

# Quest for Success Strategic Framework

**Those who defy convention with open heart and open mind are the ones who define an as yet unimagined and limitless future.**

Higher education is at an inflection point. The public's trust in it is plummeting and even the nature of truth has come into question. Intensified by pressures on social and natural systems and persistent disparities in opportunity, Ursinus College must seize the moment.

Remaining fiercely optimistic and purposefully open, the Ursinus experience will embody the power of a liberal education and manifest the full potential of people who share a resolve to make positive change happen.

Remaining true to its distinctive character and dynamic student experience, this *Quest for Success Strategic Framework* supports the college as it navigates the future to serve students and provide the world with the thinkers, doers, and leaders who will shape the world anew and aright.

Ursinus College, founded in 1869, evolved from its humble beginnings to become a college that purposefully cultivates the discernment and leadership students need to understand and achieve success in their professional, personal, and civic lives. Early on, Ursinus earned its reputation for spurring curricular innovations like the Common Intellectual Experience and by investing in the potential of every student—practices that remain core to its mission.

Since its founding, Ursinus weathered the turbulence of the times, holding steadfast to its mission as a college grounded in the liberal education tradition.

Today, Ursinus works across many disciplines, sectors, and geographic boundaries. We support our Collegeville community and endeavour to conserve and protect the health

and well-being of people, places, and planet. We welcome home the Lenape people whom we acknowledge and respect as the first people of this land. Beyond our small corner of the world, our academic, research, and service programs span several continents. We imagine a world where exploring, questioning, and learning without inhibition is the norm; a world where we come together to embrace our shared future.

In our multiple roles, and leveraging all our assets, this is our vision and steadfast commitment to our future.

***We imagine a college that enlivens and enriches the mind through open inquiry, a college where we celebrate creativity and the free expression of ideas and come together to educate the next generation and all who follow.***



## DRIVERS of CHANGE

### FINANCIAL REALITIES

- Expenses exceed revenues
- Over-reliance on endowment
- Underfunding of depreciation and capital expenditures
- Lack of diverse revenue streams
- Flat unrestricted giving rate

### INCREASED COMPETITION

- For the best students, staff, and faculty
- For affordable, quality education
- From regional public and private institutions
- From opportunities outside of traditional higher education

### 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY TRENDS

- Ubiquitous tech
- Changing expectations
- Shifting demographics
- Rapidly evolving areas of study
- Changing trends in philanthropic giving

## LONG-TERM GOALS

### SUSTAIN

### COMPETE

### TRANSFORM

The QUEST for Success Strategic Framework is supported by three strategic pillars which define focal areas for activities and initiatives that direct the college's efforts to achieve its long-term goals.

### PILLAR 1 STUDENT SUCCESS

At Ursinus College, an open questions approach to learning and living will ensure courageous conversations across difference and cultivate the discernment and leadership needed to define, understand, and achieve success and lifelong fulfillment.

### PILLAR 2 ONE URSINUS

Ursinus College's culture, defined by community and care and fostered by the passionate pursuit of our mission, will be supported by systems of well-being, collaborative organizational structures, inclusion, communication, trust, and shared governance.

### PILLAR 3 PARTNERSHIPS

Ursinus College will amplify its reach and reputation through mutually beneficial partnerships—across all sectors and geographies—that reinforce the college's role as an anchor institution and core collaborator.

**Empowering Ursinus College to respond and adapt to drivers of change to achieve long-term goals.**

**Ursinus College is ...**

### INQUISITIVE

We see questions as our path to understanding.

### OPEN-MINDED

We are receptive to learning and unlearning, without ego.

### THOUGHTFUL

Our actions are intentional and well-meaning.

### WELCOMING

We're connected and confident, and we support each other.

### DYNAMIC

We're engaged and actively pursuing interests and opportunities.

### HARDWORKING

We put in the effort for the results we want.



