

# **Strategic Plan 2025**

USAO's 2025 Strategic Plan consists of five commitments fundamental to the mission of the University and the goals that focus University resources toward achieving and maintaining those commitments. Strategies are developed under each goal that assign the person or group responsible for achieving that goal and delineate the steps required.

## **I. USAO is committed to a rigorous and distinctive interdisciplinary liberal arts education that is relevant and innovative.**

### **GOAL I.1**

The academic experience provides a purposeful distribution of study in the interdisciplinary studies core, major fields, and electives.

**STRATEGY:** Evaluate and refine the distribution of hours among IDS, the major, and electives to ensure that each student receives excellent disciplinary training and a diverse range of interdisciplinary and liberal arts curriculum that exceeds national standards for a baccalaureate degree.

#### **ACTION STEP I.1.1**

- The Academic Strategic Planning Committee, to include members nominated by the Faculty Association and VPAA, will develop a recommendation for the distribution of hours among IDS, the major, and electives to submit to Faculty Association for approval or refinement and resubmission.

#### **ACTION STEP I.1.2**

- Upon approval of the Academic Strategic Planning committee's recommendation by the Faculty Association the proposed distribution guidelines will be vetted through the office Academic Affairs, the office of the President, and submitted for approval to USAO's governing board.

#### **ACTION STEP I.1.3**

- Upon approval of the guidelines, each discipline will review their curriculum and make any changes necessary to ensure that it falls within the approved guidelines.

### **GOAL I.2**

The interdisciplinary core curriculum is relevant and innovative for 21st Century learners.

**STRATEGY:** Conduct an analysis of the unique and changing needs of 21st Century learners that will inform the enhancement and revision of curriculum in the Interdisciplinary Core.

**ACTION STEP I.2.1**

- The IDS Committee will solicit input from faculty, students, and alumni to define essential skills, tools, and abilities the IDS core should include.

**ACTION STEP I.2.2**

- The IDS Committee will recommend changes to the IDS core and the Faculty Association will review, revise, and approve.
- The IDS Committee will initiate approved curriculum changes.

**ACTION STEP I.2.3**

- The IDS Assessment Committee, in coordination with the instructors, will develop and implement the process for ongoing assessment of the IDS core curriculum.

**ACTION STEP I.2.4**

- The IDS Assessment Committee will report assessment results and curricular recommendations to instructors and the President.

**GOAL I.3**

High-quality learning experiences are offered within major fields of study through instruction, curriculum, and activities that reflect our interdisciplinary liberal arts mission.

**STRATEGY:** Curriculum in all academic disciplines will be continuously enhanced to meet the evolving goals of each program and to reflect the interdisciplinary nature of our liberal arts mission.

**ACTION STEP I.3.1**

- Using input from faculty, students and data, the Assessment of Disciplines Committee will refine the program review process to assess the high-quality learning experiences within the major fields of study.

**ACTION STEP I.3.2**

- Program reviews will be used to inform decisions to enhance the evolving goals of each program.

**GOAL I.4**

The academic experience is enhanced through instruction delivered in multiple modalities.

**STRATEGY:** Expand learning opportunities for students through blended, hybrid, and online offerings to supplement the traditional classroom experience

**ACTION STEP I.4.1**

- The Academic Policies and Procedures Committee will develop policies and procedures for the development of blended, hybrid, and online offerings.

#### **ACTION STEP I.4.2**

- The office of Academic Affairs and the office of Business and Finance will work together to develop and implement a plan for the sustainability of instruction delivered in multiple modalities.

## **II. USAO is committed to a diverse student body that fosters an integrated and personalized student experience**

### **GOAL II.1**

Diversity, inclusion, and respect for human dignity are demonstrated as core values of an interdisciplinary liberal arts institution.

**STRATEGY:** Ensure the inclusion of these core values in all aspects of the University, from human resources to coursework to community engagement.

#### **ACTION STEP II.1.1**

- The President will appoint an ad hoc committee to review the university mission statement to make recommendations to ensure commitment to diversity, inclusion, and human dignity are reflected.

#### **ACTION STEP II.1.2**

- The Committee on Committees will recommend updates to the charge of the Affirmative Action, Equal Opportunity, & Diversity Committee to reflect USAO's commitment to diversity, inclusion, and human dignity as values.

