

Progress Report on *Augustana 2020: A Strategic Plan*

This is an overview of the areas in which we've seen substantial progress toward fulfilling the vision and strategic directions of *Augustana 2020*. The highlights in this brief report have been selected because they reinforce fulfillment of a strategic direction and represent substantial progress or completion of a tactic.

Like the development of *Augustana 2020*, implementation of the strategic plan is a responsibility shared among all stakeholders. There is much more to do, and countless activities, programs and assessments are underway as we fulfill our student-centered plan for Augustana.

A more complete progress report on strategic directions one and two is available at augustana.edu/strategicplan.

Strategy I: Enhanced Preparation. Explicitly focus the Augustana experience to better assist students in taking the next step in their vocational journeys through timely placement in rewarding and meaningful jobs and careers, and high graduate school admission rates.

Planning group and Lead Implementers: Pareena Lawrence, Kristin Douglas, Michael Edmondson, Ned Laff, Jeffrey Ratliff-Crain, and Sharon Varallo **in consultation/collaboration with department chairs, faculty council, interested faculty members, governance committees and advisory boards.**

Action plan: Position career preparation and post-graduate planning as essential parts of fulfilling our mission.

Major achievements within Strategic Direction 1

CORE is now at the center of Augustana in Olin Center: CORE (Careers, Opportunities, Research and Exploration) centralizes advising, community outreach, study away, student research, professional preparation and vocational exploration in one central location anchored by the Office of Career Development, which increased from a staff of four to a staff of 13 to better serve our students. The renovation of the first and third floors of Olin Center was completed on schedule, and CORE was introduced to the campus community the week of August 18, 2014.

(This achievement responds to our goal to relocate the services provided by the Community Engagement Center and Advising Office to the center of campus, and expand and reorganize the Internships and Careers Office into the Office of Career and Professional Development.)

Career development gets a new focus—education: To better prepare students, Augustana is implementing an educational model of career development. Augustana's Office of Career Development is embedded in CORE and has started to build programs and services across several functional areas of campus. The Office of Career Development has a growing portfolio of programs and services, including:

Alumni Connections. This program connects students with alumni in a specific field of interest for job shadowing or advice. We will introduce an entire suite of programs and services to support alumni and create stronger alumni connections with campus.

Augie Hub. With an updated Augie Hub, students can more easily find jobs, internships and other career-related opportunities.

Career Counseling. Career counselors help students with interview skills and résumé and cover letter writing.

EDGE Center/Entrepreneurship. Serving more than 160 local clients, EDGE is Augustana's entrepreneurship center for event planning, graphic design, project management and a host of other small business-related projects.

Events and Programming. Augustana is hosting an employment fair and a new graduate school fair in the fall.

Publications. The Office of Career Development will release several publications, including a career development handbook.

Viking Score. This career preparedness scorecard is a data-driven approach to help students better understand how they can prepare themselves professionally.

Vocational Exploration. Staff focused on vocational exploration help students reflect upon their skills and passions, and how to combine these in pursuing a meaningful career and a life of purpose.

Student research connects students and faculty around common interests: As part of CORE, a focus on student research resources has been added for students of all disciplines seeking information about how to get connected with faculty and others for research opportunities, funding options, and outlets for presenting or publishing works. Towards this end, the Student Research Committee works closely with the other areas in CORE, most notably the Upper Mississippi Center (UMC). Advising and campus evaluation for national fellowships and scholarships, as well as the college's own Board of Trustees Fellowships, are now managed by CORE. This will allow for greater visibility for these opportunities and early connections with students who will be potential candidates for Fulbright and other national awards.

(Responds to our goal to further develop research and creative scholarship opportunities for students that will lead to high-profile presentations, publications, scholarships and awards.)

The Viking Score aims to be a national model: Our new Viking Score program of professional preparation will feature an assessment tool recommended for all students to complete throughout each year in school. Sessions on vocational exploration and career development are now part of orientation and registration programming, Welcome Week events and the First Year Experience.