# 1 Student Success

***Ursinus College will prepare every student for success in their professional, civic, and personal lives through a transformational educational experience.***

## STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

- Offer a breadth of learning and development opportunities that facilitate the professional and personal success of students, alumni, faculty, staff, and the public.
- Create dynamic, open questions-centered, 21st century learning experiences for generationally and intersectionally diverse audiences.
- Develop in-demand degree and non-degree programs aligned with Ursinus's strengths at the intersection of disciplines.
- Expand Ursinus's global footprint virtually, reputationally, and in-person promoting Ursinus's distinctive open questions framework.
- Invest in 21st century teaching and learning spaces and technology.
- Establish a vibrant college town through off-campus asset development, dining services, and bookstore partner opportunities, and external use of college facilities.
- Create an ecosystem of holistic student and professional supports that enhances student outcomes, reduces performance gaps, retains talent, and fosters inclusive excellence for all members of the college community.

## KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

### Enrollment and Retention

By fiscal year 2027, with a competitive and distinctive portfolio of curricular offerings, including a minimum of four differentiating programs, the college will attain and maintain **fulltime equivalent enrollment of 2,000** generationally and intersectionally diverse students. It will attain and maintain a first-year **retention rate of 92%**, six-year **graduation rate of 85%**, and a student **debt-to-earnings ratio of 35%**.

### Student Satisfaction

By fiscal year 2027, an average of **80%** of seniors report they would **"definitely"/"probably"** attend the college again. By fiscal year 2027, **88%** of students report they gained **"very much"/"quite a bit"** from their experience at the college, and **55%** will report that 6 or more of their courses **"highly challenged"** them to do their best work. Among admitted students and parents, the college's athletic **reputation and opportunities will increase by 0.5% each year** through fiscal year 2027.

### Student Academic Experience

By fiscal year 2027, the college will ensure that **100% of students participate in at least two high-impact practices**. Seniors will report an **advising** score significantly **higher than college peers (>3)**, **global engagement** will improve by **5% year over year**, and **5% more students** per year will **participate in national scholarship** and fellowship competitions.



# PILLAR 2 One Ursinus

***Ursinus College will nourish the health and success of our community and eliminate barriers to manifest the full potential of students, employees, partners, and friends of the college.***

## STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

- Offer personal and professional development programs for college community members and external partners that foster resilience and competence and allow all to reach their full potential.
- Act ethically to support the health and well-being of people, places, and planet through credit and non-credit learning activities and programs. Invest in physical and technological infrastructure to support sustainability throughout the organization.
- Create pathways for students to participate in work-learn-serve programs that integrate on-campus employment, community service, and academic experiences facilitating lifelong achievement through their contributions to the communities and organizations where they will live and work.
- Become a modern, professional workplace through institutionally effective continuous improvement programs, transparent policy development and implementation, accountability to internal and external stakeholders, shared governance, and alignment of organizational structure to the needs of the college now and into the future.

## KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

### Campus Climate

By fiscal year 2027, the **goals of the Okanagan Charter**, a guiding document for health and well-being of people, places, and planet, will be **achieved**. Elevating **dining services to a campus life amenity**, thereby supporting the Okanagan Charter will also be achieved by fiscal year 2027. **Each year college community members will report increased satisfaction** with campus climate compared to the previous year.

### Talent Excellence

At least **10%** or more of **faculty and staff** will participate in internal **professional development** events than in the prior year.

### Revenues and Sustainability

By fiscal year 2027, **annual operating revenues** will consistently be **greater than operating expenses** and **25% of revenues to the college will come from non-student/non-endowment sources**. **Satisfaction with campus facilities** will improve by 1% year over year. The college will **reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by 3%** year over prior year and will, by fiscal year 2027, **achieve AASHE STARS rating**.



