

## Augustana 2020: Enhancing Student Success, Before and After Graduation—A Strategic Plan

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

I am very pleased to share a draft of *Augustana 2020*, a strategic plan that will shape the college's direction for years to come. *Augustana 2020* will strengthen our mission to educate students for a changing world, developing and promoting skills and values more crucial than ever in the 21st century. As a residential college of the liberal arts and sciences, Augustana is in a strong position to do so. This strategic plan will advance the success of our students, our graduates and our mission.

*Augustana 2020* is student-centered, focusing on three strategic directions:

### **1. Enhanced Preparation, to ensure students have distinguished career and graduate school successes**

We will develop new relationships and resources so all students will have the knowledge, confidence and specific tools to connect their education with immediate goals after graduation and changing goals throughout their lives. Our graduates will find professions that honor their aspirations and investment, and vocations through which they will effect positive change in the world.

### **2. Integrated Experiences, to facilitate transformative learning**

We reaffirm our focus as a residential liberal arts college that provides a values-laden, intentionally designed holistic education, and we will expand the impact of this integrated living and learning experience for all our students. The curriculum and co-curricular experiences will take full advantage of our comprehensive learning resources as a residential campus in the 21st century.

### **3. Affordability and Value, to increase access and expand opportunities**

This strategic plan will expand our reach to provide more students an Augustana education. By 2020, Augustana College will offer this high-quality education to an academically qualified student body drawn from across the nation and around the world. We will improve our value by addressing affordability as we advance student-learning outcomes through greater success on campus and after graduation.

Achieving our goals will require active participation of the campus community and partners in the broader community. Foundational to the plan is a commitment to invest in a workforce of passionate, innovative and entrepreneurial employees who are strong advocates for Augustana. Similarly, by strengthening connections and partnerships in the community, our students will develop skills and experiences they can apply to their passions and new opportunities in a changing world.

We are excited and confident these strategic directions will enhance the Augustana experience and preparation for our students. Changes and improvements in each area of college operations are anticipated, and actions will be accomplished in an incremental and integrated fashion. For each strategy, progress against the plan will be reported as part of the President's Annual Report.

This draft reflects input from many stakeholders and countless hours of discussion, drafting and review. I thank the faculty, staff, students and alumni who have worked so hard to develop this plan. As we proceed, I welcome your feedback and comments about these three core strategies. I solicit your engagement and commitment as we work together to strengthen Augustana's mission through implementation of *Augustana 2020*.

Steven C. Bahls  
President, Augustana College

## Preamble: Augustana 2020 – A Strategic Plan

### VISION FOR THE COLLEGE

*Augustana 2020 will strengthen our distinctive value as a residential liberal arts and sciences college located in the Quad Cities that fully prepares its students for post graduate success. Our students will make greater gains in the skills, dispositions and interpersonal sensibilities needed to achieve their career goals and secure meaningful lives of accomplishment and contribution. Augustana will offer intentionally designed curriculum and integrated learning experiences through active engagement, both within and outside the classroom, that recognize the holistic nature of student learning and development. This curriculum and these experiences will take full advantage of the comprehensive learning resources of a residential liberal arts and sciences college. We will purposefully connect the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that are the hallmark of a liberal arts education to our students' post-graduate career plans.*

*Augustana 2020 will offer this high-quality education to a student body drawn from across the nation and the world; we will improve our value by addressing affordability and reducing the financial aid gap for students who have high need.*

Augustana 2020 will strengthen our mission to educate students for a changing world, developing and promoting skills and values more crucial than ever in the 21st century.

Augustana 2020 consists of three student-centered strategies—with sets of metrics and actions identified for each. Actions are intended to be accomplished in an incremental and integrated fashion. Changes and improvements in each area of college operations are anticipated. Progress against plan for each strategy will be reported annually as part of the President's Annual Report. This plan will ensure mission effectiveness and sustainability.

The guiding principle in developing our three strategic directions has been to first focus on competitive strategies, asking about major, achievable directions that advance Augustana's mission. Strategies are identified within the context of **who** we are and **what** we are trying to accomplish. Competitive strategies and related action plans make the institution distinctive. Tactics, then, are **how** the institution will achieve its strategic directions. We have resisted the temptation to include tactics, and have focused instead on what we believe are both excellent and viable strategies for Augustana College.

Focusing on the strategic directions identified in *Augustana 2020* does not mean that other important things we do at Augustana (our commitment to diversity, international programs, or scholarship) or who we are as a college are no longer imperative. To the contrary, Augustana College is in a position of strength because of what we have done and who we are, and that is central to ensuring that the strategic directions that make up *Augustana 2020* lead us to strengthen our mission and achieve our vision for the college.

