In the spring of 2019, we embarked on a journey never before undertaken in the College of Geosciences - a holistic and inclusive strategic planning process that provided every single member of our College with the opportunity to participate. The effort was led by a diverse Steering Committee, independent of departmental and unit planning processes, with the vision of a plan that empowers the College to be far stronger than the sum of its constituent parts.

The strength of this plan is that each individual in the college, as well as each department or unit, will have the ability to use their own unique expertise, strengths and passions to achieve the objectives and accomplish the goals. This plan offers the opportunity for every individual and each department or unit to deploy their talents toward the objectives and goals to which they are best equipped to contribute.
Unifying Initiative: Our Impact Known to the World

Vision: Catalyze universal appreciation of our planet and its resources for a sustainable future

Mission: Be a destination-of-choice organization for innovative education and research

Strategic Initiative 1: Create Cutting-edge Spaces to Empower Innovative Education and Research

GOALS
- Create and empower a Space Committee to guide the College vision for cutting-edge space
- Develop a funding model for renovation, maintenance and improvement of educational and research spaces
- Promote a culture that embraces collaborative/shared spaces
- Create spaces to support Student Success and Career Preparation
- Create and support cutting-edge learning spaces

Strategic Initiative 2: Promote Disciplinary Research Preeminence and Lead Interdisciplinary Solutions

GOALS
- Communicate our research excellence internally
- Promote our research excellence externally
- Cultivate creativity and innovation
- Enhance the culture of cross-disciplinary research collaboration
- Strengthen our scientific impact through outreach

Strategic Initiative 3: Deliver Exceptional Educational Opportunities for Student Success

GOALS
- Promote high impact learning at all levels of educational paths
- Support student success and retention with intrusive advising, peer mentoring, and align educational goals with career goals
- Motivate and reward engagement in exceptional, effective and innovative teaching methods
- Leverage our outreach to broaden and deepen participation in our degree programs

Strategic Initiative 4: Foster A Community of Diversity, Inclusion and Respect in which Everyone Achieves Their Potential

GOALS
- Provide resources to promote collaboration, professional development and success for every member of the College
- Recognize and reduce obstacles to success and participation of different groups/community members
- Enhance the diversity of our college through our outreach
Unifying Initiative:

Our Impact Known to the World

By prioritizing Our Impact Known to the World, this strategic plan will propel us from “best-kept secret” to household name. Our scholars will be known to the world as the go-to thought leaders. Our reputation for educational excellence and exceptional professional development at all levels will attract the best students because they know they will thrive in their studies and have access to unparalleled career placement upon graduation. The world will know that every student, staff and faculty member can achieve their potential through our community of inclusion and respect. The space in which we educate, innovate and collaborate will showcase and celebrate our excellence, reinforcing our reputation as an institution in which everyone may reach their potential. The best institutions of higher learning strengthen the community around them, and our outreach efforts will connect Our Impact to the World.

GOAL 1 Establish and define college reputation, expertise and impact

Objectives

- Establish an Impact Committee that includes the Dean and Department Heads
- Charge the Impact Committee to define the expertise to market/communicate
- Identify and address gaps in the current expertise that impacts the College’s reputation
- Identify the impact of the College on Texas, the nation, and the world to market/communicate
GOAL 2 Develop a comprehensive marketing and strategic communication plan with consistent branding architecture

Objectives

- Marketing and communication team retreat will develop first draft of comprehensive plan
- Share first draft with all stakeholders and request review and input
- Establish marketing metrics that we can report to all of our stakeholders
- Hold a College Townhall to share the plan with faculty and staff; encourage buy-in and equip with branding resources and tools
- Host Collaboration Coffees to engage the College in continual conversations about effective marketing strategies
- Establish structures to continually adapt and improve as technologies, markets and expertise evolve
Strategic Initiative 1:

Create Cutting-edge Spaces to Empower Innovative Education and Research

Cutting-edge learning and research spaces are a hallmark of excellence. Our students will learn in collaborative, technology-enabled spaces that resemble workplace environments. Student-learning and professional development also occur in laboratories, studios, maker-spaces, and such environments that also must evolve to continually set the standard for excellence. State-of-the-art analytical and computational laboratories will elevate the impact of our scholarship. This strategic initiative prioritizes the identification and allocation of resources to create and sustain such spaces.

We also prioritize the creation of spaces that allow collaboration through informal interactions and gathering spaces for study, conversation and reflection. Comfortable and functional spaces celebrate our culture of inclusion, respect and excellence.

