

Priorities for the Future

A Five-Year Strategic Plan for the
Krieger School of Arts and Sciences



JOHNS HOPKINS

KRIEGER SCHOOL
of ARTS & SCIENCES



Introduction

The Zanvyl Krieger School of Arts and Sciences sits at the core of Johns Hopkins University's Homewood campus and serves as the center for the arts and sciences in the university. Comprising 22 academic departments and 40 centers, programs, and institutes, the Krieger School is home to students interested in the humanities, natural sciences, social sciences, and the arts.

Our mission is discovery—the creation of new knowledge through research and scholarship—and the education of our students, undergraduate and graduate alike.

The Krieger School has nearly 365 tenured and tenure-track faculty and 280 teaching and research faculty with a wide array of scholarly contributions. Our current faculty include one Nobel Prize winner, 10 members of the National Academy of Sciences, 13 members of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and 18 Guggenheim Fellows. Our faculty are resourceful, submitting an average of 400 sponsored proposals per year, yielding an average of 160 grants and \$83 million. Awards span a variety of fields, ranging from NIH-funded clinical trials studying Alzheimer's medications, to projects in the humanities and social sciences, such as the Mellon Foundation-funded "Black Beyond Data: Computational Humanities and Social Sciences Laboratory for Black Digital Humanities," and NSF-sponsored research on social factors influencing compliance with COVID-19 health guidelines. With partnership and support from Johns Hopkins Technology Ventures, our faculty have also translated this research into accessible technologies, products, and services. For example, fundamental research in the departments of Chemistry and Biology have led to ongoing drug development for the treatment of heart failure and cancer. In addition, led by faculty in Earth and Planetary Sciences, a new approach to geothermal energy has been developed that promises to provide sustainable and commercially viable geothermal energy with an essentially zero-carbon footprint. In addition to faculty, the school has approximately 430 staff who carry expert and institutional knowledge across many fields. They are the engine of the Krieger School, and they are vital in enabling us to achieve our goals. Through shared governance efforts, we foster a community dedicated to excellence.

The school is home to roughly 3,500 undergraduate students, 1,000 graduate students, and 175 postdoctoral fellows, but also supports students in the Whiting School of Engineering and in the Peabody Institute. Within the Krieger School, the most populated majors include Molecular and Cellular Biology, Public Health Studies, Neuroscience, Economics, Psychology, and International Studies. Students benefit from the study of all of the arts and sciences, with two-thirds earning multiple majors or minors. Those in our doctoral programs excel upon graduation, with 48% working in academia, 27% in the private sector, and 19% in government and non-profit organizations. The successes of the Krieger School should be celebrated but we also recognize that the current landscape continues to change in ways that call us to action:

- **Changes in Undergraduate Student Composition**

While undergraduate enrollment has remained steady, the student body has grown increasingly selective and more diverse. We are witnessing a steep climb in selectivity of students, with Johns Hopkins now competing with other institutions for the very best in the nation. At the same time, Michael Bloomberg's \$1.8 billion gift transformed the institution into a need-blind one. Over the last five years, the number of students from under-



represented groups in each incoming class has grown substantially, as have the number of first-generation, limited-income students. Such changes warrant a new model for undergraduate education.

- **The Changing Nature of the PhD**

Doctoral students face an increasingly competitive job market, especially for tenure-track positions at research universities, which have decreased markedly in number in recent decades. These changes have led some to question the value of a doctorate in the arts and sciences. In the face of such obstacles, it is critical for programs to align training with the job market prospects in the field, making all graduate students stronger and improving their overall career outcomes. This need for innovation will only grow in importance as philanthropic gifts help us diversify our graduate student base. At the same time, as members of a research university, we believe firmly in our central purpose: the acquisition of new knowledge. Every new PhD represents this process at the most elemental level.

- **Emerging Fields Destined to Transform Research**

Recent institutional investments in emerging areas of interest such as artificial intelligence, neuroscience, climate change, and global democracy will transform research and discovery across the university. Coupled with new methodological tools in big data, computation, and digital humanities, we are likely to see new paradigms emerge, impacting all fields of study.

- **The Desire to Understand Our Society**

Members of our community share a common pursuit of truth in an unstable world. The humanities, natural sciences, and social sciences are different in method, research practices, and pedagogy. But they share one thing most profoundly: the search for truth through the discovery of new knowledge. Critical thinking in the arts and sciences is necessary for us to address global problems such as the COVID-19 pandemic, racial and economic inequity, and political polarization.

