



COLLEGE OF  
BEHAVIORAL &  
SOCIAL SCIENCES

**STRATEGIC PLAN**

# Introduction

Behavioral and Social Sciences at the University of Maryland has a rich history spanning more than 100 years. Over time, the size and impact of the College of Behavioral and Social Sciences (BSOS) has grown and strengthened. The dynamic educational programs and groundbreaking research in BSOS are central to understanding the human experience, which is at the heart of every grand challenge affecting our world.

Today, our College is one of the largest on campus with a diverse portfolio including academic departments in African American and Africana Studies (AAAS), Anthropology (ANTH), Criminology and Criminal Justice (CCJS), Economics (ECON), Geographical Sciences (GEOG), Government and Politics (GVPT), Hearing and Speech Sciences (HESP), Psychology (PSYC), and Sociology (SOCY), as well as many research centers and educational programs that cross multiple academic disciplines and focus on solutions to critical issues.

When we set out to craft a new strategic plan, I wanted it to be grounded in our collective past, informed by the present moment, and responsive to the future. As Dean, I charged a Steering Committee of BSOS faculty and staff to lead our planning process and to gather community input and data to shape a targeted set of priorities. This plan is a direct reflection of the many ideas and opportunities shared by faculty, staff, students, partners, and alumni in this process. Our new plan is in close alignment with the campus strategic plan, Fearlessly Forward, while also leveraging our unique strengths to advance our vision. As we pursue ambitious goals for our College, we will hold ourselves accountable by reflecting on progress at regular intervals using quantitative and qualitative indicators of success.

This strategic plan articulates how BSOS is positioned to contribute to solving new and existing grand challenges. From climate change and biodiversity decline to international relations and socioeconomic inequality, the BSOS community is exploring and addressing the most important issues of our time. By leveraging our academic, research, and partnership strengths and implementing the objectives articulated in this plan, the College of Behavioral and Social Sciences will work toward a better future. Together, we will be fearless, we will be bold, and we will Be the Solution.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Susan M. Rivera'.

Susan M. Rivera, Ph.D.  
Dean and Professor

# Guiding Principles

## Mission Statement

The College of Behavioral and Social Sciences (BSOS) at the University of Maryland increases understanding of and pursues innovative solutions to the complex challenges facing our world. BSOS draws on local, national and global connections to enrich its teaching, learning, research, and service.

In all that we do, BSOS aims to **BE THE SOLUTION** to the world's great challenges.

## Vision Statement

The UMD College of Behavioral and Social Sciences will advance innovative and student-centered teaching and learning; produce cutting-edge research and data-driven solutions to critical challenges; and build collaborations with our broad-ranging local, state, national and global partners. Together, our diverse community will create more equitable, healthy, and sustainable societies.

## Core Values

**Academic Excellence:** We provide a rigorous academic environment where all can grow intellectually and our research can flourish.

**Collaboration:** We achieve more when we work together toward a common goal, drawing on the strengths of our diverse community.

**Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Social Justice:** We recognize that we are strongest and achieve excellence when we embrace a wide range of voices, ideas, perspectives, identities, abilities, and experiences, with an enduring commitment to social justice.

**Innovation:** We think creatively and apply new solutions, grounded in the behavioral and social sciences, to complex societal problems.

**Respect:** We create environments that foster productive exchanges of diverse ideas and perspectives while treating everyone with dignity.

**Service to Humanity:** We work toward a better future for all through social and behavioral sciences research, education, and service.