(Responds to our goal to: Include vocational discernment and career and professional development in the first-year orientation, with related structured activities for 2nd-, 3rd- and 4th-year students.)

Career and Professional Development focuses our annual Symposia: Each Symposium during the 2013-14 academic year included career and professional development discussions and presentations. Alumni were included as featured presenters, each reflecting on their Augustana liberal arts experience in relation to their current professions. Both features will continue with future Symposia. This fall, the ProFair job fair is scheduled the same day as Symposium. The two events will be advertised together and ProFair will be treated as a "session" students can attend. We anticipate increased attendance compared with previous years when students needed to miss two days of classes to attend both events.

(Responds to our goal to ensure that campus-wide events, such as the three campuswide Symposia, highlight and integrate advising and career development).

Augustana pilots an online class: Three online courses were offered in summer of 2014. The courses were open to students from Luther College; likewise, two online Luther courses were available to Augustana students. The Augustana courses were well received by Augustana students, exceeding enrollment minimums.

(Responds to our goal to pilot programs with a limited number of similar institutions to deliver blended or online learning in ways that add depth to majors, offer new areas of learning, and enhance student learning outcomes and access [over the next 5 years as opportunities arise].)

Strategy II—Integrated Experiences. Connect the distinctive aspects and outcomes of an integrated residential college experience to what is most valuable for success in college and after by ensuring that all students combine an individualized set of curricular and co-curricular experiences to maximize their educational development in college, and provide superior preparation for life after college.

Action plan: Reimagine the relationship between academic and co- and extra-curricular activities to more effectively prepare students for post-graduate achievement.

Planning group and Lead Implementers: Pareena Lawrence, Evelyn Campbell, Ken Brill, Kristin Douglas, Mike Egan, Rob Elflin, Wendy Hilton-Morrow, Steve Klien, Ned Laff, Christina Lorge-Grover, Jeffrey Ratliff-Crain, Mark Salisbury, Sharon Varallo, Mary Windeknecht and Mike Zapolski in consultation/collaboration with department chairs, faculty council, interested faculty members, and governance committees.

Major achievements within Strategic Direction 2

All stakeholders will focus on the nine student learning outcomes (SLOs): As part of integrating in- and out-of-classroom learning, all areas on campus—from academics and athletics to student life and residential life—will focus on programming (individual and joint) that centers on developing our nine SLOs across all student-learning experiences. This focus on the SLOs is not at the expense of rigor in our curriculum. Department and programs continue to offer and monitor a curriculum that is rigorous and prepares students for their individual career paths. The focus on our SLOs has added a level of intentionality regarding student growth to all of our programs and experiences.

The all-campus retreat on August 18, 2014, brought approximately 400 faculty, staff, administrators and student leaders together to discuss the progress and implementation of the strategic plan, and in particular, the integration agenda that centers on the SLOs. The goal was to develop a common understanding of our campus-wide SLOs as well as a common language with which to discuss the SLOs with students. As a result, we now have resources identifying where learning in each SLO occurs on campus. These resources will allow faculty, staff, coaches and student leaders to facilitate conversations with students, helping them identify opportunities for personal growth in intellectual sophistication, interpersonal maturity and intrapersonal conviction. Knowing where learning happens across campus allows us to begin the work of intentional integration—connecting and making visible to students the learning that is happening inside and outside of the classroom. We initiated this conversation at the retreat and will continue to foster conversations and develop and refine programs in these areas.

(Responds to our goal to ensure all academic and co-curricular programs are rigorous, meet the college's expected student learning outcomes and demonstrably prepare students to undertake self-authorship of their education to meet the demands of the workplace and graduate and professional schools.)

