





SECTION I: INTRODUCTION

In 2014, Lycoming College adopted a Strategic Plan that began with an aspirational vision:

Renew and deepen Lycoming College's identity as a national liberal arts college with the goal of becoming recognized as one of the very best liberal arts colleges in the country.

This vision and the associated statement of purpose, goals, strategies and tactics inspired and focused the work of our community from 2014 to 2021. The work of the 2014 Strategic Plan has been accomplished; the environment in which we operate has changed in dramatic ways, and the resource base of the College is likely to be more constrained in future years. It is now time to craft another strategic plan, and that plan must recognize the changes in the higher education marketplace.

Environmental Scan

The most impactful strategic plans rest upon a clear analysis of the current and future environment in which organizations function. Dr. Nathan Grawe (Demographics and the Demand for Higher Education (2018) and The Agile College (2021), has documented and analyzed the extraordinarily challenging demographics that will unfold from 2026 to 2029 and continue into the early years of the following decade—likely the most impactful change that lies ahead. Other prominent features of the anticipated future landscape include the rapidly expanding role of big data in decision-making, the growing impact of robotics and artificial intelligence upon many facets of life, the implications of the genomics revolution, and the rapidity with which jobs will be created and destroyed over the next several decades. By the final years of the 2020's, it is critical that Lycoming College be positioned to navigate a landscape defined by these factors.

Our nation and the higher education sector have also entered into a period of renewed examination of and commitment to the values of diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI). Institutions of higher education are engaged in dialogue and reflection and have adopted action plans to become more diverse communities, affirm that DEI must occupy a prominent place in mission statements and guiding principles, and address institutional racism and bias. During the past decade, Lycoming College has taken some meaningful strides toward enrolling a more diverse and inclusive student body, but much less progress has been made in recruiting and retaining a more diverse faculty and staff. This plan recognizes that Lycoming must develop effective strategies to achieve greater diversity among the faculty and staff to remain one of the very best national liberal arts colleges. It also accepts the premise that realizing the College's promise of excellence will require a determined commitment to embed DEI even more deeply into Lycoming's core institutional values. This plan also identifies strategies to engage the community and move the College forward in acting upon these core values. ¹

¹ Adopting a recommendation of the Working Group on DEI, this plan utilizes the term Historically Excluded Groups (HEG), which references any group that has been disenfranchised, including race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation and ability differences. The acronym BIPOC is used and references Black, Indigenous and People of Color; while the acronym LGBTQIA+ references lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, transsexual, queer, intersex and asexual members of the community.





It has become commonplace to suggest that the COVID-19 pandemic means "the end of college as we know it." This viewpoint argues that the devastating economic consequences of the pandemic have left many families with fewer resources to pay the cost of higher education. Those endorsing this position also suggest that colleges and universities face diminished revenue and will be forced to reduce the number of faculty and staff. Others have predicted that the disruptions of 2020 and 2021 are ushering in a new era of online teaching that future students will embrace over traditional living and learning on college and university campuses.

In contrast to this viewpoint, Lycoming's 2021 Strategic Plan is built upon evidence that the residential inperson model of education remains relevant and resilient in the midst of significant disruption. As Wesleyan University President Michael Roth has written, "Despite the warnings from Silicon Valley, students and their families want that campus experience, and see it as a critical part of one's life."

Indeed, during the past eighteen months, we have seen palpable evidence that students are willing to undergo fundamental changes in daily life in order to attend in-person classes and live on a college campus. Almost all Lycoming students enrolled during academic year 2020-21 were in residence. Likewise, the College's faculty demonstrated their deep commitment to the in-person experience; ninety-five percent of courses during the pandemic year were taught in-person. Similarly, ninety-five percent of deposited first-year students arrived on campus for the first day of classes in August 2020 and 2021. The evidence seems clear that 18 to 21-year-olds want the opportunity to develop independence by leaving home, and their parents want them to do so.

Findings from Review of Competitors

The Strategic Planning Steering Committee completed an extensive study of national liberal arts institutions ranked higher than Lycoming College in U.S. News and World Report. Following a quantitative review of the institutions, the Steering Committee subsequently selected eight institutions for qualitative evaluation. All eight institutions performed more strongly than Lycoming from 2012 to 2017 with respect to enrollment of first-year students from the top ten percent of their high school classes and generated more net tuition revenue per student.

