

Loyola University New Orleans  
Strategic Plan 2020

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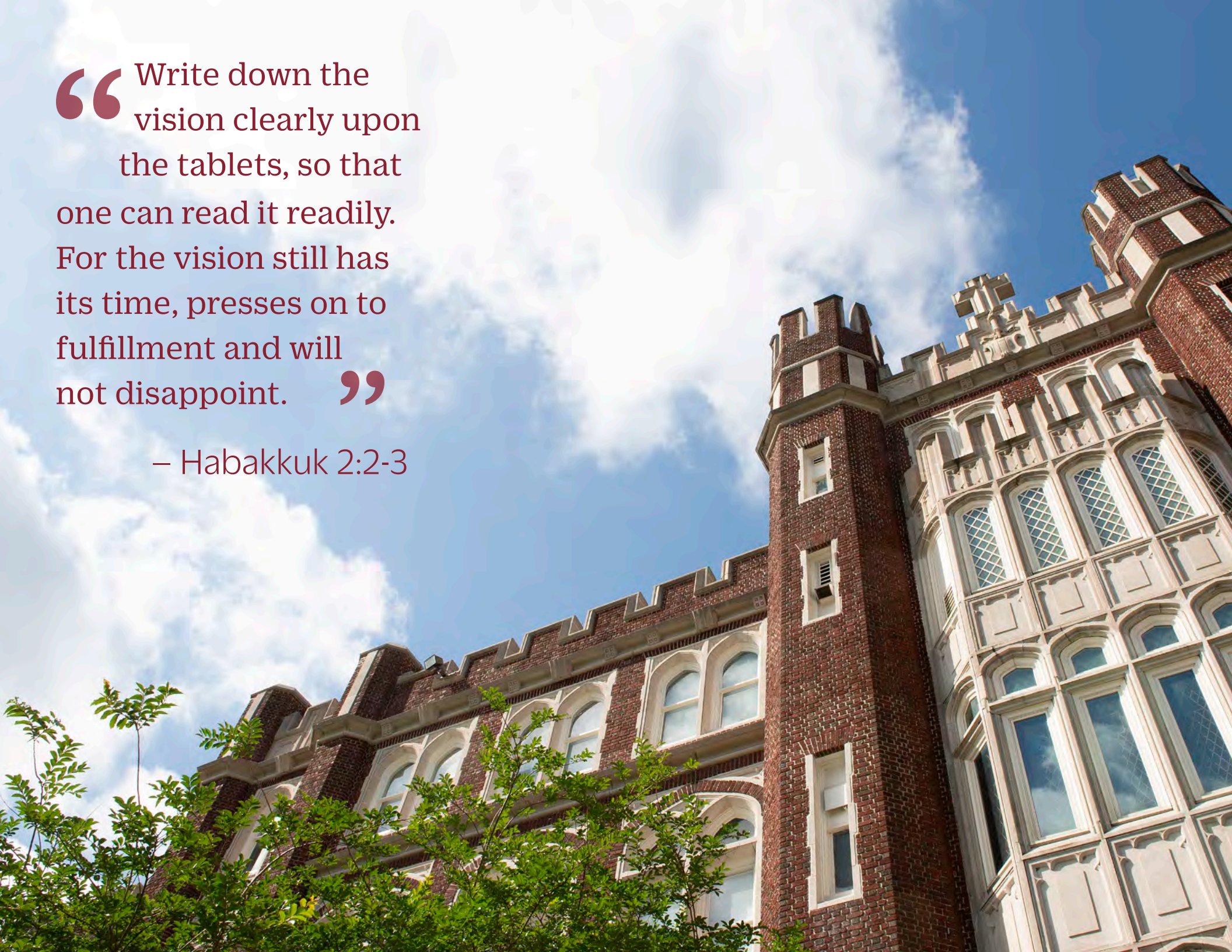
# Courage & Creativity





“ Write down the  
vision clearly upon  
the tablets, so that  
one can read it readily.  
For the vision still has  
its time, presses on to  
fulfillment and will  
not disappoint. ”

– Habakkuk 2:2-3





**Loyola University New Orleans embarks on a three-year strategic plan,** fueled by the ambition of a Jesuit institution and the innovation of New Orleans. With clear and achievable strategies, Loyola will thrive for another century of transforming lives. We will hold on tightly to our core mission, while becoming more open to the demands of a fast-changing world on our students.

