

# **Flagler College Strategic Plan (2019)**

## **Preparing for a Life Well-Lived 2025**

### **Letter from President Joyner**

It is with a great deal of excitement that I present to you the 2019-2024 Flagler College Strategic Plan. “Preparing for a Life Well-Lived 2025” is more than a road map going forward, it is quite simply a vision for a brighter world, guided by the students, faculty and staff we are privileged to serve. Over the past year, an inclusive group of dedicated stakeholders has spent countless hours reviewing trends, gathering data, researching best practices, encouraging input and presenting ideas to move Flagler forward.

Several guiding principles have directed our work from the beginning:

- An uncompromising focus on our students and the role that all facets of the college experience can contribute to their success.
- A sincere desire to honor the greatness of the past while preparing our students for the world they will inherit. The theme of our Quality Enhancement Plan is embedded throughout this document “Liberal Education and Citizenship in a Diverse Democracy” speaks directly to this imperative. Included in the guiding principle is a desire not only to survive but to thrive in this highly competitive environment and to distinguish Flagler College for the next 50 years and beyond.
- A concerted effort to be as inclusive and transparent as possible. Our core planning team consisted of all constituent groups, including but not limited to, students, faculty, staff, alumni, trustees and our community. Additionally, we will continue to strive to maximize our input gathering by reaching out transparently to all who share in the success of Flagler College.

We are incredibly fortunate to exist in an iconic place, St. Augustine. Our city and the legacy of Henry Flagler are embedded in the DNA of our College. We are perfectly positioned to maintain our legacy as a small, private, independent college in this incredible city.

The mission of our plan centers on fostering intellectual, social, and personal transformation in our students. This is why we exist, and is the highest calling of any institution of higher learning. It is our obligation to prepare them for a diverse world that will need discerning individuals, responsible citizens, and visionary leaders.

Our vision is simply to become the very best we can be. Answering the question “What does greatness look like at Flagler College?” has been a constant theme throughout the plan and has been inclusive of every element of the College. We desire to distinguish ourselves through teaching and learning as the preeminent institution of its kind in America and a model for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Excellence will always be the goal and continuous improvement the path.

The core values of Flagler have always and will continue to be our guiding light, as well as our rules for work. All decisions will demonstrate consistency with these values. We have grouped all previous core values thematically with additions that better prepare our students for their future:

### **Transformative Learning**

We are committed to educating the whole person. As a community of inquiry, we value freedom of expression and the bond between teacher and student. We embrace a personalized education that is designed to transform lives and instill a passion for lifelong learning.

### **Respectful and Inclusive Community**

We foster a sense of respect and appreciation for the dignity of all individuals. We cultivate an inclusive and diverse community that encourages civil and productive dialogue across differences.

### **Citizenship with Integrity**

We believe that ethical citizenship should be exemplified on campus and in the community. We set high expectations for honesty, integrity, and individual responsibility. We are deeply committed to building a community of trust.

### **Thoughtful Stewardship**

We are dedicated to stewardship: to the care of each other, to the preservation of our historical buildings and natural resources, to the responsible management of our financial resources and gifts, and to the celebration of the remarkable heritage of St. Augustine with its vibrant cultures and history.

Our plan identifies three priorities, inexorably linked and integrated throughout the plan. Instead of creating siloes or building departmental walls, these priorities transform divisions that are commonly seen in higher education.

- **Create a transformative academic culture**
- **Cultivate a vibrant campus community**
- **Build financial stability through strategic differentiation**

The objectives contained within this document outline clearly the path to achieve these priorities. I look forward to working with the faculty, staff, students and Board of Trustees in executing this plan.

It bears repeating that this plan is focused on our students and the fostering of their intellectual, social and personal transformation. Flagler College embraces this mission not only as its purpose, but to indeed make the world a better place for all.

Political Theorist Hannah Arendt said it best in 1954:

*Education is the point at which we decide whether we love the world enough to assume responsibility for it and by the same token save it from that ruin which, except for renewal, except for the coming of the new and the young, would be inevitable. And education, too, is where we decide whether we love our children enough not to expel them from our world and leave them to their own devices, nor to strike from their hands their chance of undertaking something new, unforeseen by us, but to prepare them in advance for the task of renewing a common world.<sup>1</sup>*

As we celebrate our 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, I want to thank those who have gone before us who laid the foundation for the incredible opportunity we have before us.

I am firmly committed to this plan and desire to be held accountable for its success. While ambitious, our future as a college and society demand it. It is my hope that you will support this mission and will join me in being “All In for Flagler.”

Joseph Joyner, President of Flagler College

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<sup>1</sup> Hannah Arendt, *Between Past and Future: Eight Exercises in Political Thought* (New York: The Viking Press, 1968), p. 196.

## **Identity Statement**

Flagler College is a small private, independent, residential college located in historic St. Augustine, Florida, with an offsite campus in Tallahassee, Florida. The College educates and prepares students for productive careers, graduate and professional studies, and informed, responsible citizenship through a highly personalized education. As a comprehensive college, Flagler offers a curriculum based in both the liberal arts and sciences and selected pre-professional disciplines. The centerpiece of the College is the former Hotel Ponce de Leon, a National Historic Landmark built in 1888 by Henry Flagler, which serves as an enduring reminder of his spirit of entrepreneurship and commitment to excellence.

## **Mission**

Flagler College offers an exceptional education through a challenging, inclusive, and supportive academic community integrated with the thriving culture and history of this unique place, St. Augustine. We foster intellectual, social, and personal transformation in our students. We prepare them for a diverse world that will always need discerning individuals, responsible citizens, and visionary leaders.

The College is committed to the preservation of the former Hotel Ponce de Leon and other historic structures that grace its campus.

## **Flagler College**

*Learning in pursuit of a life well-lived.*

## **Core Values**

At Flagler College, we strive for excellence by living our core values in service of our College's mission:

### **Transformative Learning**

We are committed to educating the whole person. As a community of inquiry, we value freedom of expression and the bond between teacher and student. We embrace a personalized education that is designed to transform lives and instill a passion for lifelong learning.

### **Respectful and Inclusive Community**

We foster a sense of respect and appreciation for the dignity of all individuals. We cultivate an inclusive and diverse community that encourages civil and productive dialogue across differences.