The following institutions were selected for close study: Augustana College, Beloit College, Coe College, Hanover College, Kalamazoo College, Lake Forest College, Randolph-Macon College and Washington & Jefferson College. The following conclusions were drawn from that review and have influenced strategies articulated in this plan.

- All of the eight colleges enrolled a higher percentage of students ranked in the top ten percent of high school graduating classes than Lycoming. This factor accounted in significant measure for their higher ranking in US News and strengthened institutional reputations.
- Six of the colleges have developed strong and visible commitments to diversity, equity and inclusion.
- The following curricular innovations were noted:
 - O all eight institutions offer majors in computer/data science (Lycoming currently has only a minor in computer science);
 - several institutions buttressed enrollment by adding neuroscience and biochemistry 5-8 years ago;
 - O most of the institutions also highlight the opportunity to study health sciences, including pre-health partnerships, articulation agreements, an institute for health sciences and programs such as physical therapy and nursing.





- Several of the institutions have marketed educational experiences that complement the formal curriculum:
 - O several have developed effective language to market their models for career advising and study abroad;
 - O several have successfully marketed programs or centers for civic engagement.
- All of the institutions made significant investments in facilities from 2009-2017.
 - From 2009-2017, one institution spent more than \$80 million and built eight new facilities and improved others.
- All of the institutions made significant investments to increase the number of athletic teams and improve athletic facilities.
- A number of the institutions market their location and immersion into the surrounding community in effective ways.

Engaging the Community in Planning

During Spring 2019, the Steering Committee established and developed charges for five strategic planning working groups. The president appointed a sixth working group focused on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion at the beginning of the 2020-21 academic year. The Steering Committee also invited the working groups to suggest additional strategic initiatives that surfaced as the groups engaged with the college community. The Steering Committee charges emphasized that the next strategic plan must focus especially on enrollment, reputation, and revenue.

The five initial working groups were asked to conduct open meetings with college constituencies to gather ideas, create transparency, and be inclusive.² The analyses of these working groups informed the strategies that follow in this final document.

² The DEI Working Group did not have the opportunity to hold an open meeting.

SECTION II: STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

I. Academic and Student Life Initiatives

The following strategies have emerged as academic and student life priorities. They are intended to enhance and broaden Lycoming College's academic program and student life experiences with the goal of raising institutional reputation, strengthening the College's appeal to prospective students, improving student retention, and building a more diverse and inclusive community.

As was the case with the 2014 Strategic Plan, Implementation Working Groups will be established and charged with developing more detailed tactics, and where appropriate, designing majors or programs. The Faculty and College Governance processes will also be engaged and utilized as the strategies are implemented.

Academic Strategies

1.1. Add Computer Science and/or Data Science or Analytics Major both to strengthen opportunities for existing students and cultivate recruitment of an untapped segment of high school student interest.

Many of our peer and aspirant institutions have computer or data science majors and leverage these majors to recruit excellent students. The College envisions a fairly compact major that would make both staffing and the ability to double major feasible. Whether stand alone or paired with another major, the addition of one or both majors will improve the academic depth of Lycoming College and open the college to a new segment of prospective students.

1.2. Establish a Humanities Research Center to create enrichment opportunities for students within the humanities, as well as to promote enhanced academic experiences and interdisciplinary activity.

This Center would complement the continued commitment that Lycoming College has made to the humanities disciplines, as well as provide a greater intellectual impact and a physical sense of community for students majoring in the humanities. It will also serve as an institutional office to promote and support the growth of enhanced academic experiences in the humanities.

1.3. Recruit and retain more faculty and academic support staff from Historically Excluded Groups by considering revisions of hiring processes, establishing a BIPOC Teaching Fellows program, and enacting more inclusive hiring policies.

Exploring and adopting ways to be more successful in recruiting faculty from historically underrepresented groups will improve the educational depth of Lycoming College and mirror the recent increase in student diversity. The intent is to identify and implement changes in faculty recruitment processes that move the College forward and are widely embraced by the college community.

1.4. Identify and implement practices that support the efforts and commitment of faculty members to develop further inclusive course content as well as teach and mentor a more diverse student body.