- **Loyola New Orleans will take its place as the most creative of the Jesuit institutions.** When we more fully embody our Jesuit identity and New Orleans innovation, we build excitement among prospective students and provide the hands-on experience that will help them succeed.
- **We will embrace innovation in how we teach.** By reviving our curriculum, taking down the walls between disciplines, and investing in our digital architecture, we will transform the minds, hearts, and spirits of our graduates so they can go out and change the world.
- **We will grow in a way that sustains us,** building on our existing strengths to create exciting new programs in areas where market demand matches mission.
- **We will be good stewards of our resources,** data-driven, transparent, and accountable. We will invest in our greatest resource: our faculty and staff.

The strategic plan will make Loyola more sustainable, strengthening our foundations, helping us to work smarter and faster.

As we succeed, Loyola New Orleans will become ever more relevant. We will open our doors more broadly, help more of our students thrive and graduate, and matter more to the people our graduates become.

# University Mission

Loyola's greatest strength is the centrality of its mission. While many institutions have mission statements seemingly written by committees and rarely consulted, the Loyola community understands, believes in, and embodies its mission.



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.

Our faculty and staff choose Loyola because they seek to transform lives. They are inspired by the rich diversity and broad talent of our students, and they in turn inspire the students through their pursuit of truth and wisdom.

The language of mission is often heard in the classroom and every type of meeting. We work harder because we serve this crucial purpose. We come together as a tight-knit community drawn by these shared values. And we strive to make Loyola ever better in order to accomplish more.





# STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

Hundreds of members of the Loyola community came together, in meetings both formal and informal, to identify Loyola's strengths and find ways to build upon them. We worked with the university's standing Strategic Planning Committee and with a creative group of faculty from each college. This was a Jesuit process of discernment, discovering truth through considered conversation and consensus.



# OUR CONTEXT

Universities have protected themselves for centuries by preserving what matters most in layers of tradition. Instead of competing through innovation, American higher education has relied on constant growth. By opening doors ever wider, eliminating barriers of class, race, and gender, the percentage of Americans who obtain a bachelor's degree or higher by the age of 25 has risen from 4.6% in 1940 to 33.4% today.

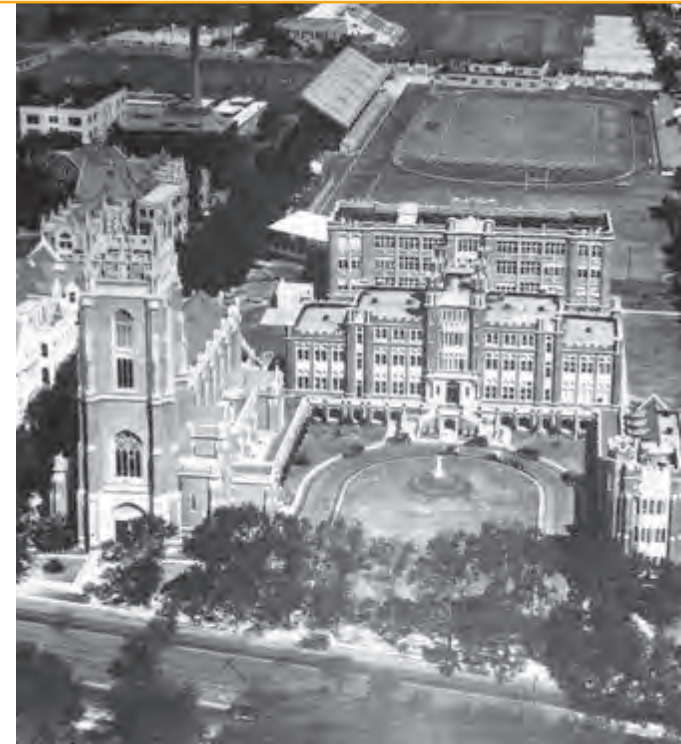
This landscape, however, has utterly changed. The pandemic of 2020 has shaken our economy and our student base to its core. This massive disruption hit universities at a moment when they were already vulnerable, competing for a declining number of 18-year-old students during a demographic dip. Higher education can no longer resist change in order to survive.

