

## **CREATING THE WORLD WE WANT TO LIVE IN**

### **LMU Strategic Plan, 2021-26**

#### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

“Creating the World We Want to Live In” is LMU’s strategic plan for the period 2021-26. Following an 18-month process of community deliberation, the final text of the plan was recommended by the Strategic Planning Steering Committee, approved by President Snyder, and formally adopted by the Board of Trustees.

The plan begins with a discussion of the context for the plan’s priorities, followed by a restatement LMU’s institutional mission and core values.

- Context for the Plan
- Institutional Mission
- Core Values

Next, the plan articulates a strategic vision for LMU’s future and three strategic commitments that are integral to the successful achievement of that vision.

- Structure of the Plan
- Vision – *In fulfillment of its mission, LMU will form a new generation of ethical leaders able to identify, analyze, and respond to the most challenging problems facing our rapidly changing global society.*
- Commitments
  - Anti-Racism, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
  - Innovation and Adaptability
  - Extending Our Reach Beyond the Bluff

The plan designates five spotlight initiatives, each with its own goal, objectives, and action steps, that collectively describe the specific tactics to be used in achieving the vision.

- Spotlight Initiatives
  - Learning for Justice, Inclusion, and Transformation
  - Integrative and Interdisciplinary Thinking
  - Personalized Connections
  - Discovery and Innovation in Graduate and Professional Education
  - Access LMU

Finally, the plan describes how LMU will implement, oversee, and assess the success of these action steps.

- Implementation and Next Steps

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **Context for the Plan**

LMU's strategic plan arrives at a critical moment. When the university selected 2020 as the year of completion for its last strategic plan, we could hardly have guessed what a pivotal year it would prove to be in the history of the world, the nation, and LMU.

This planning process has taken place against an unfolding drama unlike any in our lifetime. A year of a deadly pandemic has brought in its wake economic pain and constraint, physical distancing and isolation, and widespread fear about the present and future. Alongside the pandemic, a parallel sense of urgency has developed within our public life. We have witnessed a reckoning and reawakening around issues of racial injustice, along with a deepening socio-political polarization culminating in a contentious election and its unsettling aftermath. These events have carried with them a sense of apprehension, distraction and fatigue, along with a heightened consciousness of the diminished certainties and raised stakes of our choices about the future.

The broader context for the plan, if somewhat less dramatic, is no less significant. Over the past quarter century, higher education has gradually – often too slowly – sought to adapt itself to a world transformed by the most impactful revolution in information and knowledge sharing since the invention of the printing press. The onset of the digital age has accelerated the already rapid expansion of an increasingly global, multicultural, and interdependent society. This has been an age of miracles – of reductions in scourges such as global hunger, extreme poverty, child mortality, and child labor, along with significant improvements in global life expectancy, internet access, education, and literacy. It has equally been an age of catastrophes, with the impacts of climate change, disruptive natural disasters, economic disparities, and mass violence darkening the present for many and haunting the future for us all.

LMU's mission has always been to educate its students to impact the larger world for good. In early 21<sup>st</sup> century Los Angeles, at the crossroads of global east and west, north and south, LMU's opportunity to extend our reach has never been clearer. We have developed rapidly as an institution, driving toward greater academic excellence and enhancing our local engagement, national reputation, and international outreach. Yet never before has the emerging future for which we are preparing our students been such a moving target.

To advance the common good, our students will continue to need the skills of critical thinking and disciplined reasoning that all universities aspire to cultivate, along with the moral acuity and spiritual sensitivity that are the special hallmarks of Catholic higher education. But to meet the pivotal moment into which we are entering they will need more. Tomorrow's students will need to graduate from LMU with the desire to lead in more *inclusive*, more *imaginative*, and more *impactful* ways, and the knowledge and abilities to realize that desire in all their endeavors. *Creating the World We Want to Live In: LMU's Strategic Plan, 2021-26* envisions LMU as a university that forms such students with intention, and speaks to the institutional commitments and initiatives that will drive our institutional evolution.

### **Brief Summary of Process**

In his October 2019 Convocation Address, President Timothy Law Snyder announced the beginning of a new strategic planning process. The strategic planning steering committee received its charge from the president on November 1, and during November conducted an initial survey of LMU's major constituencies, with hundreds of students, faculty, staff, and leadership board members providing input. In January the steering committee conducted an environmental scan to assess LMU's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges. Eight campus teams composed of faculty, staff, and student volunteers were asked to analyze several potential strategic issues facing the university and to brainstorm potential objectives and actions related to those issues.

In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic in the spring 2020 semester, the president authorized a delay in the process timeline, postponing the originally planned release of the steering committee's preliminary report from April until September. In the preliminary report, the steering committee shared a draft of the plan's mission statement, core values, and vision statement, and identified nine potential strategic issues for the plan to address with possible actions associated with each. All faculty and staff were invited to participate in facilitated community discernment focus groups, and steering committee members visited student, faculty, and staff leadership groups and volunteer boards across campus to obtain additional feedback. Based on this input, the steering committee created a draft plan during the fall 2020 semester and shared it with the community for feedback in January 2021, employing a broadly based survey and visits to the community's primary constituent leadership groups. Based on this feedback, the steering committee made further revisions to the draft plan and submitted its final recommendations to the president on April 9.

Throughout the process, the steering committee has structured our work through the lens of communal discernment, using concepts and techniques derived from our Ignatian tradition as a guiding principle within the committee's internal deliberations and in our engagement with the wider university community. The steering committee believes this approach has benefited the substance of the plan and has increased our confidence in recommending it as the result of an inclusive, intentional, and responsive process of community discernment.

### **Purpose of the Plan**

The primary purpose of a strategic plan is to articulate a shared vision of the university's future to orient its collective efforts and to identify the most important strategies, goals, and actions for the institution to take in order to realize that vision. This plan does so by selecting three *commitments* that will define our strategic approach and serve as criteria for success, and five *spotlight initiatives*, inspired by those commitments, that will be the primary focus of the university's attention and strategic resources for the duration of the plan.

