



FUTURE FOCUSED

FURMAN UNIVERSITY
STRATEGIC PLAN
2024-2029

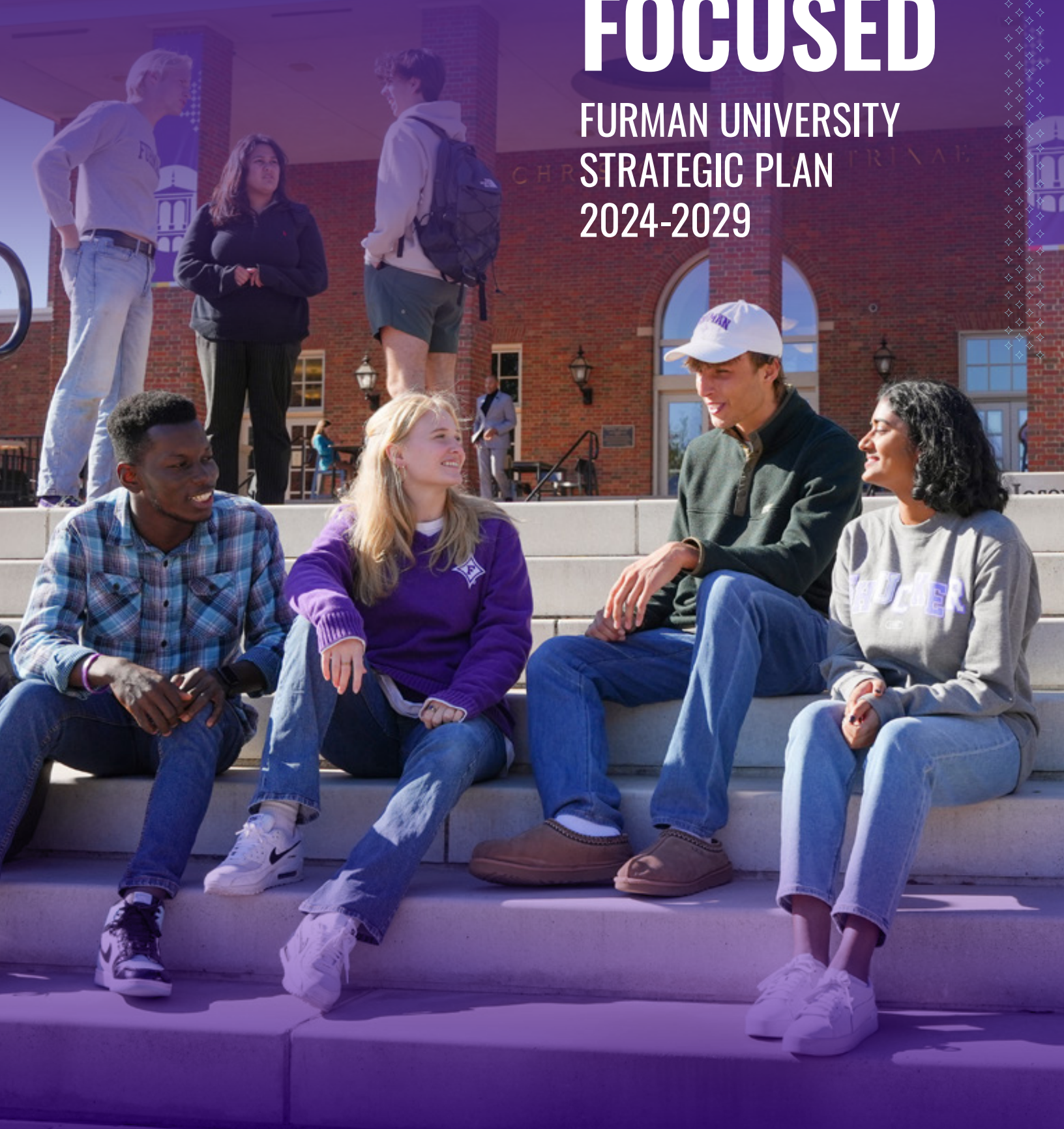
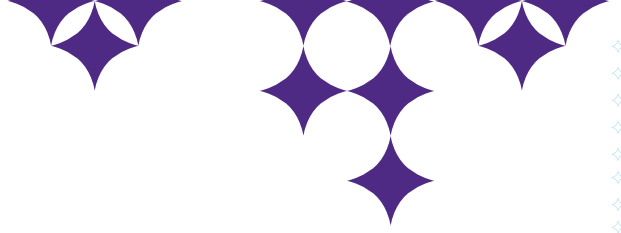


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Furman University remains steadfastly dedicated to advancing innovation, ingenuity and meaningful outcomes, fostering a thriving and inclusive community, and ensuring a strong and sustainable future. These commitments are foundational and aspirational. Over the next five years, the university will strategically prioritize these efforts with unwavering focus.