GOAL 1 Create and empower a Space Committee to guide the College vision for cutting-edge space

Objectives

- Employ the Trimble Technology Lab (laser scanner and software) to identify novel configurations of existing space to optimize our floorplan
- Identify up to ten capital renovation projects that would benefit the broadest array of students, staff and faculty and contribute directly to strategic initiatives two and three
GOAL 2 Develop a funding model for renovation, maintenance and improvement of educational and research spaces

Objectives

- Create a development plan for individual, corporate and foundation partnerships
- Identify resources available from the University, College and Departments
- Develop a sustainability model for maintenance and replacement

GOAL 3 Promote a culture that embraces collaborative/shared spaces

Objectives

- Define current culture and identify barriers for space shared across departments
- Identify the needs and benefits of shared space at all scales spanning buildings, labs and classrooms
- Define, communicate and promote incentives for shared spaces
GOAL 4  Create spaces to support Student Success and Career Preparation

Objectives

- Identify and develop space that supports Student Success (e.g., collaborative student gathering spaces)
- Identify and develop space for the Professional Development Center
- Explore opportunities to enhance virtual and physical spaces to enhance students' sense of community

GOAL 5  Create and support cutting-edge learning spaces

Objectives

- Encourage, motivate, train and reward faculty for using innovative spaces
- Engage students in designing and implementing new learning spaces via the Trimble Technology Lab
- Prioritize the renovation/optimization of existing spaces that inspire modern and collaborative teaching methods
- Identify partnerships for sponsored learning spaces
Strategic Initiative 2: 
Promote Disciplinary Research Preeminence and Lead Interdisciplinary Solutions

The College of Geosciences is mission-critical to the tier-one research enterprise at Texas A&M University. The geoscience disciplines uniquely connect academic research to applications that directly benefit the health of our planet and its inhabitants. As the nation’s most comprehensive earth-system college, we are forever committed to the discovery, advancement and application of knowledge fundamental to understanding our planet and its resources for a sustainable future. We will continue to leverage the passion of our researchers to enhance our reputation for disciplinary excellence built on cutting-edge analyses and observations, numerical simulations and theoretical studies, and field-based data collection at all spatial and temporal scales. At the same time, we continue to elevate the geoscience disciplines as the vanguard of team science, at a time when the world needs our disciplines more than ever.

GOAL 1  Communicate our Research Excellence Internally

Objectives

- Host cross-disciplinary seminars for the entire College and within departments
- Create more common space for intra-college communications
- Construct a database of staff and faculty expertise in the College
- Maintain and expand facilitation of events (e.g., “Collaboration Coffees”) to learn about collaboration opportunities
GOAL 2  Promote our Research Excellence Externally

Objectives

• Publish in high-impact journals and provide training to reach such journals
• Expand mentoring programs for all researchers to enhance reputation within funding agencies and foundations
• Enhance the media coverage of our scholarship
• Establish a highly competitive and visible post-doctoral fellowship program
• Increase the number of quality publications led by graduate students
• Create expedited communications for real-time responses to major events/disasters
• Train our scientists to communicate at a generalist level, including leveraging popular news and social media, as well as emerging platforms
GOAL 3 Cultivate creativity and innovation

Objectives

- Provide “incubator funding” for new research and for travel to conferences outside normal fields for faculty, staff and students
- Support professional enhancement opportunities (e.g., attending courses or workshops)
- Create monthly interdepartmental college seminars featuring student-driven topics delivered by internal or external speakers
- Maintain and expand informal opportunities (e.g., “collaboration coffees”) to learn about collaboration opportunities
- Promote and prioritize Faculty Development Leaves (FDLs) as opportunities to enhance external collaborations

GOAL 4 Enhance the culture of cross-disciplinary research collaboration

Objectives

- Identify and define important research directions that are aligned with the passion of our researchers
- Promote interdisciplinary teaching at all levels to facilitate research collaborations
- Exploit our research strengths to innovate and lead interdisciplinary degree programs (e.g., Climate Science)
- Identify cross-disciplinary linkages by creating communication channels, both in-person and virtual
- Adopt formal mechanisms to incentivize, facilitate, and reward interdisciplinary research
- Identify roadblocks and foster best practices for interdisciplinary research and education for graduate students
- Identify strategic research areas for new faculty hires

