Augustana College

Augustana Bold & Boundless
Strategic Plan: 2024-2029

Mission

Augustana College, deeply rooted in the liberal arts and sciences and an inclusive expression of Lutheran higher education, is committed to offering a challenging education that develops the qualities of mind, spirit and body necessary for students to discern their life's calling of leadership and service in a diverse and changing world.

Purpose

The purpose of Augustana College is to afford an opportunity for a higher education in the liberal arts that provides for the development of all dimensions of human existence, in a manner consistent with the higher education values of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. As a community dedicated to diversity, equity and inclusion, Augustana prizes interfaith engagement, commitment to justice, spiritual exploration, reasoned examination and vocational discernment. In carrying out this purpose, the corporation shall assure freedom of academic inquiry and expression.

Augustana's Future

Since its founding, Augustana College has educated and graduated people of purpose, with deep passions, the skills to accomplish ambitious goals, and extraordinary gifts for leadership. Our graduates possess a way of thinking about, and looking at, the world that equips them with a panoramic view of their community and the world that motivates them to have impact wherever they are. This is what Augustana has done since 1860 and we aspire to continue to shape graduates who impact their communities because of their experience with us. Now is the time to take the necessary actions to prepare the next generation of impactful leaders. This is the impetus for Augustana Bold & Boundless: to ensure we remain affordable, accessible, and student focused.

Mission of the Office of Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion

The mission of the Office of Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion (DEI) is to offer visionary leadership and strategic guidance for inclusive initiatives, actively participating in strategic planning, program development, and policy formulation with a dedicated focus on fostering diversity, equity, inclusion, and a sense of belonging among members of the Augustana College Community.

Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion in Higher Education

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in a higher education institution encompasses the formulation of policies and practices aimed at ensuring that every member of the institution, including students, faculty, and staff, is provided with equitable opportunities for success and inclusion, irrespective of their backgrounds.

The sense of inclusion, value, acceptance, and connection experienced by students on campus, especially those from historically underrepresented or marginalized groups, demands our careful consideration. This approach is fundamental in the creation of a learning environment where all students can excel and flourish. It is important to note that DEI initiatives are not solely directed at students with diverse identities but also extend to students from traditionally represented groups. Exposure to a variety of policies and programs focused on diverse identities provides students with the opportunity to cultivate the skills and mindsets that employers seek, such as global competitiveness, self-awareness, and the ability to work effectively with people from different backgrounds. These attributes enable our students to become more effective global citizens upon graduation.

DEI considerations come into play throughout various aspects, including student recruitment, faculty and staff recruitment, the shaping of campus culture, the promotion of career advancement and establishment of tenure processes, examination of employment budgets, and the formulation of forward-looking institutional decisions.

Goals

Augustana Bold & Boundless builds on our traditions and values to create a distinctive experience that attracts students, builds retention, and develops in-demand graduates ready and equipped to change their communities and the world.

Three key goals underpin this plan:

1. **Prioritize engaged learning: Anchor curricular and co-curricular learning around interdisciplinary, active, hands-on learning to prepare graduates for success as impactful leaders.;**
2. **Maximize student potential: Make student success our central focus by identifying the strengths and needs of our students so we can help them achieve their life and career goals; and**
3. **Connect through partnership: Work with Rock Island to contribute to community vitality, enhance neighborhoods around campus, and be an engaged presence in the region.**

In pursuing these innovations, we will maintain an affordable and transformational experience, rooted in deeply engaging hands-on liberal arts education, that emphasizes the essential skills that employers seek and that are foundational to professional and personal success.

Achieving Our Goals

Goal 1: Prioritize engaged learning: Anchor curricular and co-curricular learning around interdisciplinary, active, hands-on learning to prepare graduates for success as impactful leaders.

We will create and implement a new kind of academic and co-curricular experience that revolves around credit-bearing, problem-based, engaged learning experiences that unleash passion and curiosity for solving today's and tomorrow's problems. The curriculum (which could in its entirety be referred to as the 'Augustana Way') will begin with a re-envisioned Welcome Week that transitions students into a new approach to general education built around interdisciplinary exploration of major areas of student interest. This approach will extend through the entirety of the undergraduate experience, organized by year. Through these innovations we will prepare Augustana College students for life-long success as impactful leaders. To enhance student learning we will:

1. Transform general education around a broad range of linked courses that allow students to explore interdisciplinary topics.
2. Incorporate experiential learning throughout the curriculum and co-curriculum, including athletics, residential education, and Greek life, with CORE serving as a hub connecting community-based partnerships with campus.
3. Re-envision the way we award credit to include a rich array of experiences and knowledge gained beyond the classroom and laboratory, and account for these changes in the way faculty time is allocated and rewarded.

