

Augustana College

Rock Island, Illinois

Strategic Planning Task Force Two Steering Committee: Pareena Lawrence, Mark Vincent, Evelyn Campbell, Kristin Douglas, Liesl Fowler, Mark Salisbury, Jim Van Howe, Margaret Farrar, Jessica Schultz, Adam Kaul

Subject: Task Force Two; Teaching, Learning, Student Growth and Outcomes

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President Bahls has asked the Augustana community to develop Augustana 2020: Our Path Forward, a strategic plan that will guide our efforts over the next decade. In his goal for this strategic plan, he envisioned a plan that “will focus on the experiences and learning outcomes that will distinguish our students and graduates, and prepare them for positions of relevance and leadership in tomorrow’s world.”

I would like to ask you to participate in the Strategic Planning process as a member of the *Task Force Two: Teaching, Learning, Student Growth and Outcomes*. Although this Task force is charged with a broad range of considerations, its focus is clearly articulated in its title. To organize our work, Task Force Two will coalesce into three working groups that, while collectively focusing on student learning and experiences, will each address different critical aspects of the college’s efforts. Each group will focus on its unique charge while seeking ways that their efforts within each domain might overlap and collaborate for maximal educational effect.

The first working group will focus specifically on our **Academic Mission and Priorities**. We will be looking at how we can strengthen and/or re-envision our academic programs to ensure we are fulfilling our mission and our vision for our students while distinguishing ourselves from our peers in higher education? How can we intentionally integrate the academic mission with the student life mission, to create a vibrant intellectual community that will attract, support and engage a diverse student body preparing them for life and career upon graduation?

The second working group will focus on the **Student Life Mission and Priorities**. We will be looking at how we can strengthen and/or re-envision student life programs and services to attract, support, and engage a diverse student body to ensure we are fulfilling our mission and our vision for our students while distinguishing ourselves among our peers in higher education?

The final working group will focus on **Retention issues** and will look at developing and strengthening support and enrichment services for all our students to foster their success. We will also look at how can we more intentionally design programs and strategies to attain a 90% first-year to second-year retention rate and improve persistence through graduation.

As we answer these questions we will also need to consider the value of an Augustana education and experience and our costs and how prospective students and their families perceive our value.

Additional questions to consider:

1. What can Augustana do, consistent with mission, to encourage more students and families to choose Augustana? How do we support and create programs and experiences for students such that families will select Augustana over lower cost or more convenient alternatives?
2. How do liberal arts colleges remain vibrant in our changing world? What changes related to the economy, accreditation, higher education, technology, society, and students and family expectations should be at the center of our plans? Do all internal stakeholders understand the seriousness of the challenges facing liberal arts colleges like Augustana? If not, how do we affect their understanding?
3. What are current strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to attracting and retaining a high quality student body, and ensuring they achieve truly exceptional learning outcomes? If we are at a competitive disadvantage, how do we address that disadvantage? How do we distinguish our academic and co-curricular programs from others?
4. What are the core experiences that ensure a graduate is prepared for graduate school, the world of work, responsible citizenship and overall enjoyment of life? If any of those core experiences currently are not at the center of Augustana's program, how can we best implement them?
5. How can we better prioritize the use of resources to attract and retain talented faculty and staff, and ensure outcomes that meet the expectations of our students? How can we proactively strengthen the college now to avoid reactive changes during the next (and inevitable) economic challenges?
6. What are the barriers to improvement and innovation at Augustana, and how do we address those barriers? How do we encourage responsible innovation consistent with our fundamental values?
7. How do we build a sense of urgency for friends and alumni to give sufficient support to double our endowment? How do we more intentionally and aggressively engage tomorrow's supporters and donors?
8. How do we become a more collaborative college, using our strengths across departments, offices and programs for the benefit of our students?
9. How should we evaluate the success of our strategic goals?

Our working group will use as resources all the information that was generated during the Academic Planning sessions in the Fall and Winter term of the 2012-13 academic year as well as by the Faculty Development Task Force and the Advising Task Force. The [link](#) to all the relevant documents are available here. The Task Force on Teaching, Learning, Student Growth and Outcomes has been asked deliver a preliminary report at the October 3, 2013, meeting of the Augustana College Board of Trustees. Here's the [link](#) to the main strategic plan outline.

Please email me by **4.30 pm Wednesday March 20, 2013** if you are willing to serve on any one of the three working groups and please specify your working group preference. The three working groups are: 1. Academic Mission and Priorities; 2. Student Life Mission and Priorities; 3. Retention.