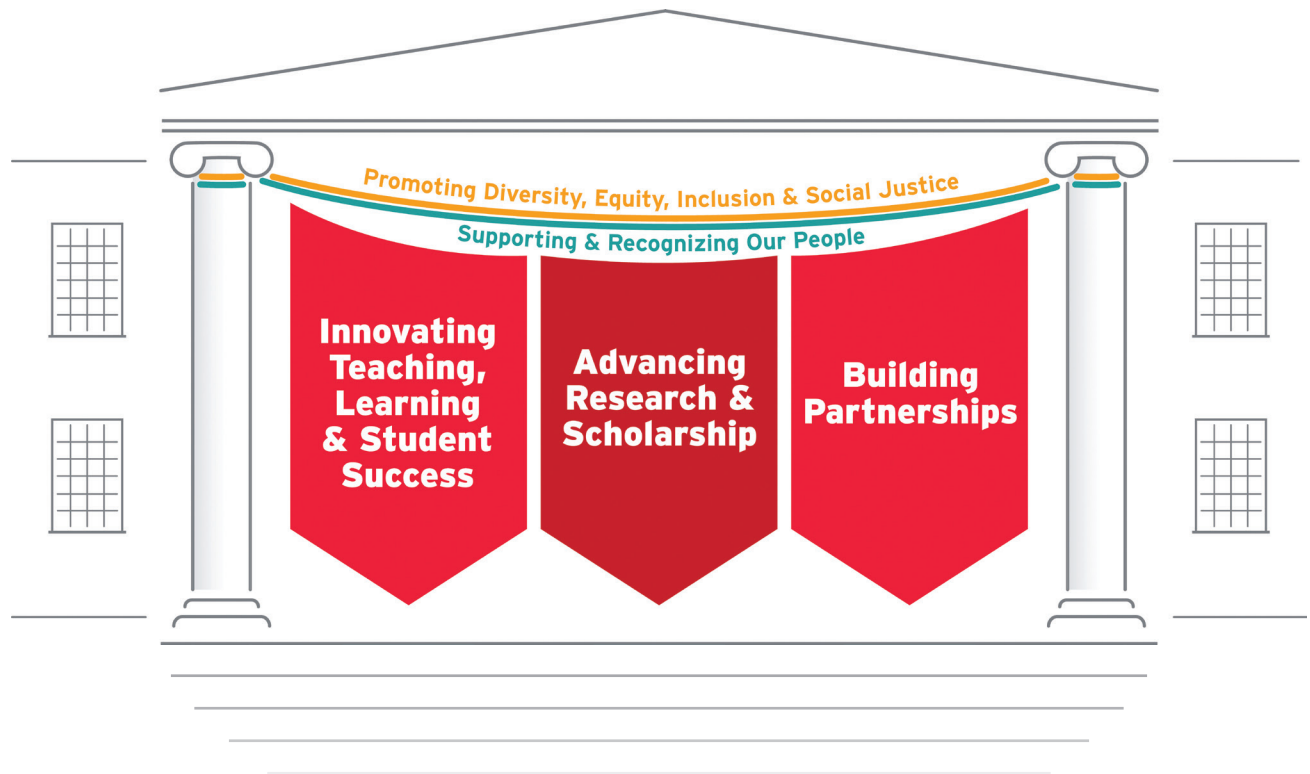


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# Strategic Plan Framework

The College of Behavioral and Social Sciences' strategic plan identifies three **priority areas** for the College to realize its vision.

The strategic plan also includes two **cross-cutting themes** that intersect with and infuse all three priorities.





## Priority Areas of Focus

**Innovating Teaching, Learning, and Student Success:** Ensuring that faculty and staff are working together to develop and deliver high-quality, evidence-based teaching, learning, and student services.

**Advancing Research and Scholarship:** Supporting and increasing the impact and visibility of scholarly activity across the varied disciplines in BSOS that strives to find solutions to the most pressing issues of our time.

**Building Partnerships:** Developing new and supporting existing partnerships, both within and beyond traditional academic boundaries, that enhance our mission-critical work.



## Cross-Cutting Themes

**Promoting Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Social Justice:** Creating and maintaining an environment where diverse perspectives are valued, inclusive and equitable practices are upheld, and systemic injustices are actively challenged and dismantled.

**Supporting and Recognizing our People:** Recognizing that our community members are our greatest assets, we invest in their development and well-being to allow them to thrive.



**Priority Area of Focus #1**

# Innovating Teaching, Learning, and Student Success

The College of Behavioral and Social Sciences prioritizes teaching, learning, and student success as a central part of our mission and contribution to the campus. BSOS faculty and staff are dedicated to innovation and excellence in their instruction and delivery methods. With a broad portfolio of undergraduate and graduate degree programs across the social and behavioral sciences, BSOS offers numerous learning opportunities that cater to the needs and passions of our diverse student body. We have the unique privilege of training the next generation of activists, anthropologists, audiologists, criminologists, counter-terrorism experts, economists, geographers, politicians, psychologists, social data scientists, sociologists, survey methodologists and more.

During the coming years, we will continue to innovate in teaching, learning, and student success by implementing and assessing evidence-based practices in our teaching and learning spaces, including classrooms and clinics, as well as research, internship, and service-learning settings. We will also deliver robust and accessible student-centered support services to meet the evolving academic and career planning needs of our students.