### THREE STRATEGIES FOR ENHANCED STUDENT ENGAGEMENT AND SUCCESS

**Strategy I: Enhanced Preparation. Explicitly focus the Augustana experience to better assist students in taking the next step in their vocational journeys through high graduate school admission rates and timely placement in rewarding and meaningful jobs and careers.**

**Action plan: Place career preparation and post-graduate planning as essential parts of fulfilling our mission.**

1. Implement Augustana CareerConnections as a signature program of the college that better integrates advising with career and professional development and campus-wide student internship opportunities (implement in 2014-2015, unless otherwise stated).
  - a. Develop a Career Community of alumni, parents and friends to expand career opportunities and potential sources of useful career-related information.

- b. Relocate the services currently provided by the Community Engagement Center and Advising Office to the heart of campus. Expand and reorganize the Internships and Careers Office into the Office of Career and Professional Development.
  - c. Expand career development services to recent alumni. (2015-2016)
  - d. Develop more comprehensive, dynamic online resources for internship and job opportunities, skills training and the like for career preparation and growth.
  - e. Further develop research and creative scholarship opportunities for students that will lead to high-profile presentations, publications, scholarships, and awards.
  - f. Focus on internships and applied opportunities, particularly in the Quad Cities, that facilitate both career and graduate school preparation and opportunities (including grad school application and other supports).
  - g. Target employers and universities with graduate and professional programs to develop pipelines for our graduates.
  - h. Help students develop professional ePortfolios or a graduate school statement of purpose with the goal of 90% of all graduating students developing either an ePortfolio or a graduate or professional school statement of purpose. (2015-2016)
  - i. Include vocational discernment and career and professional development in the first-year orientation, with related structured activities for 2nd, 3rd, and 4th year students.
2. Ensure that campus-wide events, such as the three campus-wide Symposia, highlight and integrate advising and career development. (2013-2014)
  3. Ensure students develop professional competencies that enable them to pursue a successful and meaningful career path.
    - a. Pilot programs with a limited number of similar institutions to deliver blended or online learning in ways that add depth to majors, offer new areas of learning, and enhance student learning outcomes and access. (over the next 5 years as opportunities arise)
    - b. Work with faculty to develop certificate programs (and other competency-based education programs) that will provide students with additional credentials to distinguish themselves upon graduation. (over the next two years)
    - c. Experiment with online and other third party resources for our students to achieve certain competencies when such resources can best meet the needs of our students (such as certification from Lynda.com and ALEKS). (2014-2015)
    - d. Establish on-campus internships in such areas as leadership, civic engagement, entrepreneurship, social justice, sustainability, and intercultural understanding. (2015-2016)

#### EVIDENCE OF SUCCESS:

- I-1 For graduate school applicants, acceptance rate of 95% to their first or second graduate/professional school of choice
- I-2 For non-graduate school applicants, full-time employment rates of 90% within 6 months of graduation in positions requiring a college degree
- I-3 80% of recent alumni in the workforce indicating that Augustana prepared them well to succeed in their current positions
- I-4 90% of recent alumni in graduate school indicating that Augustana prepared them well to succeed in their current program
- I-5 90% of students provided with internships (or similar intensive practical training experiences) or intensive/significant research projects

**Strategy II—Integrated Experiences. Connect the distinctive aspects and outcomes of an integrated residential college experience to what is most valuable for success in life after college by ensuring that all students combine an individualized set of curricular, co- and extra-curricular experiences that maximizes their educational development and success in college and provides superior preparation for life after college.**

**Action plan: Reimagine the relationship between academic and co- and extra-curricular activities to more effectively prepare students for post-graduate achievement.**

1. Ensure all academic and co- and extra-curricular programs are rigorous, meet the college's expected student learning outcomes and demonstrably prepare students to undertake self-authorship of their education to meet the demands of the workplace and graduate and professional schools. (on-going)
2. Create intentional co- and extra-curricular programs designed by faculty and student life professionals that capitalize on and place value in the experiential learning taking place outside of the classroom. (2014-2015)
  - a. Fully develop the conceptual Augustana ARCH program (Academics, Residential life, Co-curricular/extra-curricular activities, and Hands-on learning) to design experience-laden learning that leverages our location and results in Augustana outcomes including but not limited to collaborative leadership, intercultural competence and ethical citizenship.
  - b. Assign an associate dean to work with all stakeholders in integrating student learning outcomes throughout the curriculum, co- and extra-curricular activities, and student life.
  - c. Work with faculty and staff to develop reporting measures that clearly demonstrate integrated learning.
  - d. Develop a meaningful co-curricular transcript and establish effective ways to help students successfully use this tool to obtain employment or graduate and professional school admission in their field.
3. Develop an advising system focused on holistic student development including academic, co-curricular, social, and career goal achievement. Advise each student using a team including a faculty member, student life and/or CareerConnections staff, and upper-class students. (2014-2015)
4. Build on the success of the Reading/ Writing Center to incorporate academic support for students for whom English is a second language and for students with learning disabilities. Increase success-oriented student programming and support in traditional and non-traditional venues. (on going)
5. Implement best practices in retention strategies. (2014-2015)
  - a. Develop a robust year-long First Year Experience sequence creating an environment for every student to identify multiple niches that fit their passions and gifts.
  - b. Replace our early alert retention system with a more robust program to proactively identify students at risk.
  - c. Socially integrate students into the college community through first-year neighborhoods, interest groups, theme areas for older students, and living/learning communities.
  - d. Provide adequate support for mental health services.
6. Develop a program in digital innovation through the Center for Faculty Enrichment to support faculty in using available technology to improve student learning outcomes and to facilitate integration of in- and out-of-class learning. (2015-2016).
7. Involve our students, faculty, staff, and administration in efforts to ensure that the Quad Cities is a culturally rich community that inspires innovation and lifelong learning (on-going).