“Our strategic plan is our commitment to elevating excellence, innovation, and the holistic development of our students and community.” – Elizabeth Davis, President

As we prepare to celebrate our bicentennial in 2026, we are reminded how Furman’s rich history of academic excellence and outstanding teacher-scholars strongly underscores the university’s capacity to innovate and adapt. Our students, faculty, staff, and alumni have contributed to advancing societies at home and around the world through scholarship and service. From pioneering engaged learning to inventing The Furman Advantage to creating four community-focused institutes, our efforts have placed Furman among the finest liberal arts and sciences universities in America and demonstrated an ethos that has long incorporated a spirit of innovation. It’s in our culture and in our DNA.

Furman is a trailblazer in delivering an individualized, student-centered liberal arts and sciences education, ensuring the value of an undergraduate degree. And the nation has taken notice. Furman has been recognized as a “Most Innovative School” by U.S. News & World Report nearly every year since launching The Furman Advantage, our four-year academic pathway that weaves together classroom and experiential learning, mentoring and advising, reflection, and career preparation. The Pathways Program, a first-in-the-nation two-year advising program, prepares students to succeed in college and take full advantage of all that Furman offers. Through Pathways and The Furman Advantage, students graduate with the skills and confidence needed to pursue lives of purpose and meaning.

Over the next five years and beyond, Furman must continue to evolve in ways that are nimble and creative. As a new generation of learners emerges with diverse backgrounds and unique needs, Furman must respond, adapt, and prepare for the future to remain relevant and continue to attract students while serving as an incubator for advancing ideas and innovation. We have a responsibility to use our intellectual capital and resources to have a profound impact on our collective community.

As one of the oldest universities in the nation, Furman’s history is a robust tale of growth, resilience, adaptation, impact, and influence. We look to this strategic plan to make our immediate future even stronger and set the foundation as we enter our third century.

VISION, MISSION AND VALUES

VISION

Inspiring purposeful living and fostering thriving communities through learning, creativity, and innovation.

MISSION

Furman University challenges and supports lifelong learners through rigorous inquiry, transformative experiences, and deep reflection to lead lives of meaning and consequence.

VALUES

In championing the liberal arts and sciences, Furman University cultivates a community of learners engaged in an effort to understand themselves, the world, and their place in it.

To support this quest for knowledge and meaning, we steadfastly protect freedom of inquiry and hold ourselves to high standards of excellence and integrity. We foster a passion for lifelong learning by nurturing the growth of each individual as a whole person: intellectually, spiritually, emotionally, and physically.

As we draw lessons from thoughtful consideration of our university's past, we advocate respect for all people and actively welcome perspectives from a wide variety of backgrounds, cultures, and beliefs.

We aspire to advance thriving communities that honor inquiry, promote diversity, strive for equity, appreciate beauty, and act as responsible stewards of our planet. These aspirations inspire our vision and shape our mission, calling us to meet the challenges and responsibilities of a complex, diverse, and rapidly changing world with courage, moderation, justice, wisdom, and humility.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Rooted in a history of academic excellence and driven by teacher-scholars and a spirit of educational innovation, Furman will fortify its position as a premier liberal arts and sciences university. Recognized nationally for The Furman Advantage and other transformative programs, the university will expand its vision of providing world-class opportunities to every student and deepen its dedication to student-focused academics and community impact.

With the university's bicentennial in 2026 on the horizon, this strategic plan will guide Furman and its faculty and staff through 2029 via the following priorities:

PRIORITY ONE: UNIVERSITY OF INNOVATION AND IMPACT

Furman will strengthen its position as a national leader in individualized learning and student outcomes. By embracing the liberal arts and sciences and teacher-scholar model while enhancing The Furman Advantage and refining the four-year pathway, the university will ensure that every graduate is prepared for a meaningful career and a life of fulfillment. Initiatives to foster innovation and impact the community underscore Furman's commitment to advancing knowledge and society.

PRIORITY TWO: THRIVING COMMUNITY

Central to Furman's strategic plan is the cultivation of a vibrant, interconnected community where wellbeing and engagement flourish. Furman will prioritize the holistic development of students and an inclusive campus environment that fosters dialogue and supports student and employee growth and satisfaction. Furman also will deepen its commitment to a core value of sustainability, underscoring that functional ecosystems are foundational for long-term human thriving.

