



Year Three 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 third 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.

The five-year plan recognizes that this is a challenging, competitive time for small colleges that have historically emphasized the liberal arts. The plan clarifies the College's strategic priorities for the current five-year period 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 and, as I did in last year's report, I highlight below some major examples under headings that correspond to the plan's key strategies. Our progress has impressed "outsiders:" last month the president and a team of senior administrators from Ripon College spent a day on campus, and they were highly complimentary across the board.

Because our five-year plan's central goal, however, 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," we must acknowledge that we need to make more progress toward this key goal. On the positive side, the 360 members of the Class of 2020 are academically strong and impressively diverse: their average ACT composite score is 26.4, up from 24.8 a year ago, and 35% are either domestic students of color or international students. Many of their families are also stronger financially: 28% of the Class of 2020 qualifies for federal Pell grants, significantly down from last year's 45%.

On the other hand, our goal for this fall was to recruit and enroll at least 400 students in the Class of 2020, as well as 100 more transfer students. Like numerous other colleges in today's challenging environment, we fell significantly short of that goal, and we must do better next year and thereafter.

To meet this imperative, Vice President for Enrollment Chris Ellertson and his admission staff will work hard – in concert with faculty, athletics coaching staff, alumni representatives and other campus offices – to increase enrollment in Fall 2017 by better qualifying desirable candidates, enhancing communication with prospective students, implementing a year-round recruitment program, hosting new campus events for high school juniors, developing a new, appealing Lake Forest application form, providing earlier financial aid awards, developing new transfer recruitment programs, strengthening relationships with high school counselors, and pursuing still other strategies in consultation with expert consultants at Enrollment Research Associates. Given the importance of student recruitment for the College's future, it is essential for everyone on campus to support these efforts and strategies.

Like a large majority of colleges and universities nationwide, Lake Forest College depends on student tuition payments for 60% or more of our operating revenue, demonstrating why success in admissions is so vital for us. At the same time, I'm happy to report that our fundraising programs are robust and

increasingly strengthening our financial picture. In each of the past two years, thanks to great work by Vice President for Development and Alumni Relations Phil Hood and his capable staff, the College raised more than \$18 million in gifts and pledges to support five-year plan priorities – especially the new science facility – and considerably increased our net assets. As we approach October, when we will publicly launch our new capital campaign, we are well positioned for success.

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

Sciences

- Construction of our new \$43 million science center has begun. Demolition of the former science library – to clear space for the new foundation walls – is nearly complete, and a temporary access road, protective fencing and directional signage have been installed. Steel will be delivered in the near future, and erection of the new facility’s “skeleton” will be underway by September. The impressive “front door” addition will be completed by the end of 2017, and renovation of existing Johnson Science Center labs and classrooms will be finished during 2018, in time for the 2018-19 academic year. The 130,000 square foot facility – which will integrate all new and renovated spaces – will feature innovative designs, support 21st Century interdisciplinary curricular developments, and house our biology, chemistry, physics, psychology, neuroscience, biochemistry and molecular biology, and environmental studies programs. It will dramatically increase our capacity to support student-faculty collaborative research and strengthen our ability to provide hands-on student training in use of modern instrumentation.

Economics, Business and Finance

- The business major has been significantly revised, with a new accounting track now available for students. To support curricula and meet student demand, impressive new faculty have been appointed in finance (now our second-largest major) and in the business major accounting track. The College is spreading the word about our finance and business majors to interested, well-qualified transfer students at the College of Lake County (CLC) and other area community colleges. In addition, the Career Advancement Center (CAC) and the Trustee Committee on Post-Graduate Outcomes continue to recruit Chicago-area finance professionals to mentor finance majors and expand our roster of finance internships.

Entrepreneurship and Innovation

- A new faculty member has also been appointed to expand entrepreneurship course offerings and help develop this burgeoning minor. 21 students graduated last May having completed the entrepreneurship minor, and we project 40 or more students will complete the minor and graduate next May. An outstanding group of area entrepreneurs joined our Entrepreneurship Advisory Council last year, and the EAC is actively involved in shaping the future of our entrepreneurship program. At the inaugural “Pitch It” competition in April, the EAC awarded \$10,000 in prize money to the student entrepreneurs who presented the most impressive plans for starting and growing their own entrepreneurial businesses.

Humanities and Creative Arts

- The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation expects to give final approval in September of a \$600,000 grant to support our new African-American Studies major and a tenure-track faculty position in African-American history.
- The four-year \$800,000 Mellon Foundation “Digital Chicago” grant continues to produce great work by our faculty and students on multiple fronts. Among numerous examples, our partnership with the Chicago History Museum will feature joint development of more than 30,000 photographic images, audio recordings, and manuscript materials from Raeburn Flerlage, an iconic photographer of Chicago blues and folk artists in the 1950s and 1960s. Numerous faculty

are also engaged on other research projects, including continuing work on the excavation of the Charnley-Persky House and preparation for another archaeological dig, researching Jane Addams' anti-war activity, recreating the musical accompaniment for silent films made in Chicago, examining the origins of ensemble-generated theater, studying patterns of housing discrimination, and developing virtual and augmented reality experiences of important chapters in Chicago's history. More information on these projects and others is available at the project website: <https://www.lakeforest.edu/chicago/digitalchicago/fellows.php>.