Beginning in 2021, Dean Christopher Celenza met with Krieger School faculty members, deans, department chairs, and shared governance bodies to discuss the school's future as a leader among arts and sciences institutions. In doing so, he shared four priorities for the next five years:

1. **Revitalize the undergraduate experience.**
2. **Grow the size of our faculty.**
3. **Enhance the graduate student experience.**
4. **Promote public facing scholarship and community engagement.**

More than 225 people commented on these priorities through seven listening sessions with faculty and staff and four focus groups with graduate students, helping to give shape to the overall plan. In what follows, we briefly describe each priority, the strategies we intend to use to achieve them, and how we will ensure accountability for the results.



1. Revitalize the undergraduate experience.

We are re-envisioning our model for undergraduate education to better reflect the mission of JHU—to educate its students and cultivate their capacity for lifelong learning, to foster independent and original research, and to bring the benefits of discovery to the world. Doing so requires a strong first-year foundation for all students, a holistic curricular structure that stimulates sufficient breadth and depth in the arts and sciences, and a variety of opportunities for research and experimentation.

Strategies

- **Cultivate a common experience through the First-Year Foundation.**
First-year students need support in the transition from high school to university. By offering first-year seminars and a foundational writing course in the first year, the Krieger School will support small-cohort learning communities in which students establish foundational critical thinking and writing skills as well as mentoring relationships with our faculty from their first year on campus. In turn, these skills and relationships help students as they become part of the intellectual community at Johns Hopkins. In addition, we are changing the structure of academic advising to facilitate the role of faculty as mentors while also ensuring consistency and increasing student satisfaction and engagement in the advising process.
- **Encourage cross-disciplinary exploration and experimentation.**
We seek to broaden our students' education by launching a new General Education model and related distribution requirements based on six core foundational abilities: (1) Writing and Communication; (2) Science and Data; (3) Culture and Aesthetics; (4) Citizens and Society; (5) Ethics and Foundations; and (6) Projects and Methods. This new model preserves the depth and rigor of the major as central to the undergraduate intellectual experience in the Krieger School. At the same time, it aims to inculcate in our students the cross-disciplinary breadth and habits of mind essential to engage as rigorous, self-reflective, knowledgeable, creative citizens in a democratic society.
- **Enrich learning through research and creative activity.**
A signature component of a Hopkins undergraduate education is the ability to engage in primary research. The Krieger School is committed to increasing opportunities for mentored research as well as student-initiated learning both inside and outside the traditional classroom. Undergraduate research may occur on campus in project labs in the natural sciences, research labs in the humanities and social sciences, experiential labs in the field, and in funded research opportunities through the office of Undergraduate Research, Scholarly, and Creative Activity. Initiatives such as the Hopkins Semester will provide opportunities for co-curricular, immersive learning in Baltimore, Washington, D.C., Los Angeles, and beyond.



2. Grow the size of our faculty.

The Krieger School of Arts and Sciences must grow if it wishes to fulfill the goals related to undergraduate education. Growth is also essential if we wish to compete on a level playing field with our peers in terms of reputation, ranking, and accomplishment. The Krieger School aspires to increase the size of the tenured/tenure-track faculty to 430, thereby placing us closer to the median of our peers and extending the reach of teaching and research in each department in the school. Growth should be strategic, with investments in promising new areas of research. Growth requires parallel investments in staffing, competitive salaries for faculty and staff, facilities, and research infrastructure.

Strategies

- **Realize investments in institutional priorities.**

In recent years, the Krieger School has leveraged institutional strengths in key research areas to garner several significant gifts capable of transforming the school's contributions to research and discovery. The Krieger School must continue to support investments in the [Bloomberg Distinguished Professors Program](#), the [SNF Agora Institute](#), the [William H. Miller III Department of Philosophy](#), the [William H. Miller III Department of Physics and Astronomy](#), and the [Department of English](#).

- **Sustain excellence in preeminent departments and those poised to excel.**

The Krieger School houses 22 departments whose exceptional faculty devote their time to research, teaching, and service. Growth of the faculty can produce exponential benefits, generating more opportunities for faculty collaboration and transforming the student experience through increased opportunities for research and mentorship. Strategic growth will increase the school's reputation even further, contributing to the collective excellence of a premiere school of arts and sciences.

