"Let nothing of the past prevent us from listening, and let no present things hinder us from giving thought to the future. Move on to what lies ahead."

—St. Augustine

Igniting the Heart. Inspiring the Mind. Illuminating the Spirit.

The Villanova University Strategic Plan
OUR STRATEGIC PLAN

“We should all know and see with a clear mind what we have all sung together with one voice ...”
—St. Augustine

In the center of the Villanova University seal, we see a meaningful image: a heart overlaying a book. This image represents the unification of the heart and mind—the foundational element of an Augustinian education. We also see that the heart is aflame, as described by St. Augustine, ignited by the sparks of spiritual and intellectual growth.

We are guided by the unique vision of St. Augustine in our collective Villanova University work—on campus and throughout the world. Not only do his writings inform our community ethos, but we follow his inspiration as one of the intellectual giants in the history of humankind.

Our Augustinian academic tradition is nearly 1,800 years old. Through our efforts today, we will strengthen this tradition and ensure that it thrives to benefit Villanova students for generations to come.

This will be our shared legacy.
Today, we serve as stewards of our University. For the benefit of future generations of Villanovans, we must successfully navigate the challenges of a complex global higher education landscape. Equally important, we must stay true to our core values, which are steeped in the Catholic, Augustinian tradition.

We must continue to focus on igniting the heart—by inspiring our students to achieve academic excellence, encouraging them to push the boundaries of discovery, and cultivating within them the excitement of learning and the value of intellectual curiosity. We also must continue to emphasize compassion, service to others, and integrity—through academic offerings as well as the operations of our University.

Building upon Villanova’s vibrant history and current success, we embarked upon the development of this Strategic Plan. A steering committee of Villanova faculty, staff, and administrators was established, charged with informing and facilitating the strategic planning process with input from the University’s Board of Trustees and other Villanova stakeholders, including faculty members, employers, parents, current and prospective students, and educational experts. Town Hall meetings were held to inform and further engage Villanova faculty, students, and staff, and regular updates were provided to all Villanovans.

It is my hope that every member of our community feels a sense of genuine ownership and pride in this plan for our collective future.

In the following pages, you will read about the values and responsibilities that guide our Strategic Plan. You also will read about the manner in which this plan will support Villanova, its community, and its mission through the next decade.

I welcome your continued input as we greet a new decade in the great history of Villanova University.

Rev. Peter M. Donohue, O.S.A., Ph.D.
President

VILLANOVA UNIVERSITY:
a learning community unlike any other.
Villanova University is grounded in the wisdom of the Catholic and Augustinian intellectual tradition. Accordingly, we are committed to the common good, and we apply our knowledge and skills to better the human condition. We encourage our community to serve others, showing a special concern for the poor and the suffering, and to respect a worldview that fosters responsible stewardship of the environment.

The Villanova community welcomes members of all faiths and backgrounds who share an enthusiasm for the challenge of responsible and productive citizenship to build a just and peaceful world. Further, the University is guided by a concern for developing and nurturing the whole person, encouraging students, faculty, and staff to grow intellectually, spiritually, and socially in an environment that fosters St. Augustine’s vision of learning as a community governed by love.

Villanova is committed to academic excellence, and emphasizes the liberal arts and sciences as foundational to all academic programs. We affirm the intrinsic good of learning, contemplation, and the search for truth in undergraduate and graduate education in all fields of study, including professional programs in business, engineering, nursing, and law.

“Our Guiding Values”

Let all of you then live together, one in mind and heart …”
—St. Augustine

“Let all of you then live together, one in mind and heart ...”
—St. Augustine

Integral to this community are our alumni, who embody and define the Villanova experience. Likewise, as a community, we highly value our relationships with our students’ parents and family members, our neighbors, and our friends and colleagues worldwide.
THE VILLANOVA PROMISE

Anyone who has visited the Villanova campus can “feel” something special. But what, exactly, is it that makes Villanova unique? Villanova’s distinctive offerings are at the core of the University’s Strategic Plan.

ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

The Villanova educational experience is rooted in the collaborative pursuit of knowledge—through which professors and students are partners in the learning process—and is built upon a foundation in liberal arts and sciences. The University is recognized nationally for its commitment to undergraduate teaching, and values pedagogical distinction as much as it values scholarly research. Villanova’s diverse faculty community—united and dedicated to the highest academic standards—encourages students’ active engagement, critical thinking, lifelong learning, and moral reflection.

ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

Villanova stakeholders consistently cite “community” as the best descriptor of Villanova’s unique character as a university. Given our Augustinian heritage—which values a caring community—this makes perfect sense. While knowledge represents the mind of Villanova, a broad, welcoming, inclusive community represents the University’s heart. Many Villanova alumni maintain close connections with one another, and the University, throughout their lives.