### **Citizenship with Integrity**

We believe that ethical citizenship should be exemplified on campus and in the community. We set high expectations for honesty, integrity, and individual responsibility. We are deeply committed to building a community of trust.

## **Thoughtful Stewardship**

We are dedicated to stewardship: to the care of each other, to the preservation of our historical buildings and natural resources, to the responsible management of our financial resources and gifts, and to the celebration of the remarkable heritage of St. Augustine with its vibrant cultures and history.

## **Vision: A Holistic Approach to Higher Education**

*Flagler College aspires to become a model for twenty-first century higher education widely known for its challenging education emphasizing mentorship and attention to the whole person, a teaching faculty second to none, inspired scholarship and creativity, a signature curriculum grounded in a unique combination of the traditional and the new, and thoughtful engagement with the local community and the world.*

To realize this vision, Flagler will create a cohesive and integrated educational experience centered on the intellectual, social, and personal development of each student. This will require recruiting students who are well-suited for Flagler, crafting diverse and balanced entering classes, and supporting these students once they have arrived. It will require developing a more coherent and integrated high-impact curriculum that sets high expectations for our students and concentrates on developing core literacies; selectively developing programs that build upon our existing strengths and the abundant opportunities of the local region, while recognizing the demands of today's world; and strengthening institutional support for faculty development of teaching and mentoring. In addition, we will need to expand and enrich campus residential life, club sports, and intercollegiate athletics; expand and diversify our student body; improve campus engagement; and develop a sense of citizenship within our students. We must launch an aggressive fundraising effort to support these initiatives. At the same time, we must develop auxiliary and educational sources of revenue beyond the traditional undergraduate program that can support our core mission of undergraduate education and help strategically differentiate the College. And finally, we will need to foster a culture of effectiveness in which we utilize data to improve the education and services we offer.

Creating an integrated and cohesive educational experience requires developing, first and foremost, an academic program that transcends divisions between general education and specialized education in the majors, as well as divisions between the traditional liberal arts and pre-professional fields of study, with the goal of cultivating students who possess both in-depth knowledge in specialized fields and the breadth of competencies and skills necessary for negotiating a rapidly changing and complex world. This will require that we develop a general education program, specialized major programs, and signature programs that are designed to complement one another in fostering critical and analytical thinking, cross-disciplinary integrative thinking, written and oral communication skills grounded in evidenced based argument, mathematical and scientific competencies, and a general ability to engage in creative problem solving.

A holistic approach to higher education that fosters intellectual, social, and personal transformation requires that learning be developmental. In fact, “to be transformative, learning must be developmental.” A developmental view of learning “recognizes the “inherent integration of learning about the self and learning about the world.”<sup>2</sup> It rejects the conventional division of student development from academic life, the separation of student affairs from academic affairs, recognizing that learning goes on both inside and outside the classroom.

Furthermore, a holistic approach to higher education requires that we embrace the spirit of a liberal arts education, regardless of the subject matter--a concept of liberal arts education that, in the words of Georgia Nugent, “places increased emphasis on the manner of pedagogy, rather than on subject matter alone.” When understood in these terms, “the distinctive approach of liberal arts pedagogy emphasizes inquiry over inculcation, broad context over specialized content, and synthesis over separate bits of information.” As Nugent further explains, this does not mean that curriculum is irrelevant. “What appears to produce the extraordinary result of a liberal arts education is the particular combination of matter and manner.”<sup>3</sup> This plan proposes that Flagler deploy its collective energies and resources as an institution of higher learning to create its *own* particular combination of matter and manner, curriculum and pedagogy. This plan proposes that this remarkably young college in the nation’s oldest city take its next critical steps in defining its distinctive place in the world of higher education.

### **Strategic Delimiters**

We will initiate no program or service unless (1) it is consistent with and contributes to our mission, vision, values, and practices of shared governance, and (2) it is accompanied by the training and resources needed to ensure its effectiveness.

### **Our Essential Priorities**

In order to achieve this holistic vision, we have identified three essential priorities in conversations with the larger Flagler community. There is widespread agreement that we must: (1) Create a Transformative Academic Culture, (2) Cultivate a Vibrant Campus Community, and (3) Build Financial Strength through Strategic Differentiation. These essential priorities frame our more specific recommendations and objectives that follow.

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<sup>2</sup> Richard P. Keeling and Richard H. Hersh, *We’re Losing Our Minds: Rethinking American Higher Education* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2011), p. 41.

<sup>3</sup> Georgia Nugent, *The Liberal Arts in Action: Past, Present, and Future* (Washington D.C.: The Council of Independent Colleges, 2015), pp. 6-7.

## **Priority One: Create a Transformative Academic Culture**

We find ourselves now at a propitious moment: As other colleges face crises and even collapse, the sound fiscal leadership and selective program development of the College have placed us in an unprecedented position to capitalize on advantages by strategically investing in the development of our academic program. This is an opportunity to position ourselves for the future and improve our academic reputation through a clear and powerful academic identity. However, to foster these next stages of development, and to enable the College to deliver on the promises of its vision, substantive changes to curricula and programs are necessary: Necessary if we are to meet the challenges of a changing academic marketplace; necessary if we are to overcome the internal barriers that hinder our progress from within.

The College faces at present a number of internal barriers to realizing its academic potential: the lack of a strong and unified academic culture and clear academic identity; a curriculum that fails in a variety of ways to address the needs of twenty-first century students and to prepare them as well as it might for the contemporary world; overdevelopment in some academic programs which has worked against the broad, integrative intentions of general education; and divisions between pre-professional and traditional liberal arts programs whose dynamic integration ought to be our academic signature.

These barriers are opportunities for the future, but only if we are forward-thinking, deliberate, and act as a unified college. More than narrow piecemeal reform of *what* we teach, we must think decisively about *how* we teach, and reflect on our deeper sense of the purposes of undergraduate education. A move toward what is now called *integrative learning* in shaping majors, programs, and curricula can build on Flagler's academic strengths and recent successes, while helping us better define ourselves academically and serve our students. The American Association of Colleges and Universities defines integrative learning as learning that "cultivates essential student capacities, skills, and values; engages students with significant questions through multidisciplinary lenses and methodologies; fosters strong connections between academic learning and community-based and co-curricular learning; [and] strengthens the connections between educational outcomes and career expectations."<sup>4</sup> In Flagler's case, this list must also include the deliberate integration of pre-professional programs with a broad liberal arts education in meaningful ways and beyond the first year.

