



ACADEMIC STRATEGIC PLAN

Draft Framework



*Advancing Academic Excellence
at a University Welcoming to All*

Introduction

In Fall 2022, Syracuse University began a collaborative and inclusive effort to develop a new academic strategic plan to shape and guide the University's future. This is the first academic strategic plan created since the 2014 *Trajectory to Excellence*. The world, our country and our campus have changed dramatically since then. The global pandemic has ravaged communities and economies. There has been a rise in global warfare, forced migration and political polarization both at home and abroad. Our country is experiencing an evolving reckoning on racial justice, and the effects of climate change have intensified. Syracuse University has met these challenges strategically and proactively, while remaining grounded in our mission and values as an academic community. With our collective focus directed to the future, Syracuse University is poised to advance academic excellence at a university that is welcoming to all, not just today but for generations to come.

The world of higher education has also changed since 2014. Thanks in part to the pandemic, online learning has become ubiquitous. To meet the needs of evolving student demographics, universities are adopting innovative approaches and new modalities. At the same time, the demand for graduate and undergraduate degrees has markedly shifted, as have the dynamics of international and even domestic student enrollment. Finally, student expectations have changed dramatically over the last nine years, particularly as they relate to housing, health and wellness, curricula, inclusion, and career readiness. Together, these realities present both challenges and opportunities for Syracuse University.

In charting the course for this new work, Vice Chancellor, Provost, and Chief Academic Officer Gretchen Ritter charged the campus community with creating an academic strategic plan that will guide our collective efforts to advance academic excellence at a university that is welcoming to all. As part of that charge, she called on our community to build a plan that is:

- Simple and coherent, so that it is widely adopted and readily understood;
- Aspirational and achievable in its objectives;
- Direct yet adaptable, a living document to guide decision-making at all levels, while being responsive to changing circumstances and opportunities; and
- Distinctive and unique to Syracuse University.

To ground the academic strategic planning effort, we began with the University's [vision statement](#), which reads:

Syracuse University aspires to be a pre-eminent and inclusive student-focused research university, preparing engaged citizens, scholars, and leaders for participation in a changing global society.

This vision statement captures some of the most unique aspects and aspirations of this institution and is an excellent starting point for academic strategic planning. Explicit in our vision statement is Syracuse University's long history of **inclusion**. From its earliest days, Syracuse University has opened its doors to women and people from marginalized backgrounds and has been groundbreaking in admissions, pedagogy, living and learning communities, and research and creative output in areas that advance the causes of inclusion. The 2022 academic strategic planning process provides a clear directive that the University must leverage this tradition to forge new commitments that embrace diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility to cement Syracuse University's legacy as a community that is truly welcoming to all.

Relatedly, Syracuse University has always been connected to its sense of **place**. The University is located in a region rich with a history of inclusion, democracy, and human rights. It sits on traditional Onondaga Nation territory, the principal meeting place of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, which is often described as the oldest participatory democracy on earth. Syracuse was a famous stop on the Underground Railroad and is adjacent to Seneca Falls, the birthplace of the women's suffrage movement in the United States. Syracuse University has incorporated this rich history and heritage into its vision, and this academic strategic plan demonstrates an abiding commitment to community and engaged citizenship.

This commitment also applies to communities outside Central New York. In cities as diverse as Florence, Santiago, Los Angeles, and London, students undertake community-engaged scholarship, and faculty conduct research in almost every country. The vision statement validates these efforts, calling out a **global scope** and a commitment to meaningful preparation of our students. The strategic framework that follows builds upon these traditional strengths of the University in unique ways and leverages that global footprint.

Finally, implicit in the concept of "preparing engaged citizens, scholars, and leaders for participation in a changing global society" is the notion of promoting **human thriving**. At Syracuse University, we believe in valuing and enabling the contributions of people of all abilities and backgrounds and to understanding the physical and material conditions needed to create and support healthy and sustainable communities for everyone. Syracuse University prioritizes teaching, studying, and creating advances to promote vibrant communities in which all individuals can thrive. A commitment to human thriving also means empowering and supporting our students, faculty, and staff. To this end, we will cultivate a sense of belonging - as members of a diverse, creative, publicly minded campus community. When our community members feel confident, heard, and seen, they have the security to take risks and to be open to new people and ideas.

