

**Strategic Visioning Working Group #1**  
**Fall Report**  
**16 December 2016**

**Working Group Members:**

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**Questions or Themes that Guided WG#1's Study:**

How does the university define educational value? Who will our students be, and what will define the distinguishing value of UD's holistic educational experience in 20 years?

**Primary Observations**

Observation #1

Several themes emerged from our conversations--both on campus and beyond:

- Social justice and equity
- Diversity and inclusion
- Broader access to the fullness of a UD education
- Transparency in articulating, in clear and accessible ways, the distinctiveness of a UD education
- Experiential learning
- Community-engaged learning
- Holistic health and wellness / Wellness of mind, body and spirit
- Vocational discernment
- Ethical decision making
- Faith formation
- Connection to local communities, organizations, businesses, etc.
- Global citizenship and engagement
- An emphasis on student development *as a process*
- Necessity to challenge status quo assumptions of students/faculty/staff regarding pedagogy and the purpose of a liberal education

Observation #2

Working Group #1 drew on Pope Francis' vision of interconnectedness, which provides a unifying framework for our proposed aspirations. With the publication of *Laudato Si'* (2015)--an encyclical addressing the current global environmental crisis--Pope Francis stressed the importance of what he deems "integral ecology." For Pope Francis, interconnectedness is a way of seeing--a necessary way of perceiving the world and acting in harmony with other people and all living things. Our Catholic and Marianist identity helps us embrace the theme of interconnectedness and make it our own at UD.

Observation #3

Our proposed aspirations are rooted in our University's values and mission as articulated in *Common Themes in the Mission and Identity of the University of Dayton* (2012), while concurrently creating a vision of a distinctive UD graduate in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Campus

conversations have reminded our group that, in twenty years, a distinctive UD education will necessarily account for changing economic realities, demographic shifts at the national and regional level, the skills required of a twenty-first century graduates, and an attention to wellness of mind, body, and spirit.

### **Long-Term Strategic Aspirations**

**Aspiration #1: A coordinated, embedded and purposeful infrastructure will produce University of Dayton graduates with the boldness to imagine a more just, inclusive, and equitable world and cultivate it in their own spheres of life. This social justice infrastructure will be a paradigmatic shift advancing social justice across the entire range of university endeavors that:**

- represents a consistent understanding and deep commitment within the campus community;
- attracts, retains, supports, provides equitable access to resources, and graduates or promotes a diverse population of students, faculty and staff (See Aspiration #3);
- fosters a transformative educational experience that seamlessly integrates and honors curriculum and co-curriculum learning that attends to the development of dispositions, skills, and knowledge to advance the common good (See Appendix A);
- supports the capacity of students, faculty and staff to seek justice, listen to and engage multiple perspectives and build relationships across diversity;
- develops the capacity of all faculty and staff to bring a global and intercultural perspectives and navigate difficult dialogues;
- insists on assessment and reward of social-justice advancing activities (e.g., policy, pedagogy, strategy, practice);
- honors subsidiarity and challenge systems that create and sustain inequities for the advancement of the common good.

*Rationale:* The Catholic, Marianist call to social justice requires each of us to work for the common good within our sphere of life by changing structures that marginalize people and deny full participation in society. A purposeful and coordinated social justice infrastructure lifts the University's mission to build community across diversity; excel in integrated learning and scholarship; search for truth grounded in both faith and reason; educate for practical wisdom and partner for the common good.

*How aspiration would advance the aims of differentiation, innovation, and excellence:*

- Advancing differentiation: The social justice infrastructure would create a culture of inclusivity and equity in pursuit of the common good that would manifest in all aspects of the University community in unique and innovative ways and highlight the Catholic and Marianist charism. UD would be recognized as a global leader in intentionally advancing social justice through all its institutional practices and through the lives of its graduates.

- Advancing excellence: UD's distinctive graduates will be defined by their willingness to embrace the call to social justice, ability to engage in complex problem solving, and skill in creatively connecting to people and ideas.

**Aspiration 2: All UD undergraduates will have access to at least one experiential learning immersion that develops global /intercultural learning and vocational discernment. This signature UD experience will be an integral part of students' degree programs, of significant duration (i.e., a semester or longer), be included as part of regular tuition and be contained within a 4-year undergraduate experience.**

*Rationale:*

- This aspiration situates global, cross-cultural, and experiential learning as integral to the UD educational experience. The experiential learning immersion may take many forms including study abroad; intensive domestic or international community-engaged learning; 3) intensive research; and/or 4) internship experience in a local or international context. Study abroad and other immersive cross-cultural experiences yield numerous personal and professional benefits. However, many UD students lack access to these experiences due to financial and/or curricular barriers. So that all UD undergraduates have access to this signature UD experience, the immersive opportunity will be included as part of regular tuition and within a 4-year undergraduate experience.

*How aspiration would advance the aims of differentiation, innovation, and excellence:*

- Advancing differentiation: The immersive, cross-cultural experience will not be a stand-alone or add-on experience. Rather, it will be integrally connected to the entire UD educational experience and contribute to a student's curricular engagement and vocational discernment.

