

MERCER
UNIVERSITY

FRAMING THE NEXT
STRATEGIC
PLAN



Strategic Plan Steering Committee

Mr. Larry Brumley, Chief of Staff and Senior Vice President for Marketing Communications; Dr. Susan Codone, Director of Center for Teaching and Learning, Associate Professor of Technical Communications, School of Engineering; Mr. Scott Mabone, Assistant Director of Regional Academic Center Operations; Dr. Susan Malone, Vice Provost for Institutional Effectiveness and Janie F. New Baptist Professor of Education; and Dr. Marilyn Mindingall, Senior Vice Provost for Administration and Special Programs.

STEERING COMMITTEE CHAIR — Ms. Kellie Appel, Senior Vice President for Strategic Initiatives.

10 STRATEGIC ISSUES FOR MERCER TO CONSIDER

1

FAITH-BASED HERITAGE

Mercer's mission to teach, to learn, to create, to discover, to inspire, to empower and to serve is grounded in the faith of the pioneers who established this University 183 years ago. Our heritage as an institution founded and nurtured by Baptists continues to undergird the University through:

- Mercer's academic programs that prepare men and women for lives of full-time ministry;
- Our strong commitment to intellectual and religious freedom that invites faculty and students from a rich array of faith traditions to engage one another in exploring questions that



are fundamental to an informed life — questions about meaning and good and evil, questions about God, and questions about life and death; and

- Our emphasis on inspiring students to lead lives of service to others, including Mercer’s unique emphasis on integrating its service and research missions to meet human needs across the globe.

A distinctive, valued mission is essential for a private university to remain strong. Historically, institutions that have ended their denominational affiliation have seen their religious heritage decline in significance. Given this experience at other institutions, how will Mercer ensure that its heritage as an institution founded, nurtured and sustained by people of faith continues to inform and enrich the University’s character?

WORKING GROUP CHAIR — Dr. Craig McMaban, Dean of Chapel, University Minister, and Director of Mercer On Mission

2

FACULTY AND STAFF

Our aspiration at Mercer is to ensure that every student is inspired and empowered to major in changing the world. To achieve this aspiration requires the University to recruit faculty and staff who have talent as well as commitment to this particular objective. What steps will enable Mercer to identify, recruit, nurture, and retain faculty and staff who will enable the University to be a place that inspires and empowers students to change the world?

WORKING GROUP CO-CHAIRS — Dr. Scott Davis, Provost and Professor of Chemistry, College of Liberal Arts; Dr. Jim Netberton, Executive Vice President for Administration and Finance and Professor of Educational Leadership, Tift College of Education



3

POST-GRADUATE OPPORTUNITIES

Mercer is committed to empowering the lives of students by creating and nurturing educational experiences that are relevant, rigorous and inspiring. These experiences enrich the lives of students and lead to outstanding post-graduate opportunities: interesting and rewarding careers that enable Mercer graduates to change the world; prestigious scholarships and fellowships; admission into leading graduate and professional schools; meaningful experiences with organizations such as the Peace Corps and Teach For America; and quality residencies and judicial clerkships. The University has made extraordinary progress in this area as our academic reputation has grown and Mercer increasingly has become recognized among the finest research universities in the nation. Our graduates are competing successfully for premier post-graduate opportunities in a wide array of disciplines. What strategies will enable the University to continue enhancing post-graduate opportunities for Mercer graduates?

WORKING GROUP CO-CHAIRS — Dr. David Davis, Director of Scholarships and Fellowships and Associate Professor of English, College of Liberal Arts; Dr. Doug Pearson, Vice President and Dean of Students



4

RESEARCH

Research is central to the work of the University. Engaging students in research provides vibrant learning experiences, and indeed Mercer has been ranked among the nation's leading universities for undergraduate research. Active research agendas keep faculty members on the cutting edges of their disciplines, while making them better teachers. And contributing to the expansion of knowledge and understanding is among the obligations of great universities. For these reasons, Mercer's Board of Trustees revised the University's mission statement in 2013 explicitly to include research as a key component of the University's mission. As the level of research activity within the University has grown, the Carnegie Foundation has reclassified Mercer as a research university, the University has been admitted to membership in the Georgia Research Alliance, and various college rankings now include Mercer among the nation's leading research universities. The *Research That Reaches Out* initiative is fostering a culture that uniquely integrates the research and service missions of the University. How should resources available to support the University's research mission be focused to obtain the maximum benefit for students while enabling Mercer to make the most significant contribution to the greater good?