The strategic plan's implementation will be aligned with the annual university budget cycle and its spotlight initiatives will have presumptive priority in the allocation of strategic funds from the university budget. Many of the objectives identified in the spotlight initiatives will require substantial time and resources.

The university is currently in the "quiet phase" of a comprehensive fundraising campaign, the overall priorities of which were recommended by the Campaign Planning Council and approved by the Board of Trustees in May 2018. The spotlight initiatives were selected with an awareness

of the campaign's fundraising priorities and were intended to align with those priorities. At the same time, the strategic plan elaborates and clarifies the areas of greatest need and significance within the campaign's broad priorities and offers potential guidance for further specifying the targets and content of the campaign's initiatives to support faculty, enhance educational facilities, and expand student scholarships.

### **Structure of the Plan**

The sections that follow constitute the plan proper. The next section, *LMU in 2021*, presents statements of institutional mission and core values that constitute the underlying foundation of the strategic plan. The longer section that follows, *LMU in 2026*, offers proposed vision, commitments, and spotlight initiatives for the plan.

### **LMU IN 2021**

Statements of institutional mission and core values establish a foundation for the strategic plan in enduring features of the institution's purpose and character. LMU's mission is grounded in the context of the Catholic intellectual tradition, Catholic social teaching, and Catholic higher education, as well as in the charisms of the Society of Jesus, the Religious of the Sacred Heart of Mary, and the Sisters of St. Joseph of Orange.

As a distinctively mission-centric and values-based organization, LMU's usage of these terms is a part of daily life; as a consequence, the plan's articulation of statements of mission and core values builds upon LMU's ongoing community dialogue about mission and values. These sections do not replace the three pillars of the university's mission statement, but instead incorporate and re-articulate the most salient features of that mission which motivate the new plan.

### **Institutional Mission**

LMU's mission speaks to the foundational purpose of the institution's work: those ideals that authentically describe and motivate LMU as it exists today and into the future.

Loyola Marymount University embodies the richness of our Catholic, Ignatian, Jesuit and Marymount identity in dynamic conversation with the most challenging issues that face the world today. Our location in the vibrant city of Los Angeles offers diverse cultural, creative, and intellectual wealth and boundless opportunity for encounter and innovation. Through rigorous inquiry and relational engagement, we develop individuals whose reflection, reasoning, imagination, and discernment call forth action for positive change in the world. We continually strive for inclusive community and to advance our university mission:

- The encouragement of learning
- The education of the whole person
- The service of faith and promotion of justice.

### **Core Values**

Core values are those attributes that constitute the essence of who LMU is as an organization and emerge from the lived reality of our efforts to embody the institutional mission. They are not the same as the full set of aspirational values the institution wishes to possess: rather, they are values that the institution exhibits in its everyday conduct, that distinguish the institution



meaningfully from similar organizations, and that the institution's stakeholders believe should take priority in its most significant choices over other competing values, now and in the future.

Loyola Marymount University embraces the following core values as fundamental to our identity and living out our mission:

- ***Whole-Person Learning:*** Rooted in our Catholic, Ignatian, Jesuit, and Marymount traditions and their foundational commitment to the liberal arts, we recognize that educational excellence is multi-dimensional. We develop well-integrated individuals who exercise critical analysis, creative thinking, ethical reasoning, and compassionate discernment throughout their lives.
- ***Community Built on Relationships:*** We are a community of care that supports and contributes to the holistic well-being of each of its members. We affirm that our mission is best achieved in an environment of authentic concern for all persons, characterized by inclusion, solidarity, and respect for human dignity.
- ***Education for Action:*** Inspired by the call to a faith that does justice, we challenge ourselves as a community and as individuals to pursue the more universal good. We are thinkers and leaders driven to engage imaginatively the world's deepest needs and most urgent challenges.

## **LMU IN 2026**

### **Structure of the Strategic Plan**

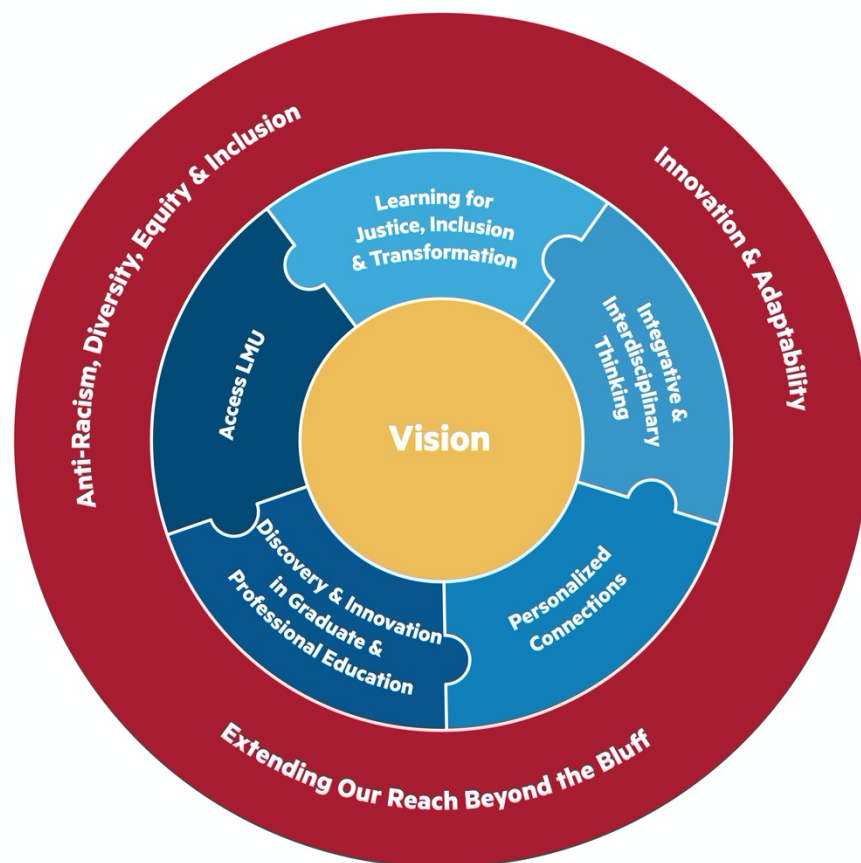
The plan conceives of LMU's strategy as consisting of three interdependent elements.