Like most of our peer institutions, Loyola struggles to bridge the gap between what our students can afford and the cost of

the education they deserve. As a Jesuit institution, we engage in a struggle carried on for 500 years, that of providing truly excellent education but making it available to all.

For a time, Loyola bridged that gap in a unique way, funding half of its operating revenue with the income of WWL radio and television stations. (WWL stands for World-Wide Loyola). Loyola sold those assets before the disruption of the television industry, and continues to benefit from the income of the resulting endowment. Now we must find new ways to diversify our revenue.

**We must be more entrepreneurial, nimble, and forever open to change. We also must remain lean and efficient to reduce costs for our students.**







We bring together an extraordinary faculty and staff, whose loyalty to Loyola's students has inspired them to work ever harder for static, or at times, decreasing amounts of compensation during the last decade.

**Loyola must grow its revenue to meet its needs, to compensate its people as they deserve, and to maintain the kind of steady revenue growth necessary for cost-of-living increases and merit-based pay.**

Loyola must also diversify its revenue to avoid over reliance on undergraduate tuition at a time of disruption in that market.

We build on key advantages as we work to attract more students and ask those who can afford it to pay more for excellence. This generation of students prefers urban institutions, in authentic and exciting cities. We know that we can do more to capture the zeitgeist of New Orleans. Students also prefer diverse campuses that look like the world, as Loyola proudly does.

Students increasingly also prefer pragmatic and professional fields of study over the traditional liberal arts, and larger schools over small. We are a medium-sized liberal arts college with historic strengths in

business, law, and the sciences. As we look ahead, we will need to capitalize on our most popular programs while continuing to make a case for the study of the humanities.

Finally, we seek to preserve and strengthen our core Jesuit identity with a declining number of Jesuit priests. For students, nothing can replace the transformative nature of engaging directly with the Jesuits, whose wisdom and skills are honed through decades of training. If we are to sustain our core mission, we must spread those skills throughout our faculty and staff. We cannot ask the remaining priests among us to carry that mission for us alone. St. Ignatius designed his Spiritual Exercises as a layperson, for all people, and we must carry on the work of formation. Our Jesuit identity stands as our calling card; it establishes our credibility as educators who change lives; and it is the entire point of our institution.



We proudly embody  
the Jesuit tradition of  
excellence, 500 years  
of extraordinary teaching,  
and we are the only Jesuit  
institution in New Orleans,  
the city that infuses us  
with creativity.





# OUR STRATEGIC VISION: BUILDING ON OUR STRENGTHS

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In order to craft our strategic vision, we cannot merely list everything we do, as important as all of those things are. To stand apart in our work, we must build on our strengths. Our vision must be rooted in who we are, but also reveal the direction we want to grow, what we aspire to become. It must resonate with what the world already knows about us, but make them think and feel differently about Loyola. It must be inspiring and it must have credibility.

Loyola is where **Jesuit social justice** meets **New Orleans creativity**.

As always, we begin with our Jesuit mission and find new ways to translate that mission into the language of this generation of students. We teach courage and commitment; we give students the tools to change the world. We also steep them in the creativity of this extraordinary city, the driving innovation, the ability to look beyond convention and conformity. And in the overlap of courage and creativity, we find the very best way to teach. We give students permission to experiment, to fail, and thus to learn, over and over again.



