

Alvernia University Updated Strategic Plan 2011-2018

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Table of Contents

Part 1:	Heritage, Mission & Vision Statements	Page 3
Part 2:	Introduction	Page 4
Part 3:	Environmental Scan	Page 7
Part 4:	Alvernia University in 2011	Page 8
Part 5:	Guiding Principles	Page 13
Part 6:	Priorities and Goals	Page 15
Part 7:	Alvernia University in 2018	Page 24

Part 1: Heritage, Mission & Vision

HERITAGE

True to its Franciscan heritage and mission motto: **To Learn To Love To Serve**, Alvernia's Franciscan values have shaped its character and history since its founding. Service, humility, collegiality, contemplation, and peacemaking are institutional core values woven through the academic, co-curricular, and spiritual culture of Alvernia. Francis of Assisi, an agent of spiritual change in the Middle Ages, gave to the three Franciscan Orders and all humanity a legacy that is timeless and universal. To be Franciscan is to respect the dignity of each human person and all creation; to be open to the world and its diversity of cultures, faiths, traditions, races, and peoples; to honor right relationships; and to seek peace through action for justice. Alvernia embraces a rich and vibrant Franciscan heritage that is relevant today, rich with promise for tomorrow, and welcoming to all.

MISSION

Guided by Franciscan values and the ideal of “knowledge joined with love,” and rooted in the Catholic and liberal arts traditions, Alvernia is a rigorous, caring, and inclusive learning community committed to academic excellence and to being and fostering **broadly educated, life-long learners; reflective professionals and engaged citizens; and ethical leaders with moral courage.**

Motto: *To Learn To Love To Serve*

VISION

To Be a Distinctive Franciscan University, Committed to Personal and Social Transformation, through Integrated, Community-Based, Inclusive, and Ethical Learning

- **Integrated Learning** — combining liberal arts and professional education and blending rigorous inquiry, practical experience, and personal reflection in the classroom, on campus, and in society;
- **Community-Based Learning** — engaging the local, regional and global communities as partners in education and service;
- **Inclusive Learning** — welcoming people of diverse beliefs and backgrounds; responsive to the educational needs of recent high school graduates, working adults, established professionals, and senior citizens; respectful and self-critical in our dialogue about differences in values and perspectives;
- **Ethical Learning** — challenging individuals to be values-based leaders by developing habits of the mind, habits of the heart, and habits of the soul.

Part 2: Introduction

In December 2005, following completion of campus-wide “listening and learning sessions” held during his first months in office, President Tom Flynn commissioned the formation of a Strategic Planning Council (SPC) to chart a course for the future of what was then Alvernia College. The Council was primarily composed of faculty and staff along with student and alumni representatives. The President’s charge included development of succinct mission and vision statements, an environmental scan, a set of 4-7 priorities, approximately 15 major goals, and recommendations for implementation.

The SPC was expected to consult widely with the campus community, especially the faculty, to incorporate feedback and suggestions in a series of drafts and to finalize a plan by the end of 2006. The plan would cover the first decade of Alvernia’s second half century, beginning with the 50th Anniversary in 2008 and extending to 2018.

Early in the planning process, during Spring 2006, it became apparent that a campus master plan was urgently needed, both to address major deficiencies in campus facilities but also so that the strategic plan encompassed capital projects as well as programmatic initiatives. At the same time, a small, project-based fundraising campaign, approved in 2004, was cancelled, and preparation initiated for a more ambitious effort.

In March 2007, after widespread campus discussion, the Board of Trustees approved a new strategic plan for Alvernia, guided by revised Mission and Vision Statements, and accompanied by a campus master plan and the Values and Vision Campaign, with a goal of \$27 million. Implementation of the university plan was divided into two phases: Phase 1, which included 2007-2008 and stretched to 2012-2013; and Phase 2, which covered 2013-2018. It was understood that some goals, such as university status, would be pursued immediately, while others--such as the shaping of an academically stronger, more diverse undergraduate profile--would be deferred until Phase II. As is typical, the campus master plan was designed to look out 20 - 25 years. Guided by the strategic plan’s major goals, it specified a set of Phase I projects (2007-2013), with the expectation that Phase II goals (2013-2018) would be identified before 2013. The fundraising campaign was organized around the priorities of the strategic plan and was timed to achieve its ambitious goal by Summer 2013, the end of Phase I.

The success of the SPC and its inclusive process helped shape the approach for monitoring progress and ensuring accountability. In addition to the Cabinet, which has overall responsibility for the plan’s implementation, two groups were assigned the responsibility for guidance and oversight: the Alvernia Planning Advisory Council (APAC) and the Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees. A new entity, APAC, like the SPC, is a campus-wide group. As part of a comprehensive revision of its committee structure, the Board of Trustees eliminated its separate planning committee and assigned those duties to its Executive Committee. In addition to regular meetings of these two oversight groups, detailed updates have been provided to faculty and staff via the annual State of the University event (August) and at Divisional Meetings (January), supplemented by the President’s quarterly newsletters and other periodic communication.

Besides shaping the campus master plan and fundraising effort, the strategic plan was intended as the framework for divisional and departmental plans. Areas with well-established plans include: Teaching and Learning—Phase I, Undergraduate Enrollment Management, the School of Graduate and Continuing Studies, Athletics and Recreation, Technology, and Integrated Marketing. Plans are also being finalized for Mission Education and Integration, the Dr. Frank A. Franco Library Learning Center, Residential Life, Diversity and Cross-Cultural Initiatives, the First Year Experience, the Montessori School, and the Seniors College. A comprehensive academic plan, incorporating current initiatives such as the Faculty Excellence programs and including a Phase II Teaching and Learning plan and a revised general education program will be developed during 2011-2012. These and other efforts are both directing the ongoing “routine” work of the University, while responding to the major goals of the strategic plan.

The scope and pace of progress between 2007-2011 has been, from any perspective, remarkable. Most prominent among many highlights was the achievement of University status, the cornerstone of the strategic plan, accomplished in the fall of 2008. This milestone helped launch the public phase of the Values and Vision Campaign, itself linked to the celebration of Alvernia’s 50th Anniversary and our Bernardine Franciscan heritage. Equally important, the awarding of university status confirmed Alvernia’s significant progress throughout the previous decade (1997-2007) and its evolution into a comprehensive institution with significant commitments to both graduate education—at the doctoral and master’s levels—and a greatly expanded and enhanced undergraduate, residential community. It also has made possible the imperative expressed in the University’s Vision Statement: “To Be A Distinctive Franciscan University.” (See Part III for a summary of recent progress.)

