Year One Progress Report

Planning Priorities for Lake Forest College 2013-2018

To the Lake Forest College Community:

Last fall the Board of Trustees endorsed the College’s new five-year plan. Captioned “Planning Priorities for Lake Forest College 2013-2018,” the plan is available for your reference on the Institutional Research webpage, under the Administration tab on My.Lakeforest.

Recognizing that this is a very challenging time for small colleges that have historically emphasized the liberal arts, the five-year plan identifies planning priorities for the College and provides several key strategies to strengthen and call attention to the value of a Lake Forest College education. Initial implementation of the plan has already produced significant progress, major elements of which are highlighted below under headings that correspond to the plan’s key strategies. In each of the next four years I will provide another report detailing further progress as well as any setbacks that may occur.

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

* Faculty, the Career Advancement Center (CAC), alumni and trustees on the new Post-Graduate Outcomes Committee are collaborating on pilot programs to enhance connections between our academic programs and career opportunities in the finance and healthcare sectors, to prepare students for those opportunities, and to engage alumni and College friends in mentoring students.

*Sciences/Health Professions*

* Architect Michael Reagan, a nationally recognized expert in science facility planning and design, has been retained to help the College plan for a major renovation and expansion of our science facilities. He led an initial two-day “Discovery Workshop” with our science faculty in July, and a second three-day session is scheduled later this month. The College’s ambitious goal is to design, raise funds to support, and complete construction of new and improved facilities within three years, in time for the 2017 fall semester.

*Economics, Business and Finance*

* The College has established a new partnership with the Mason School of Business at the College of William and Mary that provides our students with a fast track into the master’s of accounting program at William and Mary and eligibility for special scholarships.

*Experiential Learning Opportunities*

* Students completing internships during the academic year increased by 12% over the previous year, and another 56 students are completing internships this summer: likely the highest number ever.
* A large majority of students performed community service during the course of the year.

*Chicago Connections*

* Popular new All-Access Mixers in the Chicago Loop strategically connected students and alumni in various professions. In addition, for the Digital Media Design program, an inaugural “Creative Arts Showcase” matched students and DMD-related professionals.
* The Center for Chicago Programs has established productive new partnerships with the Chicago Humanities Festival, the University of Chicago Press, and the American Library Association/Booklist, among others.

*New Academic Minors*

* The new entrepreneurship minor is off and running, with Darlene Jaffke appointed as a full-time coordinator. Demonstrating broad student interest, there is a waiting list for every course offered under the minor in the coming year.
* Print & Digital Publishing, Music Education, and Entrepreneurship & Innovation are all now established, providing new opportunities for students across campus.

Prepare students for productive and rewarding careers

*Expand the College’s Mission Statement*

* Demonstrating the College’s responsibility to prepare students for life after graduation, faculty and trustees approved the addition of the following phrase to the College’s mission statement: “We prepare our students for, and help them attain, productive and rewarding careers.”

*Enhance the Career Advancement Center*

* The Forester Career Network – an interactive database of hundreds of alumni and College friends who are prepared to provide career mentorship and assistance to students in all academic disciplines – is nearly up and running.
* Each academic department now has a designated CAC career advisor/staff liaison.
* The number of students seeking CAC services rose by more than 40% over the past five years.

Maintain Strength in the Liberal Arts and Explain Their Value

* A General Education Task Force has been appointed to review and potentially recommend a revision of the College’s general education and graduation requirements, with specific reference to how we fulfill the promises in our mission statement.
* Trustee and former Chairman of the Board of Lake Forest College Robert D. Krebs and his wife Anne have completed all arrangements to donate their Lake Forest home and art collection to the College. Located in east Lake Forest less than a mile from campus, the 9,200 square foot home is a beautiful, authentic replica of an Italian Renaissance villa, and it is filled with the Krebs’ sizeable collection of art and furnishings from the Renaissance and later periods.
* Students and faculty will benefit from a $500,000 pledge to support the study of classic literature.
* The College may receive a substantial grant in support of digital humanities: negotiations with the potential donor are ongoing.
* Hixon Hall renovations will enhance performances for student actors, directors and audiences.
* Thanks to a significant gift from College friend John Liebes, the Sonnenschein Gallery is being reconfigured this summer to provide improved storage space for the College’s 1200-piece art collection, as well as a much-needed study area for students in art history and museum studies, named in honor of Mr. Liebes’ late wife, Gail K. Liebes ’53.
* A variety of web page improvements will help academic departments attract and inform students in the academic year ahead.

Improve Retention and Graduation Rates

* The new Student Success Committee has productively focused on key factors in student retention and graduation rates, and has appropriately emphasized the entire campus’s role in this vital area.
* Professor Dawn Abt-Perkins was appointed to the new position of Special Assistant to the Dean of the Faculty for Student Success. In this role she will strengthen the feedback loop between faculty and the Early Action Student Support Team (EASST), a high priority identified by the Student Success Committee.
* A new Academic Early Alert system (to replace warning grades) was established. Students will be alerted earlier in the term and have a better chance to correct disconnections between their performance and faculty expectations in courses.
* The percentage of students succeeding in introductory calculus increased significantly, compared to previous years, significantly due to the implementation of math placement tests.

Support Faculty and Staff While Continuing to Optimize Resources

* The Trustee Compensation Committee organized faculty and staff focus groups in the spring semester that yielded valuable perspectives on the College’s compensation programs. Informed by those perspectives, the College will provide a fresh articulation of its compensation philosophy this fall, along with specific goals to guide future compensation decisions for faculty and staff.
* Despite the ongoing tuition revenue challenge and resulting budget pressures, the College was able to provide a 3% salary pool for continuing faculty and staff in 2014-15, and to limit the annual increase in overall health insurance premium costs to below 5%.
* The Academic Resources and Review Committee began an important revision of its course allocation process that will continue in the coming year.

Improve Lake Forest College Marketing

* The Office of Communications and Marketing has spearheaded an innovative new “Access and Edge” marketing program with the following focus: “Lake Forest College gives every student direct access to great faculty and advisors, impressive internships, and a powerful network of alumni and friends who hire or help our graduates begin their careers. This access gives every student a valuable edge: a big boost to a bright future.”
* Led by trustee Susan Garrett ’94, a new task force of trustees, alumni and administrators has been formed to expand the College’s network of supportive Chicago-area partners and friends.
* Thanks to trustee Mark Nagle, president of Czarnowski, one of the nation’s leading design and production firms, the College has installed attractive new “Access and Edge” banners and other visual treatments across campus and at our “In The Loop” facility in Chicago.

In conclusion, I want to thank everyone in our campus community for your many efforts to support the College’s planning priorities over the past year. I feel very encouraged by the progress we’ve made, and look forward to further advances in the year ahead. Best wishes for the coming fall semester.

Stephen D. Schutt

President

Lake Forest College