Because of our Jesuit identity, Loyola attracts students who are brave, and we push them to be ever more daring. We teach them to question assumptions, whether in science or criminal justice, to think about the broader implications of technology and economic structures. Never satisfied to merely memorize doctrine, our students challenge the way things have always been and dream of more.

**Students in this generation want to change the world – not just to volunteer and be personally virtuous, but to fight for justice. We need to help them understand that there is nothing more Jesuit than that.**

We want students to choose a place that will help them become the person they want to be, rather than opting for more superficial measures of status. We want students who seek diversity – of thought and background, of experience and perception, of race and religion, color and creed. We want to make them ever more courageous. By encouraging and supporting them, by making Loyola feel like home to students who come from every background, we achieve *cura personalis*, educating the mind, heart and spirit.

We are proudly one of 170 Jesuit universities around the world and one of 28 in the United States, but we are the only *Loyola New Orleans*. The driving creativity of this city fuels our innovation. It attracts students who want to find their own voices, and demands only that they be themselves. Loyola gives those students the tools, the knowledge, discipline, and hard work to be the finest version of themselves.







Because of New Orleans, Loyola understands that innovation requires risk-taking and a little bit of adventure. We know that inspiration comes through creativity and playfulness. And that those who changed the course of the future with their inventions were the ones willing to be mocked for the absurdity of their ideas. But New Orleans teaches us to embrace absurdity. We know that we learn much more when we dare to try.

That creativity infuses everything that we do. We revel in music, communications, design, creative writing, and art. But innovation also drives our approach to the sciences by giving us permission to experiment. It fuels our entrepreneurial spirit in business and our focus on the creative industries, and it helps us reimagine the world of nursing. It allows us to make connections and arguments that others cannot see in law and criminal justice and the humanities.

Pope Francis recently urged a group of young Jesuits to engage in **courageous creativity**, because the greatest learning exists in the overlap of courage and creativity. We do not just teach students doctrine, we give them permission to innovate, to ask the questions no one else has asked. We encourage them to be willing to make mistakes, to come up with crazy theories that may be entirely wrong, or that just might shake the world's understanding of itself.

This vision frames the strategic plan. It is how we stand out in the marketplace of students. It both describes us and establishes the direction in which we want to grow.





# OUR GOAL

Our singular goal is cura apostolica, care for the institution. Loyola must return to a place of financial health and stability, an institution that has margins, seed capital for new ideas, and the ability to better compensate our people. Through our success, we will be ever better to provide excellence to our students in a way they can afford.

Many strategic plans contain wish lists for funding not yet available. Ours instead focuses on how we will grow resources to invest in our mission, our people, and our students.

**We will achieve our goal by doubling down on mission, by having clarity about who we are and why we do this work.**

We reject the false dichotomy between margin and mission, and not just because, without margin, there is no mission. It is also true that we can only succeed with mission and the clear identity it gives us.

We will know we have succeeded when we build the excitement that attracts more students and fulfill our promises in a way that graduates more students. We will know we have succeeded when we put the university on a clear path of sustainability for its next hundred years of carrying out our Jesuit, Catholic mission.





# OBJECTIVES

These are specific metrics of our performance for this three-year plan:



- **Retention Rate:** There is no better quantitative measure of our achievement of mission than our ability to graduate students whose lives we have transformed. Based on an analysis of our retention efforts and those of our peer-group, we strive for an **85% first-to-second-year undergraduate retention rate**. If we achieve this goal, it will place us within the ranks of only a dozen other institutions with similar Pell-eligible rates and, over time, improve our four and six-year graduation rates. **We also seek to end disparities within that retention rate based on class and race.**
- **Growing the University's Resources:** Loyola needs further growth to better compensate our people, provide margins for contingency, to fund new ideas, tackle long-deferred maintenance and replenish the endowment. **We strive to grow gross revenue by 20% to better sustain our needs and invest in our people, and to create budgeted surpluses of 3% through the plans outlined here.**
- **Enrollment:** Given the current demographic downturns and increasing competition, we seek to buck national trends and **continue modest growth in our undergraduate net tuition revenue while increasing overall graduate and professional net tuition revenue by at least 15% through the creation of new programs**. This will require building on the strengths described in this plan, executing our enrollment strategy ever better, and creating strategic new programs.
- **Building visibility and momentum:** To achieve its goals, Loyola must visibly expand its profile, locally, nationally and particularly with its own alumni. We will measure this by raising the number of positive media impressions, through surveys of alumni opinion, and by increasing the alumni participation rate.