- **Increase the profile of the humanities.**

Currently, the Krieger School is home to eight endowed professorships¹ held by faculty members whose work and influence span multiple fields within the humanities. We aim to increase the number of endowed professorships in the humanities to 14. Doing so will serve as a recruitment tool to establish a core group of tenured faculty in the humanities. Our vision is that these faculty members will be eager to further the interdisciplinary nature of their work, even as they engage deeply with undergraduate education and the public humanities.

- **Invest in emerging fields of study across the arts and sciences.**

The Krieger School has identified several key fields of study that involve multiple departments and programs. Cluster hires and joint appointments in areas such as neuroscience, artificial intelligence, data intensive social sciences, sustainability and climate change, trans-Asian studies, and Africana studies are expanding the reach of these interdisciplinary fields.

¹ Andrew W. Mellon Professorships in the Humanities; Charlotte Bloomberg Professorship in the Humanities; Decker Chair in the Humanities; Drew Family Professorship in the Humanities; James R. Herbert Boone Chair in Humanities; Nancy H. and Robert E. Hall Professorship in the Humanities; Russ Family Professorship in the Humanities



3. Enhance the graduate student experience.

Graduate education is vital for the health and productivity of any academic program, helping to stimulate discussion and discovery while training the next generation of scholars, intellectuals, and scientists. We seek to develop a model of graduate education that supports students not only while at Johns Hopkins but also in their careers after graduation.

Strategies

- **Define the future of the doctoral degree.**

The changing nature of the PhD demands new ways to illustrate the broad social value of the degree. It requires more robust information about the variety of careers pursued by our PhD alumni and refined training to prepare students for an array of careers that may yet to be imagined. We stand ready to articulate the full potential of doctoral education by re-investing in non-curricular activities, the nature of the dissertation, and how these relate to career outcomes. Following work already begun in the natural sciences and encouraged by national funding agencies, all Krieger School programs will engage with PHutures and the professional activities provided there. Additionally, the Krieger School has introduced a transformative initiative—the Society of Fellows in the Humanities—which selectively gathers top graduates of our PhD programs to experiment with a range of careers even as it honors the versatility of their training and expertise.

- **Improve support for graduate students.**

It is essential that our graduate students receive the resources and training needed to excel, not only during their time with us, but also into their future careers. On-going negotiations with the recently formed graduate student union will address some of these concerns, but our commitments extend beyond labor issues. We must restructure support packages to remain competitive with our peer institutions. We will expand and update the mentoring of our candidates, improving the crucial advisor-advisee relationship. We will also orient our graduate students as equitable and inclusive educators and provide valuable teaching professional development opportunities through programs like the [Teaching Academy](#).

- **Foster cohorts for graduate students.**

Building community requires innovative thinking about both space and collaboration. As we shift space allocation on campus, we will designate more shared space for graduate students, especially for those in the humanities and social sciences. In addition, we will use dissertation fellowships, research awards, and other incentives to strengthen the programs that already invite graduate students into shared projects and prioritize student-initiated collaborations.

- **Diversify graduate student base.**

The Krieger School aims to recruit more graduate students from diverse backgrounds, including students from underrepresented and limited-income groups. We will develop a clear understanding of our recruitment needs and implement a comprehensive recruitment strategy intended to create a pluralistic academic community. We will strengthen the roles of faculty diversity champions and student diversity ambassadors to support and enhance the success of our students. We will also help to build pathways to the doctorate through efforts such as the SNF Agora Institute Predoctoral Fellowship Program, the Krieger School Collaboratory PhD Pathway Program, and the History of Science, Medicine, and Technology MA Pathway to PhD in STEM-adjacent Humanities and Social Sciences.



4. Promote public-facing scholarship and community engagement.

We intend to build new channels for Krieger School faculty to share their work with, and engage, a variety of publics. Extending the influence of our research beyond the university, translating it into terms meaningful for society, and working with partners outside Johns Hopkins to produce new knowledge, ensures the continued relevance of our scholarship, even as it helps to build trust with the citizens of Baltimore and increases our accountability to the community in which we live and work.

Strategies

- **Pursue public scholarship in the social sciences.**

The school will continue to promote and support the work of the SNF Agora Institute to strengthen studies of democracy in a broader program of research and teaching and to promote engaged scholarship. These efforts include the newly created Center on Economy and Society, which will, among other things, promote ideological diversity through its new major in moral and political economy. These efforts will reside in the new SNF Agora building but will also find a regular presence in Johns Hopkins' Washington, D.C. facility located at 555 Pennsylvania Ave.