## Objectives

**Drive Academic Innovation:** Promote and measure the impact of pedagogical innovation and proactive interventions that drive undergraduate and graduate student success, especially with a focus on erasing gaps in academic engagement and success between groups in the College.

**Accelerate Student Success:** Enhance targeted support programs and mentorship opportunities in order to recruit, retain, graduate, and successfully launch diverse undergraduate and graduate students.

**Increase Adaptability:** Develop best practices for BSOS departments to deliver optimal instruction and student services (in-person, blended, online) to meet the needs of our heterogeneous student population.

**Promote Continuous Learning:** Support the ongoing professional development and training of faculty, staff, graduate student instructors, and teaching assistants across all backgrounds and ranks so they are prepared, confident, and well-supported in their important roles as teachers and mentors to our students.



## Cross-Cutting Themes

**Promoting Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Social Justice:** Our College is home to faculty, staff, and students with diverse backgrounds and lived experiences. Recognizing the unique perspectives and identities of our community members, we are committed to adapting to meet their evolving needs. Our goal is to empower our instructors to deliver high-quality, student-centered learning experiences to a diverse student body, ensuring equitable and holistic support for all.

**Supporting and Recognizing our People:** We owe a debt of gratitude to our faculty, staff, graduate student instructors, and teaching assistants who are trailblazers in teaching, learning, and student success. Our employees are committed to providing meaningful learning opportunities and student services for each BSOS student from initial onboarding to career exploration. By strengthening continuous learning for employees, we support them in this mission.



## Indicators of Success

- Increased retention and graduation rates
- Increased student satisfaction and belonging
- Increased academic engagement and success of students, independent of race/ethnicity, gender, first-generation, or transfer status
- Increased quality of first-destination placement of BSOS alumni





## Priority Area of Focus #2

# Advancing Research and Scholarship

We produce research and scholarship that improves the human experience by investigating the social and behavioral angles of major problems facing local and global communities. BSOS disciplines are at the heart of these problems such as climate change, mental health crises, threats to our democracy, social justice, and the intersection of human behavior and artificial intelligence. Consider climate change - it is not enough to study the environmental impacts of global warming, we must understand the political, regulatory, societal, behavioral, economic, and health dimensions too in order to develop sustainable solutions.

Our College is home to an international community of experts across numerous departments, programs, research centers and initiatives. Although external funding is just one indicator of our success and impact, over the last three years, BSOS faculty and staff generated an average of \$59 million annually in external funding from prestigious entities including the NIH, NSF, NASA, and DHS. In addition, our experts produce data, findings, technology, interventions, and recommendations that guide a wide range of professionals toward effective life-changing solutions.

Over the coming years, we will strategically invest in research facilities, technology, and infrastructure so that BSOS can continue to help solve the most important and challenging issues of our time. Now, more than ever, it is critical that we bring attention to the work that we do, strengthen and expand our research footprint, and continue to develop practical applications and policies that bring about meaningful change.



## Objectives

**Recruit and Retain World-Class Researchers:** Create an environment where all PTK and TTK faculty can thrive in their scholarly pursuits through effective onboarding, career development, and promotion.

**Invest in IT and Computing Support:** Support and expand faculty and staff capacity by improving hardware, software, and cloud support for research projects with complex computing needs.

**Enhance Facilities for Research Activity:** Expand research impact by modifying and building labs and clinics to create flexible and high-quality research spaces for faculty, staff, and students.

**Engage BSOS Students in Research and Scholarship:** Increase undergraduate and graduate student exposure to and participation in social and behavioral sciences research and scholarship, especially with a focus on eliminating the participation gap for underrepresented groups in the College.

**Expand Awareness of BSOS Research:** Implement a communications and marketing strategy to highlight the contributions of BSOS researchers using various channels to reach campus, local, state, national, and global audiences.



## Cross-Cutting Themes

**Promoting Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Social Justice:** We will continue to enhance the application and generalizability of our research and scholarship and address issues of inequality and injustice by diversifying our community of faculty, staff, undergraduate and graduate students.

**Supporting and Recognizing our People:** In order to produce cutting-edge research and scholarship, it is critical we enhance our facilities, improve IT resources, and strengthen grant writing and other training. These investments unlock the capacity of research teams to conduct impactful research.