“The real measure of our  
Jesuit universities, then,  
lies in who our  
students become.”

— Fr. Peter-Hans  
Kolvenbach, SJ



# STRATEGY ONE

## PURSuing RELEVANT AND MARKET-DRIVEN ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

To grow our resources and the excellence we provide to students, we must grow our academic programs. By determining where demand from students and job markets matches our strengths, we will continue to meet the needs of society and serve our mission.

### Focus on Healthcare

The urgent need for healthcare workers, from nurses to epidemiologists, has never been more clear. Loyola must build on the significant investment made in the renovation of Monroe Hall and its state-of-the-art instructional labs. We will launch an **undergraduate, pre-licensure nursing program, an accelerated BSN program, and an undergraduate public health major.**





## Expand and Improve Online Learning

It is not yet clear what impact the pandemic will have on the market for online degrees, but it has clearly (a) proved the legitimacy and rigor of online learning and (b) created enormous disruption of job markets and the need for many to pivot, retrain, and gain credentials. The overnight shift to virtual learning will move the worlds of online and traditional “on ground” learning permanently closer together.

- Loyola should do more to own our backyard and become a regional leader in online education.
- Loyola has learned how to create a more engaged experience for online students outside of the classroom, and should now provide more high impact learning experiences to attract and retain online students.
- We will expand the availability of creative hybrid programs, particularly in business and law.
- We will do better to determine the right mix of online programs to build on our strengths. We will improve the quality of our online pedagogy and address the specific learning

needs of older students. We will bring more of the marketing and admissions infrastructure in-house.

## Launch City College

We will resurrect City College to greatly expand educational access and opportunity for our region, through workforce development partnerships, continuing education and certificate programs that can be stacked into degrees. City College will function as an incubator, a school where we can be more nimble and innovative. We must anticipate the future of education as well as the future of work in order to serve the educational needs of our region during a time of great economic disruption.

## Make Purposeful Choices about Academic Programs

Driven by market data and our own mission, we will make choices every year about the right mix of academic programs to sustain us. With particular focus on new graduate and professional programs, we will prioritize and grow programs that make clear our courage and creativity, focusing on relevance and innovation. And like any healthy institution, we will also make hard decisions about where we may need to shrink in order to make room for growth.





# STRATEGY TWO

## PURSUING 21ST CENTURY EDUCATION

We must better embody the spirit of innovation ourselves in how we improve our pedagogy and use technology. By embracing the future, we will attract students excited by our offerings and keep them on the path to graduation.

### Make “High-Flex” permanent

While students deprived of the campus experience during the pandemic crave it more intensely, they may also forever expect a greater level of flexibility. Loyola already offers traditional undergraduates the opportunity to take online courses with core faculty. We must brand and build on that strength with a greater focus on learning outcomes and creative pedagogy. We will find ways to use virtual learning in live classrooms to expand our reach, including dual enrollment programs with feeder high schools.

- We will continue to invest in our **“digital infrastructure,”** the technology available to our faculty, students, and in our classrooms. We will increase the number of **“degree in three”** opportunities to bend the cost curve of higher education.



## Tear Down Academic Obstacles of Our Own Making

We will better measure the impact of our pedagogy and curricular requirements on retention and remove unnecessary obstacles to student success, including simplifying and reducing **major requirements** in certain fields. We will make it far easier for students to engage in **interdisciplinary study**, across majors or graduate fields.