PERSONAL ATTENTION

From the application process to graduation and beyond, Villanova promises all students a caring educational experience. The University takes this promise seriously, with professors and students working together within a personal learning environment. Beyond the curriculum—through a wide range of students services and resources—Villanova is dedicated to the well-being of every person throughout his or her Villanova experience.

SERVICE TO OTHERS

Villanova believes that all human beings are connected as one worldwide community—and our personal responsibility to others spans from our neighbors to all people on the planet. Villanova attracts students interested in volunteerism here and abroad, and all academic programs at the University emphasize service in their curricula.

A FOUNDATION FOR SUCCESS

Through holistic education, Villanova is committed to preparing its graduates for successful careers and rewarding lives. Villanova’s definition of success reaches beyond job titles and material wealth. It encompasses a passion for learning and—in the Augustinian tradition—a genuine desire to understand before being understood. It includes a lifelong framework for critical thinking, ethical decision making, and the use of one’s unique talents for the benefit of humankind.
OUR VISION FOR THE NEXT DECADE

With the ultimate goal to develop leaders who—instilled with a strong foundation of ethics and Augustinian thought—have a positive impact on society, the Villanova community established the following vision:

As a Catholic and Augustinian University, Villanova will provide its students with a distinctively engaging academic environment, characterized by excellence in its liberal arts foundation, professional schools, interdisciplinary studies, and graduate programs.

• We will enroll increasing numbers of high-achieving students, and in the Augustinian and Catholic tradition, successfully educate the whole person through value-driven learning and a commitment to service.

• We will provide unsurpassed levels of personal attention to our students.

• Our faculty will remain committed to outstanding teaching and increased scholarship.

• We will enhance our reputation as a premier national university and be recognized as a preeminent Catholic university that prepares its graduates for success throughout life in the global environment.
Although certainly the achievement of a higher level of excellence for its own sake is a factor, the most important driver of the strategic planning process is our stewardship of Villanova. That is, for the sake of future generations of Villanovans, we have an ongoing obligation to strengthen our University to the greatest extent possible.

When the Villanova community successfully achieves the imperatives set forth in the new Strategic Plan, the University will benefit from the following outcomes over the short and long term.

- The Villanova community will continue to thrive and live its mission.
- The value of a Villanova education will be recognized among the best in the nation.
- Villanova will actively engage talented students, faculty, staff, and alumni in its dynamic community of learners, dedicated to intellectual exploration and service.
- Villanova’s research contributions will inform the challenges of the day and be highly-regarded.
- Villanova’s yield of high-achieving admitted students will climb toward the levels of the highest-caliber institutions.
- Villanova’s applicant pool will become increasingly diverse in geography, race, and socioeconomic status.
- Villanova’s endowment, as well as its alumni giving rates, will grow closer to those of its aspirational peers.
To build upon the University’s critical strengths and to remediate any gaps, the Villanova community has established a Strategic Plan that encompasses the following five imperatives:

“Let nothing of the past prevent us from listening, and let no present things hinder us from giving thought to the future. Move on to what lies ahead.”
—St. Augustine
I. REALIZING THE AUGUSTINIAN VISION: 
Academic Distinction

Our greatest priority is academic excellence. This refers to the scholarly and pedagogical accomplishments achieved by our faculty members, as well as to the continued intellectual growth of our students. During their Villanova experience, we seek to help our students deepen and broaden their knowledge, creating strong critical thinkers whose love of learning will extend throughout the rest of their lives.

Our ultimate goal is to develop leaders who, instilled with a strong foundation of ethics and Augustinian thought, make a positive impact on society.

STRATEGIC IMPERATIVE

Villanova will strengthen its undergraduate programs by means of a new Liberal Arts and Sciences core curriculum and curricular innovations in all the colleges, building on distinctive programs and centers of excellence throughout the colleges.
Integrating the Principles of Veritas, Unitas, and Caritas

We premise our work upon the belief that the Augustinian principles of veritas, unitas, and caritas—truth, unity, and love—will continue to serve as the intellectual and spiritual guideposts of the University’s academic programs.

We will bring these principles to life in our academic programs by incorporating shared, integrated educational priorities across colleges, programs, departments, and disciplines.

From an academic perspective, the outcomes of this approach are that Villanova graduates will have grown intellectually through rigorous study; they will have the values, knowledge, and skills they need to achieve a lifetime of personal and professional successes; and their intellectual growth will be grounded in a deep sense of ethics, morality, and concern for the common good.

“The degree to which you are concerned for the common good rather than for your own is the criterion by which you can judge how much progress you have made.”

