

Notre Dame College Strategic Plan 2022-2025

The plans listed below are geared for a lasting transformative change that positions Notre Dame as a college of the post-pandemic 21st Century. For the past 100 years, Notre Dame College has opened doors for students who have experienced countless barriers to education – social, financial, educational. The College, guided by the traditions of the Sisters of Notre Dame, reaffirms its mission of educating a diverse population for personal, professional, and global responsibility.

Notre Dame College (NDC) is unique in its market, but it also faces the same challenges as most other small, religiously founded, private colleges and universities in the United States. Buoyed by a commitment to mission, the College is prepared to meet those challenges, learn from the past and move boldly into the future.

As NDC looks beyond its centennial, the College has an obligation to solidify its financial foundation, make data driven decisions, prepare graduates for meaningful work in a divisive and polarized world, and lift faculty and staff to be leaders in their disciplines. This is a place where students should learn how to earn a living but, more importantly, live a life.

NDC values family, community, diversity, access, and respect for the dignity of the human person. Just as Elizabeth and Hilligonde welcomed the first students over 100 years ago.

Notre Dame's Mission

Notre Dame College, a Catholic institution in the tradition of the Sisters of Notre Dame, educates a diverse population in the liberal arts for personal, professional and global responsibility.

Notre Dame's Vision

The vision of Notre Dame College is to be recognized as an exceptional, small, Catholic college, transforming students through excellent, challenging, and relevant learning experiences that are grounded in a values-based curriculum.

Notre Dame's Learning Objectives

Responsibility
Communication
Critical Thinking
Information Literacy
Ethical Inquiry

Framing Statements

The College will continue to...

- Animate and enliven its Catholic identity incorporating the Catholic Intellectual Tradition, Catholic Social Teaching and the founding charism of the Sisters of Notre Dame.
- Operate a diverse and relevant traditional undergraduate, liberal arts college for both resident and commuter students.
- Offer graduate level programs and expand graduate offerings.
- Operate a competitive NCAA Division II athletic program.
- Be a place that welcomes underprepared students and guides them toward paths of success.
- Be a place of access for economically underserved students removing financial barriers to quality undergraduate education.
- Be a vital community partner and resource for South Euclid, OH and Northeast Ohio.
- Offer undergraduate and graduate education through online programs.
- Offer non-traditional and accessible programs for working adults, those returning to college, those in need of professional credentials and/or certificates.

Each of the three main sections below are divided into six parts: preamble, understanding, application, outcomes/measures, investment required and return on investment. While this plan is conceived as a 3-to-5-year plan, it should be seen as a rolling renewable plan with regular and periodic assessment occurring throughout each year.

Strategic Initiative 1. Notre Dame College will focus on the holistic success of every individual student.

Preamble

Education is the core business of Notre Dame College. It is its reason for being. A commitment to serving a diverse population requires a diversity of approaches focused on academic success. Academic success is a unique path for each student. While much of education occurs in the classroom, it is not solely the province of the classroom. Educating the whole person requires the complete effort of all who work and serve at NDC. All admitted students should be given every opportunity to succeed. Not only is this a moral imperative for the College, but it is also a key financial performance indicator related to student success, retention, and graduation rate.

Understanding

- Notre Dame will apply the NSSE and FSSE data to inform and guide NDC's plans for engagement in all learning and co-curricular environments.
- Notre Dame will continue to examine industry best practices.
- Notre Dame will study NDC institutional historical trends to look for patterns of success.
- Notre Dame will further assessment practices to determine and plan for improvements or changes within the academic learning environment.
- Notre Dame will conduct regular, periodic program reviews for all programs across all modalities.

