

Transformed by the Journey

A Sesquicentennial Strategic Plan for Luther College 2008-2012

Context for Planning

In 2006 Luther College completed a comprehensive strategic planning process that began in 2000. A remarkable 95 percent of the recommendations in the plan, “Shaping a Distinctive Faith and Learning Community,” were addressed and achieved. Regent George Kuh, whose work in higher education assessment puts him in contact with hundreds of colleges and universities each year, commented on Luther’s success: “I can’t think of any other institution that could accomplish so much in so little time. The message it sends is that whatever Luther sets its mind to will get done.”

In the academic program, new all-college degree requirements and a revised weekly class schedule were adopted. Each academic department completed a formal program review and reconfigured faculty load to allow more time for mentoring and collaborating with students. January Term was restructured; new interdisciplinary programs were added; and more effective student orientation and advising strategies were implemented.

The academic program has also benefited from the establishment of the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment, enabling regular evaluation of student learning and satisfaction. The new Center for Ethics and Public Life promotes research, writing, and an ongoing conversation about the public choices confronting society and the role ethics ought to play in making those choices. Luther’s teaching and learning environment has also been strengthened through significant enhancements to the college’s technology infrastructure.

The strategic plan led to a significant facelift on campus. Luther can now boast of having some of the finest facilities in the region dedicated to the arts, with the addition of the Center for the Arts and an expansion of the Jenson-Noble Hall of Music, including a new recital hall. Across campus, Loyalty Hall and Dahl Centennial Union were transformed. Several residence halls were renewed, with the most extensive work done in Brandt, Olson, and Ylvisaker. This summer we will complete the Sampson Hoffland Laboratories, 64,000 square feet of teaching and research space for biology and chemistry. The planning process also produced an energy and facilities audit, resulting in a comprehensive plan to address deferred maintenance.

The strategic plan has helped the college deepen and communicate its mission as a college of the church. The Sense of Vocation program assisted students in discerning their own sense of call and led to new programs designed to orient faculty and staff to Luther’s mission and heritage. New programs and people bolstered diversity initiatives on campus, and a new structure was devised to integrate marketing and communication strategies.

Undergirding these capital and mission-related achievements were strengthened financial ratios, 100 percent endowment growth, and the completion of the largest campaign in Luther’s history, “A Higher Calling: The Campaign for Luther College.”

The strides we have made since 2000 have bolstered Luther’s institutional strengths:

- Uncommon clarity of and support for the college’s mission by our constituents
- Committed faculty and staff engaged with students in the totality of their lives
- Enduring relationships and feelings of connectedness alumni have for Luther
- Strong residential character shaped by a unique blend of excellence and egalitarianism
- Faculty-student collaboration, research, and personalized approaches to learning
- The mature inquiry into Biblical literature, religious traditions, and the dialogue between faith and learning
- Music and athletic programs and traditions
- The common first-year Paideia course which explores pivotal questions throughout human history
- The sciences and the college’s strong record of medical and graduate school placements
- College Ministries programs that foster spiritual formation and relationships of mutual service

- Sustained commitment to support economic diversity among Luther students
- Balanced budgets and excellent stewardship of the physical plant.

We are now well positioned to launch a new strategic plan that will guide decision-making beyond the college's sesquicentennial in 2011. This new plan, *Transformed by the Journey*, is designed to carry forward the current momentum and build on three distinctive Luther qualities: our uncommon location and how it shapes a strong sense of community, the way faith and learning intersect and lead to a transforming education, and how we engage students with the larger world.

These three qualities provide the foundation for the plan's three sections. The first, "Connecting Faith, Learning, and the Larger World," includes recommendations designed to better support teaching and learning, make distinctive programs like Paideia even stronger, and increase student participation in study-away and internship experiences. It addresses the need to find new ways to assess student learning and link student learning outcomes with faculty and staff development. Recommendations in this section also address the ongoing need to strengthen and celebrate the college's religious heritage and the ways that connecting faith and learning can lead to both personal and societal transformation.

The second section, "Connecting People, Place, and the Luther Experience," sets forth critical strategies regarding enrollment, retention, and marketing. This includes taking a hard look at diversity goals as we strive to remain affordable and accessible to students from all backgrounds. Recommendations in this section also focus on ways to invest in programs that will strengthen the college's strong sense of community. And because the Luther community extends beyond campus, we need to find new ways to engage alumni, parents and friends through the use of technology and new programs.

