

# The College of Humanities and Social Sciences



## STRATEGIC PLAN 2013



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## The College of Humanities and Social Sciences (CHSS) *Dean Marietta Morrissey*

... is the largest college within Montclair State University, with a combined graduate and undergraduate enrollment of over 5,000 students. It has the distinction of being the campus leader in teaching, research and service; its faculty have been the most frequent recipients of the Distinguished Teacher and the Distinguished Scholar awards. CHSS provides 74% of General Education and University core courses for degree students and produces 35% of the University's Teacher Education candidates.

The College last produced a strategic plan in 2008, consistent with the timing of the University's 2007 strategic plan. The current strategic plan, outlined below, is based on the analyses and reports of thirteen departmental units, two interdisciplinary majors and several interdisciplinary minors. It is consistent in vision and implementation approach with the Montclair State University Strategic Plan completed in 2012.

### Background

The College of Humanities and Social Sciences was created in 1980 by the merger of two smaller colleges. In Fall 2013, the College enrolled 4,588 undergraduate students and 807 graduate students. The last 34 years have seen expanded enrollments and enhanced program development at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. The College currently offers 20 undergraduate majors, 43 minors and 35 undergraduate program concentrations. At the graduate level, the College offers 14 graduate programs and 10 certificates.

CHSS offers students formative courses that develop skills in reading, writing, interpretation and analysis; some majors have emphasized more applied skill building (e.g., Paralegal Studies). Our academic programs are designed to prepare students for direct job market entry and for more advanced educational pursuits. We are dedicated as well to enhancing student capacity to be creative, productive and concerned members of local and global communities.

### *Five-Year Goals*

Our goals for the coming five-year period focus on the continuing development of student learning and successful application of knowledge in the post-graduate experience. To that end, we will focus on the following five areas for goals, consistent with the University Strategic Plan:

1. Student retention and timely degree completion;
2. Application of advanced technology to learning;
3. Internationalization of the curriculum;
4. Faculty hiring and renewal;
5. Increase in externally-generated funding.

## GOAL AREA 1

# STUDENT RETENTION AND TIMELY DEGREE COMPLETION

The College of Humanities and Social Sciences reports a six-year graduation rate of 66.7% (2010). This figure is based on students who begin and end their studies at MSU; it does not include the many transfer students enrolling in the College.

Consistent with the University Strategic Plan **Goal #1 (Connecting Students with a Successful Future)** and **Goal #3 (Connecting to Place)**, we aim to improve our retention of incoming students and to

hasten their path to graduation through the following three measures.

### *A. Improved advising services*

The College has traditionally relied on faculty advising with staff members providing advisement in only selected departments and in the Dean's Office. While we endorse the value of faculty advising when it involves the identification and refinement of student academic interests and post-graduation planning, we

recognize as well that the constant availability of staff is necessary for students. We recommend, therefore, increasing our staff support of faculty advising as appropriate positions become available.

We also encourage all departments to work toward the adoption of group advising sessions that can, at least, provide information to students about their course planning. Two large departments, History and Psychology, have successfully implemented group advising plans for mandatory first-year advising. We will work toward adopting throughout the College a refined and standardized model consistent with industry-wide best practices.

### *B. Experiential learning*

Experts on student retention and degree completion note the importance of experiential learning for increasing student engagement in the educational process. CHSS employs a full-time cooperative educational advisor/career counselor. At the same time, several departments (e.g., Justice Studies and the Center for Child Advocacy) require internship participation by undergraduate majors. Other programs (e.g., English and Political Science) participate heavily in internship development. Several graduate programs (e.g., Clinical Psychology, School Psychology, Speech Language Pathology and Audiology) require externships as critical parts of the educational experience. Yet other departments and programs have encouraged service learning, study abroad and other kinds of value-added experiences that allow students to see how their learning can be applied practically in real-world situations.

We continue to work toward increasing the number of students participating in experiential learning, through internships, cooperative education, service learning, study abroad and other, related activities. Toward that end, we will continue to assign staff and faculty resources toward expanding student opportunities in each of the areas listed above.