Welcome Week improves with new partnerships: Collaborations between the Offices of Academic Affairs and Student Life have allowed us to take a fresh look at existing programming and partnerships with the goal of improving the student experience. Current national research on student success and our own student survey data informed our direction. For example, planning and executing Welcome Week 2014 was a collaborative project that included staff from the Office of Student Life and Leadership; the Offices of Residential Life, Institutional Research and Advising; as well as faculty from the Liberal Studies First Year program. Welcome Week outcomes were jointly identified, and all aspects of programming were designed to ensure connections to the outcomes. As a result, the community outreach event previously scheduled for Welcome Week was replaced by Augie Life 101, a conference-style group of educational sessions designed to provide our first-year students with resources and skills to navigate the initial stages of the transition from high school to college. The program featured more than 20 faculty/professional staff

offering nearly 30 breakout sessions. Session topics ranged from how to communicate with professors to how to survive the awkwardness of sharing a dorm room. Approximately one-third of our first-year cohort attended sessions and were enthusiastic about what they learned. Students also were introduced to the newly developed Community Principles for Students as a concrete way to explain the values of the Augustana community and instill a culture of accountability, responsibility and caring.

Peer mentoring program is revamped: New responsibilities and enhanced training were provided to our peer mentors. Peer mentors now conduct activities and programs with their student groups each term and report concerns to first-year advisors, all designed to better integrate our students to campus life and enhance student success. The peer mentor training program is centered on building competencies in team-building, small-group facilitation, and cultural understanding and awareness.

(Responds to our goal to create intentional co- and extra-curricular programs designed by faculty and student life professionals that capitalize on and place value in the experiential learning that takes place outside of the classroom.)

Co-curricular transcript is introduced: The co-curricular transcript (CCT) was rolled out to students during the 2014 spring term. We continue to integrate the CCT into the fabric of Augustana culture through the Office of Student Life and Leadership and CORE.

(Responds to our goals to develop a meaningful co-curricular transcript and establish effective ways to help students successfully use this tool to obtain employment or graduate and professional school admission in their field.)

Champions for integrating in- and out-of-classroom experiences: Ken Brill, associate dean and vice president of student life, and Dr. Kristin Douglas, associate dean of student success and persistence, were assigned as liaisons from the Offices of Student Life and Academic Affairs, respectively, to serve as point persons in the integration efforts. A group of administrators from the two offices meet monthly to lead and set the agenda, monitor progress, discuss programming and manage the priorities.

(Responds to our goal to assign an associate dean to work with all stakeholders in integrating student learning outcomes throughout the curriculum, co- and extra-curricular activities and student life.)

Athletic teams and faculty mentors work together: Working with our athletics department, we have created better ways for coaches to communicate with faculty. Joint meetings have identified the challenges that faculty and coaches face in their individual roles. To overcome some of these barriers, we have created new programs and tools—including a faculty athletic team mentoring program, with 20 faculty members participating in its first year. In addition, faculty have been encouraged to be clear about their expectations of student-athletes, especially when participation leads to missed coursework, and to enlist the help of the coaches as necessary. Templates for expectations and communication have been provided to faculty and coaches to help facilitate this promising new initiative.

Strategic partnerships between athletics and residential life: This year, the Office of Residential Life has five professional staff members who also serve as coaches within athletics. Professional staff live in the residence hall and perform duties such as providing support during crises, adjudicating conduct cases and supervising student staff—but also have responsibilities with men's and women's soccer, rowing, men's and women's tennis, football, and strength and condition coaching. The learning outcomes and neighborhood support structure established within the residence halls is therefore carried over into the athletics program. Additionally, residential life has established housing for two coaches who serve as on-call liaisons for any issues related to recruits on campus. Athletic recruits have a better overnight experience when they know athletic partners are available to assist with any behavioral or medical

emergencies. These partnerships have enhanced communication on campus, allowing us to better identify at-risk students and intervene more quickly and efficiently in getting students connected with the support structures necessary for success.

(Responds to our goal to develop an advising system focused on holistic student development, including academic, co-curricular, social and career goal achievement. Also responds to our goal to advise each student using a team including a faculty member, student life and/or career development staff, and upper-class students.)

