



SOUTHWESTERN COLLEGE IN 2022
A Strong and Vibrant College

DRAFT

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SOUTHWESTERN
COLLEGE



Southwestern College provides a values-based learning experience that emphasizes intellectual, personal and spiritual growth

At Southwestern College, we recognize our obligation to ensure students fully discover their potential; commit themselves to the pursuit of that purpose; and leave equipped with both a great education and an inspired sense of purpose. It is our joy, it is our professional and vocational duty, to dedicate ourselves to this mission.

For more than 130 years, Southwestern has been committed to the liberal arts, in its broadest form; freeing students, through education, to achieve their full potential.

A liberal arts education, done well, results not just in a college degree or a first job, but also a lifetime of real and tangible benefits. We know that such an education brings greater lifetime earnings and higher chances of full employment. Additionally, college graduates enjoy improved personal health, greater rates of public service, and higher levels of citizenship. We believe that this education ultimately brings not only happiness, satisfaction and fulfillment to graduates, but also great pride, joy and success over the course of a lifetime.

While other colleges and universities strive to be all things to all people, or focus on creating an “educational environment” that is conducive to learning, at Southwestern College we dedicate ourselves directly to the education of each individual student. As a college of the United Methodist Church we fully believe in the value, worth and possibility of each student.

Southwestern College serves our students in their journeys, wherever they choose to go in their lives and careers, by ensuring they engage with the thought, perspectives, and wisdom of the larger world, inside our classrooms and beyond.

Southwestern College must be a strong and vibrant college: our work is too important, our purpose too meaningful. In order to ensure our strength and vibrancy, we commit ourselves to the following strategic plan.

PROCESS

Over the course of the 2016-17 academic year, the Southwestern College community took part in a strategic planning process. That process involved dozens of meetings and fora, as well as substantial participation online and through other means of communication. Well over 200 ideas and proposals were brought forward for consideration. While everyone on campus was able to follow the process through regular campus communications, over half of the entire community directly participated in the process. While all ideas gathered throughout this process have been documented and passed along to the appropriate administrative department heads for future consideration, this strategic plan identifies the college’s top strategic priorities.

A small steering committee was formed, consisting of two faculty members and the vice president for marketing and communications. This group joined the president in considering each and every piece of input, as well as conducting the sifting and winnowing necessary to bring the collective wisdom and perspective of the campus into a single plan.



STRATEGIC VISION

In 2022 Southwestern College will be a strong and vibrant college, recognizable for our delivery on a sincere promise to every student enrolled: each student will more fully realize their potential at Southwestern than at any other institution of higher education.

In order to fulfill this promise, we commit ourselves to excellence in:

- Partnering with students to *discover* their potential
- *Inspiring* students to commit to this potential
- *Equipping* students with a powerful liberal arts education and mindset
- Cultivating and nurturing an unmatched college *community/family* environment

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Our guiding academic vision, our current financial health, and our long-term institutional success are all dependent upon a student-by-student approach to a liberal arts education.

On an individual level, Southwestern College students know the value of a liberal arts education; they know it intuitively. They know that there is more out there, there is more to life. This is why they come to SC. Arguably the one great purpose of a liberal arts education is to help students define and name what they are driven by, what they are yearning for – and then create a path for them to reach those aspirations throughout their life.

Our viability and vitality as a small, private college are inextricably dependent on our faithful, confident and joyful commitment to this fundamental approach. Indeed, in today's higher education landscape, this is the only path to relevance and vitality. In pursuit of this endeavor, we commit to completing the following strategic priorities by the year 2022.

In 2022 Southwestern College will be a stronger and more vibrant College for having:

1. **Established a strong and robust Honors Program**
2. **Created a Center for Career and Vocation**
3. **Completed a strategic branding initiative, and implemented associated marketing plans**
4. **Authored a campus master plan for physical plant and facilities, and created one premier learning space in each of the four main academic buildings**



ACADEMIC STRENGTH

HONORS PROGRAM

In support of our commitment to a level of academic excellence that challenges our students to nothing less than their personal best, SC will have a strong Honors Program by 2022.

The program will be an integrated academic experience, fully a part of the college's overall curricular plan. The program will not only help define our academic identity to prospective students, it will also draw on, and inspire, our strengths in an interdisciplinary and creative approach to teaching and learning.

In establishing an Honors Program that best fits our

faculty, students, curriculum, and community, we will review and consider approaches that have proven successful here at SC, as well as at other, similar institutions. We will also gather the perspectives and input, the ideas and dreams, of our faculty and students. Informed by that insight and those perspectives, it is our intention to create an Honors program that inspires the enthusiastic participation of Southwestern faculty and students; a program that we are all proud of; and most important, a program that makes for a more robust academic experience for our students.

CO-CURRICULAR STRENGTH

CENTER FOR CAREER AND VOCATION

With a firm commitment to the success of each student, both during their time at Southwestern, and as they move forward in their professional and personal lives, SC will have a strong Center for Career and Vocation by 2022.

