Purposes and Goals of the Challenge Areas:

(Note: “Challenge Areas” is one possible name for these; others might be: Intellectual Communities / Knowledge and Practice Institutes / Centers of Relevance)

As emerged clearly within our previous cross-constituent conversations, the “Challenge Areas” are designed to serve these purposes and goals:

- Builds a framework for a transdisciplinary approach that enables connections across the curriculum and fosters new knowledge and creativity
- Integrates bold vision of “CAs” with full liberal arts curriculum
- Can be flexible and responsive to a rapidly changing world
- Organizes a suite of offerings: courses, seminars, programming, and resources
- Attracts new applicants (i.e., widens our applicant pool)
- Can attract donor funding and foundation support
- Supports the college’s commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion
- Supports increased accessibility

- Serves as intellectual communities that include students, and across students, staff, and faculty
- Develops connections between the academic program and student life
- Incorporates cohort building among students
- Incorporates peer mentoring
- Provides opportunities for alum engagement

- Supports students’ inquiry-driven work and provides balance with student-driven interests
- Helps students (and faculty and staff) think about the relevance of their work
- Supports campus-wide Division I, II, and III symposia that focus on student projects

- Can be implemented initially without a large infusion of resources
Approaches

to Challenge Areas

There are several different ways to provide frames for the academic program. Each of the following approaches provides different benefits (pros) and limitations (cons).

**Concepts:**
*Identity; Environment; Movement; Power; Time; Plasticity*
Units framed by concepts that are open-ended while creating a center of focus and understanding

**Questions:**
*What is power?*; *Why is art necessary?*; *Where is home?*
Units organized around open-ended questions that lead both to broad inquiry and to potential solutions/outcomes

**Themes:**
*Race & Power; Sustainability; Intelligences; The Curatorial Impulse*
Units framed around distinct yet fluid themes or concepts to create a focused inquiry that is grounded in contemporary issues and concerns

**Global and Local Challenges:**
*Injustice; Climate Crisis; The Necessity of Creativity for Changing the World*
Units that leverage the language of contemporary “challenges” to create a strong connection between our students, our curriculum, and the outcomes of our students’ work

**Contrasting Frames:**
*Soil to Space; Aliens and Neighbors; Drama to Justice*
Units that set distant or opposing terms against each other to create unique and creative frames for transdisciplinary inquiry