

ANNA MARIA COLLEGE

STRATEGIC PLAN

FIVE-YEAR PROGRESS REVIEW & ADDENDUM

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INTRO

In Fall 2021, President Mary Lou Retelle convened a Strategic Planning Revisions Committee with the goal to conduct a five-year progress review of the current strategic plan through the prism of a pandemic-altered higher education ecosystem and to consider what updates, if any, could enhance the strategic plan due to the changed environmental variables since its adoption in 2018.

THREE PRINCIPAL THEMES SURFACED THROUGHOUT THE DEVELOPMENT PROCESS:

- 1** Solidify a competitive portfolio of on-ground, hybrid, and online graduate and undergraduate degree and certificate programs that will grow future enrollment and advance financial sustainability.
- 2** The College will retitle the Strategic Plan's Pillar Four to: "Respect for Human Dignity."
- 3** The college recognizes that the post-pandemic operational and workforce environment requires continued agility to preserve organizational strengths and address weaknesses.

STRATEGIC PLAN 5-YEAR PROGRESS REVIEW

PILLAR 1

SUSTAIN REGIONAL LEADERSHIP IN THE COMMUNITY PROFESSIONS

- Renegotiated the contract with the online program management provider.
- Joined hybrid academic consortium.
- Expanded the traditional academic undergraduate and graduate portfolio.

PILLAR 2

ENHANCE AND DEEPEN THE EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE

- Began a 5-year initiative to support student success and retention.
- Expanded faculty for student academic support.
- Introduced new strategies for orientation, open houses, first-year experience, homecoming, and student events.
- Created an Esports Center, renovated the Campus Center and the chapel; built a new outdoor patio and outdoor seating. A renovated nursing lab is planned for 2024.
- Added counseling options and hours for the Health and Counseling Center to address increased student needs.
- Provided training for all residence life staff in mental health first aid.

PILLAR 3

CREATE PURPOSEFUL COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

- Received government and foundation funding to support mental health first aid training within the public safety sector; a Behavioral Health Workforce Education and Training Scholars Program supports MSW students with stipends and field placements; Reliant Foundation support for mental health programs; Highland Street Foundation supports Peer Mentoring.
- Began partnership with Boston Mutual Life to support students in the business program.
- Secured \$1 million through Congressman McGovern to upgrade the college's nursing and health-care simulation space.
- Continued clinical partnerships with St. Vincent's Hospital and UMass Memorial and with other healthcare organizations. Working with UMass Community Health to support scholarship, faculty, and clinical placements.

STRATEGIC PLAN 5-YEAR PROGRESS REVIEW

PILLAR 4

EXPAND ACCESS AND OPPORTUNITY

- Between 2011 and 2021, the college's enrollment grew by 5.5%. In 2022, began a new 3-year contract with EAB Solutions.
- Launched dual enrollment courses in 2021.
- Created a director of international programs position in 2023 to support international student interest.

PILLAR 5

STRENGTHEN ORGANIZATIONAL CAPABILITY

- Created a multiyear financial plan that integrates enrollment management, academic affairs, and advancement to ensure strategic alignment across the institution.
- Commenced the silent phase of a \$12.5 million capital campaign.
- Received an influx of federal aid in response to the pandemic through crucial one-time operational support.
- Land donation from the Sisters of Saint Anne expands campus to 260-acres.
- Invested in capital improvements to upgrade technology both in and out of the classroom.
- Added seven new members to the Board of Trustees and elected a new chair in 2023.
- Added personnel to communications and marketing to expand internal and external awareness.
- Used the pandemic-pressured staffing environment to reimagine processes, roles, and responsibilities.

STRATEGIC PLAN ADDENDUM

PILLAR 1

SUSTAIN REGIONAL LEADERSHIP IN THE COMMUNITY PROFESSIONS

- Ensure the academic portfolio is dynamic to attract new student populations who prioritize purpose-driven careers, learning opportunities and outcomes when selecting a college.

Through the legacy established by the Sisters of Saint Anne, the College's mission, values, and academic expertise position it as a thought leader on societal challenges, such as shaping new approaches to public safety and community impact.

GOAL: *Create new, career-centered academic opportunities informed by the job economy, consistent with the mission, and aligned with institutional budget goals.*

- Infuse mission and values in the evolving online and on-ground portfolio.

Flexible academic options and online teaching methods are here to stay. Anna Maria must continue to connect its mission and values with outcomes and social impact to differentiate the College. By embedding "service" across all the College's offerings, students will gain the knowledge needed for career success as well as an understanding of purpose.

GOAL: *Knowing that the academic journey of future students will involve interruptions, make sure programs are adaptive and flexible.*

- Retitle sub-pillar two of the Strategic Plan.

Change "Contemporary literacies across the undergraduate experience" to "Contemporary literacies across the **educational** experience." to encompass undergraduate, graduate, online, and certificates. Anna Maria recognizes that critical thinking, communication, ethical judgment, and quantitative reasoning skills, when complemented by individualized discipline-specific experiential skill building, are mutually reinforcing for students.

GOAL: *Reinforce the mission-driven aspects of an Anna Maria education as the topping-off of professional skill-building.*

- To sustain regional leadership, the College must continue to recruit, develop, and retain qualified faculty and staff who can support student development inside and outside the classroom.

Anna Maria Faculty and staff, the integration of experiential hands-on learning in a holistic curriculum, and a community-centered alumni network employed in service and caring professions distinguish Anna Maria as an institution associated with the public good. Similarly, the Board of Trustees is active and engaged with the broader community to bring new capacities to the institution and to the future Board.

GOAL: *Identify resources and partnerships that advance areas of institutional strength.*

- Strengthen and expand practices that deepen the educational impact for students.