Essential to the institution’s momentum has been its strategic pricing model which has limited increases in both tuition and in financial aid so as to ensure access for low and moderate income students and provide adequate resources to fund employee compensation and annual operations. Also important has been the Board’s willingness to use debt as a critical strategy for making competitive improvements as investments in the future. Nevertheless, all are aware that the plans adopted in March 2007 were crafted in a much different time than the “new normal” economic climate and competitive environment for higher education.

Alvernia’s dramatic recent progress is even more notable since the inaugural years of the new strategic plan coincided with the global economic collapse in 2008 and the resulting economic uncertainty. Proactive contingency planning by the administration, beginning in Fall 2008; effective stewardship of resources by staff and faculty; and careful oversight by the Board of Trustees were key stabilizing forces. During a time when many schools have been forced to retrench or downsize, the University has been able to make what the President described as “prudent progress.” Yet it is recognized that all private colleges and universities similar to Alvernia face ongoing economic and demographic challenges.

Mindful of the deteriorating economic conditions and Alvernia’s considerable momentum as well as the approach of the midpoint of Phase I (2007-2013), early in 2010 President Flynn called for a process that would reassess the changing landscape of private higher education and also update Alvernia’s direction for the remaining years of the plan (2011-2018). The Board and APAC reviewed a comprehensive summary of institutional progress and goals yet to be met,

with a subsequent report shared with the University community at the August 2010 State of the University address. Trustees, senior administrators, and faculty and staff on APAC and other groups conducted mini-environmental scans, or SWOT analyses. Subsequently, new goals have been identified, all within the framework of the strategic plan's original five priorities and the University's mission and vision statements. Following campus-wide discussion and feedback during early Fall 2011, the revised plan will be reviewed and approved by both the Trustees' Executive Committee and the full Board later in the fall of 2011.

Part 3: Environmental Scan

The external economic and political environment has dramatically changed since the adoption of the 2007 Strategic Plan. So, too, there has been significant institutional change. Recognizing this and the rapid pace of Alvernia's progress, an updated environmental scan was seen as an important component of a Revised Strategic Plan. Perhaps the biggest changes in the higher education environment are the pace of change, the continually negative impact of widespread economic uncertainty, and the diminished political support for higher education.

Unfortunately, the lead time once enjoyed by management teams to analyze data and respond to the changes is decreasing. The standard practice of conducting a scan and then allowing this information to inform the planning process for a lengthy period of time is no longer practical. The traditional long-range planning models which are inwardly focused and have a heavy reliance on historical data do not apply well to higher education today. The rapid pace of change has created a "new normal" for planning.

The summary findings are composite rankings from all four groups: APAC, Extended Cabinet, Cabinet, and the Board of Trustees.

Key Highlights: Challenges and Opportunities

External Challenges

1. Current and future economic uncertainty
2. Declining governmental support and increasing regulatory mandates and accountability
3. Intensified competition (FT Undergrads; Adults and Distance Education)
4. Challenges to Franciscan Identity

Internal Challenges

1. Strengthening educational quality – programs, faculty, and students
2. Servicing special student needs
3. Managing necessary growth and sustaining a financial model to fund needed improvements and address competitive deficiencies
4. Expanding philanthropic support

Opportunities

1. Franciscan identity and values
2. Leveraging continued competitive pricing
3. Increasing critical mass of residential students
4. Expanding graduate education
5. Improving student retention and student outcomes

Part 4: Alvernia University in 2011

Alvernia's current position has naturally been influenced by external trends and environmental conditions, many beyond the institution's control, and shaped by its extraordinary progress that is both recent and historic, stretching back well over a decade. The university still faces enormous ongoing challenges. It is a modestly selective, under-endowed, comparatively small, relatively young, private Catholic Franciscan institution. Yet by any measure--enrollment, finances, educational quality, external engagement, reputation--Alvernia is better positioned today than it was in 2007.

The extent of progress may be best captured by highlighting several key themes:

Preserving & Promoting our Franciscan Heritage

Beginning with the affirmation of Alvernia's Franciscan identity in the revised mission and vision statements, a range of initiatives have deepened the academic community's commitment to our Franciscan heritage, rooted in the Catholic and liberal arts traditions, with appreciation for our sponsorship relationship with the Bernardine Franciscan Sisters. The Board of Trustees has undertaken an ongoing program of mission education and has jointly established a Sponsorship Learning Community (SLC) with the Congregation's Leadership Team. The Franciscan Learning Community (FLC) has provided a detailed set of recommendations in its final report. There have already been initial mission-centered revisions to the Connection Day, Orientation, and First-Year Seminar Programs in addition to a range of other special activities. Alvernia now has several individuals with expertise in Franciscan Studies and is home to the Association of Franciscan Colleges and Universities (AFCU), with an Alvernia faculty member serving as executive director. A new leadership model is in place, effective Fall 2011, with a new Special Assistant to the President for Mission coordinating all mission education and integration plans in collaboration with a campus wide leadership group.

Besides a beautiful main chapel in the Congregation's Motherhouse, the University is fortunate to offer two additional chapels on campus for mass, reflection and prayer. A student retreat program has been launched, and InterVarsity staff provides a range of valuable services. In the last two years, there has also been a corresponding increase in the promotion of Alvernia's Franciscan "brand" in both print and electronic media. This recent work builds on earlier efforts, among them the expansion of campus ministry staff and programs, the hiring of a full-time campus chaplain, programs from the former mission office, theology and philosophy requirements (including ethics for all undergraduate and graduate students), and a longstanding commitment to service. Alvernia in 2011 is well known not only among the family of Franciscan institutions but increasingly so among the over 225 American Catholic colleges and universities.

Building Academic Strength

A number of key initiatives have strengthened the academic program. Firmly established, but still evolving, are strong colleges and schools. Several programs have achieved specialized accreditation. Two named Centers of Excellence have been launched--the O’Pake Institute for Ethics, Leadership and Public Service and the Holleran Center for Community Engagement--with the latter already having attracted regional, even national, acclaim for Alvernia. The faculty continues to grow in quantity and quality, with a net increase of 20 additional members, a steadily increasing percentage with terminal degrees, clarified and improved tenure and promotion standards (and other important Handbook revisions), and an impressive array of books and other professional achievements to complement a deep dedication to teaching excellence and service of many kinds.

