

AUGSBURG UNIVERSITY - ACADEMIC PLAN 2025

The academic plan is guided by Augsburg University's broader strategic frameworks, its vision of becoming a new kind of student-centered, urban university, and the principles and commitments that shape Lutheran higher education in the 21st century. It offers strategic focus to guide priorities, decisions, and allocation of resources in a time of profound transformation in higher education.

The plan prioritizes—and seeks to strengthen—student-centered teaching and learning in an intentionally diverse urban community. It aims to deepen support for faculty work, promote program quality, and cultivate innovation. It calls for new capacities and transparency in academic decisions, affirms the importance of new investments in people, technology, and facilities, and—in response to our new identity as a university—envisions the development of academic structures, leadership, and administrative support necessary to deepen and sustain quality in the academic program. It recognizes that we cannot prioritize everything at once, and thus makes no effort to name everything that will require our attention in the years ahead: rather, it attempts to offer a framework to guide future investments of time, energy, and resources so that we can, working together, achieve the greatest positive impact on our academic culture.

The Provost will partner with the academic Deans and the Faculty Senate to ensure the plan's successful implementation. Regular reporting and annual reviews will provide particularly important forms of assessment as well as the opportunities to make adjustments, as necessary.

DEFINING CONTEXTS**WHO WE ARE - MISSION AND IDENTITY**

Augsburg University educates students to be informed citizens, thoughtful stewards, critical thinkers, and responsible leaders. The Augsburg experience is supported by an engaged community that is committed to intentional diversity in its life and work. An Augsburg education is defined by excellence in the liberal arts and professional studies, guided by the faith and values of the Lutheran church, and shaped by its urban and global settings.

LUTHERAN HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE 21st CENTURY: ROOTED AND OPEN

Augsburg's roots in a robust Lutheran theological tradition ground our institutional commitments to educating a diverse mix of students, to engaging tensions and paradox in the pursuit of truth, to epistemological humility, and to considering questions that inform the full array of religious and secular wisdom traditions. Our commitments to service and justice are expressions of a tradition called to serve the neighbor, reduce suffering, oppose oppression, seek solidarity, and restore wholeness. We educate students to develop agency, to make choices informed by vocational discernment, and to use their unique gifts in service to the greater good.

AUGSBURG IN THE 21st CENTURY: INNOVATION, ADAPTATION, AND TRANSFORMATION

Throughout its history, Augsburg has demonstrated a remarkable capacity for resilience, adaptation, and innovation. As traditional models prove unsustainable, as the demographics for traditionally-aged students shift, and as new realities require new skills and lifelong learning, Augsburg must continue to evolve and transform if it is to thrive. To ensure institutional sustainability in this new environment, we must increase our capacity for mission-driven academic innovation; ensure that our rootedness in a particular tradition provides fertile ground for individuals from a broad array of traditions to thrive; prove ourselves willing to develop new structures, processes, and policies; and find new ways to align our distinctive strengths with the world's needs.

ACADEMIC VISION - WHAT WE ASPIRE TO BE

In ways deeply congruent with our mission, we seek to prepare an intentionally diverse mix of students not merely to adapt to a rapidly changing world but to change the world.

Academic Plan 2025

Augsburg's Academic Plan 2025 takes shape at a remarkable moment of convergence: in Fall 2017, we became Augsburg University, a symbolic change that recognizes the complex institution we've become and yet also opens up new imaginative space for what we might be in the future. In Winter 2018, a new signature academic building, the Hagfors Center for Science, Business, and Religion, opened for classes and provided not only the occasion for relocating half of our faculty but the opportunity for our students to learn and study in a state-of-the-art facility designed to support learning in and beyond the classroom. While the building is a profound material expression of who we are, where we are, and what we value, it too opens up new imaginative space for who we might become. At the same time, we are in the midst of redesigning our general education core (the last change took effect in 2002) to reflect changes in our students, our faculty, and the world. Finally, given the reality that Lutheran colleges and universities are no longer staffed exclusively by Lutherans for Lutheran students, we are participants in a national conversation about what Lutheran higher education will be in the 21st century. This too invites us to reflect on—and to some degree reimagine, in ways that are informed by the Lutheran theological tradition—who we will be, and how our Lutheran identity will be expressed, into the future.

