

The background of the cover is a photograph of a university campus. On the left, a large bronze statue of a man in a robe, looking upwards with his hands clasped in prayer. On the right, a tall, modern stone bell tower with a cross on top. The sky is blue with wispy clouds, and there are green trees at the bottom.

Rooted *in* Mission, Focused *on* *the* Future

**St. Bonaventure University
Strategic Plan | 2025–2030**

Rooted in Mission, Focused on the Future

St. Bonaventure University Strategic Plan 2025–2030

At St. Bonaventure University, our past is rich with purpose, our present is energized with promise, and our future is grounded in a singular truth: We are a community rooted in mission and focused on the future. Inspired by our Catholic-Franciscan tradition, we chart a bold path forward that furthers intellectual excellence, ethical leadership, and compassionate service.

This strategic plan, *Rooted in Mission, Focused on the Future*, is our call to action. It is an invitation to think boldly, act strategically, and lead with wisdom and love.

A collective effort of our entire community, this plan outlines four strategic pillars — **Community, Institutional Strength, Innovation, and Purpose** — that are deeply rooted in our mission and will guide us to 2030 and beyond.

Rooted in Mission

The Mission of St. Bonaventure University

St. Bonaventure is a Catholic university dedicated to educational excellence as informed by our Franciscan and liberal arts traditions. In the words of our patron, we believe that there should be “no knowledge without love,” and thus seek to transform the lives of our students, inspiring in them a lifelong commitment to service and citizenship.

St. Bonaventure embraces students, faculty, and staff of all faiths and cultures and strives to bring out the best in every individual through meaningful relationships. As an academic and spiritual community, we prepare our students for the challenges they will face in their professional careers and personal lives.

Our Values

Our Franciscan **COMMUNITY** affirms the unique dignity of everyone, each person reflecting the goodness of God, and invites all our sisters and brothers to forge bonds of mutual acceptance and understanding that create a true sense of belonging.

We are a **COMMUNITY**...

- Nurturing **COMPASSION**.
- Seeking **WISDOM**.
- Building **INTEGRITY**.

COMPASSION: We are convinced that all of creation is God’s gift, an awareness that calls forth a sense of solidarity with everyone and everything. As images of God, we strive to share God’s unconditional love, particularly with those on the margins of society — the needy, the ignored, and the excluded.

WISDOM: We are convinced that education must be transformative of the whole person, concerned not only with the intellect, but also with the will, the heart, and the body. Education must be eminently practical, not just about learning concepts and skills, but discerning how to truly live humanly, deeply, and well in the world.

INTEGRITY: We are convinced that each of us must accept responsibility for our actions and that our relationships should be based on respect for the dignity of others, honesty, and transparency, realizing that the values we espouse mean little unless they are embodied in our personal and professional lives.

Transformation Drivers

An effective strategic plan responds to current and future challenges with the mission-driven strategies that reflect the vision and values of the institution. And so, the University Planning Commission began this sequence of strategic planning with a research-based analysis of the *mega-forces* that will challenge higher education in general and St. Bonaventure University during the next decade. We named five such mega-forces:

1. Demographics –

The higher education landscape will continue to present many challenges to colleges and universities over the next decade. The most obvious is the declining, yet increasingly diverse, number of high school graduates which has led to an extremely competitive recruitment/enrollment environment and the ongoing closures of many institutions of higher education. While St. Bonaventure University will not suddenly experience what many have described as the “demographic cliff,” the number of high school graduates will continue to decline over the next decade. In addition, it is anticipated that more students will forgo the traditional path of a college degree by pursuing employment or trades that require specialized skills and/or vocational training.

2. Athletics –

The landscape of athletics is changing dramatically on college campuses throughout the United States, as courts consider past and future payment of student athletes and colleges and universities adjust to new funding policies and practices for all sports. We await the decision of the courts, the deliberations of the NCAA, and the redesign of the student-athlete experience. St. Bonaventure University has been studying all options and is taking a prudent and flexible path in its deliberations with other similarly placed universities.

3. *Perceptions of Higher Education –*

Higher education is undergoing significant transformations influenced by economic, social, and political factors. While most Americans (80%) still find value in a college education, according to The Chronicle of Higher Education they are less likely to trust institutions of higher education. In a 2023 Gallup poll of 1,013 U.S. adults, 36% of Americans expressed confidence in institutions of higher education while 22% said they had little confidence in higher education representing a 144% increase since 2015. The landscape of higher education is complex and continually evolving. Institutions must navigate rising costs, changing economic incentives, regulatory burdens, and shifting societal expectations. To remain viable and relevant, colleges and universities must embrace innovation, foster agility, and strengthen their financial foundations through strategic fundraising and community engagement.