Planning

Our new academic strategic planning efforts built on many of the successes and lessons learned from *Trajectory to Excellence*. Among the notable outcomes of that plan were (1) several “one-university” enterprise-wide initiatives like the commitment to veterans and military families and the “campus framework” which guides our investments in facilities, (2) faculty-focused programs like the Center for Teaching and Learning Excellence and the cluster hire initiative, and (3) many student-facing programs, from a focus on undergraduate research and peer tutoring to increased investment in graduate education and improvements in classroom technology. Taken together with the other accomplishments of *Trajectory to Excellence*, these efforts clearly demonstrated the value of thoughtful and dynamic academic strategic planning.

Reflecting as well on the process for creating and implementing the last academic strategic plan, we wanted to ensure that this planning effort was driven by an inclusive process that engaged the broader campus community in dialogue about what makes us proud—as individual contributors and as a collective—about our work as an institution and how we might increase our impact in the years to come. We were greatly heartened by the robust participation and fulsome contributions made to this planning effort by our campus community.

During the Fall 2022 semester, the academic strategic planning effort was organized around three pillars of our core academic mission—research and creative endeavors; educational excellence and student success; and public impact—and four cross-cutting values and operational areas that infuse and shape our work as an institution: diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility; global engagement; resource sustainability and budget; and enrollment. Seven working groups composed of faculty, students, and staff met regularly with the wider campus community to seek feedback on each area and to identify current and aspirational areas of distinctive excellence at Syracuse University. This collaborative process ultimately included feedback from more than 2,000 unique participants.

From the many working groups, campus discussions, surveys, and other sources of feedback came a rich narrative for Syracuse University. Below, we group into five themes the key elements of that narrative about where Syracuse University has historic strengths, where it is distinctively excellent now, and where it can be distinctively excellent in the future.

While these five themes are not wholly unique to Syracuse University, because of the history, culture, and expertise concentrated within the Syracuse community, they represent the coalescence of our current thinking and future aspirations. This work is crucial, as the University seeks to distinguish itself from its peers as a student-focused research university with global scope, a commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility, and a broad and deep bench of world-class professional and liberal arts programs. As a private university with a strong public mission, Syracuse University features pedagogy,

research and creative endeavors that span traditional categories of basic and applied scholarship. Syracuse University faculty and students approach their work with a keen focus on social impact, community engagement, and strong cross-fertilization between creative and artistic fields and scientific discovery. The five themes below capture those commitments and the core values that guide our work as an institution.

The strategic vision described in the remainder of this document lays a path for where the University aspires to be over the next five years and identifies areas of distinctive excellence—both today and in the future. These areas of distinctive excellence are rooted in our history and our values. They point us to an aspirational future state in which our impact and reputation are enhanced and where we, as an academic community, make an even greater impact on some of the key issues of the day.

Areas of Distinctive and Aspirational Excellence

Any successful academic strategic plan must articulate a vision of the future in which the stated objectives will be fully or largely realized. For Syracuse University, this academic strategic plan envisions growing or maintaining distinctive excellence in core thematic areas across the academic enterprise and in every school, college, department, and academic support unit. Equally important, for each area described below, we commit to distinctive and aspirational excellence in all three pillars of our work as an institution (research and creative excellence, educational excellence and student success, and public impact), since the inseparability of these pillars is foundational to what it means to be part of the Syracuse University community. Emerging from the thousands of comments and conversations that took place in Fall 2022, the University will seek to enhance our distinctive excellence in these five areas over the next few years.

(1) Emerging Technologies

Emerging technologies can be described in many ways, but the key defining factors are that their potential has yet to be fully realized and that they have the capacity to transform or disrupt established practices and ways of doing things. From artificial intelligence and autonomous systems to blockchain and robotics, emerging technologies raise new questions about how we live, how we learn, how we work, and even what it means to be human.

The drive to push the boundaries of existing knowledge, to innovate, and to ask new questions is at the heart of emerging technologies and is also baked into the guiding philosophy of Syracuse University. Home to the nation’s first iSchool, the first Disability Studies Program, the first Bachelors of Fine Arts degree, and the first Bachelors in Sport Analytics, Syracuse University has led the way in creating and embracing change and in innovating and positioning our students

to be thought leaders in a rapidly changing world. We are and have always been a campus of doers, designers, creators, inventors, and innovators. We are driven by “what if” questions and bring that curiosity into our research, scholarship, teaching, and public impact.

This bold spirit is clear in Syracuse University’s growing leadership in interdisciplinary research and teaching related to the design, regulation, and societal impacts of emerging technologies. While many universities have a growing interest in emerging technologies, particularly how these technologies are created, Syracuse University has charted a more comprehensive and holistic approach to emerging technologies by exploring the interface between science, technology, and human understanding, and between how emerging technologies are designed and how they are perceived by and impact society. Syracuse University’s approach is grounded in strong commitments to and investments in the ethical and policy questions related to emerging technologies and their complicated societal impacts.