WORKING GROUP CHAIR — Dr. Wayne Glasgow, Senior Vice Provost for Research and Professor of Biomedical Sciences, School of Medicine



5

STUDY ABROAD AND SERVICE-LEARNING

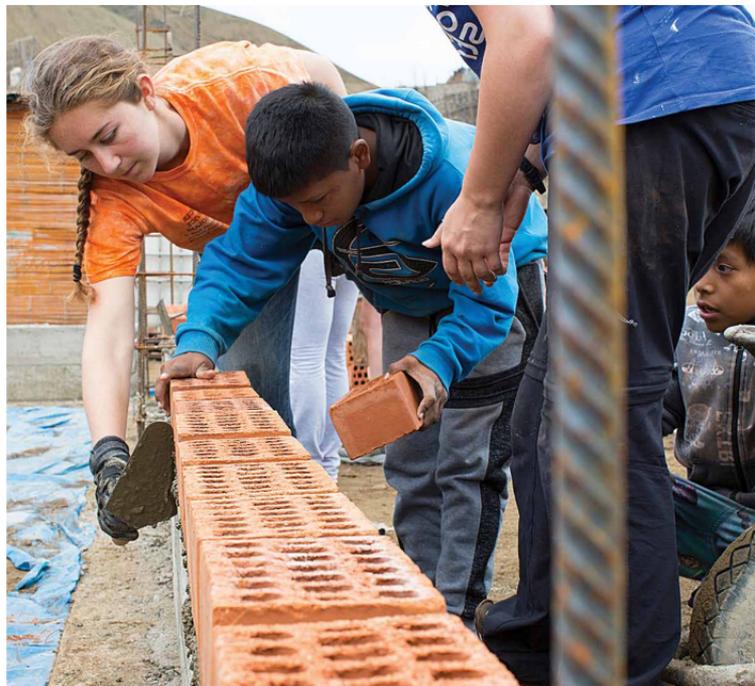
Study abroad and service-learning can provide especially engaging learning experiences for students. In the area of service-learning, Mercer has become one of the most decorated institutions in the United States. The *Research That Reaches Out* initiative uniquely integrates the research and service missions of the University. *Mercer On Mission* provides learning experiences for students that integrate research, service, and study abroad in a single impactful package that inspires students to deploy their gifts and talents to change the world. The University is committed to these integrated learning experiences, which enrich undergraduate education at Mercer. How do we deploy resources to produce the greatest impact for our students in the areas of service-learning and study abroad?

WORKING GROUP CO-CHAIRS — Dr. Mary Alice Morgan, Senior Vice Provost for Service-Learning and Professor of English and Women's and Gender Studies, College of Liberal Arts; Dr. Julie Strecker, Director of International Programs; and Dr. Bridget Trogden, Director of Research that Reaches Out and Associate Professor of Chemistry, College of Liberal Arts

6

NON-TRADITIONAL STUDENTS

Mercer provides high-quality and relevant programs that empower the lives of non-traditional students — college graduates seeking a change in career path, graduates seeking advanced degrees that will enhance their career prospects, and adult



learners seeking to complete degree programs begun at other institutions. How will Mercer most effectively continue to serve these student populations in the years ahead? What modes of delivery should be employed to deliver impactful learning experiences? What programs will be most relevant and empowering to these students?

WORKING GROUP CHAIR — Dr. Penny Elkins, Senior Vice President of Enrollment Management and Fred L. Miles Endowed Chair of Educational Leadership, Tift College of Education

7 RELEVANT CURRICULUM

One of Mercer's strengths has been our capacity to adapt to meet the evolving educational needs of our communities. Mercer launched the School of Medicine to address an emerging crisis in rural health care and the School of Engineering to meet the need for well-educated engineers in this region who could solve problems and effectively communicate those solutions. The Mercer Health Sciences Center was created to meet emerging needs arising from changes in the delivery of health care. As the needs of communities and society change and higher education continues to evolve, what modifications will be required in our curriculum to ensure the continued relevance of our work? What additional programs should be considered? Are there programs that should be deemphasized?