Application

Student Success

Objective 1: Notre Dame will cultivate a culture of high academic success by building pathways for all students across all educational modalities relative to individual needs and levels of preparedness. (22-23)

- Evaluate and adjust the pedagogical approaches and technology needed for 21st century learning in the classroom (22-23)
- Assess the Honors Scholar Program to ensure it continues to offer robust academic challenges for students in the program – consider expanding it. (24-25)
- Identify program opportunities to attract high academic achieving students and strengthen the link between the Honors Scholars Program and these students. (23-24)
- Build pathways for students based on their level of preparedness. Assessment protocols will be developed to find solutions for students. (e.g. Nursing and Education Pathways) (23-24)
- Evaluate and adjust the first-year seminar program (FYF) to better engage students in the NDC learning experience. (22-23)

- Provide professional development for faculty to engage a 21st century student (OAA) – teaching & learning, structural design, and advising system (22-23)

Objective 2: Notre Dame will develop a comprehensive process for evaluating student readiness. (22-23)

- Put in place a system that will identify incoming student needs (to be used in recruitment of 2023-2024 incoming students) (22-23)
 - Readiness on math, reading, writing, and technology
 - Examples of placement test Accuplacer, Praxis

Objective 3: Strengthen the experiential learning, internship, and career services activities of the College. (23-24)

- Reassess the goals of the departments
- Determine the resource needs
- Prepare and evaluate job descriptions
- Recruit appropriate talent to fulfill goals of the departments
- Develop stronger relationships between the College and businesses/organizations for experiential opportunities.
- Strengthen the study abroad program.
- Establish a “Scholar-Athlete” recognition award program.

Objective 4: Use a holistic and comprehensive approach for Student Success and support services including Curriculum Coaches, Tutors, Trio, Thrive, Dwyer Learning Center, Experiential Learning (internships) and Career Services, and student financial planning (financial aid). (23-24)

- Look into the feasibility of a curriculum coach model staffed by professional tutors and embedded within divisions and academic programs. These tutors will act as guides for students from recruitment through entry and work with students until they have reached a level of academic independence.
- Create a visible home for these services as a one-stop-shop where students can easily access the services they need.
- Increase open communication between all areas.
- Develop a marketing plan to promote this as a distinctive attribute of the Notre Dame experience.
- Strengthen the relationship between student affairs and student success.
- Orient faculty to all options available to assure student success.

Objective 5: Evaluate and adjust the core and major curricula to make sure each aligns with the diverse learning needs and modalities of the 21st century student and changing workforce needs. (24-25)

- Explore blended modalities: synchronous-asynchronous; f2f-online synchronous; f2f-online asynchronous.
- Establish advisory boards for each program or division to help align curriculum to present careers and to foster internship and job opportunities for students in those disciplines.
- Continue to examine professional organization curriculum guidelines, if applicable and adjust curriculum on a regular basis as needed.
- Use data from annual program assessments and 5-year program reviews to inform curricular changes to ensure academic programs are excellent, challenging, and relevant.

Objective 6: Establish a student engagement plan to create innovative approaches to increase student involvement on campus and online. (22-23)

- Develop a plan (22-23)
- Implement plan (23-24)
- Assess plan (24-25)

Objective 7: Continue to offer best in class programming for students with diagnosed learning differences through the Thrive program. (22-23)

- Develop a plan to expand enrollment
- Develop a strong marketing and communications plan for Thrive.
- Faculty professional development for advising and learning disabilities

Student Health and Wellness

Objective 8: Notre Dame will create a holistic approach to health and wellness as students balance their academic studies and personal lives. (22-23)

- Develop a Health and Wellness Clinic, to support mental health and wellness (counseling center) but also a clinic staffed with physician or NP (to diagnosis and treat illnesses). (23-24 – depending upon funding)
- Creation of a Mental Health Task Force (22-23)
- Evaluate and ensure an increasing commitment to providing resources and support to the mental health needs of NDC students, faculty, and staff. (22-23)
- Provide resources for training students, faculty, and staff as student needs change. (23-24)

Outcomes/Measures

Persistence:

- Our goal is to be at a minimum of 85% retention for first year cohort fall to spring and to aspire to 90%.
- Our goal is to be at a minimum of 67% retention for first year cohort fall to fall and to aspire to 70%.
- Graduation rates (6 years is beyond the scope of this plan. Will be measured over time.)