We bring this approach to emerging technologies into our research, into our classrooms, laboratories, and studios, and to the wider world through a commitment to public engagement around the growing list of design, technological, ethical, societal, policy, and legal questions related to emerging technologies. We also bring a public-spirited approach to innovation and technology in our unique research computing facility. Syracuse University provides our scholars with open access to the most substantial private research computing cloud of its size in the U.S. and makes this resource available to the public as the largest private contributor to the Open Science Grid Consortium.

The same spirit that has shaped Syracuse University’s engagement with emerging technologies is also clear in our long-standing commitment to opportunity-oriented innovation and entrepreneurship. From a focus on smart materials and smart cities to courses on virtual reality and blockchain, from the Blackstone LaunchPad to ITS MakerSpace, Syracuse University leads the way in cutting-edge research related to emerging technologies and in producing the next generation of thinkers, scientists, creators, designers, and artists who will shape how our world responds to emerging technologies and their potentials for growth and good.

Building on these strengths, we will invest in innovative and interdisciplinary research and teaching in areas ranging from biomaterials to computer science to policy studies. We will also invest in bringing together students and faculty from STEM disciplines, public policy, law, and the humanities. Together, our students and faculty will grapple with and address thorny questions about how emerging technologies will and should transform our world and lives, about how these technologies should be governed and regulated, about who benefits from them, and about how we can better design these technologies and shape their uses.

In our classrooms, studios, and laboratories, we will enhance and expand our digital standards and seek new pedagogies that harness the possibilities of virtual realities, artificial intelligence, and other

technologies. We will invest in new areas of curricular and co-curricular activity—like esports—which merge areas of traditional and emerging strength in science, technology, art, design, policy, marketing, and management. We will instill in our students the technological and scientific knowledge to innovate and create and the critical-thinking skills to reflect on the consequences of emerging technologies in the world around us.

(2) Human Thriving

When new undergraduate students begin their tenure at Syracuse University, they receive a charge from the Chancellor that was originally recited in 1871 by Chancellor Erastus Haven: “I charge you to thrive here, to learn here, to teach here, to make lifelong friends here, and to seek knowledge without end.”

Human thriving refers to valuing and enabling the contributions of people of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds and to understanding the physical and social conditions needed to create and support healthy and sustainable communities for everyone, particularly those who have been historically excluded or neglected. At Syracuse University, our focus on human thriving affirms our commitment to recognizing the diverse talents and fostering the success and achievements of people in all stages of life and of all abilities and experiences, both individually and within communities.

Commitment to human thriving as a community value, learning objective, and subject for study and artistic expression has been central to much of what makes Syracuse University distinctive. From our deep roots in fields associated with health promotion and human services to our long-standing interests in environmental and ecological questions across disciplines, Syracuse University faculty and students explore and determine how individuals and communities can thrive and flourish both now and in future generations. With our strengths in the humanities, the performing arts, and other creative fields, the Syracuse community of scholars, students, and artists has shown how a commitment to human thriving is also a commitment to the cultural productions and artistic practices that give life meaning.

Focusing on human thriving as an area of distinctive excellence in research, education, and public impact builds on our strong traditions of excellence in teaching and research on aging and health, in community-engaged research and education around disability and inclusion, and in an emphasis on equity and opportunity in both sports and entrepreneurship. In fostering healthy and sustainable communities, we also place a growing emphasis in research and education on the impacts of climate change, sustainability, and other environmental challenges on community well-being. Syracuse University is well placed to lead research on mitigation strategies associated with healthy indoor environments and community resilience and on ways to create and support economic opportunities for all.

Building on these areas of traditional strength, Syracuse University will invest in faculty, curriculum development, and infrastructure that

support greater excellence in interdisciplinary research and education around human thriving in areas including, but not limited to, disability, aging, healthy and sustainable communities, and sport-related academic disciplines. We will seek to position Syracuse University as a model of inclusivity beyond compliance in our research, education, and public impact. We will support and encourage research focused on the community good and on the question of how we all benefit when everyone thrives. We will aspire to become a national model for university-community partnerships that facilitate human thriving for all. Among our students, we will orient our curriculum and academic programs toward fostering a stronger sense of belonging, while we work to ensure equitable and transparent access for our students to the supports that they need.