PRIORITY THREE: SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

Furman's long-term financial outlook is strong. To fortify this position, Furman will prioritize financial strength and sustainability as we enter our third century. By bolstering our financial foundation through additional revenue generation and fundraising, the university will ensure its long-term success. Finally, Furman commits to articulating a distinct brand identity to advance its goals in recruiting, fundraising, and reputation.

This strategic plan outlines a roadmap for continued excellence, innovation, and community impact. By prioritizing individualized and innovative learning, fostering a thriving community, and embracing sustainability, Furman reaffirms its commitment to shaping the future of higher education and society at large. As it approaches its bicentennial, Furman stands poised to build upon a rich legacy and embark on a new era of academic and community leadership and impact.

Furman's strategic plan for our third century has The Furman Advantage at its foundation and relies on the continued excellence of our faculty and staff. This strategic plan reaffirms the commitment to competitive faculty and staff salaries and diversity and inclusion as specified in previous strategic plans.

This plan is a high-level vision for Furman's future that includes broad-level initiatives. It does not include a detailed plan for implementation or specific metrics for success; these will be developed by the working groups assigned to execute each initiative.

PRIORITY ONE: UNIVERSITY OF INNOVATION AND IMPACT

Position Furman as a premier liberal arts and sciences university recognized for delivering a high-value, individualized learning experience through the teacher-scholar model, a culture of innovation, and thought leadership.

OBJECTIVE 1: BECOME A NATIONAL LEADER IN INDIVIDUALIZED LEARNING AND STUDENT OUTCOMES

Deepen and magnify the experience and outcomes of The Furman Advantage to demonstrate the value of a liberal arts and sciences education and position Furman as a leading national institution for individualized, real-world, high-impact student experiences.

I. Deepen and Magnify The Furman Advantage

- Harness the transformational power of The Furman Advantage by purposefully enhancing, innovating, and evolving its supporting programs.
- Deliver an unparalleled liberal arts and sciences experience for students through innovative classroom teaching, engaged learning, and individualized mentoring by accomplished teacher-scholar faculty and professional staff.

II. Enhance and Refine Student Pathways

- Enhance students' four-year pathway through continuous iteration of its programs and opportunities, empowering students to tailor personalized learning experiences.
- Strengthen the connections between academic disciplinary knowledge, career preparation, engaged learning, and job-ready skills to effectively prepare students for success.

OBJECTIVE 2: CULTIVATE REAL-WORLD PROBLEM SOLVERS TO LEAD COMMUNITY IMPACT IN GREENVILLE AND BEYOND

Employ expertise and networks of Furman faculty, staff, and the four institutes to impact communities and provide transformational real-world experiences for students.

I. Catalyze Community-Driven Research and Thought Leadership

- Lead community-driven and faculty- and institute supported research efforts that focus on delivering innovative solutions to complex issues in South Carolina.
- Deploy institute and faculty expertise to broaden student opportunities for applied research addressing key challenges in our community.

II. Broaden Issue-based Experiential Learning and Serve as Engines of Social Impact

- Foster critical thinking and learning through curricular, cocurricular and extra-curricular experiences that emphasize real-world applications.
- Broaden applied learning opportunities in the community such as academic partnerships, research collaborations, internships, and employment in the Upstate, South Carolina, and beyond.
- Translate subject matter expertise and leadership from faculty, staff, and institutes on the local level, documenting outcomes that benefit the Greenville community and the surrounding region.

OBJECTIVE 3: DRIVE A CULTURE OF INNOVATION

As a leading national liberal arts and sciences institution with a demonstrated commitment to innovation, seed innovative thinking across all campus constituencies to meet the evolving needs of learners.

I. Prepare 21st Century Learners

- Support and enhance the teacher-scholar model.
- Ensure Furman is prepared for the next generation of students by evolving our academic and professional education programs, leveraging the relevance of the liberal arts and sciences and our unique institutional resources, and supporting our faculty and staff.
- Integrate technology into the classroom and campus to enhance learning outcomes, the student experience, and provide skills development for emerging technologies such as AI.

II. Drive Strategic Learning Opportunities and Partnerships

- Fulfill our vision to promote lifelong learners by providing transformative experiences for learners through credit-bearing and non-credit bearing programs.
- Harness Furman’s unique resources to develop innovative credentials that meet the evolving needs of 21st-century learners.
- Expand strategic partnerships with organizations in our region to create innovative solutions that develop their talent pools, address key skills gaps in our region, and demonstrate the benefits of a liberal arts and sciences-informed approach to solve key workforce challenges.

