

# STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES AND INITIATIVES

## OBJECTIVE 1: A FOCUS ON MISSION

We will invigorate Calvin College's identity and mission in terms that connect its particular history with its global future.

**1.A. Our primary efforts will strengthen our core mission: educating undergraduates, in the context of a Reformed learning community, who will assume positions of influence and bring the Christian faith to bear in the world.**

- 1.A.1. We will seek to revitalize our shared, institutional understanding of the distinctly Reformed theological identity of the college.
- 1.A.2. We will articulate a renewed vision of Christian liberal arts for this generation of students.
- 1.A.3. We will continue vigorous support for professional programs based on a liberal arts foundation.
- 1.A.4. We will initiate and support post-graduate programs that strengthen rather than compete with our core mission.
  - Develop a graduate program in philosophy in conjunction with Calvin Theological Seminary.
  - Explore other graduate programs only if they further our mission.
  - Support certificate programs and other continuing-education alternatives through institutes and centers.
- 1.A.5. We will actively recruit students who are likely to become an integral part of a Christian intellectual project with global vision and influence.
- 1.A.6. We will recruit and retain faculty and staff who are committed to this Christian intellectual project.

**1.B. We will tie key decisions, innovations, and evaluative standards to the central commitments of the college.**

We will develop a central set of benchmarks to inform decision-making and ensure transparency throughout the college. These benchmarks will relate to the following areas: learning, influence, partnership, and integrity.

**1.C. Strengthening our core educational mission will be a central funding priority for annual budgets and development dollars.**

## OBJECTIVE 2: A FOCUS ON LEARNING

We will educate students in a learning community that is well designed to prepare students for lives of service and influence in God's world.

### 2.A. We will strengthen our emphasis on teaching and learning *in community*.

2.A.1. As an educational strategy, we will model and encourage practices in community that are tied to our educational goals.

- Model and encourage active engagement with contemporary issues—engagement marked by courage, charitable discourse, careful thinking, and a covenantal commitment to our faith.
  - Expand use of the January Series as a model for active engagement.
  - Model active engagement through on-campus speakers and guests.
  - Teach students civil discourse in the classroom and in campus life.
- Work to implement goals related to creating the antiracist, multicultural, and culturally competent community that is described in *From Every Nation (FEN)*.
  - Prepare for the demographic changes in the student and employee populations in order to better serve a variety of students and employees.
  - Increasingly reflect the *FEN* goals in the curriculum.
  - Provide a greater proportion of students with an international learning experience.
  - Continue to embed the cross-cultural engagement goals of the core curriculum in core and major course offerings.
- Model and encourage gender equity.
  - Educate both women and men for lives of leadership.
  - Ensure unbiased access to all programs, and support individuals in non-traditional majors.
- Model and encourage devout faith and worship.
  - Integrate the programs of the chaplain and the dean of the chapel to foster unity in leadership.
  - Reinvigorate our understanding of our work as worship.
  - Work toward a chapel program that is owned by more of the campus community.
- Model and encourage care for the creation through environmentally sustainable practices.
  - Develop sustainability as an educational goal.
  - Provide support for sustainability practices.
  - Conduct a yearly sustainability audit.

2.A.2. We will support programs of interdisciplinary, collaborative teaching and learning.

- Develop and support a variety of undergraduate learning communities.
- Develop programs to support team-teaching.

2.A.3. We will honor the unique learning needs and strengths of each student.

- Maintain a culture of academic support so that each student who joins this college receives appropriate challenge and support for learning and for academic decision-making.
- Support an enhanced advising program so that students receive personalized guidance and information for academic decision-making before, during, and close to the end of their study here.

**2.B. We will focus on engaged and enacted (practiced) learning throughout the undergraduate experience.**

2.B.1. We will promote students' early and eager (i.e., prompt and sincere) engagement in the college experience.

- Review and revise our first-year program until it meets the varied needs of these students.
- Promote early engagement between faculty and first-year students.

2.B.2. A greater proportion of students will experience the links between classroom learning and the issues and questions of contemporary life through internship and research experiences, service-learning, engagement in local issues, and leadership opportunities throughout the campus and the community.

- Bring offices involved in experiential learning together for mutual coordination, support, and targeted funding.

2.B.3. We will strengthen faculty-student engagement outside of the regular curriculum.

2.B.4. We will explore the development of a more intentionally residential campus and make decisions about additional student housing.

2.B.5. We will encourage campus-wide initiatives that address global and local issues.

**2.C. We will cultivate a culture of educational excellence through alignment around outcomes, cycles of review, targeted funding, and programs of faculty development.**

2.C.1. We will focus on our fundamental educational outcomes and align all institutional efforts toward meeting these outcomes.