# 3 Partnerships



***Ursinus College will amplify its reach and reputation through mutually beneficial partnerships that reinforce its role as an anchor institution and key collaborator.***

## STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

- Share the Ursinus College story with a broad audience of external partners to position the college for a transformational gift.
- Monetize assets and reinvest in the physical plant and in the revitalization of the downtown to grow auxiliary revenue and support the college as an anchor institution.
- Foster early college programs, active senior learning programs, and direct admission programs to extend the reach of the Ursinus experience across generations.
- In partnership with industry, nongovernment, and government organizations, serve as a thought partner, professional development program provider, and economic and community development collaborator supporting student opportunity, economic development of the region, and addressing emerging societal concerns.
- Draw on traditions and strengths to support the common good and civil discourse acting as a convener and intersectional partner for extending liberal education to professional education and catalyzing opportunities in the liberal arts.

## KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

### Sustained Giving

**Increase the Ursinus Fund by 5% year over prior year** and maintain **100% Board of Trustees philanthropic support** to the Ursinus Fund and key priorities of individual members. **Alumni engagement will increase** annually building a healthy pipeline for increased volunteerism and philanthropic investment.

### Life-Long Learning

Establish and grow, by **10% annually**, participation in alumni and post-graduate **continuing education** programming. **Establish and grow, year over year, multi-generational learning programs** offered on campus and in partnership with local organizations.

### Economic and Community Development

By fiscal year 2027, achieve **Carnegie Classification for Community Engagement** thereby demonstrating commitment to service learning and civic engagement such that student participation in **service-learning increases by 3% year over prior year**. Execute downtown revitalization plan and **increase satisfaction with campus surroundings by 5% year over prior year**. Establish and grow, year over year, **cross-sectoral partnerships** that enhance student experiences, attract new investment to programs, and increase the visibility of the college.

### Brand Awareness

**Increase unique digital engagements by 10% year over prior year** and establish and **increase external engagement** in public facing programs by **5% year over prior year**.

# To manifest the full potential of Ursinus College we are committed to:

## **Financial Sustainability**

We are making financial decisions against an uncertain economic backdrop. Exercising scrutiny and flexibility in our financial forecasting we recognize that substantial new directions are not possible without investment.

## **Growth While Still Being 'Small'**

We will offer a demanding and in-demand curriculum and a vibrant student experience. Community spirit and a close, collaborative community, extended beyond the traditional undergraduate experience, will further distinguish the college.

## **Supportive Workplace**

Our community, known for its excellence, dedication, and exuberance for the Ursinus College experience, will live the values of the Okanagan Charter supporting the health and well-being of people, places, and planet.

## **Assessment**

Ongoing assessment of new and current activities will enable effective use of resources and installation of a culture of continuous and meaningful evaluation relative to our mission and goals.

## **Well-Being, Inclusion, Diversity, and Equity (WIDE)**

These mutually constitutive values are the essential ligature that bind the college as ONE Ursinus representing goals to which we will continually aspire.