The final part of the plan, "Connecting Sustainability, Stewardship, and Global Citizenship," looks at ways Luther might prepare its graduates with the skills and knowledge to lead society in a more sustainable direction. Luther was one of the first colleges in the country to sign the American College and University Presidents Climate Commitment, an effort to address climate change by encouraging institutions to reduce their carbon footprint and make sustainability part of every student's learning experience. The strategic plan focuses on ways to achieve the goals set out in this commitment so that Luther is a model not a mirror of society. This effort is not only the right thing to do, it will also help ensure Luther's financial security. Recommendations in this section also tackle some of the final capital projects needing attention on campus: the renewal of Valdres Hall of Science and Miller and Dieseth residence halls, the expansion of Baker Village, and the creation of an aquatic center on Luther property in collaboration with the Decorah community.

The title of this strategic plan is also the theme that has been selected for Luther's sesquicentennial celebration. "Transformed by the Journey" speaks to the experiences of early Norwegian settlers who established the college but also to the ways Luther has changed over time. Most important, the theme points to what has remained constant since the college's founding—"We strive to be a community where students, faculty, and staff are enlivened and transformed by encounters with one another, by the exchange of ideas, and by the life of faith and learning."

The recommendations in this plan—many of which are operational in tone and content—seek to accomplish the overall goal of transforming students' lives. Because this task lies primarily in the hands of Luther College's faculty and staff, the first recommendation affirms the importance of investing in them and their work. I thank each of them for their unwavering commitment to this college and to our students, and to the many alumni, parents, and friends who support them in this most important calling. Together may we realize the vision set forth in this plan so that Luther College's journey to and beyond the sesquicentennial continues to provide students with a transformative learning experience.

Thank you for joining us in this journey.

Richard L. Torgerson, Ph.D.
President

Summer 2008

TRANSFORMED BY THE JOURNEY

A Sesquicentennial Strategic Plan for Luther College

Priority Rating:

- 1 - *Urgent – critical to mission, a high priority in 2008 and 2009*
- 2 - *Necessary – important to mission, should be scheduled in 2010, 2011, 2012*
- 3 - *Sometime – will contribute to mission but doesn't need attention in this timeframe*
- 4 - *Continue with efforts underway*

Strategic Imperative I: Connecting Faith, Learning, and the Larger World

At the heart of a Luther education is the way faith and learning intersect and in turn connect students to the larger world. As we look to the future we envision Luther as a college where students continue to be transformed—by the demanding journey of liberal learning, by the call to think about learning in relation to faith and service, and by the beauty of the place, physical and communal.

Central to this transformation is the wholeness of a Luther education. While we recognize the importance of specialized learning and the strong reputation of numerous major programs at the college, it is the call for students to integrate their learning that is Luther's central gift and strength. We expect students to connect the major with studies across the liberal arts as well as with learning that occurs beyond the classroom, to examine the ethical questions their learning raises, and to act upon that inquiry for the good of nation, church, and world.

To do this well we must continue to invest in faculty and staff so that they will thrive as committed agents of Luther's mission. This should include the deepening of knowledge in their fields of expertise, the exchange of knowledge across departments, the enrichment that diversity in hiring brings, and a functional fluency in information technology. We must build on Luther's traditions of integrating learning within the academic curriculum, across the range of student residential experiences, and with the larger world beyond the campus. This should involve both longstanding and new programs, both regular classroom exchange and experiential learning, both study on campus and study away. And we must strengthen our commitment to mission by reflecting on whether students, faculty, and staff are meeting their goals and by sustaining the habits of thinking about faith and its relation to our individual and common vocation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Investing in Faculty and Staff

1. Create and endow a Fund for Transformational Teaching and Learning that will allow the college to set high expectations for performance and provide the encouragement and resources necessary for faculty and staff to thrive as committed agents of Luther's mission.