Support for faculty has been significantly improved. Several new programs have been developed, most notably with endowed Neag Professorships and Faculty Excellence Grants. Current faculty leaders also now sponsor an annual series of faculty development events. This support is at the center of the “Framework for Faculty Excellence,” a set of initiatives essential to meet the plan’s Educational Quality goals. Other elements include a long-term plan to provide appropriate numbers and allocation of full time and adjunct faculty to meet both graduate and undergraduate commitments; a compensation plan to sustain competitive salary and benefits within the new, far more prestigious peer group; criteria and processes to ensure effective faculty evaluation and to support professional growth and development; and processes to support “best practices” in faculty governance and in shared governance involving faculty, administration, and trustees.

Curriculum in several disciplines has been revised to meet new state and national standards. Assessment of student learning outcomes has become part of the planning process of every major/program to assure that students are achieving specified goals. Among many notable programmatic efforts are the significantly increased programming and support for the arts; expansion of distance education and service-learning courses; initial implementation of the Teaching and Learning Plan; the growth in stature and scope of the nursing program; the two-stage development of an Educational Technology Center; and the expansion of technology staff and support. The Franco Library and Learning Center has been revitalized as an essential academic resource through the establishment of the Learning Commons (now the most heavily used computer access point on campus), increased usage of the physical Franco Library, expanded and upgraded technology and study spaces, and improved access to research assistance provided by on-site librarians.

Supporting these efforts have been the addition or major renovation of academic facilities, such as the O’Pake Science Center, the Upland Center, and Bernardine Hall as well as the creation and/or the upgrade of fine arts facilities in Francis Hall and the sites of the Schuylkill and Philadelphia Centers. Corresponding efforts have been made, with considerable initial success, to market Alvernia’s faculty and academic reputation--on the website, in the magazine, and in the media.

Enhancing Student Satisfaction and Success

Responding to the strategic plan's call for an expanded and improved residential experience, major investments have been made in campus life: multiple new residence halls have been built, including apartments for upperclassmen; a new Campus Green and renovated Student Center have been completed; an all-weather field and track and a new baseball and softball complex have been added; and a variety of renovation projects have positively affected campus life. The creation of a University Life Division has sparked a transformation of student life, reflected in the growth of campus co- and extra-curricular programs, ranging from multicultural events to intramurals to health education efforts. Increasing student demands for learning support have been addressed by expansion (and greater use) of tutoring and disability support services. Comprehensive plans for Residential Life and Diversity and Cross-Cultural Initiatives Plan are due to be completed in Fall 2011.

Guided by experienced leaders and staff, both long-term and annual undergraduate enrollment management plans have already produced dramatic results and have established an impressive foundation for future growth and improvement. In addition to maintaining a solid base locally, Alvernia now attracts students from throughout the Mid-Atlantic region. Out-of-state first-year enrollment has risen from 17% to 30% in only four years, during a time when the entering class has grown from approximately 300 to almost 400 students. The academic profile has improved considerably (from the mid-930s to the mid-980s SAT average), and racial and ethnic diversity has increased. After declining in the middle of the last decade, freshmen retention has slightly improved, though it still lags below the average for both the peer group and other appropriate comparisons. Graduation rates represent a similar challenge, as do program-specific and overall pass and post-graduate placement rates. The steady improvement of the academic profile, combined with improved student services, both academic and otherwise, suggests significant progress with such measures is a realistic expectation.

Improving Operating Effectiveness and Resource Development

Key support areas of the institution have made major improvements in their operations, with notable results. Enrollment management (both admission and financial aid), institutional advancement, and marketing all have made major progress. Financial management and oversight are much improved, as are numerous business and student service processes. 24/7 telephone-based technology support for students and faculty is in place for email, network login, Blackboard, and Self-Service.

Financial operating results have been consistently strong, with major increases in net assets that have produced both increased debt capacity and enabled greater short-term investments in campus development. Annual budgets include two "Best Practices": full funding of depreciation and a base-line 2% operating surplus.

An aggressive, yet strategically targeted, land-purchase program has already greatly expanded the campus footprint and provides opportunity for necessary expansion as well as additional parking. Purchase and development of near-by facilities has freed up essential campus space for classrooms and faculty offices or supplemented campus recreational spaces.

Despite the turbulent economy, the institution's first comprehensive fundraising effort has exceeded its ambitious expectations. Its initial goal of \$27 million will be reached at least a year ahead of schedule. The balance of the time remaining in the campaign will focus on key unfunded priorities and to build the base for future fundraising. The absence of a strong fundraising tradition and the small number of long-time alumni represent challenges; the loyalty and appreciation of friends and business leaders from the local community represent important opportunities.

Reflecting the one revision to the plan since its adoption in 2007, there has been a major emphasis on *human* resource development. New Faculty and Staff Compensation Plans, developed by the Faculty Salary and Benefits Committee, the administration, and outside human resource professionals were approved by the Board of Trustees following salary and benefits studies as well as a review of peer and regional data that analyzed external competitiveness, internal equity, and salary compression. Implementation of the plans is well underway, and completion expected by July 2013. Staff and leadership development programs have been expanded, as have opportunities (and funding) for faculty.

Expanding Community Engagement and Institutional Visibility

From an impressive, continuously improving magazine to a new, still evolving, website to new admission publications, to enhanced campus communication, there has been a dramatic expansion of marketing efforts. The University's visibility and reputation have been enhanced—locally, regionally, and even nationally. Increased staff with advanced skill sets has helped improve results and reduce costs.

Greatly expanded community engagement efforts have played a pivotal role in raising Alvernia's profile and reputation. Major initiatives, such as the Blessing Exhibit and the Updike Conference have attracted considerable attention from the media and the local community. External validation by respected entities, such as the designation of Alvernia as a national model for Community Engagement by the Carnegie Foundation, has been invaluable. (Alvernia has also been named to the Presidential Honor Roll for Community Engagement annually since 2007.)

Less dramatic, but equally important, have been the introduction of the Ethics, Leadership, and Community Lecture Series, the new Arts and Culture at Alvernia Series, and the University's membership in a nationally known Division III athletic conference. The University's four Days of Service build on a large network of community partnerships. Alvernia's faculty and administrators are better known and better promoted, and the University's Franciscan mission is now integrated throughout marketing efforts.

Alvernia's market position has also changed due to unforeseen environmental conditions. While some of these changes have been positive and have created opportunities, others have posed challenges and either altered approaches or demanded new ways of thinking. See the previous section, Part IV, for a synopsis of the recent environmental scan.