## **Infrastructure Investment**

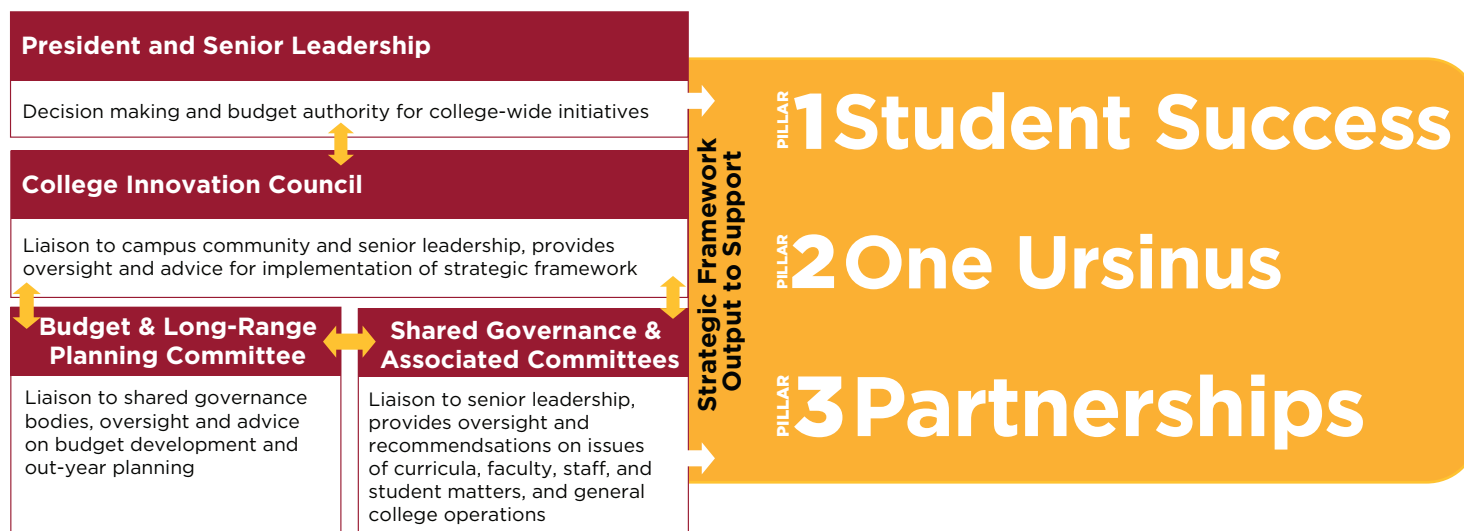
Creating spaces and places that strengthen the student experience we will improve and re-imagine campus infrastructure, including dining and residential experiences, academic spaces, and athletic facilities. Extending into the surrounding community, we will establish a vibrant downtown that enriches the community writ large.

## **Environmental Sustainability**

We will steward our natural environment, reduce waste, and improve energy efficiencies. Leveraging our natural assets, a culture of sustainability will extend beyond building and renovation practices to include a cohesive policy, curriculum, and operational components that protect the environment.

***To be resilient in a world that is in constant motion, boundaries must be pushed and limits must be challenged.***

# Implementation & Assessment



The QUEST for Success Strategic Framework is intentionally designed to be adaptable to new challenges, new opportunities, and new thinking as we move into the future. It does more than guide the college, it serves as a model for other institutions. Therefore, Ursinus is positioned to not only to achieve its goals and ambitions, but also to serve as a leader in higher education innovation.

A sustainable and resilient future for the college requires everyone to think and act boldly to define a future shaped by the authentic character of Ursinus. Our collective successes rely on the attainment of goals that are actionable and measurable.

The College Innovation Council, comprised of faculty and staff, shepherds new initiatives and transformational ideas from across all members of the college community. Working closely with the Budget and Long-Range Planning Committee and the president, investments in bold and innovative tactics and strategies are aligned with budget development and out-year planning. The College

Innovation Council also oversees the assessment of strategic investments and monitors the college's progress towards achieving its Key Performance Indicators.

The College Innovation Council developed and manages a process for submission to the QUEST for Success Challenge. Solicited from the college community, these transformational initiatives may be in various stages from conceptual to ready to implement. All require cross-college collaboration and buy-in for full implementation. All proposals must demonstrate an explicit connection to the liberal arts mission of the college, its values, and the goals of the QUEST for Success Strategic Framework.

Projects are categorized as Flagship (Large-scale Projects), Discovery (Mid-scale Projects), and Explorations (Small-scale Projects). Mature projects, regardless of category can begin the implementation process whereby project costs are built into future year budgets as well as integrated into fundraising priorities. For those

projects which need further study or a pilot to test the projects potential, the challenge supports projects at the ideation phase with the College Innovation Council supporting the incubation of the project and assessing its potential for implementation.

At Ursinus, innovation is a habit, a mindset that we impart to our students. By intentionally embedding a process that harnesses the inherent creativity and passion of faculty and staff, Ursinus will not only reach its ambitious goals, but will tangibly demonstrate the power of the Ursinus open questions approach to all that we do.