- As is the case for our business and finance majors, the College is also spreading the word about our strong humanities and fine arts majors to interested, well-qualified transfer students at the College of Lake County (CLC) and other area community colleges. In addition, the Career Advancement Center (CAC) and the Trustee Committee on Post-Graduate Outcomes continue to recruit Chicago-area writers, artists and creative professionals to mentor students and expand our roster of internships.
- Two new tenure-track faculty have been appointed in the Department of Modern Languages in order to increase our capacity in translation studies, language and technology, transatlantic studies and other key areas of current interest. Another tenure-track faculty member with expertise in the philosophy of science has been appointed to the Department of Philosophy in order to deepen the connections between the humanities and the sciences.
- A promising new journalism minor was approved by College faculty this past spring.
- The Music Department has established a new partnership with Ravinia's music education program to provide professional development for Ravinia's musician teachers who provide music lessons to underprivileged students in Chicago's public schools and the Waukegan school district.

General Education Curriculum Revision

- The faculty on May 4 voted to approve the framework of learning goals and requirements for a new GEC, which include an expanded breadth requirement, a revised cultural diversity requirement including coursework in both domestic pluralism and global perspectives, new writing, speaking and technology intensive requirements, and a new experiential requirement. Over the coming year the GEC Task Force will work on implementation plans, which will also be presented to the faculty next spring. The approval and establishment of a new GEC is vital for the College's reaccreditation, as Dean Orr has explained in the past.

Chicago Connections

- "Lake Forest College in the Loop" has moved to attractive new quarters in "The Flats," a well-appointed student residence hall operated by East-West University on South Wabash Street in Chicago that features breathtaking views of Lake Michigan. The Fall 2016 cohort of "Lake Forest Loopers" is taking up residence there this month.
- The annual "Chicago Day" during New Student Orientation for the Class of 2020 will occur tomorrow, August 23, and 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.
- The new location of the Center for Chicago Programs and Off-Campus Programs in Stuart Commons has provided these offices with greater prominence on campus and facilitated their increased collaboration with the Gates Center and other Middle Campus offices.
- A new collaboration with the Chaddick Institute for Metropolitan Development has resulted in an exhibition entitled "Windy City in Motion: Movies + Trains" that features the work of five Lake Forest faculty members. The exhibition is now on display at Union Station in downtown Chicago.

Prepare students for productive and rewarding careers

Graduates Gainfully Employed

- 97% of May 2015 graduates were either employed or enrolled in graduate school six months after graduation, based on the CAC's most recent six-month-out survey.

Enhance the Career Advancement Center (CAC)

- The CAC successfully launched five Career Pathways: (i) Business and Finance, (ii) Creative Arts, (iii) Health Care and Science, (iv) Law, Policy and Nonprofit, and (v) Build Your Own. Each pathway will provide a community for students, faculty, staff, alumni and friends working or interested in the career areas it covers. Each will also provide developmental sequences for career preparation that students can understand and follow. For more information, please see the Career Pathways pages in the CAC's website.
- An external review of our internship program was completed this past spring and yielded useful recommendations for strengthening the program. The CAC is now working to design improvements including, e.g., a potential online internship registration process for students, a consistent set of responsibilities for internship supervisors, a potential zero-credit course that will better prepare students to succeed in internships, and other enhancements to this vital College program.
- Employer outreach is steadily expanding, and CAC is closing in on reaching a goal of 50 active, well-established employer partnerships in multiple sectors.
- CAC is spearheading a drive to confirm a number of "marquee internship" sites across the Chicago area that Admissions can promote to prospective students.

Improve Retention and Graduation Rates

- First-to-second-year retention last fall was 85%, consistent with the previous year.
- The six-year graduation rate in May 2016 for the 2010 entering class was 70%, a 2% decline from the 72% six-year rate attained by the 2009 entering class. This unfortunate decline must prompt us to redouble our efforts to improve our graduation rate so that we can reach the goal of an 80% six-year graduation rate as soon as possible. Dean Flot and Dean Orr, together with the Student Success Committee, are giving renewed attention to factors influencing our graduation rates, following the Committee's detailed April 2015 report. A number of promising initiatives focused on first-year retention have already been launched, and faculty and staff briefings on this critical topic will be provided this fall.

Support Faculty and Staff While Continuing to Optimize Resources

Providing a competitive employee benefits program for faculty and staff is a top priority for the Trustee Committee on Faculty/Staff Compensation. With the Committee's help and hard work by our Employee Benefits Task Group, the College's health insurance program was changed in several ways to reflect current practice among most colleges and universities. Among other changes, the College:

- Exited the EIIA health insurance consortium to avoid excessive self-insurance administrative costs and high reserve requirements.
- Reduced from 16 to a more manageable five the salary ranks in which premium costs are grouped for faculty and staff.
- Laid groundwork for an optional high-deductible health insurance plan with a Health Savings Account that will be made available to faculty and staff in January 2017. 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.

- Released a new employee benefits website at <http://www.lakeforest.edu/about/working/benefits.php> that offers quick, accessible information about our employee benefits.

Thanks to these and other plan adjustments that were publicized during the Open Enrollment period, the College was able once again to limit the annual increase in health insurance premium costs to below 5%.

Improve Lake Forest College Marketing

Among several marketing initiatives over the past year, key improvements included:

- Major website enhancements to improve navigation and content, and to make it easier for prospective students and others to view the website on a mobile device. In addition, the Office of Communications and Marketing created a new [microsite](#) to showcase the CAC pathways and added an interactive [360-degree campus tour](#), giving prospective students and parents another way to experience the College.
- Better, regular communication with area community audiences that receive the College's semi-annual events postcard. That card – highlighting key campus events and providing the campus calendar web address – is now mailed to all households in Lake Forest, Lake Bluff, Highland Park, and Deerfield. Greater community member attendance at campus lectures and performances was evident in 2015-16 as a result of this broader mailing.

In conclusion, I want to thank everyone for your efforts to support the five-year plan priorities. We continue to make important progress, thanks to you, and I look forward to it continuing. Best wishes for the year ahead.

Stephen D. Schutt
President
Lake Forest College