TRANSFORMING
LOYOLA
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2020

STRATEGIC PLAN
LOYOLA UNIVERSITY NEW ORLEANS

2014 - 2020
Dear Friends of Loyola:

I am pleased to present the new strategic plan for the University: Transforming Loyola 2020

This plan is a culmination of over 15 months of extraordinarily productive work by faculty, staff, vice presidents and provost. It has involved all of our normal structures of shared governance, and in fact has served as a model of collaboration among all of the University’s units, including valuable input from the Board of Trustees.

We have developed an integrated plan that is, at its heart, learning centered. Loyola 2020 focuses on educational substance in academic and student life. I think it is an integrated plan in terms of action items, finances, and facilities and I think that it will move forward the University’s mission, and coheres with our “Faith in the Future” capital campaign.

Loyola’s strategic plan is a living document guided by the University’s mission, vision and values statement that focuses on cultivating a learning centered community that is 1) dedicated to a high-quality, experiential, and values-based education, 2) devoted to students’ discovery of their career and a life of service, 3) infused by the cultures and traditions of New Orleans, and 4) rooted in the Jesuit and Catholic mission of the University. It is an organic document that evolves over the life span of the plan, during which planning leads to implementation, implementation leads to evaluation, and evaluation returns us to planning.

The appropriate University and Board of Trustee committees will monitor implementation of the strategic plan in the years to come.

Supporting the major objectives of the “Transforming Loyola 2020” strategic plan, the Faith in the Future campaign will help to ensure a bright future for Loyola and for the university community.

Sincerely,

Kevin Wm. Wildes, S.J.

04 November 2014
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Loyola University New Orleans’ strategic and operational plan is designed to guide the University into the next decade. Although Loyola recently celebrated its centennial anniversary, the University still must navigate through the challenge of an ever-changing educational environment.

This plan is both strategic and operational in that it aligns strategic initiatives and actions designed to deliver value to our various stakeholders. This plan calls for our university to fulfill the promise found in Loyola’s mission that “welcomes students of diverse backgrounds and prepares them to lead meaningful lives with and for others; to pursue truth, wisdom, and virtue; and to work for a more just world.”

The plan calls for the university to focus activities on four overarching strategies to cultivate a learning-centered community

- dedicated to a high-quality, experiential, and values-based education.
- devoted to students’ discovery of their career and a life of service.
- infused by the cultures and traditions of New Orleans.
- rooted in the Jesuit and Catholic mission of the University.

To ensure the success of our overarching strategies, the University must recruit and retain high-quality faculty by enhancing support for faculty development in teaching, scholarship and creative work. We also realize that the kinds of activities outlined in this plan often form a distinctly secondary part of faculty evaluation. Experiential learning, developmental and discerning advising, community engagement, formation for mission, and other activities with or on behalf of our students are not discouraged, but because they are not generally rewarded they tend to be engaged in by a relatively small percentage of the faculty. The overarching strategies and action plans must be embraced by all if this plan is to succeed, and so a recalibration of faculty evaluation processes will be needed.
UNIVERSITY MISSION

The starting point in the strategic planning process, as in all other endeavors, must be the mission of the University, which was approved by Loyola University New Orleans Board of Trustees, March 5, 2004:

Loyola University New Orleans, a Jesuit and Catholic institution of higher education, welcomes students of diverse backgrounds and prepares them to lead meaningful lives with and for others; to pursue truth, wisdom, and virtue; and to work for a more just world. Inspired by Ignatius of Loyola’s vision of finding God in all things, the university is grounded in the liberal arts and sciences, while also offering opportunities for professional studies in undergraduate and selected graduate programs. Through teaching, research, creative activities, and service, the faculty, in cooperation with the staff, strives to educate the whole student and to benefit the larger community.

The Mission is the cornerstone of our university. We are and will remain an academic community fully committed to the pursuit of truth, wisdom and virtue; diversity in our student body, faculty, and staff; excellence in teaching, scholarship, creative work, and service; the education of the whole student; and providing benefit to the larger community. This Strategic Plan will focus on particular aspects of our larger mission that we feel are best positioned to guide the transformation of Loyola to better meet the needs of our various stakeholders.

Loyola University New Orleans builds on a rich tradition of Jesuit education and the colorful background of New Orleans to create an enriching experience for students. As Loyola prepares to reposition itself within today’s higher-education climate, it remains rooted to its foundational values.
LOYOLA’S STRATEGIC ADVANTAGES

The Jesuit vision of education is a transformative one: the student is called on both to understand things as they are and to look beyond present realities for the *magis*. Similarly, the Strategic Planning Team went through a process of evaluating where Loyola is now and where we would like it to go. This process involved a good deal of discussion and a number of group and individual exercises, some of which are described in this document. We sought throughout to create a plan that would both reflect each unit of the University and at the same time challenge each unit to become a better version of itself.