Many of these values characterize the most successful academic initiatives of our past, and they are the heart of our best self as a college today. However, as a college that strives to be transformational for our students and justly prides itself on the mentorship, passion, and sense of community that define us, we must recognize the need to make these characteristics the unifying principles of our curricula and the deliberate focus of broad institutional commitment. Far from mere trend chasing, the changes below give us a clear

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<sup>4</sup> Kevin Hovland, Chad Anderson, and Ann Ferren, "Interrogating Integrative Learning," *Peer Review*, Winter 2015, Vol. 16/17, No. 4/1, p. 1.

and unified academic identity, cultivate a thriving academic community, and position the College and our students for future success.

Our curricular and program initiatives reflect a commitment to the goals of integrated learning and a richer integration of our own programs and curricula, from the first year program and general education through the specialized programs of majors and minors. They recognize that the traditional division between general education (breadth of knowledge at an introductory level) and majors (depth of knowledge in a single area) is shortsighted, as is the false dichotomy between professional job training and the skills and capacities sought by a traditional liberal arts and sciences education.

More importantly, these initiatives recognize that we must cease to think of students as the property or province of particular majors or departments. Such thinking does not reflect the contemporary world, nor does it reflect the realities of the current job market and the career paths our students are likely to take. It also does not reflect the kind of adaptive, integrative, and engaged citizens we seek to educate at Flagler. *All professions and all professionals benefit from critical and analytical thinking, cross-disciplinary thinking, written and oral communication, quantitative and scientific reasoning, a capacity for creative thinking and problem-solving, ethical and aesthetic judgment, historical and political awareness, and reflective thought.*

This emphasis on the cross-disciplinary skills and values of a liberal and integrative education, and on an institution-wide commitment to an academic program and community that fosters meaningful inter-disciplinary coursework, conversation, and scholarship, is not to say that Flagler's existing strengths in distinct majors and programs should be cast aside. Far from it. Essential to the very idea of liberal and integrative education is the idea that the strength of our specialized majors and programs is precisely what makes conversation across and between them so valuable. This plan's initiatives are a recognition that all students, even the most passionately committed within various majors and programs, benefit from exposure to, and integration of their disciplinary work with, other modes of inquiry and analysis. Likewise, even students who feel most at home in interdisciplinary work benefit from exposure to the expert and refined ways of seeing inherent in specific disciplines. This balance of strengths ought to define our academic culture.

The creation of a transformative academic culture at the College will require (1) the implementation of the new Quality Enhancement Plan, (2) significant undergraduate program development in the areas of general education, major fields of study, and integrative education centered on the ideas of high impact educational practices and signature work,<sup>5</sup> (3) the development of a first-year "discovery program" and an ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) Program, (4) the selective development of adult, distance, and graduate programs focused on community and market needs, and (5)

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<sup>5</sup> For a current discussion of "signature work," see "The LEAP Challenge: Engaging in Capstones and Signature Work," *Peer Review*, Vol. 20, No. 2, Spring, 2018).

strong support for faculty professional development, especially as it pertains to pedagogy and program development, and maintaining a competitive and fair salary structure.

## **Liberal Education and Citizenship**

The history of liberal education has long been associated with the ideal of education as both individually liberating and education for citizenship.<sup>6</sup> This ideal has little, if anything, to do with contemporary political debates. In the history of small, private, liberal arts colleges, liberal education has a strong tradition of educating students for responsibilities in the larger society. “The philosophy of liberal arts,” in the words of Eugene M. Lang, “is the philosophy of a democratic society in which citizenship, social responsibility, and community are inseparable.” To achieve the development of students as “whole persons,” Lang argues, “classroom and campus boundaries must not limit institutional responsibility for intellectual growth and academic experience.”<sup>7</sup> Consequently, we propose to strengthen the tradition of liberal education as education for citizenship through the Quality Enhancement Plan and other initiatives that follow.

### **Goal 1: Strengthen Liberal Education, Inclusivity, and Citizenship**

Flagler has a deep commitment to the stewardship of our students and our community. We seek a transformative learning experience cultivated through a respectful and inclusive community where difference is a strength. Through that community, we seek to prepare students to be ethical citizens and builders of their own communities. The Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) will further those goals by embedding our students’ learning in a greater sense of purpose and social responsibility; by more intentionally fostering connections between what they are learning in the classroom and what is going on in the world outside of it. This world is diverse, complex, and dynamic; challenging and ever-changing. Preparing our students for success will require not just *content*-knowledge, but empathy, intercultural competence, and ethical reasoning; the ability to share their views with others with intention and passion, but also to reflect critically upon their own experiences and ideas, and to consider deeply the viewpoints of others; the ability to foster and participate in productive dialogue across difference. The QEP plan reflects research that shows cultivating a diverse and inclusive environment in these ways is necessary to educate and prepare students for productive careers and for informed, responsible citizenship. It is likewise essential to the core values that embody our mission—transformative learning, respectful and inclusive community, responsible citizenship, and thoughtful stewardship.

The central academic initiative of the QEP is a Sophomore High Impact Practice (SHIP) requirement for second-year students, focused on developing intercultural competence

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<sup>6</sup> See Bruce Kimball, *Orators and Philosophers: A History of the Idea of Liberal Education* (New York: College Entrance Examination Board, expanded edition, 1995).

<sup>7</sup> Eugene M. Lang, “Distinctively American: The Liberal Arts College,” in *Distinctively American: The Residential Liberal Arts College*, Edited by Steven Koblik and Stephen R. Graubard (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 2007), p. 140.

in service of the QEP theme, “Citizenship and Liberal Education in a Diverse Democracy.” Course formats may include study abroad, study away, community-integrative education, undergraduate research, or an on-campus intensive format. These intensive experiential learning opportunities will focus on exposing students to diverse points of view and people, improving intercultural competence, fostering dialogue across difference, and building confidence in students’ abilities to participate as citizens in a diverse democracy. This initiative is linked to a variety of other curricular, co-curricular, and administrative initiatives, including the establishment of two post-doctoral fellowships for historically marginalized faculty, and has been developed in close conjunction with the Strategic Plan.

