

Strategic Planning Primer

Our Goal: Develop a strategic plan that inspires and guides Macalester into the future, while helping us utilize our many strengths and navigate a number of challenging higher education trends.

Macalester strengths (based in part on the college's market research):

- Quality and rigor of our academic program
- Success/strength/impact of our students and alumni
- Sense of community/small size
- Distinctiveness (unique aspects of our curriculum, our location in an urban area, access to professors, research opportunities)
- Financial stability

Challenging higher education trends (based in part on trends identified by Nathan D. Grawe, *The Agile College*):

- Rising costs that outpace inflation
- Fewer students applying to private, four-year colleges, including some opting for community colleges or trade schools
- Declining birth rates that translate into fewer students graduating from high school
- Population shifts away from the Midwest

This is a creative moment for us to build on Macalester's legacy. As we imagine Macalester's future, following are some framing questions to consider:

- Who do we want to be?
- What will current and future students need to be successful?
- What changes are required to promote equity and community flourishing?
- How can we address the key opportunities and challenges we will face over the next decade or more?

- What do we do best and want to do more of?
- What could (does) make us distinctive?
- What should we let go of or transform or stop doing?

As you consider sharing feedback, ask yourself: Does this suggestion/idea help us:

- Make the Macalester experience more distinctive?
- Recruit and retain highly talented students, faculty, and staff?
- Utilize our location in the Twin Cities to enhance the student experience?
- Make our financial model more viable/in line with our peers in terms of a decreased reliance on the endowment/discount rate/fundraising?
- Support student success post graduation?