#### **ACTION STEP II.1.3**

- The IDS Committee will ensure the incorporation of content that recognizes diversity, promotes inclusion, and instills respect for human dignity in the IDS core curriculum.

#### **ACTION STEP II.1.4**

- Continue to solidify the importance of new and existing programs that address diversity and inclusiveness with dedicated resources and support.

### **GOAL II.2**

A diverse student body is attracted to support and maintain a campus population of 1200-1300 students.

**STRATEGY:** Evaluate current practices and develop a plan for attracting a diverse student body.

#### **ACTION STEP II.2.1**

- The office of Enrollment Management and Student Affairs, in consultation with the office of Academic Affairs, will inventory, assess for effectiveness, and plan recruitment efforts and events for diverse student populations.

### **ACTION STEP II.2.2**

- The office of Student Financial Aid will work with the USAO Alumni Association, Inc. and the USAO Foundation, Inc. to conduct a comprehensive student scholarship audit.

### **ACTION STEP II.2.3**

- The office of Enrollment Management and Student Affairs will evaluate for effectiveness, refine and implement the Campus Visitation Experience Plan.

### **ACTION STEP II.2.4**

- The office of Enrollment Management and Student Affairs and the office of Academic Affairs will collaborate to develop and implement a plan to expand concurrent enrollment opportunities.

### **ACTION STEP II.2.5**

- The Academic Strategic Planning Committee will evaluate current and potential program offerings that will increase student interest in attending USAO.
- The Academic Strategic Planning Committee will present their findings to the Executive Council for consideration.

## **GOAL II.3**

Useful and innovative community building programs and/or services are provided.

**STRATEGY:** Evaluate current services to students and events and determine which are most effective and which need improvement.

### **ACTION STEP II.3.1**

- The Executive Council will create a University Events Committee.

### **ACTION STEP II.3.2**

- The University Events Committee and the office of Enrollment Management and Student Affairs will develop focus groups, surveys and other methodology for evaluating student participation and assess effectiveness.

### **ACTION STEP II.3.3**

- The University Events Committee and the office of Enrollment Management and Student Affairs will enhance programs deemed effective, look for creative combinations, eliminate duplication of services and reduce or eliminate programs with low impact for a personalized student experience.
- The office of Communications and Marketing, in consultation with the University Events Committee and the office of Enrollment Management and Student Affairs, will create an accessible online calendar of events that is functional and informative.

## **GOAL II.4**

High Impact Educational Practices (HIPs) are provided across the campus.

**STRATEGY:** Cultivate individualized campus and community learning experiences.

### **ACTION STEP II.4.1**

- The Learning Environment Assessment Committee will inventory current offering of HIPs developing a baseline for the percent of students that graduate having completed a HIP.

### **ACTION STEP II.4.2**

- The Learning Environment Assessment Committee will recommend a percentage goal for students participating in HIPs and present to Executive Council for consideration.

### **ACTION STEP II.4.3**

- The office of Enrollment Management and Student Affairs and the office of Academic Affairs will collaborate to develop and implement a plan to integrate HIPs.

### **ACTION STEP II.4.4**

- The Learning Environment Assessment Committee will assess the plan and report impact to the Executive Council.

## **GOAL II.5**

A diverse student body is retained and graduated.

**STRATEGY:** Evaluate current practices and develop a plan for retention and student persistence to graduation.

### **ACTION STEP II.5.1**

- The offices of Enrollment Management and Student Affairs and Academic Affairs will evaluate current practices for student retention, persistence and graduation.
- The offices of Enrollment Management and Student Affairs and Academic Affairs will define student retention, persistence and graduation goals.
- Using the defined goals, the offices of Enrollment Management and Student Affairs and Academic Affairs will develop plans to meet student retention, persistence and graduation goals.

### **ACTION STEP II.5.2**

- The Academic Advising Committee will create an advisement handbook.

### **ACTION STEP II.5.3**

- The Academic Advising Committee will provide ongoing assessment of the academic advising system and will develop goals, initiatives, and recommendations to strengthen advising.

### **III. USAO is committed to continuously improve institutional capacity that supports a thriving and sustainable public liberal arts college.**

#### **GOAL III.1**

Diverse and high-quality personnel are attracted, developed, and retained.

**STRATEGY:** Create, fund and staff an office of Human Resources mandated to stay current with best practices for attracting, developing, and retaining diverse and high-quality personnel.