- **Objective 1: Implement the Quality Enhancement Plan: “Liberal Education and Citizenship in a Diverse Democracy”**
- **Objective 2: Establish two post-doctoral fellowships for historically marginalized faculty.**

## **The Triad of Undergraduate Program Development**

Over the next five years, the College must concentrate on developing an interlocking curricular triad of required core literacies, a limited number of new majors, and integrative education initiatives designed to prepare students for making a life and making a living in the twenty-first century.

### **Goal 2: Advance the Undergraduate Program through the Reform of General Education and the Addition of New Majors**

The College will consider reforming its current combination of a core- and distribution-based general education requirement of 14 courses (42 credit hours) into a more coherent and streamlined program of 10 required courses (30 credit hours) grounded in core literacies. These required courses would be selected from a limited set of courses especially designed for general education, rather than courses designed for study in major fields, thereby moving beyond what a former Dean of Harvard College has called a “cafeteria theory of education.”<sup>8</sup> The core literacies might include:

- Liberal Education and Citizenship (the current First Year Seminar)
- Writing (a college-wide non-discipline specific academic writing course)
- Literary Analysis
- Quantitative Reasoning (the current Statistics requirement)
- Oral Communication/Informational Literacy (one or both)
- Scientific Analysis

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<sup>8</sup> Harry R. Lewis, *Excellence Without A Soul: Does Liberal Education Have a Future?* (New York: Public Affairs, 2007), p. 255.

- Historical Analysis
- Social and Cultural Analysis
- Ethical Reasoning
- Aesthetics/Creativity

In addition to these core literacies, the College will also require all students to develop a minimal level of Intercultural Competence. This competency will be explicitly addressed in the curriculum through the implementation of a second year high impact course, which could become either a graduation or a general education requirement.

Reforming general education by developing core courses grounded in a “modes-of-inquiry approach” would free many introductory courses in academic disciplines from having to meet the contradictory demands of introducing majors to a field of study and addressing the broader purposes of general education.<sup>9</sup> This does not mean that all of these courses would be new to Flagler; some existing courses might be modified in order to satisfy core literacy requirements. These core literacies are designed to encourage students to think beyond the limitations of disciplinary boundaries and take a broader approach to learning.

- **Objective 1: Commence a review and reform of the College’s general education program with the goal of eliminating distribution requirements and establishing core literacy requirements grounded in courses specifically designed for general education.**

The College has a relatively small number of majors (34) with ten of these falling within two fields (Communication and Education). In order to develop a more complete and distinctive curriculum and become more competitive, the College must re-examine its existing majors, add all or most of the following new majors, and begin offering a Bachelor of Science degree in selected fields.

Flagler continues to enjoy a tremendous advantage because of its location. But location is not enough. This plan proposes that we take strategic advantage of the historical, cultural, business, and community resources of Northeast Florida to build upon the legacy of Henry Flagler to create a cross-disciplinary program in Social Entrepreneurship and a major in International Business; the rich history of our region to develop an Anthropology major specializing in Archaeology; and the unusual history and strength of our Youth Ministry program and its ties to the local community to create a major program in Practical Theology, and more. This plan proposes that we invest in STEM facilities and build upon the success of our Coastal Environmental Science program to launch STEM

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<sup>9</sup> Derek Bok identifies four basic approaches to general education: distribution requirements, the great books, survey courses, and modes-of-inquiry (*Our Underachieving Colleges* [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006], pp. 255-80). This plan proposes a core curriculum grounded in the modes-of-inquiry approach.

programs in Biology, Computer Information Systems, and Mathematics to move us into a much stronger competitive position, even as we continue to build high impact practices into every major. Proposed majors include:

- Social Entrepreneurship (a cross-disciplinary major)
- International Business
- Anthropology (with a specialization in Archaeology)
- Practical Theology
- STEM Programs
  1. Biology (Bachelor of Science)
  2. Computer Information Systems
  3. Applied Mathematics or Mathematical Sciences
- Music (with concentrations in voice and piano)

Of these proposed majors, STEM majors will be given the highest priority because of their importance to the curriculum and the recruitment of students. With the addition of STEM majors, the College will continue to build on its model of a highly personalized science education. We believe that the “weeding out” model in science departments of many larger schools fails to cultivate the skills of many promising students and has a disproportionate impact on minorities, women, and first generation students. With the addition of STEM majors, the College will continue to develop its personalized and inclusive model of education.

- **Objective 2: Develop a limited number of new major programs that emphasize high impact practices, integrative learning, and signature work.**

## **Integrative Education and High Impact Practices**

### **Goal 3: Develop Integrative Education and Expand High Impact Practices**

In order to encourage integrative learning, the College will consider adopting a new Integrative Study requirement for all students. All students must complete an Integrative Minor (see below), an existing minor that has been modified to meet integrative requirements, or a second major, *consisting of coursework outside of their primary major discipline*. Students will complete an integrative capstone portfolio which involves synthesizing work from their major program of study with their work in other disciplines.

In order to develop meaningful pathways for such integrative study beyond existing programs and to allow greater curricular choice, the College will develop Integrative Minor options for meeting this requirement. These minors will consist of a 15-18 credit hour interdisciplinary course of study centered on a unifying theme that will leverage the existing strengths of the faculty and curriculum. Integrative minors require a minimum of 9 credit hours of coursework exclusive to the minor, which are from a discipline other than that of the major and which do not count toward the primary major. In addition to

prescribed Integrative Minors, students might also have the option of designing an Integrative Minor which meets these requirements.

- **Objective 1: Develop a new Integrative Study requirement for all students.**

Flagler College will establish a Center for Campus Innovation and Integration: A physical and virtual space, the Center will be expressive of our Core Values and the priorities of the Strategic Plan and Quality Enhancement Plan. The ideal physical space will be an open and contemporary complex--representative of a vibrant and purposeful campus community--combining residential housing, laboratories, exhibit and creative spaces, including areas in which community partners can engage with students and faculty. Similar to innovation centers at other colleges and universities, it will be a place where students can engage in integrative projects mentored by alumni, community partners, staff, and faculty. Unique to Flagler College, the Center will be tied to our integrative curriculum across all schools and departments of the institution and student focused.