**For more information please visit [www.ursinus.edu/CIC](http://www.ursinus.edu/CIC)**

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The QUEST for Success Strategic Framework is the result of two years of effort by the Ursinus College community. It represented hours upon hours of collaborative work, surveys, and analysis. Phase One, led by Vice President of Inclusion and Community Engagement, Heather Lobban-Viravong, successfully executed college community workshops and surveys revealing a core focus for the future of Every Student's Success. Under the thoughtful guidance of Professor Meredith Goldsmith, appointed as chief strategy officer, and Professor Nathan Rein, external and internal community members worked tirelessly to refine the directions the college might pursue to its advantage. Their combined efforts resulted in a full-length assessment of the higher education landscape and detailed framework upon which the college will build a sustainable and impactful future. With the support of the Steering Committee and Working Groups, the draft QUEST for Success Strategic Framework was presented to the Board of Trustees and College community in February 2023. The final Strategic Framework was approved by the Board of Trustees in May 2023. A special thanks the Faculty Council (Professors Lew Riley, Rebecca Roberts, Ann Karreth, Tony Nadler, Beth Bailey, and Meghan Brodie) for their assistance in shaping the final document and for their incredible creativity and willingness to jump in.

## **Steering Committee**

Beth Bailey, Associate Professor of Biology and member, Faculty Council  
Missy Bryant, Vice President for Student Affairs and Dean of Students  
Meredith Goldsmith, Chief Strategy and Innovation Officer and Professor of English

Robyn Hannigan, President  
Heather Lobban-Viravong, Vice President for Inclusion & Community Engagement

Nathan Rein, Special Advisor for Strategic Initiatives and Associate Professor of Philosophy & Religious Studies

Mark Schneider, Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean of the College

Tom Yencho, Vice President of Communications and Strategic Partnerships

Aleja Aslan '25, Strategic Planning Leadership Fellow (Art and Psychology)

Peter Balos '25, Strategic Planning Leadership Fellow (Applied Economics and Philosophy)

## **Group Co-Chairs**

Paula Álvarez Tamés, Director of International Programs, Co-Chair, Academic Excellence

Jennifer VanGilder, Associate Professor of Business and Economics, Co-Chair, Academic Excellence

Dan Kelly, Director of Student Conduct and Deputy Title IX Coordinator, Co-Chair, The Student Experience

Ashley Henderson, Director, Institute for Inclusion and Equity, Co-Chair, The Student Experience

Kara McShane, Associate Professor of English and Chair of English Department, Co-Chair, Infrastructure, and Innovation

Gene Spencer, Chief Information Officer, Co-Chair, Infrastructure, and Innovation

Samantha Harvey '20, Assistant Director for Employer Relations, Co-Chair, Affordability/Debt/ROI

Diane Greenwood, Director of Admissions, Co-Chair, Affordability/Debt/ROI

Mariana Gilbert, Director of Principal and Major Gifts, Co-Chair, Philanthropy

Abbie Cichowski Kim '10, Senior Major Gifts Officer, Co-Chair, Philanthropy

Heather Lobban-Viravong, Vice President for Inclusion and Community Engagement, Co-Chair, Recruiting and Retaining Talent  
Cale Nelson, Associate Vice President for Finance and Administration and Head of Human Resources, Co-Chair, Recruiting and Retaining Talent