- Encourage all administrative units to participate in meeting learning outcomes for students.
- Intensively study one learning outcome each year and develop workshops relating to each one.

- 2.C.2. We will support an integrated and manageable assessment program that satisfies accreditation requirements and helps us ensure educational quality.
- 2.C.3. Our commitment to excellent academic programs will be supported through cycles of curricular review, departmental strategic planning, strong departmental leadership, and targeted funding.
- 2.C.4. Our commitment to excellent teaching throughout the college will be supported through enhanced faculty development and through improved evaluation and recognition programs.
  - Strengthen our program for faculty development to include early and active mentoring in the first year, training in the effective use of active and collaborative teaching methods, and the scholarly study of the implications of Christian foundations for pedagogy.
  - Expand the peer review of teaching as a way to foster pedagogical development and assess faculty for reappointment.
  - Expand the teaching award program to include multiple awards for excellent teaching.

### **OBJECTIVE 3: A FOCUS ON ORGANIZATIONAL INTEGRITY**

We aim to be a community that lives what it teaches, and teaches what it lives. Therefore, much of our effort will be toward strengthening an infrastructure that ensures the sustainability and excellence of the college and its mission.

#### **3.A. We will cultivate strong campus investment in the mission of the college by sustaining our shared governance system and improving internal communication functions.**

- 3.A.1 We will continue a commitment to shared governance, with support for faculty investment in college governance.
  - Strengthen faculty, staff, and student education about the governance structure and about committee work.
- 3.A.2 We will continue alignment of the strategic plan and governance.
  - Yearly retreat for PPC, and investment in the strategic plan.
- 3.A.3 We will strengthen our methods of internal communication.

#### **3.B. We will increase operational efficiency and financial sustainability by developing improved criteria and processes to guide decisions about resource allocation.**

- 3.B.1 We will develop and publicize financial benchmarks to guide planning.

**3.C. We will strengthen connections with donors and bolster their support for the mission of the college.**

3.C.1 We will complete the capital campaign and lay ground work for the next one.

3.C.2 We will emphasize support for general operating endowment.

3.C.3 We will involve PPC in central decisions about development priorities.

3.C.4 We will expand medium-level and younger donor bases.

3.C.5 We will strengthen an external communication strategy.

**3.D. We will support the library and information services that serve the academic and administrative activities of the college.**

3.D.1 We will remodel the library as the central academic space.

3.D.2 Develop a strategic plan for acquiring high-quality digital resources to enhance learning.

- Enhance the emerging collection of unique, essential, and expensive collections of digital sources and comprehensive full-text databases of scholarly journals.
- Provide support to secure permanent access of electronic back files of paper journals to allow removal of hard copy from library shelves and save shelf space.

3.D.3 We will continue to support information literacy throughout undergraduate programs.

3.D.4 We will develop new information technology products and services that focus on the dual business needs of “teaching and learning” and “administration and student services.”

3.D.5 We will provide a safe, secure computing environment.

**3.E. We will address space and facility needs by funding building renovations, acquisitions, and new construction, guided by the *Campus Master Plan* and the *Sustainability Statement*.**

3.E.1 We will develop a new campus master plan with a twenty-year horizon.

3.E.2 We will renovate and maintain, as needed, the . . .

- Spoelhof Center
- Fine Arts Center
- Art Department facilities
- Hekman Library
- Campus residences
- World language offices
- Administrative offices
- Welcome spaces for admissions, alumni, and parents
- New acquisitions within the expanded footprint of the campus.

- 3.E.3 We will develop a central planning mechanism for space allocation.
- 3.E.4 We will build a new campus commons to enhance community life.
- 3.E.5 We will build additional residential living space.
- 3.E.6 We will maintain a campus that is physically safe and environmentally sustainable.

**3.F. We will strengthen the staff, faculty, and student work forces of the college, to ensure efficient and effective departmental operations.**

- 3.F.1 We will enhance mechanisms to recruit a diverse staff and faculty.
  - Enhance the expertise necessary to recruit and retain international faculty.
- 3.F.2 We will maintain competitive wages and benefits.
- 3.F.3 We will strengthen leadership development efforts for faculty and staff throughout the college.
- 3.F.4 We will maintain a workplace that encourages employees to balance the demands of work and personal life.
  - Develop connections with the existing Grand Rapids childcare referral network.
  - Support flexible employment strategies.
- 3.F.5 We will enhance employee wellness.

## **OBJECTIVE 4: A FOCUS ON INFLUENCE**

As a Christian community of learners, we will seek broad influence through the discovery and application of knowledge and through the beauty and joy of creative work.