Projects and ideas generated in the Center will be outwardly focused to include our community partners in entrepreneurial activities. These can include (but are not limited to) ventures such as start-up companies, assistance for non-profits, environmental and preservation projects, creative endeavors, and community-based problem solving. By creating an “innovation ecosystem” representing diverse cultures, the arts, the natural and social sciences, and entrepreneurship, the Center will be a focal point for an integrative curriculum. Project-based educational and extra-curricular experiences relating to the Quality Enhancement Plan, integrative minors, and interdisciplinary programs will be supported by the Center. Prospective and first-year students will be introduced to the Center to familiarize them with the innovative and integrative nature of our campus life and curriculum, the projects of our upper-class students and alumni, and their potential to become history-makers in their own communities and beyond.

- **Objective 2: Establish a Center for Campus Innovation and Integration.**

As the College develops a limited number of new programs, it is especially important to develop programs that are distinctive, and even unique to Flagler, which emphasize high impact educational practices. For example, the College’s Stocking Island property offers a remarkable opportunity to develop a research station that could serve existing programs, such as Coastal Environmental Science, host new programs, attract students from other institutions of higher education, and provide net revenue to the College.

- **Objective 3: Conduct a feasibility study on the possibility of establishing a field research station on the College’s Stocking Island property in the Bahamas.**

- **Objective 4: Dedicate a full-time staff position or part-time faculty positions to the promotion and development of high impact educational practices beyond study abroad and internships, such as undergraduate research, community integrative education, and learning communities.**

## **Academic Advising and Support**

### **Goal 4: Expand Academic Advising and Support**

Most routine advising is currently carried out by faculty members. The creation of a small staff of professional advisors responsible for advising, especially during the first two years, would allow faculty members more time to serve as mentors to students.

- **Objective 1: Evaluate the current faculty-based advising system and consider reorganizing the Office of the First Year Experience and the Office of Student Success and Advising into a single office with dedicated staff advisors.**

The College does not have a successful track record of recruiting undecided students. Nor do we address the needs of the significant numbers of students who are uncertain about their major and decide to change. Consequently, a voluntary first-year Discovery Program will be developed as part of the first-year program to recruit and advise undecided students.

- **Objective 2: Develop a first-year Discovery Program for students undecided on their major field of study.**

As the College recruits increased numbers of international students, we will develop an ESOL Program to address the education needs of foreign students who are not proficient enough in English to meet the demands of the regular college curriculum.

- **Objective 3: Develop an ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) Program to address the educational needs of international students.**

## **Adult, Online, Hybrid, and Continuing Education**

### **Goal 5: Expand Adult, Online, Hybrid, and Continuing Education.**

Adult, online, hybrid, and continuing education programs serve growing student populations at colleges and universities across the country and lead their institutions in adapting to changing economic and demographic characteristics. Flagler currently offers limited adult education degree programs through the Public Administration evening program on the main campus in St. Augustine and majors in Business, Communication,

and Education on the Tallahassee campus. We also offer limited online education through our Master's Program in Deaf and Hard of Hearing and undergraduate summer sessions. As Flagler clarifies its goals and develops, adult and online education must become more central to the mission of the College in order to serve the educational needs of the community and region and ensure our financial health. The growth of adult education must begin with the integration of the Public Administration program and the Tallahassee campus into the administrative, academic, and social life of the College.

The Public Administration program and the Tallahassee campus need to be more closely integrated into the structure and life of the College. A closer working relationship with the traditional undergraduate programs, the Office of Academic Affairs, the Office of Adult and Continuing Education, and other offices needs to be developed for both programs.

- **Objective 1: Integrate the Public Administration program and the Tallahassee campus into the administrative structure and culture of the College.**
- **Objective 2: Centralize responsibility for the development of online adult education programs under the Office of Adult and Continuing Education and support these programs with appropriate staffing and resources.**

Degree completion programs have become common practice at colleges and universities because they meet the needs of working adults. Individuals with an associate's degree or equivalent have the opportunity to improve their career opportunities by completing a bachelor's degree. According to the Lumina Foundation more than 36 million adults between 25 and 64 years of age have attended college but did not complete a degree, and about 44 million adults have high school diplomas but no college experience. Local state colleges graduate thousands of graduates per year. Degree completion programs can provide a strong additional stream of revenue that supports other academic programs.

- **Objective 3: Develop two or more online degree completion programs in selected fields.**

We are moving towards a work environment where micro-credentials provide a competitive advantage to recent college graduates or working professionals. According to the Georgetown Center on Education and the Workforce, certificates are the fastest growing form of postsecondary credentials in the nation. Adult and continuing education programs have experienced significant changes over the past 30 years, expedited most recently with the introduction of online delivery. This has matched the need for access and flexibility of adult learners, and provided much needed additional streams of revenue to colleges and universities in an increasingly competitive environment.

- **Objective 4: Expand online certification programs.**

The College will evaluate the feasibility of developing additional master's degree programs in a variety of fields, such as educational leadership, public administration, business administration, graphic arts, and liberal arts, and implement one or more such programs.

- **Objective 5: Develop one or more Master's Degree programs.**

## **Teaching and Professional Development of Faculty**

### **Goal 6: Expand Support for Teaching and Professional Development of Faculty**

The College is committed to the support of faculty members as both teachers and scholars. This commitment includes expanding support for pedagogical and professional development, improving the compensation structure, maintaining a favorable faculty-to-student ratio, and exploring more flexible contracts.

Given the emphasis Flagler College places on instruction, the time is right for the College to establish a Center for Teaching and Learning, which will provide dedicated resources to our faculty to improve their effectiveness in the classroom. Through a Center for Teaching and Learning, the College will be able to place a concerted effort on helping faculty enhance teaching and learning through various means—including services and programs devoted to stimulating, supporting, and rewarding pedagogical innovation, pedagogical development related to campus-wide initiatives (e.g., the QEP), using instructional technology, and undertaking scholarship related to teaching and learning. Through peer networking and shared experiences, the Center will help faculty continually improve and tackle obstacles in higher education—from effective rubric design to meaningful syllabi to adapting for blended learning environments. And finally, the Center will help demonstrate the College's continued commitment to providing effective instruction to our student body.

- **Objective 1: Develop a Center for Teaching and Learning.**

Successful recruitment and retention of faculty and staff depends upon compensation that is competitive with Flagler's peer institutions. In addition, the College needs to ensure that faculty and staff are rewarded according to merit and that there are not significant inequities among faculty and staff members of similar rank, experience, and merit.