Initially focused exclusively on helping students prepare for their careers, the Center for Career and Vocation will focus on providing students expert guidance and care-based assistance in preparing for and finding a job and career. The center will actively help students early in their college career identify their strengths and explore potential career path. The center will assist students in seeking and finding internship opportunities later in their college career. The center will serve as a resource for students as they

compose an effective resume and related portfolio materials. The center will also prepare students for networking and all that comes with job-seeking as they are completing their college career.

Ultimately, the center will expand beyond these real, pragmatic and practical needs of students and families to a broader expression of our mission as a liberal arts college of the United Methodist Church. That commitment to empowering each student toward the discernment of their vocation, potential and purpose will become a defining characteristic not only of the Center for Career and Vocation, but a distinguishing characteristic of Southwestern College itself.



FINANCIAL STRENGTH

STRATEGIC BRANDING STUDY AND MARKETING PLAN

With a full recognition of the need to genuinely and effectively define ourselves to the larger world, SC will have conducted a strategic branding study by 2022.

This study will focus on directly identifying where our genuine and authentic strengths and values intersect with the lives of prospective students and the larger world of higher education. An obvious

benefit of this project will be to more effectively market the college and recruit students. The larger, and primary, goal of this project will be to empower all of us at SC to clearly, consistently, and authentically articulate our institutional identity - on campus, in our communities, and throughout the region and the world.

STRENGTH OF PHYSICAL PLANT

CAMPUS MASTER PLAN AND PREMIER LEARNING SPACES

Guided by an understanding of the importance of caring for the facilities we have, as well as the need for deliberate thought and a clear vision for the future of the campus physical plant, SC will have completed a campus physical plant master plan. As a manifestation of this strategic priority, and in conjunction with the master plan, Southwestern will have renovated one classroom in each of the main academic buildings into a premier learning space by 2022.

The creation of this campus physical plant master plan will guide us as we navigate our future while facing the ever-present and competing forces

of enrollment and program growth, deferred maintenance, and strategic campus improvement opportunities. The immediate focus on transforming a classroom in each academic facility will set the tone for our commitment to take care of and improve our current facilities.

This strategic priority will support a critical piece of our path to vitality: undergraduate student recruitment and enrollment. Most importantly, this project directly supports our academic mission, as it is intended to create welcoming, inviting, engaging and inspiring teaching and learning spaces



IMPLEMENTATION AND EXECUTION

Each of these initiatives will be led by, and coordinated by, a single individual assigned by the president. In collaboration with key constituents on campus, and responsible for appropriate and effective process, each project leader will be responsible for moving the assigned initiative from concept design, through planning, to full implementation. Recognizing that there are many details within each project to work through and come to agreement on, both effective project leadership and firm action plans will be key determinants to the success of this strategic plan.

These strategic priorities span the spectrum from a focus on curricular strength, co-curricular strength financial strength, and strength of physical plant. Accomplishing these strategic goals will both improve the quality of education we provide and will also strengthen this college, ensuring our vitality through the coming decade and beyond. We dedicate ourselves to this strategic plan, to these priorities, with the effective fulfillment of our mission on our minds, in our hearts, and carried out in our actions.



A GLIMPSE OF 2027

It is critical that we operate with strategic discipline as we implement this plan. These are challenging times for all colleges and universities, especially so for small private colleges, and success demands focus, courage, and commitment. However, even as we train our attention and effort on these immediate and near-term strategic goals, we must also keep our eyes on the future beyond this current plan. With this principle in mind, it is wise to remain forward looking and keep longer term markers in sight.



In 2027 Southwestern College will:

- **Be known for powerful learning experiences on Main Campus, and relevant and viable online academic programs in Professional Studies.** Beyond a strong Honors program, the college will be operating with an academic strategic plan supporting a powerful general education Program, strong majors, and meaningful learning experiences throughout the curriculum. A thorough and on-going market analysis will inform and guide our active program review and development efforts in Professional Studies.
- **Be widely known for a uniquely strong Builder Family; a campus culture defined by humility, care, and service.** We will not only affirm and deepen our institutional commitment to fully valuing all members of the SC family and acting on that value every day, but we will also express this ethic in unique and distinctive institution-wide programs.
- **Have made significant and noticeable progress in improvements to our campus physical plant.** We will have taken clear actions demonstrating our commitment to maintaining the facilities that we have, by decreasing our deferred maintenance. In support of an increased main campus enrollment, we will have also built a new residence hall and improved existing residential facilities.
- **Have achieved and sustained a main campus enrollment of 750 students on main campus, and 1,250 on-line learners each year.**
- **Have more than 5 consecutive years of budget surpluses, with the surpluses re-invested in improvements to the quality of the educational experience.**
- **Have successfully completed two capital campaigns and have raised \$50 million supporting the strategic goals of the college.**