At the outset of the 2011-2012 academic year, Alvernia University has emerged as an institution of approximately 3,000 students, supported by the recent growth of the FT undergraduate population from a little over 1,200 in 2006 to over 1,500 in 2011 (+25%). Phase 1 of the Strategic Plan called for growth in new FT undergraduates and in overall enrollment. Over the past five years, freshman enrollment has grown from approximately 300 to almost 400 students (+33%). In addition, the residential capacity will have grown from about 600 to over 1,000 (+66%) by Fall 2012, with significantly increased demand for campus housing now the norm. Phase 2 of the strategic and undergraduate enrollment plans call for steady, though modest, growth with emphasis on the shaping of the profile of the undergraduate class. Much progress has been made well ahead of schedule. Much more good work lies ahead.

The School of Graduate and Continuing Studies has also experienced changes since the 2007 plan was approved. The steady, often dramatic, growth trajectory that the University's adult education programs experienced during the early 2000's has ended. Changing market conditions, heightened competition (both with programs and delivery systems), external state curriculum mandates, challenges with certification requirements and with adequate faculty staffing, as well as greater academic rigor have all been factors.

Overall, the School's enrollment has been flat for the last three years. Moreover, some specific academic programs have experienced a decline in enrollment. A new Strategic Plan for the School of Graduate and Continuing Studies will serve as the guide to reignite the innovative spirit as well as define specific tactics that will drive growth in existing and new programs. The growth will need to come through more flexible delivery systems and continued progress in the distance education market. Much of the progress that has been made to date is due more to "seat time" requirements established by the Pennsylvania Department of Education than to retooling of course delivery systems. The School's only fully online degree is the MBA; other graduate programs are still offered primarily in the traditional semester format, a competitive disadvantage. A full assessment of market demands, modalities for delivery, and program formats will be conducted so as to accelerate the necessary turn around and re-establishment of the University's competitive position. The recent initiative with the Reading Hospital is an example of an innovative partnership that will spur growth in adult education and also help establish the platform from which the nursing program and the health sciences become signatures of the University.

Part 5: Guiding Principles

In its final document, the Strategic Planning Council identified three main guiding principles, viewed as cross-cutting themes, which were pervasive throughout the five main priorities. Given how Alvernia was positioned in the marketplace, and the deficiencies in some key areas of campus, three guiding principles were considered to be strategic for the institution at that time (2007). During the summer of 2011, a series of “institutional planning sessions” were held to review the original document. The various audiences recommended the removal of the Operational Imperatives guiding principle since most of the relevant administrative areas have evolved at least to “normal or routine” practice. A new guiding principle has emerged to address needs for more consistent and higher levels of performance across the institution and greater degrees of accountability, especially externally.

1. **Franciscan Identity and Bernardine Collaboration:** *“The Strategic Plan must reflect Alvernia’s identity and heritage as a Franciscan Catholic institution and must pledge commitment to work with the Bernardine Franciscan Sisters.”* (2007)

UPDATE: Effective collaboration between University and Congregation has become the norm. The Sisters’ beautiful chapel serves as Alvernia’s Main Chapel and their McGlenn Conference Center is a favorite location for a range of lectures, workshops, and other programs. The Sisters have ready access to campus facilities and services, especially for the Annual Jubilarians’ gathering. Especially notable is the Sisters’ support for a new shared main entrance and approach road to both the convent and Francis Hall. (See p. 7)

2. **Diversity (as stated in 2007)** *Alvernia must put strategic priorities in action with strong attention to diversity, as defined by the diversity of background of students, staff, and faculty, and as defined by diversity of experience, including service and service-learning, and experience with exposure to other cultures and belief systems.*

UPDATE: A Comprehensive Diversity Plan will be completed by December 2011. This plan includes guiding assumptions for what has become the Diversity and Cross-Cultural Initiatives Plan. Work to actualize several of the assumptions – particularly with regard to international student recruitment and plans for expansion of study abroad – is already well underway. Several areas of the University such as Athletics and Recreation and Undergraduate Enrollment Management---- have already incorporated diversity initiatives into their operations and long-term plans. Implementation will be a major emphasis in 2012 and 2013.

NEW GUIDING PRINCIPLE

3. **Culture of Excellence** *In accordance with our mission, Alvernia will commit to developing a culture of excellence and best practice throughout the educational experience, involving our people, operations and planning.*

Original Guiding Principle (now removed from the plan)

Operational Imperatives: *“The College must adhere to a number of operating principles in order to execute the Strategic Plan effectively. These principles will include emphasis on fiscal soundness, a dedication to **organizational efficiency and integration**, prudent and ongoing investment in technology infrastructure, and awareness that the Strategic Plan has substantial facilities implications.” (2007)*

In 2006-2007, the Strategic Planning Council included operational imperatives as a guiding principle in order to address a lack of sophistication and operational soundness in a number of core areas within the organization. What may have been viewed as a strategic imperative back in 2007 is now covered under “normal or routine” practices. Enrollment management, marketing, and advancement operations are now effectively in place, as are numerous appropriate policies and practices in student life. In technology, significant progress has been made regarding the infrastructure. (The next stage will focus on a more comprehensive approach with programs and services as the priority.) There is sound fiscal policy, built on a previously established foundation and enhanced by improved expense management, a sophisticated net revenue pricing strategy, and a long term financial model. Some (though not all) of the significant competitive deficiencies in facilities have been addressed, and residential life facilities have become a competitive advantage.

Part 6: Priorities and Goals

Strategic Priorities

The Strategic Planning Council identified five strategic priorities to guide Alvernia's continued improvement and development over the next 10 years:

- Identity
- Educational Quality
- Student Communities
- Community and External Engagement
- Resource Development

The five priorities are unchanged except for the one modification made in 2009: Priority V Resource Development now specifies emphasis on *human* as well as fiscal resources.

Throughout this section, the original text of the priorities has been preserved, including references to the "College."

Similarly, the original goals, some now completed, are still included. Updated goals include some of the original goals and other new or revised goals. (New and revised goals are highlighted in red.)

Completed projects from the campus master plan are listed. Also listed are the projects anticipated for completion during the end of Phase I or during Phase II of the strategic and campus master plans.

As noted above (p. 5 top), a range of divisional or specialized plans—such as the Teaching and Learning and Athletics/Recreation Plans—have been completed since 2008, with ongoing updates. They are not specified throughout this section for brevity's sake but are essential to the implementation of many of the following goals.