What makes Loyola University New Orleans distinctive? This question is critical in understanding who we are and who we want to become, and a good answer is essential in our interactions with prospective students and their parents, prospective faculty, and others. In our discussions and deliberations and through examining Loyola’s strengths and environmental opportunities, six sustainable strategic advantages emerged:

1. One of Loyola’s great strengths is the diversity of its student body, and Loyola consistently has been recognized as one of the most diverse campuses in the nation. The University should be attentive to recruiting and retaining diverse faculty and staff as well as a diverse student body, and should ensure that it is providing advocacy for all members of the Loyola community and programming on issues of diversity.

2. The City of New Orleans offers an exciting venue for student involvement due to its “rebirth” as an entrepreneurial city and a city where commerce (domestic and international) and the arts are thriving.

3. Loyola is a faith-based university that integrates a liberal arts curriculum with professional programs of study in an atmosphere that promotes community and fosters personal growth as well as career development.

4. Loyola’s Jesuit/Catholic identity represents a brand which connotes excellence in education in a values-laden climate. Capitalizing on this identity by continually improving the quality of students’ experience-based education will attract better and more motivated students. It is important that Loyola use this identity as part of its value proposition to prospective students seeking a career after graduation.

5. There is a potential strategic advantage in the continued development of Loyola’s physical facilities and infrastructure—the recently completed renovations of Monroe Hall are refreshing proof of how improvement of physical facilities can transform a campus. If resources permit, this can be a strategic advantage; if Loyola falls behind in this area, it will become a vulnerability.

6. Loyola has for decades been developing superb, nationally-known programs. Loyola must distinguish itself in the future by even more deliberately and nimbly creating signature programs which attract top-flight faculty and students.

It became clear as the Strategic Planning Team considered these advantages and challenges that the core of any strategic plan would focus on our work with students, from the earliest stages of recruitment to successful graduation and beyond. To adapt a phrase, it takes a campus to graduate a student. As we seek to transform our students, so we transform ourselves and our community. In this way, we began to think of ourselves as ideally a learning-centered community, focused first and foremost on providing an excellent education and formative experience for our students but recognizing that this requires a continuing process of learning on the part of the entire Loyola community. We call on the entire community to participate in the process of cultivating, enhancing, and sustaining this learning-centered community.
A LEARNING-CENTERED COMMUNITY

By choosing the theme of a “learning-centered community,” we mean to say that the next decade at Loyola will be one where students become ever more central to every aspect of the life of the university.

In the classroom, students will be inspired by faculty who will even further engage them in the Ignatian tradition of education, learning through context, experience, reflection, action, and evaluation. In this model, faculty members will act as facilitators of knowledge rather than merely lecturers, and students will be challenged to explain answers rather than just “give” them. Students will be challenged to learn not just what to think, but how to think.

Both in and out of the classroom, students will learn to live the magis in their work and in their lives. A learning-centered community in this Jesuit sense embraces the notion that the development of meaning in one’s life is critical preparation for action. Putting students first will allow us to focus on the individual development of each Loyola student, in the spirit of cura personalis. The ultimate goal is for students to become productive and compassionate participants in a complex world, able to care for both themselves and those around them—locally, nationally, and globally.

The success of our students depends upon the quality and commitment of the faculty and staff who guide them in this educational endeavor. It is therefore essential that Loyola continue to recruit and retain high quality faculty and staff by increasing support for their development in areas where we can best serve our students.

In the end, if we are able to graduate students who both find careers about which they are excited and personal lives that they find enriching, then we will have wholly fulfilled our promise to our students and their families: Loyola is a place where students learn the creativity and courage to choose what they become.
THE STRATEGIC PLAN

The four overarching strategies embody specific aspects of this learning-centered perspective that we believe can benefit from focused attention:

Dedicated to a high-quality, experiential, and values-based education
This is obviously at the heart of what we do as a university, and from that perspective is arguably not new. In the spirit of the *magis*, however, we can strive to do more and do better. Here we focus on experiential learning, especially specific high-impact practices, and the care of the whole student, including co-curricular programs and academic support. These are aspects of higher education that are popular in many quarters, but they flow naturally from our Jesuit mission, and they build on strengths that we already have. At the same time, they acknowledge changes in our student population.

Devoted to students’ discovery of their career and a life of service
Our roots are in the liberal arts, but Loyola has always sought to balance the ideals of liberal education and the realities of career preparation. We want our students to think about more than a paycheck, but that doesn't mean they don’t need that paycheck. The value proposition of a Loyola education can in many ways be most strongly seen here, by what our students go on to do and who they become. Helping them find the fullness of their various callings is the job not only of a strong Career Services Center, but also of faculty advisors, alumni, and indeed the whole campus community.

Infused by the cultures and traditions of New Orleans
Much of what makes us truly distinctive comes from our physical location. New Orleans is a unique city, an international port with long historical roots. Widely touted as the birthplace of jazz, New Orleans had an opera house before New York did, and that cultural diversity plays out in every medium, from visual arts to food. More recently, Louisiana has overtaken Los Angeles as a center of filmmaking. All this and more makes Loyola an ideal place for students from all over the country and beyond to come learn about the world, and about themselves. We are firmly embedded in our community, but we can enhance that commitment, market it more effectively, and bring our students more strongly into the rich cultural gumbo that is our home.