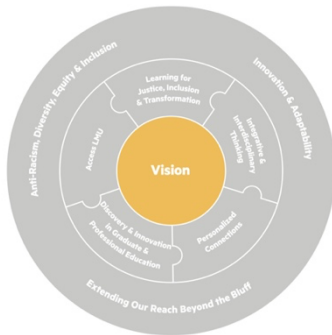
First, the center of the plan is a unifying *vision*, which describes what LMU will look like in the future as a consequence of the plan's success.

Second, the plan makes three *commitments*, which are intentional elements of LMU's overall institutional approach that the university believes are keys to our future success and will help distinguish LMU from other institutions of higher education.

Finally, the plan names five *spotlight initiatives* – specific actions that draw on one or more of the commitments to help move LMU toward achieving the vision.

The following diagram illustrates the interrelation between these three elements, populated with the content of the plan's commitments and spotlight initiatives:





## Vision

The strategic **vision** describes what LMU will look like in the future as a consequence of the plan's success. It constitutes the primary focus of LMU's strategic efforts and articulates the common purpose that the university asks all members of the community to commit to advancing. The vision speaks to the future LMU aims to realize over the duration of the plan:

**In fulfillment of its mission, LMU will form a new generation of ethical leaders who will identify, analyze, and respond to the most challenging problems facing our rapidly changing global society.**

This statement distills the three most compelling elements of the university's overall efforts: who LMU serves, what LMU does, and why:

- *Who LMU serves:* **"a new generation of ethical leaders."**

LMU's most fundamental purpose is found in the students the university helps to form and the graduates the university helps to send out into the world. LMU's students are not like those of all other universities: rather, through their distinctive learning experiences here, they become part of a community of persons for and with others. LMU's graduates become discerning, courageous persons who pursue lives of meaning and purpose, who value diversity, inclusion, and right relationship, and who possess exceptional capacity and commitment to be agents of reconciliation and justice.

- *What LMU does:* **"form [leaders] ... who will identify, analyze, and respond to ..."**

LMU prepares students to be contemplatives in action, able to understand and benefit a world in need. Like all universities, LMU cultivates knowledge and skills; as a liberal arts university, LMU orients students to multiple ways of understanding and instills in them a reverence for questions of ultimate meaning and purpose; as a mission-defined university, LMU does so intentionally, with a distinctive commitment to fostering virtues of intellect, character, and spirit, and to empowering the creative potentialities that emerge when contemplation and action mutually inform one another. Influenced by the concept of *praxis* in Catholic social teaching, LMU prepares students to assess their reality and to propose and enact transformational solutions to pressing problems.

- *Why LMU does what it does:* **"[to] respond to the most challenging problems facing our rapidly changing global society."**

The world is changing rapidly, and often in directions that do not produce justice and help attain the common good. Addressing these problems will require wisdom, creativity, and commitment. Because of LMU's mission, traditions, and community members, LMU possesses a rare potential to educate students to become responsive to the scale and velocity of the practical challenges and systemic injustices confronting the contemporary world. LMU graduates will see these challenges as invitations to reflect, inquire, and act.



## Commitments

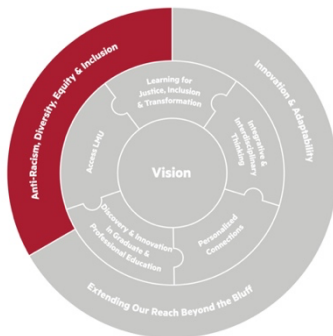
The plan's **commitments** describe the elements of LMU's overall approach that will distinguish what LMU does from other institutions of higher education.

The plan conceives of these elements as the keys to LMU's future success, a set of aspirational values that LMU intends to embody more fully as an institution in order to achieve the plan's vision.

The commitments also constitute criteria that help to determine the selection of spotlight initiatives and that will be used during implementation to guide the evaluation and future refinement of the plan.

The plan's three commitments are: *Anti-Racism, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion*; *Innovation and Adaptability*; and *Extending Our Reach Beyond the Bluff*.

- ***Anti-Racism, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion*** – In order to create an environment in which all persons may flourish in the fullness of their humanity, *we will uphold anti-racism, diversity, equity, and inclusion in all that we do.*



### RATIONALE AND STRATEGIC APPROACH:

LMU's diversity of students, faculty, and staff has steadily become more central to our institutional identity and strength, in a way that is reflective of and responsive to our Los Angeles home. As a Catholic, Ignatian, Jesuit, and Marymount university, the values of diversity, equity, and inclusion have roots in our commitment to the dignity of all persons as created in the image and likeness of God and to the service of faith and the

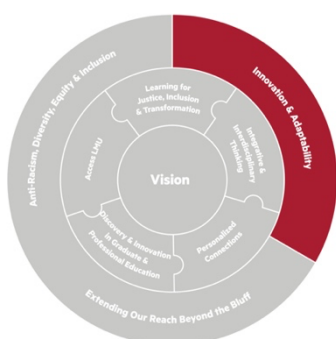
promotion of justice. We also believe that success in improving diversity, embracing anti-racist practices and strengthening our inclusive excellence is key to widening our appeal and to enhancing our educational quality and creativity in an increasingly complex world. Although improving our institutional diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) has a broad base of support among faculty, staff, and leadership, we are conscious of Pope Francis' description of racism as "a virus that quickly mutates." Overcoming systemic barriers to thriving and success for all members of our community will require us to commit to practices, policies, and an organizational culture and climate that will make LMU a national leader in mission-driven, anti-racist institutional and educational practices.