**4.A. We will be a vital source of collaborative scholarship, relating faith to issues of current and lasting importance in our world.**

- 4.A.1. We will support interdisciplinary, collaborative research.
  - Continue to support interdisciplinary reading groups and seminars.
  - Support collaborative planning by larger scholarly clusters (e.g., arts and humanities, global studies, sciences, and social sciences).
- 4.A.2. We will support undergraduate research throughout the curriculum.
  - Invite undergraduates, where possible, into the work of the centers, summer seminars, and institutes.

- Continue to make undergraduate research a priority for college support of faculty research.
- 4.A.3. We will expand support for faculty involvement with external scholarly networks and sources of financial support.
- Develop greater synergy for grant-supported work through centralized grant management.
  - Continue to increase funding for faculty travel and external collaboration.
- 4.A.4. We will continue to support centers and institutes as a primary strategy for institutionalizing collaborative, strategic scholarly work.
- Strengthen existing centers, institutes, and chairs through external grants and gifts.
  - Develop new centers and institutes that fit the mission of the college only as our calling and capacity in these areas become apparent. Some areas in which such leadership is possible include:
    - Programs in integrated science—faith, philosophy, religion, education, etc.
    - An enterprise center that links industry with faculty and student expertise.
- 4.B. We will seek a greater public voice and wider sphere of influence through our scholarship.**
- 4.B.1. Institutes and centers will explore and undertake collaborative work in order to strategically influence public scholarship and make Calvin College known as an excellent source of Christian thought.
- 4.B.2. We will encourage faculty to engage in the role of public intellectual and will provide support and recognition for this work.
- 4.B.3. We will explore alternative forms of communicating the work of the faculty and staff of the college.
- Explore the possibility of establishing an open-source database of Christian scholarship.
  - Make scholarship more accessible to a broader audience through web and print.
- 4.B.4. We will support a regular program of collaborative conferences and support Calvin faculty contributions to those conferences (e.g., Faith and Music, Faith and Writing, Faith and Science, Faith and Multiculturalism, Faith and Teaching, etc.)
- 4.C. We will honor diverse forms of faculty scholarship and encourage academic departments to support them.**

- 4.C.1. Throughout the hiring and reappointment process, academic departments will be encouraged to think broadly and strategically about how to encourage and evaluate a variety of scholarly career models.
- Recognize models for community-based scholarship and provide support for this work.
  - Recognize the scholarship of teaching and learning and provide support for this work.

## **OBJECTIVE 5: A FOCUS ON PARTNERSHIP**

Calvin College, through its academic mission, will serve the church as a valued partner in higher education and varied local, national, and global communities.

**5.A. We seek to foster academic work that serves the Reformed church and the broader church throughout the world.**

- 5.A.1. We will serve as a center for intellectual vibrancy within the Reformed tradition.
- Maintain a strong Calvin Worldview Lectureship.
- 5.A.2. Calvin's centers and institutes will be intentional about scholarly work that serves the church.
- 5.A.3. We will work with Calvin Theological Seminary to develop a master's program in philosophical theology.
- 5.A.4. We will support academic programs of immediate relevance to the congregational life of the church, such as the youth ministry minor, the worship program, social research related to congregational life, theological leadership, etc.
- 5.A.5. We will recognize faculty work that is in service to the church, either through public teaching or through work related to issues facing the church.

**5.B. We will partner with local city groups, agencies, and businesses for learning and service.**

- 5.B.1. We will maintain support for community-based research, especially research that involves students.
- 5.B.2. We will enhance support for intentional living arrangements in the city.
- 5.B.3. We will foster stronger educational partnerships with other colleges and universities in Grand Rapids.
- 5.B.4. We will foster strong partnerships with both for-profit and non-profit organizations that support student and faculty work.

**5.C. We will strengthen our networks within North American higher education.**

5.C.1. We will establish stronger connections to ethnic minority-serving colleges and universities.

5.C.2. We will forge stronger relationships outside of the Christian higher education network.

**5.D. We will strengthen our support for global Christian higher education.**

5.D.1. We will widen our internal involvement in our external networks so that every department has opportunities for external connection and leadership.

5.D.2. We will develop resources related to the theory and practice of Christian higher education.

5.D.3. We will maintain and continue to explore opportunities for relationships with colleges and universities in Asia (especially China and Korea) and in Africa (especially Ghana and South Africa).

**5.E. We will strengthen our alumni and parent networks and their investment in the mission of the college.**

5.E.1. We will communicate the importance of alumni and parents to the campus community through creative communication and on-campus welcome.

5.E.2. We will provide opportunities for alumni and parents worldwide to be involved in a variety of educational and service partnerships with academic departments and college offices.

5.E.3. We will develop new ways for alumni and parents worldwide to experience Calvin through internet technologies.

5.E.4. We will challenge alumni and parents to become more deeply involved and invested in the college.