GOAL 5 Strengthen our scientific impact through outreach

Objectives

- Engage with constituencies through generalist research communications such as The Conversation
- Identify opportunities to strengthen communities through our research, leveraging and building upon Texas Sea Grant’s Extension capacity
- Build upon College support for broader impacts by providing researchers the ability to deploy their individual efforts toward proven programming with established metrics of success (e.g., GeoX and teacher training programs)
GOAL 1 Promote high impact learning at all levels of educational paths

Objectives

- Integrate high impact learning experiences (HILE) into all curricula to maximize student learning and increase student success/achievement in all degree programs
- Expand professional development offerings to enhance workforce preparedness
- Reward/recognize staff and faculty for creation and involvement in HILE opportunities
- Provide more funding opportunities to provide HILE at no burden/cost to students
GOAL 2
Support student success and retention through intrusive advising, and peer mentoring, and align educational goals with career goals

Objectives

- Create an office with a Director of Professional Development
- Implement new programs in partnership with relevant external workforce leaders to provide unique interactions and experiences for students
- Communicate professional development activities and resources available for students to the entire College with frequent updates
- Formalize a peer-mentor program within each degree program for freshman and transfer students
- Build on current strategies for identifying and proactively addressing risk factors for student success
- Continue to identify and address issues that impact the equity of student success
**GOAL 3** Motivate, support and reward engagement in exceptional, effective and innovative teaching methods

Objectives

- Facilitate and conduct research on the effectiveness of innovative geoscience-specific teaching modalities
- Incentivize HILE for students by eliminating any burden or expense associated with the opportunity (e.g., study abroad expenses)

**GOAL 4** Leverage our outreach to broaden and deepen participation in our degree programs

Objectives

- Target engagement to communities who will benefit from a workforce with geoscience skills, with marketing/communications that showcase the tangible and intangible rewards of geoscience careers
- Build on successful recruiting strategies and pathways tailored to parents and students in diverse communities, particularly in regions that lack alternative geoscience educational exposure
- Incentivize staff and faculty participation in outreach
Strategic Initiative 4:
*Foster A Community of Diversity, Inclusion and Respect in which Everyone Achieves Their Potential*

We will become the premier destination of choice for students, staff members and faculty who seek an institution renowned for diversity, inclusivity and excellence. We will continue to invest in building a culture that values and respects the diversity of experiences that our students, staff and faculty bring to the College. Empowering a diverse and inclusive community serves as the foundation for effective cross-disciplinary research and world-class teaching. We reward and recognize respect, excellence, leadership, loyalty, integrity, and selfless service. This culture epitomizes the destination-of-choice that attracts the very best and enables them to thrive. This culture will establish the College of Geosciences as the nation’s leader in broadening and deepening participation in the geosciences.

**GOAL 1**  
*Provide resources to promote professional development and success for every member of the College*

**Objectives**

- Facilitate cooperation and the use of shared tools and resources to empower collective success
- Build on formal and informal leadership and coaching programming for all positions and ranks
- Create a culture of mentoring for all positions and ranks
- Celebrate and reward those who selflessly contribute to the recognition of others in the College
GOAL 2  Recognize and reduce obstacles to success and participation of different groups/community members

Objectives

- Increase professional development programming that enhances equity and inclusion for every member of the College
- Create and implement tailored strategies to support the diverse members of our College
- Facilitate meaningful interactions among the communities within our College

GOAL 3  Enhance the diversity of our college through our outreach

Objectives

- Build on successful middle/high school and community college recruiting strategies by engaging with guidance counselors and administrators in underserved communities
- Develop intentional networking strategies to attract the best graduate students, staff and faculty
- Strategically market our career placement success and transportable skills to empower first-generation students and those from groups underrepresented in the geosciences through Our Impact Known to the World
- Incentivize participation in outreach
- Communicate College climate efforts both internally and throughout the geosciences community through Our Impact Known to the World
Concluding Remarks

In 2025, we will look back at the launch of this strategic plan and know that our efforts spanning the Spring and Fall of 2019 mattered. The process mattered: everyone in the College was empowered to participate. The collective voice of the College not only was heard, it was heeded. The plan guided our investments of human and financial resources. The plan simultaneously reflected our courage to think and act boldly, and our discipline to remain focused on the strategic initiatives. Our impact is known to the world, and the Texas A&M College of Geosciences is the destination of choice for all prospective students, staff and faculty who seek opportunities that matter.

Acknowledgments

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Thank you for all you do.
OUR IMPACT KNOWN TO THE WORLD

TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY
College of Geosciences