## Indicators of Success

- Increased research impact measured through varied indicators
- Increased grant submissions and awards
- Increased diversity of researchers and areas of scholarship
- Increased satisfaction and successful retention of our outstanding researchers



Photo by Eric Kruszewski



### Priority Area of Focus #3

# Building Partnerships

The College of Behavioral and Social Sciences has built and nurtured meaningful partnerships with diverse entities across the local community, the country, and the world. These academic, research, and clinical collaborations include relationships with higher education, government, private and public sector employers, foundations, and other community partners. As an example, our College brings together leading scholars from diverse disciplines to support, produce, and promote population research, which is crucial to supporting an equitable, sustainable, and well-informed society. Collaborating across borders is also critically important as our world faces multifaceted global challenges, such as social inequity, gun violence, mass incarceration, opioid addiction, and terrorism. Consider threats to democracy - it is important that we partner locally, nationally, and globally to understand how factors including disengagement, misinformation, and political violence are eroding trust in democracy.

Over the coming years, we will focus on strengthening and broadening our partnerships even further to serve our students and our local and global communities. Drawing on our proximity to Washington, D.C., and our field work across the globe, we will continue to expand our partnership outreach and civic engagement.



## Objectives

**Advance Research and Clinical Partnerships:** Expand collaborations with academic, governmental, non-governmental, community, philanthropic, and corporate partners by strengthening connections and highlighting expertise in BSOS.

**Partner to Advance the Public Good:** Identify pressing societal issues where BSOS can make an important contribution through coordination with external entities and the UMD Center for Community Engagement (CCE).

**Strengthen Educational Partnerships:** Increase access to and awareness of experiential learning opportunities for students and foster a pipeline of diverse professional talent across a wide range of industries.

**Mitigate Barriers to Collaboration:** Simplify processes for external partners to engage with BSOS in educational and research settings.



## Cross-Cutting Themes

**Promoting Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Social Justice:** We will prioritize partnerships that tackle grand challenges such as health disparities, social stratification, economic inequality, racism, gender inequality, incarceration and victimization, to name a few.

**Supporting and Recognizing our People:** Our dedicated faculty, staff, and students are essential in building and maintaining meaningful long-term partnerships. The College is committed to providing BSOS community members doing this work with the tools they need to share their talents with the world.



## Indicators of Success

- Increased community-engaged teaching, learning, and research partnerships
- Increased dissemination and visibility of BSOS world-class research
- Increased public visibility of partnerships, including media coverage
- Increased faculty and staff satisfaction with partnership infrastructure and support

# Conclusion

As evidenced by our history and our evolution over the last century, the College of Behavioral and Social Sciences is no stranger to change. In the coming years, our world will undoubtedly encounter significant societal, economic, political, and environmental changes, and units in our college are deeply engaged in understanding these transformations and addressing their consequences.

With our wide range of disciplinary expertise and dedicated team of faculty, staff, and students, and the support of our alumni and donors, we are uniquely positioned to understand and change human behavior in pursuit of a brighter future. Through this strategic plan, our College will advance student-centered teaching and learning, produce groundbreaking research and scholarship, and continue to build inclusive partnerships to advance the behavioral and social sciences.

We are excited to enter this next chapter and work towards a healthier, more peaceful, and more equitable future. We look forward to having all members of our community join us as we implement our new strategic plan. **Together, we can Be the Solution.**

## Strategic Planning Steering Committee

**Mónica Caudillo**, Assistant Professor (SOCY)  
**Nadine Dangerfield**, Assistant Director of Graduate Studies (ANTH)  
**Sean Doody**, Assistant Research Scientist (START)  
Co-Chair **Michael Hanmer**, Professor/Director (GVPT/CDCE)  
**George Hurtt**, Professor/Associate Chair (GEOG)  
**Nicole Amonett**, Associate Director of Undergraduate Studies (CCJS)  
**Ethan Kaplan**, Associate Professor (ECON)  
**Joanne Leffson-Bryant**, Director of Finance and Administration (PSYC)  
**Ashley Newby**, Lecturer/Undergraduate Director (AAAS)  
**Nicole Nguyen**, Associate Clinical Professor/  
Director of Clinical Education & Doctoral Program in Audiology (HESP/College Council)  
**Kim Nickerson**, Assistant Dean for Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion (DEAN)  
Co-Chair **Katherine Russell**, Associate Dean for Undergraduate Education (DEAN)

## Ex-Officio Members

**Sarah Goff**, Chief of Staff and Executive Assistant to the Dean  
**Roberto Patricio Korzeniewicz**, Senior Associate Dean for Faculty Affairs  
**Jean McGloin**, Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Education  
**Susan Rivera**, Dean and Professor



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