PRIORITY I IDENTITY

Alvernia commits itself to becoming a distinctive Franciscan University

Alvernia's identity derives deeply from the heritage and the mission of the Bernardine Franciscan Sisters, founders and sponsors of the college. The intellectual vision of the early Franciscan theologians, like St. Bonaventure, valued "knowledge joined with love," and inspired the tradition of service, most particularly for those with the greatest needs. The missionary spirit of the Bernardine Franciscan Sisters, who came from Europe to serve the immigrant populations in the U.S., continues to inform and encourage the work of their lay successors throughout the world.

Alvernia has built a strong and enduring foundation upon this Catholic, Franciscan, and Bernardine heritage. The College is distinctive in the broad range of programs it offers and aims to offer, from the undergraduate to the graduate and continuing education, from the main campus to satellite sites, from the arts and sciences to the professional programs, from the traditional-aged to the Senior's College. The College links training in that wide range of practical subjects to the experience of a common civic and intellectual, moral, philosophical, and spiritual core that prepares students to be citizens of their region, their country, and their globe. Alvernia aims for practical, spiritual, and moral intellects who contribute to and serve their communities with grace and charity. We must build on this strength, by ensuring that we educate the whole person and work to develop the mind, body, heart, and spirit of our students.

Alvernia's rapid evolution makes essential several critical initiatives to cement Alvernia's position as a distinctive Franciscan institution of higher learning. First, the College must expand its geographic scope to parallel its growth as an institution. Focused on the Greater Reading area since its birth, the College now needs to broaden that gaze to the Mid-Atlantic Region. This will enable it to draw the students and make the community connections necessary to sustain and develop all of its broad range of programs. Second, Alvernia needs to be sure that its heritage, mission, and identity are clearly understood within the institution and without. That heritage, mission, and vision is an enormously powerful driving force for the College; our continuing development demands clarity. Especially critical will be emphasizing the Franciscan intellectual and artistic traditions, the Franciscan commitment to service, and the Franciscan belief in environmental sustainability. Finally, Alvernia must change its name from Alvernia College to Alvernia University. The combination of the broad range of offerings and venues characteristic of a university combined with the continuation of Alvernia's shared Franciscan values and personalized attention will make the institution truly distinctive.

Original Goals:

- To expand the geographic scope of student and program markets and engagement of alumni, parents, and friends, especially in the Mid-Atlantic Region.
- To communicate Alvernia's distinctive Franciscan identity both internally and externally.
- To enhance Alvernia's identity as a comprehensive institution by seeking a change in name and status to University. **(Completed)**

Updated Goals (new/revised ones in red):

- To enhance Alvernia’s identity by further developing a culture of excellence appropriate for a Franciscan *university* and by cultivating new and existing strategic partnerships.
- To continue to strengthen the sponsorship relationship between the Congregation and the University and to implement the new model for Mission Education and Integration.
- To finalize and implement an institution-wide Diversity and Cross-Cultural Initiatives Plan.
- To strive to become an environmentally sustainable academic community by putting into practice Franciscan ideals in the curriculum, co-curriculum, and campus operations.
- To expand the geographic scope of student and program markets and engagement of alumni, parents, and friends, especially in the Mid-Atlantic Region.
- To enhance Alvernia’s brand identity and academic reputation as a “Distinctive Franciscan University” through an expanded integrated marketing program and enhanced communication strategies, such as use of social media.

Campus Master Plan Projects (Completed):

- New Campus Entryway (Angelica) and Signage
- New Undergraduate & Grad/CS Visitor Centers (Student Center and Upland Center)
- Francis Hall: Campus-Side Entrance and Plaza
- New “South Campus” (Founders Village, Track and Field, Parking)
- New Angelica Fields
- Major Progress with Property Acquisition – Zone I (“East Campus”)

Campus Master Plan Projects (Phase I or Phase II):

- New Main Campus Entryway (Shared with BFS)
- Francis Hall Main Entrance (Restoration) and New Visitors Center
- Expanded Parking and Signage and Landscaping Programs
- Property Acquisition -- Complete Zone I (“East Campus”)

PRIORITY II EDUCATIONAL QUALITY

Alvernia commits itself to creating and sustaining excellent academic programs driven by an outstanding faculty.

Alvernia College has undergone significant change in its 48-year history. These changes reflect the educational enterprise’s maturation from its original mission of training Bernardine sisters to be teachers to an institution that offers more than 30 majors and programs to a wide variety of students, including undergraduate, graduate, post-graduate, and community members, at both main and satellite campuses.

The College’s goal as an institution of higher learning is to give students, both graduate and undergraduate, an educational experience that is comprehensive and integrated and that prepares students for lives in the global community. An Alvernia education extends across the spectrum of curriculum, co-curricular activities, social interactions, and intellectual events. The education strives to be both supportive and rigorous, and one that emphasizes diversity in all its forms. The quest for an integrated educational experience emphasizes the development of strong and defined

disciplines as the fundamental constituents of Alvernia's academic program. Allied to that is a powerful commitment to interdisciplinary courses and programs that blend the strengths of the individual disciplines into sophisticated courses of study and challenge students to be ethical leaders.

Alvernia can improve educational quality by emphasizing a number of signatures. These will be of high quality and high visibility, developed out of both new and existing programs. Some will be resource intensive and some will be economical. As a whole, they will signify the diverse range of Alvernia's offerings and represent the entire college, professional and arts & sciences programs, undergraduate and graduate curricula. Potential examples might be in Ethics and Leadership, Community-based Learning, and Pre-Professional Programs. Each signature will be academic in nature, and distinguish Alvernia to students, parents, the community, and accrediting bodies. They will have a readily understood value, reflect Alvernia's identity, be marketable, and have a rippling effect throughout the college. Alvernia must also target specific disciplinary programs in all of its divisions to ensure continued academic improvement, especially those that have been underdeveloped like the fine and creative arts.

Alvernia will continue to build and strengthen its student body. The College will carefully define what it means to be a quality Alvernia student and tailor its recruitment efforts to suit that definition. This definition will incorporate not only test scores and other traditional measures of student quality, but also attributes that reflect the College's heritage, history, and location. In addition, Alvernia will give careful consideration to the student experience at the institution, by paying close attention to retention and graduation rates and other measures of student achievement. An Alvernia education, through classroom experiences, collaborative work, advising, and the entire educational array, must offer enduring value. The result will be a student body ready to be challenged and stimulated by the institution, a student body ready to challenge and stimulate the institution in return.