This commitment encourages us to pursue actions that will:

- Increase the diversity of our LMU students, faculty, staff, and administrative leadership, ensuring accountability by identifying specific goals and metrics and tracking and reporting progress.
- Give particular attention to specifying increases in BIPOC representation in all populations.



- Make our organizational climate and culture more anti-racist, diverse, equitable, and inclusive at all levels through systemic analysis of structures and practices and education, training and mission-formation programs.
  - Ensure that an LMU education is unequivocally inclusive by working to decolonize the curriculum, expand usage of inclusive pedagogies, and encourage anti-racist curricular and co-curricular collaborations.
- ***Innovation and Adaptability*** – Embracing the spirit of adaptability that has defined Ignatian education for centuries, *we will innovate together across boundaries of all kinds to improve continually in research, teaching, and preparing students for the challenges ahead.*



#### RATIONALE AND STRATEGIC APPROACH:

LMU's rapidly changing external environment will increasingly require the ability to adapt to changing technological, demographic, economic, environmental, and socio-political trends. We aspire to exhibit creativity in our education and shared work, and to do so we will need to nurture collaboration, innovation and adaptability more intentionally as elements of our organizational culture and practices. The hallmark of Ignatian

education has always been its responsiveness to emerging needs and its continual adaptation toward serving the more universal good. As the content and impact of human knowledge changes and as enhanced modes of teaching, learning, student life, and institutional management become available, LMU must improve its flexibility and willingness to experiment and take calculated risks. As the world's most challenging problems become increasingly complicated and multi-dimensional, LMU must further embrace interdisciplinary approaches to research and teaching and improve our ability to collaborate across disciplinary and functional boundaries. As the university's approach to its future becomes more intentional and strategic, we must enhance our practices of consultative decision-making to deliberate more inclusively and creatively about both ends and means and to more effectively arrive at clear choices about long-term priorities.

This commitment encourages us to pursue actions that will:

- Support and motivate a university-wide culture of experimentation, innovation and strategic risk-taking.
- Dismantle or overcome organizational silos and improve structures for interdisciplinary collaboration.
- Extend and strengthen curricular/co-curricular collaborations that enhance student learning.
- Improve the effectiveness of decision-making and shared governance practices to ensure inclusive consultation and greater adaptability to changes in the external environment.

- ***Extending Our Reach Beyond the Bluff*** – Recognizing the need for increased educational impact and solidarity with our neighbors near and far, *we will increase the range and variety of our engagements locally, nationally and globally to broaden the experiences our students encounter and the insights they develop as they prepare to impact an increasingly interdependent world.*



**RATIONALE AND STRATEGIC APPROACH:**  
The ongoing mission of Catholic higher education is to continually engage the frontiers of knowledge and service to others, forming “whole persons of solidarity with the real world.” In an increasingly global and interdependent world, located at the crossroads of the United States, the Pacific, and Latin America, in the world’s largest Catholic archdiocese, with the world’s fastest-growing media-technology nexus at our doorstep and the world’s most culturally diverse

city as our neighborhood, LMU has exceptional opportunities for local and global interaction. We must build the partnerships that enrich our students’ experiences and their potential to learn and grow and vigorously engage the world our students are preparing to enter.

This commitment encourages us to pursue actions that will:

- Selectively engage and extend initiatives that promote globally conscious perspectives and drive international learning experiences.
- Pursue community partnerships that broaden student learning experiences and engage with underserved populations.
- Expand industry partnerships that enhance professional learning opportunities for students.
- Continue to strengthen our national and international reputation.

### **Spotlight Initiatives**

Our ***spotlight initiatives*** describe the main objectives and actions on which the plan will focus. Each spotlight initiative:

- advances a *single, specific strategic goal* consonant with the university’s mission through multiple tactical actions linked cohesively;
- builds upon one or more of the plan’s strategic *commitments*;
- produces or extends a *competitively differentiating advantage* for the university; and
- involves a *significant investment* of financial resources, time, and/or leadership focus.

These spotlight initiatives do not list every action LMU will pursue over the next five years. Many activities that are part of our core academic and business operations must continue and, in some cases, intensify in order to provide educational excellence, ensure stable enrollments and finances, and advance the elements of our overall strategy.

Notably, several of the spotlight initiatives below build directly on elements of the previous strategic plan “Forming Leaders who Transform the World, 2012-20.” In addition to these extensions of previous strategic initiatives, LMU will continue to consolidate our progress on key achievements from the previous strategic plan, including our efforts to:

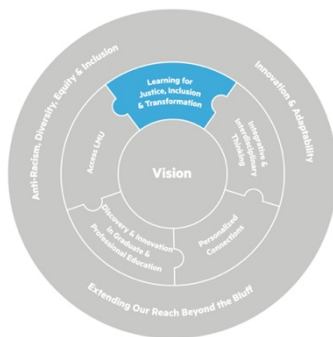
- promote academic excellence and rigor;
- continue our focus on post-baccalaureate success;
- value and support the teacher-scholar model;
- expand local and global engagement;
- advance our role as a premier Catholic university;
- deepen our commitment to sustainability and environmental justice; and
- significantly enhance the university’s reputation.

Thus the omission of a specific item from the spotlight initiatives below does not necessarily mean it is unimportant or that the university will not pursue it with intention.

Instead, the spotlight initiatives constitute the *focal points for unified action* required to achieve the vision and build a better institutional future. The plan “spotlights” these initiatives to structure our organizational thinking, prioritize the allocation of scarce strategic resources, and solicit an all-hands effort from the university community.