- **Objective 2: Complete a faculty and staff compensation study and implement an improvement plan.**

Support for professional development needs to be increased for faculty engaged in significant projects who have already utilized allotted funds. A merit based fund will be established to support them.

- **Objective 3: Establish a merit based fund for faculty professional development.**

If the size of the College undergraduate student body gradually increases with the improvement of retention and the increased recruitment of international students and student-athletes, it is important to maintain and even improve the current full-time faculty-student ratio of approximately 1 to 21. Our current FTE faculty-student ratio of approximately 1 to 17 places Flagler at the upper end of our peer group, and this is accomplished with a heavy reliance on adjunct faculty. Consequently, adding one new full-time faculty position for every 20 new students above 2,500 is advisable to improve our full-time faculty-student ratio.

- **Objective 4: Maintain and gradually improve the current full-time faculty-to-student ratio by adding one new full-time faculty position for every 20 students above 2,500 based upon the annual average enrollment.**

As Flagler continues to develop a strong faculty of scholar-teachers, it is important that the College become more flexible and creative in supporting the development of faculty members as both teachers and scholars. The adoption of contracts with teaching loads and professional development expectations tailored to individual and program needs would benefit the College at this point in its development.

- **Objective 5: Consider the adoption of faculty “creativity contracts” that would allow greater flexibility in determining teaching and professional development requirements and responsibilities.**

## **Priority Two: Cultivate a Vibrant Campus Community**

Reorganized in 1971 as a co-educational college, Flagler offered a select number of majors, enrolled 223 students, and fielded a faculty of 35. In the fall of 2018, Flagler College in St. Augustine enrolled approximately 2,500 full-time undergraduate students, fielded a full-time faculty of 118 to teach those students, offered 34 majors, a master's program and two degree completion programs, and could count more than 15,000 graduates among its alumni. During the intervening decades, Flagler has grown over ten-fold from a small, intimate community into a moderately sized college that still prides itself on retaining a small college identity, but which faces the inevitable challenges that come with growth and success.

As recently as 1997, former Dean Robert Carberry captured the legacy of Flagler's early days in his commencement address:

Flagler College is a humane institution, a place where one can speak face to face with people, touch them intellectually, spiritually and physically, and be touched in return. It is a place where good, serious conversations can take place with no hidden agendas, no attempt to sell you anything or manipulate you. It is a place where trust comes easily. There are opportunities for friendship, humor, sometimes expressions of grief and sorrow, frequently of joy and even frustration and anger, but very little boredom. Real teaching and learning go on at all levels. The work I did as an administrator and teacher was good work: meaningful, satisfying, exhausting, exhilarating, frustrating and sometimes disappointing, but always challenging.

Today, Flagler faces more than ever before the challenge of retaining this legacy and rekindling the sense of community that may have become attenuated. Since the College plans neither to shrink in size nor repeat the hardships of yesterday which helped to forge its communal identity, other measures are called for. With this plan, the College once again affirms that we aspire to be “a place where good, serious conversations can take place with no hidden agendas...where trust comes easily.”

Recognizing students as whole individuals, the College needs to commit personnel and resources to the further enhancement of student life on campus. No one department or office owns student life. Therefore, it must be the shared goal of every College employee to make certain that students are thriving at Flagler with the Office of Student Services leading the way. More than ever before, Flagler must articulate its core values and embrace them. We must continue to build a community of inquiry that values academic freedom, freedom of expression, and the bond between teacher and student; a community of trust that is diverse and inclusive, that encourages civil and productive dialogue, and that sets high expectations for responsible citizenship, while empowering students to

make their own choices; a community that is dedicated to the stewardship of our community and heritage.

If we are to live these core values, then we must be more intentional about adopting a truly developmental model of student life that does not separate student life from academic life, that envisions students as assuming progressive responsibilities as citizens, that structures residence halls and social spaces to encourage community engagement and inclusiveness, and that recognizes that we are here to help students find themselves and what they are passionate about *both* inside and outside the classroom. And, last but not least, we must simply grant them the space and the freedom to find themselves.

Adopting a genuine developmental model of student life entails, as Keeling and Hersh argue, a tight linking of academic and student affairs:

Such collaboration might take any of several forms, including the creation and assessment of learning communities with consistent faculty participation; intentional linking of classroom and experiential learning activities; integration of community service learning with course content; close and purposeful connections among all forms of advising, so that students could more coherently and effectively link academic choices with career and personal goals; and co-participation by faculty and student affairs professional staff in first-year seminars and new student orientation.<sup>10</sup>

In the case of Flagler, the integration of student and academic affairs needs to encompass everything from the joint sponsorship of new student registration and orientation days to the establishment of residential learning communities, the development of a leadership program, and the cultivation of intercultural competencies. Indeed, this plan offers many opportunities for building a more seamless campus learning experience through the launch of initiatives, such as a residential house system, an honor code, a discovery program, and a mentorship program.

Cultivating a more vibrant campus community will require that the College move toward expanding our residential capacity so that we may establish a two-year residency requirement for all students in order to build a sense of belonging and solidarity. Athletics must play a pivotal role in building this sense of belonging and solidarity. By selectively enhancing our commitment to intercollegiate athletics at a reasonable cost and developing new programs in club sports, we have the opportunity to increase solidarity, spirit, and alumni and donor ties. What is important to note is that we are not advocating a blind entrance into the arms race of higher education, but instead strategically seeking to improve areas of campus life that prevent us from being competitive in the recruitment and retention of students we believe belong at Flagler.

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<sup>10</sup> Keeling and Hersh, *We're Losing Our Minds*, pp. 174-75.

## **Strengthening the Campus Community**

### **Goal 7: Build an Engaged and Diverse Campus Community**

Flagler has the opportunity to expand the curriculum and strengthen the diversity of the student body, while also improving retention and net revenue per student. These interrelated goals require the development and implementation of recruitment and retention plans based upon changing demographics and student needs, the addition of new majors, significantly increased international recruitment, and the implementation of the new admissions policies, all of which will better position Flagler in the increasingly competitive market place of higher education.