Faculty have requested more institutional support for faculty development in teaching and mentoring a more diverse student body as well as developing course content that recognizes that many disciplines are evolving to include new perspectives, voices and ways of knowing. This priority is responsive to that important need.



1.5. Expand and/or Enrich Accounting, Business, Economics, and Entrepreneurship via an executive in residence program.

This initiative will complement the strong curricula and internships offered in these disciplines with a regular sequence of short-term visiting executives in residence including a balance of executives from HEGs. Students will benefit from the insights of those who have been successful in the related fields of management, and this program will raise the profile of the Institute for Management Studies and support student recruitment efforts.

1.6. Establish a Center for Social Science Research to promote and strengthen student and faculty community-based research opportunities.

This Center would build upon existing strengths in community-based research at Lycoming College by augmenting the profile of and support for students and faculty conducting social science research in the local region. The Center could also become an institutional means of supporting community-based research that takes place elsewhere in the country and the world. Creating this Center will make the opportunity for community engagement more visible to prospective students.

1.7. Add an interdisciplinary Environmental Science Major.

The College has in place most of the assets needed to establish an Environmental Science major. They include the Costello Farm that is being developed into a Biology Field Station and the Lycoming College Clean Water Institute. This major will highlight to prospective students that Lycoming College provides exceptional opportunities to explore climate change and related transformations of the local and global environment.

1.8. Build on existing strengths in the sciences and utilize enhanced marketing, mentoring and pathway development to position Lycoming as an institution that launches students into careers in the health sciences.

Prospective students continue to have a strong interest in the health sciences even as the pandemic has served to highlight the need for more health care professionals in our nation and around the world. The College will invest resources to better facilitate pathways from our strong science programs into the health sciences. This effort will start with better understanding of the options for new and prospective students, flow into improved exploration and mentoring programs, and include explicit program partnerships to expand student opportunities for graduate programs in the health sciences.

1.9. Develop community-based learning (CBL) as a robust option within the College's offerings of enhanced academic experiences.

Community-based learning leads to a deeper understanding in many fields of study, and this initiative seeks to improve student opportunities by cultivating and facilitating CBL within the Center for Enhanced Academic Experiences. CBL experiences offer students the opportunity to better understand the community around the College as well as improve community member's understanding of the College. It could also complement a post-pandemic renewal of the College's commitment to global education. This effort must also be intentional about creating opportunities that provide inclusive engagement with diverse cultures.



Student Life Strategies

1.10. Position Outdoor Leadership and Education (OLE) as a signature institutional program by expanding and diversifying its offerings while also strengthening marketing of the program to prospective students.

Since its launch in 2015, OLE has emerged as a signature Student Life program. The quality of OLE leadership, the scope of its offerings, and the richness of the landscape surrounding Williamsport have attracted participation from hundreds of current students. The program leaders have developed a plan to expand and diversify its offerings and have worked with Marketing & Communications on a stronger marketing plan. This strategies prioritizes implementation of that plan.

1.11. Develop an office of community service within Student Life and provide more options for volunteer activity with an emphasis on engaging the diversity of the regional community.

The College has explored different approaches to community service and civic engagement. This plan recognizes that an excellent liberal arts college offers a broad portfolio of opportunities to its students. Accordingly, we will both establish an office of community service within Student Life and provide the CEAE with the administrative capacity to support curricular based options. This more robust and visible commitment is anticipated to attract more students expecting to make community service and civic engagement an important part of their collegiate experience.

1.12. Continue growing the focus on DEI issues in campus and community programming that emerges from Student Life; and increase support of campus organizations that are actively involved in DEI programming.

An inventory of campus programming that addresses DEI issues and campus organizations actively engaged in DEI programming is a first step toward adding professional development workshops, educational programs that equip faculty and staff to facilitate difficult DEI conversations, an intergroup dialogue program, greater engagement with diverse communities in the region and more funding for annual community events related to DEI issues.

1.13. Affirm and highlight the work and vision of The Alliance by formalizing the program and identifying an appropriate location on campus (see Facilities Investments).

In recent years, the College has made meaningful progress in establishing programs, developing policies and hiring staff to prevent sexual assault, dating and domestic violence and stalking prevention in The Alliance program. This work has been supported by two grants from the Department of Justice to implement Green Dot bystander intervention and other evidence-based interventions. This strategy affirms and highlights the work and vision of The Alliance.