## **Working Group 1: Academic Excellence**

Glenda Chao, Assistant Professor of History

Amanda Cooper, Visiting Instructor in Business and Economics

Maureen Cumpstone, Entrepreneur in Residence and Director, U-Imagine Center

Rudy Henkel, Assistant Professor of Economics

Andrew Economopoulos, Professor of Economics

Kassandra Martin-Wells, Assistant Professor of Physics and Astronomy

Sarah Kaufman, Associate Professor of Art

Mackenzie Owens '23, Applied Economics and International Relations

Delanie Rogers '23, Media and Communications Studies

Ellie Templeton '21, Alumna

Chris Thompkins P'23, Parents Leadership Council

## **Working Group 2: The Student Experience**

Valerie Adelson P'23, Parents Leadership Council

Aleja Aslan '25, Psychology and Art, Strategic Planning Leadership Fellow

Alyssa Caffarelli Murphy '13, Director of Residence Life

Crystal Davison, Assistant Director, Institute for Student Success

Isabelle Deal '23, Psychology, NCAA All-American Women's Track and Field

Lauren Finnegan-Martin, Executive Director of Counseling and Wellness

Mark Hickey '14, English and Secondary Education; Alumni DEI Working Group

Lizzy Hicks '25, Psychology, Abele Scholar

Marqus Hunter, Associate Athletic Director

Brenda Lederach, Visiting Instructor, Psychology

Rebecca Lyczak, Professor of Biology  
Yvonne McCarthy P'07, Visiting Assistant Professor of Spanish and Transfer Advisor

Marion McKinney, Director of Student Engagement

Jasmine Soriano, Assistant Director of Inclusion and Equity, Intercultural and Community Engagement

Joanna Timmerman '19, Assistant Director, Disability and Access

Angela Upright '17, Assistant Director, UCARE

Michelle Vande Berg, Lecturer, Health and Exercise Physiology

Gabby Wright, Director of Campus Safety

Shannon Zura, Associate Professor of Theatre and Dance in Design & Technology

## **Working Group 3: Infrastructure and Innovation**

Arthur Artene '23, Computer Science, President UC Student Government

Beth Bailey, Associate Professor of Biology, member/chair Faculty Council

Mary Correll, Interim Vice President for Finance and Administration

Melanie Cunningham, Administrative Support Coordinator, Division of Inclusion and Community Engagement, past president of Staff Assembly

Jalen Everette '22, Political Science, former President UC Student Government

Steve Gehringer, Director of Facilities

Marqus Hunter, Associate Athletic Director for Compliance, Student Athlete Services

Kate Keppen '05, Director of Sustainability

Adam Linetty, Assistant Director of the Institute for Student Success

Lew Riley, Professor of Physics, member/chair Faculty Council, faculty representative to cabinet

James Shuttleworth '05, Deputy Chief Information Officer

Jenna Smith '23, English and Political Science, member of UCrew

Nicole Smith, Executive Assistant to the Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean of the College

Joanna Timmerman, Assistant Director of Disability and Access, Vice President of Staff Assembly

Gabby Wright, Executive Director of Campus Safety and Emergency Preparedness  
Ilya Yakovlev, past member Parents Leadership Council

## **Working Group 4: Debt, Affordability, ROI**

Trish Barlow P'25, Parents Leadership Council

Scott Deacle, Associate Professor and Chair, Business and Economics

Brianne Farris, Director of Marketing

Ashling Suppan, Associate Director, Student Financial Services

Vivian Viera '17, Associate Director of Annual Giving

## **Working Group 5: Philanthropy**

Valerie Adelson P'23, Parents Leadership Council

Lane Dubin '90  
Nethmi Ediriweera '25; Students Today, Alumni Tomorrow (STAT)

Patty Gillette P'24, Parents' Leadership Council

Simba Kanjanda '22

## **Working Group 6: Recruiting and Retaining Talent**

Dolores Alcaide-Mendez, P'23, Parents Leadership Council

Talia Argondezzi, Director, Center for Writing and Speaking

Kneia DaCosta, Associate Professor and Chair of Psychology

Chase Portaro '24, Staff Writer, Grizzly

Michele Poruban, Assistant Director, Career and Post-Graduate Development

## **Additional feedback from**

Monica (Jushchyshyn) Chu '98  
Tim Cosgrave '85

Pat Curry '01

Frank Hennessey '88

Jake Kohler '13

Lee (Rambo) Robinson '75

Amanda Reig, Professor of Chemistry

Vic Tortorelli, Professor Emeritus of Chemistry

Sheryl Goodman's 400-level seminar