

Strategic Plan 2022



Preamble

The purpose of this preamble is to provide definitions for various terms used within the Strategic Plan. Franciscan University refers to the collection of 24 Catholic American universities that embrace a common mission to introduce and disseminate knowledge of Franciscan values and practices through their educational programs.

Community refers to all who are associated with Alvernia, including students, faculty and staff at all locations and in all modalities, as well as alumni and friends.

Reference to Alvernia's Franciscan heritage refers to the heritage that Alvernia University shares with the Bernardine Franciscan Sisters and includes the following two considerations. Through its direct connection to the Bernardine Franciscan Sisters, the foundresses of the university, Alvernia is directly connected to the larger historical and spiritual Franciscan legacy founded in the 13th century by St. Francis of Assisi and St. Clare of Assisi. At the same time, Alvernia University enjoys

independence from, and generativity beyond, the Bernardine Franciscan Sisters by means of which the university has created its own distinctive Franciscan identity, mission and heritage. Thus, Alvernia University has produced new avenues for Franciscan life and expression in the United States of America and elsewhere in the world.

The concept of stewardship aligns with a Franciscan perspective on sustainability when one views the environment as God's creation. Sustainability includes four interlinked dimensions: environmental responsibility (e.g., energy and water conservation, recycling, transportation, green space); social equity (e.g., shared decision making, sense of community, diverse campus community, equitable pay); economic health (e.g., purchasing locally manufactured items, hiring people from within the local community); and cultural vitality (e.g., values, heritage, sense of place, and retaining and respecting traditions). (Hawkes, 2006)

As a private institution working for the public good, Alvernia University is built upon a commitment to the community, evidenced, in part, by the development of high-value partnerships. As good stewards of limited resources, Alvernia University actively seeks, and engages with, community partners to create mutually beneficial relationships.

The academic experience of the students at the university goes far beyond what happens

Alvernia Advantage Balanced Scorecard

Franciscan Identity & Values (Mission)



OBJECTIVE: Serving the community by engaging in activities that support our Franciscan mission

Initiative	Measure
Integrating internship opportunities allowing for immersion in the broader community in meaningful ways.	Create agreement for model partnership between academic community and industry partners for experiential learning in classes.
Identifying and developing sustainable service learning opportunities in conjunction with our community partners.	Institute service in solidarity model where all service opportunities are connected to a time of solidarity, formation and reflection grounded in Catholic Social Teaching Principles and/or Franciscan core values.

OBJECTIVE: Fostering a community of faculty and staff committed to academic excellence and student-centered learning

Initiative	Measure
Attracting and retaining a diverse faculty and staff.	Utilize human resource data regarding faculty and staff demographics and implement the Hiring for Mission, Diversity and Inclusion Policy.
Creating opportunities for developing community among faculty and among faculty, staff and administration.	Develop the use of Alumni House for faculty. Reestablish university community book club. Create periodic sponsored opportunities for community gathering.
Sustaining a culture and traditions of faculty self-governance and of shared university governance.	Develop formation opportunities for community awareness of the importance of, and opportunities for engagement in, faculty self-governance and shared university governance.
Committing resources adequate to enable faculty to flourish in scholarship, teaching, advising and service.	Assess faculty resource needs to create a three-year plan that will result in application of resources in identified areas of need.
Committing resources adequate to enable staff to flourish in their respective areas of responsibility and expertise.	Assess staff resource needs to create a three-year plan that will result in application of resources in identified areas of need. Make resources available for staff directors, at a minimum, to participate in networking opportunities and conferences.

Academic Experience (Academic Success & Satisfaction)



OBJECTIVE: Providing experiential learning and professional development opportunities

Initiative	Measure
Integrating experiential learning opportunities such as internships, service learning, clinical or field experiences, and conference participation, allowing for immersion in the professional community in meaningful ways.	Determine the availability of experiential learning opportunities for students and assess the successfulness of their integration.

OBJECTIVE: Fostering lifelong learners and ethical leaders serving communities

Initiative	Measure
Offering opportunities to build resilience and skills that enable students to persist and achieve their academic goals, flourish in their professional lives, and be reflective and ethical citizens.	Assess the available opportunities and determine expansion plan.