(3) Global Diversity

Born out of a region with a deep commitment to breaking down barriers to foster inclusion and expand opportunity, Syracuse University has long recognized the benefits of embracing the talents and contributions of people from all backgrounds, nationalities, and religions. Syracuse has historically outpaced peer institutions for promoting diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility. When Syracuse opened its doors in 1870, the first class of students included seven women—in contrast to most private U.S. universities at the time. In 1876, Syracuse graduate Sarah Loguen became only the fourth African American awarded an M.D. in the U.S. In 1889, Cornelia Clapp became the first woman in the U.S. to be awarded a Ph.D. in Biology, and in 1893, William Lewis Bulkley became the fourth African American in the U.S. to earn a Ph.D. In 1898, the first intercollegiate basketball game in Syracuse University's history was played not by men, but by the women's team. In the early 1940s, Syracuse University accepted a large cohort of Japanese American college students from the West Coast, who consequently avoided being sent to internment camps. Following World War II, the University embraced returning veterans, beginning a proud tradition of service to those who have served the nation. In 1970, the "Syracuse Eight" (a coalition of football players advocating against racial discrimination) paved the way to equal opportunity and treatment in college sports.

Today, Syracuse University has rich cultural offerings that are accessible to both the campus and neighboring communities. The MLK Library and the Community Folk Art Center are cultural gems of our African American Studies department. La Casita and Point of Contact highlight the creative output of our Latinx communities. Since 2005, the Haudenosaunee Promise and Haudenosaunee Honor scholarship programs have opened Syracuse University's doors to members of the Haudenosaunee nations and serve as examples to our peers of inclusion of a valued and essential local population. Syracuse University's commitment to diversity and inclusion is broad, distinctive, and ongoing, including our strong commitments to veterans, to persons with disabilities, and to intellectual diversity.

Additionally, Syracuse University is proud of its history as a leader in internationalization and global engagement. The College of Law

offered instruction in international law from its earliest days, and the University has large alumni chapters in dozens of countries. Syracuse University sent its first students to study abroad at the turn of the 20th century. Since its founding, the University has always welcomed international students and faculty and has benefited enormously from this intellectual diversity, with some of its most distinguished faculty and students hailing from other countries. Equally important, University faculty and alumni have taught and worked at universities, non-governmental and transnational organizations, and government agencies in countries across the globe. Across campus, there is broad consensus that global diversity sits at the heart of our aspirations and strengths. In addition to our robust international scholar population, traditional areas of distinctive strength for Syracuse University include intercultural learning, study abroad, and welcoming individuals from abroad, from the military, from other non-traditional backgrounds, and from underrepresented communities.

Broad and diverse participation in research, creative expression, and innovation is critical to advancing discovery and seeking new knowledge. Building upon these strengths, the University commits to embedding in all its activities the values of internationalization, accessibility, inclusion, and outreach to veterans and active military personnel, adult learners, and other non-traditional students.

The implications of this commitment are significant. Developing and implementing a sense of shared accountability is the responsibility of University leadership at all levels, but living these values is the responsibility of every member of our community. Cultivating a sense of welcoming and belonging into the culture of each department, school, college, and business unit is a shared undertaking. Safeguarding the University's enduring legacy of accessibility, inclusion, and global scope requires a concentrated and collective effort.

For faculty, this commitment means continuing investment in our diversity hiring plan, expanding our professional development opportunities and affinity group work, and making important changes to promotion and tenure to recognize the significant and unacknowledged advising work and public scholarship undertaken, often by underrepresented minority faculty. Faculty will need to modernize curricula across disciplines to ensure relevant approaches to DEIA and internationalization and will have incentives to center their research and creative endeavors on issues of DEIA, as well as veterans, military, and other non-traditional groups in higher education. We will enhance faculty use of University facilities abroad, in cities around the United States, on the south side of Syracuse, and in other locations, to advance their creative and scholarly work. For staff—and indeed for all members of our community—the University will invest in programming, trainings, and professional development opportunities to truly make DEIA a shared responsibility for all.

For students, the University will expand its efforts to serve and integrate our international student population and invest in creating welcoming communities for students of all backgrounds—in residence

halls, in affinity groups, in cultural centers, and in classrooms. The University will create opportunities for all students to study abroad or away to build multicultural awareness and will continue to develop and grow the First Year Seminar and the shared competency in global citizenship. Together, these efforts will help Syracuse University remain a leader in higher education in promoting global diversity.

(4) Experiential Inquiry

With the motto “Knowledge crowns those who seek her,” Syracuse University is distinctive among its peer institutions for pushing its students and faculty to seek knowledge in all corners of the campus, the community, the country, and the world. At Syracuse, both faculty and students—from architecture to journalism; drama to engineering; and sport management to physics—learn by doing. Combining the breadth of nine professional schools with depth in the liberal arts and bringing together experiential and theoretical research and learning opportunities for students and faculty, experiential discovery has been at the heart of the University’s mission since its founding.