For 2021-26, LMU’s spotlight initiatives are:

### **Learning for Justice, Inclusion, and Transformation Initiative**



**GOAL:** LMU will transform its academic and student life experience to embrace anti-oppressive curricular, co-curricular, and pedagogical practices, grounded in a commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion as defining features of an LMU education.

**RATIONALE AND STRATEGIC APPROACH:** LMU’s educational vision embraces anti-oppressive pedagogies, including anti-racist approaches, and seeks to expand understandings of academic excellence and student success to be more inclusive

and justice oriented. Informed by our liberal arts foundation and our commitment to human dignity and whole-person education, we will offer strong and challenging academic and co-curricular programs that address issues of identity and difference – and their consequences at multiple levels – as well as broaden our students’ global horizons. Our Catholic mission and commitment to justice motivates us to pursue equity and inclusion for all students and to seek to overcome systemic racism and other forms of historical exclusion and marginalization and their impacts on our students. We believe that diversity enhances

human creativity, inclusion enriches personal thriving and interpersonal engagement, and equity-mindedness enables social transformation. Students who experience a diverse, inclusive, equitable, and anti-racist learning environment are more likely to acquire the distinctive insights, cultural competencies, and value commitments needed to address the world's most challenging problems. By spotlighting an initiative to enhance these practices and to recruit and retain the students, faculty, staff, and administrative leaders needed to ensure success, we can collectively fulfill the rich promise of an LMU education.

*Objective 1: Actualize commitments to inclusion, diversity, equity, and anti-racism across undergraduate and graduate students' curricular and co-curricular experiences.*

Actions:

- Review and revise core curriculum and major/minor curricula to directly address racism and other forms of oppression and exclusion, and to increase awareness and engagement with the resulting impacts on academic disciplines, cultural presuppositions, and social structures.
- Review and enhance professional development strategies that support and encourage inclusive pedagogies (for example, universal design for learning (UDL), anti-oppressive teaching and pedagogical practices, etc.) that enhance educational effectiveness for all learners, including persons with disabilities.
- Support faculty research/creative work and faculty-student academic mentoring in areas related to anti-racism and DEI-oriented learning.
- Design a plan to increase coordinated curricular/co-curricular engagement with challenging issues related to diversity, equity, inclusion, including consideration of an anti-racism engaged learning-experience requirement.
- Support student life programs and initiatives that promote diversity, equity, and inclusion (for example, restorative justice practices).

*Objective 2: Increase successful recruitment and retention of faculty, staff, and administrative leaders from historically underrepresented and marginalized groups who can contribute directly to the initiative's curricular and co-curricular aims.*

Actions:

- Set clear expectations and metrics for success in recruitment and retention of faculty, staff, and administrative leaders from historically underrepresented and marginalized groups, and align hiring practices and faculty/staff support structures to ensure success.
- For faculty, recognize and reward forms of teaching, research, and service that promote diversity, equity, and inclusion, including curriculum transformation and recognition of "informal/invisible" service; for staff, recognized DEI-related service that contributes to co-curricular educational objectives as a valued element of performance reviews.
- Review departmental tenure and promotion standards and merit review processes for faculty and staff and propose revised standards that recognize a broad range of expressions of excellence in scholarship, teaching, and service in ways that are inclusive and academically sound.

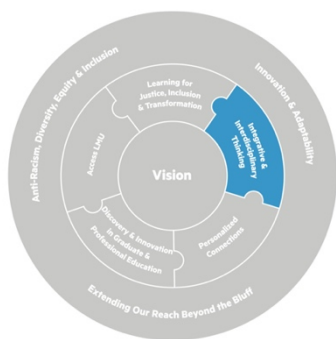
- Examine formal and informal structures for mentoring, support, and thriving of faculty and educational staff, and devise a plan to improve support structures, as appropriate to each area, throughout their careers.
- Pursue fundraising opportunities for initiatives that contribute to diversifying the faculty.

*Objective 3: Increase successful recruitment and retention of students from historically underrepresented and marginalized groups.*

Actions:

- Set clear expectations for success in student recruitment and retention for historically underrepresented and marginalized groups.
- Strengthen pathways and infrastructure for recruiting students from historically underrepresented and marginalized groups to attend LMU.
- Increase funding to support and develop curricular and co-curricular programs and initiatives that positively impact the student experience, retention, persistence, and graduation of students from historically underrepresented and marginalized groups.
- Evaluate current access to high-impact learning opportunities such as study abroad, internships, and undergraduate research, and devise a plan that increases access for historically underrepresented and marginalized groups.
- Pursue fundraising opportunities for scholarships that support the recruitment and retention of a diverse student body.

### **Integrative and Interdisciplinary Thinking Initiative**



**GOAL:** LMU will establish a distinctive academic specialization in interdisciplinary and integrative thinking approaches that prepares students to use multi-dimensional analysis, critical reasoning, and creative problem solving.

**RATIONALE AND STRATEGIC APPROACH:**

Catholic higher education has long embraced an integrative conception of reason that understands all branches of human knowledge as connected through God as the ultimate source of truth. The wisdom of

that approach is now clear, as we continue to discover that the world's most challenging problems can only be solved by transcending the current boundaries that separate forms of human knowledge and combining the disciplines of rational discourse with the distinctively human capacities for creativity and ethical discernment. In a world where more and more functions will be performed by automation or artificial intelligence, there will be increasing need for those distinctively human virtues of mind and character that liberal arts higher education, especially in the Catholic tradition, has always emphasized. LMU has the opportunity to distinguish itself as a university that prepares its students for this ever-evolving future by foregrounding interdisciplinary and integrative thinking as the hallmark of an LMU education. By leveraging existing interdisciplinary strengths, such as the university's liberal arts-grounded core curriculum, as well as expanding interdisciplinary offerings in graduate and professional fields and recruiting faculty in areas of interdisciplinary strength,

LMU can affirm its commitment to this approach. Likewise, by further extending opportunities for global- and local-engaged learning experiences and by intentionally positioning ourselves as leaders in educating for imagination, creativity, and ethical discernment, LMU can attract and form students with the integrative thinking capacities required to solve the world's biggest challenges and while also enhancing their opportunities for career success and personal impact.