In an increasingly secular society, the implicit value of a *Catholic and Franciscan* education is also questioned. The perception of the value of Catholic higher education in the United States is multifaceted and evolving. While these institutions are lauded for their academic excellence, commitment to moral and ethical development, and emphasis on social justice, they also face significant challenges related to cost, changing demographics, and maintaining their religious identity in a secularizing world. By addressing these challenges thoughtfully and proactively, Catholic colleges and universities can continue to provide a valuable and distinctive educational experience that resonates with a diverse and dynamic student population.

4. *Technology Disruption –*

“Disruption” means any change that is significant enough to warrant a strategic response, where that change may be positive or negative. In most cases the changes introduced by technology have the potential to be both positive and negative. This reflects the ethical ambivalence of technology itself, the value of which largely depends on the purposes for which it is utilized and the effects it is likely to have. The white paper produced by the technology sub-committee thus charted a balanced range of both opportunities and challenges presented by technology, and it aimed to serve as a tool for members of our institution to better understand and navigate the immense potential and utility with ethical and environmental risk.

5. *Business Models –*

The long-established business model followed by most private institutions has changed dramatically in recent years. Private institutions have traditionally relied on three sources of revenue: 1) tuition/room/board/fees, 2) fundraising, and 3) earning from endowment. All three sources have reached a point of restricted growth or at least growth that does not always match growth in operating expenses. Our study examined the changes in both sides of the equation as well as how these trends are evidenced in operations and the long- and short-term impacts, and considerations for the future including alternative sources of revenue.

The work of these five task forces was the subject of the 2024 Convocation. The task force white papers were circulated and made available to all members of the community. After a brief overview of the work of the task forces, community members were invited to break-out sessions on each of the five mega-forces. The results of all sessions were collected and tabulated and became the subject of ongoing discussions by university leadership and the University Planning Commission.

Those discussions led to the development of strategic priorities. Those strategic priorities became the subject of the December 2024 Board of Trustees retreat. Suggestions from the Board were given to the UPC for their deliberation and inclusion in the final set of priorities. Further discussions between the campus, the UPC and University administration and staff led to the development, revision, and a final list of goals.

This strategic plan is organized around four pillars. Each pillar has strategic priorities and goals to guide the work of the next five years.

A separate operational plan is being developed by the President's Cabinet and UPC leadership and will be delivered to the President of the University for his approval by September 1, 2025.

Thus, the University Planning Commission, after a year of intense study and deliberations with the entire campus, offers this strategic plan to the Board of Trustees for its approval.



Focused on the Future

Pillar 1. Community: Student Success, Enrollment, and Belonging

Our foundation is community, and our unwavering commitment to academic excellence and student success is at the heart of our community's work. In the spirit of St. Francis and St. Clare, we are called to form a learning environment where every student is known, valued, and empowered to thrive. We will expand academic and co-curricular offerings to attract and retain a vibrant student body while also pioneering bold new areas of study that speak to the needs of a rapidly changing world.

We commit to an inclusive culture of academic excellence, where intellectual rigor is matched by holistic support—mentoring, mental health services, spiritual ministries, financial literacy, and career readiness—all working harmoniously to nurture the whole person. We will uplift underrepresented voices, support adult and first-generation learners, and ensure every student finds a sense of belonging at St. Bonaventure.

Strategies

1. Expand academic offerings, co-curricular programs, online programs and degree pathways to attract and retain a dynamic student body while exploring bold new areas of study—including potential new schools and disciplines—that position the university for future excellence.
2. Elevate academic excellence by fostering a culture of intellectual rigor, critical inquiry, and innovative pedagogy, ensuring students are challenged and supported in achieving high standards of learning and professional preparation.
3. Strengthen student support services, including financial literacy education, career development, mental health services, and residential life enhancements.
4. Prioritize dignity, community, and belonging through initiatives for a range of student populations, including underrepresented populations, adult learners, commuters, and first-generation students in a way that reflects our Franciscan values.
5. Ensure faculty and staff are supported through professional development, career advancement opportunities, and investments in workplace well-being, recognizing that their growth directly enhances student success.
6. Leverage the impact of athletics and organized sports activities in fostering student engagement and belonging, further leveraging athletics in building campus spirit, attracting prospective students, engaging alumni and strengthening our sense of community.

7. Advance accessibility by embracing Universal Design principles to create an inclusive campus environment that goes beyond ADA compliance.

Pillar 2. Institutional Strength: Financial Sustainability, Growth, and Investing in Our People

Our mission demands a strong foundation, built through **integrated planning**, that aligns academic priorities, financial stewardship, and operational effectiveness to advance student success and institutional resilience. To sustain and grow our university, we will diversify revenue streams, modernize our business models, and lead a historic fundraising campaign to build our endowment and support strategic investments in academics, scholarships, and facilities.

We will develop innovative operational strategies that enhance efficiency while investing in our greatest asset—our people. Competitive salaries, benefits, and meaningful opportunities for career advancement will support a thriving and resilient workforce. We will also continue to ensure that our campus spaces are welcoming, functional, accessible, and environmentally responsible.

We aim to unite our community around shared values, financial health, and future-facing sustainability through increased alumni engagement and a commitment to green practices.