Central to the academic experience are Alvernia's community of engaged and proficient faculty. The College relies on them to teach, mentor, and guide students through their academic journey, whether at the undergraduate, master's, or doctoral level. Academic faculty remains one of the few groups in society whose responsibility is to explore, create, and pass on knowledge without partisanship or bias, and regardless of pressure or favor. Such responsibilities demand "teacher-scholars" who combine excellence in teaching with excellence in scholarship and bring the two together for the benefit of their students and the community.

Alvernia thus must continue to strengthen and build its faculty community by recruiting and retaining such teacher-scholars. Moreover, improving the community of faculty requires resources and recognition for faculty teaching, service, and all forms of scholarly activity. The commitment of such resources to Alvernia's faculty must be accompanied by a consistent level of rigor in teaching and scholarship through the creation of individual and institution-wide developmental and evaluative standards for teaching, scholarship, and service that compare favorably to Alvernia's peer institutions.

Original Goals:

- To improve program quality by creating interdisciplinary signatures and targeting resources to specific undergraduate and graduate programs, including underdeveloped ones such as the fine and creative arts.
- To prepare all students for lives in the global community by stressing an integrated learning experience through general education, capstones, and participation in learning communities.
- To improve the community of faculty through a systematic plan of effective recruitment, support, and evaluation that ensures the continuing development of excellent “teacher-scholars.”
- To bolster student achievement by improving the entering student profile and by improving the demonstrated outcomes of the Alvernia education.

Updated Goals (new/revised ones in red):

- To develop a comprehensive academic plan that ensures compliance with all accreditation/regulatory requirements and specifies priorities and resources for curriculum and program development, faculty excellence initiatives, staffing and space planning, technology and other instructional support.
- To establish Alvernia as a leader in Graduate and Adult Education by expanding programs, markets, and delivery systems, especially through distance education.
- To improve program quality by establishing “signature programs,” disciplinary and interdisciplinary, at both the undergraduate and graduate levels.
- To prepare all students for lives in the global community by stressing an integrated learning experience through general education, capstones, and participation in learning communities.
- To improve the community of faculty through a systematic plan of effective recruitment, support, and evaluation that ensures the continuing development of excellent “teacher-scholars.”
- To improve “student success” by improving both the entering student profile and Alvernia’s educational outcomes as measured by retention, graduation, certification examination pass rates, job placement, and graduate school acceptance rates.

Campus Master Plan Projects (Completed):

- Upland Center – Purchase and Full Renovation
- Franco Library: Learning Commons – Phase I
- Teaching and Learning Plan – Phase I
- New Fine and Performing Arts Facilities (Francis Hall)

Campus Master Plan (Phase I or Phase II):

- Bernardine Hall: Completion of Full Renovation
- Teaching and Learning Plan – Phase II
- Franco Library: Learning Commons – Phase II

PRIORITY III STUDENT COMMUNITIES

Alvernia commits itself to enhance the learning experience for all students by strengthening and expanding the residential and educational environments.

The education that students receive during their college career happens not only in the classroom, but also during a wide range of encounters, whether academic, athletic, recreational, social, or cultural. A particularly important encounter has long been the experience of living and learning on campus. Becoming integrated into a tightly knit community of learning and socialization, consisting of faculty and students alike, encourages both intellectual and civic maturity.

Currently, Alvernia's residential experience is relatively small compared to its peer institutions. That puts the College at a disadvantage with those peers in competing for the large majority of students who wish to live away from home and have a "total college experience." At the moment, the College has neither the space nor the on-campus services, staff, and activities to compete effectively with schools with larger residential bodies. A substantial residential population, largely undergraduate but with some graduate students, combined with the services and activities to match will make Alvernia more competitive in the larger market. Alvernia's residential community will thus be carefully enlarged along with the services needed to support that community. The College will aim to create not just capacity for residents but strive to build a diverse and inclusive community of students on campus.

At the same time, the College must recognize that it has strong non-residential communities. Composed of commuter, graduate, continuing education, and off-site students, these communities are growing in solidity and self-identity. We will continue to emphasize those groups by structuring on - and off - campus services in a way that supports them as well.

In fact, Alvernia's student services and staff will be the linking point between the residential body and other student groups. Alvernia will aim for a true residential experience for its entire student body. Activities will range from athletic, to cultural, to social, to intellectual, and will promote interaction between the co-curriculum and the curriculum.

This will require facilities that support the entire range of curricular, co-curricular, and social and cultural activities. Especially critical are well-developed learning environments with a consistent level of technology, usability, and access. Alvernia will also improve learning spaces, including formal areas where teachers and students can gather together to explore and discover, and more informal areas where students can study and learn independently. Such learning commons are critical to ensure that the learning experience extends seamlessly across campus, from the Franco Library to student center to residence hall, within classrooms and without, in the physical and virtual world alike. Social and cultural spaces are also essential, especially for indoor and outdoor recreation and athletics.

In sum, Alvernia commits itself to strengthening its student communities, undergraduate and graduate, residential and commuter, and full-time and continuing education. Each community will receive the focused attention it needs to flourish. The emphasis for every community will be healthy intellectual, spiritual, and physical development of all students.

Original Goals:

- To develop a co-curriculum that includes enhanced programming in the arts, recreation and athletics, social and cultural experiences, contemporary and ethical issues, and leadership opportunities.
- To create a state of the art teaching, learning, and living environment through improved facilities and services.
- To expand in stages the residential community by increasing significantly the size and variety of living options, to a preferred capacity of 800 students after five years **(Completed)** and 1000 students within 10 years

Updated Goals (new/revised ones in red):

- To develop a co-curriculum that includes enhanced programming in the arts, recreation and athletics, social and cultural experiences, **community-based service projects**, contemporary and ethical issues, and leadership opportunities.
- **To create a competitive and contemporary teaching, learning, and campus environment through improved facilities and services for both residential and commuter students.**
- **To strengthen the residential community by increasing the size and variety of living options to a capacity of at least 1,000 students and by implementing an accompanying program, staffing, and services plan.**
- **To expand technology support for main campus, off campus sites, and distance education programs, including full wireless service.**

Campus Master Plan Projects (Completed):

- Student Center Renovation
- New Central Campus Mall and Green
- New Athletic and Recreation Facilities (Outdoor)
- New Fine and Performing Arts Facilities

Campus Master Plan Projects (Phase I or Phase II):

- **Founders Village -- Buildings III and IV, with attached Student Activities Center (accompanied by modest expansion of PEC-based food service)**
- **“East Campus” Development**
- **Athletic and Recreation Facilities (Indoor): New Fitness/Wellness Center; Fieldhouse (Angelica) and PEC Renovations (one or two stages)**

PRIORITY IV COMMUNITY and EXTERNAL ENGAGEMENT

Alvernia commits to expanding external engagement, especially with alumni, civic leaders, and learning partners, and to strengthening its visibility and reputation.

