

BELMONT UNIVERSITY

VISION 2020

PHASE IV: STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

NOVEMBER 2014



BELMONT
UNIVERSITY



OUR VISION 2020

In your hands is a document that reflects the work we have accomplished thus far in our visioning process. Though voiced as strategies and goals, what you will find in these pages is a reflection of who we want to be and where we want to go as a University. We still have a bit more work to do to finalize this plan, but I want to share what we have at this stage because I believe Vision 2020 captures the dreams and ideas of the collective Belmont community.

At this phase we are announcing our seven strategic priorities for the next five years, as well as a few specific goals for each priority. Your input formed the framework for everything you see. From renewed focus on student-centeredness to promoting individual worth and mutual respect within our community to enhancing every area of our academic engagement and community service, these priorities will guide our actions as we move forward and set the goals for each individual area.

I appreciate everyone's contributions to the crafting of this plan and the work you will do in the years ahead. Let's get started!

Sincerely,



Bob Fisher

THE VISION 2020 PROCESS

Phase I
Gather Campus Input

Phase II
Analyze Data and Identify Key Insights

Phase III
Develop Guiding Principles

 **Phase IV**
Establish Strategic Priorities

Phase V
Refine and Publish Final Strategic Plan



OUR MISSION

Belmont University is a student-centered Christian community providing an academically challenging education that empowers men and women of diverse backgrounds to engage and transform the world with disciplined intelligence, compassion, courage and faith.

OUR VISION

To be a leader among teaching universities, bringing together the best of liberal arts and professional education in a Christian community of learning and service.

OUR VALUES

Integrity. Inquiry. Collaboration. Service. Humility.

COMMON GUIDING PRINCIPLES ON THE PATH TO 2020

- 01.** Students will be at the center of all that we do.
- 02.** Highest quality academic programs and excellence in teaching will be treasured.
- 03.** Strong Christian character will be embedded in all that we do.
- 04.** Diversity will be enhanced across the university community.
- 05.** A strong people-first culture of openness and mutual respect will guide our relationships.
- 06.** The reputation of Belmont University will be strengthened.
- 07.** Technology will be deployed to enhance learning and improve operational efficiency.
- 08.** University resources will be applied to achieve high quality and to maintain momentum.
- 09.** Investments in people will be made in the form of salary, benefits and individual development opportunities.
- 10.** We will cherish the privilege of service to others and the importance of our work.

STRATEGY 1

Students are the answer to the question “Why Are We Here?” **WE WILL** strive to attract, retain and graduate extraordinary students by:

- making the physical and mental health and safety of our students our first priority;
- insisting that students reach for their potential by challenging them at the appropriate academic level;
- connecting students to faculty through academic advising, joint faculty and student research, and faculty and staff support of general student activities;
- involving students in appropriate decisions at the departmental, college and university levels;
- providing counsel and direction to student leaders;
- finding and engaging partners in delivering student mental health services;
- coordinating the work of disability, support and counseling student services;
- clearly communicating community responsibilities and accountability to students and parents;
- integrating Student Engagement and Leadership Development, Student Health Services and Fitness and Recreation into the academic experience;
- continuing to enhance the on-campus living experience; and
- adapting our academic programs to provide leadership development opportunities to all students.

STRATEGY 2

We view individual worth as the cornerstone of our faith-inspired imperative to build strong relationships within the Belmont community. **WE WILL** pursue transparency, open conversations and positive relationships as tools for creating a renewed sense of mutual respect and collaboration by:

- recruiting and retaining extraordinary faculty and staff;
- asking every department to commit to playing a role in increasing the racial and ethnic diversity of the Belmont community;
- actively supporting the leadership and strategies of the “Welcome Home Team” while also retaining personal responsibility for creating an environment characterized by hospitality;
- expanding our commitment to support professional development plans for faculty and staff;
- continuing our commitment to have a well-compensated, fully engaged faculty and staff;
- developing additional communication opportunities for conversations among faculty, staff, alumni and university leaders;
- working to strengthen and further empower existing committees and seeking to create additional opportunities for input; and
- assessing our progress in this area by utilizing several organizational development assessment tools including *The Chronical of Higher Education's* work climate survey.