—St. Augustine

Veritas (truth) in academic programming is the fulfillment of Villanova’s educational promise. This includes a pervasive commitment to program and pedagogical excellence, a passion for discovery, and an academic experience of the highest quality that prepares students for careers, graduate education, and lifelong learning. Academic programs are characterized by active student learning, the linkage between theory and practice, global perspectives, and creative problem-solving and leadership skills.

Implementation Examples

• University-wide: We will implement a shared core curriculum consisting of courses designed to establish a moral and ethical learning foundation—along with courses specified by each college to ensure quantitative and scientific literacy, effective communication, and writing skills. We will advance faculty research and curricular innovation that promotes the fulfillment of Villanova’s educational promise.

• Liberal Arts and Sciences: We will institute a new core curriculum that replaces introductory survey courses with thematic courses. Such thematic courses will be characterized by intellectual engagement and an avoidance of subject matter overlap.

• Business: We will offer all students the opportunity to participate in an international learning, service, and/or internship experience, with University financial support available to assist those with limited means.

• Engineering: We will partner with the School of Business to create a distinctive Engineering Entrepreneurship program, focused around a new Engineering Entrepreneurship minor.

• Nursing: We will establish an undergraduate minor in Global Health, open to all University students, under the auspices of the new Center for Global Health.
Implementation Examples

• University-wide: We will strengthen further Villanova’s first-year experience, which introduces students to academic life and to the University’s focus on a caring community. We will build upon the success of our themed first-year learning communities—as well as the Sophomore Service Learning Community—to offer additional sophomore learning communities to students.

• Liberal Arts and Sciences: We will launch new interdisciplinary conferences and symposia reflecting academic initiatives and concerns, and will partner with the other colleges in areas of interdisciplinary study—especially ethics and other values-based topics.

• Business: We will establish a new business minor/certificate program, open to all University students, consisting of an integrated introduction to business concepts and practices.

• Engineering: We will expand service learning opportunities to encompass all engineering departments with the goal of ensuring that every engineering student has the opportunity to engage in a service activity during his/her Villanova experience.

• Nursing: We will pursue interdisciplinary projects and courses with other colleges and clinical agencies that serve community health needs.

Unitas (community) in academic programming is a coherence and connectedness among all aspects of our collective intellectual life. Academic programs are characterized by interdisciplinary teaching and research across the disciplines—both within and across the colleges. They also are characterized by connections between graduate and undergraduate programs and between curricular and extracurricular student experiences.

Caritas (caring) in academic programming is the foundational relationship that exists among Villanova’s Catholic Augustinian values and practices, rigorous scholarly research and teaching, and service experiences made available to students. This combination encourages Villanova students to lead their lives with a deep commitment to social responsibility and ethics.

Implementation Examples

• University-wide: We will support and expand efforts focused on service, ethics, sustainability, Catholic Social Teaching, and other manifestations of our Catholic and Augustinian values—including faculty research in these areas. We will work toward the goals set forth in our University Climate Action Plan, which involves the entire campus community in an effort to achieve net carbon neutrality by 2050.

• Liberal Arts and Sciences: We will work to develop a science core curriculum, the Mendel Science Experience, for non-science majors. Special courses with small classes will feature lectures, labs, and field experiences that focus on problem-solving, the use of technology, the application of quantitative tools, and interdisciplinary understanding.

• Business: We will establish a Business Ethics Initiative, which will expand our emphasis on ethics across a number of courses required of all undergraduate business majors. We also will introduce new ethics course modules—and expand our emphasis on ethics across a number of existing courses—in graduate business programs.

• Engineering: We will partner with faculty in the Liberal Arts and Sciences and the Office of Mission and Ministry to develop a new Ethics Across the Curriculum program, which will strengthen our incorporation of Catholic Social Teaching in the curriculum.

• Nursing: We will expand our implementation of global and international health experiences for nursing students, with the goal of serving diverse populations and cultures as they face both existing and new public health challenges.
II. THE NEXT GENERATION: 
A Diverse Intellectual Climate

It is essential to provide students from wide-ranging backgrounds with enhanced attention within a caring intellectual environment. Concurrently, we wish to enroll an ever-increasing number of high-achieving students. Both initiatives will result in greater discourse and diversity of thought as well as student satisfaction.

STRATEGIC IMPERATIVE

Villanova will increase enrollment of high-achieving students by personalizing its recruitment efforts, improving financial aid, and placing an increased focus on diversity.