Center for Faculty Enrichment opens in Olin, as part of CORE: The Center for Faculty Enrichment (CFE) launched in fall of 2014. In conjunction with the Academic Technology Committee, the CFE is planning a faculty academy for the 2014-15 academic year focused on the topic of “Blended Learning and the Flipped Classroom.” This series of workshops will use presentations by faculty, webinars and hands-on practical sessions to provide faculty with best practices for using online technologies to advance our educational mission and the SLOs. The CFE also has invested in an on-demand development webinar subscription to provide faculty with convenient access to innovative teaching ideas, including use of blended and online approaches. *(Responds to our goal to develop a program in digital innovation through the Center for Faculty Enrichment to support faculty in using available technology to improve student-learning outcomes and to facilitate integration of in- and out-of-class learning.)*

Problem-solving for our community delivers deep learning: The Augustana community is actively engaged in community-based learning and service projects, especially to solve community-based problems, through the work of the Entrepreneurial Development through Guided Experiences (EDGE) Center and the Upper Mississippi Center (UMC). This year, in conjunction with the UMC, faculty and students from seven departments are partnering with residents of the neighboring KeyStone Neighborhood in problem-based research projects. The departments include anthropology, art, biology, environmental studies, geography, history and religion. The model and the projects are serving as a pilot for similar community problem-based research to be organized by the UMC. Solicitation letters to cities for the inaugural research projects (beginning in fall of 2015) will be mailed in September.

(Responds to our goal to involve our students, faculty, staff and administration in efforts to ensure that the Quad Cities is a culturally rich community that inspires innovation and lifelong learning.)

Advising gets a new director and new direction: We hired a director of advising to lead our efforts to provide a strong advising experience to each Augustana student. The director is responsible for overseeing advising in the major, advising for transfer students, and professional development opportunities for faculty advisors. During the 2014-15 academic year, the director of advising will work in partnership with department and program chairs and faculty. In support of this strategic initiative, the faculty agreed to change advising from a service activity to a teaching responsibility, which moves the importance of advising to the core of what we do at Augustana—teach our students. The director of advising will lead faculty to develop learning outcomes for advising (some outcomes could be department- and program-specific), develop common learning experiences for students, and develop assessment strategies for advising as teaching. The advising office relocated to the first-floor CORE suite to leverage synergy with career development programming and counseling, and the advising webpage has been re-organized and re-designed. Additional resources for students and advisors will be added to the webpage throughout the 2014-15 academic year. To improve advising on campus, several faculty development opportunities were offered. Twelve faculty completed the advising academy professional development series sponsored by the Center for Faculty Enrichment.

(Responds to our goal to develop an advising system focused on holistic student development, including academic, co-curricular, social and career goal achievement. Also responds to our goal to advise each student using a team including a faculty member, student life and/or career development staff, and upper-class students.)

English as a Second Language support is in place: We successfully completed a search for an English as a Second Language (ESL) specialist who will support the needs of our ESL students by teaching a course on language and culture of the U.S., providing academic and non-academic support to our international and domestic students for whom English is a second language, and providing professional development opportunities for faculty focused on universal course design and supporting our English language learners.

(Responds to our goal to build upon the success of the Reading/Writing Center to incorporate academic support for students for whom English is a second language and for students with learning disabilities, and to increase success-oriented student programming and support in traditional and non-traditional venues.)

Residential neighborhoods support student developmental growth: Residence hall “neighborhoods” were established, categorized into first-year neighborhoods (Seminary, Andreen, Swanson East), second-year neighborhoods (Westerlin, Erickson) and upper-class neighborhoods (all traditional living area housing). These residence halls have programming designed to target special topics and themes as students transition through college. First-year students need social integration on campus to be successful, and residential life programming will assist them in establishing peer relationships and identifying necessary resources on campus. Second-year student programming is more reflective and asks students to assess their performance in the first year and set goals based on what should be improved. Additionally, second-year students should be planning for vocational exploration, research experiences, internships and study away. Upper-class student programming works on life skills as they become more independent, as well as graduate school applications, résumés, internships and career exploration.