Rooted in the Jesuit and Catholic mission of the University
In a very real sense, mission underpins the first three strategic initiatives, so it could be argued that no more needs to be said on the subject. In true Jesuit fashion, however, we want to be intentional about the formation of students, and indeed all members of our community. The action plans articulated here make explicit a commitment to our mission that is implicit elsewhere and ensure that conversations about mission take place at every level of our campus.

The substance of these four overarching strategies is not new to Loyola, nor do these strategies encompass the entirety of the learning-centered community they represent. For instance, innovative teaching and experiential learning can be found in many parts of our campus, from first-year seminars to core major courses to capstone experiences and graduate seminars. Moreover, the scholarship and creative work engaged in by faculty often has a close relationship to their work with students in and out of the classroom. By choosing specific areas for attention, the strategic plan does not deny the value of others, but we hope the work done in these areas will enhance those others as well.

Loyola’s four overarching strategies will be achieved through a series of action plans described below:
CULTIVATE A LEARNING-CENTERED COMMUNITY

1. dedicated to a high-quality, experiential, and values-based education
   a. Ensure that each student will engage in at least two experiential-based practices which may include:
      ■ Collaborative research
      ■ Community engagement
      ■ Internships
      ■ Study abroad and global immersion
   b. Develop an integrated co-curricular program that offers personal, professional, physical & spiritual development opportunities, which engage students in the life of the campus.
   c. Centralize academic support services that create highly visible space to foster independent and mentored student learning and success.
   d. Develop, review and revise college organizational structures and programs.

2. devoted to students’ discovery of their career and a life of service
   a. Transform Loyola’s Career Services to make it a signature program and recruitment tool.
   b. Create a new model for advising that is collaborative across academic and non-academic units and that focuses on student development, not just progress toward degree.
   c. Develop the network of Loyola alumni and friends who support students’ exploration of a variety of career paths and a life of service through internships, summer jobs, and other engagement.
   d. Design and implement an e-portfolio program, which all undergraduate students will use to compile a holistic record of and reflection on their Loyola experience.

3. infused by the cultures and traditions of New Orleans
   a. Create a new model for collaboration that provides a support structure to engage the Loyola community directly with New Orleans.
   b. Increase opportunities for students to interact with the cultures, traditions, and location of New Orleans through their coursework.
   c. Create a marketing campaign that highlights Loyola’s connections to New Orleans.
   d. Create and enhance programs that will supply graduates for growing-demand professions in New Orleans.

4. rooted in the Jesuit and Catholic mission of the University
   a. Expand formation of students, faculty, and staff in Loyola’s Jesuit identity through integration of spirituality, justice, and the intellectual life.
   b. Integrate Ignatian principles of discernment into advising, career planning, and support for lives of service.
   c. Tie course-level student learning outcomes to aspects of Loyola’s Jesuit and Catholic identity, such as its commitment to justice and ethical conduct.
   d. In pursuit of solidarity, increase opportunities for students, faculty, and staff to connect to, collaborate with, and support Jesuit ministries in New Orleans and beyond.
   e. Integrate into the hiring process the opportunity for all job candidates to articulate how they perceive themselves contributing to the university’s mission.
CREATING THE PLAN

The road to this strategic plan has been a 15-month-long journey of scrutiny, deliberation, and collaboration. The strengths and perspectives of many groups were harnessed to steer Loyola into the future. The Plan is based on the following research:

A. An Environmental Analysis. An outline of current and future economic and educational environments, the contexts and expectations of the students, employer expectations, and the employment outlook.

B. A SWOT Analysis. Part of the Jesuit tradition is the examen, a means of evaluating the good and the bad. The examen can lead to transformation in the personal life. In the same way, the University examined its strengths and weaknesses, its opportunities and areas of concern, to help it to make a clear-sighted transformation for the future, and

C. A Gap Analysis. The Strategic Planning Team identified areas for improvement by addressing differences between students’ perceptions and expectations and the actual performance of the university.
Funding the Plan

Transforming Loyola 2020 will be funded in three ways:

1. Through existing budgets and reallocation of current resources
2. Revenue growth from increased enrollment as the result of new programs
3. External fundraising

Measuring Progress

Transforming Loyola 2020 will be implemented through 21 action plans that were developed by the University Strategic Planning Team. The Gantt chart below, created during the early stages of plan development, approximates the phased implementation of each action plan. The actual implementation schedule may vary slightly.

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While the Strategic Planning Team recognizes that all of the action plans will begin implementation in academic year 2014-2015, the Team has developed assessment metrics and cost estimates for five priorities that require immediate attention:

- Experiential Learning: Ensure that each student will engage in at least two experiential-based practices which may include collaborative research, community engagement, internships, and study abroad and global immersion
- Academic Support Services: Centralize academic support services that create highly visible space to foster independent and mentored student learning and success
- Career Services: Transform Loyola’s Career Services to make it a signature program and recruitment tool.
- Collaborative Advising: Create a new model for advising that is collaborative across academic and non-academic units and that focuses on student development, not just progress toward degree.
- New Programs: Create and enhance programs that will supply graduates for growing-demand professions in New Orleans.