- Our recruitment goals include the development of an alumni and faculty interviewing program and the improvement of all aspects of communication with prospective students—including leveraging new technologies.
- Our admissions goals include greater proportion of high-achieving students; an improved applicant win rate against aspirational peers; and a higher mean SAT score among incoming first-year undergraduate students.
- Our enrollment goals include continuing to build a community that is diverse in race, gender, ethnicity, and culture; equalizing graduation rates for all students; and providing increasingly-competitive levels of financial aid.
III. NATIONAL STATURE: Faculty Scholarship and Graduate Programs

Villanova’s ability to increase its national stature—among both academicians and practitioners—depends in great part upon the reputation of its faculty, the quality of its scholarship, and the excellence of its graduate programs. Such enhanced national stature, in turn, allows Villanova to attract the most talented students, faculty, and staff to its dynamic, intellectually-rich campus.

STRATEGIC IMPERATIVE

Villanova will continue the pursuit of excellence in graduate and professional education and in faculty scholarship, investing in programs that have a positive impact on society in addition to enhancing Villanova’s national reputation. The University will continue to track performance against national and competitive benchmarks. To this end, we will:

• Strengthen faculty quality through a focus on recruiting, retaining, and supporting the best teacher-scholars available with a focus on distinguished senior scholars and junior faculty fellow positions.

• Enrich and expand select graduate and professional programs at master’s and doctoral levels, including the use of remote sites and distance learning, in alignment with Villanova’s core mission and strategy.

• Foster an environment and infrastructure that effectively support research, scholarly excellence, and student-professor partnerships.

• Effectively communicate to the world the value of the Villanova experience by showcasing its faculty scholarship and graduate programs.
IV. THE VALUE OF VILLANOVA: Sharing Our Story

In order to achieve our strategic goals, we first must create a shared understanding of exactly who we are and a shared lexicon for the benefits we offer. In other words, our entire community must know by heart what we are promising prospective students and all our constituents. When this occurs, we will be able to communicate our distinctive identity and better tell the Villanova story.

- We will identify and clearly articulate Villanova’s points of differentiation, clarify our value proposition, and create Villanova’s core messaging to communicate better the Villanova story.
- We will ensure that our Catholic and Augustinian identity is maintained and strengthened—and more effectively communicated. Evidence of this distinctive attribute will be demonstrated through the creation of new campus resources, such as a Center for Service and Service Learning, a Center for Future Catholic Leaders, and an Institute for Faith and Learning.
- Villanova’s outreach will include strategies for successfully reaching key internal and external groups, ranging from alumni to prospective students to potential employers. We will spread the Villanova message to ever-expanding geographic areas beyond the northeast region.
- We will pursue aggressive media and marketing outreach to increase awareness of Villanova worldwide by building our faculty expert program and enhancing traditional, online, and new media strategies.
- There will be broad Villanova community involvement in this effort, and we will implement a system of metrics and measurements that establish a baseline and track the success of our communication efforts over time with all constituents.

STRATEGIC IMPERATIVE

Villanova will define and communicate its distinctive identity and value proposition, focusing on: academic excellence, strong community, service to others, personal attention, and platform for success.

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The most practical difference between Villanova and other prestigious Catholic universities in the United States is in the value of our endowment. To reach the level of academic quality achieved by our aspirational peers, this inequity of resources must be addressed.

**V. THE VILLANOVA ENDOWMENT:**

**Securing Our Future**

The most practical difference between Villanova and other prestigious Catholic universities in the United States is in the value of our endowment. To reach the level of academic quality achieved by our aspirational peers, this inequity of resources must be addressed.

**STRATEGIC IMPERATIVE**

Villanova will more actively and aggressively engage the full University community in building the necessary financial resources and facilities to achieve its vision.

- The growth of our University endowment will be a key strategic priority, with the success of all other strategic imperatives depending upon it.
- University Advancement will coordinate and conduct a volunteer-led comprehensive fundraising campaign, around the compelling elements of the Strategic Plan. At the same time, it will seek to maximize private, philanthropic support by significantly increasing and engaging the broader spectrum of alumni and friends of Villanova in the life of the University.
- On the facilities side, we will move forward on the recommendations set forth in our 30-year Campus Master Plan to enhance the educational experiences of our students. With the initial focus on areas of key importance, the plan ranges from upgrading residence halls to creating a pedestrian-friendly campus environment, to the creation of new facilities to further enhance the Villanova experience.
OUR THANKS

Villanova University would like to sincerely thank the entire community for its part in making our Strategic Plan come alive. Special thanks to go to the Board of Trustees, the Strategic Planning Committee, and the more than 300 faculty, staff, students, parents, and alumni, who met with us and participated in focus groups.

“...Let good friends visit us. Let them be persons who know how to give useful advice and how to win us to express our own feelings in conversation.”

—St. Augustine