*Objective 1: Develop or modify distinctive curricular and co-curricular programs that foreground interdisciplinary and integrative thinking as the hallmark of an LMU education.*

Actions:

- Strengthen the educational impact of the interdisciplinary dimensions of the core curriculum, including consideration of an Interdisciplinary Academy/Academy of the Core.
- Leverage the flexibility of the University Honors Program curriculum as a laboratory for innovation in interdisciplinary teaching and learning.
- In consultation with faculty, develop a university-wide framework to assess and assure interdisciplinary and integrative thinking in learning outcomes, curricula, and pedagogy.
- Expand usage of pedagogies, curricular content and co-curricular experiences that promote interdisciplinary and integrative thinking, including imagination, creativity, and ethical discernment.
- Expand usage of pedagogies, curricular content and co-curricular experiences that leverage interdisciplinary and integrative forms of experiential and engaged learning, project-based learning, and reflective learning, especially those that engage with challenging problems that require a multi-disciplinary focus.

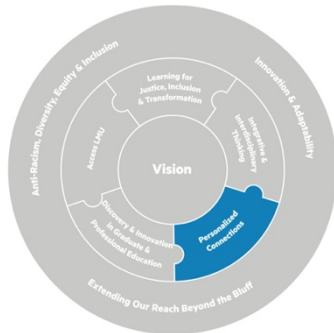
*Objective 2: Design or modify institutional structures to support interdisciplinary cooperation, and build selected, mission-resonant areas of interdisciplinary excellence oriented toward solving the world's most challenging problems.*

Actions:

- Explore and recommend a timeline to create and launch selected new interdisciplinary degree programs.
- Explore and propose potential academic concentrations and credentials that recognize thematic or skill-based multi-disciplinary experiences at a smaller scale than a traditional major or minor.
- Devise a plan to expand and support opportunities for collaborative teaching.
- Create or enhance spaces, modes, and partnerships to promote interdisciplinary research ideation and intellectual community.
- Align capital fundraising priorities to support the need for a "creativity-ready" campus, including additional spaces to support programs in fine arts, engineering, and digital and immersive learning.
- Pursue fundraising opportunities to support endowed faculty positions with interdisciplinary expertise in select fields.



## Personalized Connections Initiative



**GOAL:** LMU will reinforce the value of our student-centered educational experience through personalized connections between students and the faculty and staff who support them.

**RATIONALE AND STRATEGIC APPROACH:** A key part of LMU's signature value proposition is the holistic and profoundly interpersonal educational experience our students receive. Founded in our mission to educate the whole person, LMU's special commitment to intimate class settings, academic

mentoring, rich student life opportunities, and support for student success is critical to the distinctive value we provide. In the post-pandemic environment, the quality of this personalized experience will become even more central among the reasons students and families select an LMU education. LMU can leverage its foundational commitment to whole-person education by providing learning experiences distinguished by the personalized connections students make with our faculty, staff, and other students. These connections, supported by a university-wide commitment to information sharing and collaborative student engagement programs and practices, will constitute a central reason why students choose and remain at LMU, and will help ensure that our students experience greater academic success and whole-person flourishing. These personalized connections will also foster the intimate formative experiences and lifelong bonds that help equip students to become leaders who make a positive impact in the world.

*Objective 1: Maximize the value of LMU's signature student-centered experience by re-defining "personalized connections" for the current context.*

### Actions:

- Set targets for tenure-line and full-time faculty aimed at maintaining favorable student/faculty ratio and small class sizes to preserve strong personalized connections.
- Evaluate current usage of curricular and co-curricular high-impact practices (HIPs) for student success such as global learning, engaged learning experiences, leadership development, internships and student work experiences – and develop a plan that ensures equitable access to these learning experiences.
- Research and potentially develop a four-year HIPs plan and/or an LMU Experiences Transcript to guide and document curricular and co-curricular aspects of a student's development.
- Increase support for undergraduate research and extend global and local research opportunities.
- Leverage recent gains in familiarity with technology-assisted pedagogies and establish a learning growth plan to enhance faculty, staff and student fluency to maximize technology as a key feature of LMU's personalized connections.
- Revisit and devise an updated approach to summer term and/or new "intersession" course offerings and modalities to enhance flexible learning options for students.



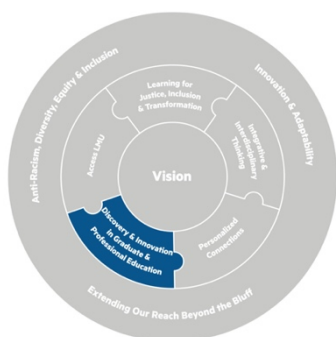
- Extend the value of an LMU education by consolidating and/or further enhancing career and professional development services, alumni engagement, and lifelong learning opportunities

*Objective 2: Sustain or improve retention and graduation rates in the face of downward pressures.*

**Actions:**

- Create and test a more coordinated, centralized, and communicative student success infrastructure that includes a “web of support” technology foundation to facilitate undergraduate and graduate student transition and onboarding, curricular and co-curricular engagement, and continued and timely progress toward their degree.
- Create structures and practices that ensure institution-wide coordination and information-sharing to support student success and evidence-based decision-making while protecting data privacy and information security.
- Evaluate current student advising and academic services and expand impact by increasing awareness of available support structures among students, faculty, and staff and expanding self-help tools.
- Enhance support structures and self-help tools for student health and well-being.
- Integrate diversity and equity considerations in devising student success structures and services.