Investments Required

Health Clinic \$150,000.00

One-stop-shop student support center \$250,000.00

Curriculum Coaches \$250,000.00

Support professional development \$50,000.00 (annual)

Technology for the 21st Century Classroom – needs assessment

Return on Investment

Increased net revenue from retention improvements.

Increased enrollment.

Increased retention based on financial investment as mentioned above.

Priority for 22-23

Objective 2: Notre Dame will develop a comprehensive process for evaluating student readiness. (John Smetanka)

Objective 1: Notre Dame will cultivate a culture of high academic success by building pathways for all students across all educational modalities relative to individual needs and levels of preparedness. (Sandy Grassman)

Objective 6: Establish a student engagement plan to create innovative approaches to increase student involvement on campus and online. (Chris Gill)

Strategic initiative 2. Notre Dame will establish a sustainable financial model to assure a strong future beyond its centennial.

Preamble

Notre Dame College will continue to be heavily dependent on undergraduate tuition in its financial model. However, this dependence can be lessened through the diversification of revenue streams, focus on retention and the implementation of new programs and activities to promote growth in undergraduate, graduate and continuing professional education. At the same time, the college will continue to implement best practices related to higher education finance, but it should also borrow from other industries best practices that may enhance the finance operations of the college. The college will continue to look for operational efficiencies as a good steward of institutional resources. The role of philanthropy must be increased to support Notre Dame students, operations, endowment, and the physical needs of the campus.

Understanding

- Assess best practices through local and national organizations.
- Where appropriate, use outside consultants and advisers to assess operations and make recommendations.

Application

Recruitment/Enrollment

Objective 1: Notre Dame will strengthen and solidify its recruitment model for traditional aged students to enroll a minimum of 1000 and a maximum of 1400 students while maximizing net tuition revenue. (22-23)

- Continue to implement best practices in college student enrollment (22-23)
 - Begin recruitment earlier in the high school experience for traditional students.
 - Access acceptance rate based on offer letters extended. Perform analysis review on students that accept decisions and decline to come.
 - Continue to increase efficiency and improve communication and services to prospective students by using the latest technology and building best business processes
- Strategically prioritize recruitment of undergraduate programs and conduct an annual assessment of the academic programs (22-23)
- Strengthen our ability to recruit the non-athlete students (23-24)
 - Targeting student population with potential higher net tuition revenue
 - Targeting students with areas of academic strength
 - Developing collaboration with potential feeder partners

- Conduct periodic financial aid optimization analysis to establish targets for the optimum number of students in each academic program to maximize net tuition revenue. (22-23)
 - Perform a program breakeven analysis at the various budget levels.
 - Use data to develop the optimal mix of students.
 - Periodically review and monitor discount rate.
- Strengthen marketing and communications efforts (22-23)
 - Review the College website to make it as attractive and user-friendly as possible.
 - Reassess the goals of the department
 - Determine the resource needs
 - If necessary, prepare and evaluate job descriptions
 - If necessary, recruit appropriate talent to fulfill goals of the department
- Determine unbundling plans past 2024 regarding relationship with Online Wiley (22-23)
 - Hardware needs
 - Software needs
 - Marketing needs
 - Enrollment department
 - 24/7 Student and faculty help desk
 - Advisement needs

Growth

Objective 2: Notre Dame will create a campus culture which encourages and maximizes creative thought for continued growth in revenue and sustainability. (23-24)

- Create a team that develops and inspires creative and courageous ideas within the community.
- Seek philanthropic/investor support to fund new initiatives.
- Investigate and implement as appropriate additional co-curricular programs (sports, organizations, etc.).

Objective 3: Expand opportunities through the Office of Professional Development. (24-25)

- Determine how much expansion do we want (badges in cyber, etc.)
- Provide non-credit courses for our students, faculty, staff, and community.

Objective 4: Expand opportunities for graduate and online students to enroll. (24-25)

- Graduate and online enrollment reaches 15% of net revenue by 2025.
 - Invest in new graduate and professional programs based on cost-benefit analysis.
- Explore potential new program opportunities for the current and future job markets.

