June 20, 2017

Dear Faculty, Staff, and Students:

We hope you are enjoying some time for renewal this summer. While the rhythms of campus work are altered these few months, we write to provide another update on the strategic planning process, which continues through the summer and will culminate in opportunities for review of, and feedback on, a draft strategic plan for Luther College at the start of the new academic year.

In late April, following the completion of the information-gathering phase of the process—the detailed findings from which remain available here—we shared an evolving summary of the potential “big ideas” and strategies that emerged from the Strategic Planning Committee’s (SPC) discussions (available here). During late April and May, the SPC convened another round of four open forums and facilitated discussion at standing meetings of the faculty, staff, and student senate to discuss those ideas and to engage colleagues in reflection and feedback. Thank you to everyone who took the time to participate in and contribute to these conversations. Your ideas, questions, and recommendations provided essential counsel and nuance for us to consider and include in the planning process.

On May 24-25, 2017, the SPC and Cabinet met for a two-day strategic planning retreat. It was an intensive meeting, filled with open and honest discussion, generous and respectful listening, and deliberation of bold and hopeful—but also practical and realistic—strategies to help support and strengthen our college over the next five years. During the retreat, we were able to reach consensus on the broad outline of the new plan, identifying four closely inter-related draft goals—in the categories of academic excellence, innovation, and local/global impact; supporting the resiliency and success of our students and campus community; championing diversity and inclusion; and achieving financial sustainability and affordability—with approximately 5-7 potential objectives in support of each.

Over the summer, we are working closely with our colleagues at Keeling & Associates (K&A) to draft and refine the language of the goals and objectives and to prepare a narrative document that sets the context of the plan and justifies our strategy. Our intention is to complete this work and share the draft with the campus community before the beginning of the fall semester, and to hold another round of forums and discussions for reflection and feedback at the beginning of the term. For those who are on campus this summer, we also will convene some small-group discussions during July for reflection on the evolving draft plan; please stay tuned for details. We hope you will take advantage of these and other opportunities to contribute to the process, and we look forward to these discussions.
As always, if you have any questions, comments, or concerns, please contact the co-chairs or members of the SPC at any time, and visit the strategic planning website for additional information and updates.

With best wishes for a relaxing and productive summer.

Sincerely,

Brad Chamberlain and Terry Sparkes
Co-Chairs, Strategic Planning Committee