

**Draft Vision Statement for a
Proposed College of Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences**

The following statement was developed by a group of ten department heads and chairs from the College of Humanities and Fine Arts and the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences, who served as the Provost's Working Group during the fall and winter of 2010-11.

The members of the Working Group were:

Joe Bartolomeo, English
Elizabeth Brabec, Landscape Architecture & Regional Planning
Elizabeth Chilton, Anthropology
Jeff Cox, Music & Dance
Gerald Epstein, Economics
Lisa Henderson, Communication
John Hird, Political Science
John McCarthy, Linguistics
Bill Oedel, Art, Architecture & Art History
Amilcar Shabazz, Afro-American Studies

The original version of this draft referred to the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences (CLASS). In subsequent discussion the group decided that the College of Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences (CHASS) was a better descriptor, and this version of the document reflects that change.

College Vision:

The College of Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences (CHASS) is a celebration of perspectives—artistic, scientific, and scholarly—that are available to support individual growth and inspire societal change. The College is dedicated to the value of critical and creative thinking, cultural understanding and breadth, and creative and interpretive work in the preparation of citizens in the fullest sense. CHASS supports the integrity of its constituent disciplines while at the same time fostering transdisciplinary connections and interactions that expand knowledge and understanding. The College is dedicated to making a significant contribution to research, teaching, policy, creativity, and outreach in the social sciences, fine arts, and humanities; it serves as a model of engaged scholarship, academic rigor, interdisciplinarity, and innovative research; and it articulates its broader impacts to a wide group of stakeholders.

College Mission:

The mission of CHASS is to promote the study, understanding, and expression of what it is to be human, and to enrich communication and nurture empathy for the human condition. The College engages scholars and students who seek to understand and improve individual and social life in the Commonwealth and beyond. This includes, but is not limited to, the study of human evolution and history, social change, and artistic and literary expression. Some of the key areas of inquiry in the college are subjects that are among the most pressing in the 21st century: globalization, environmental and cultural sustainability, social justice, and ethics. Research and teaching in CHASS highlight the intersection of all these issues with respect to artistic expression, communication, policy, and engaged scholarship. The College promotes, supports, and communicates results of research about and by humans in their biological, linguistic, cultural, historical, and aesthetic contexts. Our goal is to create and maintain a community where shared values—including engagement, honesty, integrity, joy, passion, creativity, tolerance/acceptance, and academic rigor—create the foundation for individual growth and institutional transformation. In sum, our mission is to provide an academic environment in which to challenge the mind and nurture the spirit.

College Objectives:

The College of Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences is committed to:

- Preparing our students for fulfilling careers and lives, enriched by a deep understanding of human diversity and creativity.
- Supporting our faculty and fostering excellence in their work as teachers, scholars, scientists, and artists.
- Encouraging collaborations that transcend the boundaries of disciplines, departments, colleges, and between the University and the community.
- Reaching out in education and service to non-traditional students, underserved groups, underrepresented minorities, and others who can benefit from association with a great public university.
- Honoring the contributions made by our staff toward achieving these goals.

About the College:

The College of Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences is the largest college at the University of Massachusetts Amherst, with over 6500 undergraduate majors and over 1300 masters and doctoral students. Representing the foundation of learning and General Education for the campus as a whole, the College contributes to the education of every UMass student at some point during his/her undergraduate experience, and nearly one out of every four graduate students is in the College.

Faculty members in CHASS produce cutting-edge scholarship and creative works in the arts, humanities, and social sciences. Among the awards they have received are the MacArthur “Genius” Grant, the Pulitzer Prize, the Grammy, the National Book Award, and the Guggenheim Fellowship; their work is often supported by grants from major national and international sponsors and foundations. CHASS faculty and students are active not only in the classroom but also in laboratories, libraries, theaters and performance halls, studios and museums, archaeological excavations, and communities around the world. All of the members of the College—students, faculty, staff, and alumni/ae—in their work and in their lives honor excellence and celebrate human diversity and creativity. CHASS also engages the wider public in its diverse programs, ranging from performances to public policy initiatives.

The main educational force for the university, CHASS provides wide-ranging experiences to undergraduate students, from theater to philosophy to economics. Students work closely with faculty mentors to explore human history, experience world cultures, analyze social interaction, create and appreciate art, and master important fields of thought, inquiry, and innovation. Graduates of the College have a broad perspective on the origins, characteristics, and challenges of social and cultural environments they inhabit, along with strong analytical and problem-solving abilities, considerable experience in verbal and written communication, and a range of skills adaptable to a wide variety of careers. Its graduate programs educate and train students for careers in academia, the public sector, and a wide variety of professions.