



College of
Social and Behavioral Science
THE UNIVERSITY OF UTAH

2022-2027

STRATEGIC PLAN

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Overview | A Letter From Our Dean



This plan reflects the collective vision of our students, faculty, staff, alumni, and partners who share a deep commitment to creating knowledge that matters and building a brighter future for our communities.

At CSBS, we believe education is a catalyst for opportunity, research is a driver of discovery, and community is the foundation for meaningful change. Our mission is simple yet profound: *to inspire human solutions to life's challenges*. This plan lays out how we will continue to live that mission while embracing new opportunities for growth and impact.

We are charting our course through four strategic priorities. We will champion *Student Success* by fostering belonging, expanding access, and preparing graduates to thrive in a rapidly changing world. We will advance *Research Innovation* that tackles society's most

pressing issues and generates knowledge that improves lives. We will deepen our *Social Impact* by connecting scholarship to communities, policy, and practice - locally, nationally, and globally. And we will strengthen *Agility & Excellence in Operations*, ensuring we have the systems, people, and resources needed to support excellence at every level.

This plan is not both a reflection of who we are and a bold declaration of where we are going. It is a commitment to our students, our university, and our communities that CSBS will continue to lead with purpose, innovate with integrity, and create lasting impact.

I am deeply grateful to all who contributed to shaping this vision. Together, we will ensure that the College of Social and Behavioral Science continues to lead in advancing knowledge and creating solutions that strengthen our communities and our world.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michelle M. Camacho".

Michelle M. Camacho
Dean, College of Social and Behavioral Science



Our Vision

To lead the University of Utah and the state in research, education, and community partnerships that translate social and behavioral science into meaningful action, empowering people and shaping policies that improve our communities.

Our Mission

The College of Social and Behavioral Science advances understanding of the human experience to inform solutions for society's greatest challenges.

Through rigorous research, experiential learning, and community engagement, we explore the social, behavioral, economic, political, and environmental forces that shape our world.

CSBS prepares students to think critically, lead with purpose, and create solutions that strengthen society.

STUDENT SUCCESS

At CSBS, student success is at the heart of our mission. We are committed to creating an welcoming, supportive, and innovative learning environment where all students can thrive. By expanding access, reimagining pathways, and integrating experiential opportunities, we prepare graduates to lead with confidence in an ever-changing world. Looking ahead, we aim to elevate retention and graduation rates, strengthen mentoring, support advising, and foster a culture of belonging. Our focus is on empowering students to achieve their full potential while shaping the future workforce with skills grounded in a social and behavioral science lens.



Student Success Initiatives

- Expanded Student Support Structures:** Increased frequency of meetings between the Associate Dean for Student Success and Directors of Undergraduate Studies to improve coordination, information flow, and student outcomes.
- DEWI Reduction & Academic Support:** Implement targeted use of the Learning Center and Supplemental Instruction to lower D, E, W, and I rates.
- Peer Mentoring & Supplemental Instruction:** Expand the Student Ambassador program to include peer mentoring, strengthening belonging and persistence among undergraduates.
- First-Year & Signature Experiences:** Pilot programs to enhance first-year engagement, retention, and transition support, including collaboration with the Navigate U Hub for transfer and migrating students. Expand upon success of established Living Learning Community offerings - *e.g. - Sustainability, Action, & Leading Together (SALT)*.
- Responsive Curriculum:** Shape curriculum in response to student demand and workforce needs—developing programs, such as the new neuroscience major, that align with the priorities of the state and nation.

4,200+
Students



CSBS serves the largest number of students at the U

- Internship & Workforce Development:** Strengthen internship programs and launch planning for the ULaunch Initiative to connect undergraduates with high-impact, career-aligned experiences.
- Flexible Learning Expansion:** Support development of diverse modalities to improve accessibility, fill rates, and student flexibility.
- Mental Health Focus in Education:** Integrate mental health and well-being into curricula across departments, reinforcing student resilience and career readiness.

The Future of Student Success

Looking ahead, CSBS will deepen its commitment to student success by expanding access and opportunity across every stage of the student journey. We will strengthen academic support systems, scale mentoring and internship programs, and create more experiential pathways that connect learning to purpose.