Strategies

1. Enhance financial sustainability through diversified revenue streams, endowment growth, new curricular and co-curricular programming
2. Launch a fundraising campaign focused on endowment growth through philanthropy, grants, and partnerships to support scholarships, student aid, academics, and infrastructure improvements.
3. Deploy operational efficiency and effectiveness programs across all areas of the university and institutional financial literacy programs to ensure long-term fiscal health.
4. Strengthen faculty and staff retention by ensuring competitive salaries, benefits, and professional development opportunities to create a sustainable and engaged workforce.
5. Implement innovative resource management strategies that optimize the use of human, technological, financial, and physical resources to support the long-term success and sustainability of the athletics program.
6. Ensure the sustainability, functionality, accessibility and appeal of on-campus and digital facilities through proactive maintenance, modernization, and strategic investments.

7. Develop a cohesive philanthropic and alumni engagement plan to incorporate relationship development and advanced generational giving strategies.
8. Prioritize student and alumni outcomes to promote academic programs, enhance career readiness, and improve student development, while strengthening the university's external profile, attract prospective students, engage donors, and enhance institutional reputation.
9. Embed integrated planning into the fabric of the university function, to enhance institutional resilience, advance student success, and position the university for sustainable growth.

Pillar 3. Innovation: Emerging Technologies and AI Integration

As the digital landscape transforms, so must we. St. Bonaventure will lead with courage and creativity in harnessing emerging technologies and artificial intelligence (AI) to enrich academic excellence, streamline operations, and enhance the student experience.

From curriculum design to administrative functions, we will integrate AI tools that increase efficiency, deepen learning, and personalize support. Our faculty and staff will be equipped with innovative technologies and training to ensure they—and our students—are prepared for the future.

Yet, we will innovate with integrity. Clear policies and ethical frameworks will guide our use of AI, ensuring that equity, privacy, and the dignity of the human person remain at the center of all technological advancement.

Strategies

1. Develop AI and emerging technology strategies to enhance the academic curriculum, administrative efficiency, and student support services.
2. Establish AI governance and privacy policies that support ethical and effective use.
3. Equip faculty and staff with cutting-edge technological tools and training to improve efficiency, enhance the learning environment, and future-proof university operations.
4. Leverage AI-powered tools such as chatbots, learning analytics, and predictive enrollment models to improve student experiences and institutional operations.
5. Expand and enhance support for online and hybrid learning opportunities and systems.

Pillar 4. Purpose: Mission-Driven Leadership, Sustainability, and Community Engagement

The heart of St. Bonaventure beats with purpose. Its vision is to transform lives through educational excellence. Grounded in our Catholic-Franciscan identity, we are called to form ethical leaders, engaged citizens, and compassionate change-makers. Through service-learning, sustainability initiatives, and community partnerships, our mission becomes a lived experience that touches lives and transforms the world.

We will elevate our brand by telling the authentic story of St. Bonaventure: a place where academic excellence meets character formation. We will cultivate partnerships with schools, nonprofits, businesses, and global networks to extend our mission's reach and relevance.

Sustainability is not only an environmental concern but also a moral imperative. We will embed ecological responsibility into our curriculum, operations, and campus culture, living out Pope Francis's call to care for our common home. Through athletics, we will foster pride, connection, and shared purpose on campus, in our region, and across our alumni family, inspiring a collective commitment to sustainability.

Strategies

1. Reinforce Catholic-Franciscan values through academic excellence, ethical leadership development, and service-learning opportunities.
2. Strengthen partnerships with local and global communities, including alumni networks, high schools, community stakeholders, and corporate organizations, to foster a sense of community, enhance learning opportunities, and strengthen the network of mentorship support for our students and faculty.
3. Inspire pride and broaden recognition of SBU by implementing bold, strategic branding initiatives, marketing, and digital outreach showcasing the life-changing impact and enduring value of St. Bonaventure education.
4. Advance our commitment to sustainability through curriculum development, operational efficiency, and environmentally responsible practices, positioning SBU as a leader in sustainable higher education.
5. Invest in green technology, energy efficiency, and waste reduction to create a more sustainable campus and embed sustainability into the university's identity.
6. Harness the power of co-curriculars and athletics to promote academic excellence and enhance community engagement. Strengthen connections with local schools, youth programs, and regional organizations while deepening alumni involvement through events, mentorship opportunities, and shared traditions.

7. Become a stronger community leader and provide educational, cultural, spiritual, economic, and civic guidance and access for the Southern Tier.

Conclusion: A Future Shaped by Franciscan Mission

St. Bonaventure University lives the legacy of St. Francis and St. Clare of Assisi by serving students' intellectual, emotional, social, and spiritual needs in today's complex world. It reminds us that great futures are built humbly but boldly, step by step—rooted in purpose, nourished by hope, and carried forward by community. With faith in our Franciscan mission, the path to 2030 is clear — and the possibilities are boundless.

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