.4 Measure and report the results.

The College prepares an annual report on diversity and inclusion. This report includes measurements such as:

- Demographic make-up of incoming and graduating students
- Percent of graduates who participated in travel study or out-of-culture experiences
- Demographic make-up of faculty and staff
- Number of faculty, staff and students who participate in diversity and inclusion-oriented training each year

Implementers: See Reporting Party (Scorecard)
Timeline: Review Graduate Exit Survey Spring 2019
Baseline AY 2013-14
Track Ongoing

“As a student in landscape architecture I was working and collaborating with students ... who came from various backgrounds. This was a valuable benefit because it mimics the professional setting I’m in today—collaborating across disciplines, learning from others, and working as a team.”

Shane Friese
OU Landscape Architecture Alum
Landscape Architect & Project Manager at Freese and Nichols, Inc.
4.0 Manage facilities and technologies that support the work of faculty and students.

Overview

The College maintains facilities at Gould Hall and specialty labs. The College will support faculty and students with the latest technologies and up-to-date facilities. The College will review existing facilities to find opportunities for improvement or expansion to stay current with the needs of students and faculty.

4.1 Conduct a capacity and occupancy assessment of Gould Hall.

After 7 years in the remodeled Gould Hall, the facility is still continually refined to accommodate changing uses. A comprehensive review of capacity and usage could reveal opportunities for adjustment. The assessment could help inform whether there is a need for expansion of the facility based on enrollment trends and program needs.

Lead Implementer: Faculty with Expertise (Summer Contract)

Implementers: Deans' Office, Division Directors, Faculty

Timeline: Summer 2019

4.2 Develop utilization and management plans for specialty labs.

Specialty labs include the Creating/Making Lab on George Street, the Oklahoma City Design Center, the BIM/VIZ Lab, Digital Making Lab, and computer labs. Each lab shall seek to maximize utilization in support of educational objectives, research outcomes, and community engagement. Each lab will identify projected maintenance or upgrades. Each lab will also explore potential user groups across campus and in the community.

Parallel efforts at the university, such as efforts by the Tom Love Innovation Hub or OU Libraries, should also be considered. The College's specialty labs may identify efficiencies to share resources or management efforts with these groups.

Lead Implementer: Specialty Lab Representatives

Implementers: Deans' Office, Specialty Lab Representatives and Users, OU IT, OU Libraries, Innovation Hub

Timeline: Summer 2019+
4.3 Support OU campus planning, design, and construction.

GCA faculty have expertise that is valuable in facility planning, design, and construction. In coordination with the President’s Office, faculty may engage in technical assistance as part of their service commitments.

Lead Implementer: Dean

Implementers: Dean, Division Directors, Faculty

4.4 Conduct an assessment of staff roles and classifications.

GCA staff has experienced changes in its numbers, composition, and job requirements over the past several years. A comprehensive review of college needs and staff capacity and responsibilities could reveal opportunities for adjustment. The review could reveal whether there is a need to add staff and adjust current staff responsibilities or position classifications in response to enrollment trends and program needs.

Lead Implementer: Dean

Implementers: Dean, Division Directors, Faculty

4.5 Measure and report the results.

Changes and improvements to the facilities will be communicated annually to the faculty and student community. Usage of facilities will also be tracked.

- List of refinements or updates to facilities
- Number of students and faculty trained at specialty labs

Implementers: See Reporting Party (Scorecard)

Timeline: Ongoing
5.0 Communicate a strong college identity.

Overview

“Design in Action” reflects our commitment to developing new knowledge and training high-performing professionals to design resilient communities. The practitioners of our allied disciplines design the policies, processes, and infrastructures that shape communities.

The “Design in Action” brand is based on the community impacts of research, teaching, and service at the College, and on celebrating the accomplishments of alumni in the field. A refined communication strategy rooted in the legacy of The American School is essential to the pursuit of development opportunities, third-party recognition, and sense of community among College faculty, staff, students, and alumni.

5.1 Develop a marketing plan that communicates a clear, concise, and aspirational brand identity.

The College will develop and communicate through annual community impact reports, regular newsletters, and online media to engage external stakeholders across diverse sectors, including the University, industry professionals, alumni, and potential community partners.

Successful external communication depends on successful internal communication. Faculty, students, and alumni should contribute news items for inclusion in marketing materials.

Implementers: Deans’ Office, Faculty, Students, Alumni, Advisory Boards

Timeline:
Website Launch Fall 2018
Plan AY 2018-19
Implement Ongoing

5.2 Measure and report the results.

The College will track the success of marketing and communications efforts through a number of metrics:

- Analytics for monthly Oculus newsletter
- Analytics for social media and website engagement
- Number of mentions in media

Implementers: See Reporting Party (Scorecard)

Timeline:
Ongoing
6.0 Expand and manage financial resources to support strategic goals and objectives.

Overview

The recent naming gift for the Christopher C. Gibbs College of Architecture provided a strong foundation to secure the College’s financial future. The College will pursue expanded financial resources through targeted program enrollment growth and by growing its total endowment. Expanded and managed resources support strategic investments in students, human resources, research, teaching, community engagement, and facilities.

6.1 Create a stewardship plan to guide development efforts.

The College will pursue a development plan to grow the total endowed funds.
- Student scholarship, travel study and student opportunities
- Faculty teaching, research and outreach opportunities
- Competitive pay for faculty and staff

The plan will include continued outreach and relationship-building with alumni, industry partners, and advisory boards. The College will consider hiring a development intern to provide additional support staff.

Implementers: Deans’ Office, Division Directors, Advisory Boards, OU Office of Development

Timeline:
Plan AY 2018-19
Implement AY 2018+

6.2 Measure and report the results.

An annual stewardship report will include an overview of development progress. Two metrics are proposed for this report, however the stewardship and development plan may reveal additional metrics that are worth tracking.

- Number of unique donors
- Total value of endowment

Implementers: See Reporting Party (Scorecard)

Timeline:
Reporting each May
Addendum: Areas of Focus

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES IN THE CONTEXT OF THE GCA 2019+
Emerging areas of excellence in research, creative activity, and community engagement

1. RESILIENCE
Social, intellectual, and physical infrastructure

2. ENTREPRENEURSHIP
Innovation and agency in planning, design and construction

3. WELLBEING
Evidence-based design, pedagogy, and experience

GCA STRATEGIC PRIORITIES with RESEARCH THEMES