II. Facilities Initiatives

This section of the Plan establishes priorities for making additional improvements in the College's physical plant. It is anticipated that the proposed enhancements will improve institutional reputation and grow recruitment interest from prospective students, especially those with strong academic credentials.

During the summer of 2019, the B wing of the Academic Center was renovated. Subsequently, significant renovations in the Heim Science Building were also completed. This plan recommends additional enhancements to existing academic facilities with a focus on those that are judged most likely to strengthen recruitment and institutional reputation.

The opening of the Krapf Gateway Center in fall 2019 resulted in several spaces around campus being vacated. The open spaces included the Drum House and the space in the Academic Center previously occupied by the CEAE as well as areas of the Academic Center that were vacated when the Lynn Science Center was opened. This section also outlines priorities for repurposing spaces and is coordinated with initiatives recommended under the section on Academic and Student Life. Finally, the identified investments also include other facilities and grounds improvements that are judged to be responsive to the strategic goals of strengthening enrollment and enhancing institutional reputation.

The College has also collaborated with City government, County officials, and the private sector to revitalize the east end of Williamsport (also referred to as "Old City"), where our campus is located. Identified as a priority in the 2014 Strategic Plan, this collaboration previously secured more than \$7 million in public funding that has been deployed to improve streets and other infrastructure in Old City. This plan commits the College to an ongoing commitment to collaborations that build upon the progress already achieved.

Finally, this section of the Plan incorporates findings from a broader review of Lycoming's physical plant and suggests other facilities initiatives.

Academic Facilities

2.1. Construct a new music center that provides teaching, practice, and rehearsal spaces and serves as the home of the Department of Music.

Lycoming College has not constructed a new music facility in over 75 years, and the current facility (Clarke Chapel) is not commensurate with the quality of the music program or appropriate to serve the number of students involved. While the main performance and public space in Clarke Chapel will continue to be an essential aspect of the campus, a new teaching facility is needed to support the music program and the vital role it plays in attracting and recruiting students intending to participate in music as a defining characteristic of their collegiate experience. By connecting the new facility to the existing Welch Honors Hall, the College can maximize the use of existing spaces that serve music and the performing arts on campus.

2.2. Complete renovations to teaching labs in the Heim Science Building

The ongoing renovation of biology, chemistry, and biochemistry teaching labs in the Heim Science Building is an important facility investment to complete.

2.3. Renovate the psychology and neuroscience classrooms, faculty research labs, and departmental spaces in the lower level of the Academic Center.

The Department of Psychology and the Neuroscience major enroll significant numbers of students and are anticipated to be important to the College's enrollment efforts in coming years as well. Renovation of the teaching and lab spaces that support this program are a pressing and critical academic investment.

2.4. Repurpose space in the Academic Center previously occupied by the CEAE to serve as the inaugural home to the Humanities Center.

This investment recognizes that the Humanities Center has been identified as an academic priority. The space will serve as a resource center and gathering place for students and faculty interested in the humanities, and the office will support humanities faculty in developing enhanced academic experiences, other innovative programming and recruiting initiatives.

2.5. Conduct a feasibility study to explore constructing a "learning commons" in the Snowden Library.

The construction of a "learning commons" in Snowden could present the College with an opportunity to enhance the role of the library, learning supports, and information technology to strengthen student outcomes while also signaling to prospective students and families the central role that the programs have in the life of the academic program.

Student Life Facilities

- 2.6. Establish a physical space for The Alliance program/house in 47 Ross. This investment complements a priority identified in the Academic and Student Life section.
- 2.7. Construct a stadium at the Shangraw Athletic Complex to support the new intercollegiate field hockey program as well as the existing programs in soccer and lacrosse.
- 2.8. Support efforts by the Chamber of Commerce/Visitors Bureau to construct a collegiate baseball facility as part of the Williamsport Ballpark Project that will serve as the home field for the new intercollegiate program in baseball.
- 2.9. Repurpose the vacated Drum Admissions House as offices for athletics administration, coaching, and fundraising.

The new stadium, support of the Chamber's plan to construct the Williamsport Ballpark Project, and the repurposing of Drum House are needed to support the addition of intercollegiate teams in field hockey and baseball, which is a high priority enrollment management strategy.

