



# Leading with Distinction: Academic Excellence at a University Welcoming to All

2023-2028



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# 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. The United States 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 evolving needs of students, universities are adopting innovative approaches and new modalities. At the same time, the demand for graduate and undergraduate degrees has shifted markedly, as have the dynamics of international and even domestic student enrollment. Finally, student expectations have changed significantly 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.
- Distinctive and unique to Syracuse University.

To ground the academic strategic planning effort, we began with the University's vision statement:

***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 our 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 2022-23 academic strategic planning process provided a clear directive that the University must leverage this tradition and forge new commitments that embrace diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEIA) and 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 U.S. women’s suffrage movement. Syracuse has been and continues to be a place that welcomes immigrants and refugees. Syracuse University has incorporated this rich history 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.

Over the last 153 years, Syracuse University sometimes failed to fully embrace the values set forth in the vision statement. Nevertheless, there is much to celebrate in the institution’s past, and this academic strategic plan is a concentrated, collective effort to mobilize these core principles and set the institution on a trajectory whereby our actions today will be celebrated by our current campus community and by future generations of students, faculty, and staff.

Accordingly, a highly inclusive process, detailed in Appendix B, focused on the core pillars found at any U.S. university—research and creative output; educational excellence and student success; and public impact—and paired them with urgent issues of today: DEIA; global engagement; sound enrollment policies; and resource sustainability. From working groups in each of these areas emerged five areas of distinctive and aspirational excellence for Syracuse University.



# Areas of Distinctive & Aspirational Excellence

This academic strategic plan envisions growing or maintaining distinctive excellence in core thematic areas across Syracuse University as a whole 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 interconnectedness of these pillars is foundational to what it means to be part of the Syracuse University community. Over the next few years, the University will seek to enhance our distinctive excellence in these five areas, which emerged from the thousands of comments and conversations that took place in Fall 2022.

These areas of distinctive excellence align nicely with the priorities developed by the University's senior leadership over the last two years: academic excellence, being a campus welcoming to all, developing distinction in technological savvy, building and nurturing a culture of entrepreneurship, and remaining the best university for veterans and military-connected families. Just as the University's underlying values were woven into the fabric of the planning process, each of these objectives is woven throughout the areas of distinctive excellence and institutional commitments delineated below.

These areas of distinctive excellence also align nicely with the University's long-standing commitment to liberal arts and sciences, and with its newly developed shared competencies. For example, the focus on global diversity, engaged citizenship, and experiential inquiry below reflects our promise that all students will acquire competence in civic and global responsibility and in ethical and inclusive decision making, values that are firmly embedded in the University's historical commitment to building a vibrant and diverse academic community that equips students for leadership in a rapidly changing world.

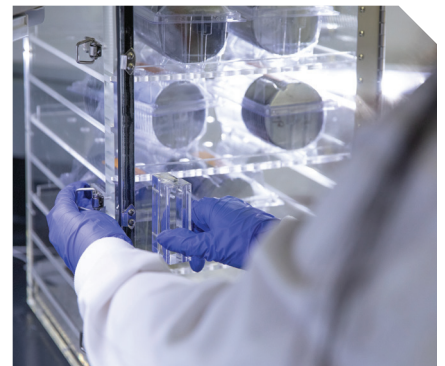
# 1

## Emerging Technologies

Emerging technologies are innovations whose potential has yet to be fully realized and that 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 what it means to be human. Above all, they offer new opportunities to innovate and create new possibilities in the world around us.

This drive to innovate and create new possibilities is also baked into the guiding philosophy of Syracuse University, which has often led the way in charting new directions in scholarship and academic programs. Syracuse is home to the nation's first School of Information Studies, the first disability studies program, the first bachelor of fine arts degree, and the first bachelor's degree in sport analytics. It has one of the first masters of public administration and one of the nation's first online J.D. degrees. In all these ways, Syracuse University has led the way in creating and embracing change, in our research and in our work with students.

This 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 by exploring the interface between science, technology, and human understanding to examine how emerging technologies impact society.





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 the Blackstone LaunchPad to the 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, entrepreneurs, and artists who will shape how our world responds to emerging technologies and their potential for growth and good.