Strategy III—Affordability and Value. Address affordability and increase Augustana’s value to students in order to sustain enrollment.

Action plan: Reduce core costs where possible, reduce unmet financial need and maintain a competitive recruiting program designed to achieve enrollment targets.

Major achievements within Strategic Direction 3

Close the Gap has tremendous impact: 387 students were offered a Close the Gap award in the amount of \$2,500, \$5,000 or \$7,500—renewable each year for four years. 138 of the 387 students who were offered a Close the Gap award enrolled in the fall of 2014. \$610,000 in Close the Gap funding was awarded of which \$334,000 was funded by donors. The average “gap” (amount of unmet financial need) across the entire enrolled group decreased by 15% with a dollar amount drop of \$6,745–\$7,988 (*Noel Levitz, July 18, 2014*). Close the Gap contributed to an increased number of enrolled Presidential Scholars (ACT average of 28.6 and class rank of top 7%), and was the foundation for an improved overall academic profile, as indicated by a mean ACT of 25.9 compared to 25.2 last year (*Noel Levitz, July 18, 2014*).

(Responds to our goal to reduce the financial aid gap for high-need students, particularly those who are high performers.) (2013-2014)

International enrollment increases: International students comprise nearly 5% of the entering cohort of degree-seeking students in fall of 2014. Another 17 one-year non-degree and international exchange students entered the college for the fall of 2014.

(Responds to our goal to ensure Augustana has an international presence by increasing international student enrollment from 3% to 8% within five years while maintaining comparable net revenues per student.) (2014-2019)

The college engages Alix Partners to do a business and administrative assessment: Augustana College received a grant of \$200,000 from the Austin E. Knowlton Foundation to pursue an innovative effort to partner with an outside consultancy to perform an institutional audit of business practices. An engagement and market-based approach like this is very unusual in higher education, and provides a platform from which to consider the future of the college’s business operations and practices. However, this is comparable to a long-standing tradition within our culture to have an external review, which is quite common for

academic programs. The college proposed to the Knowlton Foundation a partnership with Alix Partners to conduct an operational diagnostic program. Alix Partners will work with the college to evaluate existing data, systems and operations. The areas to be evaluated include: pricing and revenue, cost for major, cost per credit, cost of personnel, cost of calendar, etc. The primary objective is to identify areas that present the opportunity for long-term cost savings to the college and its students, and systems improvements that increase the perceived value of the Augustana experience.

(Responds to our goal to create a culture where all internal constituencies continually examine key processes to improve outcomes for our students and minimize unnecessary expenditures.)

Strategic plan rollout and campaign planning: The Office of Advancement is rolling out the Augustana 2020 strategic plan to key constituents across the country through small group dialogues and individual visits with President Bahls beginning in October 2014 and continuing over the next several months. The campaign feasibility study will begin in late 2014 and will conclude within four to six months, in anticipation of an upcoming campaign to raise funds for endowment and other strategic priorities.

(Responds to the resource implications of Augustana 2020)

Westerlin Fitness Center will open in October: The college will complete a renovation to the former Westerlin dining hall in September/October, transforming the space into a contemporary recreational fitness center reinforcing the healthy living theme of Westerlin Hall.

Swimming adds a full-time swimming coach: To improve competitiveness and expand the roster, we've added a full-time coach for our men's and women's swimming programs.

Public health is Augustana's newest major: This fall, the college added a major in public health. The new major responds to student interest and a strong foundation in the biological and pre-health sciences; leverages interdisciplinary connections and long-time co-curricular programming, such as our service-learning trips to Nicaragua and the student group Augustana Community Health Outreach Organization; and provides another intersection between student passion and society's needs to prepare graduates to stand out and lead.

(Responds to our goal to demonstrate the benefits of Augustana's high-value programs.)