2.10. Develop a next phase campus masterplan that addresses, among other items: residential facilities that have not been renovated, the Lamade Gymnasium, the proposal for a Makerspace, the possibility of a facility for Esports and other needs that may emerge.

The 2014 Strategic Plan included a phase one campus masterplan that identified a new entrance to the College—now anchored by the Krapf Gateway Center-- as the highest priority. Subsequently, a January 2018 Trustee Retreat prioritized renovations in the Academic Center, the Heim Science Building, and the music building. It is now time to develop a next phase campus masterplan that identifies and prioritizes the next improvements to the physical campus.



Old City Revitalization

- 2.11. Finalize efforts to develop a collaboration with a developer committed to constructing a mixed-use project on College-owned land along Basin Street.
- 2.12. Support plans by the City of Williamsport to improve the streetscape of E. 4th Street and construct a green walkway along Willow Street.

The 2014 Strategic Plan established revitalization of Old City Williamsport as a priority for the College. By the fall of 2020, considerable progress toward that goal had been achieved, but work remained to be done. In particular, as envisioned in the phase one campus master plan, the new entrance to the College included a mixed-use project to be constructed on College-owned land along Basin Street the phase one campus master plan. During the past year, steps have been taken to identify a developer interested in this project, and this strategy establishes the completion of the mixed-use project as a priority.



III. Enrollment Management Initiatives

From 2026-29, American higher education will face a demographic disruption that leads to a sharp 12-percent contraction in total enrollment. Moreover, the reduced total enrollment is projected to continue into the early years of the following decade. The contraction will be driven by a dramatic fall in the birth rate in the United States that took place during and immediately following the Great Recession and has not recovered. The impact of this demographic disruption on IHEs, however, will vary with geographic location and institutional type. It is expected to provide both opportunities as well as challenges. In other words, the aggregate story of contraction obscures important variations; and it is important to understand how Lycoming College can respond effectively to the variations as well as to the overall decline.

Economist Nathan Grawe has argued that an opportunity lies in the likelihood that "national institutions" (top 100) will fare substantially better than the "regional" ones during the disruption, and that the

differences between the two types of institutions will be greater in the northeast and mid-Atlantic regions. In particular, the types of students who historically have enrolled at "elite institutions" (top 50) are predicted to double or triple in some parts of the country and decline less in the northeast. Grawe posits that as a consequence of this rising demand for elite institutions, some students seeking admission to "elite institutions" will be unsuccessful and turn to "national institutions" as a desirable alternative. With its recent rise in the rankings, Lycoming College has the opportunity to be one of the national institutions that benefits from this excess demand for "elite institutions."

Certain population segments also present the College with an opportunity. The number of second-generation students of color participating in higher education is projected to grow significantly, as well as an Asian American population with strong connections to higher education. The fact that Lycoming has become significantly more diverse since 2014 positions the College to become an attractive option for second-generation students of color. It will also be important that the College develop tactics for successfully recruiting more students of Asian descent.

Enrollment Strategies

- 3.1 Position Lycoming College as a "Top 100" national institution to benefit from excess demand for elite institutions during remainder of this decade.
 - 3.1.1. Building on the success of the Wertz and Knights Skeath programs, consider developing additional merit scholarships, including in the areas of leadership and civic engagement.
 - 3.1.2. Continue to raise the academic profile of incoming classes through focusing on recruitment of students in the top ten percent of high school class, including through the partnership initiative.
- 3.2. Maintain the College's strength in recruiting first-generation domestic students of African and Latinx descent.
- 3.3. Focus on recruiting demographic groups where the number of students going to college is projected to increase, especially students of Asian descent and second-generation students of color.

Strategies 3.1, 3.2 and 3.3. respond directly to Grawe's analysis of opportunities summarized above.

3.4. Develop a new international recruitment strategy that is responsive to significant changes in global demand for United States higher education.