### *C. Curriculum planning and modifications*

The availability of required courses is paramount for timely degree completion. While CHSS faculty and staff have made course substitutions to complete program requirements when needed for graduation and the Dean's Office has been accommodating in approving independent studies and permitting some under-enrolled courses to run so as to further timely degree completion, what is optimal for our students is a dependable plan of study and set of curricular options that will allow them to complete their programs in a timely fashion without necessitating special waivers or dispensations. Therefore, we intend to determine where scheduling obstacles exist for students moving through their curricula in an efficient way. The result will be curricular modifications and realignments of programs in order to enhance their attractiveness to new students and to provide students with necessary coursework on a reliable basis. Our now extensive assessment data will be consulted to consider how best to deliver the optimal level of content, methodology and academic rigor in our courses and scheduling plans.

CHSS has incorporated a more data-driven approach to managing the academic advising process. Building on this progress, the College will adopt a comprehensive

strategy for enrollment management that utilizes more fully and appropriately the many data available to us now and as the new University-wide enterprise system comes on line. Toward this end, each academic department and major will develop and implement an enrollment management plan that will address student recruitment, advising and retention, and integrated course scheduling. The College will call on the resources of the offices of Enrollment Management and Institutional Research where appropriate to create a suite of actionable reports that will provide department chairs with relevant student data needed to make decisions about student progress and placement and programmatic efficacy.

### Graduate education

In recent years, CHSS has experienced strong growth in graduate education, with the majority of new students entering programs that have direct work-place impacts and an increasing number of courses delivered on-line, where appropriate for the target student population and the course content. We continue to support graduate education in our foundational humanities and social science areas, while encouraging the expansion of graduate programs with direct benefits for working adults, many of which are appropriately interdisciplinary. Newer graduate programs like Child Advocacy draw on the strengths of many core disciplines and diverse areas of faculty expertise while addressing local and regional concerns.

*To accomplish the above three measures, the College commits to applying to its own educational endeavors these specific objectives from the University Strategic Plan:*

**The University will actively and strategically recruit, retain and graduate a diverse, increasingly selective undergraduate and graduate student population. [University Strategic Plan Objective 1.A]**

- By 2016, CHSS will increase the mean GPA of entering first-year students from the current level of 3.1 to 3.4.
- By 2016, CHSS will increase the retention rate of first-year students from the current level of 79% to at least 86%.
- By 2016, CHSS will increase the overall six-year graduation rate from the current level of 63% to 70%.
- For each of the next five years, CHSS will increase graduate enrollment an average of 3%.
- By 2016, CHSS will increase the average GRE scores of entering master's students, where relevant, from the current level of Verbal – 496(152\*) and Quantitative – 516(148\*) to Verbal – 530(154\*) and Quantitative – 530(149\*).

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- By 2016, CHSS will increase the average GRE scores of entering doctoral students, where relevant, from the current level of Verbal – 147\* and Quantitative –153\* to Verbal –157 and Quantitative – 152.

\*Note: The GRE Scores listed are reflective of the previous scoring system (200-800), and the newly adopted scoring system (130-170).

- By 2016, the Dean's Office advising staff will expand from its one current position to three full-time colleagues; at the same time, as hiring opportunities present themselves, CHSS will restructure positions where appropriate in support of advising initiatives.\* To strengthen our culture of advising, the Dean's Office will also cultivate opportunities for professional development and continuing education for faculty and staff advisors.

**All academic programs, undergraduate and graduate, will reflect the current state of, and best instructional practices in, their respective disciplines, while selected programs will seek and attain national ranking or recognition. The University is committed to being at the forefront in the creation of new and innovative strategies for pedagogy, learning, research and campus co-curricular life. [University Strategic Plan Objective 1.B]**

- Each CHSS department will develop a succinct and refined message articulating the value of its program(s), placing a particular emphasis on student outcomes.

**Expectations of student performance in undergraduate and graduate programs will be high and will increase progressively during the course of the programs. [University Strategic Plan Objective 1.C]**

- Students who more fully engage with academic advising\* demonstrate improved performance at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. Therefore, by 2014, the College will develop and implement a communication plan focused on increasing awareness about 1) the availability of advising services within the College, 2) changes in University advising policy and best practices in the field and 3) the importance of the strong mentorship of students at the advanced undergraduate and graduate levels. The communication plan will target students within the College as well as faculty advisors.