##### **ACTION STEP III.1.1**

- The Executive Council in collaboration with appropriate stakeholders will create, fund, and staff an office of Human Resource.

##### **ACTION STEP III.1.2**

- The office of Human Resources will review current personnel policies and practices to ensure personnel policies and practices are consistent across University departments and divisions and designed to attract diverse and high-quality personnel.

##### **ACTION STEP III.1.3**

- The office of Human Resources will work with the Faculty-Staff Development Committee and the ITAC Steering Committee to provide onboarding and professional development appropriate to personnel duties and responsibilities.

##### **ACTION STEP III.1.4**

- The office of Human Resources will work with the Executive Council to ensure equitable compensation and workload while incentivizing exceptional performance through clear policies.

#### **GOAL III.2**

University resources are aligned with institutional goals.

**STRATEGY:** Create a systematic process to ensure University resources are aligned with institutional goals.

##### **ACTION STEP III.2.1**

- The Executive Council, with input from appropriate stakeholders, will review existing budget processes, facility utilization, enrollment trends, recruitment and retention strategies, scholarship utilization, funds available from the USAO Foundation, Inc., and tuition and fee trends.

**ACTION STEP III.2.2**

- The Executive Council will design and implement an annual process of budget review and development that enlists input from appropriate stakeholders.

**ACTION STEP III.2.3**

- The Executive Council will create a comprehensive budgeting process and a communication plan to inform stakeholders of the annual budgeting process and outcomes.

**ACTION STEP III.2.4**

- The Executive Council will recommend an annual budgeting process to the President for consideration

**GOAL III.3**

Facilities, grounds, and technology contribute to the learning environment and to program effectiveness

**STRATEGY:** Develop and implement a plan to ensure that facilities, the campus grounds, and technology contribute to the learning environment and enhance program effectiveness.

**ACTION STEP III.3.1**

- The Executive Council will routinely analyze facilities, the campus grounds and technology use for how well they contribute to the learning environment and enhance program effectiveness.
- They will enlist assistance and recommendations from design and utilization professionals and other relevant stakeholders

**ACTION STEP III.3.2**

- The Executive Council will routinely update the campus master plan based on input received and present it for approval to the President and the USAO Board of Regents.

**ACTION STEP III.3.3**

- The Executive Council will routinely analyze technology use to ensure that it contributes to the learning environment and program effectiveness.

**GOAL III.4**

Financial resources are increased through grants and private giving.

**STRATEGY:** Create and implement long-term plans to increase the productivity in the office of Grants and Sponsored Programs in the office of Academic Affairs and the offices of Development and Alumni Development in the office of University Advancement.

**ACTION STEP III.4.1**

- The Vice President for Academic Affairs will develop and implement a long-term plan for the office of Grants and Sponsored Programs sufficient to achieve annual grant submission goals.

#### **ACTION STEP III.4.2**

- The Vice President for University Advancement will develop and implement a long-term plan for the office of Development sufficient to achieve annual giving, major gift, planned giving, foundation, and corporation giving goals.

#### **ACTION STEP III.4.3**

- The Vice President for University Advancement will develop and implement a long-term plan for the office of Alumni Development sufficient to reach annual alumni participation and giving goals.

#### **ACTION STEP III.4.4**

- The Executive Director of the USAO Foundation, Inc. will work with the Foundation Board to grow Foundation assets while increasing funds available to support of the University's mission.

### **IV. USAO is committed to communicating a cohesive message to internal and external constituents that is consistent with its mission and objectives.**

#### **GOAL IV.1**

The University brand and message is clear, consistent, and effective in increasing University visibility among targeted external constituencies.

**STRATEGY:** Develop a comprehensive marketing plan that ensures a clear and consistent University brand and message to targeted external constituencies and a process for evaluating, updating and maintaining that brand and message.

#### **ACTION STEP IV.2.1**

- The office of Communications and Marketing will work with the offices of Enrollment Management and Student Affairs, Development, Alumni Development and other stakeholders to review and analyze existing messaging and branding.
- This group will also review and analyze the branding and messaging of affiliated organizations (USAO Foundation, Inc. and USAO Alumni Association, Inc.) to ensure brand and message consistency

#### **ACTION STEP IV.2.2**

- The office of Communications and Marketing will work with these offices and stakeholders to create a comprehensive marketing plan that unifies all marketing efforts and expenditures.
- Budget responsibility within this plan will remain with the departments originally authorized to expend these funds.

