

Unit: Undergraduate Academic Affairs

Section 1: Programmatic & Academic Vitality Narratives

- 1) Have you made any changes to your unit's strategic plan and/or budget process in the past year? If yes, what are 3-5 key elements of your unit's new/revised strategic plan and/or budget process? If no, please comment on the progress you've made in 3-5 key areas of your strategic plan.**

We are at the mid-way point of our five-year (2018-2023) strategic plan. While altered here and there by the pandemic, our progress has persisted toward our strategic objectives, including the following:

1. UAA was founded in the early 1990s based on the premise that a centralized unit dedicated to undergraduate education would be especially well-positioned to construct novel learning experiences that do not necessarily align with a college or school. Core to our current strategic plan is to build upon our history in this regard in a more accelerated manner. Among our notable achievements this past year necessarily include pivoting learning experiences to virtual formats, not least the Undergraduate Research Symposium, which featured over 850 student participants. Another curricular innovation was one that we couldn't have imagined at the outset of our planning process: "2020: The Course." This was certainly an extraordinary educational opportunity at an extraordinary time and we are committed to leveraging this experience to advance extraordinary interdisciplinary teaching and learning initiatives as we move toward what are hopefully more ordinary times in the coming years. Interdisciplinarity is a key characteristic of the curricular innovations we are most well-positioned to advance, so we are especially proud to now be playing a role in supporting students' engagement in the new Data Science minor and to have just received approval from FCAS to offer a new minor in Leadership Studies. Finally, we are very pleased to have published the Resilience Lab's *Well-Being for Life and Learning Guidebook*, a resource which will support instructors' facilitation for learning experiences that embody principles of resilience and compassion in support of student mental health.

2. Optimizing the pre-major experience is another strategic objective on which we made substantial progress this past year. Some of this progress was unplanned, however: Pivoting our entire new student orientation, advising, tutoring, and academic success coaching operation was a substantial – and successful! – undertaking, and we are intent on making sure that all of the learning we have done does not end up being in vain with a return to campus and a resumption of business as usual. To be sure, we have new understandings of what we and students are capable of, which will benefit our service to pre-major students for years to come. Indirectly but no less important, will be the Office of Educational Assessment's completion of a second retention and graduation study which will propel the work of the Retention Task Force, just as its original study from 2014 did.

3. Finally, we have a number of strategic objectives related to UAA administrative matters and toward which we have made significant strides. For example, to advance organizational effectiveness and efficiency and in anticipation of UWFT organizational requirements, we have centralized and reclassified several personnel whose work supports human resource and financial management. Also for example, to bolster our work on equity-focused staffing practices we are critically examining what we are doing in recruitment processes to cultivate diverse applicant pools.