



What Must Be Done:
NIAGARA UNIVERSITY STRATEGIC PLAN 2018-2025



**NIAGARA
UNIVERSITY**



Realizing Niagara's Future

Building on its more than 160-year history of educating students in the Catholic and Vincentian tradition that emphasizes ethics, lifelong learning, and service to others, Niagara University continues to provide the foundation for its students to be successful both in their personal and professional lives.

Often recognized as one of the top higher education values in the country, Niagara imagines its future potential of being an institution that

develops the whole person: mind, body, heart and soul. As a Vincentian university, Niagara seeks to inspire its students to serve all members of society, especially the poor and oppressed, in local communities and in the larger world. The 2013 appointment of President Rev. James J. Maher, C.M., brought a renewed promise to engage the university's key stakeholders through transparency in planning and budgeting, a commitment to a vision of shared governance, and a call to elevate even further evidence-based practices in planning and institutional improvement.

Through a process of visioning and analysis of internal and external environments, Niagara engaged university-wide councils and committees, sectors and divisions, alumni, students, and the external community, with the aim of gathering relevant input for the University's strategic goals and directions.

The university's strategic plan affirms its core strengths, aligns its efforts to build on these strengths while anticipating and responding to challenges, fulfills its commitment to the mission, and ultimately realizes the full potential of Niagara.

With a view to 2025, the strategic plan identifies five key strategic vision goals:

- Academic excellence founded in interdisciplinary approaches to learning, capitalizing on our strong tradition in liberal arts education and high quality, accredited professional programs.
- Social justice with a campus dedicated to diversity and awareness of the local and global environment, and educating students as citizens of the world.
- Mission-driven transformative leadership, fostering economic and social development with the community and its strategic partners.
- A culture of care for the whole person, and an organization strengthened by innovation and shared governance.
- An open campus environment through the use of cutting-edge technology, and improvements to facilities and outdoor spaces.

Academic Excellence

Elevate academic excellence and reputation through student-centered, collaborative, experiential and integrative approaches to learning in preparation for 21st century careers.

Transformational education that integrates the liberal arts and professional study into careers of the 21st century will lead to successful outcomes for graduates, while building the academic profile and reputation of the university. Academic excellence will be defined by the university's core strengths in programs and graduate outcomes (value), as well as the quality of students and learning environment. Building from a core of experiential learning within liberal arts and professional studies, actions include: revising general education (deeply integrating mission and the liberal arts), advancing strategies to intentionally increase graduation rates (profile indicators), elevating programs that have distinctive value and scale in the marketplace — resulting in increased retention and graduation rates, improved graduate outcomes, and the ability to differentiate tuition across the university.

GOAL 1: Elevate and promote programs of distinction.

GOAL 2: Increase program excellence, sustainability and student interaction with full-time faculty by assessing needs and providing resources.

GOAL 3: Revise the General Education curriculum in a manner that integrates across disciplines both within liberal arts and professional programs.

GOAL 4: Increase research, scholarship, and professional development of faculty, students and staff through external funding for support.

“I’ve been trying to put into words what the Niagara research experience does for our students. Working on an actual research agenda and being given the independence to think creatively and independently transforms a student into a scientist.”

**Dr. Mary McCourt
Professor of Chemistry**



Excellence in the Student Experience

Cultivate a culture that fosters excellence in all our experiences, including development of the campus, support services, and technologies.

It is the deep engagement across the university experience, lifelong connections made between students, staff and faculty, and advancements to campus facilities that foster excellence in the experience of students and ultimately builds retention. The integration of this culture will require deep and sustainable interdependencies across the university community. We will seamlessly integrate learning and development of students through mentoring, advising and providing support when needed. Expanding engaged experiences on campus and connecting to professional networks for students provides new opportunities to connect with over 34,000 alumni around the world. The investment in facilities and support for technology must focus on the student experience and foster a culture that 'puts students first'. A focus on the importance of engaging students in campus life and the co- curricular learning experience will lead to significant investments in housing, the Kiernan Center and the library. These actions also align with findings from the brand marketing study, resource prioritization report, and capital campaign feasibility study.