Strategies:

- a. Through the dean's office, and in particular the associate deans of the college, sponsor both broad conversations and focused workshops about good teaching within and beyond individual disciplines, using both faculty experience and what we learn from assessment of student learning. (2,4)
- b. Provide staff with on-campus workshops to advance business and job skills, supervisory skills, and other areas that assist them in working more effectively with students. Establish an endowed fund to support staff study leaves and increased professional development opportunities related to student learning goals and institutional needs. (1)
- c. Establish pre-tenure sabbaticals and other professional development opportunities for faculty who have completed a successful third-year review, and develop incentives for tenured faculty to take year-long

- (rather than semester) sabbaticals. (2)
- d. Establish three 2-year teaching fellowships (one per division) that have an emphasis on classroom learning and departmental innovation and creativity. (2)
- e. Establish an endowed fund to support scholarship initiatives for new faculty members. (1)

2. Strengthen Luther's institutional commitment to hiring and retaining a diverse faculty and staff.

Strategies:

- a. Enhance the faculty guidelines for Diversity in Employment and identify organizations committed to increasing minority presence so that departmental searches for tenure-line positions are geared toward increasing the visible diversity of candidates. (1)
- b. Identify and utilize organizations committed to increasing minority presence in staff searches. (1)
- c. Increase mentoring opportunities for faculty and staff of color. (1,4)
- d. Support annual participation in the Consortium for Faculty Diversity. (1)
- e. Work to increase campus awareness about the many types of diversity, including students of color and international students, but also low-income students, students with disabilities, and students whose religious background is not Christian. (1,4)

3. Strengthen information literacy and fluency initiatives for faculty and staff so that they can better prepare Luther students to enter the workforce with strong skills in information research, critical analysis, and technology.

Strategies:

- a. Develop a strong LIS-based program of information literacy and technology training services in support of the curriculum. (1,4)
- b. Require Luther employees to participate in information resource/tool training programs to remain current in their research and work skills. (2,4)
- c. Evaluate staffing in the academic technology area, particularly in the area of instructional technology support. (4)
- d. Establish replacement cycles and funding for departmental technology resources to ensure current and reliable technology. (4)

Integrating Learning

4. Envision ways in which the college's longstanding Paideia program can build strong intellectual community across the student body, the faculty, and where feasible, Luther alumni and parents.

Strategies:

- a. Make changes in Paideia program governance, staffing, training for faculty, and curriculum development that will engage us at our best in cross-departmental inquiry and in connecting our learning to the larger world. (1)
- b. Examine the coherence of the Paideia program as a whole, both in the relationship of Paideia I to Paideia II and also in connection to the work of our Center for Ethics and Public Life. (1)
- c. Structure incentives for faculty across the college to teach in the Paideia program, including the possibility of faculty moving between its first-year and junior/senior components. Give the Paideia Director and the Paideia II Coordinator a clearer and more substantial role in faculty hiring and annual staffing plans. (2)
- d. Draw on Luther graduates and Luther parents as their expertise and interest allow to enrich student and faculty learning in both Paideia I and Paideia II. (2)
- e. Reduce on-campus Paideia II class sizes to no more than 20-22 in order to foster its central goals of ethical formation and writing development. (2)
- f. Consider changing the name of the program—or of connecting the now familiar name to a phrase that defines it more sharply. (2)

5. Strengthen other distinctive programs including J-term, the honors program, the collegewide senior project, and independent collaborative research, and publicize them as elements of a transformative student experience built on close and personal collaboration with faculty and staff.

Strategies:

- a. Support emerging areas of academic strength and publicize them along with programs for which we are already well known. (1)
- b. Continue to develop creative forms of learning in January, on campus and off, in order to build students' opportunities for focused exploration, collaborative and self-directed inquiry, and application of their studies to the larger world. Provide clear, consistent communication to students about the purpose and value of the January term as an occasion for experiential learning. (1)
- c. Fund professional residencies on campus in January as well as opportunities to work with professionals off campus, including alumni and parents. (2)
- d. Expand opportunities for staff members to contribute to student learning efforts across the college, including J-term classes. (1)

6. Position learning in the context of a larger world by ensuring that all students have an opportunity for a study-away experience (study abroad, service learning, research, student teaching, internship, or longer term study in another place).

Strategies:

- a. Develop a means by which Luther can leverage and ensure a study-away experience through endowed funds. (2)
- b. Create programs that could be offered at a lower cost as well as short-term summer or spring break opportunities for those athletes, musicians, and others who can't work a J-term or semester-long program into their schedule. (1)
- c. Connect study-away programs to life and work on campus, paying closer attention to preparation and re-entry. (3,4)
- d. Build on the long tradition of language and cultural studies at Luther by offering courses in Mandarin Chinese and expanding international programs to China, South America, and Spain. (1)
- e. Explore connecting two of Luther's traditional strengths by increasing the number of Paideia II options that involve study away: single January or summer courses, January or summer courses linked to a course in fall or spring, and courses that are part of long-term Luther study-away programs. (3)

7. Increase opportunities for student internships with the goal of ultimately achieving 70 percent participation in internships by students from all levels—first-years to seniors.