Syracuse University faculty have always sought to push the boundaries of inquiry and discovery beyond the textbook and classroom, creating interactive research and learning environments both on and off campus. Until 1934, the University ran the Joseph Slocum College of Agriculture, with students working and learning on a farm on South Campus. The legacy of this early academic effort can be found today in the food studies and nutrition programs, both of which prioritize experiential learning and delivering practical, community-enhancing experiences for students. In 1906, in recognition of the value of intercultural learning, Syracuse University was one of the first U.S. universities to send students abroad and, in 1959, opened the first study abroad campus in Florence, Italy. In 1947, the University acquired an experimental license to open a radio station for its communications students, and WAER remains a major component of the S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications’ experiential teaching and learning. It is now joined by the ACC Network, which uses the Newhouse studios and Newhouse students for its television broadcasts from campus—the only relationship of its kind in the conference.

Faculty and graduate students have been doing fieldwork abroad almost since the University’s founding, and Syracuse researchers and artists have studied and created on every ocean and continent and in almost every country on Earth. Closer to home, faculty have been working and creating in the Syracuse community since the campus was downtown. Today, the South Side Communications Center and South Side Innovation Center remain important living laboratories and incubators operated by faculty from multiple schools and colleges.

Experiential learning is leveraged in all schools and colleges and across multiple academic programs. Syracuse University students benefit from a range of immersive learning opportunities that take them out of the classroom and into unfamiliar and hands-on settings where they must learn to navigate cultures, tasks, materials, and environments

that are new to them. The immersive-learning opportunities in which our students can participate include everything from study abroad and study away to independent undergraduate research, studio-based creative work, internships, and community-engaged learning and service. Whether broadcasting a sporting event, directing a play, designing a building, launching a start-up, analyzing a Medieval manuscript, performing a laboratory experiment, navigating a new city or country, or defending a client, our students learn to bridge from conceptual understanding to real-world practice and application.

Building on its strength in this area, Syracuse University is well-positioned to advance its goals of nurturing globally engaged citizens, advancing the public interest, and creating a community welcoming to all by providing immersive and experiential opportunities to its students and faculty. To do so, Syracuse University will leverage its existing facilities that support academic excellence on and off campus. On campus, we will invest in facilities and curricula to ensure that every Syracuse student engages in experiential learning during their time as a student. To this end, the University will promote broader use of the Shaw Center for Public and Community Service, the Syracuse University Art Museum and the many affiliate arts organizations, build interdisciplinary science and discovery teaching and research labs, encourage wider use of our maker spaces and other tech-centric creative resources, incentivize new approaches to hands-on learning in curricula across our schools and colleges, and provide financial support to ensure that all students can participate in these activities. Beyond campus, our aspirations are similarly bold. University facilities on the south side of Syracuse, in the Adirondacks, and in global cities are already platforms for experiential learning. While we will redouble efforts to provide all students access to these assets for learning, these facilities will also be platforms for research and creative work and to make tangible advancements in public impact. The University will incentivize faculty to pursue in-depth study—often with the support of student researchers—in University facilities both on and off campus.

(5) Engaged Citizenship

Enshrined in the University’s vision statement, a commitment to fostering globally oriented and engaged citizens has always been a priority at Syracuse University. Since its founding, the University has had a strong commitment to liberal arts precisely to equip all students—from those in professional schools to those in the arts and sciences—with the skills to navigate and positively contribute to a complex and changing world. The University’s focus on engaged citizenship also includes our support and appreciation for those who have served in the armed forces through our commitments to veterans and military-connected families. Since 1917 and particularly in the years following World War II, the University has sought to provide a welcoming, productive academic community for veterans and their families, for those training for military service, and for active military members. Today, with the National Veterans Resource Center at the Daniel and Gayle D’Aniello Building, Syracuse University stands as a model for all universities on how to serve those who serve.

Wider public service is also part of the Syracuse tradition. Over the years, Syracuse University has trained tens of thousands across all schools and colleges for public service in government, nongovernmental and multilateral organizations, arts and social services agencies, and community-based organizations. Syracuse University faculty have served as advisors and leaders at the highest levels of government around the world and have founded lasting organizations serving the public good. Taken together, the University has outpaced its peers in creating engaged and informed citizens.