GOAL 1: Define and establish expectations to ensure excellent support, advocacy, and care of students through processes, training and interactions.

GOAL 2: Invest in facilities that improve the student learning, residential, and social experience which are tied to the priorities of the plan.

GOAL 3: Continuously innovate and advance technology across programs and infrastructure.



OBJECTIVE III:

Impact of Civic Engagement

Advance impactful collaborations that focus on mission and civic engagement to benefit the Greater Niagara Region and Niagara University.

Inspired by St. Vincent de Paul, we are called to look beyond the campus, seeking out causes of poverty, and using the strength of education in an engaged process that inspires positive short and long-term change in the lives of others in our community and around the world. This will be accomplished by building on the university's existing contributions in service and elevating initiatives to scale for a deliberate and focused impact in the region surrounding the university, with emphasis on community-based action in the city of Niagara Falls. This clear focus on mission must be integrated across colleges and sectors of the university, aligning service with the academy. Action plans include: transforming service to realize a measurable impact, enhancing co-curricular programs that focus on poverty and environmental justice, and establishing living and learning opportunities in the heart of the community.

GOAL 1: Reinforce the IMPACT program to adopt a collective impact and systemic change model, including identification of key areas of community focus.

GOAL 2: Apply multi-disciplinary research and teaching to the greater Niagara region, with an emphasis on poverty and environmental justice.

GOAL 3: Create a sustainable living/learning community in the city of Niagara Falls where students live, work, and serve in the spirit of Saints Vincent and Louise.



**“So, our vocation is to go,
not just to one parish,
not just to one diocese,
but all over the world;
and do what?**

**To set people’s hearts on fire,
to do what the Son of God
did. He came to set the world
on fire in order to inflame
it with His love.”**

St. Vincent de Paul



Graduating Global Citizens

Enhance a diverse, inclusive, values-based learning environment designed to graduate global citizens and promote civil discourse.

Our graduates are entering a world that has never been more volatile, ambiguous, and complex. Niagara's graduates must be prepared for a changing global landscape. Niagara's Catholic and Vincentian heritage calls for us to cultivate a diverse and international environment, which focuses on campus climate, research, and a curriculum that builds partnerships and opportunities for enrollment, exchange, and strength in preparing global leaders. Actions include a university focus on excellence across race, equality, and mission; full implementation of the Brennan Center for Language, Culture and Leadership; and extension of our footprint in strategic international regions as a pathway for Vincentian universities.

GOAL 1: Diversify the student body through the inclusion of more underrepresented and international students.

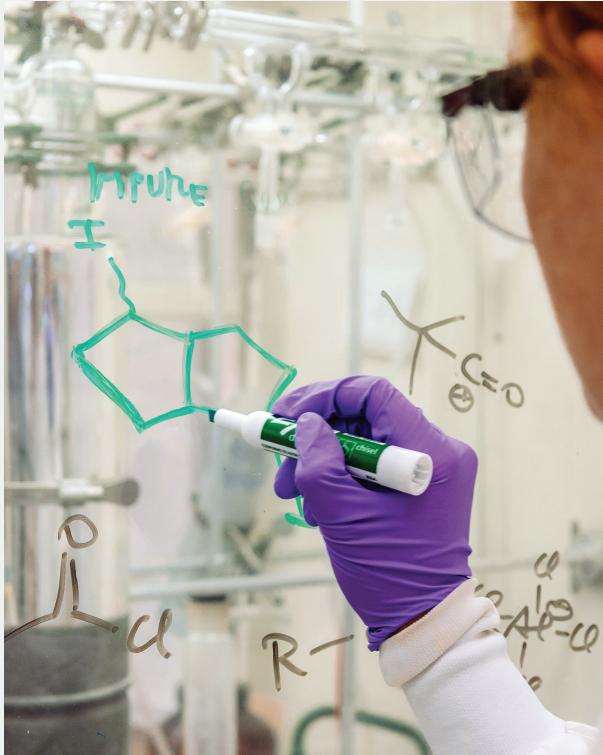
GOAL 2: Provide academic and co-curricular support and campus accessibility through partnerships to meet the needs of a diverse student population.