**The faculty will continually assess curricula in the majors to ensure that they reflect the evolution and expansion of fields and provide the knowledge and the skills needed for the future success of our graduates. [University Strategic Plan Objective 1.E]**

- By 2014, each CHSS department, in conjunction with the University Career Center or CHSS Career Services and with the support of the Office of Alumni Relations, will set in place a method for evaluating student success after graduation. Indicators will include information collected from the graduate and his/her employers, placement in graduate or professional school programs, evidence of career advancement and awards/recognition received.

**The University will cultivate flexibility and imagination in curricular design and implementation. [University Strategic Plan Objective 1.F]**

- By 2015, CHSS will increase internships and co-op experiences by 20% and service-learning experiences by 15% to enhance knowledge and improve job placement opportunities.

**The University will extend and enhance the connectivity that forms the basis of the community of scholars [University Strategic Plan Objective 2.A]**

- By 2015, building on rigorous core disciplines, CHSS will identify one additional masters' level graduate program with a professional focus for development that is broadly interdisciplinary, meets evolving needs for society, with a focus on our region, and is compatible with existing faculty expertise.

**GOAL AREA 2**

## **APPLICATION OF ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY TO INSTRUCTION AND LEARNING**

The College of Humanities and Social Sciences has been a University leader in adopting technology to instruction and learning, an important dimension of University Strategic Plan **Goal #5 (Meeting Challenges and Opportunities on the Way to Tomorrow)**. CHSS offers more on-line courses (synchronous and non-synchronous) and in hybrid form than any other unit on campus. We now offer a graduate program on-line (M.A. in Child Advocacy and Policy) and have many components in place to provide an undergraduate on-line degree completion option in Psychology and General

Humanities and a fully on-line program in Law and Governance.

Over the course of the next year, we plan to complete the on-line programming options listed above and to develop at least one more on-line graduate option. In addition, we intend to provide additional on-line course options to students during the winter and summer sessions (in which CHSS already provides over 55% of the University's current scheduling).

A new area for development in CHSS is coursework that engages students at MSU and a second location. We are currently

teaching courses with students from MSU and Kibbutzim University (Israel) interacting in the same virtual classroom. This model is appropriate for other international settings

and domestic ones as well, and CHSS will seek to establish additional teaching partnerships.

*To accomplish the above measures, the College commits to applying to its own educational endeavors these specific objectives from the University Strategic Plan:*

**The University will incorporate new modes of instruction into the curriculum. [University Strategic Plan Objective 2.D]**

- By 2016, CHSS will ensure that all faculty members have access to professional training in new technologies and will seek University support for faculty for enhanced development of technologies in course offerings.
- By 2016, CHSS will ensure that all technologies used in classes are equally applicable to any type of networked devices.
- By 2016, CHSS will ensure that over 50% of all faculty members are trained in emerging technologies and 100% of all faculty members are trained in current technologies.
- By 2016, CHSS will ensure that at least 50% of all faculty incorporate and 90% of all faculty know how to incorporate media and mobile computing technologies into the instructional program wherever appropriate and feasible.
- CHSS will increase the number of on-line programs as well as individual on-line courses. By the end of the five-year period, CHSS will offer at least one undergraduate and one more graduate degree program fully on-line.

**The University will incorporate new modes of instruction into the curriculum. [University Strategic Plan Objective 2.D]**

- By 2016, CHSS will fuse the new technologies into the curriculum by initiating at least one additional on-line joint instructional opportunity with a partner university.

GOAL AREA 3

## INTERNATIONALIZATION OF COURSE OFFERINGS AND STUDENT EXPERIENCE

The College of Humanities and Social Sciences leads the University in terms of course offerings relating to cross-national and international content (pertinent to University Strategic Plan **Goal #4, Connecting Globally**). Nearly every department and program offers courses that treat relevant issues in international or cross-national terms. In addition, our Departments of Spanish and Italian, and Modern Languages and Literatures, our minors in International Studies, Arabic Studies, Russian Area Studies, Asian Studies, and Latin American and Latino Studies, and our concentration in International Justice address international matters in a direct fashion. Yet there remains a lack of focus on some international content areas: we need to continue to evaluate faculty strength in areas of African, Asian and Middle Eastern studies. Moreover, as global collaboration becomes increasingly important in all content areas covered by the College, we must continue to expand our departmental and program curricula to incorporate international and cross-national content.