The immersive, cross-cultural experiences might take many forms including study or research abroad, civic engagement, ETHOS, and activities with Marianist learning centers or notable national and international organizations (e.g., Habitat for Humanity Global Village Experience). If necessitated by a student's circumstances (e.g., family or graduate students) the opportunity could take place in the Dayton area. Immersive experiential learning opportunities could also be extended to graduate students (as appropriate depending on program).

- Advancing excellence: This signature experience will develop graduates who excel in the knowledge, skills, and dispositions needed in 2037 in a distinctively Marianist way (See Appendix A). These include intercultural competence, reading of systems and contexts, creatively connecting people and ideas across traditional divisions, navigating a rapidly changing, globally networked society, social-emotional and collaborative skills, and developing an understanding of how to make a positive impact in the world.

**Aspiration #3 - The University will meet 100% of the documented financial need of all admitted students. This intentional promotion of educational justice, inclusion, and equity will increase access for socioeconomically underprivileged students and allow the University to pursue inclusive excellence.**

*Rationale:* The UD educational experience will be grounded in an increasingly diverse and inclusive community.

*How aspiration would advance the aims of differentiation, innovation, and excellence:*

- Advancing differentiation: UD will be able to recruit and shape a student body that better reflects demographic trends nationally and globally (including the global Catholic population).
- Advancing excellence: A diverse and inclusive community is an essential context for the development of distinctive graduates' intercultural competence, connecting across traditional divisions, collaborating with a diversity of people, engaging with multiple perspectives, and embracing the call to serve while inquiring into the structures that create, sustain and perpetuate inequity. (See Appendix A).

**Aspiration 4: UD will establish a University-wide institute for creativity, innovation, and entrepreneurship. The institute will coordinate efforts in articulating and implementing the practical implications of Catholic Social Teaching, encouraging collaboration among departments, units, schools, and industry. The University of Dayton will be known as a global catalyst for innovation and entrepreneurship in fostering a more just and equitable society.**

*Description:*

- The institute, in partnership with community leaders from every social sector (e.g., business, industry, and social services), will coordinate efforts in teaching-learning and collaborative research in dialogue with Catholic Social Teaching to generate new ideas and practical applications in business and community organizations to solve the world's most pressing problems.
- UD will build a physical commons to intentionally encourage creative collisions at the intersection of ideas and disciplinary knowledge.
- UD will partner with businesses, community organizations, and industry associations to create an innovation ecosystem to support students in their search for solutions to pressing problems.

*Rationale:*

- Cross-unit collaboration and partnerships with businesses, community organizations, and industry associations will make the University of Dayton a global catalyst for innovation in its creative application of Catholic social teaching.
- This entrepreneurial ecosystem will span multiple units to prepare graduates for creating conditions around the world where innovation and entrepreneurship thrive. Rooted in the values of social justice articulated in Catholic social teaching, the University of Dayton will be known for its efforts to follow Paul VI's counsel: "If you want peace, work for justice, and bring about prosperity and peace."

*How aspiration would advance the aims of differentiation, innovation, and excellence:*

- The idea of a cross-campus institute to advance innovation is not new. However, the idea to involve all academic units in curriculum design and delivery, and research projects, and to create a governance structure to coordinate and direct an ecosystem aimed at helping students dream and bring to reality ideas for solutions to pressing world

problems, is distinctive and unique. The institute will allow students to engage in meaningful cross-disciplinary learning and research, and grow UD's national brand as a leader in Catholic higher education by establishing thought leadership through practice and research.

**Aspiration 5: UD will be a leader in delivering a collaborative and multidisciplinary educational experience that cultivates the holistic health and wellness of all students.**

Examples of how the aspiration may be delivered include:

- An Institute of Health and Wellness can include collaboration across multiple units. This may create an opportunity for students from many disciplines (as well as staff and faculty) to work directly with the campus community and could include a pro-bono, on-campus wellness clinic where experiential and inter-professional learning opportunities, programs, or collaborative research projects that serve the community can be developed.
- Experiential learning opportunities within and outside of the curriculum can be developed (or utilized where they are already in place) where each student participates in confidential, multi-modal assessments that help them to understand the tenets of being well and healthy. As they develop their world view and understand their place on the health & wellness continuum they may choose to set personal goals and engage in practices help them to achieve these goals. Potential opportunities can be threaded through existing coursework (psychology, gender studies, nutrition, religion, fitness, etc.), but synergized in a way that helps students understand how each element relates holistically to a more successful existence.

*Rationale:*

- The UD mission speaks to “educating the whole person,” which includes the mind, body, and spirit. Catholic and Marianist educational traditions at UD involve seeking knowledge in a sacramental spirit, such that “a sacramental approach to knowledge means [...] that the whole person (mind, spirit, and body) should be engaged in learning and should be the subject of study, as every dimension of human life bears value.”
- Attention to the holistic well-being of our students demonstrates a true commitment to the “dignity of the human person.” This aspiration aligns with the University’s commitment to the Marianist Tradition and The World Health Organization’s definition of health: “a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.” Likewise, wellness is “an active process of becoming aware of and making choices toward a more successful existence.”
- UD students will understand that the UD mission and community are enhanced by one’s own health & wellness and by valuing the health & wellness of others.