Alvernia is centered within Berks County. Most of the College’s students are drawn from within that county or the counties bordering it, and the College is well known within that area. Our alumni live largely within the three-county area, and most of the College’s fundraising takes place there. Alvernia’s growth into the Mid-Atlantic Region demands a renewed effort to

engage with the College's traditional communities more fully through alumni programs, by creating opportunities for students and alumni to connect, and by ensuring that the connections between Enrollment Management, Institutional Advancement, Community Engagement, and alumni are strong. As the College grows in regional focus, it must ensure that its foundational relationships remain solid.

Within Berks County, Alvernia has long had a strong community presence. This will continue. Berks and the surrounding counties will be, for the foreseeable future, the geographical foundation of Alvernia, and the College must scrupulously tend to that foundation. This involves more than merely drawing students. Alvernia's educational mission emphasizes practical application, community involvement, and service learning. The College, as both an institutional responsibility and educational imperative, sees engagement with its community as absolutely critical, whether through experiential learning opportunities, strong alliances with local and regional partners, or by establishing the Alvernia campus as a community destination for events, activities, and programs.

Finally, Alvernia must successfully market itself and its strengths as a distinctive Franciscan University. This demands the development of an integrated marketing plan that spans both local and regional markets, that promotes undergraduate and graduate programs, and that emphasizes Alvernia's blend of curricular and co-curricular programs and offerings.

Original Goals:

- To engage the alumni through special programming and expanded opportunities to connect with their alma mater.
- To establish Alvernia as a [regional and national] leader in community-based learning and civic engagement through the [Holleran] Center for Community Engagement and the [O'Pake Institute] for Ethics, Leadership [and Public Service]
- To build Alvernia's reputation by developing an integrated marketing program
(Completed)

Revised Goals (new/revised ones in red):

- To establish Alvernia as a [regional and national] leader in community-based learning and civic engagement through the [Holleran] Center for Community Engagement and the [O'Pake Institute] for Ethics, Leadership [and Public Service].
- To expand Alvernia's role as a proactive leader in responding to the educational needs of its City and surrounding communities--by continuing to provide access to underserved populations and first generation students and advanced education for working professionals as well as by undertaking appropriate strategic partnerships and special initiatives.
- To establish Alvernia as an important local cultural resource for the Arts, Interfaith Dialogue, and Ethical Issues.
- To strengthen alumni engagement and philanthropy, locally and regionally, by expanding regional chapters and significantly increasing alumni participation in the Annual Fund.
- To develop alumni leaders through involvement in chapters, the Alumni Council, and the President's Advisory Council.

PRIORITY V RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

Alvernia commits to pursuing new and expanded opportunities for (human and) fiscal resource development to enhance both educational quality and long-term fiscal strength.

The College must work to ensure that its efforts are supported by a position of continuing financial strength, in both its current and its long-term financial positions. The College has a relatively small endowment. To solidify the Alvernia's current financial position, the College must carefully steward current resources through a range of sustainability initiatives. In addition, Alvernia's enrollment has to grow along with the institution. This growth, however, must come in a sustained and systematic way through the development of short - and long-term undergraduate and graduate recruitment and retention goals. The institution should also look to secure its fiscal future. To do so, Alvernia has to seek out new revenue sources. These sources could come from a range of initiatives, including grant development and non-credit programs. Most importantly, Alvernia should work to develop and sustain a comprehensive fundraising campaign, to help underwrite the costs of the Strategic and Master Plans and to build the endowment. Finally, the College must put into action its Franciscan ideals of stewardship by working towards environmental sustainability in order to be a good global steward as well as a good local one. Alvernia trains its students to be ethical leaders in their communities; the College can do no less.

Original Goals:

- To enhance current fiscal strength through steady, targeted enrollment growth.
- To strive to become an environmentally sustainable college community and campus by putting into practice Franciscan ideals in campus operations.
- To secure Alvernia's fiscal future by developing new sources of revenue and through a comprehensive fundraising program, including an initial "Anniversary campaign," and ongoing efforts.

Updated Goals (new/revised ones):

- To enhance fiscal strength and campus development through enhanced budget surpluses, continued strategic use of debt, new sources of revenue, and steady targeted enrollment growth resulting primarily from increased adult education enrollment and improved undergraduate and adult retention.
- To complete implementation of the Faculty and Staff Compensation Plans (2013) and to continue support of the Faculty and Staff Compensation Philosophy approved by the Board, including a highly competitive overall employee benefits package.
- To ensure continuous improvement and increased funding of both faculty and staff development programs.
- To exceed the \$27 million Values & Vision Campaign goal in support of established fundraising priorities.
- To develop a "culture of philanthropy" among the members, alumni and friends of the University to support current, ongoing and emerging initiatives - - including support of the Alvernia Fund; future capital, endowment and comprehensive campaigns; and a robust planned giving program.

Part 7: Alvernia University 2018

Alvernia's recent progress reflects both its steady growth and improvement during the last decade and the "greater expectations" established in the 2007 strategic plan. This success has, quite naturally, led the entire Alvernia Community--faculty and staff, students and alumni, trustees and community leaders, other friends and supporters--to have even greater expectations for our future.

What aspirations do we have for Alvernia in 2018? What are our hopes for this special place, our aspirations for the University and especially for the educational experience of our students . . . undergraduate and graduate; those in Reading, at our sites in Philadelphia and Pottsville, and those learning on-line; the pre-school children at our Alvernia Montessori School, professionals enrolled in non-credit training and development programs like Leadership Berks, retired adults enjoying the offerings of the Seniors College?

Communities thrive only when their individuals do, so we should expect the most from ourselves--our own supreme effort, the maximum use of our talents, humility about our personal accomplishments and great appreciation for those of others. Each member of the University community must *first* model our Franciscan core values of Service, Humility, Peacemaking, Contemplation, and Collegiality and the ideal of "knowledge joined with love," if Alvernia is to flourish and achieve our vision: "To Be A Distinctive Franciscan University, Committed to Personal and Social Transformation, Through Integrated, Community-Based, Inclusive, and Ethical Learning."