The Departments of Spanish and Italian, Modern Languages and Literatures and Linguistics have recently moved to renovated Schmitt Hall, where the availability of advanced technology for interpretation and translation as well as general language instruction has facilitated new programming in these areas at the undergraduate and graduate areas. At the same time, the teleconferencing facilities in Schmitt have enhanced opportunities for shared course offerings in Montclair and other locations, as described above. We intend, over the next five years, to develop more “global classroom” experiences making full use of the technology at our disposal.

The College has been a leader in the development of study abroad programs. CHSS faculty members lead student trips to several locations in Italy, France, Peru, Germany and Spain. Our students participate in MSU-sponsored study abroad programs in many other locations. In addition, our faculty members participate in faculty exchanges in China, Austria and other parts of the world; several of the exchange agreements were developed by

CHSS faculty members. The Dean's Office will continue working closely with the Global Education Center in promoting campus globalization.

Study abroad is extremely important for students in many of our majors and advantageous to all our students regardless of major, yet the resource limitations common for many of our students often make international travel difficult for them. We intend to increase financial assistance for study abroad. In addition, we will

continue to encourage efforts to bring international faculty and students to Montclair State University for interaction with our students. We have placed several Scholar Rescue participants in our departments in recent years. We have been active as well in the placement of Fulbright scholars at MSU, particularly in the Department of Linguistics. These are important opportunities for our faculty, staff and students, and we will continue to support such interactions during the next five year period.

*To accomplish the above measures, the College commits to applying to its own educational endeavors these specific objectives from the University Strategic Plan:*

**The University will extend existing partnerships and establish new partnerships with selected foreign universities, focusing on collaborative research, jointly offered instructional degree programs, and entrepreneurial opportunities. [University Strategic Plan Objective 4.A]**

- By 2014, CHSS will, in collaboration with the Office for Research and Sponsored Programs and the Global Education Center, initiate a College program of international research and cooperation with existing partner universities.
- By 2016, CHSS will have 80% of its departments participating in international partnerships.
- By 2014, each CHSS department will present a specific plan, when appropriate, for globalization of its curriculum using technology.
- By 2015, at least three CHSS departments will conduct at least one regular course through the internet in conjunction with universities from other countries.
- By 2017, CHSS will offer at least two combined degree programs with partner universities in other countries.

**The University will increase the involvement of Montclair State faculty in the area of international research collaborations, and the number of international faculty hosted by the University annually. [University Strategic Plan Objective 4.B]**

- By 2016, CHSS will have at least 50% of its departments involved in international fellowships or research grants.

**The University will increase the number of students who participate in a study abroad program, and develop appropriate financial mechanisms to assure the accessibility of that opportunity for students of all economic means. [University Strategic Plan Objective 4.C]**

- By 2014, 3%, and by 2016, 5% of CHSS students will study for a full term at a university abroad.
- CHSS will maintain and expand the funds provided for study abroad so that, by 2016, it will increase the available funding by 50%.

**By 2014, University departments that offer World Languages will provide students with a dynamic communicative approach to learning a language and its key cultural constructs; placement policy will promote language proficiency outcome objectives. [University Strategic Plan Objective 4.E]**

## GOAL AREA 4

# FACULTY HIRING AND RENEWAL

The College of Humanities and Social Sciences will meet the challenges of tomorrow (**Goal #5, Meeting Challenges and Opportunities on the Way to Tomorrow**) in large part through the continued renewal and rebuilding of faculty resources. Currently CHSS has 186 full-time tenured and tenure-track faculty, a number that does not meet our instructional needs. Over the last five years, we have replaced some, though not all, retiring faculty members and others who have left MSU for opportunities elsewhere. The good number of our junior colleagues,

however, are generally making very good progress through the reappointment, tenure and promotion processes.

Many departments have large cohorts of colleagues eligible for retirement. The replacement of these faculty members presents both a challenge and an opportunity. In some cases, curricular offerings will remain largely the same; in others, with retirements, new methodological skill sets and content areas may be deemed appropriate by relevant departments and programs. The Dean's

Office will continue to work with departments and programs to refine and redefine needed areas of faculty hiring and aggressively seek faculty resources.

