KEY INITIATIVES

The College of Liberal Arts is committed to providing transformational learning experiences to undergraduate and graduate students, conducting research that changes the world around us, and promoting responsible and engaged citizens through academic programs and outreach.

Under these areas, the college has identified five major fundraising priorities for the “Lead By Example” campaign we believe will enhance a Liberal Arts education at Texas A&M University.

FIRST-GENERATION STUDENTS

First-generation college students face lower graduation and retention rates than other students due to the social, financial, and academic obstacles they often must overcome. Nearly one in three College of Liberal Arts students is the first in their family to attend college, making scholarships and programmatic support an essential fundraising priority for the college.

Texas A&M University’s Regents’ Scholars program provides needs-based scholarships of up to $5,000 a year to qualified first-generation students. Students in the college enroll in the Liberal Arts Regents’ Scholars Initiative, a year-long class designed to acclimate them to academic life. In the fall, among other skills, these students learn time management, test preparation, and financial management, while also forming the bonds of a community and support system. In the spring, students travel on a field trip, where they gain global experience and engage in service activities.

DIGITAL HUMANITIES

Digital humanities sits at the crossroads of humanities research and data sciences using the latest technology. This progressive body of research fosters collaboration across disciplines in an effort to digitize archival materials for generations to come. Whether it’s the works of William Shakespeare or the van Gogh painting “Starry Night,” our researchers capture the humanities in digital form, ensuring that we protect and provide widespread access to these critical components of our culture.

Liberal Arts’ digital humanities interdisciplinary program contains the Initiative for Digital Humanities, Media, and Culture (IDHMC), which aims to help student and faculty researchers access and understand a variety of digitized humanities sources. The program also houses the Humanities Visualization Space—a revolutionary facility comprised of 15 high-definition LCD monitors, enabling users to zoom in on important, and previously overlooked, details in art and literature.
Students in the College of Liberal Arts are driven by one of the university’s core values: selfless service. Time and again, students cite a desire to help people as a reason they pursue a degree from Liberal Arts. One such way to make a difference is through entrepreneurship and innovation, which requires the kind of critical thinking we foster in our students.

The Innovation and Entrepreneurship Initiative will help students learn to recognize an unfulfilled need and develop a solution, thereby contributing to society and the economy. We hope to offer our students a minor and certificate program that gives students the tools to establish, manage, and enhance transformational business ventures.

### BRAIN SCIENCE

The College of Liberal Arts’ Brain Science Initiative within the Department of Psychology places us on the brink of unprecedented scientific discovery. By using advanced tools and approaches, students and researchers can see the brain in action to better understand how people think, feel, and interact.

The college’s core group of brain scientists is trained in cutting-edge techniques in neuroimaging and psycho-physiological measurements. These top-notch researchers are nationally and internationally recognized for their innovative research. The brain science initiative represents the next generation of approaches to treat and prevent countless diseases and disorders, including Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and Alzheimer’s disease.

### INNOVATION & ENTREPRENEURSHIP

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### BEHAVIORAL ECONOMICS

Behavioral economics is a recent and increasingly influential field that uses human behavior to explain economic decision-making. Whereas standard economic theory assumes that consumers are always rational and forward-thinking, behavioral economics takes into consideration the realities of the human condition, such as emotions, confirmation bias, and loss aversion. The field’s prominence allows its concepts to be applied to other areas, such as healthcare, marketing, and climate policy.

The College of Liberal Arts’ Behavioral Economics Initiative in the Department of Economics is uniquely positioned for success, as we have some of the most distinguished behavioral economists leading our efforts in this area. A significant element of this initiative is the Behavioral Economics and Policy Program (BEPP), in which faculty, along with undergraduate and graduate students, create or collaborate on significant research projects using the college’s Economics Research Laboratory—one of the best-known behavioral economics laboratories in the country.