WORKING GROUP CHAIR — Dr. Scott Davis, Provost and Professor of Chemistry, College of Liberal Arts



8

UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS

Mercer has experienced tremendous expansion of its traditional undergraduate student enrollment in Macon, growing from 2,300 students a decade ago to 3,100 in the fall of 2016. At the same time, we have seen a significant increase in the academic profile of entering freshmen. Mercer has been highly responsible in controlling its price to ensure that a Mercer education remains accessible to a diverse socio-economic population. As a consequence, Mercer enhances the education of its students by exposing them to a richer diversity of colleagues than any of its peer institutions. As the University approaches its third century of service, what are the optimal student population, academic profile, and price in our undergraduate program?

WORKING GROUP CHAIR — Dr. Penny Elkins, Senior Vice President of Enrollment Management and Fred L. Miles Endowed Chair of Educational Leadership, Tift College of Education



9

INTERCOLLEGIATE ATHLETICS

As the cost of competing in NCAA Division I intercollegiate athletics continues to increase, universities must carefully monitor the return on investment derived from participation in intercollegiate athletics. The most important return on Mercer's investment in intercollegiate athletics mirrors the return on our investments in music groups, theatre programs, intercollegiate debate teams, student government and other co-curricular activities. Our students develop skills and qualities

of character through participation that supplements and enhances the lessons being learned and skills being developed in our classrooms and laboratories. Competing at the highest level of intercollegiate athletics also creates the kind of vibrancy and spirit on campus that is attractive to talented young people, builds pride and loyalty among important constituencies of the University, and helps raise the profile of the institution. Mercer has experienced all these benefits as the only private university in Georgia to compete in Division I, through regular contests against other high profile national universities, through moments such as Mercer's victory over Duke in the second round of the NCAA men's basketball tournament and Mercer's recent football game against Georgia Tech. We attach great value to the benefits of competing in Division I. Considering the wide array of subjective benefits associated with Division I competition, what measures and methodologies should the University employ to ensure that the investment being made in Division I intercollegiate athletics is appropriate?

*WORKING GROUP CHAIR — Dr. David Keith, Dean and Professor of Music,
Townsend School of Music*



10

FACILITIES, EQUIPMENT AND TECHNOLOGY

Beautiful campuses, high-quality facilities and equipment, and current technology contribute to inspiring and empowering learning experiences at Mercer. The University's facilities, equipment, and technology must also keep pace with projected growth in student population and changes in academic programs. In recent years, the University added approximately 900 beds of undergraduate student housing and extensively renovated several existing student residential facilities, while adding several new dining options on the Macon campus. With respect to academic facilities, the University has added a Medical Education and Research facility in Savannah, a Medical School practice plan facility in Macon, the Tattnall Square Center for the Arts, and the Bell House to support the music program. We are completing construction of the Spearman C. Godsey Science Center and planning a new pharmacy building in Atlanta, while also renovating and repurposing a number of existing academic facilities. The University has added new athletics facilities for football and lacrosse and is completing construction



of a new baseball stadium, while continually working to upgrade existing venues. What academic, residential, student life, administrative and athletic facilities, as well as equipment and technology, will be required to meet the University's foreseeable needs? What facilities will require renovation in the coming years and how will the University prioritize maintenance and renovation initiatives? How will the University prioritize technology to ensure that the needs of students, faculty and staff are met?

WORKING GROUP CHAIR — Dr. Jim Netherton, Executive Vice President for Administration and Finance and Professor of Educational Leadership, Tift College of Education

UNIT-LEVEL STRATEGIC PLANNING

In addition to the 10 overarching issues to be addressed in our University-wide strategic plan and as an integral component of this strategic planning process, each academic and administrative unit of the University will be charged with developing a new strategic plan that is consistent with Mercer's mission and vision, as well as the priorities that will be established in the new strategic plan.



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