Overview of the plan's three objectives:

1. Strengthen student-centered teaching and learning for an intentionally diverse community
2. Promote program quality and innovation
3. Improve academic structures, leadership, and administrative support for faculty work

OBJECTIVE 1: Strengthen student-centered teaching and learning for an intentionally diverse community**Why this matters:**

Augsburg's distinctive identity largely rests on our reputation for educating an intentionally diverse mix of students. We have been recognized locally and nationally for this work and for how we live out our commitments to equity and justice. Our urban location further positions us as an institution of choice for accomplished teacher-scholar and teacher-practitioner faculty dedicated primarily to teaching. Demographic projections indicate that future growth in traditionally-aged undergraduate students will be in students of color. We have the opportunity to strengthen our distinction for quality and leadership in this area—an opportunity that will help secure a strong footing for the institution's future.

Initiatives and Goals

- 1.1 Secure Augsburg's distinction as a private university of choice for students seeking an excellent education in a small, urban, diverse, inclusive, and mission-driven environment
 - Achieve greater diversity in the faculty, staff, and administration
 - Infuse diverse perspectives across the curriculum, in programs and in courses
 - Identify and strengthen curricular practices that are demonstrably effective in developing students' academic abilities and facilitating timely progress to degree
 - Approve and implement a new general education core that responds to the needs of our diverse students, reflects our institutional mission and distinction, and develops the skills students will require to engage the emerging needs of our region/world
- 1.2 Invest in faculty to strengthen teaching and learning across disciplines, delivery modalities, structures, and platforms
 - Make new investments to achieve faculty salary benchmarks and proportionality goals
 - Redesign mentoring for new faculty, focusing on early-career vocational discernment in our institutional and local contexts
 - Cultivate new strength and flexibility in technology-enhanced pedagogy and course structure across the full range of delivery modalities
 - Actively promote and reward effective practices in teaching an intentionally diverse mix of students, as measured by assessment and student success metrics
 - Clarify faculty workload parameters
- 1.3 Deepen partnerships between faculty and key University offices
 - Admissions - to help achieve enrollment growth, refined goals relative to academic promise or ability, and the matriculation of a diverse mix of students capable of succeeding at Augsburg across all programs and levels (u.g.+g.)
 - Advancement - to help reach endowment goals that advance quality in the faculty and academic program

- Marketing - to help advance institutional reputation and distinction; achieve enrollment goals; discern market response to internal initiatives, ideas, rhetoric
- Student Affairs - to ensure integration of curricular and co-curricular learning around shared institutional learning outcomes

Measuring progress:

1. Improved assessment results in NSSE and in our direct program-level assessments of institutional student learning outcomes
2. Increased number of students are making timely progress to degree
3. Better understanding and improved documentation of employment outcomes for graduates
4. Realize undergraduate enrollment growth, while maintaining diversity and an academic profile of each entering class that creates the conditions for quality teaching and learning
5. Realize gains in faculty recruitment (as measured by hiring of first-choice candidates) and faculty satisfaction (as measured by GCTWF surveys and other instruments)
6. Achieve greater diversity in faculty and staff
7. Fewer concerns in student satisfaction surveys about the diversity of faculty or absence of diverse content in the curriculum
8. Achieve Advancement goals in building an endowment that enhances teaching and learning
9. Create a faculty workload policy that is transparent, consistent, equitable, and supports quality teaching and learning
10. Additional support for faculty in aligning their gifts with institutional needs - increased recognition and celebration of diverse contributions to our community
11. Wider and more creative uses of technology in the service of teaching and learning
12. Increased recognition and celebration of distinctive (and diverse) achievements in teaching and learning

OBJECTIVE 2: Promote program quality and innovation**Why this matters:**

Without quality programs that respond to the educational needs of students and intellectually (as well as creatively) engage the faculty, Augsburg cannot thrive or make strong contributions to the public good in the Twin Cities or beyond. Our divisive and divided times require Augsburg's unique gifts: the tradition that informs our work provides a rich array of tools for the complexity of 21st century challenges, problems, and realities.