Community Engagement

Initiative	Measure
<p>Commencing the Reading CollegeTowne initiative in furtherance of Alvernia’s commitment to community outreach and community building.</p>	<p>Plan and facilitate at least one community service event and one service-learning course partnership each semester that are aligned with the Reading CollegeTowne Initiative.</p> <p>Continue to develop and expand partnerships and sponsorships to make the O’Pake Institute for Economic Development and Entrepreneurship sustainable. Expand the Fellows and Mentor Program and the number of clients we will serve in the region.</p> <p>Create a functional regional entrepreneurial ecosystem to leverage regional resources and assets to maximize economic development opportunities.</p> <p>Continue to expand our O’Pake Business Incubator and Technology Transfer Office and make the O’Pake Financial Services activities operational.</p>
<p>Seeking opportunities for</p>	

Initiative	Measure
<p>Educating students to be engaged, ethical and empowered citizens who value diversity and contribute to local and global communities through purposeful leadership, activism and service.</p>	<p>100% participation of SEARCH classes in our Service Saturdays. At least 65% of Alvernia University students will participate in community and/or global service projects per year. Engage at least 35 students in the Franciscan Servant Leader Certification Program.</p>
<p>Attracting students and strategic partnerships through community engagement offerings.</p>	<p>Identify incoming students who have a service/sustainability passion and host an immersion experience prior to orientation, which will then carry over throughout their four-year Alvernia University experience in alignment with student career pathways and passions.</p>
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Student Experience



OBJECTIVE: Recruiting and retaining students who can be successful at the University and contribute to the academic community and student experience

Initiative	Measure
Developing an enrollment model focused on building the class based on enrollment goals by major, athletics, equity, diversity and inclusion, and student engagement.	Meet or exceed budgeted enrollment goals annually for traditional students, transfer students, adults, international and graduate students. Use EAB survey data and Health Care Research Corporation matric/non-matric survey to assess yield improvement year over year.
Enhancing student services for adult learners, including career development, academic advising, student engagement, community engagement and graduation outcomes.	Baseline survey conducted in 2020. Survey adult learners annually. Collect graduation outcomes and placement six months and one year post-graduation using National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) standards.
Creating a Graduate Student Association to allow for ongoing student feedback. Establishing an advising structure within the four colleges that is flexible and responsive.	Graduate student retention. Graduation placement/outcomes six months post-graduation.

OBJECTIVE: Providing developmentally appropriate programs and services for all students, including residents, commuters, athletes, veterans, transfers, international and adults

Initiative	Measure
Providing living-learning environments that are conducive to the curricular and cocurricular experience.	Use the ACUHO Survey, annually, for all residents. Review the Aladdin Food Satisfaction Survey annually and provide opportunities for feedback through Food Services Committee of SGA.

Initiative	Measure
Developing a robust set of experiences for students from marginalized populations and students of color. Implementing d	

OBJECTIVE: Inspiring an engaging intellectual and creative life

Initiative	Measure
Increasing undergraduate research and expanding opportunities for internships, job shadowing and mentoring.	Measure undergraduate research projects annually to assess increased participation.
Increasing our commitment to enrich the experience of academically motivated and talented undergraduate students.	Investigate ways to incentivize student enrollment and engagement in the Honors Program at the University, including the possibility of establishing an Honors College.
Creating academic and service-learning communities for both graduate and undergraduate students.	Create spaces to help build communities and engagement among groups of students on campus.
Enhancing offerings in, and support of, intellectual and creative arts.	Assess current offerings in these areas with a goal of building more robust programming.
Providing opportunities for civil dialogue and increased understanding of diverse ideas, varied perspectives and global issues.	Establish and communicate a database of these activities.

OBJECTIVE: Nurturing an environment that prepares students for their personal and professional goals

Initiative	Measure
Scaling career services to meet the needs of a diverse group of students. Providing career development opportunities that are part of the academic experience in the classroom.	Using NACE standards to develop career services that match student need.
Developing a Student Employment Center that provides students on-campus employment aligned to their major.	Develop a graduate student employment resource.

OBJECTIVE: Providing opportunities for students to engage outside the classroom through a robust Student Affairs area

Initiative	Measure
Engaging students in leadership development through student organizations, clubs, leadership opportunities, student activities, wellness programming, commuter services, orientation, international student services, residence life and first-year experiences.	Use NESSE data to gauge student satisfaction and high-impact practices biannually.

Initiative	Measure
<p>Achieving optimal infrastructure, systems and processes for efficient and sustainable operations.</p>	<p>Create and deploy a software technology plan that (i) reduces redundancies, (ii) maximizes efficiencies and (iii) reinvests resources into the student experience.</p>
<p>Committing to the preservation of our shared heritage with the Bernardine Franciscan Sisters and providing the environment for this heritage to flourish.</p>	

OBJECTIVE: Ensuring the responsible use of resources by seeking efficiencies wherever possible in consultation with all stakeholders

Initiative	Measure
Ensuring appropriate staffing.	Assess the needs on campus to support the health and well-being of the University community.
Streamlining communication, processes and procedures to ensure responsible use of resources.	Ensure the effectiveness of communication with respect to resources between and among the board, senior leadership, faculty and staff through formal processes.