Building on these strengths, we will invest in innovative and interdisciplinary research and teaching related to emerging technologies in areas from computer science to policy studies to biomaterials. We commit to bringing together students and faculty from STEM disciplines, public policy, law, and the humanities to address thorny questions about how emerging technologies will and should transform our world and lives. Our research in this area will help shape how emerging technologies are governed and regulated, how they can impact society in equitable ways, and how we can better design these technologies and shape their uses.

In our classrooms, libraries, studios, and laboratories, we will enhance and expand our digital standards and seek new pedagogies that harness the possibilities of artificial intelligence; virtual, augmented, and extended realities; and other technologies. We will invest in new areas of curricular and co-curricular activity, like esports, which merge areas of traditional and emerging strengths in science, technology, art, design, policy, marketing, and management. We will maintain open and public access to our research computing capabilities—among the most innovative in the country—to facilitate our scholarship. Finally, 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, Chancellor Syverud gives a charge that was originally recited in 1871 by 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 of research and creative expression is central to what makes Syracuse University distinctive. From our deep roots in fields associated with disability studies to our long-standing interests in environmental, ecological, and sport-related questions, Syracuse University faculty and students explore how individuals and communities can thrive, both now and in future generations. With strengths in the humanities, the performing arts, and other creative fields, Syracuse University scholars, students, and artists show how a commitment to human thriving is also a commitment to the cultural productions and artistic practices that give life meaning.

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 a leader in research on mitigation strategies associated with healthy indoor environments and community environmental resilience, as well as on environmental policy and politics.

In the years to come, 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, environmental sustainability, healthy 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. As the perils of climate change become more apparent and more urgent, Syracuse faculty and student researchers will expand their work on environmental sustainability.

We will orient our curricula and academic programs toward fostering a stronger sense of belonging and confidence among our students while working to ensure equitable and transparent access to the supports they need. Our commitment to human thriving must be evident to students as they navigate our campus and academic programs. We will also support and encourage research on the community good and aspire to become a national model for university-community partnerships that facilitate sustainability and human thriving for all. We will foster community engagement that is multi-directional, always recalling that our campus is part of a broader Syracuse community, and center our work around community inclusion and involvement from the outset.

# 3

## Global Diversity

Born out of a region with a deep commitment to breaking down barriers to inclusion and expanding opportunity, Syracuse University has long recognized the benefits of embracing the talents and contributions of people from all backgrounds, nationalities, and religions and of expanding the scope of our research and teaching across Central New York and around the world.

When Syracuse opened its doors in 1870, the first class of students—intentionally and explicitly co-educational—included seven women, in contrast to most private U.S. universities at the time. In 1889, Cornelia Clapp became the first woman in the United States to be awarded a Ph.D. in biology, and in 1893, William Lewis Bulkley became the fourth African American in the country to earn a Ph.D. In 1898, the first intercollegiate basketball game in Syracuse University’s history was played 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 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 Black football players fighting racial discrimination) paved the way to equal opportunity and equal treatment in college sports—at Syracuse University and across the country. From the beginning, the University has also been intentional about global outreach. 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.





Today, Syracuse University has rich cultural offerings that are accessible to both the campus and neighboring communities. The Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Library and Community Folk Art Center are cultural gems. 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 the University's doors to members of the Haudenosaunee nations. Syracuse University's commitment to global diversity also includes our work with veterans and persons with disabilities, as well as our attention to intellectual diversity.

Syracuse University remains a leader in global engagement. The University has offered instruction in international law from its earliest days and has large alumni chapters in dozens of countries. Syracuse University is a national leader in international education, with a highly ranked study abroad program. Since its founding, the University has welcomed international students and faculty, with some of its most distinguished faculty and students hailing from countries other than the United States. Equally important, University faculty and alumni have taught and worked at universities, nongovernmental and transnational organizations, and government agencies around the world.

Building upon these strengths, the University commits to embedding in all activities the values of internationalization and DEIA, and to outreach to veterans and active military personnel, adult learners, and other post-traditional students. The implications of this commitment are significant. Living these values is the responsibility of every member of our campus community and requires a collective effort and a commitment to thoughtful engagement with the communities—local and global—with which we work and live.