As we consider our aspirations for 2018, certainly the right starting point is the challenge to more fully realize our Mission and Vision Statements and to successfully achieve our strategic priorities and goals. Were we to do so, Alvernia will—quite literally-- look far different.

By 2018 we will have a much larger campus, building on the recent addition of the Upland Center, Angelica fields, new administrative services center on Morgantown Road, and partnerships with entities like the Ken Grill Pool Association and St. Anthony's Parish. Angelica Park will provide a magnificent entry experience leading to the new grand campus entrance on St. Bernardine Street shared with the Congregation. Hopefully, it will also be a major environmental destination and a catalyst for Alvernia's sustainability efforts. We will have made great progress in the development of an "East Campus," the area below the Sisters' property stretching down to Angelica Park. A recreation center and field house will be the central feature of this area, perhaps accompanied by some specialty town house residences and definitely including a practice field and ample parking.

With all of Bernardine Hall's classrooms and most in Francis Hall already renovated, future main campus development will focus on the addition of academic facilities, such as an expansion of the Franco Library and a much larger academic center in place of the Business/Communication building opposite Bernardine Hall. The Dr. Frank A. Franco Library and Learning Center will be a hub of student and campus activity, with a more comprehensive mission and scope of services befitting its full name. Creatively designed learning spaces and faculty development programs will better support the adaptive pedagogies needed for 21st

century students of diverse backgrounds and abilities. All of this will be needed to support highly regarded signature programs, such as in Nursing and the Health Sciences, perhaps in Early Childhood Education and other specialty areas, certainly in Leadership Programs and Ethics Education.

These and other programs will have strengthened the individual college-school identities, while underscoring the competitive “Alvernia Advantage” of being a close-knit, yet diverse, small university that emphasizes “Integrated, Community-Based, Inclusive, and Ethical Learning.” A more coherent general education program will have heightened the liberal arts dimension of Alvernia’s identity and strengthened the integration of students’ liberal arts and professional studies. Targeted new programs will also have been developed by entrepreneurial faculty and academic staff. Some programs may replace or modify existing offerings; some will build on areas of academic strength; some will take the University in new directions. The Faculty Excellence Program will combine endowed professorships and other forms of essential faculty support with high standards of expectation, especially for the quality of instruction. The faculty will have grown in size and stature, with many well known for their scholarly and professional accomplishments as well as for inspired teaching.

Alvernia’s full-time undergraduate enrollment will be more diverse and will have grown, but probably not as dramatically as in the last decade. Hopefully, enrollment will have increased primarily because of much improved student retention and transfer recruitment and a more modest increase in the number of new freshmen. The residential population on the main 48 acres will probably be at or close to capacity, with the eventual completion of Founders Village, but there may be other near-by housing options for students and new faculty. Living-learning communities and theme housing will be catalysts for a vibrant co-curricular program, and Alvernia athletes will be well known as scholars and servant leaders as well as conference champions.

Alvernia will have significantly improved our market position in all graduate and adult programs by ensuring that our programs and delivery systems are highly competitive, especially by increasing the use of on-line modalities. Strategic partnerships, such as the new nursing initiative developed in 2011 with the Reading Hospital, will have helped expand Alvernia’s graduate and other post-baccalaureate offerings. Both the Montessori School and Seniors College will be far better known and will keep campus buzzing even during summertime!

Alvernia’s prominent role in providing advanced degrees and specialized certifications to those seeking career advancement, along with its longstanding commitment to educational access for underserved populations, will be the cornerstones of its contributions to the quality of life of its City and County. But the University will have also enhanced ways that “the community is part of its curriculum,” by making community-based research and service-learning essential elements of its offerings. Strategic partnerships, such as a much expanded South Reading Youth Initiative, and other creative efforts to improve educational attainment and health care in Greater Reading, will have further reinforced Alvernia’s value as an essential community resource. Alvernia graduates will be well prepared to be agents of positive change in their communities. And graduates of Leadership Berks and Alvernia’s other leadership programs will join trustees and

other members of the Alvernia community in contributing greatly to the quality of life of our city and county.

And yet “Alvernia Nation” will in 2018 reach far beyond the boundaries of Berks County and even Pennsylvania. The Study Abroad and International Mission Programs, greatly expanded back in Fall 2011, will include annual programs in Brazil, the Dominican Republic, and Assisi, in partnership with the Bernardine Sisters, to complement initial sites in Europe, Africa, and Australia. Global perspectives will be far more integrated throughout the curriculum and co-curriculum, and the Diversity and Cross-Cultural Initiatives Plan will have spawned a range of additional improvements, including increased enrollment of underrepresented groups, especially from the local community. The University will be well established as a major cultural and artistic resource locally, respected as a center for interfaith dialogue, with the O’Pake Institute and Holleran Center helping establish a national reputation for community engagement.

Reflecting Alvernia’s growing reputation regionally, and even nationally, alumni chapters will dot the East Coast and perhaps a few other locations. Alumni volunteers will be major partners with academic departments, career services, and admissions. They’ll also provide expanded leadership as trustees and faithful supporters of the fundraising efforts. However, the Board of Trustees will still attract top community leaders ardent about the University as an invaluable community resource and a strong, values-based academic institution.

Board and alumni leadership will have enabled the Alvernia to make steady progress with fundraising. The Alvernia Annual Fund, essential for keeping the University affordable for deserving students, will have doubled during the previous decade, both in participating donors and dollars contributed. Major campaign gifts will come from friends and alumni alike and include both capital support and endowment commitments.

The most compelling case for support will be the University’s deeply embedded and actively lived Franciscan heritage, with faithful sponsorship by the Bernardine Sisters and lay leadership from faculty, staff, and administrators passionately committed to the Mission. Franciscans on the Board, the Congregational Leadership Team, and the faculty and staff will contribute the “ministry of presence” as well as vital expertise in Franciscan Studies. Lay women and men throughout the campus, well prepared by the Mission Education Program and inspired by the Sisters, will be leaders in advancing the institution’s identity as a “Distinct Franciscan University.”

In 2018, as in past years, Alvernia graduates will themselves be distinctive. Broadly educated to be critical thinkers and creative problem solvers, they will be reflective professionals and engaged citizens. Respecting the dignity of all and committed to the common good, they will be open to the world and its diversity of peoples and be contributing members of their communities. Imbued with the Franciscan core values and the ideal of “knowledge joined with love,” they will be ethical leaders with moral courage. Alvernia graduates will in 2018, as today, do well and do good.