*How aspiration would advance the aims of differentiation, innovation, and excellence:*

- Research suggests that efforts to promote the dignity and the holistic health and wellness of students will differentiate the educational experience and value at UD. Specific benefits include: academic success and persistence, decreased odds of engaging in drinking behaviors, psychosocial adjustment, enhanced stress management, developing healthy relationships and body image.

## **APPENDIX A: Characteristics of UD Graduates in 2037**

UD graduates will be a “porch light” wherever they are.

University of Dayton graduates will be recognized for embodying the following characteristics (parenthetical references are to the themes identified in *Common Themes in the Mission and Identity of the University of Dayton*):

- A. Intercultural competencies needed to reach across communities both globally and locally and walk in community with others who differ from themselves.
  - (*Building community across diversity; Partnering for the common good*)
  
- B. Complex problem solving that requires synthesis of multiple data sources and fluid reading of systems and contexts, novel or familiar.
  - (*Excelling in integrated learning and scholarship; Searching for truth grounded in both faith and reason; Educating for practical wisdom*)
  
- C. Change managers who can read the signs of the times, creatively connect people and ideas across traditional divisions, and navigate a rapidly changing, globally networked society.
  - (*Educating for practical wisdom; Building community across diversity; Searching for truth grounded in both faith and reason*)
  
- D. Social-emotional skills that support persisting and thriving in challenging situations and multiple contexts, developing collaborative relationships with a diversity of people, and stretching beyond one’s comfort zone to “stay at the table”.
  - (*Building community across diversity*)
  
- E. Embracing the call to address the structural causes for inequity and make a positive impact on the world, while pursuing their own individual talents and vocation.
  - (*Educating for practical wisdom, Building community across diversity; Partnering for the common good*)

## **APPENDIX B: Example of a cohesive, progression of the UD educational experience**

This “Flyer Formation” includes Flyer students, alumni, and post-grad professionals. Completion of the sequence facilitates the acquisition of the distinct characteristics of a UD graduate.

Donors can choose to support any aspect of the Flyer Formation process, initiatives, or programs.

- **Foundational Context:**
  - Diverse and inclusive community (Aspirations 1 & 3)
  - Attention to the wellness of each individual (Aspiration 5).
  
- **Year 1 Awareness:** Students explore questions including: “What is social justice? What is the common good? Why is it important? How is it reflected at UD? How does the UD community reflect this in society?”
  - Deep exploration in seminars; exploration of Marianist traditions as the foundation and conduit
  - Civil discourse; understanding and engaging difference (intergroup dialogue) (Aspiration 1 & 3)
  - Development of information literacy skills
  - Could provide a key curriculum and experiences for students electing to take a gap year.
  - Opportunity to collaborate with industry, Neighborhood School Centers, DECA, Sinclair, and Central State University for the development of a Social Justice, Inclusion, and Equity Regional Cluster- education, civic engagement, research centers, showcase models of inclusivity and highlight importance (Aspiration 1, 4 & 5)
  - Endowment to support accessibility, diversity for students, faculty, and staff— model what we value
  
- **Year 2: Immersive cross-cultural experiential learning opportunity for every undergraduate** (Aspiration 1 & 2)
  - Gaining experiences that support development of intercultural competence
  - Experience must be linked to critical reflection/emphasis on reflective practice
  - Student-faculty-alumni-professional teams that participate in a coordinated immersion (Aspiration 2)
  - Focus on empowering rather than “aiding” and “serving”; careful not to reinforce hierarchies and in civic engagement (Aspiration 1)
  - Structures and Systems: Center for International Programs, China Institute, Fitz Center, Center for International Programs, Office of Multicultural Affairs, develop a Center Social Justice and Inclusion, Center for Social Concern, Marianist global network and local, national, international, and alumni partners (Aspiration 4)
  
- **Year 3: Practice virtues-** use tools and talents to take measurable action/solve complex problems/innovate (Aspiration 1)

- Students use knowledge and experience to solve complex open-ended problems
- Demonstrate entrepreneurship and innovation
- Collaborate with variety of partners including Center for Social Concern, (Aspiration 4)
- **Year 4: Systemic Change-** actions taken that can have a lasting effect or impact to promote the common good / systemic change (Aspiration 1)
  - Demonstrated ability to identify key actions, resources, and skills that will promote the common good
  - Students answer a call to discover one's unique gifts and employ them in service for the common good in ways that are personally satisfying and bring meaning to one's life.
  - Culminating educational experience where students create a plan and/or enact systemic change for the common good- on campus, with collaborators, could be coordinated through the proposed Social Justice, Inclusion, and Equity Regional Cluster; Center for Social Concern, etc.
- **Post-graduation / Alumni: Lifelong connections**
  - Support of life-long learning- post graduate, other professionals, graduate students (e.g. coordinated immersions for alumni; workshops)
  - Strengthened network of alumni interactions, career development (online) gatherings and workshops, global travel and connections