For faculty, this commitment means continued investment in our diversity hiring plan, expanding 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. We will encourage and support faculty research and creative endeavors centered on issues of DEIA and global issues, as well as on veterans, military, and other post-traditional groups in higher education. Faculty will also update curricula to ensure relevant approaches to DEIA and internationalization. For staff, as



for all members of our community, the University will invest in programming, training, and professional development opportunities to truly make DEIA a shared responsibility for all.

For students, the University will expand efforts to serve and integrate international students 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 in order 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 promoting global diversity.

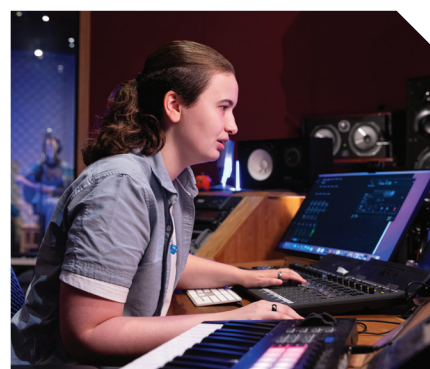
# 4

## Experiential Inquiry

With the motto “Knowledge crowns those who seek her,” Syracuse University is distinctive among its peers for pushing 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; from drama to engineering; and from sport management to physics—learn by doing. Combining the breadth of nine professional schools with depth in the liberal arts and bringing together basic and theoretical research, experiential discovery has been at the heart of the University’s mission since its founding.

Syracuse University faculty have always sought to push inquiry beyond the textbook and the 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, which prioritize experiential learning and practical, community-enhancing experiences for students. In 1947, the University acquired an experimental license to open one of the first college radio stations for its communications students, and WAER remains a major component of campus teaching and learning. It is now joined by ACC Network Extra, which uses Syracuse University studios and students for its broadcasts from campus—the only relationship of its kind in the conference.

Syracuse University students benefit from a range of immersive learning opportunities that take them out of the classroom and into unfamiliar settings where they must learn to navigate cultures, tasks, materials, and





environments that are new to them. Such opportunities 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 startup, analyzing a medieval manuscript, conducting a laboratory experiment, navigating a new city or country, or defending a client, Syracuse students learn to bridge conceptual understanding and real-world practice and application.

Building on its strength in this area, Syracuse University is well positioned to promote the goals of nurturing globally engaged citizens, advancing the public interest, and creating a community welcoming to all by providing immersive and experiential opportunities to students and faculty.

The University will incentivize faculty to pursue in-depth research—often working with student researchers—in facilities on and off campus and build interdisciplinary science and discovery research labs.

For students, we will invest in facilities and curricula to ensure that every student engages in experiential learning during their time at Syracuse University. The University will promote broader use of the Syracuse University Art Museum, the Library Special Collections, and the many affiliate arts organizations, build interdisciplinary science and discovery teaching labs, encourage wider use of our maker spaces and 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.



# 5

## Engaged Citizenship

As enshrined in our 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, no matter their field or major, with the skills to navigate and positively contribute to a complex and changing world. Home to the first school with the word citizenship in its name, Syracuse University has built engaged citizenship into the very fabric of our campus. The University's focus on engaged citizenship also includes support and appreciation for those who have served in the armed forces through our commitments to veterans and military-connected families. 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 an equally strong 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 that serve the public good. Widely recognized as a national leader in this area, the University has outpaced its peers in creating engaged and informed citizens.

Today, our commitment to engaged citizenship can be found in the human service professionals, journalists, teachers, activists, organizers, and civil and foreign service professionals we train. It can also be found in the Shaw Center







for Public and Community Service, connecting students with experiential learning opportunities in communities around them. This commitment is visible through our work with the Central New York Humanities Corridor and the Engaged Humanities Network—which serve to foster civic engagement through the arts and humanities—and through our commitment to arts engagement at Syracuse Stage and other affiliated arts centers.

As Syracuse University looks to the future, it seeks to expand this core value across its work. We will enlarge the scope of our research, more fully incorporating our commitments to veterans and military families, the local community, resource sustainability, and global engagement into research agendas across schools and colleges. We will also support faculty as they undertake public facing and publicly engaged research across all schools and colleges.