## Prove the Relevance of a Broad Education in the Humanities

In the tradition of Jesuit higher education, we insist that undergraduates receive a broad education, learning the insights of different disciplines and forever broadening their perspectives. We should make the relevance of those experiences more apparent and accessible. We will designate paths through the **Loyola Core** so that students can match the knowledge and skills they need to their own interests: (1) diversity, equity, and inclusion, (2) creativity and culture, (3) nature and humanity, and (4) the economic enterprise. We will design core courses more exciting and obviously relevant to non-majors.





# STRATEGY THREE

## PURSuing A DISTINCTIVE LOYOLA CULTURE

In order to stand out in a crowded marketplace, we must have credibility. We must build on our strengths of courage and creativity, both to attract more students and ensure that we graduate them.

**Jesuit Identity** Expand Jesuit formation to give our faculty and staff a deeper and broader understanding of Jesuit values, strategies, and beliefs. We will teach and support our students using those insights and that language. We must ensure that every student who comes through our door has a chance to experience the transformative power of cura personalis, care of the mind, heart, and spirit.

- Complete the **Benson Jesuit Center** as a beacon, a welcoming hub of our campus life. Fill it with programming that celebrates our Catholic, Jesuit identity.

**Diversity and Inclusion** Foster an ever more **inclusive community** for the diverse students we so proudly welcome, through implementation of the Strategic Plan for Inclusive Excellence. We

will proclaim our values in the ways that we treat each other with dignity and empathy. We will improve the diversity of our faculty, work harder to retain that diversity and ensure equity. We will also foster a community where we can disagree with each other, and learn to debate issues with respect and humility.

- Continue to build on our strength of serving students with disabilities, using wrap-around services to help them flourish.
- Achieve the status of **Hispanic Serving Institution**, unlocking federal support for our diverse student body. To get there, we will intensify our recruitment and welcome Hispanic students – the one growing demographic of young people and a major force in the American Catholic church.
- Continue our work to **end gaps in retention** based on race and class with particular outreach efforts.





**Develop a More Engaging Campus** Redevelop **Broadway campus** in ways that include residential living, particularly for law students, and event spaces.

- Build the **residence hall** envisioned in the campus master plan to meet more of the demand for campus housing and to create a more exciting community. Work to include in this project the deferred maintenance of other residence halls.
- **Make the front corner of our campus magical.** Redesign the Communications Building with color, creativity, and a public-facing stage at our front door.

**Make Manifest Our Strengths in Courage and Creativity in the Academic Enterprise** **Prioritize relevance** in faculty research and service by valuing societal impact in faculty hiring and promotion.

- In particular, we focus on the “apostolic preferences” of the Jesuit order, including care for the dispossessed and the environment.
- Reinvigorate the **first-year experience** to overtly reflect our strengths in courage and creativity and design the new **January term** in creative ways.

- Expand Environmental Studies as an interdisciplinary major across the undergraduate colleges with a more specific focus on climate change. A commitment to creation is primary to our faith and a focus of the Jesuit Order. This signature program will both reflect our values and attract students from a generation that correctly identifies these issues as primary.





# STRATEGY FOUR

## FOSTERING STEWARDSHIP OF UNIVERSITY RESOURCES

To serve our mission, we must lock in the tools of long-term sustainability and constantly improve our skills of execution and efficiency. Loyola, having just come through a difficult period of enrollment downturn and resulting deficits, has learned lessons from our mistakes that we must never forget. We have become leaner, more transparent, nimble, and entrepreneurial. We have identified extraordinary strength within our community and learned to teach each other the skills we need. We are resolute.





## Move to a modified Responsibility-Centered Management

budget system, one which incentivizes revenue growth and cost savings.

## Replace ERP system

and invest in better technology for our financial and student information systems.

## Continue the transformation of our campus to a sustainable environment,

making visible investments that model our values to students and prospective students and that improve our efficiency.

## Invest in our people,

our most valuable resource, through systematic and excellent professional development, better management practices, and as quickly as possible, true merit-based pay and cost-of-living increases.





“Education is not the filling of a pail,  
but the lighting of a fire.”

– W.B. Yeats



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