STRATEGY 3

WE WILL ensure long-term organizational strength by the efficient and responsible use of our resources, including:

- growing our enrollment to a total of 8,888 (a rate of 317 students or an average of 4.2 percent per year) to efficiently utilize our recently expanded capacity;
- maintaining a student-to-faculty ratio on the range of 13:1 by continuing to add faculty as we grow;
- working together as a coordinated team including admissions, deans, faculty, staff and alumni in sharing the responsibility to recruit extraordinary students;
- committing to environmentally sustainable practices as we pursue reducing our per-student carbon footprint;
- finding ways to educate our students regarding the importance of caring for the natural environment;
- striving to hold the cost of attendance increases to less than 5 percent per year;
- obtaining a bond rating of "A" as a result of efficient financial management;
- maintaining the positive gap between our costs and revenues;
- coordinating and increasing the efforts of deans and other university leaders to leverage the efforts of our development team;
- continuing to rely on a fully engaged faculty and staff;
- balancing workloads within and across departments and the university; and
- utilizing a more data-driven approach to decision making.

STRATEGY 4

WE WILL engage in ongoing evaluation of our learning processes and adapt to changing environments. The concepts of cross-disciplinary engagement, inter-connectedness, integration and systems thinking will help drive both our learning and administrative mindset by:

- strengthening the Learning Community Courses in our curriculum along with the Junior Cornerstone Seminar to help students more fully experience the concept of integration of knowledge;
- developing academic programs that cross disciplinary lines and find innovative intersections that address changing world needs;
- revising current and creating new academic programs that focus on “niches” that fit with Belmont’s differentiation strategy by asking “Where else can we be the best in the world?”;
- assessing the economic and intellectual viability of existing academic programs and directing resources to our current and future strengths;
- greatly enhancing our assessment capabilities to provide greater accountability for learning; and
- seeking to “blur the lines” of the organizational chart to be more active in innovation, problem solving and finding ways to help one another in efforts to serve our students.

STRATEGY 5

WE WILL utilize technology related to information dissemination, learning, instructional delivery and administrative practice to innovate for the benefit of our students by:

- organizing our technological resources in a way that recognizes the profound shift in information dissemination;
- leveraging print and digital resources to support learning, teaching and scholarly work;
- enhancing our ability to support faculty research with technology;
- utilizing technology more fully in our administrative work;
- developing the capability to deliver more learning online; and
- consolidating our online delivery system through a common platform.



STRATEGY 6

WE WILL continue our commitment to be “Nashville’s University,” aligning Belmont’s vision and resources with the ever-changing needs of the people in our community by:

- being known for the active service-learning components of our curriculum;
- leveraging our academic expertise to meet the needs for continuing education in Nashville;
- committing to give of ourselves as faculty, staff, administrators and students to community service organizations and to offer ourselves for leadership positions when appropriate;
- continuing to support the Bridges to Belmont initiative as a re-investment in our community;
- supporting community initiatives that align with our educational mission—such as the Middle Tennessee STEM Innovation Hub, Nashville Arts and Business Council and the Tennessee Arts Academy—within the boundaries of fiscal responsibility; and
- being a gathering place for the community for important events such as executive education, nonprofit fundraisers, fair and balanced political debates and discussions, and responding to community-wide disasters and emergencies.

STRATEGY 7

As a Christian community of learning and service, **WE WILL** exemplify our Christian faith by responding to the imperative expressed in James 1:22, which states “Do not merely listen to the word... Do what it says.” Our response will include:

- partnering Interdisciplinary Studies and Global Education with academic colleges to implement more local, national and international discipline-specific mission and study abroad opportunities;
- engaging in collaborative opportunities with a broad range of disciplines to consider how Christian ideas, principles and content might enhance learning;
- inviting graduate students to take part in expanded Spiritual Development student orientation to make them aware of growth opportunities through conferences, speakers or service opportunities;
- continuing to strengthen residence hall-based Bible studies;
- strengthening the faith component of the KIVA and Living a Better Story programs;
- developing spiritual growth opportunities for juniors and seniors;
- organizing Chapel events in a coherent and intentional curriculum to address the typical flow of student needs; and
- calling on all faculty, staff and administrators to be spiritual leaders.





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