Through innovative teaching models, expanded offerings, and stronger community partnerships, CSBS will continue to empower students to thrive academically and professionally - preparing graduates to be workforce ready, and lead with purpose, resilience, and a sense of social responsibility.



RESEARCH INNOVATION

CSBS is home to research that shapes understanding, drives discovery, and informs solutions to pressing challenges. Our faculty and students tackle complex issues through interdisciplinary collaboration and a commitment to advancing knowledge that matters. Looking ahead, we seek to grow our research profile, expand funding opportunities, and highlight the transformative impact of our work locally and globally. By fostering a vibrant research community and investing in innovation, we will amplify the reach of CSBS scholarship, positioning the college as a leader in advancing insights that improve lives, influence policy, and contribute to the public good.



Research Initiatives

- **Continued growth in research funding:** Build upon recent success in research funding - 118% growth between 2022 and 2025 - by continuing to pursue strategic grants, interdisciplinary collaborations, and high-impact scholarship.
- **High National Research Rankings:** Five of eight CSBS departments rank in the top 20 nationally for research productivity; Sociology (#2), Geography (#4), and Anthropology (#4) rank in the top five.
- **Expand CSBS Social Science Data Initiative :** Secured a \$2M NSF grant to launch the CSBS Data Science Initiative and expand the NEXUS Scholars Program to train students in applied data science. Increase users of WFRDC.
- **Interdisciplinary “Family Matters” Theme:** Advance cross-college collaboration around demography, caregiving, family health, and genealogy, linking CSBS strengths to Utah’s cultural context.
- **AI & Responsible Governance Cluster Hires:** Position multiple departments (Economics, Political Science, ESS, Anthropology) to lead in Responsible AI research and policy development.

5 of 8 CSBS departments

rank in Top 20 for Research Productivity



- **Environmental & Climate Research Leadership:** Expand work in spatial data science, wildfire response, environmental hazards, and sustainability through the School of Environment, Society & Sustainability.
- **Behavioral Health Research Growth:** Support the Behavioral Health Innovation and Dissemination Center (BHIDC) in advancing mental health research, training, and clinical service delivery in partnership with the main campus and health science academic units. Increase training opportunities for mental health providers.
- **Community Engagement, Public Affairs, & Policy Innovation:** Designate School of Public Affairs to integrate research, civic engagement, and leadership training. Build upon college's impact related to civic values.

The Future of CSBS Research

The future of research in CSBS lies in bold interdisciplinary collaboration. We will grow our strengths in behavioral health, data science, sustainability, and public policy while advancing new frontiers in responsible AI and social analytics. Investments in faculty recruitment, graduate training, and research infrastructure will amplify our impact locally and globally.

By fostering partnerships that link discovery to application, CSBS will continue to drive research that informs decision-making, shapes policy, and addresses the most pressing issues facing our communities.



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SOCIAL IMPACT

CSBS disciplines are uniquely connected to the issues and needs of society, both within Utah and across the globe. Our work informs policy and strengthens communities by applying evidence-based insights to real-world challenges. With a strong foundation of engagement and outreach, we are committed to deepening partnerships, amplifying community voices, and ensuring our scholarship makes a tangible difference. As we look to the future, we will broaden opportunities for community-engaged learning, build meaningful collaborations with public and private partners, and position CSBS as a trusted leader in driving social impact for the greater good.



Societal Impact Initiatives

- **Community-Engaged Research:**

Sustain partnerships addressing mental health, environmental justice, family well-being, and social equity.

- **Behavioral Health Workforce Development:**

Development: Collaborate with Talent Ready Utah and state agencies to expand behavioral health training and psychometry programs that address statewide needs.

- **Public Service Education:** The School of Public Affairs continues to produce civically engaged leaders through accredited

programs in Public Administration, Public Policy, and International Affairs.

- **Civic & Global Engagement:**

Strengthen ties with community organizations, policymakers, and local governments through applied research and experiential learning programs.

- **Community Partnerships:**

Strengthen community engagement through partnerships with the Hinckley Institute of Politics and other campus units to co-sponsor public events, speakers, and civic dialogue opportunities that connect CSBS scholarship to broader community conversations.

