

Year Two Progress Summary Planning Priorities for Lake Forest College 2013-2018

To the Lake Forest College Community:

I am pleased to present this progress summary at the end of the second year under the College's current five-year plan, which remains available for your reference on the College's website: www.lakeforest.edu/aboutus/administration/strategicplanning.

As it was a year ago, this is still a challenging, highly competitive time for small colleges that have historically emphasized the liberal arts. Recognizing this, the five-year plan clarifies the College's current priorities and provides strategies to strengthen and call attention to the value of a Lake Forest College education. We have made real progress under the plan over the past two years, and major examples of progress are highlighted below under headings that correspond to the plan's key strategies.

It is important to remember, however, that the plan's central goal is to "attract, enroll, retain, and graduate an academically qualified and diverse student body willing and able to pay an increasing share of our tuition." Our progress toward this key goal is mixed thus far. On the positive side, average net tuition revenue per student is projected to be 2.2% higher this year than last, our retention and graduation rates are continuing to improve (as you can read below), student academic qualifications remain competitive, the diversity of our student body continues to be strong, and the largest group of transfer students in College history – totaling 90 – will enroll this fall. On the negative side, our first-year class this fall will number 361 and be the smallest in several years. Our new vice president for enrollment, Chris Ellertson, is already providing strong leadership and innovative new strategies to recruit larger first-year classes in the years ahead, but the admissions market will remain intensely competitive through the foreseeable future.

As a final introductory comment, it is noteworthy that several examples of important areas of progress touch or cross more than one key strategy in the five-year plan. The Digital Chicago project supported by an \$800,000 Mellon Foundation grant, for instance, involves the humanities, our Chicago connections, the creative application of new technologies, and valuable experiential student learning. The ongoing enrichment of our finance major involves a strategic academic area, Chicago again, intentional career preparation, experiential learning and alumni engagement. Although these and other examples are listed singly below, they could rightly appear in multiple places, and the programmatic synergy they represent is a major College strength.

Invest in Key Academic Programs that Match Student Interests and Offer Sound Employment Prospects

Sciences

- Plans for the renovation and expansion of the College's science facilities have greatly advanced over the past year. Architect Michael Reagan has facilitated multiple faculty workshops that have played a critical role in finalizing a project design. The 120,000 square foot facility will emphasize interdisciplinary connections and feature state-of-the-art teaching and research labs, classrooms and student gathering spaces. We expect to receive final approval of the design by the City of Lake Forest in September and, shortly thereafter, to prepare the building site by demolishing the former Center for Chicago Programs. (The Center has now moved to Stuart Commons.) Fundraising continues apace for this \$40 million project, the largest in the College's history. Assuming we meet fundraising targets, then initial construction could begin by October.

Economics, Business and Finance

- The Department of Economics, Business and Finance has begun work to revise and strengthen our business major curriculum with the goal of offering accounting and marketing concentrations that promise to attract both four-year and transfer students. Regarding transfer students, the College is working to develop a well-considered articulation agreement with the College of Lake County (CLC). Finance faculty, the Career Advancement Center (CAC) and the Trustee Committee on Post-Graduate Outcomes have collaborated to expand finance internships, add new finance-related courses (e.g., Finance 140: Introduction to Insurance), and recruit finance professionals to mentor finance majors and help them secure employment.

Entrepreneurship

- An inaugural group of 14 students graduated last May having completed the entrepreneurship minor. This year the number of declared minors totals 65, and 307 students are enrolled in fall or spring entrepreneurship courses.
- The College has recruited eight successful Chicago-area entrepreneurs to serve on a new advisory council for our entrepreneurship minor. Council members will mentor entrepreneurship students, judge future “shark tank” and “elevator pitch” competitions, and potentially support student entrepreneurial ventures.

Humanities and Creative Arts

- The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation approved two grants totaling \$900,000 to support humanities programs. An \$800,000 grant – “Digital Chicago” – is supporting a four-year digital humanities program centered on urban archaeological digs that will engage students and faculty in many different ways. It will produce, among other things, smartphone applications providing in-depth information on artifacts unearthed at historic Chicago sites. A \$100,000 grant is supporting a two-year collaboration among English faculty at Lake Forest, Beloit and Knox Colleges to explore joint curricular development and course sharing possibilities.
- Our English department is also the recipient of a \$500,000 grant from alumna Randy Berlin and her husband, Melvin, to provide permanent support for the department’s Classics of Literature course sequence.
- The College approved new academic minors in Museum Studies, Chinese, and Education.
- Permanent storage and curatorial space for the College’s permanent art collection has been developed in the Sonnenschein Gallery, thanks to a generous gift from John Liebes, widower of Gail Liebes ’53.

General Education Curriculum Revision

- The Task Force on General Education and Graduation Requirements made good progress with its review and revision of our general education program. At the end of the spring semester, it presented an interim report recommending that the program be revised to accommodate an expanded breadth requirement, separate requirements for coursework in domestic pluralism and global perspectives, new writing, speaking and technology intensive requirements, and a new experiential requirement. In May the faculty unanimously endorsed the Task Force’s direction and charged it to develop a final proposal based on the ideas and concepts in the interim report. The Task Force plans to present such a proposal to the faculty for approval this year.

Chicago Connections

- “Lake Forest College in the Loop” continued its popular and successful All-Access Mixers in the city, which connect students and alumni in various professions.
- The annual “Chicago Day” during New Student Orientation, next Tuesday, August 25, will again feature alumni luncheons in the city. First-year studies classes will join Chicago alumni in their offices and at the Loop campus for great food, conversation and early mentorship.