## EVIDENCE OF SUCCESS:

- II-1 Intentional integration of academic experiences and pedagogy, residential life experiences, co- and extra-curricular activities and hands-on learning made possible only at a residential college, with every area of the college able to articulate how it supports and advances student learning and student success. This will be demonstrated by connecting all curricular, co- and extra-curricular, and hands-on experiences to the college-wide student learning outcomes.
- II-2 Co-curricular transcripts available to all students.
- II-3 Improvement of retention rates to 90% (3 year average) after the first year and improve four-year graduation rates to 75% (3 year average).
- II-4 Evidence of students taking ownership of their education and future careers, as measured by improvement in Student Survey results and Graduate Survey results in areas of student engagement.

## **Strategy III–Affordability and Value. Address affordability and increase Augustana’s value to students in order to sustain enrollment.**

### **Action plan: Reduce core costs where possible, reduce unmet financial need and maintain a competitive recruiting program designed to achieve enrollment targets.**

1. Reduce the financial aid gap for high-need students, particularly those who are high performers. (2013-2014)
2. Demonstrate the benefits of Augustana’s high value programs (e.g., Augie Choice) in order to progressively decrease merit aid that is in excess of demonstrated financial need. (2016-2017)
3. Develop a plan of predictable, guaranteed comprehensive fee control. (2015-2016)
4. Streamline matriculation for transfer students and develop agreements with community colleges that provide a formalized and accessible pathway for student transfer to Augustana. (2015-2016)
5. Ensure Augustana has a national presence by increasing out-of-region enrollment from 17% of the student body to 22% within five years while maintaining comparable net revenue per student. (2018-2019)
6. Ensure Augustana has an international presence by increasing international student enrollment from 3% to 8% within five years while maintaining comparable net revenues per student. (2018-2019)
7. Create a culture where all internal constituencies continually examine key processes to improve outcomes for our students and minimize unnecessary expenditures. (2014-2016)

## EVIDENCE OF SUCCESS:

- III-1 Increased perceptions of affordability based on a new price/cost structure model.
- III-2 Net revenue consistently sufficient to support the human, physical, technology and financial resources necessary to deliver the high value programs to students contemplated by this plan, at a cost families can afford.
- III-3 Implementation of multiple mutually beneficial partnerships with similar institutions that result in expanded opportunities to improve affordability.

## RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS OF AUGUSTANA 2020

- RI-1 Double the principal amount of our endowment to \$250 million within the next decade (not considering market growth).
- RI-2 Examine all operations and support areas for process improvements and other options that might free funds for strategic plan implementation.
- RI-3 Work with faculty leadership to develop a plan, within our current resources, to free up time for the advising necessary to implement these strategies by accomplishing supporting action plans.

- RI-4 Maintain and strengthen a healthy institutional culture that values shared and personal responsibility and collaboration in support of student learning.
- RI-5 Invest in faculty, administration, and staff development by establishing programs that foster and support the development of skills needed to accomplish Augustana 2020.
- RI-6 Assess and provide IT resources necessary to support the plan.
- RI-7 Renovate and repurpose Olin, College Center, Bergendoff and the older residence halls in ways that explicitly advance student learning.
- RI-8 Maintain transparency in our communication and invest in a workforce of employees who are valued for their passion, innovation and entrepreneurship, who are committed to student learning and improving it wherever possible, and who are empowered and trusted to implement this plan.
- RI-9 Establish an Augustana 2020 implementation team, with responsibility to oversee implementation of the plan and provide periodic reports on our progress.

*Augustana 2020* cannot be implemented without the consistent effort of our faculty, staff and Board of Trustees. Implementation of this plan will involve hard work and difficult choices, to which we are committed. Critical to the strategic plan also are the efforts of our alumni and friends to support the college in providing the best possible education to the next generation of Augustana students.

*Augustana 2020* will strengthen Augustana financially and ensure the college remains focused on its mission throughout the 21st century. *Augustana 2020* will provide greater value for our students and sustain a demand for an Augustana education during these challenging times for liberal arts colleges. In this age of entrepreneurship and multiple careers, Augustana's liberally educated graduates have a great opportunity to impact the changing world as citizens and leaders. By accomplishing our strategic goals together, we will ensure their success.