- **Economic Evaluation & Policy Impact:**

The Department of Economics contributes to statewide and national discussions through its Economic Evaluation Unit, focusing on health economics and social policy analysis.



- **Veteran Support:**

Expand support for veteran and military-affiliated students through partnerships with the Veteran Support Center, strengthening access, connection, and pathways to public service.

- **Community-Based Clinical Access:**

Support the BHIDC's bilingual Rose Park clinic, expanding access to behavioral health services in underserved communities.

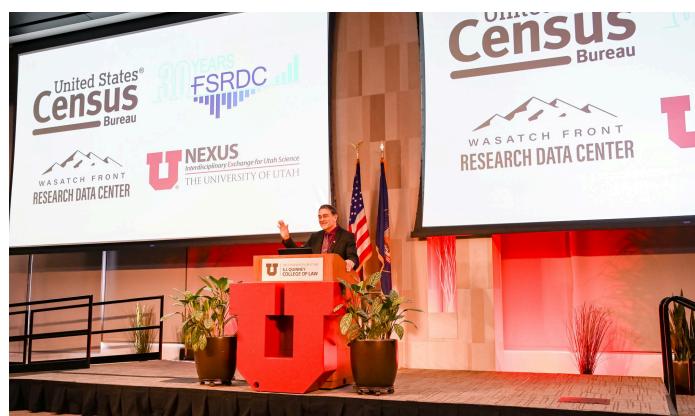
- **Sustainability & Environmental Stewardship:**

Stewardship: Continue community collaborations on climate resilience, sustainability education, and environmental data sharing.

Shaping a better future for our communities

In the coming years, CSBS will expand its role as a trusted partner in creating solutions for a more healthy, resilient, and sustainable society. We will strengthen connections between scholarship and public good - linking classroom learning, research, and community engagement to real-world impact.

Through initiatives in behavioral health, public affairs, environmental resilience, and family well-being, we will continue to build bridges between academia and communities, ensuring our work improves lives, informs policy, and elevates the human experience across Utah and beyond.



AGILITY + EXCELLENCE IN OPERATIONS

Operational excellence provides the foundation for CSBS's mission. We are committed to building agile, efficient, and responsive systems that support our students, faculty, and staff while adapting to the evolving landscape of higher education. By streamlining processes, investing in technology, and fostering a culture of continuous improvement, we aim to strengthen the College's ability to deliver on its strategic priorities. Looking forward, our focus is on enhancing transparency, maximizing resources, and cultivating resilience. Through operational agility and organizational excellence, CSBS will remain well-positioned to grow, innovate, and sustain meaningful impact in the years ahead.



Operational Initiatives

- **Right-Sizing the Budget:** Advocated for realignment of base funding to reflect enrollment growth, instructional output, and operational demands.
- **Shared Services & Administrative Efficiency:** Collaborate with the new LAS shared-services structure to centralize finance, HR, and computing operations for greater transparency and equity.
- **Infrastructure Improvements:** Documenting completed and planned infrastructure improvements (e.g., building renovations, deferred maintenance)
- **Faculty Workload Review:** Initiated a multi-year process to standardize teaching loads and research incentive structures across departments, improving balance and efficiency.
- **Succession Planning:** Develop a faculty succession plan to manage retirements strategically and preserve instructional continuity.
- **Operational Transparency:** Centralize communication through the Dean's Office to enhance accountability, track metrics, and share best practices across units.

- **Technology & Online Delivery Efficiencies:**

Support faculty in modernizing online courses, improving scalability, and optimizing classroom utilization.

- **Financial Innovation & Philanthropy:**

Strengthen external partnerships and philanthropic efforts to sustain programs such as BHIDC, WFRDC, and new professional master's degrees.

The Future of CSBS Operations

CSBS will continue building a foundation of operational excellence that enables innovation and long-term growth. We will modernize administrative systems, streamline processes, and align budgets with institutional priorities to ensure sustainable success.

Through collaborative partnerships in the new College of Liberal Arts and Sciences structure, we will enhance transparency, efficiency, and equity in resource allocation. Our commitment to continuous improvement, strategic hiring, and effective use of technology will ensure CSBS remains agile, adaptable, and positioned for excellence in a rapidly changing higher education landscape.





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