Today, our commitment to service learning can be found in the Shaw Center, a national leader in connecting students with experiential learning opportunities in the communities around them. That same commitment can also be found in the human-service professionals, journalists, teachers, activists, organizers, and civil and foreign service professionals we train. It is visible through our work with the Central New York Humanities Corridor and the Engaged Humanities Network—which serve to foster empathy and civic engagement through the arts and humanities—and through our commitment to arts engagement at Syracuse Stage, the Community Folk Art Center, and other affiliated arts centers.

As Syracuse University looks to the future, it seeks to expand this core value across all its work. Teaching engaged citizenship means re-evaluating long-standing curricula to ensure they remain consistent with core values and utilize the University's substantial assets for experiential learning. The University will continue to develop and promote scaffolded, ongoing curricular content across schools and colleges that advance informed citizenship and create intercultural learning opportunities for all. We will expand the scope of our research, more fully incorporating our commitments to veterans and military families, the local community, resource sustainability, and global engagement into the research agendas across schools and colleges. With humility and a recognition that the University has much to learn and gain from our community partners, we will utilize our substantial community-based assets, like the South Side Innovation Center, to directly engage in civic matters in our neighborhood, such as the removal and replacement of I-81. We will also experiment with new innovations in teaching and research, utilizing such tools as community incubators and perhaps even considering the creation of a "center for public impact."

Laying the Foundation

As noted by our working groups and by the many members of our community who participated in the strategic planning process, to meet the aspirations stated or implied in these areas of distinctive excellence, the University must take clear and measurable steps. Our planning process yielded several strategies that leverage existing strengths, respond to the challenges of today, and provide clear direction for the University as it embarks on its next five years. While this strategic framework is not meant to be overly prescriptive—leaving many implementation decisions to faculty and leadership at the school/college, department, and service-unit level—

some common objectives emerged from the thousands of points of feedback received during the planning process. To realize our collective vision and to live our collective values, we must take some concrete steps together.

We must also have a roadmap of commitments. Over the next five years, the University will direct resources and energy to enhance educational excellence and student success, research and creative activities, and public impact in specific ways for each of the five areas of distinctive excellence described above. Every member of the University community—students, faculty, staff, trustees, alumni, and friends—can and, we hope, will participate in this effort.

A key element to our ultimate success lies in the fact that the five areas of excellence are distinct but not discrete, meaning that many common objectives bind the areas together. Thus, while each of the five themes contain unique goals, other equally important goals are shared between some or all of them. What follows is not the exhaustive list of commitments the University will make. It is, however, a set of common objectives that provide clear direction to leadership at the University and school/college levels on areas of focus and attention in the years to come.

Programmatic Commitments

The following list of programmatic commitments reinforces the narrative defining our areas of distinctive excellence, a narrative shaped by a remarkable level of engagement and input from the University community. Because much within these areas is mutually reinforcing, many of these programmatic commitments will help the University meet its objectives across various areas of distinctive excellence.

1. Incentivize research and creative work in areas of distinctive excellence.

In all schools and colleges, research and creative activity that advances the University's contributions in all areas of distinctive excellence is happening. Over the next five years, academic leadership—from the provost to the deans to department chairs—will use the areas of distinctive excellence to guide investments in research and creative activities. These investments, which will be made not just to advance but also incentivize excellence, may be in physical space, such as labs or studios, or in equipment, course buyouts, research-related travel, doctoral student fellowships, new staff and faculty hires, or professional development.

2. Better leverage University facilities abroad, across the United States, across New York State, and in the Syracuse area and make them available to all faculty and students.

Currently, study abroad and away locations are almost exclusively used to advance Syracuse University's teaching and learning enterprise. While this use is laudable, these facilities—and the deep community connections developed over the decades we have operated them—can also be used to advance our research and creative work. Similarly, nationally recognized assets on or near

campus, such as the Syracuse University Art Museum, La Casita, the Community Folk Art Center, and the South Side Innovation Center, can all be better leveraged by faculty for teaching, research, and co-curricular activity.

3. Remove barriers to entry for immersive and experiential learning.

Experiential learning will be a requirement for all students at Syracuse University, and no student will be denied access to an experiential learning opportunity. Meeting this commitment means creating appropriate scholarships for study abroad/away and other hands-on learning opportunities. It also means expanding the opportunities available, including seeking new locations for study abroad and study away, new opportunities for creative engagement, new ways to engage in basic or applied research, and new technology for all members of the campus community.

4. Review curricula across all disciplines to update and ensure compatibility with the University's stated values.

The University will commence an ongoing project, akin to the program review process, for faculty to comprehensively review and update curricula in all disciplines to adequately reflect the University's values and stated commitments to such areas as academic and research excellence, diversity, accessibility, internationalization, and immersive learning.