Philanthropy

Objective 5: Strengthen and expand the role of philanthropy supporting the short and long-term financial health of the College. (23-24)

- Enhance alumni relations and encourage annual fund growth.
- Solicit donors to fund 100 scholarships to cover the gap (approximately \$2,500) between students' EFC and financial aid awards for each year that the students are enrolled.
- Review all scholarships and how they are distributed and assure proper stewardship with each donor.
- Maximize existing technology for philanthropy optimization (social media, Gravyty, etc.)

Objective 6: Launch a Centennial Campaign focused on scholarship & Capital projects. (22-23)

- Establish goals for capital campaign and determine benchmarks and timeline.

Objective 7: Prepare for the future by growing the endowment. (23-24)

- Intentional cultivation of donor base
- Create a culture of philanthropy (100 new donors)
- Improve stewardship to donors of endowed funds

Management/Operations

Objective 8: Strength its financial operational practices to maximize use of resources (22-23)

- Develop a predictive model to project net tuition revenue. (22-23)
- Create a collaborative budget process which encourages fiscal responsibility for budget managers. (22-23)

Objective 9: Conduct a Campus Enhancement Plan to best determine what physical investments will bring the greatest near-term revenue enhancement. (22-23)

- In conjunction with above, review existing master plan, including critical facility needs, to ensure our commitment for educating students to be future leaders (22-23)
 - Plan for updating all classrooms
 - Investigate Historic district tax credits
- Create a master plan for information technology (22-23)
 - Plan for updating all classrooms (IT updates)
 - Phase implement of that plan
- Evaluate projects related to potential program and revenue growth or enhanced recruitment and retention (23-24)

- Reimagine the campus grounds to include a baseball field.
- Expand stadium with permanent amenities.
- Addition of track and field facilities
- Build a campus health and wellness center.
- Create additional academic facilities
- Acquire neighboring property
- Beautify campus
- Continue to reduce deferred maintenance.

Objective 10: Notre Dame will invest in our greatest asset, our faculty and staff, in becoming a great place to work in Northeastern Ohio. (23-24)

- Review comprehensive compensation packages and establish a program to achieve parity with peer institutions.
- Create an annual performance review process linked to compensation adjustments.
- Continue to develop ways to enhance the employee experience.
- Develop and implement an employee appreciation program.
- Strengthen the onboarding process for new employees where they will complete paperwork, learn about employee policies and campus resources, and become familiar with the institution.
- Create a more uniform orientation process where employees work with their supervisor to understand their unique role and how to collaborate across campus.

Objective 11: Notre Dame will become a vibrant center for community engagement to strengthen and expand reputation and to generate revenue through campus rentals, camps, and related activities. (23-24)

- Increase outside rental of facilities during off times.
- Create a marketing plan to drive revenue and enhance NDC image as a civic partner.

Outcomes/Measures

Higher student satisfaction as measured by NSSE and retention – possibly investigate using SSI (Student Satisfaction Inventory) data as well.

Balanced and healthy operating budget.

Expanded revenue year over year.

Increased use/rental of campus facilities.

Investment Required

Financial Aid Optimization - \$67,000.00

Campus Enhancement Project \$65,000 (does that pay for the master plan?)

Centennial Capital Investing: \$750,000

- Landscaping
- Sidewalks and surfaces
- Falcon Nest rehab
- First floor Regina Classrooms
- Dining Hall rehab
- 4th floor rehab (common area and flooring) – possibly furniture
- Restrooms – 1st floor Admin (100K)

Building projects: many (to be assessed):

- Baseball field (1.8 mil)
- Expanded stadium with permanent amenities (1 mil)
- Track and Field facilities (1 mil)
- Deferred maintenance estimated at 8 mil

Return on Investment

30% growth in total revenue over five years (estimate)

Priorities for 22-23

Objective 1: Notre Dame will strengthen and solidify its recruitment model for traditional aged students to enroll a minimum of 1000 and a maximum of 1400 students and best determine what markers are needed to hit targeted revenue goals. (Beth Ford)

Objective 9: Conduct a Campus Enhancement Plan to best determine what physical investments will bring the greatest near-term revenue enhancement. (Jenny Erbs and Mike Pressimone)

Objective 8: Strength its financial operational practices to maximize use of resources (Jenny Erbs)

Strategic Initiative 3: Notre Dame will foster the development of each member of the community, so they understand, articulate, and embody the mission. Notre Dame will embody the values and mission described above.