Teaching engaged citizenship means reevaluating 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 curricular content across schools and colleges that advances engaged citizenship and creates intercultural learning opportunities for all. We will also experiment with new innovations in teaching, utilizing such tools as community incubators, and support our students, faculty, and staff in developing skills to participate in thoughtful, open dialogues around complicated topics. With humility and a recognition that the University has much to learn 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, elevate the voices of our community partners, and build joint strategies with community stakeholders. This work is particularly important at this moment, as the community addresses key issues like the removal and replacement of I-81 and Micron Technology’s new chip fabrication plant.



## Where We Will Be in Five Years

Living our values is key to our integrity, long-term relevance, and health as an institution. It is also a critical component of our mission to address the world's most important and urgent challenges through research and creative output and, most importantly, through educating and preparing our students. If we follow 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 be encouraged and enabled to participate in a study abroad or study away experience before they graduate from Syracuse University.

We will transform study abroad and away from an elective that many students pursue to an embedded element of most academic programs on our campus. We commit to supporting schools and colleges in developing the curricular pathways, specific programs, and necessary financial supports that will increase the number of students participating in study abroad and away. We will also increase our study abroad and away venues and opportunities. We will create short-term programs that meet the needs of student-athletes, military-connected students, performers, adult learners, student workers, students in disciplines with significant lab, field, or studio work or rigid curricula, and others who may find semester-long programs challenging. Increased financial aid and philanthropy will be key to removing financial obstacles to realize this commitment.

*By 2028, we expect the vast majority of undergraduates to have a credit-bearing study abroad or study away experience by the time they graduate.*



2.

The University will grow enrollment and research in relevant STEM disciplines to meet the opportunities associated with emerging technologies and economic development in Central New York.

The University will invest in the faculty, infrastructure, and staff to manage an enhanced STEM footprint. This work will include shared facilities and investment in the Office of Research.

*By 2028, undergraduate enrollment in the College of Engineering and Computer Science will increase by at least 50%, 50 new faculty members will be added to the college, and research expenditures will increase by 100% from current levels.*



### 3.

The University will have cross-college research centers, programs, and institutes of national renown in each of the five areas of distinctive excellence outlined in this plan.

In some cases, this work will involve enhancing, coordinating, or consolidating strong programs that already exist at the University. In other cases, it will mean establishing new centers, programs, or institutes. The Office of Research and the Office of Academic Affairs will provide central funding for the faculty hires, startup funding, and core facilities needed to achieve this goal. As part of this commitment, in the area of human thriving, the University will invest in programs focused on disability and inclusion.

*By 2028, Syracuse University will be recognized in salient rankings and peer surveys as a top-twenty university for research and education related to emerging technologies, human thriving, experiential inquiry, global diversity, and engaged citizenship.*





4.

Every Syracuse University undergraduate will engage in curricular and co-curricular offerings to acquire the skills and develop the orientation needed to participate as engaged citizens in civil discourse and deliberative democracy.

As a counter to the extreme polarization that has come to dominate political and cultural discourse in the United States and elsewhere, Syracuse University students will be equipped to think critically and engage in constructive dialogue that transcends their political biases. This work means further curricular enhancements to the First-Year Seminar and to the DEIA courses offered.

*By 2028, Syracuse University will have mandatory curricular and/or co-curricular material for all undergraduates on deliberative democracy and civil discourse.*



5.

Syracuse University will be seen nationally as a model campus for the support of opportunity-oriented entrepreneurship and innovation and for fostering community, corporate, and university partnerships.

We will expand co-curricular entrepreneurship programs like the Blackstone Launchpad, the South Side Innovation Center, WISE Women’s Business Center, and Invent@SU, and leverage the Whitman School’s entrepreneurship expertise and programs. We will also develop internships and other curricular offerings highlighting entrepreneurship in all schools and colleges and at our study abroad and study away venues.

*By 2028, Syracuse University will be recognized as a national leader in these areas, reflected by being in the top 20 in all salient rankings.*



6.

**Syracuse University will continue to be the preeminent university—public or private—for service to veterans and military families.**

To increase our service to those who have served in the armed forces, the University will enhance online and part-time offerings, prioritize the recruitment and retention of veteran students and faculty members, and create funding opportunities for experiential learning for GI Bill beneficiaries.