## **Discovery and Innovation in Graduate and Professional Education Initiative**



**GOAL:** Adapt curricula and research support systems to provide competitive, mission-resonant graduate and professional programs that respond to societal needs, new market climates, and horizons of discovery.

**RATIONALE AND STRATEGIC APPROACH:** LMU's identity has long centered on our undergraduate programs, even while we have achieved distinction in signature areas of professional education (including law and education) and expanded into new areas of

doctoral (educational leadership for social justice), master's degree and non-degree/certificate study. The education graduate students require in order to respond effectively to the world's complex needs is shifting rapidly. This presents an opportunity for LMU to fulfill the Jesuit imperative of meeting people where they are by making our graduate and professional education programs more responsive to the changing external environment and more effective in promoting research and discovery in distinctive areas of strength and promise. Increasingly, our reputation, rankings, and public profile will require us to sustain academic excellence and enrollment success in key graduate and professional fields. Selectively strengthening and expanding our graduate and professional education offerings can also help diversify revenues and add alternative sources of increased enrollment. Taking a more innovative and focused approach to graduate and professional education can further enhance the university's overall academic quality and extend its impact on the world.

*Objective 1: Design and implement a “start-up” framework for graduate and professional education that facilitates the creation and continuing evolution of innovative degree programs in academic areas of promise.*

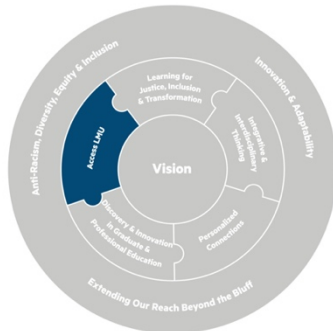
Actions:

- Establish a revolving source of competitive seed funding to assist colleges and schools in developing innovative new graduate and professional programs *en route* to establishing long-term fiscal sustainability.
- In collaboration with faculty, adapt the academic review process and program governance structures for graduate/professional program to encourage innovation and responsiveness to emerging opportunities while sustaining academic quality.
- Revise existing budget frameworks and establish appropriate incentives that promote academic innovation, market-responsiveness, and enrollment growth.
- Increase and systematize LMU’s use of relevant market research and data-based decision-making about proposed and existing graduate programs.
- Foster mission-distinctiveness and enhance mission integration in graduate and professional program curricula and student life.
- Set clear expectations and data benchmarks to increase graduate enrollments.

*Objective 2: Deepen LMU’s commitment to the teacher-scholar model by strengthening university-wide infrastructure and support for graduate and professional research activity.*

- Enhance university research grant infrastructure (sponsored projects and professional development) for faculty and graduate students.
- Evaluate current support for graduate student success and research opportunities for graduate students and invest in key support structures.
- Stabilize current doctoral program enrollments to ensure we meet requirements for national university status.
- In dialogue with faculty, determine whether to add new research doctoral programs and/or convert selected existing research master’s programs to doctoral programs.
- In collaboration with faculty, develop a coherent overall portfolio of selected research-degree master’s programs, interdisciplinary graduate/professional offerings, and market-distinctive graduate online/hybrid programs, and establish appropriate infrastructure to support academic quality for the new portfolio of programs.

## Access LMU Initiative



**GOAL:** Expand access to an LMU education, especially among distance learners, post-traditional students, students in non-degree or continuing education programs, and other students who have encountered obstacles to pursuing traditional forms of higher education.

**RATIONALE AND STRATEGIC APPROACH:** A period of disruptive change – including rising national and global inequality, an economic downturn, and increased competition among universities for high

school graduates – poses a potential long-term challenge to LMU's currently-strong enrollments. In the aftermath of the pandemic, we are more conscious of LMU's dependence on our on-campus and in-person learning modalities. At the same time, LMU's recent experience with transposing our student-centered higher education to remote modalities gives us the opportunity to leverage what we have learned through targeted, intentional exploration of distance learning modalities to reach new populations of learners. To address these issues, LMU should enhance fundraising for endowed and current use scholarships and devise a sustainable long-term enrollment strategy that improves access and reduces lower-income students' unmet need and dependence on loans. In addition, LMU should adapt its current modes of serving students to address the needs of several categories of students more deliberately. These include: (a) distance learners; (b) "post-traditional" students, who typically are 25 or older, seeking to complete a degree, and balancing their studies with full-time employment, dependent care, or other responsibilities; and (c) students seeking non-degree professional and continuing education. Many of these students tend to put a premium on self-paced, accelerated, evening, weekend, or other flexible learning options, and may be easier to serve through branch/satellite campuses and/or online/hybrid learning modalities. Learning to adapt to the needs of these new student populations can enable us to fulfill a commitment to improved access while expanding our sources of new enrollments beyond traditional undergraduate populations.

*Objective 1: Create new access opportunities to an LMU education, including among populations of distance learners and post-traditional students, and adapt our structures and practices to serve better the distinctive needs of these students.*

### Actions:

- Devise an overall enrollment and financial aid strategy aimed at balancing stable long-term enrollment patterns with improving access and reducing unmet need and dependence on loans for lower-income students.
- Through strategic fundraising initiatives, increase scholarship endowments and current use scholarship funds.
- Convene a working group to conduct a market/needs assessment and develop an action plan for serving distance learners and post-traditional students and develop an action plan.

- Explore how using prior learning assessments and other mechanisms that recognize educational achievements can facilitate appropriate academic progress for distance learners and post-traditional students and propose potential opportunities.
- Explore options for expanded online/hybrid learning, flexible learning schedules and self-paced/accelerated degree programs for distance learners and post-traditional students and outline proposals to actualize.
- Expand financial aid, advising, career center and other support services to better accommodate evening, weekend, and after hours learning.
- Support and resource faculty who focus on adapting teaching to serve distance learners and post-traditional students.
- Research, outline, and leverage opportunities to enroll mission-appropriate cohorts of students through external partnerships, strategic acquisitions, or program mergers.

