# LMU STRATEGIC PLANNING 2021-26
## FEEDBACK AND DISCERNMENT
## CONSOLIDATED FEEDBACK

### STRATEGIC PLANNING STEERING COMMITTEE
November 2, 2020

1. **What do community members hope might be different in LMU's future and its impact on the world if we make good choices in the plan? List the most important hopes you heard.**

   • Clarify sense of identity and purpose/"North Star"/who we are and where we're going

   • Take risks and leap forward/elevate aspirational goals we strategically want to achieve

   • Commit to DEI/anti-racism work and to make it bolder and more visible

   • More focus on academics and teaching/quality of faculty

   • Emphasize research/build up R2 standing

   • Better integrate/highlight/support/celebrate graduate/professional education, programs and student life into our overall focus

   • Put a stake in the ground/distinguish LMU from other institutions

   • Attract the right students, faculty and staff to LMU based on mission

   • Provide students with education/experiences that we are distinguished for – this is what the world needs now

   • Shared understanding our religious affiliation (Catholic, Jesuit, CSJ/RSHM)

   • Bold, confident articulation of identity and values without apology or obfuscation (even at the risk of not being everyone's first choice)

   • Better distinguish tactical questions (essential operational functions) from strategic priorities (what we want to be known for and what we want to invest in)

   • More effectively address sustainability and the environment

   • Clarify next steps on internationalization

   • Better mitigate high cost of living in LA for faculty and staff

   • Make LMU more affordable for students (lower tuition, reduced costs)

   • Find other revenues and resources (fundraising, revenue diversification)

   • Cooperate together better, be more adaptable together

   • Harmonize LMU's internal self-understanding and external self-understanding better

   • Plan should have measurable outcomes and metrics

2. **What do community members fear might happen to LMU's future and its impact on the world if we do not make good choices in the plan? List the most important fears you heard.**

- Negative financial impact of low enrollment/demographic cliff (impact on personnel, small programs, etc.) long-term survival/flourishing

- That in our attempt to respond to enrollment pressures, we are going to become like everyone else, we may lose our distinctiveness

- That we will do nothing bold and maintain status quo/play it safe/follow not lead/stagnate/"same old LMU"

- Being too bold, being forced to change, consequences of making mistakes

- Losing our small class sizes/"high-touch" approach

- Fail to prioritize research

- That we will push academics to the background and foreground things less central to our encouragement of learning

- Losing sight of liberal arts tradition

- Losing our competitive position by failing to invest appropriately

- Lack of enough creativity and imagination, ideas buried in educational marketing

- Not investing enough in our faculty/staff who are already here/feeling underappreciated/undervalued/undercompensated

- Fear of being left behind; shifting focus will leave some people out; fear of change

- Actions not following words – lip service but not putting priorities into practice – meet the new plan, same as the old plan

- Priorities will not be measurable/measured

- Dwindling resources will prevent funding of initiatives

- Treating technology as an end in itself rather than instrumental to educational goals

- High cost of living in LA will prevent recruitment and retention of faculty/staff

- Branding, image, rankings and revenue will overshadow value of LMU education and student/staff/faculty experience.

- Focus too much on athletics/image, not enough on academics

- Compromise our mission/identity/commitment to social justice

- Voices will not be heard/communications will be sanitized/safe/vetted/inauthentic, will paper over the messiness and disagreement that are part of intellectual community

- Community feedback will be lost or ignored

- Losing our sense of community/care of the person

- That we will be too bound by our sense of place and space and not think broadly enough about reaching out further (virtually, new locations, etc.)

- Focus on anti-racism may obscure forms of identity/difference issues that have impacts and need to be addressed (other –isms)

- That we won't take the significance of the current moment seriously enough – assume "back to normal"

### 3. What are the common denominators we heard among the feedback?

- Need for focused/concrete strategic priorities to orient the whole institution. Strategic issues include many strong elements of what we are/what we do, but not clearly integrated together. What we choose should permeate all aspects of what we do

- People tended to focus on how the plan applied directly to them rather than the institution as a whole

- We should build the plan around what distinguishes us and our competitive advantage

- Urgent sense that the world going the wrong direction – we want LMU to do something different, counter-cultural – racism/climate change/losing our Catholic identity –LMU should be doing better than the world is doing and/or helping to make up the gap.

- The way we choose to be bold and make the world a better place should be built around student experience/academics/whole person education

- Preliminary report is too focused on institutional functioning rather than what directly impacts student academic/personal experience

- Thinking about life after LMU for our students as an important part of the plan – careers and jobs, alumni engagement, lifelong learning

- Desire for a more strategic focus on academic identity and activities – faculty, research, R2 status, graduate/professional programs as more integrated parts of a strategic whole

- Tether ourselves to being anti-racist and social-justice-centered institution

- DEI/Anti-Racism needs to be handled carefully – we can lead and be authentic, but we have to avoid treating it as an add-on or after-thought or be seen as trend-following

- We need more resources now to support students/faculty/staff

- Need to reduce tuition dependency, diversify our revenue sources.

- Anti-racism, diversity, equity and inclusion + nimbleness ought to be woven throughout the report

- Interdisciplinarity is likely to be key and should be integrated across issues; connection between interdisciplinarity, breaking down silos, and nimbleness

- Current higher education environment is fragile and volatile – LMU is not totally well-positioned to meet the challenges ahead, we have areas of vulnerability

- Importance of our reputation to our enrollment and overall success

- Emphasis on creativity/innovation is an opportunity to be a distinctive feature for LMU

- This is more of a moment for us to build on existing strengths (and existing faculty/staff/students) than for us to address any major deficiencies

- Yearning for "something" that is not yet clearly seen

- Need greater clarity around strategic goals vs. tactics/operations – e.g., for some, enrollment success and first-choice university should be results not priorities; technology may be a tool and not a priority

- Plan should impact the world/vision should focus on the problems of the world

## 4. What are the most important tensions that we heard between perspectives that are separately valid but difficult to resolve?

- Anticipating revenue shortfalls or wanting reduced tuition cost versus still wanting changes that are resource demanding

- Tradition/history versus orientation to the future

- What we want and cherish versus what the world demands

- R2/rankings trajectory versus maintaining liberal arts focus/distinctiveness

- More emphasis on liberal arts, undergraduate, humanistic, holistic education versus too much emphasis on liberal arts/undergraduate instead of graduate/professional, research, STEM, etc.

- Wanting big, bold change/pursing aspirational goals versus not losing our sense of who we are/maintaining our identity/fear of change

- Improving nimbleness versus ensuring appropriate consultation/shared governance

- Catholic (and Jesuit/CSJ/RSHM) identity and values – desire to foreground and clarify self-understanding versus desire to promote pluralism/inclusion/diversity/interfaith

- Articulating an overall vision for the university for the long term versus articulating a vision specific to this 5-year plan

- Which strategic issues are the "whats" (substantive outcomes) versus which are the "hows" (approaches/methods)?

- Competition for resources as a zero-sum game

- How do we balance need for change/strategic choice with including everyone/not having people feel left behind?

- Interdependence of many of the plan's proposed elements – hard to eliminate some without impacting others