Strategies:

- a. Establish an endowed fund to support internships and job shadowing opportunities. (2)
- b. Seek assistance from alumni, parents, and friends of the college to help with career mentoring and networking opportunities. (1)
- c. Marshal internal resources to reach this goal by offering workshops to train faculty and staff on how to establish internships. (1)

8. Foster integrative learning that connects academic inquiry with ethical reflection and spiritual formation demonstrated through the application of knowledge, skills, and responsibilities to new settings and complex problems.

Strategies:

- a. Leverage the potential of the Center for Ethics and Public Life by increasing its visibility and identifying opportunities for students to develop leadership skills within a moral and ethical framework. (1,4)
- b. Determine the ways in which Luther's emphasis on vocation will be embedded in the life of the college after the Sense of Vocation Lilly grant expires. (2)
- c. Strengthen Luther's commitment to the importance of daily chapel in integrative learning by ensuring chapel time is respected on the campus schedule and encouraging greater participation by

- students, faculty and staff. (1)
- d. Increase opportunities for faculty and staff collaboration, with a goal of improved student learning opportunities in areas such as sustainability, health and wellness, and student leadership. (1,4)

Strengthening Mission

9. Engage Luther students, faculty, and staff in regular review of the college's progress toward its goals for student learning and document for others the ways that Luther prepares students to lead good lives.

Strategies:

- a. Assisted by the work of the associate academic deans, our academic planning and assessment committees, and the director of assessment and institutional research, connect what we discover through assessment of students' learning with development for our faculty and staff. (1,4)
- b. Seek and sustain useful collaborations with other liberal arts colleges to compare our effectiveness with theirs and to make improvements as warranted. (2)
- c. Identify means for students to reflect on, evaluate, and plan for their own learning at significant "milestones" in their lives as undergraduates. These milestones could include first (summer) registration, the end of Paideia I and the end of the first-year January seminar, spring of the sophomore year (to create a plan for remaining study), return from study away, the end of Paideia II, and the conclusion of the senior project. An electronic portfolio might be the best way to organize this, but whatever the means, chief value will be in asking students to reflect on their own learning, both in and out of the classroom, as they look to their futures. (2)
- d. Support new initiatives in the Office of Assessment and Institutional Research for evaluating the Luther student experience. (2)

10. Affirm Luther's faith and learning mission by building and strengthening relationships of mutual service with selected congregations and faith communities.

Strategies:

- a. Develop shared events with synods and other regional educational institutions that focus on topics such as vocation, service, and youth mentoring. (2,4)
- b. Offer College Ministries staff, students, and other campus personnel to be a resource for congregations, conference gatherings, youth gatherings, camps, synods, assemblies, and other events around a set group of topics to better share the story of Luther College and Lutheran higher education. (1,4)
- c. Identify the necessary funding and staffing to offer a Lutheran Festival of Writing every three years as a way to model how faith can inform learning and writing, and to gain national visibility for the college. (2)
- d. Seek endowment support to continue Luther's summer vocational ministry fellowships when the Lilly grant expires. (2)

Strategic Imperative II: Connecting People, Place, and the Luther Experience

Those familiar with Luther know that the interrelationship between the college's strong academic program, faith tradition, sense of community, and picturesque location creates a unique and powerful learning experience. As we look to the future we must continue to ensure that qualified and promising students who desire a Luther education have the opportunity.

Affordability will continue to be a key factor in enrolling and retaining students. Pressure grows each year from families and the government to restrain cost increases and operate more efficiently, especially because fewer families have saved adequately for college and federal support for higher education is flat. This makes student financial aid critical, and because it takes an increasing share of Luther's operating budget (31 percent in 2007-08) new strategies are required in awarding aid.

We also recognize that attaining a college degree continues to be out of reach for growing numbers of minority and low-income students. As the Midwest and the nation's population continue to grow more diverse, how can Luther best respond to the dual challenge of access and success for students from diverse communities? Not only is this

commitment a faithful expression of Luther's mission, it also strengthens our ability to prepare Luther students for lives of service in the global community.