Students want a vibrant learning community and campus environment responsive to their individual needs and advancing their career opportunities. First-year student experiences, internships, experiential learning, and career connections represent opportunities to enhance learning, demonstrate College impact, and engage Anna Maria's extensive alumni.

GOAL: *Develop more innovative interdepartmental collaborations between Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, Admissions Alumni Relations, and Career Services to advance enrollment, student achievement, and job placement.*

PILLAR 2

ENHANCE AND DEEPEN THE EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE

- Reassert that student success is primary.

Anna Maria engaged a strategic consultant (Credo) to lead a comprehensive five-year initiative to review and implement improvements that support student retention and success. This will increase the annual retention rate, furthering academic development, graduation rates, career placement, and institutional marketability.

GOAL: *Maintain college-wide support for Credo initiative.*

STRATEGIC PLAN ADDENDUM

PILLAR 2 *CONTINUED*

- Emphasize a supportive, individualized student experience to foster an inclusive atmosphere, improve physical assets to realize better outcomes related to the college experience, and support student well-being.

The College puts a focus on every student to make them aware of the mission and campus resources. The College affirms that a student's well-being is also paramount.

GOAL: *Identify opportunities to enrich experiential elements of the college experience through both programmatic and physical upgrades.*

- Cultivate a richer on-campus community among all student populations.

The post-pandemic campus experience requires more creativity to engage student populations who have seen three years of disruption. There are new strategies underway for Orientation, Open Houses, Homecoming, Residence Life, campus events, and to support international students.

GOAL: *Dedicate planning resources for the evolving academic, engagement, housing, and experiential needs of future students.*

PILLAR 3

CREATE PURPOSEFUL COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

- With a legacy of serving community needs, Anna Maria remains committed to addressing the region's greatest challenges.

Coming out of the pandemic, the College can reinvigorate thought leadership engagements on and off campus that highlight core competencies and create new partnerships tied to program growth.

GOAL: *Increase sustainable learning opportunities for students that enhance their marketability in the workforce, support community outcomes, amplify mission, and grow enrollment.*

- Create innovative programs that address trends in the broader community and demonstrate the College's utility as a regional resource.

Talent shortages and job transformations are affecting community service professions where Anna Maria's impact is historically strong and has previously received government and foundation funding.

GOAL: *Emphasize social impact initiatives to grow revenue through increased enrollment and external financial support.*

- Expand cross-department sharing of expertise on- and off-campus.

Collaboration is a vehicle to carry Anna Maria's values outward and create more exposure for the College and ensures the College makes the most of community partnerships.

GOAL: *Promote on-campus, inter-departmental communication, and creativity to reach a wider audience of community stakeholders.*

- Foster stronger student connections with alumni and deepen alumni participation in academic life.

The unique family-like characteristics of the campus culture are brand advantages. The meaningful relationships made possible by the College's smallness create pathways for all students, especially underrepresented students, with respect to community service, academic success, campus participation, and alumni connections.

GOAL: *Facilitate new opportunities for alumni to engage across students' academic journeys.*

STRATEGIC PLAN ADDENDUM

PILLAR 4

EXPAND ACCESS AND OPPORTUNITY

- Retitle Pillar 4 to: Respect for Human Dignity

The campus experience at Anna Maria College will be a community where individuals from all faiths, cultures, socio-economic levels, and backgrounds are welcomed and can thrive.

GOAL: Create a sustainable environment for all programming.

- Implement a model for future residential and commuter enrollment and revenue.

Post-pandemic, the College must become more innovative in developing robust domestic and international recruitment strategies due to significant demographic shifts, workforce changes, student expectations, and increased competition. Expand dual enrollment initiatives. Promote more on-campus living. Identify additional populations for programming opportunities. Life-long learning advances the value “Development of the Whole Person.”

GOAL: Prioritize on-ground, hybrid, and online undergraduate and graduate programs attractive to the College’s diverse, traditional, and non-traditional populations to bolster revenue and enrollment.

- Achieve reputational sustainability by underscoring brand promises surrounding service, building strong communities, and care.

Promote academic outcomes, social impact, and student experience, by highlighting outcomes, people, and partnerships. Being small gives every member of the Anna Maria community the ability to create impact and opportunity through service and social impact. Alumni help communities become stronger and more welcoming.

GOAL: Expand visibility for Anna Maria with updated content strategies for the website, publications, events, social media, and advertisements.

PILLAR 5

STRENGTHEN ORGANIZATIONAL CAPABILITY

- Personalize Anna Maria’s core attributes to enhance alumni engagement and donor support.

Institutional Advancement has increased stewardship and alumni programs. Looking ahead, IA recognizes the need for new digital strategies to boost engagement as GenZ grows as the main alumni cohort. Future government earmarks are undetermined, but Anna Maria’s focus on service and regional and state priorities is an advantage.

GOAL: Connect donor emotion to today’s student experience and Anna Maria’s impact on community priorities.

- Reimagine the campus through a long-range institutional master plan.

Anna Maria commenced the initial phase of a \$12.5 million capital campaign in 2021. Institutional Advancement is soliciting support with full engagement from the Board of Trustees.

GOAL: Expand donor solicitation initiatives to promote long-term master plan goals.

- A positive student experience begins with a positive staff experience.

This aligns with the strategic priority of putting students first. The new normal requires a different operating model going forward to contend with the faster pace of change, challenging enrollment pipelines, changing student demographics, workforce competition, hybrid workstyles, and flexible education modalities. Departments must create a system of succession management, utilizing collaborations, and taking measures to access a range of applicants.

GOAL: Cross-train for talent building and to build opportunities for workplace flexibility which in turn helps attract and retain workers. Explore unconventional incentives and resources to improve hiring and retention.



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