- Thanks to a partnership begun through our Center for Chicago Programs, the Art Institute of Chicago will offer free admission to Lake Forest College students, faculty, staff and alumni all day on Saturday, September 19 and on the evening of February 4. Lake Forest College students have free admission *every day* with their Lake Forest College student ID.
- The relocation of the Center for Chicago Programs and Off-Campus Programs to Stuart Commons will provide these offices with greater prominence on campus and facilitate increased collaboration with the Gates Center.

Summer Programs

- Campus activity this summer was greater than ever before. More than 220 students – including a number of our current students as well as a record number of visiting students – enrolled in one or more of 30 courses offered in three four-week sessions. This nearly doubled the number of courses offered and students enrolled last year, and represented a major advance in summer programming. Steady growth in summer camps and conferences kept pace with the growth in summer courses. All in all, summer 2015 was one of the most educationally and financially successful the College has experienced.

Technology

- Thanks to a generous donation, the College this summer developed a new instructional computer lab in the library. New technology was also installed in a Young Hall classroom, and technology was upgraded in Carnegie, Durand and Meyer Auditorium.
- LIT has also supported faculty use of lecture capture software in teaching, and a growing number of student and faculty publications have been added to Lake Forest College Publications, the College's open source institutional repository, where they have enjoyed wide exposure.

Prepare students for productive and rewarding careers

Graduates Gainfully Employed

- 98% of the Class of 2014 were gainfully employed or in graduate school in the year following their College graduation, according to a recently completed survey. More respondents than ever before, in addition, said their jobs were meaningfully connected to their undergraduate courses of study and/or their personal career ambitions.

Enhance the Career Advancement Center (CAC)

- Inspired by the College's mission to "prepare our students for, and help them attain, productive and rewarding careers," and by the CAC's progress over the past year, generous anonymous donors pledged \$2 million to support the College's career programs. As a result, CAC has been able to expand professional staff, programs and plans to benefit all Lake Forest College students. In particular, CAC is strengthening internship programs, employer outreach, and the developmental Career Milestones sequence that is designed to help students become well-prepared and highly competitive job candidates by their senior year.

Improve Retention and Graduation Rates

- First-to-second-year retention, at more than 86% in fall 2014, was the highest ever, reflecting sustained attention and good work by our Student Success Committee. In addition, 72.4% of students who matriculated in fall 2009 were graduated by spring 2015: essentially tied with last year's record six-year graduation rate of 73%.
- The Student Success Committee issued a detailed report in April 2015 that focused on key factors in student retention and graduation rates, emphasized the entire campus's role in this area, and identified key strategies that the College is now implementing to achieve first-to-second-year

retention and six-year graduation rates of 87% and 80% by 2018. The report is available for reference on the Institutional Research page under the Administration tab on My.lakeforest.

Support Faculty and Staff While Continuing to Optimize Resources

- Informed by faculty and staff focus groups conducted during the 2013-14 academic year, the Trustee Compensation Committee (TCC) worked with the College's administration during 2014-15 to clarify the College's compensation peer group, goals and strategies. The 26 colleges in the ACM and GLCA combined were selected as the most appropriate peer group, and the TCC confirmed a goal of maintaining total compensation (salary and benefits) in the top half of the peer group for full-time faculty and supervisory administrative staff.
- With TCC support and guidance, and ongoing consultation with faculty and staff, the College administration will continue to review and analyze the College's salary structure and benefits programs, in order to recommend strategic changes and improvements during 2015-16.
- The College was able to limit the annual increase in health insurance premium costs to below 5%.
- In the works for implementation this January is an optional high-deductible health insurance plan with a Health Savings Account. This option will be attractive to employees who may benefit from pre-tax savings for health expenses, and should save money for the College overall by encouraging employees to consider cost when selecting treatment options.

Improve Lake Forest College Marketing

- The College pushed forward its "Access and Edge" marketing theme through new admissions publications and events, on-campus banners and announcements, and media outreach.
- Local and national print and broadcast outlets frequently featured College faculty and staff during 2014-15, thanks to effective placement efforts on the part of our Office of Communications and Marketing (OCM). Among media publicizing the College were the New York Times, Chicago Tribune, Chicago Sun-Times, all Chicago TV stations, NPR, WGN Radio, BusinessWeek and numerous others. A recent "hit" was the print and broadcast publicity generated on July 28 by our Mellon Foundation-sponsored archaeology dig at Chicago's Charnley-Persky House.
- Internal campus marketing and communication advanced during 2014-15 through the "Lake Forest Weekly News" email postings by OCM.
- Several improvements to the College's .edu website now make it easier for prospective students to find interesting and compelling information about the College and its offerings.

Capital Campaign Planning

- The five-year plan's priorities will require substantial philanthropic support. With this in mind, active planning is underway for the College's next capital campaign. A campaign prospectus has been approved by the Board of Trustees and is available for review in the web pages of the Office of Development and Alumni Relations (DAR). With a provisional goal of \$125 million, the campaign will be the College's largest, and DAR has already garnered a number of sizable early campaign commitments, including the growing set of pledges for our new science facility. The current plan is to publicly announce the campaign by fall 2016.

In conclusion, I want to thank everyone for your efforts to support the five-year plan priorities. Thanks to you, we're making good progress, and I look forward to it continuing. Best wishes for the year ahead.

Stephen D. Schutt
President
Lake Forest College