*Objective 2: Broaden access to LMU's academic experience by re-configuring and selectively expanding LMU's non-degree professional and continuing education programs.*

Actions:

- Establish appropriate academic leadership structures and charge them with re-imagining, re-configuring, and re-branding LMU's continuing education offerings.
- Revise offerings of non-degree/certificate programs to ensure expansion in key professional fields, especially leveraging LMU's Playa Vista and downtown Law School campuses to take advantage of L.A.'s strengths at the nexus of the media-technology sectors.
- Develop outreach approaches that help potential non-degree-seeking learners see themselves as benefiting from an LMU education.

## **Implementation and Next Steps**

### *From Strategic Plan to Implementation Plan*

A strategic plan identifies an organization's vision of its future and the goals, objectives, and actions that will realize that vision. Bringing the plan's goals to fruition, however, requires a more detailed specification of how the plan will be implemented, including identification of metrics of success, timetables for action, and similar matters. This means LMU needs a structure to execute the plan, as well as an oversight mechanism to evaluate progress toward the plan's goals and objectives and to establish and, when necessary, recommend modifications to the plan's actions, timetables, and metrics.

### *Principles for Implementing the Strategic Plan*

LMU's overall approach to implementation and oversight should mirror the key elements of our three strategic commitments: diversity, equity, and inclusion; innovation and adaptability; and extending our reach and impact. Our implementation practices and oversight structures should exemplify these commitments and balance them effectively. Specifically:

- Our oversight structures should draw on an array of perspectives across differences in identity, role, etc. They should harmonize an inclusive and diversity-embracing approach with functional efficacy in decision-making.

- We should be open to evolving our structures even when doing so runs contrary to past practice or expectation, encouraging cooperative effort and information sharing across unit and disciplinary boundaries, and ensuring that the plan's implementation is appropriately transparent and adaptable to developing circumstances. Such adaptations should include exemplary models, structures, and practices of shared governance.
- Our approach to oversight and implementation should be continually conscious of and responsive to changes in the external environment and emerging best practices and innovations across higher education.

In addition, the mechanisms we adopt for implementing and overseeing the strategic plan need to interact effectively with existing management structures, shared governance practices, and budgeting processes to ensure appropriate modes of responsibility, accountability, consultation, and information sharing. It is understood that the plan's spotlight initiatives will have presumptive priority in allocating strategic funds through the annual budgeting process through the duration of the plan.

#### *Planning Advisory Council*

Primary oversight of the plan will be assigned to a Planning Advisory Council which will meet at least twice per year and will report to the president. Its membership, appointed by the president, will include senior administrators, faculty, staff, and student members familiar with the plan's initiatives as well as those responsible for implementing the plan, including the spotlight initiative implementation team leaders (see below). This group will review reports on progress toward each spotlight initiative and the plan as a whole; make recommendations to the president on potential adjustments to goals, objectives, actions, and timetables as needed; and share periodic updates on the plan's progress with the LMU community.

#### *Spotlight Initiative Implementation Teams*

The university will also establish separate implementation teams in support of each of the plan's five spotlight initiatives in order to coordinate action across the university. To ensure effectiveness, these teams will be small and agile and should consist of faculty, staff, and administrative members as appropriate for the subject matter and the organizational roles and responsibilities involved. During the summer and fall of 2021, these teams will be charged with drafting an implementation plan for each spotlight initiative, including recommended actions, timetables, resource requirements and metrics for success, consulting with partners and impacted constituencies as appropriate. As implementation proceeds, these teams will meet regularly to coordinate efforts and report to the Planning Advisory Council on progress, resource requirements, and recommended adjustments to the overall implementation plan. Each implementation team will have a designated team leader who will serve ex officio on the Planning Advisory Council. A subcommittee of the Planning Advisory Council composed of the implementation team leaders will meet between council sessions to coordinate efforts between the teams, identify potential interrelations and efficiencies between the spotlight initiatives, and prepare items for the council's consideration.

#### *Unit-Level Planning*

In addition to the university strategic plan, many academic and operational units of the university will want to develop unit-level plans outlining their strategic agenda. In order to maximize

creativity and flexibility while ensuring an appropriate degree of university-wide alignment, LMU will take a “loosely-coupled” approach to unit-level planning. This approach will invite all units to identify their most significant goals, objectives, and actions for the coming years, while also asking them to report regularly on how their unit’s plan aligns with and contributes to achieving the goals and objectives of the five spotlight initiatives. Not every unit will be directly involved in every spotlight initiative, but all units will be expected to support and contribute to achieving the goals of the five spotlight initiatives as a whole. These planning processes will be led at the unit-level and should include substantial consultation with stakeholders and respect appropriate shared governance roles and responsibilities.

#### *Outcomes and Metrics*

Effective implementation of a strategic plan requires establishing specific outcomes and metrics that will be used to assess the plan’s success. The outcomes and metrics selected should be meaningful to the goal of each spotlight initiative and should be capable of being measured and reported with appropriate ease and frequency. Metrics should be valid, specific, realistic, time-bound, and aligned to the initiative’s goal. Metrics may include a combination of inputs (activities and projects that contribute to the work of the plan) and outputs (targets and outcomes achieved by the plan). We should be selective about the metrics chosen to distinguish those measures that are most significant for the overarching goal of each spotlight initiative. A good question to ask ourselves when selecting and aligning key metrics for each goal is: “If the targets and/or outcomes for this spotlight initiative are achieved, will it improve our institution’s progress in this area?” Data collected for the metrics should be integrated with the university’s overall data-sharing structures and pertinent to evidence-based decision making. In developing proposed outcomes and metrics, the Spotlight Initiative Implementation Teams should consult widely with appropriate stakeholders.