New colleagues generally come to the University with a substantial research commitment. At the same time, the College takes its teaching and service responsibilities seriously and encourages new faculty colleagues to consider their roles as investigators, teachers and citizens of the University as three dimensions of a well-balanced portfolio. We will continue to encourage colleagues to seek resources to enhance their teaching and their research opportunities both within the University and in other venues. Toward that end, the Dean's Office has steadily and significantly increased travel funds available to research faculty presenting their work at scholarly conferences. We have also supported participation in instruction-related conferences, those on assessment and other essential services to the College and its departments and programs. We encourage our professional staff and faculty to participate in intraprofessional education and practice.

We also rely on clinical and professional staff to provide applied instruction for our students. With retirements and resignations, we have utilized one-year

temporary faculty to fill instructional gaps. We use a large cadre of instructors in this category to staff First-Year Writing as well. The University's new instructional and clinical specialist categories give us another kind of resource to maintain continuity in instruction while departments and programs plan for longer-term arrangements. We will continue to utilize both one-year appointees and instructional/ clinical specialists as appropriate but remain committed to filling as many instructional positions with full-time, tenure-track faculty members as possible. With respect to student needs in and out of the classroom, the demands of supervision and support for a large contingent of part-time faculty, and the increasing demands of assessment and curricular planning, full-time, tenure-track faculty members remain our most important instructional category.

The College maintains a large and generally strong cadre of adjunct instructors. We have provided office space, professional development and other opportunities to these valued colleagues. Nevertheless, we are concerned about the high number of courses taught by adjuncts, which we estimate to be 40-50% of all CHSS courses offered in any given semester. Again, full-time, tenure-track faculty members are our preferred instructional resource.

*To accomplish the above measures, the College commits to applying to its own educational endeavors these specific objectives from the University Strategic Plan:*

**The University will extend and enhance the connectivity that forms the basis of the community of scholars. [University Strategic Plan Objective 2.A]**

- CHSS will augment, annually, the number of full-time faculty in high-demand programs and those for which the addition of faculty will contribute to achieving national ranking or recognition or to maintaining national ranking and recognition, such as already enjoyed by the Audiology and Speech Language Pathology programs.

## GOAL AREA 5

## EXTERNAL FUNDING

The University Strategic Plan (**Goal #3, *Connecting to Place***) notes that New Jersey public funding for higher education has been diminishing and that maintaining healthy enrollment growth is a challenge. The University has explored other sources of funding to support students and programs (University Strategic Plan **Goal #2, *Connecting People and Ideas***). There are several mechanisms that CHSS, too, is pursuing to provide resources for our students, faculty and academic programs.

Critical importance lies with CHSS's desire to create a new position which will be devoted to academic advising and communication/marketing of College achievements, events, and notable students and alumni as well as faculty.

### *Scholarships*

With the assistance of the CHSS development officer, we have established an advisory board made up of 10 alumni and other interested professionals. These individuals have committed considerable time and resources to helping us target

appropriate scholarship and graduate fellowship donors and to assisting in providing internships and post-graduate opportunities for our students.

We have had several important successes in raising scholarship funds throughout the College, including a large legacy gift for strengthening the languages and linguistics. At the same time, we have received funding to support programming in several departments, such as the visit of a noted writer from Spain. In general, our department chairs and program directors have worked hard to engage alumni in Homecoming and other events. Efforts to improve our websites, develop a newsletter, and generally make College successes better known to alumni communities have been made.

The College is dedicated to continuing such endeavors, with the identification of a larger and more focused donor pool our most immediate need. A principal goal of the College over the next five years will be the creation of student financial support at both the undergraduate and graduate levels.

*To accomplish the above measures, the College commits to applying to its own educational endeavors these specific objectives from the University Strategic Plan:*

**The University will increase the amount and diversify the sources of non-state support. [University Strategic Plan Objective 5.A]**

- By 2015, CHSS will, in consultation with the CHSS Advisory Board, identify and establish multiple cooperative relationships with providers of internships for students majoring in CHSS fields.
- By 2015, CHSS will, in consultation with University Advancement, identify a range of specific longer-impact and one-time funding opportunities for donors.