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

KPIs will be developed by working groups assigned to operationalize specific initiatives.

PRIORITY TWO: THRIVING COMMUNITY

Cultivate a vibrant, interconnected community where students, faculty, and staff flourish, engagement thrives, and wellbeing is prioritized.

OBJECTIVE 1: PRIORITIZE WELLBEING, GROWTH, AND A SENSE OF BELONGING

Prioritize Furman’s holistic approach to wellbeing for the student, faculty, and staff experience.

I. Enhance the Student Experience

- Support holistic student development by integrating wellbeing into all facets of the student experience.
- Provide the tools and support needed for students to develop independence and resiliency.

II. Foster Diversity and Belonging

- Demonstrate a steadfast commitment to recruit and retain a diverse community of students, faculty, and staff.
- Reinforce the essential role of cultural understanding, inclusiveness, and belonging and implement initiatives aimed to improve these outcomes.

III. Support Employee Growth and Satisfaction

- Prioritize faculty and staff wellbeing, engagement, and professional growth.
- Foster a positive and enriching campus culture through improved communication and collaboration.

IV. Enrich the Campus Environment

- Create an inclusive and inspiring campus environment and physical space.
- Ensure that students, faculty, staff, and alumni find a sense of place on campus.

OBJECTIVE 2: CULTIVATE A COMMUNITY OF DISCOURSE AND INQUIRY

Develop the platforms and skills that support the freedom of inquiry, thought, and discourse on our campus and in our larger community.

I. Strengthen Healthy Discourse

- Promote through On Discourse and related initiatives respect for all people, rigorous inquiry, and opportunities to engage in productive dialogue and engage different perspectives.
- Extend conversations beyond the student body to faculty, staff, and community audiences and spaces

II. Foster Dialogue Skills Development

- Create opportunities to develop skills for communicating across differences while promoting freedom of inquiry, deep listening, and respectful dialogue.



OBJECTIVE 3: IMPROVE FINANCIAL STABILITY FOR THE FURMAN COMMUNITY

Meet the financial needs of students, faculty, and staff in a variety of ways, alleviating barriers and promoting access to help pave the way for their ultimate success.

I. Meet Student Financial Need

- Determine costs and potential resources to develop a strategy to meet 100% of financial need for students.

II. Support Employee Recruitment and Investment

- Reaffirm Furman’s commitment to competitive salaries and benefits for faculty and staff.
- Invest in employee recruitment, engagement, and retention.

OBJECTIVE 4: LEAD IN RESPONSIBLE STEWARDSHIP FOR OUR PLANET

Deepen our commitment to a core value of sustainability, underscoring that functional ecosystems are foundational for long-term human thriving.

I. Advance Carbon Neutrality Goals

- Recommit to and realize the plan to become carbon neutral as a responsible global citizen.
- Reduce greenhouse gas emissions, targeting a 60% net reduction by 2030, and a goal of carbon neutrality by 2040, using 2007 as a baseline. For additional details on our climate goals, [click here](#).
- Assess and improve institutional resiliency to climate change.

II. Foster Sustainable Community

- Utilize Furman’s unique physical assets and our integrated, holistic approach to model sustainability that supports human thriving within ecological boundaries.
- Integrate educational opportunities that produce global-minded citizens with the interdisciplinary skills and experience to solve the climate crisis.

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

KPIs will be developed by working groups assigned to operationalize specific initiatives.

PRIORITY THREE: SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

Foster a dynamic and sustainable future as we enter our third century.

OBJECTIVE 1: BOLSTER OUR FINANCIAL FOUNDATION

Secure the university’s long-term success through strategic prioritization of revenue generation and financial strength.

I. Ensure Financial Growth

- Implement, and commit to a long-term sustainable and robust business plan.

II. Boost Fundraising

- Complete and exceed the goal for the Clearly Furman campaign.
- Ensure institutional capacity for ongoing fundraising success beyond the current campaign.
- Grow the endowment.

III. Diversify Revenue Opportunities

- Broaden student base beyond undergraduates and diversify revenue streams.

IV. Optimize Campus Resources

- Evaluate ways to optimize existing infrastructure, technology, and human capital.
- Capitalize on economic savings attained by making progress toward sustainability goals.
- Align funding with strategic priorities so that we can respond to capacity needs without adding resources.

OBJECTIVE 2: ARTICULATE THE FURMAN BRAND

Identify and communicate a clear, authentic identity that draws on Furman’s distinctiveness, reflecting a bold, inspiring, and visible brand.