Telling the Luther story in new markets and in new ways is also needed, and calling upon those who know us to help with this work will be important. One of the college's distinctive strengths is the extended Luther community, a committed and engaged constituency. We must build on efforts to cultivate a sense of belonging with alumni, parents, and friends by providing opportunities for involvement, supporting those who promote the college in their home communities, and making current information about Luther accessible and transferable. Technology becomes an important partner in this work as a powerful tool to connect people with place.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Enrolling and Retaining Students

11. Build the applicant pool to ensure an annual first-year entering class of 670-680 while sustaining a yield of approximately 40 percent, and continue to enroll at least 50 transfer students each year.

Strategies:

- a. Restructure financial aid awarding strategies in order to annually enroll a first-year class in which more than 90 percent come from the top 50 percent of their graduating class. (2,4)
- b. Build the applicant pool 5 percent, to equal 2,700 by 2012. (1)
 - Increase the Chicago-area admissions counselor position to full time.
 - Hire a part-time recruiter in Denver, Colorado.
 - Utilizing geo-demographic data, work with Royall & Company to enhance and expand our search capabilities in secondary and tertiary markets, including California, Arizona, Colorado, and Indiana.
 - Increase the prospective student conversion rate in our primary markets by developing a new communications plan and dropping the application essay requirement.
 - Develop a marketing plan that utilizes current technology that resonates with prospective students (e.g., MySpace, YouTube, text messaging, Zinch, and shoutouts).
 - Investigate a fly-in reimbursement program to increase campus visits from outside our primary recruiting markets.
 - Fully implement *Active Campus* and provide training to admissions staff.
- c. Increase the number of international and U.S. students of color by approximately 100 students by 2012, maintaining roughly equal proportions of international students and U.S. students of color. (1,4)
- d. Develop recruitment strategies in countries where affinities with Luther's mission and programs are compatible, and continue to cultivate relationships with United World College programs. (1,4)
- e. Develop educational partnerships with one or two regional community colleges serving predominantly first-generation and underrepresented minority student populations. Provide targeted scholarships for students interested in completing their baccalaureate degree at Luther. (2)
- f. Increase participation in "feeder programs" that identify, recruit, and develop strong college student candidates among underrepresented minority students in the U.S. (e.g, "A Better Chance" and "Admission Possible" programs.) (1,4)
- g. Engage alumni and parents in creating networks to support annual enrollment targets. (1)

12. Increase first- to second-year persistence to 88 percent by 2012.

Strategies:

- a. Continue the improvements to first-year experience programs: advising, orientation, and vocational discernment. (For Paideia see recommendation 3.) (1)
- b. Take full advantage of the federally funded TRIO program (Student Support Services) and Student Life services to better serve first-generation and low-income students and their parents. (2)
- c. Implement faculty and staff development efforts that help them connect with new students as work-study supervisors, professors, coaches, ensemble conductors, and other mentors. (2)

- d. Improve the June registration program by expanding it to a full day. Include sessions for parents to strengthen messages about the college experience and expectations. (1)
- e. Consider an expanded orientation period for international students to give them greater opportunities to practice English in an academic setting. Consider a course prior to Paideia for those students in need of greater English language skills. (1)

13. Create a business model to test the viability of level enrollment after 2012, taking into account demographic and economic projections.

Strategies:

- a. Determine institutional enrollment capacity given existing infrastructure resources (personnel and physical). (1)
- b. Devise strategies to support cost containment (reducing spending growth), cost management (reducing spending in specific areas to reallocate to other areas), and cost cutting (reducing program/unit costs). (1)
- c. Regularly report cost savings and efficiency gains to constituent groups. (1)
- d. Manage net revenue so that it at least equals the projected annual CPI. (1)
- e. Develop appropriate benchmarks and goals for staff compensation and staff development. (1)

Engaging Constituents

14. Develop new, fresh, and persuasive methods to communicate Luther’s distinctiveness and how students fulfill the college mission in ways that resonate with various target markets.

Strategies:

- a. Redesign admissions marketing and visibility materials to include new messages about the college focusing on place, transformation, community, engagement with the world, and integrative learning. (1,4)
- b. Provide centralized leadership for college-wide communication and marketing initiatives while continuing to support the Integrated Marketing Committee. (1)
- c. Dedicate more resources to marketing and communications and explore outsourcing some of the workload. (1)
- d. Seek ways to survey key stakeholder groups to support and inform the college’s marketing strategies. (2)

15. Increase the number of parents and alumni who participate in college activities, provide financial support, and assist in identifying and recruiting students.