Operational Commitments

Broader than programmatic commitments, the following areas of focus are the result of the deliberations of the many working groups and points of feedback from the campus community. Like the programmatic commitments, these operational commitments provide a guide for resource allocation as the University embarks on implementation of the academic strategic plan.

1. Approach diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEIA) as part of everything we do—a responsibility to be shared by all parts of campus.

Being welcoming to all is a core commitment of the University and, thus, a hallmark of this academic strategic plan. To meet this commitment, the University must instill in every member of our community—faculty, students, and staff—a sense of collective accountability, meaning an individual and shared responsibility to live up to our highest ideals and expectations in becoming a truly welcoming and accessible campus. From going beyond compliance in accessible buildings, signs, and digital properties to creating antiracist curricula and innovative research opportunities in our many disciplines to nurturing a sense of belonging in our departments, dorms, clubs, and classrooms, the University will dedicate significant effort and resources to building shared ownership and to tracking our progress in this crucial and truly overarching objective.

2. Break down barriers and bridge silos.

To maximize the utility of the broad scope of the University and to pursue solutions to the complex challenges of today's world, Syracuse University is compelled to foster a robust ecosystem of interdisciplinary and cross-campus scholarly and pedagogical engagement. This academic strategic plan challenges campus leadership to confront barriers to interdisciplinary work, find efficiencies related to research infrastructure, public engagement, and student success, and build complex and integrative approaches—in classrooms, laboratories, studios, libraries, internships, academic departments, and residence halls. The University must adapt to meet the particular challenges of interdisciplinarity, both pedagogically and operationally, in hiring, facilities allocation and development, budgeting, and the administration of everything from lab equipment to grants and contracts. Part of this work also entails a commitment to streamlining tasks where possible and eliminating redundant work.

3. Engage communities.

Syracuse University has a proud tradition of community engagement in Central New York and in the many locations in which its students study and faculty conduct research. Engaged scholarship is key to realizing the areas of distinctive excellence described above, and the University commits to this objective through being present in the community, engaging public policy work, expanding our already-broad experiential learning and research opportunities, and leveraging the University's intellectual capital on behalf of local initiatives and issues. This commitment applies to the University's engagement in Central New York, as well as in all the communities in which the University operates around the country and the world. This engagement will be particularly important as the region experiences transformative change, including the arrival of Micron and the I-81 redevelopment project.

4. Make academic excellence central to the stories we tell about Syracuse.

While there is much work to do to achieve the aspirations and areas of distinctive excellence enumerated in this academic strategic plan, the University will prioritize telling its story through the lens of our values and strategic core themes. Utilizing various channels in earned (traditional media), owned (web channels and social media), and paid media (advertising and marketing), the University will tell the story of its achievements to date and as they occur during the implementation period to come. While there are many aspects to the Syracuse University image and brand, through creative storytelling, the University has the opportunity to generate new interest and excitement about our teaching, research, creative output, community-based co-curricular activities, and other academic objectives and outcomes. Additionally, for those areas like DEIA, which require the effort and accountability of all members of our community, telling our story is an important way to build engagement and commitment. In the end, the success of this academic strategic plan will be based on various metrics designed to track real progress toward our goals and aspirations. In the

meantime, however, the University will align its communications strategy with its considerable marketing apparatus to advance our objectives as defined by our academic strategic plan.

5. Align enrollment and budget strategies with the Academic Strategic Plan.

With ten undergraduate schools and colleges offering full-time, residential instruction, a College of Law, and a suite of part-time residential and online undergraduate and graduate degrees, Syracuse University has vast offerings for its students and potential students, which is one of the many areas of distinction for the University. However, given budget exigencies, an admissions process designed to populate the schools and colleges can lead to enrollment outcomes that are not consistent with the University's changing strategic vision. There are many reasons for this challenge. Actionable solutions may lie in adjustments to the budget model so that it does not entirely align resources with student demand. It may mean raising scholarship dollars to offset financial aid demands on tuition or adjusting subvention between schools and colleges to better reflect the University's research agenda and strategic priorities for enrollment. An additional commitment here is reflecting on where centralized resources, rather than a decentralized model, are a better structure.

6. Go “beyond compliance” in accessibility.

Syracuse University currently has among the most comprehensive accessibility policies of any university in the U.S. Only Harvard University's policy matches Syracuse University's commitment to digital accessibility, and the campus has committed to a long-term objective of making our physical spaces more accessible than is required by law. Indeed, some of the newest construction—the National Veterans Resource Center, the Burton Blatt Institute office suite, and the newly renovated Schine Student Center—were built with Universal Design standards. In the next five years, the University will ensure that it aligns its policy and architectural design accomplishments with high-quality delivery of accommodation services to students, faculty, and staff.