I. Define and Clarify Brand

- Define and articulate through research and creativity a clear brand identity that draws on Furman’s distinct academic and student life experiences to bolster public awareness, reputation, and prestige.

II. Tell the Furman Story

- Develop internal, campus-wide communications plan to coordinate messaging.
- Devise succinct, clear messaging to tell the Furman story.

III. Broaden Athletics Impact

- Utilize athletics to strengthen the student experience, foster sense of community, enhance national recognition, and to strategically impact key performance indicators for the university.
- Emphasize its role in recruitment, brand awareness, and reputation.

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS
KPIs will be developed by working groups assigned to operationalize specific initiatives.

STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS AND METHODOLOGY

As Furman approaches its 200th year, we continue to strive for excellence and innovation. In Spring 2023, the university community embarked on the process of developing this strategic plan, a deliberate and purposeful effort aimed at determining, defining and focusing our priorities and initiatives, and charting our future for the next five years.

President Elizabeth Davis, the Senior Administrative Team and the Strategic Planning Team worked with consulting partner Credo to identify the framework and timeline while ensuring consistent and meaningful input from all members of the community.

The strategic planning process was a deliberate and purposeful effort aimed at determining, defining, and focusing our priorities and initiatives.

KEY MILESTONES FOR THE PLANNING PROCESS:

- Kickoff/Partnered with Credo – December 2022
- Credo presents framework to Board of Trustees – February 2023
- Community Day planning workshop – February 2023
- Summer Board Retreat – August 2023
- Strategic Planning Team launched – October 2023
- Strategic Planning Team meetings – October and December 2023
- Campus feedback sessions – Nov. 9, 17, and 27, 2023
- Strategic Planning Team report – December 2023
- Draft of strategic plan presented to Board of Trustees – February 2024
- Strategic plan shared with the faculty and campus – March 2024
- Faculty endorses plan – April 2024
- Board of Trustees approves plan – May 2024
- Working groups begin to operationalize – Summer 2024



STRATEGIC PLANNING AND LEADERSHIP TEAMS

Strategic Planning Team

Beth Pontari, *Co-Chair | Interim Vice President of Academic Affairs and Provost*
Connie Carson, *Co-Chair | Vice President for Student Life*
Kristin Austin, *Assistant Director of Human Resources Operations*
Ian Brown, *Director of Campus Recreation and Wellness*
Jason Cassidy, *Associate Vice President for Student Life and Dean of Students*
Erik Ching, *Assoc. Provost for Engaged Learning; Prof. of History; Dir. of Undergraduate Research*
Vaughn Crowe-Tipton, *Associate Vice President for Spiritual Life/University Chaplain*
Linnea Freeman, *Associate Professor, Biology*
Scott Henderson, *Professor, Education*
Lisa Knight, *Chair and Professor, Anthropology*
Elizabeth Lichtenberg, *Senior Director of Brand Strategy and Visual Communications*
Mac McArthur, *Prof. and Chair, Communication Studies; Interim Assist. Provost for Graduate Studies*
Lauren Payne, *Associate Vice President for Career and Professional Development*
Kaniqua Robinson, *Assistant Professor, Anthropology*
Liz Seman, *Chief of Staff, Liaison to the Board of Trustees*
Michele Speitz, *Professor, English*
Garrett Stern, *Executive Director, Leadership and Professional Education*
Randall Umstead, *Chair and Professor, Music*
Rob Warren, *Major Gifts Officer - Institutes*
Erin Wissing, *Executive Senior Associate Athletics Director - Development and Alumni Relations*

Senior Leadership Team

Elizabeth Davis, *President*
Beth Pontari, *Interim Vice President of Academic Affairs and Provost*
Connie Carson, *Vice President for Student Life*
Jeremy Cass, *Dean of Faculty*
Jason Donnelly, *Vice President for Intercollegiate Athletics*
Franklin Ellis, *Assoc. Dean and Director of the Center for Inclusive Communities*
Tom Evelyn, *Vice President for University Communications*
Meredith E. Green, *General Counsel*
Susan A. Maddux, *Vice President for Finance and Administration*
Heidi Hansen McCrory, *Vice President for Development*
Emily Schuck, *Vice President for Enrollment Management*
Liz Seman, *Chief of Staff, Liaison to the Board of Trustees*
Danny Tang, *Assoc. Vice President for Technology and Chief Information Officer*

Additional contributions to the strategic planning process provided by:
Michelle Shaw, *Executive Assistant, Provost Office*



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