- **Objective 1: Enhance student recruitment and enrollment strategies that are based upon changing demographics and student needs and supported by measurable metrics and data monitored by Enrollment Management and Student Services.**
- **Objective 2: Develop and implement a comprehensive retention plan to increase overall first-year student retention to 75% by 2021 and to 80% by 2024.**
- **Objective 3: Develop and implement new majors in fields such as biology, social entrepreneurship, international business, information systems, and applied mathematics.**
- **Objective 4: Develop the China Program and other international student recruitment with the goal of adding 100 students to the total enrollment over the four year period 2019-23.**
- **Objective 5: Increase the total enrollment of underrepresented first generation and minority students, as well as those from targeted growing geographic markets, through the intentional implementation of supportive admissions policies, programs, and services.**

### **Goal 8: Adopt a Developmental Model of Student Life**

If students are to mature as citizens, then they must be treated as responsible adults and given the freedom to act as such. We need to recognize that citizenship must begin at home, if we are to prepare students for responsibility in the larger world. We will revisit and revise our inter-hall visitation policies in light of today's youth and our competitors in higher education, set high expectations for honesty, integrity, and responsibility, consider the adoption of an honor code, foster a respectful and inclusive community on

campus by modeling civil dialogue, and create more leadership opportunities for Flagler students.

- **Objective 1: Develop and implement a robust campus life program that personifies the values of citizenship and responsibility, provides opportunities for leadership development, and offers students opportunities to build a sense of community.**
- **Objective 2: Develop student-learning outcomes for student life.**

### **Goal 9: Expand On-Campus Residency and Strengthen Campus Life to Enhance the Student Experience**

The College is constrained from becoming a majority residential college by limited residential space on campus. Expansion of on-campus student housing and/or construction of student housing near-the-campus will allow the establishment of a two-year residency requirement for all students and lay the groundwork for a thriving campus culture.

The creation of a residential house system based upon some combination of “themed” housing around common interests, residential learning communities, and intra-mural athletics holds the possibility of increasing students’ sense of belonging, enhancing campus life, and improving student learning.

- **Objective 1: Expand on-campus student housing and establish a two-year residency requirement to improve campus life.**
- **Objective 2: Construct and/or expand one or more residence halls with the goal of increasing on-campus student housing by 250 beds or more.**
- **Objective 3: Enhance and expand student activity venues and events for all students, including off-campus and older students. Enhance off-campus housing services.**
- **Objective 4: Create a residential house system with appropriate staffing to enhance campus life.**
- **Objective 5: Develop and construct an Interfaith Center.**

## **Expand Engagement with Sports**

### **Goal 10: Expand Engagement with Sports**

To support Division II sports, the College will add a Pep Band under the oversight of the Music Program and Athletics Department.

- **Objective 1: Establish a Pep Band.**

Shaped by the values we practice—accountability, integrity, sportsmanship, and teamwork, Division II sports support a vibrant campus community, promote health and wellness, enhance cultural diversity, and help retain students. To provide more opportunities for students and greater interaction with the local community, four new NCAA Division II sports will be added: Men’s Lacrosse, Women’s Lacrosse, Men’s Outdoor Track and Field, and Women’s Outdoor Track and Field.

Appropriate facility enhancements or construction, coaching and support staff, scholarships, and operating budgets will be put in place in order to ensure the success of the new programs, the improvement of campus life, the safety and well-being of student-athletes, and the positive representation of the institution.

- **Objective 2: Establish Men’s and Women’s Lacrosse teams, NCAA Division II.**
- **Objective 3: Establish Men’s and Women’s Outdoor Track and Field, NCAA Division II.**

With the oversight of the Office of Student Services, student clubs provide important athletic opportunities for students. Club sport offerings will be expanded.

- **Objective 4: Investigate club sport offerings at peer institutions and institute one or more club sports.**

## **Priority Three: Build Financial Health through Strategic Differentiation**

In the highly competitive market of higher education, Flagler must become more strategic in the development of its revenue and resource base and its differentiation from other institutions of higher education. This strategy is necessarily two sided. First, the College must address clear deficiencies that keep it from becoming more competitive and differentiating itself. Second, the College must strategically differentiate itself from current and potential competitors in ways that are difficult to match. In addressing our shortcomings we can also distinguish ourselves, as we have with our Coastal Environmental Science program in recent years, without being bound by the constraints of more established institutions of higher education.

Flagler must become less dependent on undergraduate tuition and develop more diversified streams of revenue. This can be accomplished by developing both auxiliary revenue sources and distinctive adult education, online, and graduate programs. In addition, the College must strengthen and even grow its traditional undergraduate program and develop a more vibrant campus life, if it is to deliver on its promise of a transformative education. This will require capital investment in science facilities and additional residential space in order to become and remain more competitive. Both revenue diversification and capital investment are necessary for improving our market position and achieving strategic differentiation, and strategic differentiation is necessary for enhancing our revenue and building our financial health.

According to a recent study by Moody's Investors Service, some institutions of higher education are "generating strong revenue growth," while others are not, because these institutions have been able to identify and capitalize on market opportunities. A number of findings by Moody's are relevant to Flagler:

- While right size and location are associated with revenue growth, strategic differentiation is critical.
- Capital investment enhances competitiveness and is associated with higher revenue growth.
- Colleges with STEM and practical art and design are experiencing strong revenue growth.
- Online and distance education offers market opportunities, but also competition.<sup>11</sup>

Flagler continues to enjoy a tremendous advantage because of its location. But location, as stated above, is not enough. This plan proposes that we take *strategic* advantage of the historical, cultural, business, and community resources of Northeast Florida; that we invest in science facilities and further develop the potential of our coastal location and

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<sup>11</sup> "Higher Education – US: Strategic Differentiation Fosters Stronger Revenue Growth at Private Universities," *Moody's Investors Service* (29 August 2017).

unique ties with Bermuda and the Bahamas; that we build residential facilities to strengthen campus life and retain students; and that we invest in and expand adult education to strengthen our competitive position and ensure our financial future.

## **Control Costs and Diversify Revenue**

While becoming more diversified in our revenue sources, we must also become more financially proficient. Financial proficiency includes understanding budgets, assessing expenses and revenues, and tracking program costs and benefits. As we move forward with the implementation of the strategic plan, the College will perform regular academic program reviews, monitor space and classroom utilization, and embrace sustainability to ensure that we are making the most of existing resources. Improving net revenue through all of these will be critical to our efforts. More generally, the keys to building financial strength are knowing our costs and increasing net revenue streams. Understanding our costs will include improving our financial reporting and analysis. Better reporting and analysis will help guide the College in understanding which programs subsidize the institution, which have potential for growth, which programs should operate with a subsidy, and which should be considered for elimination.