From 2006 to 2015, the number of international students enrolling in U.S. colleges and universities grew rapidly with Chinese students serving as the primary driver. Various factors, including changes in U.S. immigration policy, reversed this growth trend in 2016, and the number of new enrollments fell every year until 2020. With the onset of the COVID pandemic, new international student enrollment is estimated to have fallen by 43 percent during the 2020-2021 school year. Most analysts expect this disruption to stabilize and international student enrollment in the United States to resume growing, but the patterns and opportunities will be different than those that defined recent decades. Lycoming will engage the expertise and devote needed resources to develop an appropriate new international recruitment strategy.



3.5 Continue to focus on increasing revenue from student enrollment through intentional recruiting of students from families with greater capacity to pay, including a focus on 2nd tier private schools by deploying a campus-designated individual(s) to strategically selected schools.

The classes that entered in the fall of 2020 and 2021 included more students from families with a greater capacity to pay. Successful recruitment of these students improves both revenue per student and retention.

3.6 Continue growing applications by widening the "admissions funnel," including possible additional of intercollegiate athletic teams after baseball and field hockey have been integrated.

Unlike many peer institutions, Lycoming College did not add more intercollegiate athletic teams during the 2010s as a strategy for stabilizing enrollment. The College is currently adding baseball and field hockey and making facilities investments to support the addition of those teams. When the two programs have been stabilized, the College should consider adding additional intercollegiate teams

- 3.7 Invest in tactics to enhance the number of prospective students, such as new video content for the website (including marketing of Williamsport that appeals to the 17-year-old); focusing more on the 1,600 PFEW students who are on campus each summer; and highlighting a "careers" tab on the website with more material on pathways in the CEAE's site.
- 3.8 Identify and implement additional programs and tactics that increase the College's retention and graduation rates.

The College's actual retention and graduation rates regularly exceed predicted rates, and this differential has a positive impact upon the College's rankings in *U.S. News* and *Washington Monthly*. Nonetheless, we must redouble efforts to support the persistence and success of the students that we enroll.



IV. Campus Culture Initiatives

Liberal arts colleges with a national profile are often places known for their engagement with and positive impact upon the economic, social and cultural life of the region in which they are located. They are also regarded by their faculty and staff as employers of choice or "a great place to work." They invest in cultivating the leadership potential of students, faculty and staff. They embrace the values of inclusion, diversity and equity and take actions that affirm those values.

This Plan builds upon the existing strengths of our campus culture that were identified in surveys and focus groups conducted by the working group on campus culture. Employees identified the following as positive features of the campus culture: (a) the college engenders a true sense of community, (b) those who work for the college feel that they have good relationships with colleagues, (c) members of the college community have respect for others, (d) the college emphasizes and supports teaching, (e) the diversity of the student body enriches academic and student life; and (f) in most observable practices, the college takes a student-centered approach.

We also seek to deepen the College's commitment to the values of diversity, equity and inclusion. In addition, we commit to assessing the experiences and outcomes of students, faculty and staff across race and other aspects of identity and develop tactics to address disparities with intention to improve campus climate and create a culture of belonging.

Campus Culture Strategies

4.1. Affirm inclusion, diversity, and equity as core College values by including language within the College's Guiding Principles.



- 4.2. Develop and implement a plan to recruit a more diverse campus leadership team and staff, especially focusing on HEG.
- 4.3. Focus on retaining HEG and BIPOC staff through mentoring, managing workload, increasing professional development, and strengthening campus policies on sexist, racist and discriminatory behavior.

The College has made considerable progress toward becoming a diverse and inclusive community, particularly in the cultures and identities represented among its student body. These strategies seek to affirm that diversity, equity and inclusion are core College values. They also identify as priorities recruiting and retaining HEG and BIPOC staff, including among the campus leadership team.

- 4.4.Invest in and implement initiatives such that the College becomes an "employer of choice."
 - 4.4.1 Adopt a public statement of work culture values.
 - 4.4.2 Develop and invest in more staff development and mentoring, including diversity education.
 - 4.4.3 Review staff workloads looking to eliminate redundant and unnecessary tasks and reassign work responsibilities. 4.4.4 Benchmark staff compensation to peer colleges and the local job market
 - 4.4.5 Review employee benefits and options for strengthening the College's ability to attract faculty and staff,
 - 4.4.6 Consider ways to attend to work-life balance issues.

A survey and focus groups conducted by the Campus Culture working group identified tactics that the College could implement toward the goal of becoming an employer of choice. This strategy commits the College to implementing those tactics.







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