- **Encourage community engagement in the city of Baltimore.**

The Krieger School will leverage existing relationships to expand its engagement with the city of Baltimore. The school will continue to support work such as the Ecological Design Collective, the Hard Histories Project, and Inheritance Baltimore while also using the path-breaking methodologies of the Baltimore Social-Environmental Collaborative and 21st Century Cities Initiative to research cities in general. We intend to strengthen collaborations with the Center for Social Concern which may also enhance our work in the K-12 system where programs such as Writers in Baltimore Schools and BioEYES have proven successful. Opportunities for partnerships also exist with the Baltimore Museum of Art and several other arts institutions, fostering new research and educational opportunities for our entire community.

- **Support public scholarship in the humanities and the arts.**

The Krieger School will explore new opportunities to promote the humanities and the arts. We will advance the potential of the Alexander Grass Humanities Institute as a portal for faculty to present their scholarship to wider audiences. The public-facing work of the institute—particularly in the Humanities in the Village (Baltimore) and Humanities on the Mall (Washington, D.C.) series—offers faculty in the humanities departments opportunities to give talks, seminars, or conferences that address a variety of communities beyond Johns Hopkins. In addition, we will pursue ways for our students to become engaged in creative scholarship in the arts, including the establishment of an Arts Council, whose purpose will be to think through collaborative ways to realize this goal.

- **Advance public scholarship in the natural sciences.**

In addition to increasing partnership with Johns Hopkins Technology Ventures, we will engage our community across the sciences, arts and humanities, and public policy. For example, the recent launch of the James Webb Space Telescope has created an unprecedented opportunity to leverage our relationships with the Space Telescope Science Institute, the Applied Physics Lab, and the Whiting School of Engineering to engage the community in questions about the origin of the universe and life within it. The Krieger School has researchers working in critical areas such as climate change and artificial intelligence, devising new ways to share their findings with multiple audiences.

- **Educate Krieger School faculty and students in methods of public scholarship.**

The Krieger School will continue to provide access to resources such as The OpEd Project (where faculty members receive guidance on writing opinion pieces) to increase the likelihood that our voices will be heard. We are also seeking to develop a cluster of courses aimed at teaching faculty members and graduate students creative ways to bring their scholarship to the public beyond the walls of the university.



Sharing Our Progress

As the Krieger School rises to preeminence, we will provide annual updates on our progress, which will be assessed in a multitude of ways.

Changes in undergraduate education should be evident in course evaluations and responses to the Senior Survey. Given that the first-year experience is critical for the change we wish to see, we will also monitor cohorts in the Enrolled Student Survey and use these data to adjust practices where necessary. We should also be able to observe changes in enrollment patterns, with greater participation in research activities and greater breadth in education across the arts and sciences.

The impacts of faculty growth go beyond size. Collectively we should strive to achieve excellence across the board. Accordingly, we consider improvements in reputation meaningful. These improvements will register in national rankings, increased productivity and invited presentations, and a visible growth in the coverage and presence of faculty in media and the popular press. In the areas of new or emerging fields of study, we expect to see increases in course enrollments, as well as an increase in faculty and student research and/or funding in these areas.

As with the undergraduate experience, improvements in the graduate student experience should improve satisfaction scores in the PhD Exit Survey. We plan to deploy additional surveys at key points during the graduate experience to monitor success and adjust as needed. Changes should also affect admissions, leading to increased selectivity and higher yield rates, lower attrition rates, and shorter time-to-degree. In addition, we expect that these strategies will make our doctoral students stronger candidates in the job market.

Finally, by engaging the public in our scholarship, we shine a light on the innovative research of faculty and its impact on the world. Such efforts should lead to a wide array of symposia, conferences, and lectures in the community, both within Baltimore and Washington, D.C.. Over time, we might expect to see greater community presence at these public events. We will work to increase opinion pieces in mainstream media on key issues written by Krieger School faculty along with a broader and deeper footprint in social media.

Conclusion

The Krieger School of Arts and Sciences is committed to achieving preeminence. We will foster a diverse and inclusive school culture where students engage in innovative research and learn from world-renowned experts who translate knowledge and discovery for practice within our communities. As we implement our new strategies, we look forward to increased collaborations across the university, which will garner support for more interdivisional activities and expanded physical spaces to host them.