### **Goal 11: Institute campus-wide procedures to monitor departmental and program costs and improve cost efficiencies**

As Flagler approaches its fiftieth year, the College finds itself in the paradoxical position of being financially very sound and yet vulnerable. On the one hand, Flagler has a long history of excellent financial management: we have a history of balanced budgets, low tuition discount rates, sound financial ratios, and a significant endowment for such a young college. At the same time, the College finds itself in a position of being overly dependent on tuition from the undergraduate program because of a modest endowment, a relatively young alumni and limited donor base, and a lack of income diversification. Of these, the lack of diversification offers the greatest opportunity for Flagler to improve its net income, both in the areas of educational programs and auxiliary services.

### **Goal 12: Diversify Revenue Streams: Develop Non-Academic Auxiliary Sources of Income**

Among the many potential sources of auxiliary revenue, some of the most promising include the following:

- Expand and effectively manage facility rentals to generate significantly more net income for the College, especially during the summer months.
- Change procedures in campus Health Services to permit the billing of insurance companies.
- Change management practices in the Flagler College Bookstore to allow for significant improvement in the new income generated by the College.
- Open the Ponce Dining Hall to tourists.

- Charge a fee for early move-in to the residence halls.

Of these, expanding and effectively managing our rental facilities may hold the greatest potential for increasing net revenue.

- **Objective 1: Expand and more effectively manage summer facility rentals to generate greater net revenue.**
- **Objective 2: Change procedures in campus Health Services to permit billing of insurance companies beginning.**
- **Objective 3: Develop a plan to increase other auxiliary sources of revenue.**

### **Goal 13: Develop New Academic Programs for Adult and Online Education and Monitor their Net Revenue**

Flagler needs to imagine a more diversified and performance-oriented budgeting model, which sees enrollment, philanthropy, and alternative revenues as essential to continued financial health. Continued over-reliance on undergraduate tuition places the College in a position of vulnerability. While we have comparative advantages over peer institutions in areas such as deaf education, law, and accounting, we are comparatively disadvantaged in other ways. Many institutions similar to Flagler in mission and reach have spent the past ten years selectively adding graduate and non-traditional degree programs that fit the culture of the school and provide additional revenue streams. Such programs alleviate vulnerability to traditional undergraduate enrollment fluctuations.

## **Fund Raising in Support of Strategic Initiatives**

### **Goal 14: Increase Philanthropic Support of Flagler’s Mission and Strategic Plan for Excellence**

- **Objective 1: Conduct a feasibility study to ascertain the College’s readiness to develop and launch the first comprehensive capital campaign to fund the priorities of the Strategic Plan.**

These priorities include:

- (1) Raising funds for the construction of a new STEM building to house programs in science, computer information systems, mathematics, and other fields to be determined.
- (2) Raising funds to construct a new residence hall and/or enter into an agreement with a private individual or company to construct and lease a residence hall in partnership with the College.

(3) Raising funds to construct an Interfaith Center.

(4) Raising funds to establish endowed funds for a Teaching and Learning Center, scholarships, faculty positions, historic preservation, and study abroad programs.

Additional fund raising objectives include:

- **Objective 2: Cultivating funding opportunities for students, faculty, programs, and facilities during the leadership and public phases of the campaign to secure new gifts and pledges.**
- **Objective 3: Substantially increasing alumni participation in philanthropic support of the College's goals.**
- **Objective 4: Strengthening the culture of faculty, staff, and student giving.**

## Appendix A: Strategic Planning Committee, 2018

<b>Alan Woolfolk, <i>Chair</i></b>	Vice President of Academic Affairs and Dean of the Faculty
<b>David Carson, <i>Co-Chair</i></b>	Vice President of Business Services
<b>Deborah Thompson, <i>Co-Chair</i></b>	Vice President for Enrollment Management
<b>Linda Glover Barnett</b>	Consultant
<b>Joel Bolante</b>	Director of Public Administration Program
<b>Beverly Carmichael</b>	Vice President of Institutional Advancement
<b>Jud Damon</b>	Director of Athletics
<b>Donna DeLorenzo</b>	Executive Director of College Relations
<b>Rick Groux</b>	Board of Trustees Representative
<b>Viv Helwig</b>	Alumni Representative
<b>Jorge Herrera</b>	Associate Professor of Business Administration and Director of Adult & Continuing Education
<b>Joseph Joyner</b>	President of Flagler College
<b>Joanna Krajewski</b>	Assistant Professor of Communication and Director of Strategic Communication Program, Department of Communication
<b>Stacey Matthews</b>	Chief Accounting Officer and Controller
<b>Cheryl McCarthy</b>	Associate Professor of Education and Chair, Department of Education
<b>Andrea McCook</b>	Assistant Dean, School of Creative Arts and Letters Associate Professor, Department of Visual and Performing Arts
<b>Martha Mickler</b>	Community Representative
<b>Brian Nesselrode</b>	Director of Library Services
<b>Colton Neubauer</b>	SGA President
<b>Sara Pedigo</b>	Associate Professor and Chair, Department of Visual and Performing Arts
<b>TBD</b>	Chief Information Officer

<b>Wayne Riggs</b>	Assistant Dean – School of Humanities and Sciences Associate Professor of History, Department of Humanities
<b>Allison Roberts</b>	Assistant Dean, School of Business, Education and Mathematics and Associate Professor of Economics, Department of Business Administration
<b>Kurt Sebastian</b>	Professor of Mathematics and Chair, Department of Mathematics and Technology
<b>Melissa Southwell</b>	Associate Professor of Natural Sciences, Department of Natural Sciences
<b>Laura Stevenson Dumas</b>	Assistant to the President and Secretary to the Board of Trustees
<b>Daniel Stewart</b>	Vice President of Student Services
<b>Jessica Stowell</b>	Director of Institutional Research and Effectiveness
<b>Art Vanden Houten</b>	Dean of Academic Life
<b>Craig Woelfel</b>	Chair of the Faculty Senate 2018-2019, Associate Professor of English