Initiatives and Goals

- 2.1 Identify and invest in strong signature programs

- Develop, and incorporate into periodic program review, common metrics to position programs, on a 5-7 year horizon, for (1) growth and additional investment, (2) maintenance, (3) restructuring, or (4) retirement
- Refine and strengthen program-level assessment of student learning
- Incentivize and invest in academic innovation
- Maintain or enhance core strengths in the humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences
- 2.2 Invest in (at least) three new programs with promising new net-revenue potential by 2020.
- 2.3 Rethink and rebrand the undergraduate degree-completion program for working adults, with programs, structures, and policies designed to meet regional market and emerging business needs
- 2.4 Rethink and rebrand Augsburg in Rochester - for the next 5 years; for the second 20 years.

Measuring progress:

1. Identification of programs ripe for new investment
2. Identification of programs in need of restructuring or retirement
3. New funds identified to support academic innovation
4. Investments in innovation lead to documented results
5. Program-level assessment leads to documented change
6. One new program is initiated by 2020, one by 2022, and one by 2024
7. We have a new, more flexible, and rebranded degree-completion program for working adults launched in 2019
8. We have a new, rebranded, "Augsburg in Rochester" site and strategic plan for growth by 2023 (the program's 25th year).

OBJECTIVE 3: Improve academic structures, leadership, and administrative support for faculty work

Why this matters:

Without the support and tools appropriate to 21st century higher education, faculty and staff devote energy to managing details rather than to providing the best educational experience for students. Without greater transparency around decision making and processes, the fewer opportunities we have to benefit from the ideas, perceptions, and wisdom faculty and staff bring to difficult questions. Without academic leaders who possess the skills, capacities, understandings of faculty and programs, and data to reach informed decisions, we are inefficient at best and make the insufficiently-informed choices at worst—leading to lack of transparency, distrust, lack of confidence, silos, and politicization of issues.

Initiatives and goals

- 3.1 Review and refine institutional structures to support academic quality
 - Review academic policies and processes for efficacy and impact

- Strengthen professional development for academic leaders, chairs, and program directors
- Strengthen support for graduate and continuing education at Augsburg
- 3.2 Invest in or develop new analytic capacities to support academic planning and decision-making
 - Increase transparency
- 3.3 Invest in technology that meets priority academic needs, creates new efficiencies, and enables faculty and staff to devote new energies to strategic innovation in the academic program
- 3.4 Invest in facilities and infrastructure that supports effective teaching, deep transformative learning, and strong student/faculty relationships - that supports a vital, engaged, and dynamic academic experience
 - Prioritize Memorial Hall renovation (2018-2020)
 - Develop Kennedy Offices (2018-19)
 - Identify off-campus site for Graphic Design Storefront (2018-2020)
 - Pursue East End development

Measuring progress:

1. By 2019, we have created a College of Liberal Arts and Sciences and are reviewing the implications of that structural change for committees, faculty meetings, and academic policies.
2. By 2020, we have created Schools of professional studies that cluster similar programs together and enhance visibility of programs in key areas. We are reviewing implications of structural change for committees, faculty meetings, and academic policies.
3. By 2020, we have evaluated the initial iteration of an Office of Graduate, Professional, and Continuing Studies with recommendations for improvement as we move forward.
4. By 2019, we have redefined the community's understanding of the role of the academic dean as a leader of the faculty and the academic program in a particular area. The Dean's Offices are bringing greater efficiency to the work of administering the academic program, reducing some of the routine clerical work that has historically fallen to department chairs and program directors at Augsburg.
5. In 2018, we have begun to introduce institutional dashboards that make the work of Academic Affairs and the shape of the academic program more visible and transparent.
6. In 2018, we have begun investing strategically in technologies that improve the quality of our work and reduce the demands of routine clerical work on faculty, allowing them to focus on more strategic and visionary efforts (for example, what TaskStream could do for Assessment).
7. In 2018, we have created structures that provide a more transparent and effective process for "operationalizing" new program growth, innovation, and/or restructuring.
8. Between 2018-2020, we dedicate the resources necessary to "refresh" and transform faculty offices in Memorial Hall, on the model of the Hagfors Center, which prioritizes inviting spaces for students and faculty to meet or gather.