

Strategic Plan 2020-2025

Vision

The Institute for the Study of Human Flourishing (ISHF; the Institute) is revitalizing and renewing the study and cultivation of virtue in higher education, advancing the study of virtue through leadership in virtue research, and improving the flourishing of students and of all people in Oklahoma and beyond through effective and inspiring outreach programs.

Mission

To advance research in the study of virtue and promote flourishing and leadership in virtue education and outreach.

Goals, Objectives and Activities

Goal 1: Sustainability

Develop a sustainable infrastructure that supports the organization, operations, programs, and finances of ISHF and nourishes its growth and development.

Objective 1: Develop a flexible and adaptable organizational structure that supports the ongoing success of ISHF.

Activity 1: Create and appoint a Board of Directors that actively engages in the life of ISHF while promoting its mission to OU and the greater community.

Activity 2: Restructure the roles of post-doctoral fellows to include activities that specifically support the work of ISHF.

Activity 3: Create roles and expectations for OU undergraduate fellows and graduate assistants whose work will advance the research and educational outreach activities of the Institute.

Activity 4: Develop reserve capacity to maintain the Institute's core administrative, operational, and communications functions when in-person instruction, engagement, and meetings are not advisable or permitted.

Activity 5: Develop a leadership succession plan to ensure continuity in fulfilling the vision and mission of the Institute.

Objective 2: Increase on-campus visibility and garner greater institutional support for ISHF's research and educational activities.

Activity 1: Increase engagement of ISHF leadership and staff with university service committees, task forces, and working groups.

Activity 2: Develop and implement routine methods and practices for keeping members of the OU campus community updated about the Institute's work.

Activity 3: Secure an external sign for ISHF and develop other appropriate way-finding communications that help identify and locate the Institute (e.g. campus map, University website, signage within the Chemistry Building).

Activity 4: Work with other "Provost-direct" centers and institutes to create a reference group that meets regularly with the Provost.

Activity 5: Work with OU leadership to explore opportunities to fund additional essential staff positions that will help secure and support the Institute's core programs and services.

Objective 3: Diversify and strengthen the ISHF funding model to maximize external funding that supports the Institute's ongoing research, education, and outreach work.

Activity 1: Continue to pursue and secure grant and contract funding to support the mission and the ongoing evolution and diversification of programs and initiatives of ISHF.

Activity 2: Establish and nurture an active working partnership with the Office of Advancement to identify and develop opportunities with potential donors and foundations that can support the work of the Institute.

Objective 4: Establish and activate a culture of assessment to systematically measure progress made with this strategic plan and to demonstrate the value and impact of the Institute's work.

Activity 1: Develop metrics and data collection processes for this strategic plan to document progress and ensure that goals and objectives are achieved.

Activity 2: Work with the University to systematize and prioritize assessment of student learning outcomes in courses containing virtues education components.

Activity 3: Use assessment data to (1) improve delivery and effectiveness of educational and outreach programs, (2) support future grant and contract proposals, and (3) strengthen external fund-raising.

Objective 5: Develop an effective marketing and communications plan and action steps that establish a consistent and tangible ISHF presence across all media platforms.

Activity 1: Regularly and widely share the achievements of ISHF and the outcomes of its work through multiple delivery methods and across a diversity of constituents (OU leadership, staff, students, community partners, funders).

Activity 2: Explore and develop innovative ways to broadly share the work of ISHF through the use of new media (e.g. podcasts, blogs, online communities, as well as virtual, interactive and/or live-streamed events).

Activity 3: Partner with OU to create and implement promotional activities that both benefit the mission of OU and highlight the work of ISHF (e.g., celebration of 5-year anniversary with a symposium and launch of an annual Oklahoma Award for Leadership in Virtues Education [or similar]).

Goal 2: Education

Promote virtues education through the development of scalable curriculum and outreach partnerships and programs on the OU campus, in the Norman community, and beyond.

Objective 1: Expand outreach and increase support to the Norman Public Schools to ensure that virtues education extends throughout the K-12 spectrum and in all schools.

Activity 1: In partnership with Norman Schools, identify opportunities to develop programs and curriculum that establish a system of roots for human flourishing for students and their families, at the primary, middle, and high school levels.

Activity 2: Create greater on-the-ground support for teachers and administrators to implement and assess virtues education in schools.

Activity 3: Strengthen professional development, training, mentoring, and other support for teachers and other educational staff.

Objective 2: Partner to establish ongoing educational outreach efforts that infuse a virtues framework into the OU undergraduate (academic and co-curricular) experiences.

Activity 1: Establish new or strengthen existing institutional partnerships with departments such as the Office of Diversity and Inclusion, Division of Student Affairs, and Office of Human Resources to integrate virtues education and the advancement of human flourishing into relevant programs and activities.

Activity 2: Strengthen and diversify relationships with academic departments and University College to support the infusion of virtues education into course curricula.

Activity 3: Provide faculty and staff development experiences and resource materials to support curricular and experiential infusion of virtues education.

Objective 3: Extend the Institute's reach, reputation, and impact by expanding educational outreach within Norman and to other communities in Oklahoma and beyond.

Activity 1: Explore signature programs with Norman community partners, including expanding professional development opportunities for community leaders.

Activity 2: Develop online/digital delivery methods and systems for virtues education.

Goal 3: Research

Advance the study of virtues and human flourishing by promoting and executing meaningful research through a multidisciplinary lens.

Objective 1: Advance research on virtues and human flourishing both within multiple disciplines and through interdisciplinary initiatives, including in areas that intersect with virtue education (e.g. equity, social justice, health equity, social virtue epistemology, information ethics).

Activity 1: Establish relationships with OU academic departments, graduate programs, and individual faculty from a variety of disciplines that can provide opportunities for intersectional work in virtues education (through brown bag lunches, reading groups, and/or speakers that discuss and explore the intersections).

Activity 2: Recruit post-doctoral fellows from various disciplines whose research meaningfully intersects with virtues and addresses multiple aspects of human flourishing.

Objective 2: Develop partnerships on and off campus that expand ISHF's capacity and reach for research and scholarship.

Activity 1: Establish and support undergraduate research in virtues and human flourishing including sponsoring research with students from the OU Honors College.

Activity 2: Develop research partnerships with scholars from other universities in the US and abroad to explore the intellectual, social, and cultural questions concerning the intersections of virtues education and related fields.

Activity 3: Work with OU Institutional Research to develop systems for collecting and reporting data on longitudinal outcomes for students who engage in courses and activities containing components of virtue education (e.g. retention, progression, and graduation metrics).

Objective 3: Expand and strengthen an international focus on research on virtues and human flourishing.

Activity 1: Continue and expand collaboration with educators and scholars in other countries whose work addresses virtues education and human flourishing.

Activity 2: Provide presentations and engage as participants in international conferences where virtues education and human flourishing are pertinent topics.

Activity 3: Submit research papers and reports of the outcomes of educational and outreach activities for publication in international journals.