*By 2028, Syracuse University will have a recruitment program for military-connected faculty, a robust assortment of meaningful experiential learning opportunities for all military-connected students, and significantly enhanced focus on veterans in school/college research agendas, both independently and in coordination with the D’Aniello Institute for Veterans and Military Families.*







# A Living Document

This framework, together with our central goals and commitments, sets the parameters for the next steps in the academic strategic plan. At this writing, each school and college has developed its own strategic priorities, and plans for advancing them, that align with this framework.

This academic strategic plan will be a living document, responsive to new challenges and opportunities. Implementation plans are underway for all commitments in this document, and the same activity is underway at the school/college level. We commit to consistently measuring progress and efficacy and will host 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 turn frequently to 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 students to meaningfully contribute to their communities, our country, and the world. On behalf of the Office of Academic Affairs, we extend our deepest gratitude and appreciation to the thousands of individuals who helped create this framework, with particular thanks to the 118 faculty, staff, and students who sat on our academic strategic planning working groups during the 2022-23 academic year.

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.



# Laying the Foundation: Institutional Commitments

As noted by the many who participated in the strategic planning process, to meet the aspirations associated with these areas of distinctive excellence, the University must take clear and measurable steps. While this strategic framework is not meant to be overly prescriptive and leaves many implementation decisions to faculty and leadership at the school/college, department, and service unit levels, 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.

A key element to our success lies in the fact that the five areas of excellence are distinct but not discrete, with common objectives that bind them together. Thus, while each theme contains unique goals, other equally important goals are shared between some or all of them. What follows is not an exhaustive list of University commitments. It is, instead, a set of common objectives that provide clear direction to leadership at the University and school and college levels on areas of focus and attention in the years to come. To realize our collective goals, we make the following commitments. An expanded list, and a further articulation of these commitments, can be found in Appendix A. Scaffolded implementation plans for all commitments—complete with timelines, budgets, and accountability structures—are under development.

## **1. Remove barriers to entry for immersive and experiential learning.**

Opportunity and funding will be available so that all students experience immersive learning—study abroad and study away, research, community service, or internships—at Syracuse University.

## **2. Review curricula across all disciplines to update and ensure compatibility with school/college strategic plans and stated values.**

All academic deans will lead efforts to review the curricula in their schools and colleges.



**3. Approach DEIA as part of everything we do—a responsibility shared by all parts of campus.**

The University will hold everyone accountable for DEIA goals.

**4. Promote interdisciplinary work.**

The University will take efforts to remove administrative and programmatic barriers to interdisciplinarity.

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

The University will build a new enrollment plan to reflect institutional priorities and adjust school and college budgets accordingly.

**6. Go “beyond compliance” in accessibility.**

In addition to investing in disability as a research and teaching enterprise, the University will exceed ADA standards in physical and digital infrastructure, pedagogy, and programming.

**7. Build new pathways and opportunities for non-traditional learners.**

The University will continue to develop new opportunities for online learning and new pathways for credit-bearing courses, professional credentials, and place-based flexible and accessible programming.



## APPENDIX A:

### Unabridged List and Articulation of Institutional Commitments

#### **1. Remove barriers to entry for immersive and experiential learning.**

Experiential learning will be a requirement for all students at Syracuse University and a signature of the student experience. Meeting this commitment means creating appropriate scholarships for study abroad, study away, undergraduate research, community service, and other hands-on learning opportunities. It also means expanding available opportunities, including seeking new locations for study abroad and study away, creating short-term curricular opportunities, and identifying new opportunities for creative engagement, new ways to engage in basic or applied research, and new technology for all members of the campus community.

#### **2. Review curricula across all disciplines to update and ensure compatibility with school/college academic strategic plans and stated values.**

All schools and colleges will commence an ongoing faculty-led comprehensive review and updating of curricula in all disciplines to adequately reflect the values and stated commitments in this plan and in school/college academic strategic plans. Additionally, the University will commit to continuous improvement of the First-Year Seminar to help achieve the vision and objectives articulated in this plan.