    a. Integrate co-curricular DEI programming into the curriculum/courses through intentional collaborations between OSID, OISSS staff and faculty.
        i. VP DEI collaborate with faculty to create 1-credit J term courses with a focus on intercultural interactions for all first-year students.
        ii. Consider the Student Leadership Programming (e.g. Student Leaders for Inclusion, Diversity and Equity or SLIDE) for credit.
        iii. In collaboration with key campus partners, align first year experiences for PACE and International Viking with yearlong programming for credit (Academic, Career, Social, Vocational).
        iv. Develop a professionalism course for international students to support transition to U.S.

4. Build this new approach to undergraduate education around revised Student Learning Outcomes focused on engaged learning that yields the actionable skills employers seek.
5. Explore graduate programs that extend our strengths and meet high-demand needs.
6. Build greater flexibility into the academic calendar to support systematic participation in CBL, internships, and other engaged learning opportunities.
    a. Explore internship opportunities for PACE and international students to explore career opportunities (e.g. J term and summer)

Goal 2: Maximize student potential: Make student success our central focus by identifying the strengths and needs of our students so we can help them achieve their life and career goals

We will become a national leader in student success through our robust support structures and focus on wellness. Our college will model a truly student-focused, supportive culture that meets students where they are to build resilience and prepare them for fulfilling futures. Beyond the foundational conditions for learning, we will enhance every students' exploration of purpose and vocation. This same ethos will extend to the environment we provide for staff and faculty. To maximize potential for each member of our community we will:

1. Prioritize wellness and belonging throughout our community and across our academic and co-curricular practices.
    a. Office of DEI offer a series of professional development opportunities for faculty and staff to better understand challenges faced by our diverse student population. (Collaboration with Academic Affairs, CFE, Counseling etc.)
    b. Increase awareness in order to support and encourage diverse student engagement on campus-wide committees.
    c. Continue to enhance counseling services with specific attention to the needs of our diverse student population.
    d. Increase opportunities for international students to access living and learning communities.
    e. Increase opportunities for underrepresented and international students to secure internships that minimize systemic barriers (e.g. transportation, financial issues)
2. Proceed from a truly student-centered approach so we can tailor supports to needs, beginning with enhanced pre-enrollment and pre-welcome week activities and extending throughout students' Augustana experience.

    a. Re-assess impact of Passport to Success program for prospective international students.
    b. Integrate mandatory Vector DEI module in pre-welcome week materials (e.g. summer).

3. Emphasize diverse experiences and perspectives throughout our academic, co-curricular, and student support practices, and emphasize resilience.
    a. Engage students in Pen America educational opportunities
    b. Revive the Sustained Dialog Series

4. Align and enhance student support efforts across the College by creating a Student Ready Steering Committee to connect efforts devoted to students' academic, financial, mental health and physical health needs.
    a. Ensure representation from the DEI area
    b. Develop more structured systems of support to ensure English language learners have increased access to ESL, reading and writing services.
    c. Develop a basic financial literacy program or module to assist students and families understand the complexities and challenges that exist when paying for higher education.
    d. Assess policies that may create inequitable barriers for our under-represented students.

5. Expand financial resources available to high-achieving students with high need backgrounds through Augustana Possible.

6. Ensure that every student richly explores their purpose and vocation beginning during welcome week and extending throughout their Augustana experience.

Goal 3: Connect through partnership: Work with the city of Rock Island to enhance and revitalize neighborhoods around campus and be an engaged presence in the region.

Augustana will serve as a national model of what it means to be a good neighbor that builds bridges, not walls. Our approach will emphasize partnering with organizations and institutions in Rock Island to identify, understand, and address community needs and contribute to the common good. To connect our communities we will:

1. Re-envision our institutional boundaries to partner in revitalizing areas that border campus and integrate the campus and city community.

2. Create a public-private partnership (PPP) focused on investing in our community and expanding learning opportunities that benefit our students and Rock Island.
    a. Establish intentional partnerships between OSID and OISS with community based organizations to create increased opportunities of student to co-create meaningful programs and engagement.
    b. Work with advancement to secure grants to ways OISSS and OSID can support CBO programming.
    c. Integrate community-based learning into curricular and co-curricular initiatives and innovations.
    d. Develop and implement a diversity certificate program in collaboration with faculty that is tailored for businesses in the Quad Cities.

     e. Creating awareness about using diverse suppliers at Augustana College.
3. Develop robust structures and practices to identify and address community needs.
4. Support and incentivize business development in areas around campus.