### *Self-supporting outreach activities*

The faculty and staff of the College of Humanities and Social Sciences have worked hard to develop a series of activities to engage faculty, train students and serve large communities in self-supporting ways. The department of Communication Sciences and Disorders is a CHSS-leader in community outreach, providing high quality clinical services and hearing devices to a range of age and income groups. Our non-credit ESL program brings students from all over the world for language training at no programming cost to the University. The Department of Psychology provides

assessment services for elementary and high school students in a self-supporting way, as does the Center for Child Advocacy in its educational programs about bullying. The Humanities Institute offers several programs over the course of the year to acquaint area high school students about Humanities fields and disciplines. The Humanities Institute, Coccia Institute, Inserra Chair and other faculty and programs have received external funding to support events of interest to the campus and regional communities. The College is dedicated to continuing and expanding such activities as they benefit faculty, staff, students and broader constituencies.

*To accomplish the above measures, the College commits to applying to its own educational endeavors these specific objectives from the University Strategic Plan:*

**The University will extend and enhance the connectivity that forms the basis of the community of scholars. [University Strategic Plan Objective 2.A]**

- By 2014, CHSS will identify an additional center or institute with either a broad cross-disciplinary or narrowly-targeted focus that can demonstrate progress toward building a national reputation.

**The University will increase partnerships and joint ventures with research organizations, business, government, and non-profit organizations. [University Strategic Plan Objective 2.B].**

- By 2015, programmatic centers and institutes within CHSS will develop funding plans for generating external support.

### *Sponsored research funding*

External funds are required in some fields to make research possible; where equipment and other expenses are significant, research sponsors are essential. Research funding is not, however, mandatory in all disciplines in order to produce scholarship; yet even in these fields external funding will enhance the opportunity to accomplish influential scholarship. CHSS faculty throughout the College are producing articles and books that draw the attention of the scholarly community and contribute strongly to the general regard of Montclair State among regional and national institutions of higher education, and the College strives to expand opportunities for faculty's research.

CHSS has increased its funding in recent years in areas where funding is needed for effective investigation and analysis. An increase in competitive federal funding is particularly notable. Colleagues in Linguistics, Speech-Language Pathology and Psychology have been the recipients of several large grants from the National

Science Foundation and National Institutes of Health; colleagues in CHSS have received National Endowment for the Humanities fellowships and grants, and the College has led the University in the receipt of Fulbright awards. The Center for Child Advocacy has been a leader in the state of New Jersey in developing training activities with large state grants and contracts. Colleagues in Linguistics and Psychology have received research funding from the Department of Defense.

As the College hires more research-active faculty in areas where external funding is necessary for research success, we expect that grants and contracts will increase as well. Working with the University's Office of Research and Sponsored Programs, the College will continue to promote and support these activities of scholars in all departments seeking assistance in completing research proposals.

*To accomplish the above measures, the College commits to applying to its own educational endeavors these specific objectives from the University Strategic Plan:*

**The University will increase extramural support for scholarly activity. [University Strategic Plan Objective 2.C]**

- By 2016, CHSS will increase the number of competitive proposals submitted to federal funding agencies by 4% per year.

- CHSS will increase each year the number of grant proposals that include support for full-time graduate students.

**The University will foster a campus culture that is service-oriented [University Strategic Plan Objective 5.F] and will develop and implement external and internal communication strategies that will support the goals and objectives of the strategic plan [University Strategic Plan Objective 5.G].**

- By 2016, CHSS will create a new position in the Dean's Office to serve academic advising and internal communications for students and to coordinate and enhance external communication about the College for diverse constituencies.

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## SUMMARY

***The College of Humanities and Social Sciences*** is a large, vibrant and diverse entity. It has the instructional and staff talent and creativeness as well as the curricular strength to adapt to the changing competitive landscape of higher education. During the next five years we will build on our strengths to better serve an ever-changing student body as well as the larger campus and academic communities. We will focus in particular on the five areas for goals discussed in this document:

1. Student retention and timely degree completion;
2. Application of advanced technology to learning;
3. Internationalization of the curriculum;
4. Faculty hiring and renewal;
5. Increase in externally-generated funding.

CHSS will, through the implementation of this strategic plan, reinforce and renew our mission to prepare students to be productive members of and contributors to our local and global civic and economic communities.