GOAL 3: Activate programs with anchor colleges, universities, and high schools in strategic international regions.

GOAL 4: Elevate the Edward A. Brennan Center for Language, Culture and Leadership (which focuses on leading, learning, and serving in order meet the needs of international students and their families) into a center of excellence to target global stakeholders.

GOAL 5: Implement the Rose Bente Lee Ostapenko Center for Race, Equity, and Mission to focus on research and professional development for students, faculty, staff, and administration on diversity and inclusion topics.





“There are plenty of schools out there to choose from, but Niagara separates itself through the options that it gives each student individually. There is something at Niagara for everyone and the possibilities are endless. I was fortunate to get a position at my dream job and really have Niagara to thank for helping me get there.”

George Waters, '16

OBJECTIVE V:

Expanding Bi-national Legacy

Establish Niagara University as the premier bi-national university within the Province of Ontario, Canada through mission-based academic programs, improved branding, and the establishment of an Ontario NU campus.

Niagara's legacy of graduating students who live and work in the Province of Ontario dates back to 1984, with the first Consent of the Ministry. As the only bi-national university in this region with authority to operate in Ontario, Niagara alumni in the province are seen at all professional levels of leadership and across professions. As aligned with the recommendations of the Business Model Task Force, Niagara is positioned to regain its market in the province of Ontario and build upon the success of Niagara University in that region. These actions include expansion of Ministerial Consent to offer more programs in and around the greater Toronto area, reset of tuition for partnership programs with Canadian institutions, and strategic recruitment of undergraduate students for programs offered on our main campus.

GOAL 1: Expand post-baccalaureate and graduate offerings in the province of Ontario.

GOAL 2: Develop an enrollment plan for market penetration in Greater Toronto and surrounding areas that focus on undergraduate, graduate, and transfer enrollment streams.

GOAL 3: Develop and implement a tactical plan for the transition from multiple program sites to a Canadian campus that will promote excellence in the delivery of Ontario-based programs.

OBJECTIVE VI:

Strengthen Our Fiscal Future

Diversify revenue generation and strengthen fiscal sustainability.

The commitment to affordability as an independent university aligns with the landscape of concern for costs and value in high education. Fiscal responsibility and efficiencies are complemented by the need to diversify revenue through partnerships with organizations like National Grid, promoting sustainability initiatives, and Help Me Grow — a project that leverages screening and referral services in the community. These partnerships can generate revenue and provide opportunities for innovation that builds non-tuition streams, and establishes brand affinity in new markets. Actions include movement to self-sustainability among centers of the university, seeking funding for endowed faculty positions and research (which will also build the university's reputation), and establishing competitive areas of programming.

GOAL 1: Develop and enhance innovative public and private partnerships to generate sustainable revenues.

GOAL 2: Streamline financial processes and resources across campus-wide operations and program management.

GOAL 3: Significantly increase revenue generation from advancement and philanthropy.

GOAL 4: Aggressively pursue external funds (e.g. institutes, foundations, grants) for strategic priorities.

GOAL 5: Increase regional market share and build brand affinity in new domestic markets.

Planning and Accountability

The broadly participative process of creating this strategic plan has served to more firmly embed an ethos of planning into the culture of the university. This plan represents a culture shift by identifying specific areas of strategic importance, establishing congruity with college and sector plans, ensuring a cooperative understanding of our intended outcomes, and establishing clear accountability for plan actions.