Preamble

Notre Dame College stands for something. Its identity as a Catholic college that provides values-based education and access and opportunity to a diverse population sets it apart from its competitors locally and regionally. Mission drives this commitment, but mission must be understood and committed to an ongoing basis. Mission must be nurtured and taught.

Understanding

- Engage the campus through meaningful discussions of the understanding of mission.
- Engage the services of the Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities (ACCU) to help assess and lead meaningful discussions about living the mission.
- Engage experts or outside services to help direct discussions of diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Application

Mission

Objective 1: Notre Dame will undergo a comprehensive assessment of our core documents to ensure they respond with the changing needs of students in the 21st Century. (22-23)

- Design and implement a process to reaffirm the mission statement of the College and verify that all areas of the College are aligned (22-23)
- Convene groups of our community, both internal and external, to discuss our vital connections to the Catholic church with the goal of writing a new catholicity statement (22-23)
- Look into adding some mission/Catholic event days (23-24)

Objective 2: Notre Dame will fully articulate and integrate Catholic Social Teaching (CST) in each program – curricular and co-curricular. (24-25)

- Discuss with faculty how CST could be embedded in each program with the possibility of implementation the following year.
- Determine how CST will be assessed in each program

Objective 3: Notre Dame will advance our excellence in diversity by promoting new initiatives and become a leader in the Cleveland area in Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion work. (22-23)

- Create an Office of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (22-23)

- Create campus-wide engagement programs to support retention of diverse and multicultural students, staff, and faculty (22-23)
- Develop campus-wide multicultural programs to support the academic and social success of students, staff, and faculty. (22-23)
- Design campus wide training and professional development for faculty and staff. (23-24)
- Develop a campus-wide communication plan for the dissemination of DEI work. (24-25)

Objective 4: Notre Dame will continue to define or determine our relationship with the traditions of the Sisters of Notre Dame (SND). (22-23)

- Initiate meetings between the President, SND, BOT, and NDC community
- Continue involvement of SND in college events

Objective 5: Notre Dame will develop a comprehensive on-going mission integration program for all employees. (22-23)

- Refine and expand a year-long mission formation process that will be required for all new employees to help them see their connection to the mission of the College. (22-23)

Objective 6: Notre Dame will increase our external engagement and create a plan for communicating our mission broadly. (22-23)

- Increase the number of students serving in the community through internships, experiential learning, and community service.
- Create and implement a communication plan for parents, students, alumni, and donors
- Review the College website to make sure it reflects the mission of NDC.
- Review the campus physical environment to ensure it enhances the mission.

Objective 7: Develop a communication plan to increase transparency and collaboration among various departments within the college. (23-24)

- Develop an annual communication plan
- Create a communication committee

Outcomes

Deeper understanding of and commitment to living the mission.

Enhanced onboarding program.

Greater institutional reputation.

Investment Required

Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion –

Mission formation costs - \$10,000.00

Return on Investment

Longer tenured employees

Priorities for 22-23

Objective 1: Notre Dame will undergo a comprehensive assessment of our core documents to ensure they respond with the changing needs of students in the 21st Century. (Cabinet)

Objective 3: Notre Dame will advance our excellence in diversity by promoting new initiatives and become a leader in the Cleveland area in Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion work. (Sandra Golden)

Objective 5: Notre Dame will develop a comprehensive on-going mission integration program for all employees (Ted Steiner)

Comments from the board

Define metrics instead of refine metrics

Should we have KPIs – use that term when we develop the metrics

Like the idea of a 3 year plan – appreciate (Geoff) the work that went into this. It will be important to have an owner for each objectives.

This will be on every board agenda moving forward.

Terri mentions this is a living breathing document. Move unanimously