#### **ACTION STEP IV.2.3**

- The office of Communications and Marketing will routinely evaluate the comprehensive marketing plan for its effectiveness in increasing University visibility to targeted constituencies and present recommendations to the Executive Council for consideration.



#### **ACTION STEP IV.2.4**

- The office of Communications and Marketing will develop and distribute written guidelines on the use of University brand, message, logos, signatures and related material to ensure consistency across University departments, divisions, and affiliated organizations.

#### **GOAL IV.2**

Faculty and staff are well-informed advocates of the University and its mission.

**STRATEGY:** Implement a campus communication plan that will effectively enable University personnel to be well informed advocates of the University and its mission.

#### **ACTION STEP IV.2.1**

- The Executive Council will utilize the It Takes a College initiative to provide consistent messaging to all University personnel.

#### **ACTION STEP IV.2.2**

- The ITAC Steering Committee will work with the office of Communications and Marketing to create an online site that provides internal stakeholders with easy access to USAO marketing information and material.

#### **ACTION STEP IV.2.3**

- The ITAC Steering Committee will work with the office of Communications and Marketing to ensure that faculty and staff members receive all University news releases.

#### **ACTION STEP IV.2.4**

- The ITAC Steering Committee will work with the Faculty and Staff Development Committee to present workshops on USAO mission distinctives and the role played by various departments.

#### **ACTION STEP IV.2.5**

- The Vice President for Academic Affairs will assign a faculty mentor with incoming faculty to improve the onboarding process.

#### **GOAL IV.3**

Alumni and donor information is collected, managed and utilized in service of the University's mission and goals while maintaining security and privacy.

**STRATEGY:** Review and evaluate existing processes and systems for collecting and managing alumni and donor information.

#### **ACTION STEP IV.3.1**

- The Vice President for University Advancement will involve appropriate stakeholders in the review and analysis of existing processes and systems.

**ACTION STEP IV.3.2**

- The Vice President for University Advancement will work with the Vice President of Business and Finance and the office of Information, Network and Research Services to research and determine if the current software is compatible for integration with existing University systems or if another product may serve the University better.

**ACTION STEP IV.3.3**

- The Vice President for University Advancement will present findings and recommendations to the Executive Council for consideration.

**V. USAO is committed to having a positive impact on the community through civic, cultural and economic engagement and partnerships.**

**GOAL V.1**

USAO faculty, staff, and students are engaged with the local community.

**STRATEGY:** Evaluate current levels of community engagement and develop a plan to articulate and target USAO's engagement with the community.

**ACTION STEP V.1.1**

- The Executive Council will inventory current levels of community engagement and collaborate with USAO personnel and community stakeholders to develop a plan to strategically target volunteer, internship, and business opportunities.

**GOAL V.2**

Campus and educational opportunities for community members are implemented and marketed according to a well-developed plan.

**STRATEGY:** Evaluate current community targeted events and educational opportunities and develop a plan for offerings that will garner community interest and support.

**ACTION STEP V.2.1**

- The office of Communication and Marketing will conduct focus groups with community members to gauge interest and give opportunities for input.

**ACTION STEP V.2.2**

- The office of Communication and Marketing will develop plans for offering and marketing events and educational opportunities that will maximize community engagement and present these plans to Executive Council for consideration.

### **GOAL V.3**

The University is an essential partner and leader as policies are developed and decisions made about the future of the city, region, and state.

**STRATEGY:** Work with community leaders to provide resources and establish partnerships as policies are developed and decisions made about the future of the city, region, and state.

#### **ACTION STEP V.3.1**

- The Executive Council will work with campus-wide stakeholders to create an inventory of programs, services, facilities, and academic resources that can contribute to University partnerships and collaborations with the city, region, and state.

#### **ACTION STEP V.3.2**

- The President will commission an update to the community economic impact study and will continue to encourage USAO personnel to participate in city, regional, and state planning and policy making forums.

#### **ACTION STEP V.3.3**

- The office of Communications and Marketing will develop a plan to present the University as an essential partner to appropriate city, regional, and statewide leaders and present this plan to the Executive Council for consideration.