#### **3. 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 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 and an individual and shared responsibility to live up to our highest ideals and expectations in becoming a truly welcoming and accessible campus. Nurturing a sense of belonging in our departments, residence halls, clubs, and classrooms, the University will dedicate significant effort and resources to building shared ownership and to tracking progress in this crucial and overarching objective. This work will include updating curricula, professional development opportunities, course evaluations, and performance evaluations for faculty and staff.



## APPENDIX A:

### Unabridged List and Articulation of Institutional Commitments

#### **4. Promote interdisciplinarity: Break down barriers and bridge silos.**

To maximize the utility of Syracuse University's scope and to pursue solutions to the complex challenges of today's world, the University needs 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 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.

#### **5. Align enrollment and budget strategies with the academic strategic plan.**

While the University pays close attention to demographics in enrollment, an admissions process designed to populate the schools and colleges based largely on existing programs and budgets can lead to enrollment outcomes that are not consistent with the University's changing strategic vision. There are many ways to address this challenge, including adjusting the budget model, raising scholarship dollars to offset financial aid demands on tuition, adjusting subvention between schools and colleges to better reflect the University's research agenda and enrollment priorities, and creating central resources to advance the strategic objectives outlined in this plan.

#### **6. Go "beyond compliance" in accessibility.**

As noted, Syracuse University has existing and emerging research and teaching in the area of disability studies. Beyond that, the University currently has among the most comprehensive accessibility policies of any U.S. university, and the campus has committed to making our digital and physical spaces more accessible than is required by law. Indeed, some of the newest construction on campus—the National Veterans Resource Center, the Burton Blatt Institute office suite, and the recently renovated Schine Student Center—were built with Universal Design standards.



## APPENDIX A:

### Unabridged List and Articulation of Institutional Commitments

Syracuse University will maintain its commitment to full accessibility in software, websites, and other digital properties. In the next five years, the University will align policies, procurement, and architectural designs with high-quality delivery of accommodation services to students, faculty, and staff.

#### **7. Build new pathways and opportunities for post-traditional learners.**

Syracuse University has made solid inroads in online and digital learning, with degree and non-degree programs in every school and college. In the next five years, the University will continue to enlarge and evolve credit and non-credit digital offerings, stackable and alternative professional credentials, and place-based flexible and accessible programming, offering pathways to the University to many who would otherwise not be part of our community. Lifelong learning is not only an important part of the future of higher education, it also embodies the University's long-standing commitment to accessibility, diversity, and opportunity. Every post-traditional program offered by the University will be of the highest quality and reflect this academic strategic plan's commitment to inclusion and innovation.

#### **Additional Commitments:**

#### **8. Solidify the University's status as an institution known for very high research activity (Carnegie R1 classification) by incentivizing research and creative work in areas of distinctive excellence.**

Syracuse University is currently classified as Carnegie R1—meaning it is one of the most research active and productive universities in the United States. It is vital that we retain our reputation as a highly research active institution. Over the next five years, academic leadership—from provost to deans to department chairs—will prioritize the expansion of our research enterprise and use the areas of distinctive excellence to guide investments in research and creative activities. These investments 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.



## APPENDIX A:

### Unabridged List and Articulation of Institutional Commitments

#### **9. 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 undergraduate teaching and learning enterprise. While this use is laudable, these facilities, and the deep community connections developed over decades, can be used to advance our research and creative work as well. Similarly, nationally recognized assets on or near campus, such as the Syracuse University Art Museum, Syracuse Stage, La Casita, and the South Side Innovation Center, can be better leveraged by faculty, staff, and students for teaching, research, and co-curricular activity.

#### **10. Build and nurture meaningful relationships with our local communities.**

Engaged scholarship is key to realizing the areas of distinctive excellence, and the University commits to this objective by being present in the community, engaging public policy work, expanding 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 we operate around the country and the world. The University will also commit to engaging community partners in program design and delivery, particularly as the region experiences transformative change, including the arrival of Micron Technology and the I-81 redevelopment project.



## APPENDIX B:

### The Planning Process

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. Together with the other accomplishments of *Trajectory to Excellence*, these efforts clearly demonstrated the value of thoughtful and dynamic academic strategic planning.

Reflecting 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 heartened by the robust participation in and fulsome contributions 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 excellence; 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.

While the five areas of distinctive excellence around which this plan is organized 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. The five themes capture those commitments and the core values that guide our work as an institution.