Strategies:

- a. Enhance parent and alumni communication, better utilizing the web and other electronic media. (2,4)
- b. Develop learning experiences (e.g., travel seminars, J-terms, web-streamed lectures) targeted at parents and alumni. (3)
- c. Support the Alumni Council business plan to enhance reunion experiences, expand alumni events through "events in a box" gatherings, assist with the identification and recruitment of new students, and increase alumni donor participation—including a new emphasis on young alumni. (2,4)
- d. Explore and implement virtual eventing opportunities for on-line groups. (2,4)
- e. Expand networking opportunities between students, alumni, and parents (e.g., career mentoring, host programs with particular student groups, and a “buddy system” for international students). (2,4)
- f. Increase opportunities for residencies to take advantage of alumni and parent expertise, especially in the area of financial planning, home purchases, loans, insurance, and other “life skills” topics to better prepare students for life after college. (2)
- g. Create a development committee that reports to the Board of Regents. (1)

16. Expand and better utilize information technology services and resources to serve both the local and extended Luther community, and enhance data stewardship and network security.

Strategies:

- a. Explore the use of the Google search engine to expand access to public and private web-based resources. (1)
- b. Work to integrate web-based services into customized user portals (e-mail, calendar, course data, etc.) for ease of use by faculty and staff. (2)
- c. Evaluate staffing and infrastructure needs for ensuring data stewardship and network security. (2)
- d. Emphasize routine audits and threat assessments of network security both from inside and outside our local network. (1)
- e. Outsource IT services such as e-mail, calendaring functions, and third-party management of residential networking infrastructure and services. (1,4)
- f. Invest in network-based multimedia services to provide easy capture, collection, storage, and distribution of multimedia content for academic and community use. (This will allow the college to support podcasting, recording of lectures, events, live video broadcast/production, etc.) (1)
- g. Digitize select paper records by implementing web-based document management for academic and administrative use. (2)

17. Invest in programs that intentionally impact the sense of community at Luther.

Strategies:

- a. Expand the new student immersion experiences launched in summer 2007 by the Center for Ethics and Public Life. (1)
- b. Create a “town/gown” council that collaborates on ways to make Decorah and Luther College a more welcoming place for diverse populations. (1)
- c. Explore a voluntary pre-orientation for students from diverse backgrounds to ensure they immediately access the climate of welcome and support that Luther provides. (2)
- d. Establish regularly scheduled program and departmental reviews to assess effectiveness. (4)
- e. Expand staffing in Human Resources in order to provide more staff development, training opportunities, and recognition events that build morale and strengthen community. (2)
- f. Strengthen campus-wide partnerships to increase participation in academic convocations. (1)
- g. Address the pressures on Luther’s calendar and scheduling that can lead to a fragmentation of community. (1)
- h. Communicate the importance of leaving time for conversation, community, and renewal during chapel and Thursday “shadow block” times. (1)

Strategic Imperative III: Connecting Sustainability, Stewardship, and Global Citizenship

Since its founding in 1861, Luther has remained true to its roots while preparing graduates to respond to a changing world. As we look ahead to the next century and beyond, global environmental problems, resource scarcity, and climate change will threaten the health of the planet. They will also present economic and operational challenges for Luther. Our commitment to relevant and transformative experiences for students pushes us to seek sustainability through greater efficiencies and new policies in operations while preparing graduates with the skills, knowledge, and experience to lead society in a more sustainable direction.

As a college of the church, striving for sustainability is anchored in our call to be good stewards of God’s creation and responsible citizens in the global community. As a strategic imperative, sustainability pushes us to reduce energy usage and consumption patterns and to explore renewable energy production strategies. By building upon Luther’s decision to be a charter signatory of the American College and University Presidents Climate Commitment and the significant progress that has already been made, we must be bold in our efforts and become a leader within the educational community.

To do this, sustainability must weave itself into all areas of college life, including the curriculum and outreach programs that create awareness on campus and in the region. It must also guide decision-making in operations through the adoption of sustainable practices and the continued care for this special place—the land and physical plant that have been cherished by generations of Luther students, faculty, and staff for nearly 150 years.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Creating Awareness

18. Create a Center for Sustainable Communities to be a catalyst for change locally and regionally.

Strategies:

- a. Develop a sustainable food systems program and play a leadership role in the Northeast Iowa Food and Fitness initiative. (2,4)
- b. Work with community partners to launch a community energy initiative focusing on conservation and renewable energy. (2)
- c. Create programs that foster sustainable business practices and entrepreneurship. (2)
- d. Enhance environmental education outreach efforts and work with community partners to create a place for environmental programs along the Upper Iowa River. (2)
- e. Strengthen partnerships with congregations and faith communities in sustainability education and draw upon the resources of diverse faith traditions regarding the stewardship of creation. (2)

19. Make sustainability a part of every student's learning experience.

Strategies:

- a. Invite Luther faculty and staff to integrate attention to place and to sustainable community into our curriculum, the residential experience of our students, work-study, and campus operations. Sponsor workshops to help achieve this goal. (2)
- b. Enhance the Environmental Studies program by endowing a chair for Environmental Studies as part of the Center for Sustainable Communities. (2)

20. Nurture connection to place in all stakeholders.

Strategies:

- a. Develop an outdoor recreation program that provides immersion experiences to incoming students and offers year-round programming to connect the campus with Luther's natural environment and to wellness initiatives that are already well established. (1)
- b. Tell our story about our unique location and campus sustainability efforts prominently on the Luther website and in other communications pieces. (1)
- c. Fund a scholarship program to attract and retain high school students with an interest in sustainability and environmental stewardship. (2)

Adopting Sustainable Practices

21. Model stewardship and sustainability in all college operations to reduce Luther's environmental impact and mitigate operational costs.

Strategies:

- a. Hire a sustainability coordinator to oversee and coordinate college sustainability initiatives. (1)
- b. Create a permanent campus sustainability council with broad campus representation. (1)
- c. Significantly reduce material flows and associated energy by reducing consumption, switching to more sustainable alternatives and increasing recycling. (2,3)
 - Increase purchase of local food in Dining Services to 35 percent of total food purchases.
 - Decrease solid waste by 25 percent.
 - Decrease water consumption by 15 percent.
 - Decrease paper consumption by 25 percent and shift to at least 50 percent post-consumer content.
- d. Develop a college purchasing policy that has a focus on sustainable alternatives. (2,4)
- e. Adopt a college policy that all building projects incorporate LEED certification strategies. (1)
- f. Monitor college use of toxic chemicals in all areas of campus with the goal of utilizing sustainable

alternatives. (1)

22. Reduce Luther’s carbon footprint by 50 percent and develop a plan to achieve carbon neutrality.

Strategies:

- a. Audit campus operations and implement energy efficiency upgrades in the physical plant. (1)
- b. Monitor all greenhouse gas emissions related to Luther operations. (4)
- c. Implement a comprehensive and creative program of energy education to shift behavior of students, faculty and staff as a way to reduce energy demand and shift the campus culture toward sustainability.(1)
- d. Invest in renewable energy strategies that provide cost savings and reduce Luther’s carbon footprint. (2)
- e. Develop a strategy for the use of carbon offsets including offsetting all college air travel with legitimate offsets. (2,4)
- f. Monitor and reduce emissions from student, faculty, and staff travel, including reducing emissions from fleet vehicles by 35%, utilizing alternatives (hybrids, electric, biodiesel, compressed natural gas), and changing behavior. (2,4)

Caring for Place

23. Design and implement a campus land-use plan that affirms land stewardship, sustainability, and landscape designer Jens Jensen’s original vision for the Luther campus in 1911.

Strategies:

- a. Improve campus signage and wayfinding with directional signs and directories. (1)
- b. Create a central campus “clearing,” improve circulation with a two-way loop road around campus perimeter, and increase handicap and visitor parking in the campus core. (2)
- c. Add council rings and other outdoor gathering places, an enhanced trail system, and a river landing to promote outdoor learning and connection with the environment. (2,4)
- d. Update management plans for campus natural areas and prioritize ecological restoration projects. (2)

24. Continue sustainable and strategic enhancements of the plant and facilities with a focus on student learning, energy payback, campus needs, and economic return.

Strategies:

- a. Budget annually for deferred maintenance. (1,4)
- b. Secure sufficient debt financing to support the completion of Valders Hall of Science and Miller-Dieseth residence hall renovations following sustainable building standards. (1)
- c. Complete the Baker Village complex by adding 100 beds and incorporating environmentally responsible features. (1,4)
- d. Pursue a joint venture plan with the City of Decorah and the local school district to create an indoor aquatic center on Luther College property that will serve the needs of all collaborating parties and follow sustainable building standards. (1,4)
- e. Develop a plan and timeline for resurfacing the outdoor track, Regents Center surface, and the field house floor. (2)