Why distinctive excellence matters

The vision of distinctive excellence we have outlined for Syracuse University has its roots in our collective efforts to grapple with the question of where we, as an institution, want and should be in the next five years. How can we best contribute to the wider pursuit of knowledge for a better world? How can we best position our students to be leaders and change-makers in that world?

Living our values is key to our authenticity and seriousness as an institution and to the long-term relevance and health of our University. It is also a critical component of our mission to address the world's most important and urgent challenges through research, creative output, and, most importantly, educating and preparing our students. In most disciplines, sophisticated cultural competency is a baseline necessity for innovation and success. An architect, lawyer, journalist, engineer, entrepreneur, or data scientist cannot succeed without a nuanced understanding of accessibility, sustainability, and

equity. Research in everything from materials science to gravitational waves to instructional design will not be relevant, and creative output and public policy solutions simply will not have traction today, without the same.

Where we will be in five years

If we remain disciplined and focused, under this academic strategic plan, we will advance academic excellence at a university that is welcoming to all in the following ways:

1. Every undergraduate will participate in a study abroad or study away experience before they graduate from Syracuse University. We will increase our abroad and away venues and opportunities, and significantly expand the number of graduate programs that provide these experiences for their students.
2. The University will grow its educational and research capacities in relevant STEM areas to meet the opportunities associated with emerging technologies and economic development in central New York.
3. Syracuse University will be recognized in peer surveys as a top university in the country for research and education related to disability and inclusion. The reputation of excellence of our research on disability will be matched by excellence in our services to our students, faculty, and staff.
4. Every Syracuse University undergraduate will be offered the educational resources necessary to acquire the skills and develop the orientation needed to participate as engaged citizens in civil discourse and deliberative democracy.
5. Our budget structure will be adjusted to better encourage and support interdisciplinary research and teaching. The revenue sources that support our academic programs will be more diverse and will include larger contributions from sponsored research, technology transfer, corporate partnerships, and philanthropy.
6. The University will have a central hub to support engaged teaching and learning, leadership development, and community partnerships.
7. Our enrollment strategy team, in partnership with all schools and colleges (including the College of Professional Studies), will facilitate the recruitment of both traditional and non-traditional students and learners who will successfully enroll in and complete a wide variety of degree and nondegree offerings.
8. We will grow the number of nationally renowned research centers and institutes in relation to the five areas of distinctive excellence identified in this plan. There will be central support for core facilities in support of interdisciplinary research and creative work. This support will include resources to develop translational research and creative work across all disciplinary areas.

9. We will demonstrate our commitment to being an inclusive campus that supports human thriving and a sense of belonging for all students, faculty and staff of any ability, orientation, or background, with particular attention to the experiences and success of underrepresented minorities, international students and faculty, the disabled, the LGBTQ+ community, and Native Americans, as well as veterans and military-connected families. The success of this commitment will be seen in the recruitment, retention, and achievement of all our students, faculty, and staff and informed, in part, by campus climate surveys against the baseline we established in 2020.

10. Syracuse University will be seen nationally as a model campus for its support of entrepreneurship and innovation and for fostering community, corporate, and university partnerships.

This framework, together with these central goals and commitments, sets the parameters for the next steps in completing the academic strategic plan. In the coming weeks, we expect that each school and college will develop strategic priorities, and a plan for advancing them, that align with this framework. Based on the school and college planning efforts and priority setting, this framework will be augmented by specific goals and metrics. While that process will conclude this academic year, the resulting final draft plan will of necessity be a living document. It will be responsive to new challenges and opportunities, and we will consistently measure its progress and efficacy. We will do so by hosting an annual, one-day symposium that brings our community together to reflect on our progress toward our goals and to revise or reaffirm our strategies and objectives.

As we look to the future, we will reflect and capitalize on the values that have been core principles since our founding—inclusion, innovation, and global vision—all harnessed to build a thriving Syracuse University—on campus and globally—that equips our faculty and prepares our students to contribute in meaningful ways to their communities, our country, and the world. On behalf of Academic Affairs, we extend our deepest gratitude and appreciation to the thousands of individuals from across our community who helped create this framework, with particular thanks to the 118 faculty, staff, and students who sat on our Academic Planning Working Groups during the Fall 2022 semester. We welcome and look forward to your feedback and are eager to collaborate with all of you as we advance our strategic priorities in the years ahead.